INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT W. MURPHEY

INTERVIEWER: Ted Gittinger

PLACE: Mr. Murphey's office, Nacogdoches, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: All right, Mr. Murphey, would you begin by telling us what your association was with Governor Coke Stevenson?

M: I knew Coke Stevenson from my earliest recollection as a child. Coke Stevenson married Fay Wright of Junction, Texas, and she was the daughter of a pioneer medical doctor in the Hill Country. He ranched as well as practiced medicine in Junction. My mother, who was Reba Wright, was the second oldest daughter of Dr. Wright, and Coke Stevenson married Fay Wright, who was my mother's sister, so he was my uncle by marriage. And because of that, as I say, from my earliest recollection I visited his ranch. I guess I'm one of the few people that has ever slept in the speaker of the house apartment in the Capitol building at Austin, and I've slept in the lieutenant governor's apartment in the Capitol building in Austin, and I have slept in the Governor's Mansion in Austin.

G: Not many people can make that claim.

M: I'm sure that many people have spent the night in one or more of the places, but I may be the only survivor who has slept in all three of them. But we would visit, as families back then were prone to do, and so he was my uncle by marriage. I worked on his ranch and visited and

tagged along after him since I was a child. So that is my connection originally with Coke Stevenson was that he was my uncle by marriage.

G: I see. When was the first time you can recall being involved in any way in one of his campaigns?

M: Well, of course, up until he ran for lieutenant governor he had never run a statewide campaign. Governor Stevenson had been county attorney of Kimble County, and at that time he ran on a platform of stopping the cattle and goat and sheep rustling. They were having a terrible time with rustlers, and they called upon him to run to try to end it, which he did. Then he was elected county judge on the platform of getting some decent roads in and out of Junction. Junction still does not have a railroad, never has, and they didn't have a very good highway. So he was elected county judge by the people again, [who] urged him to run so that they could get Junction a decent highway out of there. Then he ran for the legislature and of course was later elected speaker of the house and thereafter was the first man to be elected to succeed himself as speaker of the house. He served two terms as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

So up until he ran for lieutenant governor at the time W. Lee O'Daniel was running for governor in 1938 [he did not run a statewide campaign]. And of course I campaigned for him as a young college boy when he made his race for lieutenant governor. I did not leave the confines of Nacogdoches County; I was his Nacogdoches County campaign manager. Of course, he was elected lieutenant governor at the same

time O'Daniel was elected governor. And that was my first actual getting out and making speeches and campaigning for him.

G: How did you do in Nacogdoches County?

M: Oh, we carried Nacogdoches County by an overwhelming--I say overwhelming, I don't think it was quite that good, because Coke Stevenson was an unknown quantity in East Texas back before television and back before the modern types of communication, and really nobody over here had ever heard of Speaker of the House Coke Stevenson much. But he was elected.

G: Good. Good.

M: Then of course thereafter I campaigned for him regularly when he ran for governor.

G: Can we talk about the 1941 campaign a little bit?

M: Yes. I was still in college in 1941 in Stephen F. Austin, at that time it was State Teachers College, now Stephen F. Austin State University. But I covered a little wider range in that campaign as my time would allow. And of course back then the campaigns were run in July and August and as time would allow, well, I campaigned rather widely for him and made numerous speeches. Even back then I was interested in the platform and speaking. Being a young man like I was, well, I got a kind reception most places. That was back in the courthouse-steps speaking days, you know. So I would nail out placards and speak for him and hand out cards, do everything I could for him. I was a great admirer and still am a great admirer of Coke Stevenson.

G: I came across an article that mentioned something, that you used an issue of the liquor interests of a man called Hal Collins. Do you remember him?

M: Oh, yes. Yes. Hal Collins of course was a very colorful personality in Texas, the old Mineral Wells Crazy Water Crystal domain back when that was a very popular patent medicine, Crazy Water Crystals. He started out like--we were scared to death, because he had a radio program with a hillbilly band, and his name was well known because of his radio programs and all. Back in those days, as I recall, the liquor question and the selling of liquor in some places he owned became an issue of whether he was a--in East Texas we thought of them as bootleggers in those days, you know.

(Interruption)

Of course, one of the things that I recall in that campaign was the fact that it was our position that Carr P. Collins was an opportunist who wanted to be elected to high public office and had absolutely no qualifications. He tried to run an O'Daniel-type campaign, which of course was very popular in those days and served W. Lee O'Daniel mighty well. Collins approached the voting public with the same type campaign, and Mr. Stevenson was never the showman type or he never entertained the idea of going out asking for votes on anything but the record and what he stood for governmentwise. We was afraid this showman might overtake him, so we worked pretty hard.

G: Okay. How were Governor Stevenson's relations with the Ferguson organization in those years?

M: Well, now, of course you're getting a little bit--I'm no young man, but I'm not really old enough to have been very attentive to what was going on in state government in the Ferguson days. They were a little bit before my time. But in conversation with Governor Stevenson and visiting with him and hearing him talk about the Fergusons, actually Coke Stevenson got along splendidly with the Fergusons. He was not susceptive to some of the Ferguson policies, but by the same token, I guess you'd call it political expediency, with Governor Jim and with Mrs. Ferguson, in both instances the relationship was I think pretty cordial. I do know that a break came, and to be perfectly honest about it, I cannot with any authenticity tell you what caused the break between [Governor Stevenson and] the so-called Ferguson machine, if in fact by 1940 or 1941 there was a Ferguson machine. I cannot tell you exactly what the break actually was.

G: All right. What about the early relationship between W. Lee O'Daniel and Governor Stevenson?

M: Well, I am aware of that relationship. Any political student in Texas recalls with great relish the facts and circumstances surrounding O'Daniel announcing for governor. As I recall, there was at least twelve candidates in that race, and O'Daniel started out rock bottom. He was a flour salesman. He had a radio program in which he hawked his flour and had a hillbilly band, the Light Crust Doughboys. They were great musicians, and he had a large listening audience. You'll have to remember back then we didn't have the center of populations that we have now, and Texas was still predominantly a rural state.

This type of program and this type of salesmanship was very acceptable to the rural population of Texas, and O'Daniel started out--I've heard Mr. Stevenson and other politicians of the day say that he started out with absolutely no thought of being elected governor of Texas, that this was just another weapon in his arsenal of selling flour, that he was going to get a lot of free publicity by running for governor.

