INTERVIEW III

DATE: March 1, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: J. J. (JAKE) PICKLE

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Congressman Pickle's office in Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

F: Jake, let's pick up where we left off. He [Johnson] is now a close winner in the race against Coke Stevenson in 1948 and a closer winner in the State Democratic Executive Committee. Did you have anything at all to do with getting him legally certified, that is, in the litigation that followed?

P: No. That was really left to Alvin Wirtz and John Cofer--

F: That was really out of his hands too, wasn't it?

P: Yes. And Everett Looney. Those people either planned or directed the legal hearings. None of us, at that point, could do anything about it because it was a legal matter. The 1948 convention had ended in such a state of anger and electrifying charges that the whole atmosphere was unsettled and charged in Texas. It got so bad that when the Johnson people won the convention, then those people in Fort Worth who had actually put up the money to hold the convention--that is, rent the hall, supply the typewriters, the paper, the chairs, and other equipment--decided that they were going home, and they did. They took their typewriters and all of their equipment out, and the convention literally was

stalled for an hour or two while we scrambled around to get new typewriters and chairs. That was the kind of attitude that was prevalent.

But it did go on to the courts. Whatever they say about Mr. Johnson, by and large, when he gets in a tight spot and it's a matter that does go to the court, he'll listen to his lawyers. He'll take the lead in conversations on most things, but in those days Senator Wirtz, Mr. Cofer, and Mr. Looney were telling him to not make any statements, and he didn't. Eventually he was confirmed here in the Senate.

F: What did you do in the days ahead?

P: I was in what you'd call the public relations business then.

F: This was Syers, Pickle, and Winn?

P: Yes, we had a public relation, advertising agency, and I had been involved in the 1954 campaign--I mean from 1948 to 1954. I was connected with KVET from the fall of 1946 until the spring of 1948, at which time I joined Ed Syers and Windy Winn in the public relations agency. In that capacity I worked for and worked with various state officials who were running for office. It was sort of a natural product. Allan Shivers was our first statewide candidate. I was the state organizational manager for Shivers then. All through that period I was in advertising and public relations.

F: Did the Senator show any great concern as far as state races were concerned in those days? Did he talk with your firm about whom you ought to get in and help?

P: No. He was not trying to build up any powerhouse, except as it affected his own operation. He did not ask any of us to watch this candidate or that candidate. We did keep up a constant series of correspondence and contacts and visits during this six-year period. Quite often when he was home we would be together on a personal basis. He didn't have a campaign, as such, except in 1954.

Now in 1954 when Dudley Dougherty ran against him--

F: Incidentally, we have a good interview with Dougherty on that campaign.

P: Already? Well, it will be interesting. Dudley had appointed himself as a senator, sort of, you know. He really was a very nice fellow. But he was challenging Mr. Johnson, and I at that time did handle the campaign in Texas. Actually the campaign consisted in reminding the editors and the state officials what a good job Senator Johnson was doing. We did not attack or say anything against Mr. Dougherty. He started off by holding a talkathon in Houston and in other ways making charges that Senator Johnson just ignored. Actually we didn't really have a race.

I might point this out, Joe. It's typical of Mr. Johnson. All through that time we would cover the state of Texas, and I, as both an individual friend and sometimes as a consultant on a professional basis, would go with him and work with him. We used to cover the state. This shows a thorough preparedness of this man. I'll give an example. During the years of 1952 and 1953, in the fall--in those days, he would come home from Congress and we would

cover the state. We would systematically and factually make complete appearances in a congressional district. Primarily working through the congressman involved we would go into every congressional district, and we would make from one to ten speeches in a two or three day appearance. And one by one, during the fall, we'd cover those districts. So that in the years 1952 and 1953 we made literally hundreds of appearances of major type, at least they were major preparation. The state public might not have known it, but a lot of input was given to these area appearances. I'll give an example: We went into Wright Patman's district in 1952 or 1953, I've forgotten the particular year, but in one day those two officials were literally challenging each other; that is, Congressman Patman and then-Senator Johnson about how many good appearances he, Mr. Patman, could arrange and how many good appearances or speeches could he, the Senator, make. They literally dared each other. In one day we made seventeen speeches.

F: Goodness alive!

J: All in Wright Patman's district. The next day we made thirteen speeches. And we finished up in Paris at a chamber of commerce dinner that night. Now, I'll tell you, when you make seventeen speeches in one day and thirteen the next in groups of twenty-five, fifty, two hundred, three hundred people, with a lot of promotion, and every one of them [at] a key little spot in the town or the district, then I'll say you have covered it! And as the advance man or the public relations man and as the scheduler, I had to know

that we could leave one community at 10:15 and we had to be then at the next community in Cass County, we'll say, at 10:50 because a group was waiting at the store or at the train station.

F: You must have known every country road in the place.

P: I had to know the road, I had to know the routes, I had to go in advance, I had to know exactly how to get there and how much time it would take. Most of all, I had to have some arrangements to break up the other meeting, because normally, when a man starts talking to a group, he doesn't know them, they're a little bit cold, he has to warm them up, they have to kind of get used to him, and he has to kind of find out what they're interested in, and he may talk around the bush a little bit to try to find that one spark that will create the interest. When he really gets going, it's time to leave. So you've always got to have somebody that's grabbing his coattail, and yanking him, saying, "Sorry, we've got to go, we've got to go!" This made it a little difficult and a bit awkward, but we made that many appearances in those two days.

