INTERVIEW I

DATE: December 19, 1985

INTERVIEWEE: HORACE E. RICHARDS

INTERVIEWER: Ted Gittinger

PLACE: Mr. Richards' residence, Corpus Christi, Texas

Tape 1 of 2, Side 1

G: When did you enroll at San Marcos first?

R: It was 1923.

G: 1923? That's pretty early. That's earlier than I had expected.

R: Well, you know, I'm eighty-one years old. In 1923 I was going to school in Stockdale.

G: I see.

R: I got into a little trouble there at school and got kicked out. I was graduating that year so the folks sent me over to San Marcos. They had a sub-college over there, the tenth and eleventh grade. I entered over there and had a pretty rough time because this was more or less of a country school that I'd been going to. But I finished the tenth grade and the eleventh grade and then I went all the way through college and almost got my master's degree, but I couldn't make a living anymore teaching school so I got away from that and went into business.

Well, I didn't go into business exactly at that time. The first thing I did, I got a job with the OPA during the war, and I was with them several years. After that I came here to Corpus Christi to go into the commercial refrigeration business, and I was in that for

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twenty or twenty-five years. Before that, though, I taught school for seventeen years, the last seven years at Alamo Heights in San Antonio. After that, I moved here and was in business here--I don't remember--twenty or twenty-five years.

Then I started ranching at Smithville, Texas, on the Colorado River down below Austin, and I ranched there for ten years. By that time, I had gotten to the age where I shouldn't be ranching anymore, so I sold the ranch and all the cattle, and I had thirteen business places there in Smithville. Sold out everything and came here to retire.

We've been here about twelve years, and we spend most of our time traveling. We spend the summers in Colorado and the winters in Arizona. We're fixing to leave on the twenty-sixth. And so that's about it.

G: I see. Let me ask you a few things about San Marcos specifically. Where did you room and board when you were staying there?

R: Well, last time I had a count I had lived in twenty-three different places there. Some of them ended rather uniquely. One time I was making five gallons of wine in a closet, and it was in the wintertime, and I was afraid it would get cold. I had it in a big paper box, so I put a lantern in there with it to keep it warm, and the landlady found it and said, "Mr. Richards, you'll have to either pour out the wine or move." I moved. (Laughter) So I went from place to place there and over a long period of years. Finally I got my degree in I reckon it was 1946 or something like that. I think about thirteen, fourteen

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years I spent over there, teaching in the winter, going to school in the summer, sometimes in the wintertime.

G: Was that pretty common in those days, to teach in the winter and then go back to school?

R: Oh, yes. We were all real poor boys and girls over there. That was a poor person's school.

G: Did you have a job on campus?

R: No. I never worked for the school, but I did many other things. I told you about the radio station I owned. I had a watermelon stand. I sold neckties. I had a popcorn stand. I had ping-pong tables that they played on and just any number of things that I did there while I was going to school. I always had something. Still people see me and want to know what racket I'm in now.

(Laughter)

G: Were you in education? You were a history major, isn't that right?

R: History major.

G: Okay. I can't remember why I knew that, but--

R: We had some wonderful history teachers.

G: Who were some of your memorable teachers?

R: Well, I remember Miss [Retta] Murphy. She was a large lady. She knew every little detail in Texas history, nothing she didn't know. One of the funniest things that happened, we had Wilton Woods, whom you read about. We called him Noisy. He never talked. He always was late. Her pet peeve was somebody coming in late. This day he came in tip-toeing, late. She had already started. She slammed her book down and

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said, "Mr. Woods, if you ever got here on time, I think I'd drop dead." He never did stop. He said, "I wish I'd a-known it." (Laughter)

And, well, it was a very enjoyable time.

G: How about Professor [M. L.] Arnold?

R: Professor Arnold was a great teacher. He was a great man. Funny stories about his son, Frank. I think he's dead, of course, now, but Frank was just a big, old, chubby boy, you know. He wasn't smart like his daddy, but he was a good-natured guy. I was writing for the newspaper, the College Star, and I had this in there--what I did was buy a joke book and substitute a college student's name because then they took the papers and sent them home because they had their name in the paper, and I remember saying "Frank Arnold to Garbage Man: 'What will you charge to haul a load across town?'" "Garbage Man to Frank Arnold: 'Nothing. Hop in.'" And he wanted to whip me.

G: He didn't like that.

R: He didn't like it.

G: Professor [H. M.] Greene, you remember?

R: Oh, yes. I knew him. I took him over to San Antonio to see Roosevelt once, and I'll never forget what he said. He said, "I got close enough where I could have touched him with a broom handle!"

G: Do you remember when that was?

R: Well, it was when Roosevelt came to San Antonio. I don't remember the date, but they had a big parade down Houston Street. There was

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thousands and thousands of people, and we went together over there to watch that parade.

Yes, he was quite a deal. He chewed tobacco, you know, and he kept his spittoon in his drawer in his desk, and while he was talking, he'd just pull the desk [drawer] out and spit in his spittoon. Everybody loved him. He was a great guy. His son belongs to the A&O [Alpha and Omega], you know, and he did himself. We had three or four profs in there, and he was one of them.