But I think it amazed and surprised O'Daniel himself whenever it caught on and people began to pour in dollar donations and fifty-cent donations. With all of the encouragement that he got, he finally said, "Well, now, look, I might get elected governor of Texas." And as a result of that, of course as history reflects, he swept the state without a run-off. Bill McCraw, who was then running right out of the attorney general's office, Bill already had fountain pens--back in those days before the ballpoints--and he had pencils and things engraved for the press and his friends "From Governor Bill McCraw." He was going to pass them out after his election, you know.

Well, O'Daniel swept in. I give this background because it brings me up to the relationship between W. Lee O'Daniel and Coke Stevenson. O'Daniel was elected and Governor Stevenson had a run-off in that election for lieutenant governor. All of these people announced on the O'Daniel ticket. They were running for agricultural commissioner, for land office, for all of the elective offices, back then every two years, you know. They announced that "I'm a W. Lee O'Daniel man. Vote for me." Well, when O'Daniel won in the first primary, he really alienated some of his closest supporters because he

turned right around and in the run-off--he was safely in, he'd been elected--he turned right around and vigorously supported the professional politicians that he had run against as governor.

Coke Stevenson was a professional politician by that time; he'd been in the legislature eight or ten years, he'd been county judge, he'd been county attorney, he'd been in politics for a goodly number of years and he was one of the ones that would have come under the term professional politician. O'Daniel turned right around when he got elected and endorsed all the professional politicians, on the theory that O'Daniel was scared to death when he got elected governor because--I don't know whether this is true or not, but I don't have any doubt but what it is--that whenever he got elected, the first thing that entered in his mind was who he was going to appoint as comptroller. And somebody had to tell him that the comptroller was running in the same election he was, that he didn't get to appoint the comptroller. O'Daniel was totally--it was brought out in the campaign he didn't even have a poll tax, which you had to have at that time to be an eligible voter. O'Daniel never did even pay his poll tax where he could vote for himself. He was completely ignorant of the government of Texas, how it was run and anything else. And when he got elected, he immediately wanted to surround himself with at least some people that knew how to run the government. And of course I've heard my uncle say, and others, that the reason he got the endorsement was that O'Daniel was looking for help.

But anyway, O'Daniel and Governor Stevenson got along well. Governor Stevenson was well aware of W. Lee O'Daniel's lack of knowledge in governmental affairs, budgetary affairs, and all the other matters that back then were of importance. He got along extremely well. O'Daniel called upon him in many instances for advice and counsel in regard to state government, and I guess Governor Stevenson knew state government as well as any other man in the history of this state. But his relationship was cordial. He did not have a high regard for the man in his native intelligence and abilities, but he was a very jovial man. W. Lee O'Daniel was a very carefree, slapping on the back, very likeable man, and Governor Stevenson got along extremely well with him, except sometimes he would cross swords with him on issues that he thought that O'Daniel was proposing that were not to the best interests of Texas.

G: Is there any substance to the story that Mr. O'Daniel was kicked upstairs to the Senate in order to make Coke Stevenson governor?

M: Well, I will say this, and there's no question about it, O'Daniel got the vote, support, endorsement, and monetary contributions from Coke Stevenson supporters. Yes, this is a matter of almost record, that people like myself and my family and conservative people throughout this state who knew of Coke Stevenson's views on constitutional government, they rallied to vote for O'Daniel and support him on the theory that Coke Stevenson would be governor, that he would succeed O'Daniel. As lieutenant governor he would move into the governor's office. There's no question about that.

G: Let me skip to something not entirely related but not unrelated. Where were you during the [Homer] Rainey controversy at the University of Texas?

M: I was in Nacogdoches, Texas, but I was well aware of what was going on. To sum it up in as short of a synopsis as I can, Governor Stevenson crossed swords, so to speak, with Governor Rainey at the University of Texas simply on a constitutional basis, which most of Mr. Stevenson's actions were based on. He was a great constitutional lawyer, a good lawyer, and he adhered in all of his statements--I've heard him make no telling how many speeches, and without exception almost the Constitution was the basis of his convictions. He simply thought that the University of Texas administration at that time was trying to usurp the powers of the legislature and of the executive's office in the administration of affairs at the University of Texas. That the tail was trying to wag the dog, so to speak, and that the basis of the conflict was just simply that he thought the University of Texas should be subservient and enjoy the leadership of the people elected by the state to run the University of Texas and not by some self-proclaimed Ph.D. who wanted to assume full authority for all matters at the university.

As an anecdote, as you well know, I'm a humorist and I enjoy the funny things that happened. I remember a member of the legislature from Dallas, Texas, a very dry humor type of fellow, on the floor of the house during that controversy. When Rainey then later announced for governor, he said this fellow got up and was addressing himself to

Homer P. Rainey. He said, "They tell me that Homer P. Rainey is a Ph.D. I don't know whether it's true or not, but I'm going to help spread it on him." So that was. . . . (Laughter)

G: That's pretty good.

Let's talk for a second about the Parr business. What kind of relationship existed between George Parr and the South Texas so-called machine counties and Governor Stevenson before the 1948 election?

M: Oh, I've heard Governor Stevenson refer to George Parr and to the so-called Parr machine, which there was in South Texas, many times. Of course, Coke Stevenson in his political life, most of the elections that I can recall, received the support of the George Parr "machine," in quotes. Basically that was true because George Parr always liked to support a winner, and in most of Mr. Stevenson's races, other than that race for lieutenant governor, his first statewide race, in all of the other races that he ran in Texas up until the 1948 Senate race--and even then he was the favorite--it was all the experts [who] said Coke Stevenson is going to win, and George Parr threw in. Mr. Stevenson was well aware, I think, of the fact that the George Parr method of eliciting support for his picked candidates was, to say the least, not totally honorable or legal. But you must remember this, that really up until the 1948 campaign it made very little difference in most races who Parr voted for. Everybody noticed when the returns came in that it was always lopsided for one candidate down in that area of the state, but you weren't talking about all that many votes, nor were you talking about all that influence outside of South Texas.

So, as I say, Governor Stevenson received this support, and it was not because of any close relationship or friendship or anything that Mr. Stevenson did for George Parr particularly. It was just the fact that George Parr was looking after George Parr and he wanted to support a winner.

G: So there hadn't necessarily been any favors passed but there hadn't been any swords crossed either?

M: No. No, it was very amicable. I don't know personally of any particular incidence where there was any visitation between Mr. Parr, you know, coming out to the Stevenson ranch or enjoying any social activities or any closeness of that type. He'd just call Governor Stevenson and say, "We're for you," and Governor Stevenson said fine, you know. (Laughter)

G: Well, after all, as you say, he's a professional politician. You don't turn it down when someone says they're going to vote for you.