F: As president, he upset schedule-makers by always being willing to stay longer and shake a few more hands and speak to a few more people, and consequently he ran late so much of the time. Had he developed that tendency in this period?

P: Yes, I guess so.

F: If you get late to seventeen appearances, you're going to be powerful late!

P: You've just got to maintain a schedule, and you must have someone to politely say, "We must go." I think the public thinks sometimes that you're perhaps trying to be a big shot and want to get away from there. It isn't that. A man in public office, if he has things well organized, if he's doing things, has got a tight schedule that he must keep. Time is of great essence.

I could give you an example of the tenseness and the preparation and exhaustion that goes into these kinds of appearances if it would make some color.

F: I'd like to have it.

P: One of my favorite stories that I've never really told except in just little select groups was when we started out on this particular run. I believe it must have been the forerunner of the swing into Wright Patman's district. But we had gone to Blooming Grove, Texas. Our dear friend, Mr. Drew Gillen, wanted the Senator to come and address a men's Baptist Wednesday night prayer group. He had issued an invitation several times, and nobody in the whole world was a more loyal or dear friend than Drew Gillen. So the Senator finally said, "We'll do it."

We got to Blooming Grove one night right at dark, and the wind was blowing hard, a blue norther literally had blown in. The meeting was in an old-fashioned tabernacle, the square type of building where the roof came up to one point and the windows were open entirely around the place. You just raised and lowered a kind of sidings. They had closed them down to try to keep the wind out, but

that wasn't possible, and it blew hard and it was cold. Very cold.

F: It must have been noisy.

P: It was noisy. But we talked and visited and prayed--and the Senator visited with them a long time because he really was pleased to be there with Drew and his friends. When it had finished, the Senator wanted to go back into Corsicana to the hotel, but Drew had insisted that we come to his home. He said that his kids were gone, Blake Gillen and the others had already left home. We could have the Gillen's home to ourselves. Mr. and Mrs. Gillen were staying with friends. So finally the Senator agreed that that's what we would do.

Our group, Warren Woodward, and I, and someone else on his staff, finally ended up at Drew's home. Around eleven or eleven-thirty we finally decided it was time to go to bed. Mind you, the wind was still blowing and howling. We had finally turned off the lights and hadn't any more than done that when Clayton Hickerson with Associated Press called from Dallas and insisted on an interview with Senator Johnson. We got the lights on, and I and Woody at different times tried to tell him we'd talk to him in the morning, but Clayton was feeling "no pain" about that time, and he insisted that, by golly, he was going to talk to the Senator right then. I guess it took two or three calls and two or three interruptions. I don't believe the Senator ever talked to him that particular night.

About two o'clock in the morning an old cow started bawling. This cow was on the lot right next to the Drew Gillen home. Now of course in a town of that size you would have a home and then

you would have a big lot or a vacant lot which could normally be two or three lots. But on this particular lot this old cow was out there, and she'd just been separated from her calf, and the cow was mooing for her calf. You never heard such mooing! Unless you'd been out at night in the country and heard an old cow cut loose at night asking for her calf, you just don't know what a noise it makes. And how constant it is! That went on from about one until four in the morning. We finally had to call Drew on the phone and Drew got up, had to go down the street to find Bob Keckler--it was Bob Keckler's cow--and he had to get Bob, along about four or five in the morning, to go move that cow to another part of town so we might get some sleep. Of course, we were getting no sleep during all this time.

F: You were thinking how the hotel would have been in Corsicana.

P: Yes, at that time. Well, finally, they got the cow moved. It was about dawn. We got up to go on our next trip on which we had to leave about 8:00 a.m. We all came into the center bedroom where the Senator was sleeping, and he was still livid and angry because he had been up all night; he hadn't slept, and he was cold. Finally, with us telling him he must go and make this swing, he said, no, he was cold, he was cold, he couldn't go, he just had to have some rest. We went through that for a while. Finally, with us standing around making notes and him giving us instructions, he insisted that Warren Woodward get in the bed with him. He said, "I need some body warmth." And Woody was so embarrassed he nearly died! He finally shucked off his shoes and looked sheepishly at everybody, but he crawled in bed

and huddled up to the Senator, and the Senator proceeded to give us instructions, dictate and transact his business while for about fifteen minutes he got warm next to Woody. All because of Bob Keckler's cow! (Laughter)

F: Is the Senator affected by weather?

P: I don't think so particularly. He always has colds during the winter time. It seemed to me as long as I worked with him sometime during the cold [weather], he gets a cold, and he blows. And when he blows his nose, it's like a bull in a vacant lot. He just really snorts and puffs and puts on a big show. But he is susceptible to colds and pneumonia, and from that standpoint the weather does bother him. But weather bothers any candidate when you're on the swing. It's a problem and factor that we've got to reckon with.

