

## INTERVIEW I

DATE: February 28, 1976

INTERVIEWEE: J. R. PARTEN

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Major Parten's home in Madisonville, Texas

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F: First of all, Major, to that first little visit where Jimmy Allred called you in to meet Lyndon Johnson.

You were in Austin on Board of Regents business, for the University of Texas, or do you know why you were in Austin? You must have spent a lot of time there in those days, anyway.

P: I remember that. I was on the Board of Regents in 1937, and I also had a good deal of oil and gas business in Austin. I recall definitely when Governor Allred called me at the hotel and told me that he had a friend in his office he'd like me to meet, and suggested that I come up if convenient. I did go up, and met Lyndon Johnson. He had just announced for Congress, to fill the vacancy created by the death of Congressman Buchanan. When I met Lyndon, I asked him what his platform was going to be, and he promptly told me that he was going to help President Roosevelt pack the court. I couldn't help but scold him about this, because I'd been

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through the University of Texas studying government, political science, and law, and I was steeped in the philosophy of the separation of powers. I found readily that I couldn't talk Lyndon out of his position.

F: Looking back, can you see any of those qualities in him that you later knew when he was higher in office?

P: Well, I could readily tell that he was a dynamic young man, and he had an amount of brilliance, and he was ready to go to work. And I saw him, of course, a few days later in company with my friend and attorney, Claude C. Wild, Sr.

F: Was Claude with Humble Oil then?

P: No, Claude Wild was then director of the Independent Petroleum Association of Texas, of which I was president. And Lyndon was fretting at that time about organizing his campaign, and he asked us if we knew of any young men that might help him. I had known John Connally as a senior in the University. I think he was president of the students' association.

F: He was president of the student body.

P: Right, of the student body, yes. We had watched him in the campaign of Gerald C. Mann, and we thought he had performed very well in the campaign of Jerry Mann. Jerry was elected attorney general.

F: Right.

P: We recommended John Connally to Lyndon Johnson on that occasion. He met John and John went to Washington with him, after he was elected. And of course, I later saw a good deal of Johnson in

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Washington, after he got to be congressman.

F: In those early days, did you figure that Johnson was going to be more than just another congressman, or could you tell?

P: Well, I couldn't tell at that time, but it wasn't many years until Johnson had jumped into the fray, to get elected to the United States Senate.

F: Yes.

P: And I felt that he did a pretty good job of campaigning. I think he was defeated.

F: He was defeated in 1941.

P: He was defeated the first time he ran, but he later won.

F: Yes. The relationship between the federal government and universities wasn't so close then, but you were on the Board of Regents until 1941, and chairman the last couple of years. Did Johnson actively become an advocate for the University in Washington, or was there any opportunity for it?

P: There was really no opportunity at that time for senators or congressmen to be concerned greatly for the University. I think that time passed when the federal oil control bill was killed in 1933, and it's come back in more recent years, to be a matter of great importance. I think it's certainly, at this time, very important for the University to have a liaison with Washington, because of the federal government's investment in education.

F: Right. Well, the University has a pretty big stake, too, in what goes on in the petroleum industry.

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P: And a big stake. The University has a big stake in the petroleum industry, because the University's selling a great deal more oil and gas today than the majority of the oil companies in the United States.

F: You were on a number of assignments and commissions during the 1940s largely to do with the petroleum, transportation, and largely in the Department of Interior. Did you run up against Johnson in any of those?

P: No, I didn't especially run up against Johnson in those areas. My first service, I was called to service in the summer of 1941 to serve as a member of the Tanker Control Board.

F: Right.

P: When the tank ships had gone to war, more or less, they had been assigned to the British, and the Tanker Control Board was created at Washington comprised of five members, of which I was one; I was the representative from the Gulf Coast. There was another representative from the East Coast, and a representative from the West Coast. Mr. Ickes' office furnished one of those representatives by the name of Ralph K. Davies, and the other one was from the British Embassy. And that board carried on--its chief responsibility was to assign the use of these tank ships. After we formally entered the war, on December 7, 1941, Mr. Ickes was trying to get the Big Inch and the Little Inch Pipelines built from Texas to the Eastern Seaboard, and invited me to be Director of Transportation in the Petroleum Administration for War.