M: Certainly not. Certainly not. And unlike the present day, the people of Texas was kind of--it was kind of a--I won't say it was a joke, of course. When people think that the ballot box is being misused, they're not going to joke about it. And yet it was a kind of a shrug and a wink, like the Huey P. Long days in Louisiana and other places. They knew something was going on. But as I say, it didn't really make any real difference to the state.

G: Well, what happened between those years and 1948 to change the Parr attitude?

M: I cannot say with any authenticity the exact straw that broke the camel's back. I do know that Parr wanted Governor Stevenson to appoint certain people. You know, that's the main power of the governor in Texas. The governor in Texas has no great power; our power lies in the legislature, which I'm thankful for. About the only thing that the governor, then and now for that matter, can actually accomplish to try to put his train of thought into action in state government is by virtue of appointments. I do know that Governor Stevenson turned down some appointments that Parr really wanted.

G: Do you know what they were?

M: I cannot recall. I'm sorry, I don't know. I can't recall. But there was a breach there. As I say, Governor Stevenson was never a close personal friend of George Parr other than being cordial to him, as he was to everybody. As far as George Parr holding any influence over him, if there was any I never saw any evidence of it. I think that Mr. Stevenson, if it didn't make any difference, would probably run errands and so forth for George Parr, as any politician does for any constituent, if it means votes.

G: Sure. What did you know and what did Governor Stevenson know, if you can testify to this, about Lyndon Johnson in these pre-1948 years?

M: Well, of course, I have heard Mr. Stevenson many, many times talk of Lyndon Johnson. Really, Mr. Stevenson, back in those early years when Lyndon was one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's bright boys in the NYA, in the bureaucracy he got appointed to at an early age, in his twenties--Mr. Stevenson, of course, was older than Lyndon. I've heard him speak

that he thought Lyndon was an opportunist, that Lyndon was a New Dealer, whom Mr. Stevenson utterly disliked. He did not like anything about the Roosevelt Administration because he thought that Franklin D. Roosevelt was usurping the Constitution and trying to pack the Supreme Court. And all of the things that Roosevelt did in those Depression years in the thirties to try to bring this nation out of Depression, Mr. Stevenson frowned on. Not his objectives, but on the means that he was trying to accomplish these objectives. Of course really I've heard Mr. Stevenson say that they didn't work anyway, that all that got this country out of the Depression was World War II.

G: A lot of columnists would agree with that.

M: Well, at any rate, Mr. Stevenson was almost outraged at some of what he termed the unconstitutional usurping of power that the President was trying to exercise. And of course Lyndon was a "me too" to FDR; if FDR had said jump, Lyndon would have said how high. Of course, he rode into his first congressional election on the coattails of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He ran as a Roosevelt man, you know. So Mr. Stevenson started observing Lyndon and his attitudes and he had often said that he was a political opportunist, that Lyndon would say, do, act or anything else if he thought it would get him one more vote. That he blew with the wind, that he tried to ride the waves of whatever happened to be popular, and of course no one can deny that Franklin D. Roosevelt was popular. But I don't think that Governor Stevenson ever changed his opinion, from my earliest knowledge of

hearing him speak of Lyndon, that he was a shallow man, that his main interest was number one, Lyndon Johnson; number two, getting elected.

G: Do you know when and why Governor Stevenson decided to run in 1948? Do you know what brought that on?

M: Well, I think without the encouragement of an awful lot of his close friends that he would have never been a candidate. Let me say here that in all of the public offices that Governor Stevenson ran for, and that's back when he first ran for county attorney as a young man in Kimble County, to the county judgeship, to the legislature, in all of those instances Governor Stevenson never did enter politics for politics' sake. He never had any ambitions for a political life actually. He was not a political person. I believe he was the worst campaigner that I ever saw in my years of observing politics. He had none of the talents for a fast handshake and a quick grin and a slap on the back and a one-of-the-boys type of familiarity with people that he had never met before. He was more of a reserved man. He was a very quiet man. He had a lot of the attributes of Abraham Lincoln. He had an excellent sense of humor. He was one of the most humorous men that I was ever around, but someone who did not know him would not realize that because he was very droll. He'd chuckle at things and so forth, and he was good to be around. He was good company for people and he enjoyed his friends, and he made a lot of friends, close friends, but he never was a political animal. He never could, for instance, walk into a roomful of people and in ten or fifteen minutes shake hands with all of them, slap them on the back and give some little short

political spiel that would enhance his popularity with the group of people. He might get in a conversation with one of them and talk about cows or goats, sheep or ranching business or something of that nature and enjoy it, but he just never did mix and mingle like a typical politician would.

He was an unusual man. I had a high regard for him, and you're going to have to consider all my remarks in this interview on the basis that he had faults and I'll be quick to point out those faults, but Coke Stevenson was one of a kind. I don't think we'll ever see his kind again in Texas politics or anywhere else, because he really--I can't say--he liked to win, let me say that. Whether we was playing dominoes or calf roping or what else, he liked to win, but politics was not his life. Politics was secondary, and most of the offices he was elected to, as I said, he went in for a specific purpose, to accomplish some goal for the people that he thought was for the betterment of his fellow citizens. But as far as wanting the prominence and the power and all that went along with high political office, it just really never did appeal to him, he never did use it.

Even when he was governor and when he was speaker of the house and lieutenant governor and all, he shunned parties and receptions. His wife, my aunt, before her death in 1941, after he succeeded O'Daniel, she had to push him and pull him to get him--he'd rather sit and read or study or do some type of outdoor work. He was an outdoorsman and he loved to chop cedar and work his cattle and deer hunt, he was a great hunter. He liked man companionship. He never was a

ladies' man. By that I simply mean even in the social atmosphere of a party or something, you'd find Coke Stevenson off talking to the men somewhere. He never was quite really at ease with the opposite sex, so to speak. I guess now they'd call that macho, but he didn't intend to be or wasn't putting on an act or anything, but that was just his nature. He enjoyed the company of men. He just didn't mix and mingle. He didn't know how to turn the compliment. He didn't know how to brag on the dress that you was wearing as so many politicians do, "that's a lovely necklace" or this type of thing.

G: Well, was it Mrs. Stevenson then that pushed him into running in 1948?

M: No, see, she died in 1941.

G: Of course, yes, that's true.