On this particular Wright Patman trip, we finally got to Paris, Texas. After we had made these seventeen and thirteen appearances, still cold, still windy, we were staying at the Gibraltar Hotel. Now this was built back in the days between Abraham Lincoln or William McKinley, that period. It was right down in the railroad yards. We had a room that was on about the eighth or ninth floor, they always put us up in their top suite. It was at least sixty years old or more at the time. We had a joint bathroom, and the bathroom was raised a bit sort of where you step up. There was no shower in it, just had one of these tubs with a little small spout that came out, and when it drained, it took some time. It was just an old, old hotel building that was fine in its day, but it was seventy-five years past its prime. The wind was still blowing.

We had a corner suite, and on the inside of the windows were these old time shutters. So far as I know they weren't working, because the tapes were broken, but the shutters were there, I guess as a protector against the sun. The wind, when it hit in gusts, it would hit the shutters and literally sound like an accordian ripping up and down the scales. I wanted to get a different suite or get in a separate room, because however tired the Senator was, I was more tired. I had been the advance man, the dispatcher, the introducer--all of it for seventeen speeches and I had had it.

Well, the Senator, to show his sense of humor, thought it was funny that I was trying to get away from him to get some sleep when he thought probably I ought to be worried about him getting some sleep. I had reached a point where I wanted rest, and I didn't want any more foolishness. And he just said, "No, you're going to sleep here in this room with me now. I may need you during the night." He made a big point of it. And finally we went to bed.

Well, wouldn't you know! It wasn't an hour later until Clayton Hickerson called again. Wanting another interview! We insisted we couldn't do it, and finally I told him, no, he [the Senator] wasn't here in the room. Finally the Senator says, "You tell him I am in the room now. I'll talk to him." Of course by that time, I was done in. So I handed him the phone and he talked to Clayton a little bit. It wasn't a pleasant conversation but he finally talked to Clayton. I was fussing and I crawled back into the bed to go to sleep. Later, it wasn't ten minutes, until I realized the Senator had gone to sleep, and he was snoring loud. He made so much noise that literally I covered my head up. I could hear him through all the wind

blowing. I tried again to sleep. I rolled and tossed for about five or ten minutes and finally when he got to such a crescendo of snoring that it literally ended up in a rupture at the top of the scale, I threw my cover back and said, "Damn!" I got out of bed to see what I could do about it. Well, when I reacted that way, the Senator burst into laughter, and he laughed and laughed! There he was, lying over in bed "possuming" that he was asleep and snoring just to aggravate me! I've often thought that here I was, the subject of the joke. And somehow, you know, that lets off tension. It's a little private story that we never tell, but it just shows you that there he thought the best thing for him to do was to kind of work me up, and that gave him relief, I guess. And as I look back over it, I realize now it probably did.

F: What did you do in 1954?

P: During the campaign we really didn't do much of anything other than just advance the positive side of Senator Johnson and what he had done.

F: He wasn't really worried.

P: No, he wasn't really worried, and we had no problem. I think that was one election where Mr. Johnson carried nearly every county in the state, so naturally he was every pleased about it. This set the stage then. It erased the doubts and the suspicions and the fears and the hatreds.

F: He was <u>the</u> senator now.

P: He was in his own name and in his own right the senator with a positive strong election behind him. I think it set the stage for

whatever followed in the next six years because he had his own base of operations in his own name in his own right.

F: Let's stop the forward action for a moment and ask two questions. Somewhere in here Dan Moody got completely estranged from him; he may never have been close, but Mildred [Moody] became almost violent in her opinions toward the Senator. Then somewhere in here this division with Ralph Yarborough began to come in. Do you have any explanation for either one of those?

P: I don't know what caused the split between Mr. Johnson and Mr. Moody. That split though was apparent from the first day we returned from the services, that is, from 1946 on. In 1946 and 1948 the real opposition of Governor Moody was apparent. I think it really stemmed from philosophy more than one individual incident. Mr. Moody and a group of his people were either Texas Regulars, or at least were against the processes of change under which we were going, that is, the New Deal days. I assume that was basically the reason for opposition. Also, Mr. Moody was practicing law and he had certain clients. I know during the campaign in 1946 and 1948 that Mr. Johnson would, because he had the opposition of Mr. Moody and his people, attack them because he said that Magnolia Oil was behind this campaign; that he had not given them all the relief in some oil measure during the war years, and therefore that [they felt] Mr. Johnson ought to be gotten rid of. I don't know whether the charge was valid, but that was Mr. Johnson's answer, and I would imagine that the people in the Tenth District would rather choose,

and did choose, a man who represented the people instead of the Magnolia Oil Company. So I think that really was the base of it.

Now, we didn't have this same strong opposition in the 1954 period because Governor Moody after 1946 and 1948 was less active in the political field.

F: Just faded.

P: Yes. And Mrs. Moody carried it on and has at times been personal about it.

F: Just kind of a woman's vengeance, really , is what it amounted to.

P: Well, she would just never give in, and I assume has not given in today. But the real reason for the split I really don't know.

F: What about Ralph?

P: It had nothing to do with the Moody interests.

F: No.