F: Did that idea more or less originate with Secretary Ickes, or did

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it just come out of everywhere because it was so practical?

P: Well, I was told at the time that the major oil company representatives and the Independents were both vitally interested in this job and by compromise I was chosen for the job. I took it with reluctance, but I thought I could do something to help win the war. And we finally did build those pipelines.

F: There was no problem with Congress on that?

P: No problem with Congress. Our problem was with the War Production Board, who had control of the steel.

F: What in? The assignment of materials?

P: And the competition for material to build these pipelines ran all the way from wood, vitrified tile, and concrete, to steel. We finally won an award of the steel to build the pipelines, after proving that it would require more steel to reinforce a concrete pipeline than it would take to build an all steel pipeline. We had a very good MIT engineer, out of the organization of Standard Oil of New Jersey, who very effectively made that point. His name was Howard Page.

F: Did you know Alvin Wirtz pretty well in that capacity?

P: Yes, I knew Mr. Wirtz. I didn't run into him on many occasions on this particular problem. I was speaking largely for the Interior before the War Production Board and, when I spoke, I usually had Secretary Ickes with me.

F: Did you have any opportunity to observe the relationship between Jimmy Allred and Lyndon Johnson? I presume it remained rather cordial and close, didn't it?

(Interruption)

P: Well, the relationship between Allred and Johnson was very close, and

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I know that Senator Johnson took a great deal of interest to see that Jimmy Allred was made a federal district judge. I think he was certainly responsible for that appointment. I might say I was very pleased later to have several of my friends among the prominent lawyers in Houston to say to me that Allred made an outstanding federal judge, did a very good job as a judge.

F: Did Senator Wirtz exercise much authority in Interior, or was he just assigned a sector and pretty well handled that?

P: Well, I'm sure that he exercised considerable authority; I'm sure that he had a very important part in Interior. But so far as I know, it didn't touch oil and gas, and my relationship with the Interior Department was entirely oil and gas.

F: Did Ickes understand oil and gas? Or was he educable?

P: Ickes was a brilliant man; he was a close student of whatever he undertook, and he caught on to what was going on in oil and gas, and what the problems were very fast. I went into his service with great reluctance, because I had a big fight with him back in 1933, when he tried to get passed his federal oil control bill. I was a little stunned when he invited me up to take this job, and talked to him quite frankly about it. We had an understanding just how we were going to operate. I told him very frankly that I knew where the industry resistance was to the building of these Big Inch Pipelines, and I knew where the help would come from. Moreover, I told him where the shooting was going to come from. I had an understanding with him that I would stay there just as long as he'd back me up, but when he saw fit

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to do otherwise, I could buy a ticket home.

F: Right.

P: But I never had any problem; enjoyed his support completely, and we got the job done fairly expeditiously.

F: Where was the shooting coming from?

P: It would come from a few of the major oil companies, who were also in the tanker construction business, who thought that--

F: Competitive.

P: --given a little time, they could solve the problem with tank ships.

F: Was it always a foregone conclusion that when the crisis was over, the Big Inch would become part of the private sector of industry?

P: I studiously avoided any indulgence whatsoever in speculations of what was going to be done with these lines after the war, because in those days the question of converting into natural gas was a controversial question. I thought for me, as a representative of the government, trying to do something to win the war, it was just foolish to get involved in that argument. It didn't concern me, what was going to happen to them after the war. I was out to build them for one reason, and that was to win the war.

F: You had an immediate target.

P: Yes, sir.

F: Did you have anything to do with the formation of Texas Eastern Transmission?

P: No, I did not. I was invited to, but I did not. I didn't.

F: You didn't help to sort of put the group together? Who did that,

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Charlie Francis?

