

## INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: SIDNEY SUBLETT "SUB" PYLAND

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Pyland's residence, Abilene, Texas

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G: This is a good place to start. You're going to talk about the A and O [Alpha and Omega, later White Stars].

P: Yes.

G: How it got started.

P: Actually, initially it got started, we fellows in 1929 were circulating there together. I was ineligible and working out--I'd go down and take the scrubs that would scrimmage against the varsity during these times. But I was running around with Horace Richards, Lyndon [Johnson], Upton Breeden, Wilton Woods, I could name off several of those boys that I can just think of off the top of my hat. And we were really helpful to the football team and their endeavors. We printed signs and did all kinds of things. I could paint the signs and we'd go decorate the field and decorate the special trains when we'd go to ball games in 1929. So we were really helpful to them.

But during the meantime we organized this because O. W. Strahan, who came here [to Southwest Texas State Teachers College] in 1919 as the coach, had had this

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secret athletic fraternity by which he could control all his football players I guess, name the captains, *et cetera*. Now this is the way I remember it way back there, but it never did necessarily reflect the people that maybe somebody thought should have been captain or should have been something else, should have been president of this certain class. But this thing was going on secretly there for years called the Black Stars, a secret athletic fraternity.

G: Was the Black Stars the name of it or was that--?

P: Yes--well, that's what we all called it. It didn't have any name that I knew of. They didn't know we knew they were operating, but Lyndon and all of them, you don't fool Lyndon Johnson nor Horace Richards nor--what's my friend over in Florida?

G: Vernon Whiteside.

P: Vernon Whiteside. Yes, he and I were real good friends for years and years. He was raised in Lockhart and I was raised in San Marcos. So we'd been friends all our lives. He and I, I guess, were the first athletes in this organization. He was a track man and wasn't much of a football player, you know, but he was a good track man. But he had interests in that direction. That didn't really have much to do with it. But I kind of liked their theory on it. I knew I was kind of a little bitter toward the coaching deal. I'd watched it since I was a kid, go down and watch the college workouts and all. I knew what a tough fellow he was. I don't know, I just built up a resentment and so I was very eager to go along with their platform, Lyndon and these boys that had brought it up. I imagine Horace Richards because he was always at the bottom of everything. It was a good idea. Well, we'll organize our own deal. We'll control the student elections, we'll protect

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ourselves, just pull politics in school is what it amounted to. Of course it ended up my getting beaten out of the captaincy because they found out I was a member of this fraternity that we organized. We'd run then for two or three years before they even knew we were in operation. We controlled the elections. I remember old Horace telling me one time about going in and [he] railroaded some election in one classroom and he had one class in another section and he actually wasn't even in that grade. But he got by with running a dark horse in there and controlled the election in that particular run. I don't know whether he was a sophomore, junior, or what, maybe he was a senior, but anyway.

G: But how did you work it, because it seems like you must have had a very limited membership?

P: Just we fellows who were running around together seemed to associate, and there were nine of us. I know this night we went down to the Hofheinz Hotel there in San Marcos, the old Hofheinz Hotel, right back of the First National Bank. We met up in one of the rooms and I've heard Whiteside say many a time, "We didn't have a Bible in there, we had something else to swear by." But anyway, we took the oath there and wrote up the minutes of this meeting and elected officers. I can't remember just exactly what but there were nine of us there. I remember that. I was a member of that nine and they got me ten in here due to the fact that I dropped out and hadn't gone back to the meetings. I hadn't heard from them. I didn't even know it still existed for years after I came out here and somebody heard about me and let them know and I get to hearing from them and I attending the meetings. It wasn't that I wasn't in sympathy with them and wasn't still happy with them. I never did get in the Black Stars. I never was a member of the athletic

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fraternity. As a matter of fact, when they found out I was a member of this one it caused me to not get the captaincy. They ran a dark horse in there that shouldn't even have had a football suit, Elvin Read, back in 1932, I guess, 1931 or 1932, whenever it was. But I was the quarterback and backed up the line on defense, because we played sixty minute ball in those days. I was a pretty popular football player but was never a member of the other organization.

G: Why?