G: How about Miss [Mary] Brogdon? Do you remember much about her?

R: Yes, I remember Miss Brogdon. I never did have any particular bad run-ins with her. She kept order all right.

G: She was tough, I hear.

R: Oh, yes. Yes, back in those days, you know, you couldn't have a date without a chaperone. If you go over to see a girl at the rooming house, it had to be somebody else in the room at all times, and girls couldn't go out to the car and talk to the boys at all when they drove backwards and forwards up that hill. It was graveled then, you know. It was during her whole time.

In fact--I'm not right sure. They talked to her about this organization. She was very sympathetic to it.

G: I see. I hadn't heard that.

There are some published sources that say you were something of a campus promoter, and some of the things that you've said tend to reinforce that. Is that an accurate--?

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R: Oh, yes, that's true. I reckon I still am. I love to promote. I always had something going. If it wasn't raffling off something, it was somewhere--

The thing that stands out most was the night we had--Denton was our big adversary in football. I didn't care about football, but anyhow, I went to the rally. It was upstairs in the auditorium, and during this rally, why, it just occurred to me. I didn't have a dime, and I had this friend, Walter Grady, who was one of the original White Stars. We had on little black hats and we were standing in the back, and it occurred to me, "Now, here's a good--these people are all upset. They're jumping up and down and quivering all over. There's some way to get some money out of them." So I told him, "Just do what I do," and I jerked off my hat as they all started to come out of the big double doors, and I said, "Pitch in for the decorations! Pitch in!" They literally filled up my hat. That actually did happen. I couldn't run because it would look funny. Professors were putting money in there and everything else, and I couldn't stay and I didn't know what to do. But I stayed, and I just bought more ice cream sodas for the girls the next week or two.

(Laughter)

G: When did you first become aware of Lyndon Johnson? Can you recall that?

R: Well, yes. I was in school when he came over. He came over, and he ate there at the Gates House, and it wasn't very long until--his mother's the one pushed him. She pushed him into the job as the

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President's [C. E. Evans] secretary, and that's where he really became popular because he could help you get a job, a lot of things there, you know. She pushed him into that job.

But we were all eating at the Gates House. Now, Lyndon--wasn't nobody knew he was named Lyndon. I'd never hear anybody call him Lyndon. It was Bull, Bull Johnson. There was eight or ten of us ate there, just on a table all together, and he stood up most of the time and reached all the way across the table. Never passed anything, never. He was just pouring it down while he was talking. And he was quite an entertainer. He can really imitate. He was a good imitator. He can take an old German fellow and talk just exactly like him. There were a lot of them up in the hills where he lived, you know, and he was good at that.

G: Now, you say his mother pushed him into that. What exactly do you mean?

R: Well, I'm not sure, but I've heard that she wrote a letter to the President. She came up there trying to get him a job and told how good he was and so on and so forth and, first thing you know, the President had him there in his office. And he gradually turned lots of stuff over to him. He was busy, and you'd just have to see Lyndon, see.

G: You spoke of his mother. You knew his mother?

R: I knew his mother, his father, Josefa, Marcia [Lucia] and--oh, the oldest one--Rebekah.

G: Rebekah.

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R: Yes.

G: Did you know Sam Houston?

R: Did I know Sam Houston? (Laughter) There is a story in itself.

G: Well, don't hesitate to tell it.

R: Well, a few things stick out in my mind. While I had this radio station, we had an old man who was the first mayor, I think, of Austin, Edwin Waller. Now Edwin Waller ran for office--it's in Believe It or Not--twenty-one times and was never elected. The only office he ever had was the mayor of a little town in Louisiana, and it got washed away. So he was in San Marcos, and he was always running for office, and he would walk up to a group of men talking and, of course, nobody voted for him, but they would all say, "How are you all going to vote?" "Oh, we're gonna all vote for Ed." So, by the end of the campaign, he knew he was elected, see, but he didn't get any votes at all. But he wanted to make a talk over my radio station, so I let him talk for a dollar; that was my fee for talking. And while he was in there talking, he had an old Maxwell car, I believe it was, just shook all over when it started, and Sam Houston Johnson went out, and it was a flat top, and filled the whole top full of rocks. And so when he came back out and started his car, it sounded like those rocks would never quit falling, you know, and he took off.

He [Sam Houston] warted me on that radio station. The phone would ring, and he would want to know, "Is the announcer a man or a woman?" And he always had something smart. He'd say, "Tell the announcer to get the clothespin off his nose," and all that stuff. He

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just spent his whole time, and he was just intrigued by that radio station.

He was quite a character. One time--that was a little bit later--he went over to the Plaza Hotel in San Antonio and rented a whole floor and invited all of his friends over there for really a party. Didn't have any money and told them to send the bill to Lyndon. Lyndon had to pay it. That's after he'd already got to be--I don't remember whether he was congressman then, or something, but that was along later after Lyndon had a little money, you know. But he would do anything.