M: I'd say his friends, number one, wanted him to run for the Senate. If you want my real honest opinion based on my observations and all, I think if Mrs. Stevenson had still been alive that she may have wanted Governor Stevenson to run for the Senate, but I think he would have gone home to that ranch and loved every minute of it on that ranch. But he was a very lonely man. In fact, that's what began my close association with Governor Stevenson. When he retired from the governor's office, he went home to that ranch and there was nobody there. His ranch had run down during the time that he was in the governor's office. Even back then you couldn't get good help, and he had a cousin of his trying to look after the ranch, and even while he was in the governor's office he'd almost go home to that ranch, a hundred and forty miles, every weekend to see how his stock was doing, if they

were fixing the fences, if they were clearing land like he told them to do and so forth. That ranch was his first love. He's buried on that ranch. He didn't go to the State Cemetery or to any big monument in town or anything; he's buried within fifty feet of his ranch home. And that was his life; that ranch was his life.

But, you know, it's a pretty lonely life living seventeen miles from town and being by yourself with absolutely nobody. I think this influenced Governor Stevenson a great deal, that he felt like his years ahead of him, that I don't think he could see living on that ranch by himself. So I think he decided, you know, "Why not? If I can help the nation, if I can help the country, if I can be of assistance, I'll run." That's what probably prompted him to do it. More than any other one thing I think the loneliness of that ranch by himself was one of the factors, that he wanted to get out and do something.

G: Well, it's certainly a reasonable explanation.

As I recall, Governor Stevenson announced very early--maybe it was even New Year's Day of 1948--that he was a candidate.

M: Yes, it was.

G: And that Lyndon Johnson did not announce until very late, somewhere in late April, I think.

M: Without being privy to it or being a party to it, I think there was a great time of study, and I think Lyndon desperately wanted to be United States senator. But I think there was a question of whether or not, after his defeat by O'Daniel and all, he could beat Coke Stevenson.

Coke Stevenson left office as a very popular governor. I think Lyndon's friends and supporters and those who would go along with him, so to speak, assured Lyndon that he had a fighting chance, and that was about all he had at the time he announced.

G: Do you remember Governor Stevenson's reactions when LBJ announced?

M: Oh, I think he dreaded the campaign. He knew that Lyndon Johnson was an energetic, active, fast moving, new breed--at that time--politician. Although he himself thought he could beat Lyndon, he knew that he was going to have to get out, get away from that ranch and go to work.

G: He couldn't just run on his record from the ranch.

M: That's right. That's right. Even though to some large extent that's what he did in that campaign. It was very difficult. Mr. Stevenson's supporters and the people who were close to him and assisted him, they used to just might near cuss him because he wouldn't do the things and go the places and say the things that they wanted him to do and say. I've heard him say many times that he would not prostitute himself to a side show to get elected to public office. And of course when Lyndon started out with his helicopter later in the campaign and all of his--you know, Lyndon would have hillbilly bands, too, at various places to trump up the audience before he landed in his helicopter. Governor Stevenson was just aghast at that type of campaign, and he had previously criticized O'Daniel for it the same way. That just wasn't his--he was of the old school that you ran on issues, that you ran on record, that you ran on constitutional stands that you took in

regard to the administration of the government. He was aghast at some of the tactics of Lyndon's brash type of campaign.

G: Let's talk for a minute about the record. Now, one of the things that the Johnson forces used in the campaign was Governor Stevenson's record on pardons and paroles. They made a big to-do about that. In your observation, was this an effective use of that issue? Did this hurt Governor Stevenson?

M: Oh, it was like so many issues in any political campaign, even now-adays. You attempt to make issues out of things that sometimes really in other times would be no issue. I think if the records were checked, that Governor Stevenson's record as governor in regard to pardons and the approval of parole was most like any other governor's. It was almost perfunctory. They would bring him in the recommendations and he would, in most instances, rely on the judgment of the people who made the recommendations. I personally know of no instance where there was any great demand.

You know the Fergusons got involved in that pretty severely. Jim Ferguson was accused of getting pay-offs and other things for pardoning or paroling certain individuals. They tell the story I'm sure you've heard and recorded many times about the old farmer that wanted Jim to pardon his son out of the penitentiary, and Jim said, well, he just didn't believe he could do it, but he said he had a mule over there at Temple that he had he'd like to sell to that farmer. And the farmer said, "Jim, you know I ain't got no use for a mule," and the Governor said, "Well, your boy might ride that mule home from the

penitentiary." (Laughter) And Mrs. Ferguson was not too much different. Of course, Jim, they used to say you got two governors for the price of one. When they impeached Jim, he wasn't eligible to hold the office anymore. Of course, Mrs. Ferguson ran, was elected. They said somebody stepped on her foot going up in the elevator there at the Capitol one day and said, "Pardon me, Mrs. Ferguson." She said, "You'll have to see Jim about that." (Laughter)

But I would say the same thing about Lyndon's issue in that race about pardons and paroles as I would say about the labor issue, the endorsement that Governor Stevenson got from organized labor in that campaign, and even some of the other so-called issues. Mr. Stevenson would state his views based on a broad, general philosophy of constitutional government. Whereas Lyndon was smart enough, and I will say Lyndon was as good a politician as Mr. Stevenson was a bad politician because Lyndon had the knowledge and the ability to attract votes and to make issues that were to his benefit. And of course this is what politics is all about. This is what politicians have been doing since the day one of trying to see what they could bring up that would, first of all, gain some notoriety and publicity, and secondly that they could use to enhance their political vote. Whereas on the one hand Governor Stevenson was talking about broad philosophical areas of government, Lyndon was cutting down on these issues that he thought would make popular campaign issues. Whether there was any fire where the smoke was didn't really make any difference if you could get up enough smoke.

G: Still, the Taft-Hartley issue apparently was where things really focused, didn't they?

M: Well, let me say this about the labor thing. Mr. Stevenson never enjoyed the support of labor up until the 1948 election. The record I think will reflect that simply because of his broad philosophical view of constitutional government. He saw the need for unionism as such, but even back in those days he [felt], and many times has said to me in conversation, that the labor union leadership was misleading the average workingman, that the unions were usurping the workingman's name and numbers to try to enhance themselves. Of course, he was an ultraconservative man and Lyndon was an ultraliberal man. Between the two philosophies of liberalism and conservatism, labor just wasn't going to support Mr. Stevenson. Of course, Lyndon made the mistake in regard to his vote on the Taft-Hartley. As a result of that, it outraged labor all over the country and especially here in his home state of Texas. So they felt they didn't have anyplace to go. They were not going to come out and endorse a man who had for all apparent purposes turned his back on them. How would they have explained it to the rank and file of their membership? So their support of Governor Stevenson in the main was they didn't have anyplace else to go. And besides that, like George Parr and others, they thought Mr. Stevenson was going to get elected, and this was a good reason to give to support him, to try to get some influence with him.