P: I just never did [join it]. I was in sympathy with all these boys and stayed with them and remained friends with them. Although I played with the teams, I never was asked or never did get to attend one of their meetings or anything. I just didn't know. I think we realized our objective there but it was something to do. There wasn't anything to do in those depressing times. We didn't have any money to spend so we had to have some fun of our own. But that's kind of the origin of it. I think that Lyndon and Horace Richards and Vernon Whiteside were really the originators of this thing. From then on it grew, and a lot of these boys were in there years later that I didn't even know were members of it, after I met them and my wife and family. You know, a lot of years has passed. I'd taken all of my children, all four of them--there they are, four children. At different junctures, you know, I would attend one of these meetings. It was real nice. It was fine to see all these people that had such a hard time back in a very depressing time, [to see] that most of them evolved into pretty good citizens. Not leftists, you know. Most of them have the right perspective. They're law-abiding and religious folks trying to educate their children, the basis of America I guess. But I think it's real nice to look back to see what a

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hard time we had back those days and how easy it is nowadays. Whatever we did, they turned out to be pretty good citizens.

G: Do you recall what your first election was after you formed the group, what race you contested first?

P: Well, I think the student elections, as best I remember. I wasn't involved in it. That's about all we got. There wasn't a whole lot to do. This was the first notoriety we got, feeling like we had steamrolled some of the elections and we had enough members there to kind of get into that.

G: There is a story of Bill Deason's election to class president I believe and how LBJ worked . . .

P: What was Bill's number in there, incidentally?

G: I believe he's number four.

P: Well, he was one of the charter members then.

G: Five, I'm sorry.

P: He was one of the first nine. Yes, Bill Deason, I remember him, sure.

G: Do you recall that race? Do you recall his election to class president?

P: No.

G: Was that a White Star effort. I mean an A and O effort?

P Oh, I'm sure it was. I'm sure it was. He was a real popular fellow in any event and would have been a leader. I think a lot of Bill Deason. I did then and I've seen him years later just intermittently to visit with him. Of course he stayed with Lyndon and worked for him a long time, didn't he? Didn't he go to Washington with him?

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G: Well, he went with the ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission].

P: I see.

G: The official name was the--

P: Alpha Omega. Yes.

G: Do you know why that name was chosen or who suggested it?

P: Well, that evolved the night we had our meeting and named it there. I don't know whether Whiteside or who suggested it, but I remember we were about two hours down there and we rented a room down at the hotel, for no reason particularly except to isolate ourselves away from some of the dormitories or houses. There was not much place we could get in isolation when we organized it, but I remember the room.

G: How did you select the nine people to be invited?

P: There just happened to be nine of us, that was it, that were kind of inviting each other.

G: How did you find out about it?

P: Well, they just invited me up with them and I was running around with Bill Deason and Upton--well, Upton Breeden wasn't there then--Wilton Wood I believe, Lyndon, Horace Richards and Vernon Whiteside. Now those are the ones that I knew more intimately I guess than any. And I would guess--they're still contesting which was number one, Horace and Vernon. I don't really remember, because they both had the guts to do it. I was a good friend to both of them. I ran around with both of them. We were real close friends.

G: Where did the name the White Stars originate?

P: Because the others were called Black Stars. They never did have real names. That was

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the moniker everyone gave them, the athletic fraternity, called it the Black Stars. So the next thing you know everybody got to calling us the White Stars. That's where it came from, just because it was opposite of the Black Stars.

G: Was it well known on the campus that the organization was in existence?

P: Within about a year's time it got to be pretty well known. As I said, it took about that long before they railroaded me on the student elections. The coach was mad about it. He never talked to me about it because he and I nearly had fights two or three times. He knew I'd fight him in a minute and everybody in this organization knew that.

But I remember going to the election and Francis Sanders was a good friend of mine. Francis had played quarterback his freshman year, my ineligible year, in 1929 and he was playing with the varsity. The next year, of all people, if I hadn't been there, ideally suited for the captain's seat, Sanders was and I was going to vote for him. We started the election. The Gaillardians, the girl beauties up at the college, [were] the ones that sponsored this every year, the election of the next year's football [officers]. It seems so trivial, so incidental now but it was a big thing in those days. Francis came out, and I was on the outside talking to some of the people, hadn't gone to the table yet. They had us sitting by each one of those girls, sitting by different ones. I was supposed to sit by George Vest's sister. I knew her real well. He used to coach for the varsity there for a little while. George Vest did, married one of those Knapp girls with the Chevrolet deal down in the Valley.

Anyway, Sanders called me outside and said, "Sub, they've got the election

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framed. You and I are going to get split votes because you know you're going to vote for me and I'm going to vote for you and the rest of the votes are going to go to"--they had somebody else could have been made possibly captain, but they used the dark horse, Elvin Read, who'd just barely lettered, but he was a nice boy and he was subservient to the coach. So he said, "Elvin Read." I said, "Good god almighty, I don't even know how he got a uniform." And I made a big scene. I left the banquet and wouldn't even stay and apologize to the Vest girl for embarrassing her. I just turned my plate over and walked out when they came in because I found out about it. And sure enough, it came out that way. They elected him. They had to get Claude Kellam to come and get me and talk me into coming. I wasn't even going to work out with them the next day and they wanted me. Claude Kellam was over in San Antonio, was athletic director of San Antonio public schools, who had coached me in high school. We were good friends and [he was] Jesse's brother. So he came over and came to my house and talked to my dad and my mother and me. He's a pretty persuasive fellow, a very patient fellow. I always respected him; I still respect him. He was just voted into the Hall of Fame down here this last T banquet [?]. I didn't attend.