P: I think Senator Yarborough's entry in politics was kind of an odd one in the sense that he had really wanted to run for attorney general. He was trying to get support for the race. I think the combination of efforts by both Allan Shivers and John Ben Shepperd cut him off from funds. Each time he tried to get support or money, they'd cut him off. I think he finally just decided that since they were blocking him so totally in one field, that he would just run for governor instead. I don't think he originally intended to run for governor back in the 1954 period. I really think he wanted to go for attorney general, and he switched at the last minute and just kept it up. But his entry into politics had no connection as such with Mr. Johnson or his interests. It was more Mr. Yarbrough's

opposition to the people in power at the time. He became sort of a symbol of opposition and it grew and grew until finally he was successful.

F: He may be happier opposing than he is winning.

P: Well, he's a natural fighter, that's true in a sense.

F: Let's go on.

P: About this time, in 1955 I guess it was, Mr. Johnson had his heart attack, and this of course shook the whole state and the country up, because here he was, one of the most powerful senators in the country going strong, having just been elected to a new term. We didn't know whether he was going to make it. During his rest period he, I imagine, thought a long time, should he give up public office. I can guarantee you there's a certain stress about holding office and being full of ideas and trying to do things, or trying to just keep up. It consumes you. It consumes your time.

F: You really have two jobs. Well, you have a lot of jobs, but it always seemed to me from my own career, which is not as intense as yours, that there are, one, those things that you want to get done, and that's one job--the legislation, the committee hearings. The other is that eternal outreach of hands to you that will wreck any schedule. You must come in here a lot of mornings with a day outlined, and you never touch it.

P: That's exactly right. I walk in in the morning-- I have one hour normally to take care of the requests that come in, and there will be a hundred of them during the day--and here's a

delegation waiting and another delegation waiting, and I just literally throw up my hands and sit down. It takes a lot of patience. This is true of any man in public office because you come to work, set to get a specific number of things accomplished, and then there are so many interruptions. But this is true also of all life, of any job. But it's certainly true in the political field. And I'm sure this weighed heavily on Mr. Johnson because if you work at this job, it takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of energy. I imagine during those days he was wondering, should he give up public life, should he just serve out his time.

F: Did you come up to see him?

P: No, I did not, not then.

F: You didn't see him until he got home?

P: I saw him in Washington perhaps on one or two occasions, but not during the time he was in the hospital. I don't think any of us much from Texas came up because he was not to have visitors and it wouldn't help a thing. So we sent messages and by that way kept in touch.

At any rate, over a period of months he recuperated, got his strength, and had the assurance from the doctor that he was all right. But he didn't make any public appearances. I'll never forget though that when he did come back about a year after the heart attack--it had been fully a year, it was sometime in 1956, as I recall it--we had a big rally at the Whitney gymnasium in

Whitney, Texas. This is out of Hillsboro.

F: Yes, Lake Whitney.

P: I don't know why the Senator agreed to go to Whitney for this Democratic rally.

F: Was this when they dedicated the dam?

P: Yes, they had a new dam, but it really wasn't the dedication of the dam. It was just sort of a Democratic rally or an appreciation dinner honoring Senator Johnson. I know the press didn't play it as such. It really was a recognition that he was back in full health and going strong, and this was his first public political Democratic meeting or rally since he had had his heart attack.

F: On something like that, is it initiated out of Whitney or does the Senator's office initiate it? Whitney is, in a sense, such an apt place. It beats Dallas or Fort Worth or some more urbane center, you know, to go to Whitney where the people are, if you think of it that separate.

P: That was one of the considerations, I'm sure. Now, Senator Johnson made the decision that he would go to Whitney, and I'm sure that he did it, one, not to go to the big cities, but to pick some place that would be a little out of the way. And if he had a big successful party in an out-of-the-way place and it was a smashing success, that would be picked up and carried throughout the state a lot more prominently than would an appearance in Dallas. So I'm sure that must have been one of the decisions.

Also, they had a group in Whitney at that time who were very

active in political and civic matters. Dr. Silas Grant and his wife Betty and a group of young men around the lake area of Whitney had a lot of Democratic meetings. They were good strong Democrats. Hill County was a good Democratic county. And they were so active in the field that I think the Senator thought that would be a good place, that they could produce them--and in the counties around there. Well, they did decide to go there.

That having been decided, then it has to be a success. And they made their plans and their preparations, but the Senator, I think, was a little bit apprehensive at just how it would work. And he asked his friend Mary Rather to help. Mary was then living in Hillsboro and was running the Rather Drug Store after her brother and his wife had been killed in an automobile wreck, Mary was there in Hillsboro and she had been a part of his staff for some twenty years. So Mary talked it over with them and yes, they could use some additional help. And the Senator called me and asked me could I go up there for a couple of weeks and lend a little professional help or suggestions to it.

So I did. I went to Whitney, and I stayed for about two weeks. I literally went into every little community adjoining Whitney. We had a quota and a list of things for every community to do, and we challenged one community over another community. We covered the entire territory good, and we had it well organized. We had a lot of spirit and a lot of contests, lot of gifts to be presented, lot of recognition.