G: He was a campus terror [inaudible].

R: Yes. He told me one time way back there before Lyndon even was elected anything, "You know, Lyndon is running night and day for president of the United States. He wants to be. That's all he wants to talk about." And I know that was true. He had his eye on that job back ten years before he was ever elected to anything.

G: I was going to ask how Sam Houston arranged some of those things because apparently he was just as poor as LBJ was.

R: Oh, he didn't have anything at all. I had this watermelon stand in San Marcos, and he hung around there all the time and just into one thing and another. He was quite a character, all right.

G: What about LBJ's father? Did you know him very well?

R: I knew his father real well. He kept a bottle of whiskey in his inside coat pocket all the time. Actually, he was an alcoholic. One night Lyndon and I and Wilton Woods and his father went in their old

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broke-down Chevrolet over to San Antonio to hear Jim Ferguson speak. Now, you remember Jim Ferguson. They were big Ferguson people. On the way back, the old man was pretty tipsy, and he was sitting in the back. I was sitting in front with Lyndon, and Lyndon kept turning around talking to his father in the back seat. And the old man said, "Lyndon, if you turn around here one more time, I'm going to make you pull this car out of the road and let Horace drive." "Yes, sir." Well, they went on about five minutes and of course Lyndon forgot about it and he turned around. He said, "Pull the car off the road. Just pull it off." He pulled it off. He said, "Horace, get over there and drive. Lyndon hasn't got sense enough to drive a car." That's how wrong your daddy can be sometimes, see?

(Laughter)

G: Well, I think his father is supposed to have said at some time or other that Lyndon wasn't college material, either.

R: Yes, that's right.

G: What kind of relationship did they have? Were they at odds?

R: Well, Lyndon was ashamed of him. After he got to be president, he was "my great old daddy," you know, and those things, but back then he was just an old, worn-out, hackneyed politician. He had run for office for years and never did have anything. They never did tell how poor he really was, and I don't think Lyndon ever told how poor he was. They really were poor people. I was in their house when they were paying about twenty-five dollars a month, and the whole family lived

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in it. See, they brought them over to San Marcos to try to get them in school, and they didn't have anything at all.

G: That was, I guess, when his father had some kind of a state job, didn't he?

R: Well, he was state representative for, I reckon, twenty years.

G: Well, earlier, but I mean he was bus inspector or--

R: Yes, he was some kind of an inspector back there then, but then after he came over to San Marcos, I don't remember him having done anything at all. They just lived in an old broken-down house over there, and they had these three daughters and the two boys, and I knew all of them real well.

In fact, I taught school with the youngest one's husband out at Alamo Heights, and that's another story. He got fired because he wasn't any good, and I got a little raise. Well, Lyndon got hold of that, and he made up his mind that I got his brother-in-law fired. Lyndon wrote a letter to Wilton Woods. I found it and read it, and it said, "Horace got my"--I can't remember the boy's name now--"got him fired, but I'll get even with him some day." So I lived the rest of my life in fear that he would get even with me about getting his brother-in-law fired. (Laughter)

G: Did he ever [inaudible]?

R: No, I don't think he did.

G: You never found any evidence of that?

R: I know one time when he was made director of the NYA I sent him a wire like everybody else did and said, "Congratulations." I got one back

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that said, "It always gives me a great deal of pleasure to hear from friends like you."

G: You can read that any way you want.

R: Yes, that's right. I know how he meant it, though.

G: Well, they say the best revenge is living well [inaudible].

Now, you said that he was a mimic and a storyteller and an entertainer and so on.

R: Oh, yes.

G: What kind of stories did he like to tell?

R: Well, most of the stories that I remember were stories of those old Germans up there around Johnson City. He could talk exactly like them and he would tell stories. I don't remember any of them in particular, but he always had a group around him listening to those stories. He was a good storyteller.

G: Well, was he popular, would you say?

R: Well, no. A lot of people didn't like him. He never quit talking. About as bad as I am. He just kept on and on and on, but he was pretty entertaining.

I remember the time that--do you know who Welly Hopkins was? Well, Lyndon, Wilton Woods, and I, and I believe one other went with him on a speaking campaign, and Lyndon would sit over here, and this crowd was all Germans. They were drinking beer. They couldn't even talk good English. And I would sit over here, and Wilton over here, and the other boy here. And Welly Hopkins would roll up his sleeves. He was a little bitty fellow. He was running against a guy named

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Richards, no kin to me. But he was a tall guy. And he'd just turn around and look right up in his face, and he rolled his sleeves up, and every time that he lowered his voice, one of us would start an encore and even stand up. And those old boys, they didn't even know what he was saying, so they got to following us, and the first thing you know, the whole crowd was strong for Lyndon Johnson [Welly Hopkins?]. You couldn't shut them up, so that went over so good the first time we did it, everywhere he spoke we did the same thing, and the whole crowd went for him. I think that's what got him elected.