Anyway, that was the only reason I came back. But I got so mad about it and played with Elvin Read as captain next year. The only reason they did it was because I belonged to the White Stars; I had joined this other organization.

G: Did you take in members every semester or every year? What was the process?

P: I can't remember. I think whenever we could get a quorum together we'd vote on another fellow. I don't know how many blackballs he had to have, I can't remember. I believe

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this is the way we did it, because several came in after this initial deal. I guess Horace or Vernon probably remember that better than I.

G: Did you get a guy his freshman year or his sophomore year, his junior year?

P: I don't think that particularly [mattered]. We just sized up a pretty good fellow we thought would be a good citizen or a good student, good member. I don't think that had any merit on it. And each one would recommend somebody. I can't remember anyone particularly that I recommended but I noticed that several of the boys that I knew real well were members of it.

G: What about initiation? Was there an initiation?

P: I don't think we ever initiated anybody; I don't remember. We kind of hung together. I know when we went on a special train to a football game this year when we had this organization in 1929, like we went up to Southwestern University, all of us fellows kind of hung together. The best I remember there were several of us there together. If there was any carousing or drinking or hell-raising, well, we'd be all together. I don't know, we were just friends. This was a gradual thing. I left there and actually didn't attend one of the meetings for so long. I guess if it hadn't been for this fellow, [Walter] Richter, I might have never attended another meeting.

But you see how many more members they had gotten in there since I was a member. I was one of the charter members. We ran around all the time. Golly, Horace Richards and Vernon Whiteside, we'd sit up at night. Horace always had a little money and he could go buy some--I remember buying some sign cloth, ducking, strips of it, fifty foot long, like that, and we'd go down there and borrow my old friend Harry Wilcoxon's

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sign shop in the middle of the night. Like they were going to have a big game out there, I remember several of those banners we'd put on the sides of the special trains, and I'd be up all night painting those darn things and the guys would help me fill in. Of course, I could paint signs pretty well. Horace and them would help me and we'd get the money together some way to buy the material and use up everybody. But we were really--in my ineligible year there the team won the TIAA [Texas Intercollegiate Athletic Association], won the conference, and I think mostly due to our enthusiastic help.

G: Did LBJ go to the games?

P: Yes, he sure did. He always liked athletics. He'd like to have been an athlete, I think. It just wasn't his cup of tea, wasn't really built for it much, you know. He was real tall and slender when I first met him, when he borrowed this sweater and went back to Johnson City with it, wore it all year long. Of course, that's about all we had in those days was a pair of pants and a sweater to wear. He didn't even have a sweater.

G: Do you recall the first time you met him?

P: I keep thinking of the old San Marcos High School grounds. I think we had a softball game out there and I believe [he was there]. He was living up--I don't know where the house was, I've been in the house with him. So we must have made friends then. This must have been about in 1924 or 1925 it seems like. But we played softball then. We'd play late in the evening like [on] Sunday afternoon right on the campus of San Marcos High School, and right up this alley was right to his house about a block away. Just in the back of my mind I think that's where I must have met him, because every kid in town would come out there and play softball.

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G: Was he interested in student politics from his--?

P: Oh, yes. He and Horace and what-you-call-it [Vernon] were leaders to begin with. I can look back and see it now. They were natural born leaders and they were good students. See, Lyndon's job, I think he got to be secretary to the registrar to the president there. I remember I'd see him in the office there years later. We didn't associate as much as we had back there in high school days. But in sub-college there we were pretty good friends.

I remember him going with a girl by the name of Johnson. [Alfred T.] Boody Johnson who played football with the college there, [she was his] sister, lived in Lytle, Texas. I didn't know until years later and met his wife. I'd never known her before. But when I remembered him he was a pretty close friend of this girl. He was with her a whole lot. Like Upton Breeden married Audelle. They were together constantly; they went together all during college there and I never think of either one being seen with another mate. But I remember Lyndon going with this girl.

G: What was her first name, do you remember?