But as far as I know, Coke Stevenson never, other than voting for the workingman when he thought it would benefit the average man out

there actually working, as far as him doing anything specifically for organized labor, I don't think anybody can point to anything. In fact I think to the contrary, most of his votes and speeches and everything would go in the other direction. I just think it was a fork that labor had to jump, and they didn't have anywhere to jump but to Coke Stevenson.

G: At least labor could punish LBJ for his Taft-Hartley vote.

M: That's right. That hits close to the whole point.

G: Would you think Governor Stevenson was even mildly embarrassed by the endorsement that he got from the AF of L I guess it was?

M: Well, of course, it put him in a rather unusual position to say the least of it. He did not expect it. He did not ask for it. It came to him almost by default. Of course, all of his advisers and everybody was saying "this is great, Coke. You've been winning without them and now you've got them. This is good." So as a result of that his position was "well, I'm going to let labor do the talking. I'll take their vote. If they want to vote for me, I certainly will appreciate their support as I would anyone else." But as far as anything in his past record or anything--he certainly didn't earn it, it was a gift to him, and he accepted the gift.

G: Is there any connection between this and his apparent reluctance to commit himself on Taft-Hartley?

M: Well, here again now, this is Bob Murphey speaking. I think if Coke Stevenson had been elected to the United States Senate that organized

labor would have turned over every man that was ever connected with it in his grave by his stands and positions he would have taken. Because I never knew Coke Stevenson to compromise one of his principles in any way. I know of my own knowledge that Coke Stevenson would not have been a union-labor legislator or a congressman or a senator. As I say, not that he wasn't for the workingman; he'd been one himself all of his life. He'd come from nothing, with no education and had worked with his hands all his life. I think he had a high regard for a man that earned his living by the so-called sweat of the brow, but he absolutely had no love for organized labor as we know it. But I think, now, to your question--I'm not trying to dodge your question of why he didn't make a strong statement on Taft-Hartley. I don't think Coke Stevenson would lie to the people of Texas to get elected.

G: No, no.

M: And by reason of that, he chose to say nothing. If labor wanted to think he was a labor boy, fine. If other people knew deep down in their heart that Coke Stevenson was not, which most of Governor Stevenson's following knew that he was not a organized labor man, he enjoyed the best of both worlds so to speak by saying nothing.

G: At one point LBJ charged that Governor Stevenson was labor's candidate, and I think he went so far as to say that the Governor was Sid[ney] Hillman's gift to Texas.

M: I think that's correct. In fact, I think he said a lot more than that in the course of the campaign. And of course look at it from Lyndon's viewpoint. This was great politics on Lyndon's [part]. He wasn't

going to get organized labor votes; they were written off. He knew he wasn't going to get them, and so he capitalized on that, throwing that organized labor candidate [charge] against Governor Stevenson. And I know this for a fact, hearing Governor Stevenson and his people evaluate the situation, Governor Stevenson knew that his people, the people that knew Coke Stevenson and his philosophy and his background and his record, they knew he was not organized labor's boy and they were going to support him. On the other hand, organized labor, for whatever thousands of votes it was worth, were supporting him. So by saying nothing he kept all of them. And that's what his advisers advised him to do, said, "Coke, don't run labor off. You've got them. Don't alienate them. And your friends already know that you're not an organized labor. So just. . . ."

G: I was just curious as to whether perhaps some of the more conservative Stevenson supporters might have been put off by labor's endorsement.

M: Oh, I don't think there's any question that his supporters were embarrassed. As I say, I think Governor Stevenson was surprised by the endorsement because of his past record. But I think, as I say, as little political animal as he was, this was one time that he let politics influence him a little by saying nothing. He didn't lie to either side, and he let each side draw their own conclusions.

G: Nobody could accuse him of misstating his record at least.

M: That's right. I know he was not going to say that yes, I do, or no, I don't, and then going up there and not following what he had told the people. He didn't want the record of his public utterances to bind

him in any way if he got elected to the United States Senate.

G: Now, Governor Stevenson was, as I recall, a strong states' rights man, at least that's what he was--

M: Oh, absolutely yes. Absolutely. In fact, he was a strong courthouse man. I've heard him say many times that Austin ought not to try to do anything that the courthouse could do, and that Washington ought not to ever try to do anything that Austin could do.

G: Why didn't he get the endorsement of the States' Rights Party in that contest?

M: Well, I think you get into personalities basically. I think that the states' rights people wanted a total break. Coke Stevenson had been in politics for a long time, and he was one of O'Daniel's so-called professional politicians. I think that the so-called states' rights people were looking for a breath of fresh air. They were "agin" everybody that was in, so to speak. This I think was the thinking in one regard. Then I don't think Governor Stevenson, although he was very ultraconservative in his attitude toward the role of government, just as he would not sell out to labor or to anyone else for their vote, I don't think that he would go as to the ultra far right as some of the States' [Rights] Party people wanted him to go.

G: Were there individuals--you said personalities?

M: Personalities?

G: Yes.

M: Oh, I think just as in any political association of persons that you're going to find people who are engaged in it for their personal

benefit. I would not state any names per se. But a lot of people who were saying the country is sucking on the hind tit wanted to move up a little. They wanted a new breath, they wanted a new start, they wanted to be in on the ground floor, so to speak. I think that Governor Stevenson received a great number of votes from people who held themselves out as states' righters. I'll always believe that, although I can't of course open the ballot box and tell you.

G: All right. Could you describe Governor Stevenson's campaign strategy? Is there any catchword or phrase?

M: That is a good question. If he had a strategy it never was made known to me. I went out to live with Governor Stevenson after I graduated from law school in 1947, and he had gone out of office, of course, in 1946. He was living on that ranch by himself. I went out there and cowboyed for him, helped him on the ranch. We didn't do much politicking in 1947 except get around to some state fairs where he was invited to come and speak. He spoke to some Rotary Clubs and things as a former governor and so forth and so on. I think at that time of course he knew he was going to run. I think he definitely had made up his mind that he was going to run, and as a result of that, even after I went out to live with him, his close advisers and all would come out to the ranch and sit around and of course plot the so-called strategy and so forth and so on.

But as far as having any A-B-C plan of election, if there was one I never knew it. He campaigned just like he always had, person to person, get in the car, drive to the county seat, go in the courthouse,

shake hands with the elected county officials, walk around the square, shake hands, make a noon speech to one of the civic clubs, this type of campaign. No glamour, no great advertising or publicity campaigns. There were some mailings, of course, not like today but at that time reasonably good. They had, of course, their list of supporters in the various areas and who to contact, who they could count on and who they couldn't.