G: That was when LBJ was managing Welly Hopkins' campaign in a couple of counties?

R: Well, I don't know whether he was managing it or not. He asked us all to go, and, anyhow, he came out better because after it was over, Welly Hopkins invited us all over to Austin for dinner, and Lyndon ended up by getting Welly Hopkins to get him a job with [Richard] Kleberg.

So that was another story about the time I got the job at Alamo Heights. We went down to Houston. He was Kleberg's secretary then, and boy, he was really putting on the airs. First time he'd ever owned an automobile--he didn't own one then, I don't think; I think they furnished it to him. But anyhow, he wanted to impress us, so he took us over to Kleberg's house, and he told Kleberg, "Now, Horace wants a job in San Antonio at the Alamo Heights school. Bill Deason is teaching there. Why don't you call down to Houston and get them to promote Bill Deason so Horace can have his job?" He said, "Well, you

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do the calling." So Lyndon went to the old telephone. It was a crank telephone on the wall. He called Houston and told them he was calling for Kleberg, and of course, this guy, when he said that, said, "Why, sure. We'll do something for him." And he did.

Well, I went on back to Alamo Heights, and the first day of school was opening, but I didn't go out there and tell the superintendent. I didn't tell anybody. I waited until just before the bell rang. I walked in his office and said--Bill Deason didn't even call him and tell him he wasn't coming--"I'd like to apply for the job that is being vacated by Bill Deason." Well, he was in such a bind himself--he was the new superintendent--he said, "Just go in there and take charge." Those kids were about to tear the building down. I went in there and stayed seven years.

(Laughter)

G: Was it common for jobs to get passed along like that?

R: No. No. It wasn't, but this was a kind of a political deal. [Tom] Dunlap, who was a state representative, was with us, too, that was the other one that was with us. But anyhow that's the way I got the job. He wouldn't have gotten it for me, but what he was trying to do was help Bill Deason get a better job, and Bill Deason started to quit because he said, "For money, you can't beat that schoolteaching deal," but Lyndon did plenty for him after that. He got him this job, as you know, in Washington, D. C.

G: How was LBJ regarded by the faculty [at San Marcos]?

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R: Well, I think they liked him all right. They liked him. He was a friendly guy, and there was nothing obnoxious about him at all. He always, if there was a picture being taken, though, wanted to be in the front row. He really wanted to stand out in front, and like I say, he was running way back there then, you know. Did a good job, too.

G: How did he dress back then?

R: Well, he didn't have money to do very much dressing, especially while he was selling Real Silk hosiery, you know. But he always looked nice and neat and things like that.

G: Were you involved in that Real Silk hosiery transaction?

R: No, no. I didn't. I had too many other irons in the fire.

G: But you know for a fact that he did sell it?

R: Oh, sure. I've seen his samples and everything a lot of times, yes.

G: Do you know about that story of him promoting a trip to Laredo one night by selling socks?

R: No, I don't.

G: I think it's in [Robert] Caro's book, but anyway, it's not all that important. Was he a poker player?

R: I taught him how. I taught him how to play poker. He wasn't any good at first, but after a few years, why, he became a real good poker player. He could hold a poker face, and he was good. I remember one time, though, he was living over the President's garage and we were playing poker up there. Two of us was on the bed and then two or three more were sitting in chairs around a little table. Of course

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old Dr. Evans would have died if he had known a big poker game was going on in his garage. But, anyhow, he got in an argument with Mylton Kennedy. We called him Babe Kennedy. Kennedy was a pretty good sized guy, and I never will forget. He said, "Lyndon, if you open your mouth one more time, I'll knock every tooth you've got in your mouth plumb down your throat." And he kind of made a pass at him with his fist. Lyndon fell back on the bed and said, "I'll kick you!" They picture him as a big, tough, fighting cowboy. He didn't fight.

G: Did he have that reputation as somebody who wouldn't fight?

R: Well, yes. I never remember him getting into anything like that at all, and then, you know, just talking to him. He wasn't a sissy, but he wasn't a fighter, either. He wasn't a rough guy. And this other guy was.

G: Babe Kennedy was.

R: Yes, I roomed with Babe Kennedy, and he was a Black Star.

G: Yes. Well, now, was he a tough guy?

R: Who, Babe?

G: Yes.

R: No, not particularly. He was real intelligent though. He had a high IQ.

G: But there wasn't any actual contact made during this confrontation?

R: Well, no. He hit at him and missed him. I reckon he was afraid Lyndon was going to kick him.

G: (Laughter) You wrote for the paper. Were you in the Press Club?

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R: Yes, I belonged to the Press Club. I was associate editor and I wrote this column, "El Toro." You know they couldn't get rid of the newspapers that'd stack up. Nobody wanted that College Star. Some of us got to writing things like that, you know, and they'd start to reading it, and then we'd write jokes and everything, but all through there we put students' names in there and, of course, you couldn't print enough papers. Everybody wanted three or four to send home, you know. So that's the way that got started. But just a bunch of us, Lyndon and I and Wilton and several of us hung out in that office all the time.