P: I can't remember. Her brother's name was Boody Johnson and he was a good football player, played there with the college just a little ahead of me. I know if I wanted to find out what was going on in school, one of the three I would have gone to, or the four, maybe Bill Deason, Horace Richards, Vernon Whiteside or Lyndon Johnson.

G: I've gotten the impression that perhaps some of the students did not regard LBJ as popular because he was close to the administration.

P: Yes, he was. Well, they can't say he wasn't a good student because I'm sure there was nothing came between him and he had a lot of things to do, too. He had it pretty rough,

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too. I know looking back on it now everybody had it pretty tough then. But I know we had a whole lot finer home. We were living higher on the hog, say, if that's a good expression to use, but we were all so poor no one noticed the difference. You just didn't pay much attention to it. We didn't reflect on it like that was a barometer. But Lyndon, I know, was a tenacious fellow. He'd have made a fine athlete if he had been playing, because whatever he did he was going to put his heart in it. That kind of separated us when he got up further in college because, well, he got on the debating team and that didn't appeal to me. But you had to put a whole lot of extra heart in to be doing that as much as it would [to be] down playing football, extracurricular activities. You know, he had to put in a lot of heart there to do that. I remember him doing that, and we'd see each other on the campus. But we didn't run around a whole lot together later on. But when we were first intimate was when we first started back in sub-college and he had to, I assume, improve his grade points from an unaffiliated high school. I'm guessing that's what happened.

G: How did this process work? Did he have to take courses or take exams?

P: Well, [they had] a little school out there. I imagine they had a one-room schoolhouse out at Stonewall, wherever he went to school, or Johnson City, wherever it was. Those kids from the country towns would come in, they'd have to go a calendar year or go a year until they found out if they were up with that bracket educationally before they could get their diploma to get out of high school. They wouldn't accept them in college. In other words, they had to be qualified. Of course, if they were twenty-one years old, they could get in on their individual efforts, but prior to that so many of them came in, and the sub-

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college had so many of them that would come. Maybe they had older brothers or sisters but their diploma wouldn't be acceptable as an entrance to the college and they'd have to go--I don't know why the word calendar year came to me but I'm thinking this is what happened. So Lyndon had to go a year there I know before he was able to be accepted in college, for his college courses.

G: Was there a sort of a difference in status between those who lived there in San Marcos and whose families were there and the students who were just boarding there? I gather, for example, that San Marcos students tended to control things a lot.

P: This is probably what prompted this organization, this athletic fraternity. The Black Stars, I'm sure that started there in San Marcos. It probably did have something to do with it. I hadn't reflected on that, had no reason to, but I'm satisfied that's probably what started it, back when it started. It was already in operation, you know, like way back there, and I was very interested in college football. I was down there watching them play every day. Ed Horton [?] and I would hitchhike, barefoot kids, to out-of-town games to see them play. We wouldn't have a quarter in our pocket. I've talked to Red Hildrith [?], who played back on the old championship 1921 team. He's a good friend of my brother's and they go bird hunting together down there. He'd tell me about the time Ed Horton and I--Ed's dead now--they'd take us on the bus and feed us because we just took off to see them play football somewhere. We grew up in the atmosphere liking to play football. I'm sure Lyndon had this same attitude. He never did have a chance, I guess, to play out at Johnson City. A lot of the fellows never got a chance. Might have been all right, it's mostly heart anyway, and opportunity.

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G: But it seems that the students from San Marcos were better known, were more likely to be elected to things.

P: They kind of controlled it. I'm satisfied it did. It was a little local affair there that controlled everything regardless of what outsiders did. I'm satisfied this is what prompted the organization of this. Have you talked to some of these other people about it?

G: Yes. Another feature it seems to me is the campus had an awful lot of organizations: literary societies, debating teams.

P: Yes. Of course I wouldn't have been as interested in that as some of the other boys. I'm satisfied [that's] the reason they organized because I wouldn't have been the one to start it, but I went along with it. I'm satisfied that that had a lot to do with it. It was actually mostly opposed to some outsiders coming in, out-of-town boys or girls coming in and having any control over the running of the school. That's the way politics is born though.

G: Anything on Professor [H. M.] Greene?

P: Loved him like a daddy. He and I were good friends.

G: Really?

P: Had a few drinks together, too. He was a character.

G: Was he sort of an *ex officio* sponsor of the A and O?

P: He got along with both sides of the realm, I tell you that. That old boy was a pretty sharp cookie. He'd have been my idea of a guy to have up there as a congressman. He'd have made a good one I bet you. I bet Lyndon would have said the same thing, just looking back on it. I remember in the classroom he would sit there and have a chalk box in his

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desk, pull it out and spit tobacco juice in it or go off and spit out the window outside on somebody standing out on the campus, teaching school like that, he was kind of a throwback. I'd go out to his house and visit with him and take him a drink. We'd sit there and have a drink together. He was a character. He seemed to get close to anybody, whatever it took to get close. He had that faculty without showing it. Just an ordinary fellow, but a real strong fellow.