When we finally went into that gymnasium party at Whitney, we

had over four thousand people in the little gymnasium of Whitney, Texas. The Senator was overwhelmed with the crowd and the spirit and the response that he got. I think he felt then that the people were still with him, that he had a lot to offer, that he could handle the situation, that he was physically well. I really think that that Whitney appearance is one of the most important in his political career, because it was the first time that he had really gone back to the public after his attack.

F: Now, Whitney is a little special, but earlier you've mentioned towns like Blooming Grove just to sort of keep a hand in as you went into these congressional districts. There never was any yardstick as to how small a place could be before you would ignore it; if you thought you could get a few people out, you'd go there?

P: You bet. We sought them out. And the reason was that whenever you'd go into a big city, you didn't know where to grab the handle. In those days you didn't have community centers as such, it was just the big city. And the big cities didn't respond as well to Mr. Johnson in many respects, except possibly San Antonio, as the state as a whole. His image was that he was of the people, he was just sort of a populist type of candidate. He always has looked for ways to go into the small communities. In the earlier campaigns, 1946 and 1948, when we were covering the district and didn't have a tough campaign, but you didn't know, every little rural community in the district had a visit of some kind. They might not be much more than a crossroad, but

we'd go into those little communities and we would not only write ahead of time or call ahead of time to a key person, I'd even put out handbills, put them out in the country stores. And even if that fellow who gets a handbill didn't come or didn't hear him, that handbill will be a subject of conversation for weeks and weeks before and after. So it all serves its purpose. And that's why I think Mr. Johnson always felt that his support came from the people out in the country.

F: And he could always in an appearance identify with these people very easily. I've watched that.

P: Oh, yes, because he's part of them. He grew up in the little town of Johnson City, and he knew every country saying and every reaction that a country person has to politics. He's a student at it. You bet!

F: I've wondered sometimes if, as president, that was part of his difficulty with the eastern press. I'd hear him make references to "standing out there in that searing heat with caliche blinding your eyes," and I had the feeling that they didn't know what he was talking about. They'd never heard of caliche, or they'd never stood in the sun.

P: That's right, or really never had seen what we used to call stump speaking, the old country appearances. And he could also relate by some sort of country story the point that he wanted to make to the audience. He could tell a country story and the people back home would laugh and slap their sides or their hips about it.

F: And tell the same story three years later.

P: Oh, yes. Now that same story up here could be told to a group of people visiting later in the White House or in the Senate office, and they'd all laugh and chuckle about it and thoroughly understand and appreciate it because they felt like here was a man who really knew. But oddly enough over the years the press began to pick them up and because the President could tell these humorous stories from our countryside, they would depict him as being sort of a--

F: Cornball.

P: Yes, cornball. And some of the press, who wanted to, would paint it in that light. But every time he told a story it was about people who had had something happen; he was telling a fact of life, and that's why they were good.

F: Let's go on from Whitney.

P: That was in 1956 I believe. He then began to make appearances at different times over the state. He didn't jump into it, but he could see that he was the voice pretty much, the dominant voice, in Texas, and he therefore was very active in the political movement over the state.

At that time we were getting ready for the national convention, and I've got to think back. It seems to me like in 1956 that was the year of the national convention that Mr. Johnson almost was successful, he more than anyone, in nominating John Kennedy as vice president.

F: Texas went for Kennedy over Kefauver, which surprised a lot of

people since Tennessee was a southern state of course.

P: Yes. I also believe that John Connally had nominated Kennedy for vice president. I believe that's correct.

But at any rate during the 1956 campaign Mr. Johnson was active in Adlai Stevenson's bid for election. Although they were not successful, he was a very active part in it. It also distressed him because two years before that time at the state convention our Texas Democratic convention had gone against Stevenson because of the tidelands issue. Governor Shivers had refused to support the party because Stevenson had refused to give him the kind of commitment he said he needed on the tidelands issue. Mr. Johnson recognized that he couldn't sit on the sidelines. He couldn't have the fight between Stevenson and Shivers or the State Democratic [Executive] Committee, and he as a senator could not be just interested and just express himself. He had to take a lead in it. So in the 1956 campaign and the 1958 campaigns, he took a very active part in precinct matters, and eventually through him, he had control of the Democratic state machinery. Governor Price Daniel had come into the picture by then.

F: That's a question I wanted to ask you, because the 1956 and 1958 were very crucial state conventions in which the Johnson-Rayburn wing of the party made itself felt, and in a sense saved it for the national party, as against going a particularly Texas conservative route.

P: Yes. Because of what had happened at Amarillo in 1952 this set in motion an effort to regain control, so to speak, of the Democratic

Party. In 1954 and 1956 a group of liberal people had organized in the state to literally take over the party, and they were called the Democrats of Texas. Now Mr. Johnson, on the other hand, wanted to, in an indirect sense at least, have control of the [State] Democratic Executive Committee or the Democratic Party through his leadership. He didn't want to go either the route of the Shivers people or the route of the Democrats of Texas. This set a stage where a lot of us were somewhat caught in the middle.