P: It was done largely by Reggie Hargrove, formerly of the United Gas at Shreveport, Louisiana, and a close personal friend of mine, by the way, and a very fine oil and gas man. He was a leader in putting Texas Eastern together. Charlie Francis participated and helped them. But I didn't take any part in the matter of disposal of these pipelines at all.

F: Who set the price?

P: Oh, I'm sure that they negotiated it with the then-owner of that branch of RFC known as the Defense Plant Corporation which owned the pipelines. I'm sure that Mr. [Jesse] Jones, if he were still living at that time, did have something to say about it.

F: He was.

P: The price was simply negotiated.

F: Did you support Johnson in that first Senate race he made against Pappy O'Daniel?

P: Oh, yes, yes, I supported Johnson.

F: Were you active, or was it just a matter of money. I mean, not that money isn't active, but I mean did you [support him in other ways]?

P: I supported Johnson.

F: How about then in 1948, when he ran against Coke?

P: I supported him in 1948. I flew my own airplane all over Texas trying to help him, when he was struggling against the possibility that the Secretary of State might not let his name go on the ticket, after that "landslide vote" of eighty-seven that

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nominated him. I think it was eighty-seven, or eighty-nine, wasn't it?

F: Eighty-seven is the generally accepted figure. Who put him in touch with John Crooker who I think represented him in that? You would have known Crooker?

P: Oh, yes, I knew Johnny Crooker very well.

F: Incidentally, I asked him, Mr. Crooker, that, and he said, "Well, he just chose me because I was the best lawyer in Texas." (Laughter)

P: Well, I'm sure that had something to do with it, because John Crooker was an able lawyer. But the man that I was best acquainted with at the time who worked on that problem was James V. Allred, who was then practicing law in Houston. That was before he went on the court.

F: Yes.

P: He was no longer governor, and was practicing law in Houston. I know it was Jimmy Allred that called me on the telephone and asked me if I wouldn't come to Austin one day and meet with Lyndon and him, and the Brown brothers, in an effort to help Lyndon.

F: Now this is after the election, but when the contest is on?

P: This was after the primary election and when the contest on certification was on. I flew to Austin; I was met at the airport, went out to the Brown place on the lake, and met Lyndon and Jimmy Allred; I think George and Herman were both there, and possibly some others. They told me that they wanted me to fly to Marshall, and talk to my old friend, the late Myron G. Blalock, who was living at Marshall.

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F: Myron either had been or was going to be Democratic national committeeman, wasn't he?

P: He had been or he was. I think he had been; I don't think he was at the time. They wanted me to go to Marshall and talk to him and see if he wouldn't use his influence to help Lyndon. They anticipated, and told me so, that Dan Moody and some Dallas attorneys were working on a plan to go over early some morning to Caddo Lake, home of Judge Davidson.

F: Oh, T. Whitfield Davidson?

P: Yes, T. Whitfield Davidson. And persuade Judge Davidson to give them a preliminary restraining order, against the Secretary of State, to enjoin him from certifying Johnson's name on the ticket for the November election. I readily agreed; got Myron on the telephone, and he said yes, that he'd meet me at the Marshall airport, and I flew to Marshall. He met me at the airport, and I had a nice conversation with him, and had lunch with him and explained my mission. He looked at me with his eyes sparkling, and said, "Well, now, I don't want to let Jimmy Allred and Lyndon and the Brown brothers feel that I'm close to Whit Davidson, because I'm not. I don't think any man is close to Whit Davidson." I was surprised, though he was a former law partner, he made that statement to me. But he said, "I will do what I can, but don't let them feel too optimistic." He later reported to me that he had done all he could do. Of course I flew back to Austin, reported to Lyndon and Jimmy Allred and the Brown

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brothers, what I'd done, and what Blalock had said. A few days later Judge Davidson did grant that restraining order. You know the rest of that story.

F: Yes.

P: That caused Jimmy and all the rest of the attorneys to have to go to Atlanta, where they got no favorable results; therefore they went to Washington, and there, due to the action of Justice [Hugo] Black, they got the injunction dissolved.