G: What were his politics? Did you ever get any insight there?

P: I never did know, but he was real close to Lyndon. He thought a lot of him. Of course, he ran the debating team, and Lyndon was one of his boys. I don't know, that didn't appeal to me.

G: Did he advise the A and O?

P: He later got in it.

G: Did he?

P: I didn't know. He might have prompted the thing. I can't--I won't say that.

G: I see him on the list here.

P: Oh, yes, he got on the list later. Of all people that were acceptable to me--I don't remember whether I was involved in the voting for him or not, but the name appeared on there and I never did get to go to a meeting. See, I missed them for years and years and I didn't even know it was still in operation. They still carried my name forward and I just barely knew Walter Richter and all of a sudden I get to appreciating him. He sees my brother-in-law, Bob Kercheville [?] and talks to him every now and then. I saw Bob Sunday. He might have been at the bottom of the whole thing.

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G: Well, he's listed down at ninety, which is pretty high up.

P: What, ninety? Yes, that's pretty far along. But I bet you--

G: You don't remember him at any of the meetings then?

P: No, no. I never did see Professor Greene at any of the meetings. Now his boy came along, his boy was a member of it, too, wasn't he?

G: Yes.

P: I can't remember his name.

G: How about Beauford?

P: Beauford, that's it. I didn't know him well. He was just a kid there when I knew him.

G: Anything else on his teaching style?

P: Well, I don't know whether he patterned after Abraham Lincoln, what I would have thought he would have been like, because he was an outdoorsman. You ought to have seen his house. Man, it was something else. I started to walk out his back porch, he said, "Don't step out there, Sub. I haven't finished that yet." I go out there and there's a hog sleeping right out on there. He had the wood around ready to pour the concrete but never had poured it. No hurry. No housekeeper at all. Everybody would joke about it. His collar never was ironed, he never wore his tie pulled up and might not be freshly shaven. But he was a character, I tell you. Everybody loved him. Smart fellow. He'd go along with you. In an argument you'd never know he was arguing with you. He'd have his way about it, in the classroom the same way. He was very reluctant to intimidate anybody, hurt their feelings. It reminds me of my boss that I worked with so long here at Western Chevrolet. It would take you two days to know you'd been eaten out by him. That was

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kind of Professor Greene. So everybody loved him, tried to get in his class. Not that he was particularly easy, because he'd be harder than anybody, but he'd try to teach you something. Actually it was educational just to be in his class; you learned something even if you never looked at a book, and sometimes I wonder whether it's necessary to do that or not. If you have a man that's a good enough lecturer, you know, you can get a good deal of education out of that.

G: He was a bachelor, I gather?

P: No, he was married. I don't remember. I met his wife and she was just kind of in the background. Didn't dress very strongly, just kind of backwoods people. That's the way they were. It was really odd. But of course Lyndon loved him. Well, all these boys, the guys here thought a lot of him. I'm sure President Evans thought a lot of him.

G: I was going to ask you about Dr. [Cecil] Evans.

P: Dr. Evans. I knew him real well. Yes, he'd been there at the college since I remember. See, Dr. [A. W.] Birdwell left the college and went over to be the president of Stephen F. Austin [State] Teachers [College] when they built it and I was over there and played my freshman year there so I got to see some of the old teachers that were from San Marcos [who] were over there. I just stayed there one semester, had a run-in with the coach and left and came back home. This is the year I had to go a calendar year to become eligible to play in 1930; was in 1929. That's when we all got together. Whatever was going on in the college, well, we probably organized it or did it, this bunch, that A and O right there.

G: I believe there was a Dr. [A. H.] Nolle also, who was dean of faculty.

P: Dr. Nolle, real smart fellow. Yes, I knew him real well, knew the whole family, and

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everybody knew him. Everybody kind of looked at him as kind of an oddball. He was a little distant, a little unapproachable, not very personable, very dignified fellow. I remember one year I went back home--it had been several years--and he and his wife were coming out of the show and I was down there to meet someone at the show and he came out, Dr. Nolle. He comes up very gracefully, "It's nice to see you, Mr. Pyland. My wife," and I shook hands with her. He had a lot of polish about him. He'd wear his collar pretty stiff, too. Dr. Nolle, now he was a real sharp fellow, brilliant man, but I didn't think he was as close--he might have been as close to Lyndon and some of the better scholars than I. And I was a good friend. I liked him. We got along just fine.