It was that time that Price Daniel decided to retire from the Senate and come back to Texas. That was in 1956 that he was elected as governor. The groups at the May convention in Dallas in 1956 nearly--they literally did gain most of their objectives, Mrs. Frankie Randolph and her people. This set the stage in the fall of 1956 whether Governor Daniel would be able to control. Governor Daniel had not been interested particularly in the Democratic executive committee fight or the presidential elector delegates because he was running so hard in the spring and summer of 1956 to be elected that he simply did not have time, couldn't take time. I was in charge of the state organizational campaign for Governor Daniel at the time, and I know the problem that he faced. We ended up at the September convention in 1956 with a stark realization that we did not have control of the Democratic executive committee, and that the incoming Governor would probably be on outs with the party machinery, and that the Democrats of Texas literally were going to take it over from him.

It was at that point that Governor Daniel decided that, as

governor, he had to be the main spokesman. It was also at that time that Governor Daniel had a general agreement with Speaker Sam Rayburn and Senator Johnson that they would help. Now they were in an unenviable position that they certainly appreciated the help of the group, the Democrats of Texas, to win for the Democratic Party, but at the same time the group of the so-called DOT people really would not have run the political machinery, the S.D.E.C., at all in harmony with Senator Johnson or Speaker Rayburn, for that matter, or with Governor-Elect Daniel, because they were a group at that time of minorities who had come together--a large group of the more liberal Mexican-American leaders, some of the Negro leaders, and primarily supported and financed by the labor group. When you got those three together with the so-called loyal Democrats who were saying over the state that the only loyalty you could have would be to the Democratic Party through the DOT, that gave them a good force.

Well, the Fort Worth convention in 1956 was one of the "bloodiest" in the state's history. It required about fifteen or sixteen hours before that convention was finished. We went in at nine in the morning. We didn't come out until about two or three in the morning. We had to have police protection in the front and on the inside. I remember that I was in charge of the Governor's nominations committee, that is, taking selections from these senate--district--caucuses for representation on the executive committee. And they were to be recommended by their county and nominated by our committee and then approved by the convention as a whole, normally a routine procedure.

But starting back in the Shivers days, the governor would look

over the people nominated in district caucuses and if he saw someone on there who was personally obnoxious, he would say, "Knock 'em off." In those days it seemed like I ended up being Peck's bad boy. During Governor Shivers' time and during Governor Daniel's time, I would always end up with the responsibility of screening the executive committee. And because of that fact, I got to be more controversial than either Shivers or Daniel in many respects. I was doing the so-called hatchet work, and it was a very difficult position to be in. But in those days the governor really felt, if he was to be titular head of the party, he ought to have the right to look over and at least say that he didn't want someone on the committee who was personally trying to cut his head off or trying to do things differently from what he wanted to do. And there certainly was a valid argument for that approach. As we look back on it, inevitably that had to change because you couldn't give to one man the sole responsibility of choosing exactly every person on an executive committee. You might want it, but it just can't go that far. We used to try to appeal to a district that said they were going to put up a person that we knew personally was objectionable to the governor. We would try to appeal to them: "Put up somebody else. Put up a third party, put up a person that hasn't personally opposed the governor. And that way, you can have your man." But a lot of times they would not do it. They would bow their necks and just say, "We're going to appoint this man, and that's all, period." Then you had a fight. Each year we get a little less of that. From the

Mineral Wells convention first, and then the next Mineral Wells convention, and then in the Fort Worth convention, we were able to remove some six different people from district caucuses, enough to give Governor Daniel the control of the machinery. But that just shows you how much infighting there was in those days. This fight was in the September convention in Fort Worth in 1956.

All this set the stage of course for the contest that we had in May for the fight between Johnson and Shivers about who was to control the delegates going to the national convention. Mr. Johnson won, and at that point, through his efforts to cooperate with Governor Daniel, and vice versa. Thus the party machinery was kept in the control of the Governor but with certain liberalizations of procedure. We won that convention but it was rough and tough and mean.

We had another mean convention in San Antonio in 1958, which resulted at the end in storming the convention platform, because there were still a few people who had changed on the executive committee. That showed the intensity of feeling on this subject. Finally this practice of screening nominations to the S.D.E.C. was done away with when John Connally came in as governor. He felt that we were past the point where we ought to be "removing" people. Actually he had a big enough vote of the committee, so he didn't have to be just noble about it altogether. But it was a good thing to have gotten all that blood-letting behind us now, because what we do now is a more democratic process. The governor has just got to be sure that he has his people selected ahead of time instead of making a fight down in the committee or the convention floor.

F: Lyndon Johnson as Senate majority leader put through the first civil rights bill of any note in three-quarters of a century. Did he utilize your firm at all to try to prepare Texas for this?

P: No. No, I don't remember that we had any involvement with it. It was strictly a decision, as far as I know, made in Washington. I rather imagine one reason for it was that it just wasn't a subject that you could gain much by talking about it in the newspapers down home. People weren't ready for it, they didn't particularly want it. Nobody was trying to sell the idea. But the storm clouds were gathering, that is, these clouds of changes, and I think Mr. Johnson recognized that it had to come about, and that the most unlikely source of it would be for a southerner and he, as majority leader, to lead it. Because of that fact, he could mollify some of his dear friends like Senator Richard Russell and others who would naturally be opposing him with all their might. He could at least ask them to be relatively quiet about it and see what he could work out, because they wanted him to do well. But I rather imagine the people in Washington didn't know what they could do or what they could get accomplished themselves. And I imagine right up to the very last on that first civil rights bill that they were playing it pretty close to the vest and were not trying to publicize it back home. So we were not brought into it. I wasn't at that point.