F: Right.

P: And Lyndon's name went on the November ballot.

F: It was touch and go though for a while.

P: It was, it certainly was.

F: Was Johnson closer to one or the other of the Brown brothers?

P: I don't know; I think they were very close friends, both Herman and George.

F: I never did know Herman as well as George. I've known him over the years.  
(Interruption)

F: Did you get the feeling that this was a kind of an alliance of mutual interests, or that the Browns pushed Johnson or Johnson pushed them?

P: Oh, I thought that the Brown brothers, just like many of the rest of us, were very much interested in seeing Lyndon go to the Senate; they were simply working in his behalf. And I thought that the attorneys had very cleverly predicted what was liable to happen on Caddo Lake that later turned out to happen.

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F: Right.

P: I know that Myron Blalock reported to me that he was very sorry that he hadn't accomplished more, but he had done all he could do.

F: Did Johnson ever talk with you about his difficulties in representing an oil state?

P: No, no, I don't recall that Lyndon ever talked to me about the difficulty of representing an oil state. I always got the impression that Lyndon was representing Texas very effectively and he was having a lot of pleasure in doing it.

F: Was he useful at all in the tidelands controversy?

P: Well, I'm sure that he was useful, but the tidelands thing was filled with a lot of emotionalism--

F: Yes, it was.

P: --that caused a lot of people to do some very irrational things. I've often thought that it was quite ironic, but nevertheless a fact, that the big oil blow-out that resulted in oil covering the whole of Santa Barbara Bay in California, would not have happened if a compromise on tidelands worked out by Speaker Sam Rayburn with President Truman had been effectuated and had not been killed by influential people and officials of Texas. The compromise agreement missed was since the states have oil and gas conservation departments that are efficient and effective, we should have a law leaving the states in control of oil and gas conservation, and the administration of oil and gas leases, offshore United States, and simply have all revenues therefrom split fifty-fifty between government and state, and quit arguing about the

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the three-mile limit and the ten-mile limit. The reason that compromise conceived by Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Truman did not pass the Congress was primarily because Austin officials fought it hard and certain oil companies fought it.

F: Was that on the basis that Texas should get it all?

P: No.

F: Going to shoot for all or nothing.

P: What opponents wanted was to make sure that all of the state oil and gas leases that had been executed by Texas out to the ten-mile limit would be respected. But the point is that if the state of California had been operating under that compromise as proposed by Rayburn and accepted by Truman, had that been the law, then the Union Oil Company in the Santa Barbara Bay would have set a thousand feet of surface casing--state rule--instead of about four hundred and fifty feet. And you wouldn't have had that blow-out. It cost the operators something like a hundred million dollars and it cost--

F: Lord, what it cost California, just in. . .

P: No end, no end of cost. California had a thousand-foot rule on surface pipe at the time, but this well was just a half mile outside the three-mile limit. I always thought that was quite ironic. Possibly Lyndon helped Rayburn on that matter. I'm just not acquainted with that. I ran into this proposed compromise when I was working for the Interior Department in the establishment of the Petroleum Administration for Defense during the Korean War. I was assisting Oscar

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Chapman, the Secretary of the Interior. He told me that the President had talked to him about the compromise, and asked me what I thought of it. I said, "Now, I think it's a brilliant idea and it ought to be implemented." And to clinch it, I went myself to Mr. Rayburn to get the full truth of this report. And he told me that he and Truman were agreed on it, but the Governor of Texas and the Attorney General of Texas didn't want it.

F: That would have been Jester or Shivers?

P: Shivers.

F: Shivers and Price Daniel.

P: And Daniel.

F: You got pretty close to Sam Rayburn, close enough to attend some of those "Board of Education" meetings. Did you get to observe him with Johnson?

P: Oh, yes. They were very close.

F: Was it a father-son sort of relationship?

P: Very much so. Very much so. And Lyndon relied upon him greatly.

F: Listened to him?