My favorite was the dean of men, H. E. Speck. Oh, man, what a fine fellow he was. He loved athletics, too. If it hadn't been for Dean Speck I doubt if I could have played football ever, because I was always getting in some kind of scrape. But old Dean, you just tell him the truth, that's all he wanted. His son is out there at ACC [Abilene Christian College] now. I saw him here a while back. He had to tell me who he was. He'd gotten gray-headed, I hadn't seen him in a while. He's H. E. Speck, Jr.

G: What were some of the favorite student activities? What would you do, for example, for social life?

P: Well, we had the college dances. That was a big thing. We always got name bands down there.

G: Did you have them in the girls' gym?

P: In the girls' gym or the boys' gym. We had I don't know how many of them, maybe two a year. We didn't have very many, but that was a big [thing]. We just didn't have much

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activities. I didn't belong to any of the fraternities or anything else--they didn't have much going on or any particular clique, because it was a pretty small school. I don't remember how many students we had then. We would have had less than a thousand I guess during the wintertime, didn't we?

G: I gather there were more girls than boys.

P: Yes, particularly in the summertime. See, they'd have four or five thousand students there because there are two or three thousand in the summertime. But of course they have all these girls who were teaching school. They'd come get a certificate enabling them to teach one year and they'd have to go back and enhance that. That's the way I remember it. I think the teachers college did a whole lot for the country because a lot of those people came up there that would have to mortgage their farms to be able to send their kid to school to get a teachers certificate so they could come back and help support their family. That's something that's hard for fellows as young as you to fathom, but I could see so many of them did it. I'm sure they were all straining just like people strain now.

G: LBJ left for a term to go to teach school in Cotulla. Do you remember that?

P: I didn't remember that, but I read about it later. After thinking about it I remembered he was gone teaching. I didn't know where it was. It was down in South Texas. It was Cotulla and I remember seeing some pictures of it when he taught down there. I'm sure that was what he was doing to get some money ahead because he wasn't making [money in San Marcos]. Now Ed Cape was quite a benefactor of Lyndon's. He was president of the Texas Bank and Trust Company there in San Marcos and he was a good friend of

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mine.

G: Oh, really?

P: Oh, yes. I thought the world of him. He lived right next door to my sister--Bob Kercheville and Virgie Kercheville. As a matter of fact, since I've been here I delivered a new Cadillac to them over at the Cadillac house. That was a 1938 [?] model, delivered it to him right there next door to him. I drove in that night, and the next morning I went over when he was up and we went down to his office down over the bank building.

As a matter of fact, I was talking to him--this is on tape, maybe I shouldn't even mention it--about bumping into Sam Houston [Johnson]. I came through with my boy Randy, who's thirty-four now. Randy was with me then, just a little fellow, and we stopped at a drug store there. [There] was a Fawcett girl who went to college there with us, was a friend of Lyndon's, and her daddy had this drug store there in Johnson City.

G: Truman Fawcett.

P: Was that his name? I didn't remember. But anyway, I stopped by there just years later when I'm driving through Johnson City. [I thought] "Lyndon may be here now. I'll stop at this drug store, Fawcett, that's familiar. I remember this Fawcett girl. I had several classes with her." And I stopped by and she was married and off somewhere else, because there had been a lot of years elapsed, but I met her brother who was working in the store. I bought us sunglasses because we were driving into that sun; it was about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. I got just plain glasses and I bought a pair for Randy and a pair for me. I asked him, "Is Lyndon in town?" He said, "No, he just left, but Sam Houston is." "Yeah? Where's Sam Houston?" Well, he walked out the door and showed

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me how to get to his house.

I drove up there and pulled up to the front door and Randy was still sitting in the car out in front. I wanted to get on in before dark, but anyway I wanted to stop and visit a little. He never was as close a friend as Lyndon was, but I knew him and knew the whole family. So I went in. His wife came--whom I'd never met-- to the door and she hollered back at him, said, "A Mr. Pyland is out there, wants to see you, so I'm going to invite him on in." He was in there in bed. I guess it was four or five o'clock in the afternoon. I walked in there. He was in just his shorts. I shook hands with him and sat there and talked to him a minute, but I don't know whether he was drunk or not but I don't think he ever knew who I was. I knew him; he hadn't changed that much. He had different hair, kinky hair. He looked more like his mother. And so did Josefa; they were both blonde and had kinky hair, blonde kinky hair, and Lyndon's was long wavy hair like Rebekah's, because they were more alike, tall.