G: Let's see what else. I read somewhere that you used to help Babe Kennedy put the paper to bed there at one stage of the operations. [Inaudible]

R: Yes. That's when I got acquainted with the newspaper office down there. That's another one of my rackets. I knew that all these students were coming in for summertime. See, we had two or three times as many in the summer as we did in the wintertime, so we were going to have some kind of game with another school. I had a bunch of little square tabs printed. I don't know, several hundred of them. And there was a little string in them. And I sat out under the bull-session tree out there, and these freshmen girls all wanted something to do. They wanted to keep busy, so I'd let them have ten tickets, but they had to give me a dollar in advance. Then they would take them and sell them--pin them on the boys for ten cents apiece, but I had a big profit in them, you see, and so I sold hundreds and hundreds of those things. The girls were working free, see.

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(Laughter)

G: Were you in Harris Blair?

R: No, no. That was Bill Deason. That was his main deal. No, I never did. I think that was a little too sophisticated for me. I was more the poker-playing type.

G: How about athletics?

R: No, no, no. It was just as foreign to me. In fact, you see this Black Star outfit were athletes--nearly all of them were--and we called them "The Beef." That was "The Beef," and we were "The Brains." That's when I started the other organization, you see.

G: Well, let's talk about that White Star/Black Star.

R: Well, I'll tell you how I got started in it. I noticed--I reckon I was a sophomore or junior or something--that they'd have all these class elections, and I wasn't interested in it at all, but I wasn't invited. I didn't even know when--I'd see somewhere where it had happened, and this guy and this guy, always a Black Star, was elected president and secretary and treasurer and vice president and so on, so I just got to thinking one day, "I believe I'll start me one of my own." And so I was standing at the foot of the library stairs, and [Vernon] Whiteside came along. He was rooming with me, and I told him. I said, "I'm going to try to start this organization." He got interested in it but not very much, but I went home and wrote the constitution and by-laws and all and called a meeting of five kids that I knew. We met that night down on the bank of the San Marcos River. We had a Bible, and I swore them in with the Bible and gave

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them a pep talk, and it was super-secret. It's all in this deal here--how important it was.

So this thing then kind of got to be political, and the thing that is very amusing that I put in there, "If anybody asks you are you a White Star"--we were not White Stars, Alpha and Omegas, O and A's is what we were, you know--"your immediate answer would be 'No,'" because you were thrown out when that question was asked you, immediately you were thrown out, but the minute you left, you were back in automatically.

G: So you didn't have to lie?

R: Didn't have to lie. So this thing grew and grew and finally we took in some professors and finally I think we had about a hundred and fifty. We ran the school. We ran all the elections. We had Lyndon in there, and he got the jobs for people, and we just kind of tied up the whole thing there, you know, and nobody knew too much about it because it was super-secret, you know.

G: Well, now, weren't the Black Stars secret, too?

R: Yes, they were secret, too.

G: How did you figure out that there was an organization that was running things?

R: Well, it was kind of hard, but some of them talked a little, and they'd have roommates. You know, A&O, and he'd be rooming with this other guy, and those things get out. They knew we were an organization. They knew we were secret, but that's about all they did know. They didn't know who belonged, see.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

But it was really hot competition, and they had what was known as the Gaillardians. That was for popular girls. Well, we put up our candidates, and of course we got all ours elected, because I was president of the junior class.

I would like to tell you that story about the first time that Lyndon stole an election. Lyndon was running for president of the senior class. I was then president of the junior class. We met across the hall for the elections. I was up on the rostrum holding my class, and I just named my men. I said, "Everybody in favor of this"--I just carried it off like that, and we always elected my friends who were president and vice president. Nobody else had a chance. I wouldn't recognize them, see.

So I jumped off and ran across the hall. And the seniors were just finishing up the election. And I said, "Wait a minute! I haven't voted." And they all said, "Horace, you're not a senior." I said, "I'm taking more senior subjects than I am junior subjects." Well, they didn't have time to look all that up. Besides, he was running against Berry, who was a son of the school superintendent there, Joe Berry, and Joe had it won anyway, so they didn't pay much attention to me. They said, "Okay, go ahead and vote." So I voted for Lyndon. They counted the votes right then. Lyndon won, by guess how many votes.

G: One?

R: Mine. So I've always maintained that that was the first election he

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

ever stole or was stolen for him, see. The other one was down in San Diego, Alice.

G: Were you sure enough taking more senior courses than junior courses?

R: Oh, I don't know, but I had sense enough to know they didn't know either, see.

(Laughter)

G: Well, when you originally founded the A&O you said that Wilton Woods was the first person you talked to.

R: No, Whiteside.

G: I mean Vernon Whiteside.

R: Yes.

G: And do you remember who was in the original group?

R: Yes. I had Vernon Whiteside--there was only five of us--and Wilton Woods, Walter Grady from Tennessee and Bill Deason.