F: Did you have any suspicions through here that he might be going for something more than senator?

P: I remember one time I was visiting here in Washington and spent the night at his home. He had asked me the night before, "If I had a chance to become majority leader, do you think I ought to take it?" Ernest McFarland, I believe, had had it just before then and had been defeated.

F: This used to be almost a road to oblivion. You're Senate majority leader, and you're gone. It happened on the Republican side to the Speaker Lucas.

P: That happened about the same time. Scott Lucas. And I guess this was so much in my mind that I was arguing that I didn't know whether that would be the thing to do. About all I did was view it with considerable alarm and doubt. I don't think that I ever really gave him a good definite answer. We drove down the next morning from his home out on 30th Place Northwest, and as we were coming in to the Capitol, he asked me again, "All right, Jacob, what's your decision? Should I go for the majority leader or not?" I said, "Well, I don't know. Unless you think it would lead to something specific which I haven't seen, I doubt that I would want to do it."

Now obviously during those days he was thinking that it <u>was</u> true that the majority leader was a controversial post. You could be asked to do so much in directing the affairs of the Senate that you'd have to neglect your affairs at home. I think he felt at that time that he was in a good, strong enough position back home that he could risk it. I think also he was thinking so much ahead of us that he knew that if he was going to do anything in the

political field, nationally speaking, that he had to take advantage of the opportunity that presented itself, and he couldn't wait to be nominated on the ticket normally because a southerner was not going to be made president or vice president on the Democratic ticket. He knew that. And I guess he was saying, "Now what is a channel and a vehicle?" Obviously he thought the majority leadership could lead him into this.

And it did just that. Those of us who had doubts about that course just weren't thinking far enough down the road like he was. Because from that majority position he proved that he was the strongest political leader in America. There's not any question in anybody's mind, whether Democrat or Republican or friend or foe then or now, that he as majority leader wasn't the most singularly effective man in the United States Senate history. He did get through bills like the civil rights bill, he did give strong leadership, and he knew those senators so well and how they would vote and what they were interested in, that when he had any given bill he didn't have to wonder and doubt and analyze. He could get a good quick vote count on any given issue and knew how to get the ballots and get an understanding so when he walked on the floor it was done. And not many of those votes, I guess, were in doubt. Now I wasn't here in those times. But history tells us that he was certainly the most powerful man. And his relationship with Speaker Rayburn during that time--Mr. Rayburn as speaker, he as majority leader--put those two men, those two Texans, in the most powerful position in

United States history. They influenced and controlled legislation. Not President Eisenhower, who was a fine gentleman and who wanted to do right, but he had no experience in these things and he had to rely on somebody. It turned out to be that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rayburn literally gave leadership to both Democrat and Republican Parties in those years.

F: If President Eisenhower had had, say, John McCormack and Mike Mansfield running Congress, he would have had some problems that he didn't face.

P: I'll tell you he would have had. President Eisenhower was fortunate in those days that those two men, Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Johnson, decided that, as they had often said, they were not going to oppose just for opposition's sake; that they would support the President when they thought he was right, and would give leadership to a position, particularly in international affairs, and domestic, too. And [they] did that.

F: I've taken about all your time I should this morning. Is there anything else on the fifties we ought to get into?

P: I was thinking in terms now of the Los Angeles convention and the years that went beyond that. At that point I don't think I have anything else in those particular years because I was not here, I did not see him all the time. I did see him as senator when he came home. I was a frequent visitor at his Ranch, not as a professional in any sense but just on occasion to visit with him about the state situation. I think Mr. Johnson felt that I knew the state

picture.

I had taken the position from 1956 on as the executive secretary of the State Democratic Executive Committee. Then for nearly six years under Governor Daniel, I worked in that capacity. We had offices right across the street in the Austin Savings Building, and I would clip the papers over the state for political news. I would go out the back door and into the kitchen of the Mansion, and would quite often give these things to the Governor or talk with him about it, and he'd go to the Capitol.

We started for the first time a professional staff with the State Democratic Executive Committee. Heretofore the executive committee had been sort of a hip-pocket thing: that is, the man who was elected as secretary, or chairman, of the convention would keep the records in his own office or in his own back room, and that was it. We had no permanent place to operate from. So we set about then, when Governor Daniel went into office, to build a permanent office. And we did. We got equipment, we got typewriters, we got personnel, and we began to give help to the governor's office. A lot of times a governor, or president for this matter, doesn't really want to fool with his executive committee, or the Democratic National Committee, as the case might be, until just before election. They kind of get in his way because they're a group of sixty, or whatever the number is, people and they have individual thoughts, and he's one man trying to run his own show. We tried to develop a relationship with Governor Daniel that gave us contact with our executive committeeman or woman and

with the senator or representative involved. Even to the point of where a confirmation and appointment came up, our office was given the job--I was--to call a certain person. "If you would be appointed, would you serve, would this suit you?" That way, we knocked down a lot of the opposition of the executive committee. Then, though I was very controversial, I was also in the position to help the governor. I knew people from all over the state because I had worked in three of four campaigns. Mr. Johnson was mindful of that, and we kept in close touch.