P: He listened to him, yes. And that's the reason that I have been saying that if Rayburn had lived, I don't think Lyndon would have let that Vietnam war break him down, just kill him.

F: You think Rayburn had a little sharper finger on the pulse?

P: Well, I don't think that Rayburn could ever have been brought to have the confidence in the Pentagon that Johnson had. Johnson just felt that those generals and admirals were the --

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F: They were the experts.

P: They were the experts and they weren't going to mislead him.

F: Yes.

P: And yet they did mislead him in my opinion; and I don't think they'd have misled Rayburn.

F: Did you talk with Johnson at all about his presidential plans during the late fifties? You know there was all that uncertainty about whether he was going to run in 1960 and when he finally offered himself, Kennedy already had the nomination sewed up.

P: Oh, yes. I, of course, was supporting Johnson for the presidency and I thought he did a wise thing by sticking to his job in Congress and not slighting his job as many candidates do. But Kennedy beat him, he beat him . . .

F: Los Angeles.

P: Fairly. I'd like to say another thing to Johnson's credit. I know of my own knowledge that Lyndon Johnson had no idea in the world of going on that ticket for the vice presidency after Kennedy was nominated. Lyndon was out to get the top job. He never gave any consideration to the vice presidency, nor did Mr. Rayburn.

F: No.

P: And I was in Los Angeles.

F: Unofficially or as a delegate?

P: No, no, I wasn't a delegate, but I was out there for the convention and I spent a great deal of time at Mr. Rayburn's apartment which was in the Biltmore Hotel on the same floor as Lyndon's. And I was in

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Lyndon's apartment. But mostly I was around Mr. Rayburn's apartment.

The next morning after Kennedy was nominated--I lived in another hotel--I showed up at Mr. Rayburn's place about eight o'clock, or eight-fifteen. I noticed the klieg lights were on at Lyndon's shop, which was at the other end of the corridor. A line of people were in front of his door, and I wondered why. I went on into Mr. Rayburn's apartment--the door was open--but nobody was there. Well, I turned around and walked down to Lyndon's place and when I got there Felix McKnight of the Dallas Times Herald stepped out, said, "How do you do?" And I shook hands with him and I said, "What are you people doing down here?" He said, "Jack Kennedy's in there. We're waiting for a statement." I said, "Well, what do you think Jack Kennedy's in there for?" "Well, we think that he's going to. . . they're going to have a statement to make, and we're here to get it."

We talked a minute longer and I took leave and went on back to Mr. Rayburn's apartment. I was reading my paper and Mr. Rayburn walked in. And he asked me the question, "Wonder what's going on down in front of Lyndon's shop?"

F: He didn't know, either?

P: He didn't know, either. And I said, "Well, I don't know," but I told him what had happened to me. I had gone down there and talked to Felix McKnight and what Felix had told me. And being the wise old fox he was, he [Rayburn] said, "Well, I hope Jack Kennedy's not trying to talk Lyndon into going on that ticket with him, because I'm opposed to it." And I said, "I think that's reasonable." And we talked

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about some other matters.

Later, I went over to visit Hubert Humphrey's quarters and went on and had lunch with Howard Keck of Superior Oil Company, which I had scheduled. I came back to Rayburn's apartment; it must have been about one or one-fifteen.

F: You still didn't know anything?

P: No. Mr. Rayburn tagged me and said, "I want to talk to you."

Led me in the bedroom and said, "I want you to know that since you left this morning about eleven o'clock, Jack Kennedy came by here and talked to me and I found out that he was putting all the heat he could on Lyndon to go on that ticket with him. And he presented it such a way that I concluded finally that Lyndon couldn't very well turn it down. Some twenty-three of his colleagues in the Senate and about twice that many House members have urged him to do it. Finally I said to Jack, 'Jack, if you'll get on the TV and you'll tell the world--' "

F: You mean Sam.

P: Mr. Rayburn said it, "Jack, now if you'll get on the TV and you'll tell the world that this is your idea, that you initiated the idea, you asked him to go on this ticket, nobody suggested you do it, then I will agree to advise him to do it." And he said, "I just wanted to tell you why I changed my mind." About that time, Ed Pauley walked in and then the Majority Whip McCormack walked in, later became Speaker McCormack.