Now, a little story about Walter Grady. I don't suppose you've read much about him. He went home one year for Christmas. His father was a jeweler, like you are. He stole all his father's watches and came back to school and sold them.

G: Good gravy!

R: Everybody had an expensive watch around there for about a dollar. Well, that was a pretty rough bunch of people, you know.

G: Somewhere here I have a list, and I'm sure you have one, too, of A&O that someone--I guess it was Walter Richter--put together some time or other.

R: Yes, he was way down the line, Walter was.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

G: Everybody had a number. And he had you down, and Vernon Whiteside down, as both one and two.

R: Well, yes, that got to be quite a joke. Of course, Vernon knew--I was rooming with him at the time--he knew I was number one because I started it all, but he likes to argue so he'd always bring this thing up, and that's when I told him, just to argue, about who's number two, and he got number two. But that's the time that Lyndon was there, one of the first meetings after we got kind of started. We got to arguing about who was number one, and I told them that, so Wilton Woods was number three. Wilton--Noisy--didn't complain at all. Lyndon just took his number away from him and on the records it shows Lyndon was number three when he wasn't even there at the first meeting, see.

G: I wondered about that.

R: No, he wasn't even there. He tried a couple of times to get in. He'd been turned down by the Black Stars, and we didn't want him because he talked too much. We called it flapping. He just flapped all the time, and we didn't want him. He'd tell our secrets, we were afraid.

G: Well, how did you get to be a member of the White Stars? How did LBJ get to be a member?

R: Well, later on, I reckon, after he got so many jobs for people, we let him in. He was in, I reckon, I don't know, tenth maybe. You see, we went a good long time just with five. And then six. We were very careful who we chose, you see, and he got in down there somewhere, but not in the originals. Of course now you can go back and ask these old boys that he gave these big jobs to, and they remember him starting

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

the whole thing, you see, and he didn't have anything to do with it at all.

G: It's good to get that straight.

R: Yes.

G: How did LBJ get to be editor of the Star in, I have down March 1928? Now, that's pretty early.

R: Well, as I remember, he must have been appointed. I don't remember him ever being elected editor, but he worked there, and he wrote some editorials just like I did and everybody else, but I don't remember him--he wasn't popular enough to become editor. He just was working on the paper, and I think somebody said, "Okay." But I was listed in the paper as associate editor for a while.

G: They used to bring out a freshman edition and a sophomore edition, a junior edition, and so on.

R: Yes.

G: And that was the time, I think, that the freshman edition placed second to the senior edition. Did you work on that edition?

R: I'm sure I worked on the senior edition. If I knew what years, I've got those editorials over there, but I don't remember. That's been how many--fifty years ago, fifty-five years ago, sixty? Something like that, you know.

G: Coming up on it.

R: Yes. About sixty years ago. You know, the first time we had a meeting of this A&O we were all about nineteen years old, and we went up to Wimberley. Just boys. We had a keg of beer. Then the next

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

time we took our girls along when we went up to Wimberley, and this thing just sort of grew and grew and grew, and we all got to be very close friends and still are. Most of them are dead now, but for many years--

G: Where did you get the beer?

R: I don't know. Somebody got a--well, I think maybe we made it. Oh, we made lots of beer.

G: Home brew?

R: Home brew, there in college, you know.

G: Pabst Blue Ribbon Malt.

(Laughter)

Tape 1 of 1, Side 2

R: Yes. But I wasn't about to pour it out.

G: Well, you got your girls and went up to Wimberley. Did you have to have a chaperone for that or was that a sneak--?

R: Just sneaked off, you see. Just slipped off.

G: What was at Wimberley that you went up there, or was that just for fun?

R: Well, it was just a place out of town. I don't know why we went up there. It was pretty country. Lot of the professors had homes; Greene had one up there and so on and so forth. But where we went to drink the beer was over at Hunter, right out of San Marcos, see. It was out of the county. You couldn't drink it in San Marcos. It was against the law, but over there you could. And halfway to Seguin over there--I can't remember the name of the place but you would go over

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

there, and there would be fifty or a hundred students every night sitting out under the trees drinking beer, the college professors, and all of them.

G: Why was it legal? This was during Prohibition now, wasn't it?

R: Yes.

G: Well, I guess the--

R: No. No. San Marcos didn't have any beer for years and years after the Eighteenth Amendment was [repealed] in there.

G: Oh, I see. Well, it was dry and had a wet county next door. I see. Okay. Yes, that's right.

R: Had two wet counties, Seguin and over toward New Braunfels, you see.

G: Right. Right. German counties.

R: Yes. I spent more of my time over at New Braunfels. I had a roommate who played a flute or something in the orchestra over at dances, and I'd go over there almost every night with him, see, so we had a big time. But that doesn't bear on this.

R: Well, you recall the drive that was put on to improve Evans Field?

G: No, I just remember something about it, but I don't remember any of the details.

G: Okay. What have you got there?