Of course, Dr. Joe, I also became extremely controversial. Even when I went in as executive secretary, I was a strong believer in the Democratic Party and in being a loyalist. I never once voted for the Republican ticket, not in 1952 or any other time. I had no part of the 1952 convention. And although I had the highest respect for Governor Shivers then, and now, because he's a very able man, I still did not approve of our state committee not supporting the Democratic nominee. That always is a possibility. You know, you always are faced with that and I would reserve the right. But I thought it has to be a very extreme situation before you do it.

When they put on the campaign way back there about raising money for the Democratic Party--we wanted to raise money on the national level and on the state level--the national committee was constantly trying to get us to raise money to give to the national party. And we, the state, were constantly saying, "We'll raise so much money if we can keep so much money," because both

sides needed it. Oddly enough, this is one of the reasons why President Kennedy did come into Texas, to try to help raise some money and get the warring factions of the Democratic Party together. They had a campaign in those days right at the beginning that they were going to advance called "Dollars for Democrats." I tried to give leadership to it and tried to call some of the liberal people together. We held meetings all over the state to raise money for "Dollars for Democrats." The idea that elections were so expensive that everybody ought to have a part, just a little part, and everybody give a dollar. So they asked me to spearhead it and Governor Daniel said, "Do the best you can on it." And I would try my best. Senator Yarborough at that time was after us good, that is, after Governor Daniel and the state committee. He was also after me because I was, I guess in a sense, part of the muscle up there, so he would rake me over the coals publicly every now and then.

At one of their meetings they started a little phrase that gave me a lot of publicity. It was at one of the Yarborough rallies, as I remember. I think it was Alex Dickey of Denton or Craig Raupe, who actually had worked at one time on Senator Johnson's staff, but at any rate their answer to the "Dollars for Democrat" drive was "Dollars for Democrats, but not a Nickel for Pickle." That got in the paper and it was spread all over the state. To this day all over the state I run into people who will say, "Dollars for Democrats but not a Nickel for Pickle." It gave me a lot of publicity. I've laughed a lot about it since then. And so has Senator Yarborough.

He and I have become good friends because in that day he wasn't after me, he was just giving leadership to his side just as we were trying to win for our side.

F: Were you involved in that Port Arthur story?

P: My firm was. I was not individually except in an indirect sense. I've been given credit for the Port Arthur story by a lot of people, and I must say that I was not unmindful of it. Actually at the time when the Port Arthur story was put together, I had first worked in Senator Johnson's campaign, the Dougherty campaign, and then I was handling the campaign for Judge Few Brewster who was running for re-election to the Texas Supreme Court. I believe it was Few Brewster. I was handling that campaign. At any rate, I had a Supreme Court campaign that I was running totally. My firm then did get into the runoff campaign between Shivers and Yarborough, and my firm was employed and did produce the Port Arthur story. I was counselled about it and talked to them a bit about it. But I really didn't know what they were doing and how they were putting it together. The idea came from several sources and not just from the firm, and our firm was mostly mechanical in putting it together. But the firm did go to Port Arthur, they did film the "story" and ran it statewide on TV. Senator Yarborough said later that that was the thing that defeated him for governor--the Port Arthur story. TV was very young then; but it was powerful.

Two or three years later Bill Brammer who had worked for Senator Johnson came to the office to visit with me one morning, and we were having coffee in my office, and he asked me about the Port

Arthur story. I thought he was still connected with Senator Johnson. He wanted to know why did they film that so early, and I told him, "Why, Bill, you didn't want them to get run over and do it in the middle of the day! There was too much traffic!" The idea or theme of the picture was that Port Arthur was a ghost town. We laughed about it. He went back to the Texas Observer and wrote, "Pickle says this, etc. about the Port Arthur story." And then I had to start denying it all over again. I really was not involved in the Port Arthur story, but my firm did produce it, did put it together, and did write the script.

F: What I was wondering was whether Senator Yarborough ever held that against you personally.

P: No, I don't think so. At the time he probably felt very bitter about it, but he has never really mentioned it. I think he's satisfied that I was not personally involved in it. It has never been an item of controversy between us.

F: One last question. Did the Senate Majority Leader ever express himself to you on the coming of Senator Yarborough to the Senate in these days?

P: No. I don't think so. I don't think he was a party to his election or any opposition to him. I think he let it take its course and when he became the Democratic nominee, Senator Johnson then supported him. Though the press makes a great deal about the opposition of the two, fundamentally they're good political friends. At least Mr. Johnson has told me many, many times personally, "Ralph Yarborough votes for the people, and you might have personal

differences about appointments, a lot of things, but he really does come nearer voting for the people than anybody that has been there in a long time." So there have never been any philosophic differences between the two.

F: Okay, let's let you get on to something else.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview III]

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