F: Right.

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P: And as we were sitting there talking, John Holton, Mr. Rayburn's executive assistant, came in and said, "Mr. Speaker, Governor Lawrence is out here to see you." (Interruption)

F: No, it wouldn't have been David Lawrence.

P: No, Governor Lawrence of Pennsylvania.

F: Yes.

P: And Mr. Rayburn said, "Well, what does he want to see me about?" John said, "Well, I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but I imagine that he wants you to tell him what he ought to say when he's placing Lyndon's name in nomination for the vice presidency tonight." The Speaker said, "Well, Jack Kennedy hasn't gotten on that TV yet." But he said, "I guess I'd better go out and see the Governor." Just as Mr. Rayburn approached the door, Kennedy flashed on the TV and made that statement he agreed to make with Rayburn.

That was how Lyndon got drafted on that ticket. And I had the pleasure of explaining that to several of Lyndon's friends back here in Texas who were very unhappy with him.

F: Oh, they were ready to crucify him.

P: Among those many friends that were unhappy with Lyndon, one of them was Herman Brown, and I explained this to him.

F: Yes.

P: I felt that I should because I was really privy to the facts.

F: This was kind of an anti-Kennedy feeling; they felt that in effect Johnson had joined the enemy.

P: Well, it was wrong. Jack Kennedy was right; there were two

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or three southern states he couldn't have carried without Lyndon.

F: Yes.

P: Jack Kennedy was very smart to have made that decision. It was his.

F: Did you take any active part in that campaign? In 1960.

P: Oh, I worked at it, but I wasn't full-time.

F: Just a matter of calling around or something.

P: Supporting, I supported the ticket all the way.

F: Did it give you any problems in some of your relationships?

P: No, no, not at all. Personally I had a high regard for Jack Kennedy; I thought Jack Kennedy was a very good man. And I was opposed to it; I would rather have seen Lyndon stay in the Senate.

F: Yes.

P: Maybe I was a little selfish in that, because we had a lot of important business involving Texas, but I did agree with Mr. Rayburn that there was no way that Lyndon, having received so many favors from the Democratic Party--

F: Could fail to give one back.

P: Fail to give one back. He just couldn't avoid it. With all his peers pulling at him, in both the House and Senate, and Jack's desires were honest.

F: Right.

P: He recognized Lyndon's ability and vote-getting ability.

F: Johnson saved him in the South, really.

P: He did. He came very near losing Texas but that's another story. I think John Connally was responsible for that. I think Connally like to

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have lost Texas for Lyndon on that occasion.

F: In which way?

P: Well, that's a long story. But since you ask, let me go back. After Governor Shivers misused the Democratic Party machinery of Texas for Eisenhower, the Republican, Mr. Rayburn and Johnson decided that they must take the Democratic machinery away from Allan.

F: Yes.

P: They revealed their plans to me in Washington on an occasion and pressed me into service to come back to Texas, knowing that I was a close personal friend of Mrs. Frankie Randolph, who was really head of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party in Texas.

F: Frankie wasn't committeewoman at that time. It was later that she became committeewoman.

P: Lyndon asked me to see Frankie Randolph and see if I could persuade her to get behind him and Rayburn and help them wrest the Democratic Party machinery of Texas from Governor Shivers. I agreed to do that, and did; and Frankie very willingly decided she would help because she felt that it was the proper thing to do. She worked very hard at it and helped Lyndon take the party machinery away from the Governor.

After she did that, Lyndon had had his heart attack and while sick John Connally was running his show. The May convention came along in Dallas. John had had a meeting in Austin which I attended. And in that meeting he said that Lyndon wanted to choose a conservative and a liberal for his committeeman and committeewoman. It sounded very reasonable.

F: Right.