R: Well, let's see. I told you about a lot of these things. I remember Lyndon getting me a date. He had a date, and this girl had a friend from Austin [who] came over, and he wanted to find her a date. He asked me if I would go have a blind date with her, and I said, "What does she look like?" He said, "Oh, boy! Out of this world!" I got

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

in there, and she almost couldn't get in the car. But her daddy was a state railroad commissioner in Austin, big politician, you know, and he didn't want to muddy the water with that girl, so he got me a date with her. Of course he did all the talking. I didn't have to do anything. But I thought that was so funny. I really took hook, line, and sinker.

I told you about the hotel, and getting me a job at Alamo Heights and visiting him in Corpus Christi. When I came down there to visit him--yes, I told you about the letter he wrote to Wilton. And a funny thing that Josefa--I don't know whether I ought to tell this or not, but anyhow, Lyndon, I believe, was running for the Senate then or something, and he came over to San Marcos, and President [John G.] Flowers had some big shots on the stage, and Lyndon was to make a speech, and he kind of suspected Whiteside, so he eased over to him and said, "Now, listen, nothing political. Don't dare mention anything political." They asked Whiteside to get up and talk, and he said, "I'm right here nominating Lyndon Johnson for president of the United States. " Flowers jumped up and ran over there. So he went ahead and made this glowing speech about Lyndon. When he got through, Josefa'd had a drink or two, and she didn't know the microphone was still on, and she said, "Goddamn, Vernon, you made a better speech than Lyndon!" Right over the microphone.

(Laughter)

I don't know how this is going to sound.

G: Oh, you can always edit it out.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: She got in some kind of trouble over in Austin, too. I better not get on that, though.

G: Well, you can always take out anything that you don't want in.

R: I don't think I've told you this story. [Fenner] Roth and I were in business together, and this deal came up--I'm telling you this because it shows just about what kind of person he was. I made the statement a while ago he'd walk over your dead body for one more vote. So, anyhow, this thing came up. There was a vacancy at Galveston for--not a port director, but--oh, I don't know.

G: Port authority?

R: No, it's for the stuff that's shipped in. It's a big job.

G: Customs?

R: Customs, yes. This thing came open. And Roth asked me one day, "Would you mind if I took that job?" I said, "No, I don't." He said, "Of course, it pays $10,000 a year. You don't even have to move down there. You don't go there. It's just a political plum, and I'll just throw the $10,000 into the company, and you're getting half of it, and I'm getting half." And I said, "Of course, I don't mind that at all except I can tell you one thing. You will never get it." And he said, "Well, I don't know why. After all these years I worked for him and the money I've given, I better get it."

So our office was next to Roth's, and I heard him talking to Roth's, and I heard him talking to Lyndon all day. He'd call Lyndon, and Lyndon would call him back. He'd call him back. The job paid $10,000. You didn't have to move down there. You didn't have to do

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

anything. At the end of the day, he offered Roth the second position down there. It paid $7,000 a year, and you'd have to move there. Well, Roth wasn't interested in that. He was making plenty of money here with me, see. He didn't need that at all, but he turned him down. He turned right around and gave that job to Tully Garner, who owned the bank at Uvalde. John Garner's son, you know. Multi-millionaire who could pitch in $50,000 or whatever he wanted to. Roth couldn't. So that was pretty typical of the things that he did.

And then did I tell you the story about Wilton and the post office at Seguin?

G: No.

R: Well, Wilton, until he died, was strong for him. He did everything you could for him, campaigned for him and everything else. So Wilton was acting postmaster at Seguin, and, naturally, you kind of go into the deal as real postmaster if everything goes right, but Mrs.--oh, what's her name? Big, a national committeewoman from Seguin--I can't think of her name right now, but, anyhow, she'd been there for years [Mrs. Hilda Weinert]. Multi-millionaire. I'll think of it in a minute, but anyhow, she didn't like Wilton. Wilton showed me list after list: Republicans, Democrats, everything was for him having the real job, not the acting, you know. So this thing went on, and finally she just apparently told Lyndon, "That's it!" So Lyndon never gave Wilton that job, and finally when Lyndon went out, out went Wilton without any pension from that at all. He had to act as just a--you might say, not a letter carrier but just one of the employees in there for about

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

two years to be able to get any pension because Lyndon wouldn't back him up and give him a job over her head. He wanted the campaign money worse than he wanted to do a favor for a friend of his who had been with him that long, and that was pretty typical. He did Roth that-away. He did Woods thataway. He did a lot of people thataway. If you had the money and the power, you could get it. If you didn't, you don't. Well, that's the reason he's a good politician, I reckon.

G: Yes. You said he did Roth that way. Can you recall an instance?

R: Well, that's what I was telling you about the port director.

G: Port director.

R: See, he did him thataway, and Wilton was the postmaster job down there. Neither one of them got it, and yet both of those guys had followed him for years and given him what little money they had and worked hard for him. Roth even named his son after him, but he would step over your dead body for one more vote. That's I reckon what it takes.