Anyway, I left and came on back. Next morning we were down at the bank and I was sitting there with Ed Cape, having a drink with him on Sunday morning, fixing up the check and the title papers on this Cadillac I had delivered him, made a deal over the telephone. Of course, we reminisced about the time the bank got robbed in 1923 or 1924 there, and half the people in the bank got fired over it. There was a lot of things I don't care about revealing now, but he'd talked to me about. Anyhow, I told him that I'd stopped in Johnson City on the way down to see if Lyndon [was there], because knew Ed Cape thought a lot of him and had helped him a lot during school time. It was just odd that the president of the bank--after they had the shake-up he was made president of it,

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and was a prominent lawyer there, too. Well, the bank was in the Cape Building.

Anyway, I told him about seeing Sam Houston up there, but I said, "I talked to him about thirty minutes and I don't even believe he knew who I was. He had a wild look on his face. I don't know whether he was on dope or drunk or what." Ed said. "Well, he probably didn't recognize you. He was probably drunk, something like that." Just passed it off. No disrespect to him, but actually I didn't think he ever recognized me. So I bid him *adieu* and his wife, too, and left to go on back and told my son about it, just a little boy. We drove on back. But we discussed this; I remember us talking about it down in Ed's office over the bank there the next morning.

G: Did Ed Cape know LBJ when LBJ was a student there?

P: Oh, yes. Yes. He knew him real well. I had evidence of it but I am sure that Ed Cape any time Lyndon needed it--because he was sponsoring him in politics. At the time we were talking that time, this Canyon Dam thing was being conceived, and he suggested to me I might want to buy some of that land up there. I said, "Oh, I wouldn't be interested in it." But anyway, we discussed it. I talked to him a long time. I don't know, I always thought Ed kind of liked me; he knew my daddy, knew my whole family. But I was an athlete and he liked athletics. He had gone to A & M. I don't remember whether he played football down there or not. He had a brother my age and we'd gone through high school together, Enos Cape.

But Ed and I always remained good friends up until he died. I'd go to San Marcos, I'd go by and visit him and have a drink with him. He was a pretty good bottle man. I never did see him drunk but he'd have a drink with you, talk a little politics. But

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he was always talking about Lyndon. So he kept up with him and I figured he was one of his foremost sponsors in San Marcos. The family probably didn't even know this, but I knew it. Because I liked Lyndon. He knew that he and I were good friends. Ed, I'm sure, financially helped him some because you know, we were all pretty poor folks back in those days.

(Interruption)

G: Can you tell me about that Gates boarding house?

P: It was right at the foot of the hill on the east side of the street that's now Lyndon B. Johnson. I guess all the heavy eaters--Joe Vance--we buried Joe down at Devine here a while back, greatest athlete I ever knew, played ball. Lyndon knew him real well--Goofy [Clark] Gordon--I don't know whether he's still alive, lived in San Antonio. But they were the heartiest eaters of all the people who ate at Mrs. Gates' house. There was a Gates boy and a Gates girl I believe that went to college there with us. But that was a real popular boarding house, right at the foot of the hill on the left side coming down. It was a shotgun-looking house, a long straight deal, but she had a long boarding table there.

Incidentally, in bringing up the Gates house, did anybody bring up the Pirtle house?

G: No.

P: That was where Bill Deason and nearly all the boys [lived]. You could always get a congregation up at the Pirtle house. It was up on top of the hill right next to the Wray house. The boys' boarding house, all the windows were knocked out. It was an unsightly

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looking thing. All the boys that stayed there, Mrs. Pirtle, they loved her like a mother. They could go to the icebox any time of night and eat. I remember the Pirtle House and the Gates house. See, I lived there in town, so very rarely would I ever get to go around with these boys at the boarding houses and eating houses. But I remember the Gates boarding house. Gee, I'd forgotten about that. She had a real nice boy. He was about my age. I don't know what ever happened to him, a nice looking fellow. He went to college there. I can't remember his sister.

G: Anything on Miss [Mary C.] Brogdon?

P: Brogdon. Dean of women. I could write a book on her. I imagine Lyndon could, too. I've been in her office several times. She'd get Dean Speck in. Like the time they caught me in bed at the Wray house, one of the girls' dormitories there. Miss Brogdon frowned on that considerably. She was about to kick those girls out of school and I had to tell a lie because it was somebody else's fault. It really wasn't my fault. Old Dean Speck knew that I lied about it, but he appreciated my coming to the rescue because they were going to kick [them out]. The girl's name, she's married to a doctor down here in Gatesville right now, her name was Hazel Mehard [?] and I can't remember her roommate's name. She went with one of these boys. But anyway, it was just for fun. I opened the window and climbed in. They were both good friends. There wasn't anything going on. The old lady Wray caught me there and reported me to Miss Brogdon. Really, nothing transpired except there was a lot of scandal. That was a scandalous thing to do, in the middle of the night, half drunk, [to] get caught in this girls' boarding house.