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P: Time went on and before the Dallas convention it became clear that his choice for committeeman was Byron Skelton of Temple, a very good man. I would have classified him as a liberal; some people wouldn't, but I would. And Mrs. Bentsen, Mrs. Lloyd Bentsen of--

F: McAllen and Houston.

P: Well, I think at that time they had moved to Houston. I knew Lloyd Bentsen, knew him very favorably; I didn't know Mrs. Bentsen. But this Bentsen Realty litigation where Allan Shivers was alleged to have made substantial profits in the Valley while he was lieutenant governor by getting in some way connected to these land fraud cases.

F: Getting options?

P: Yes. Water rights. They'd come into play and a good deal of objection commenced to appear against Mrs. Bentsen. Well, I didn't know Mrs. Bentsen and certainly had an admiration and respect for Lloyd. He was a friend of mine; I had known him as a legislator and again in Congress. And I felt that in those so-called land fraud suits down there in the Valley and widely publicized that Lloyd had nothing to do with them at all. But nevertheless I knew that this was going to be an ugly thing in the convention and I felt the course of wisdom was to avoid it. So I appeared at John Connally's suite in the Adolphus Hotel in company with my associate Marlin Sandlin two days before the convention and asked him if he had totally discounted these so-called land fraud cases. He said he had. "Well," I said, "if you have, all right. I just wanted to know that you hadn't overlooked anything." But the night before the convention, I went to two

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district caucuses and both of them were just on fire against Mrs. Bentsen. That worried me, but still I said nothing. Lyndon was sick. And Marlin Sandlin had gone to Houston to bury an aunt. Then he got back that night and went to his caucus, Harris County. I was caucusing from Madison County. I wasn't in the Harris County delegation. And he and I had breakfast the next morning and he told me that he had heard strong objection in the Harris County caucus over the plan to make Mrs. Bentsen the committeewoman. He said, "They're just not going to take it." And he, like I, had no interest in it at all, except Lyndon's interest. So when he said that, I said immediately, "Let's go see Mr. Rayburn, put this thing in front of him." So we went to Rayburn's suite which was the president's suite at the Baker Hotel; and Mr. Rayburn had gone to the bedside of his dying sister Miss Lou in Bonham. So then I thought the only thing to do was to talk to Lyndon. I placed a call to Lyndon and the report was that Mrs. Johnson left directions that Lyndon could not talk till after ten o'clock.

F: Where was he? In Washington?

P: No, in Dallas.

F: In Dallas.

P: He was asleep. So then Marlin and I decided that the only thing we can do was go back and see John Connally. It was about nine o'clock, approaching nine o'clock by that time. So we went back up into the Adolphus Hotel, to John's suite. John was dressing and he was in the company of Vann Kennedy, a friend of mine from Corpus

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Christi.

F: Right. I know Vann.

P: So I said to John, "John, I am very much disturbed that you're going to have too big a fight than is necessary over this committee-woman place. Not that Mrs. Bentsen isn't a fine woman and deserving and all that, but you're going to have a fight over it that isn't going to do Lyndon any good." I told him what I had heard the night before in the Sixth District Caucus and in the Seventh District Caucus and Marlin told him what he had heard the night before in the Harris County District Caucus. And [we] questioned, "Is this fight worthwhile?" He said, "Well, whom shall I get?" I said, "Get the most conservative woman in Texas. Get Mrs. [Hilda] Weinert of Seguin or get Mrs. [Marietta] Brooks of Austin. Get anybody. Just don't have the controversy." He finished tying his tie and as he walked out the door said, "Well, I've got the votes." Vann Kennedy came up to me and said, "You're entirely right." He said, "For God's sake, go see Johnson." I said, "Well, I can't do that because Lady Bird says he can't be disturbed before ten o'clock and the convention's going to start in twenty minutes." So, we went to the convention. And John ran the convention.

F: Yes.

P: And everything went fine until about twelve-thirty p.m.

F: There really wasn't any problem taking care of Shivers, was there?