But as I look back on [the race]--and I drove Governor Stevenson, we started out in his own personal car, his old 1946 Ford. We wore it out driving, and then we got a new Plymouth car. I drove him I don't know how many thousands and thousands of miles, crisscrossing Texas, meeting with supporters, visiting these places, making talks, driving him to the meetings. Of course, I spent a lot of time with him. I remember one time in Jasper, Texas we had to sleep in the same bed. He was invited to lead the rodeo parade in Jasper, Texas. We got over there. There was so much going on that they just had one spare room, and they didn't know he was going to spend the night. They thought he was going on after the parade, and we'd planned to spend the night there, and he and I slept in a double bed together. We were just that close during the campaign.

But being as close to him as I was and traveling with him, I guess during the campaign I spent more time of course with him than any other one person simply because I did drive him. It was just in most instances he and I, and in some instances some of the reporters would get in the back seat. Governor Stevenson had an awfully good

relationship with the press at that time. I think one reason was he was the only governor I think probably ever that let them come in every day; he'd meet with the press every day and say, "Boys, you got any questions? I'll tell you what's going on." And as a result of that, his openness and all, the relationship between Coke Stevenson and the press was very good. If some reporter was following his campaign and wanted a ride, Governor Stevenson would say, "Well, yes, get in." That's just the way it was.

G: You drove him everyplace he went then during the campaign, is that right?

M: Yes, sir.

G: Both for the primary and the run-off?

M: Yes, sir.

G: Did he go to Alice? Did he go to South Texas?

M: We did not spend a lot of time down there simply on the theory that George Parr was going to vote them like he wanted to.

G: That was pretty well established?

M: Yes, there wasn't any need to spend any time campaigning in that Parr deal then because you either had them or you didn't have them. If you didn't have them there wasn't no need to try to get them, and if you had them you let well enough alone.

G: Did Governor Stevenson discuss this with you? Did he tell you that this--?

M: Oh, yes, yes. And that was one of the things he said, "We got other fish to fry." Those were the exact words that he used, "We got other

fish to fry. There's no need of wasting time down in George's bailiwick." Now he did have some support, especially in Jim Wells. You know, so many people looking back on the 1948 election think Duval County was the key county, which it wasn't at all. Box 13 came out of Jim Wells County. But no, Governor Stevenson didn't think it made that much difference. It never had.

G: There weren't that many votes in South Texas.

M: That's right. No. So it really was of no concern to Governor Stevenson.

G: Nobody can see--

M: He didn't send any emissary to try to change George Parr's mind or try to rectify their differences or patch up things in order to get the vote or anything. I'm sure that some of his supporters, which he had some in Jim Wells County, I'm sure that they tried to do all they could to scrounge as many votes as they could for Coke Stevenson, but as far as trying to capture the majority of the votes, he knew he wasn't going to do it.

G: Well, some of those supporters were some of the ones who rang the alarm bells later on, I think.

M: Well, they were outraged and had been. I mean, those people down there were in the center of this thing and they resented Parr's influence. There wasn't much you could do about it in Duval, his home county and down in there, but his influence radiated out from his domain so to speak and the people resented that. They had a bad reputation and they felt like that--the old one-man, one-vote thing

that we know now, down there it was one man, ten votes. For every citizen, many times they voted a hundred per cent when the rest of the state was voting maybe 40 or 50 per cent. Well, you can bet that every man eligible to vote in George Parr's domain was recorded as voting.

G: Absolutely. Did you have any good sources of information as to what was going on inside the Johnson camp?

M: Oh, none at all. Governor Stevenson really personally, and I think of course his supporters, were trying to find out where Lyndon was gaining or losing. You understand this.

G: Certainly.

M: But Governor Stevenson personally, I never heard him enter even into a personal conversation with anybody about what Lyndon was planning or what Lyndon was doing. He just kind of ran his own race as I recall.

G: So there wasn't a whole lot of concern about what LBJ was doing, what his strategy was or--?

M: I think Coke Stevenson ran, as I said, on his record, on what he had done in the years that he had been in public office. He was very proud that he wrote the first state auditor's bill for Texas. He was very proud that he was the originator and author of the pay-as-you-go amendment in Texas that we still enjoy, that they can't spend us into debt by deficit spending, and the fact that he did get the state auditor bill. There had never been any auditing of all the state departments at all until he authored that bill when he was a member of the legislature. He thought that those things, plus his unquestioned

honesty--I don't think his honesty was ever questioned by anybody unless it indirectly was in regard to this pardon and parole business. You can be assured that they searched long and hard to get some documentation, which really they never did. So he was going to run his race and if the people wanted him, fine. I think deep down in his heart if they didn't want him that was fine, too.

G: Well, did Johnson have any sources of information inside your camp? Was there anybody feeding him--?

M: Oh, I'm sure there was. I don't know of any--you know, I kind of smiled during the Watergate thing that came up during the Nixon deal. That would have been just like a drop of rain water falling in the Atlantic Ocean back in the old days of give-and-take politics. This is done in every campaign. They try to put spies in your camp, so to speak, and to know what your next move is, what you're coming out with. They try to do this. Back in the old days they used to rent a room next to you somewhere and put the ear against the wall. They didn't have the electronic gadgetry that modern politicians do and all. But we do know, and it was pretty well documented that--Governor Stevenson's Austin headquarters were at the Driskill Hotel. We later learned that they pretty well knew what was said over the telephone there.

G: What means, do you think, did they [have]?

M: Through the switchboard, yes.

G: Switchboard? I see. I see.

M: That was when they used to plug it in, you know.

G: Yes. Yes. When you have to call the operator to make a call.

M: That's right. That's right.

G: Well, that's interesting.

You don't have any reason to think that Booth Mooney might have been feeding LBJ, do you?

M: I really don't think so. I think--

G: I don't have any reason for asking that other than the fact that he worked for one and then the other.

M: I think if you were to ask Booth Mooney today--

G: I wouldn't dare.

M: No, no. I haven't told you the question I want you to ask him. I think if you were to ask Booth Mooney today if he was an admirer of Coke Stevenson he would say yes. I think Booth Mooney, he was a professional publicist, he made his money through being a publicity director and PR man and a writer. You know, he later went to work for Lyndon. I think that Booth Mooney worked hard for whoever paid his salary. I think that Booth Mooney, if questioned today, would say that he had a high degree of respect and admiration for Governor Stevenson. So I don't think so personally. I knew Booth real well and I know he worked hard. I know he gave us some good advice. I think he did what he was supposed to do for Coke Stevenson.