I told Dean Speck just what happened, and on another occasion similar to that

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where girls were caught out all night, didn't get back till next afternoon. He called me in after it was over with. And I got kicked out of school for it but those two girls got to stay in. They let them stay in school. Later on he told me he knew that there was a doctor's son there in town who was a sissy. He just told a lie about what had happened. It was actually his fault that caused the whole thing. I got kind of trapped in it. Of course, I was ready for a good joke any time but I wasn't that bad a fellow.

Miss Brogdon--I made a statement one time to my daddy about driving. He was such a reckless driver. I said, "One of these days you and Miss Brogdon are going to get caught going the wrong direction, of course, in a one-way street, and both of you are going to get killed." She was notably a bad driver. She had more wrecks than anybody, had no business driving a car. But she held a tight thumb on ten o'clock curfew. Those girls had to come in.

G: How did she get along with LBJ?

P: I imagine [very well]. Of course, he was such an apple polisher, you know, and she liked that. He'd have been a better hand at it in those days than I would have. I imagine he got along with her, but I imagine he had some problems. I imagine he's been in that office a few times because he kind of liked the gals, too, you know. We were human. We were only human, and so were the girls. We had a lot of friends. I guess they were the best times. I'd like to sit down sometime and reflect, and try to remember all the things that did happen. Had nothing to do anything with, you know, the time we were going to school. That was a real trying era. They think Carter's got a problem now, just think what they thought about back in those days when we were going to school. You didn't

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know where your next meal was coming from but you didn't care much. (Interruption)

G: Let's talk about that.

P: He borrowed this [sweater]. That was my first high school football sweater. We had a brown sweater with a white stripe, one stripe on it. I designed the letter for it, an H. S-M-H was the way it went. He wore that sweater and went back to Johnson City and he didn't give me the sweater. I wrote him about it and he didn't send it to me. I called him about it and he wouldn't send it. So we fussed about it. So I drove to Johnson City and got it once; my folks drove me up there one Sunday after church and got that sweater. I told Judge Ely [of Abilene] about it before he died and he went to Washington way back years ago and he talked to Lyndon about it. He said, yes, he didn't have a sweater to wear and I lent him one and he remembered about it. It made him sound kind of like Abraham Lincoln. And to look back on it I guess it was pretty trying. Of course, I was real proud of that sweater.

Incidentally, I got my letter sweater hanging back there. It looks brand new, 1932. My wife and mother kept it all these years and we opened it up a while back. It's hanging in my closet right there. Because I've never worn the thing any more than I did my ring that Cadillac gave me. It got stolen here a while back but I recovered it because it had my name written on it. Somebody stole it and the silverware [?].

You know, you get to thinking about . . . you get to be as old a man as I am, it's pretty hard to remember the things that would be interesting to his kiddos or maybe someone else coming along that thought a lot of Lyndon B. Johnson. You know, a lot of little things did happen that would be nice to remember now. I'm bound to have thought

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a lot of him or I wouldn't have let him have my sweater.

Lyndon was a real ardent football supporter. He came out to the games and he was leading in the yells, very enthusiastic. He was a full-fledged student. He was always active in all the student functions. I always kind of looked up to him. He was a whole lot brighter boy than I am. But for some reason we hit it off together there when I first met him, when he first came there, and we got to be real good friends.

I just thought his mother was an angel. She was a pretty little woman, looked more like Josefa, had blonde, curly hair, but worked real hard. I always figured she was the human dynamo behind him. I never did know; I'd just meet Mr. Johnson. He'd sit there, bald-headed, and had this string bow tie and looked kind of like Jim Ferguson to me, a big fellow. But I don't know what he did, had some kind of a political job. But his mother kind of raised the kids and I'd always see her there, after reflecting on it. But she got around just like my mother; she had a lot of work to do trying to bring those kids up under very trying circumstances. But I always thought she was a real pretty little woman, blonde, as I said, looked more like Josefa. Josefa and Sam Houston looked more like the mother and Rebekah and Lyndon looked more like the daddy, his features, little darker skin and black hair. Lyndon had real pretty hair.

G: Well, I certainly do thank you. I appreciate your time.

P: I wish I could contribute something to it. It was nice to visit with you. I didn't feel like I knew a whole lot to give you. Probably think of something after you leave.

G: We'll have another shot at it if [you do].

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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