P: No problem at all. Everything went fine until twelve-thirty. At twelve-thirty, the convention stalled. We sat there in that

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convention till seven o'clock that evening talking and drinking pop and eating hot dogs.

F: What were you hung on?

P: Johnson had to get up out of his bed and come to the convention hall to straighten the thing out. The result was that Johnson, after trying for hours to straighten the thing out, threw up his hands and said, "Let this convention choose whomever it desires," and walked out. So the choice was thrown on the convention floor and Judge Jesse Andrews of Houston got up and nominated Mrs. Frankie Randolph and she was elected by acclamation. Well, Connally couldn't get over that.

F: Yes, I imagine!

P: Connally couldn't get over it. He had all of these warnings and all this advice and did not pay a bit of attention to it. Then he very skillfully made plans for the September convention to pay Mrs. Randolph back. Mrs. Randolph was now National Democratic committee-woman; she was the head of the Harris County delegation at the September Democratic convention in Fort Worth. And when she got over there and we all got to Fort Worth . . . .

F: This is 1958, isn't it?

P: It's 1956.

F: 1956, right, right.

P: When we got over there, why, John had everything locked up. He had enough delegations disqualified and had his own people qualified to insure complete control. He had the Harris County delegation disqualified. My associate, Marlin

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Sandlin, couldn't have gotten in the convention except I got him in as an alternate from Madison County. And he joined Judge John Townes and a group of old Texas Regulars sitting back there in the Harris County delegation seats. Mrs. Randolph wouldn't come in the convention hall, because her delegation was disqualified. She stood in the hall all day. I appealed to Mr. Rayburn, and he sent me to see Johnson. Johnson, behind the scenes, behind the stage, just said, "Well, John is running it." I said, "You're making a big mistake here. This isn't going to produce any good." They also disqualified the delegation from El Paso or made some kind of a deal with the delegation from El Paso. I think they threw out one delegation and put in another one. And so that finished the convention.

Later Johnson commenced to feel the heat from this thing which wasn't unexpected, and Johnson sent me word through my friend and associate, Marlin Sandlin, Washington to Houston--I was in Houston--urging me to get Mrs. Randolph and Mr. Randolph to dinner, and he and Lady Bird would like to join the Partens entertaining the Randolphs. He wanted to bury the hatchet with Mrs. Randolph. So, being the good old workhorse I am, I went over to see that lovely southern lady, Mrs. Randolph, and made that proposal to her, and she very graciously acceded to it. Later I met Lyndon at Mr. Rayburn's library dedication at Bonham. I tagged him and got him out in the back yard and told him that, following his request through Marlin Sandlin, I had talked to Mrs.

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Randolph and she had said that she had no ill feeling towards him in the world and would be glad to dine with him. And he said, "You know, John's talked me out of this. I don't think that I want to bury the hatchet with her." I said, "Well, I wish you'd come to that conclusion before you got me in this embarrassing position."

F: Right. You'd just invited somebody to a dinner that isn't going to be held.

P: So that ended that. But when the vote was counted, you remember that it was ten o'clock the next morning before we knew who had carried Texas when Johnson and Kennedy ran together. Remember that?

F: Right.

P: Lyndon Johnson should have carried this state by three-quarters of a million votes.

F: And it was barely fifty thou.

P: He barely carried Kennedy across the line in Texas.

F: Right.

P: And I attribute the whole thing to John Connally.

F: Did you get the feeling that John became more than an assistant, that really he became almost on a level with Johnson in those days? As far as Texas politics were concerned, anyhow?

P: Yes, I thought that he was very effectively asserting himself as a double for Johnson.

F: Yes.

P: As a double for Johnson. And I thought it was very sad, I thought it

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was unfair to Lyndon.

F: Almost a kind of variation of that cliché, you know, "What's good for Connally is bound to be good for Johnson!" (Laughter)

P: Maybe so, I don't know. But that worried me, worried me greatly. It worried me greatly. I was in Austin the morning after the election and I remember we didn't know until nine or ten o'clock that next morning who had carried Texas.

F: Hold it a second here.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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