G: Fair enough.

M: I could be wrong. (Laughter)

G: No. I have no real reason for asking that other than the fact that in his career he worked for both men.

M: Right. Right.

G: Can you give me some idea of what kind of financial problems Coke Stevenson faced during his campaign? Where did the money come from? Even then it cost something to run a campaign.

M: Right. I was not privy to, of course, the financing of the campaign. I hoped that we had enough to feed me out on the road and to sleep me and to pay for the gasoline. That was my main concern, was to get the car there and to get Governor Stevenson there and try to eat three meals a day. And as far as how the money came in and from the sources it came and all that, I really have no information that would be of benefit to you.

G: Okay.

M: I know he had a wide range of contributors that had built up down through his lieutenant governor, his speaker years, his governor years, and I think these same people, in the main--of course he had some that defected. But in the main I think that they stayed with him.

G: Speaking of providing gasoline and so forth. It occurs to me that in those days road travel was not as uninterrupted by automobile problems as it is these days. Did you have any more or less--?

M: Oh, yes, many's the times that I'd let Governor Stevenson out and head for a shade-tree mechanic or a garage somewhere to get the car tuned or to see what the noise was in the rear end or something. It was not without problems. We had flats. And Governor Stevenson was an expert flat fixer.

G: Is that right?

M: Yes, sir. Many the times he's helped me fix flats.

G: Did you use a hot patch? Was that the method of the--?

M: No, we had a spare tire. Oh, yes. Yes, we had a spare tire. Thank goodness. (Laughter)

G: Can you give me any idea how prominent Texans tended to line up as the campaign progressed? I mean, I don't know who to mention here, but people would perhaps want to know where was Jesse Jones in this campaign? Where was Allan Shivers, people like that?

M: I think basically--you know, people support political candidates then and now for a multitude of reasons. Sometimes it's personal, they just like the man, they're close to him socially and otherwise and they're a friend and so they vote for him as a friend. Others support a political candidate because of his philosophy of government. We get back into the conservative-liberal-states' rights what-have-you type of thing. Others support a candidate for what it will do for them, financially, powerwise and otherwise, businesswise. As I recall the 1948 campaign, this is kind of the way things fell into place in it, too. The Brown and Root connection between Lyndon and the Brown and Root powers that be out of Houston were very evident, and we knew that Lyndon--and I don't think even Lyndon's closest associates would say otherwise--got contracts and made a lot of money for George Brown and his associates. And as a result they scratch one another's back. They supported Lyndon, which is understandable. I mean, that's politics. The line-up in that race was basically along philosophical

lines, personal lines, and then the opportunist line of people who said, "Well, we've got to get old Lyndon in there, it will help us." Not from a standpoint of we the people, but we my business or we my profession.

G: Right. Well, both sides charged that the other was indebted to the special interests, whoever they are. Right? How much fabric was there to these charges and how much of it was the usual political wind that you hear?

M: Oh, as I recall that campaign, I think that both sides flung that accusation rather indiscriminately concerning vested interests and the corporations' candidate and big business and what have you. And of course, let's face it, in many instances the corporate structure will support a candidate because they think they would, in the event of choices, contractwise or appointmentwise or moneywise, give them the benefit of the doubt, if it came down to that, and they support their friend, so to speak, who they think will be friendly to them. Coke Stevenson had some of those type people and Lyndon Johnson had some of those type people. It just depended on past years. Lyndon had done a lot of favors for people in Washington. Coke Stevenson had done a lot of favors for people in Austin. And I don't accuse either man of any illegality or any under-the-table pay-offs. Every man will have to judge that by himself. But it's just a fact of life that sometimes when decisions are going to be made, you favor one side against the other, and the side that's favored is your friend, and the side that doesn't get the favor is your political enemy.

G: Now after the primary did the Stevenson strategy--well, you say that you don't know that there was a strategy, but were there changes made?

M: Well, I probably should amend my statement that there was no strategy. I do not mean to say that they didn't have a game plan, as we call it now. I think the game plan was to try to hold onto what he already had because he felt like the majority of Texas people were for him.

G: Now what I'm specifically thinking about is that the third candidate, Mr. Peddy--

M: George Peddy.

G: --got something like two hundred thousand votes, I believe it was, in the first primary. Was there a plan to go after that bloc of votes?

M: Well, of course we knew that whoever got the majority of George Peddy's votes would be elected. It was a swing vote so to speak; it was that close.

G: Well, of course Johnson was behind Mr. Stevenson by about eighty thousand.

M: That's right. Stevenson knew that many conservative, states' rights type people had supported George Peddy, and he knew that when Peddy was out of the race that he would get more of Peddy votes than Lyndon would without doing anything. Now, that's not to say that they didn't start courting and running and sitting down and talking to George Peddy supporters, the basic power type of leadership that was scattered over the state for Peddy. Of course they courted them, talked to them, and asked for endorsements. Both sides did. But Mr. Stevenson's attitude was that we're going to get them, we're going to

get the majority of the Peddy votes. The Stevenson camp felt that way.

G: And you didn't even need a majority. If you got half you were all right.

M: That's right. That's right. That's exactly--that was the reasoning, that we're going to get our share and our share is going to be larger than Johnson's share.

G: Did you go to Washington with the Governor after that primary?

M: No, I did not. I didn't--he rode the train. I didn't have to engineer the train so I stayed on the ranch.

G: Did he talk to you about that trip when he came back?

M: Oh, in just a jovial way. As I said, Mr. Stevenson had a great dry sense of humor. I recall him saying that he didn't know really whether he wanted to go to Washington or not after that trip. (Laughter)

G: Long, long train ride.

M: Well, not only the trip himself, but even back then the life in Washington and the manner in which things were done, and of course the bureaucracy had begun to build. There was, he felt, a lot of artificiality to a lot of the people that he talked with, the insincerity that he found in visiting with some of them. They just weren't his kind of folks.

G: I see. That's interesting.

From what vantage point did you observe the events associated with the controversy over the run-off?

M: I came home to vote in my home box here in Nacogdoches County and never did for any intents and purposes go back to Junction. All I know about the Box 13 controversy and the events surrounding it was basically what I read in the newspaper and what I later--of course, I was very close to Mr. Stevenson until his death and we'd go out there and go hunting together and talk cow business. You know, Mr. Stevenson married again after the election, a few years after. He was very happy, and I think he lived a lot longer by not being elected to the United States Senate than if he had have been. He lived to be eighty-seven years old and led a very contented, happy life on that ranch. I would go and spend weeks at a time with him out there. And of course he and I have talked about the surrounding events and all many, many times.

G: Is that anything that gave you any particular insight into what went on down there?

M: Yes, he told me that he only made one mistake in that investigation.

G: What was that?

M: When they were trying to get into the bank there to look at the ballots and the tally sheets and to have an opportunity to examine them, they told him that they could not take them. Now later they let Kellis Dibrell and James Gardner and some of the investigators that Governor Stevenson had taken down there in for a short period of time just to look at them to be sure that they were there. They doubted--they thought they had already been destroyed. Of course actually they were later destroyed before the court could look at them.

But Frank Hamer, who was a retired Texas Ranger--he's the one that hunted down and killed Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, a very famed and I might add feared man in South Texas. Frank Hamer went down there, and when the deputy sheriffs who were guarding the entrance there to the bank told them they couldn't see them, Frank Hamer pushed his coat away from his pistol and told them, "Stand aside." Those were his exact words, "Stand aside." And Governor Stevenson, who was present at the time, told Frank, "No, Frank. We're going to do it by the law. We're going to do it by the law." Governor Stevenson has often told me that if he had let Frank Hamer go in there that day that the outcome would have been far different, if they could have gotten photostatic copies or--well, back then I don't know whether there would have been photostatic copies, but at any rate, been able to secure [copies]. All they wanted was to get those ballots and tally sheets and all in some safe place where they knew they would not be doctored or destroyed. And Frank Hamer would have gotten the ballots. There's no question in my mind. I knew Frank Hamer very well personally and visited with him in later years in Austin where he retired to, and Frank had told me that he would have killed them if they had interfered. But Governor Stevenson was the one man that stopped him from getting them.

G: Might have been a very different story.

M: It would have been a different story, no question about it.

G: Did you go to the state convention in Fort Worth?

M: I did not. I was not a delegate. I was, of course, on the campaign trail and I did not attend the precinct or county conventions and was not elected as a delegate, and as a result of that I did not attend the state convention that year.

G: From your perspective in the subsequent years in the state legislature, I know that you were associated for a number of years with that body--

M: Right.

G: Did this incident leave a mark on state politics?

M: Well, let me say this. I guess I was probably the youngest man ever elected sergeant at arms of the Texas House of Representatives in 1949. Ernest Boyett, whom I've mentioned earlier in the interview, had been a longtime sergeant at arms of the house of representatives. In fact, he was the first elected when Governor Stevenson went in as speaker of the house, and he had served many years. He retired; he announced that he would not run again. Now this was back, understand, in the days to when the house members actually elected the officers of the house. The [Texas] Constitution provides that the legislature shall elect a sergeant of arms, a chief clerk, a doorkeeper, an assistant doorkeeper, and a journal clerk. They set out the officers of the house. Back in those days these were contested races. Nowadays, in fact, two or three terms after I left office in 1953, the speaker here again I think usurped his power and he would name who he wanted as his officers of the house and submit them to the house. And they

would vote on them, they would elect them, but it was just a routine thing. They rubberstamped whatever the speaker wanted.

Back in the days that I ran, in 1949 when I ran, two former members of the house ran against me. It was a coveted office. We were paid the same salary as the members of the house. In fact, our salary was better because after the first hundred and twenty days the members got cut to five dollars a day and we kept drawing our ten dollars a day. Since I had been first assistant sergeant at arms while I was in school and all, I was first assistant sargeant of arms in the 1947 session--and whenever I decided that I was going to run in 1949 for sergeant of arms, even my uncle said, "Well, Bob, I don't know whether you can get elected. I don't know how many friends I've still got in the legislature." Ernest Boyett said, "Well, we'll just have to see. If you want to run, well, jump in there." So I went to Austin and worked very hard. I would go around, and of course members were coming in to rent apartments and hotel rooms and to make arrangements, select their desks for the session and so forth. And so I campaigned very actively for. . . . Durwood Manford was ultimately elected speaker. It was pretty well perceived that he would be. And at that time I visited with him. To make a long story short, in my race for the sergeant at arms job in the house of representatives, I think had there been a great pro-Johnson, anti-Coke Stevenson division, so to speak, that I certainly would not probably have been elected sergeant at arms of the Texas House of Representatives. But I was elected by a good vote.

G: So you don't think this left any lasting--?

M: I don't think any deep scars among the proponents of either party. I know that Governor Stevenson was disappointed that he did not get the support of some people whom he thought were his friends in his legislative days, but by the same token, as I say, these people had their own motives. And I will say this, that in most instances, just as I mentioned about Booth Mooney a few minutes ago, I think even the people who voted against Mr. Stevenson in the main still had a high degree of respect for the man and would like to call him friend. But as far as me saying any--Coke Stevenson never attempted to wield any power or influence that I can recall after that 1948 election. That ended his political interest.

G: He didn't consider running again?

M: Absolutely not. Absolutely not. And people wanted him to. He would get letters and so forth. But he had absolutely no interest in political office after that.

G: Was he bitter? Would you go that far as to say he was bitter?

M: He was disappointed in the system. Coke Stevenson was a great lawyer, a great respecter of the court and the judicial system, so to speak. It was not so much that he took it as a personal loss as that he felt that the democratic, judicial, logical approach to a question of that nature, that it did not end that way, that it was done through politics. And of course time does not permit us to go into the step by step of what happened after the final vote tally was adopted by the state convention, or even before.

G: Could we go into that sometime?

M: Oh, yes, we can go into that some later time, but Governor Stevenson was just totally frustrated I think would be the answer because he was cut off in the federal courts. Justice [Hugo] Black, one justice of the Supreme Court, knocked any judicial investigation into vote fraud, knocked it in the head with one sign of the pen. Governor Stevenson was I think very disappointed that the question of whether there were stolen votes--in the minds I think of even pro and anti-Johnson people they would have to say that there were votes stolen in Jim Wells Box 13. And Governor Stevenson to his dying day regretted that the vote and the wishes of the people of Texas were not counted accurately and that the majority of people did not rule in that election. He was disappointed in that respect. Any bitterness, I don't think he had really, and this may seem strange to hear me say this. But in being around him and all, I never saw any evidence of bitterness. It was more of a disappointment, it was more of a [feeling that] right did not win. Governor Stevenson was a great believer in justice will prevail through the courts, and since that was not the way it was decided--it was decided politically not judiciously--he was very disappointed that the system, so to speak, did not work.

G: Well, we'll have to cut off here. That's a good place to cut off.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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