G: Let me tie up just a couple of loose ends about the White Stars now. Can you recall a date when it was founded because there's some controversy over when it was founded?

R: Well, I should have that. Yes. August 19, 1932. That's when we wrote the constitution and bylaws.

G: But LBJ was long gone from San Marcos by that time.

R: Maybe that's when this copy--oh, this is a copy. Yes. The copy was made then. That's right.

G: Oh, I see.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: Yes, that's a copy. Let's see. There should be a date in here somewhere. No, I don't know. It was 1930--I just don't--

G: Well, let me ask you this, and maybe this will help place it. Was it before LBJ went to Cotulla or when he came back?

R: I just can't remember. After all, we're talking about fifty or fifty-five years ago, and I can't remember, but I remember he was a senior, I reckon. A sophomore or senior. I went all the way through school with him in classes with him, so I think I was probably a sophomore then. I did work on my master's degree after that, but I can't recall just when the year was.

G: You think it was when he would have been a senior? [Inaudible]

R: Yes, yes. He was a senior. This election he had, he ran for president of the senior class.

G: Was that the first election that the White Stars really got going in a political--?

R: No, we operated there for two or three years, so it must have been a year or two years before that.

G: Okay. That would fit in. Do you know how LBJ got that job in Cotulla? Do you know any of that background?

R: No, I don't. They had a place for bureaus. The superintendent left things up at the college, and you could look at them if you were interested, but I don't think he got that through political--but it was a job nobody else wanted, down there way off from nowhere in a Mexican place, you know.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

G: Do you recall LBJ going to that Democratic National Convention in 1928 in Houston?

R: Yes, I wasn't there or anything, but I remember them talking about it. I remember when it happened.

G: There was another trip he made, I think, in that year. He went to Oklahoma City to hear Al Smith talk.

R: I don't know about that at all. No.

G: [Inaudible] gone up there with his father?

While he was teaching at Cotulla, would he come back to San Marcos on weekends or in free time?

G: Well, I remember seeing him come back. I don't know how often he came back. I don't think very often because I don't believe he had a car then. If he did, I didn't know about it. The first car he had was the one he borrowed from Kleberg, and he rode around up at school. He'd come back on the weekends with his top down, sitting sideways, way down low in the seat, impressing everybody, you know, because none of us had a car. We were too poor. We didn't have a car at all, and there he was in this politician's [car]. It really made him a big shot, you see.

G: Do you remember what kind of a car it was?

R: No. It wasn't a Ford nor a Chevrolet. It was some big old car. I remember my brother was riding with him and several other boys one day, and they stopped to get a chili, and he began to talk to this girl in there and tell her how great he was and that he was with Kleberg and he wanted her to vote and so on. And she said, "Well,

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

this is not even in your district." He said, "Well, you'll get a chance to vote for me someday, though."

(Laughter)

G: One person has said that was a big, old, yellow Buick.

R: Why, I believe it was. Yes. That's right. It was. I remember now, it was a yellow Buick. And it was a convertible. An old one.

G: Pretty snazzy?

R: Oh, yes, especially with--

G: Someone has said that he bought a car with the savings that he put together from that year at Cotulla, and then he came back--

R: He might have owned this Ford--it was a Ford coupe--when I went down to see him at Kleberg's office, and he rode us around and showed us the town and all, in his car. And I know he had a Ford, A-model coupe, and I believe that was his.

G: Now, where was this that you went?

R: That was in Houston.

G: In Houston? Okay.

Now, he was elected summer editor of the Star when he came back from Cotulla. This is the way the record seems to read. And I've been curious. How did he get elected to the summer editorship while he was in Cotulla? Or was he able to come back? How did that work?

R: Well, my remembrance was that you didn't get elected. It had a board or something there, made up of students and faculty, and they appointed people like that.

G: I see.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: He got appointed.

G: And he had friends on the board?

R: Yes. That's right.

G: Well, that would make sense.

R: Or nobody else wanted it.

G: Well, who held that job in the President's office while he was gone, or did it just stay vacant?

R: No, I'm sure it didn't stay vacant. They had an old boy there--well, I can't think of his name. I know who it was, but I can't even remember his name anymore, but--

G: A faculty member?

R: Well, Tom, Tom something.

G: Nichols?

R: Tom Nichols. Yes, he was there, kind of as an assistant, too, you know, and I imagine he's the one that handled it.

G: I see. Okay. Who lived over Prexy's garage when he vacated it?

R: Well, Lyndon lived over it, and I'm not real sure, but I believe Boody [Alfred] Johnson lived over there, over the garage. That's where we played poker and made beer.

G: How did you disguise that?

R: Well, the first time we made beer, the President went off on a trip with his wife, and the old boy that was his caretaker let us go in the President's kitchen to heat the water on his electric stove, and after we got the beer all made, we put it down in the basement. Then as

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

we needed a dozen bottles, we'd slip down in the basement at night and get it out.

G: Did you make pretty good beer?

R: We thought it was real good. Some of them drank it green, I don't know how, with a dipper.

(Laughter)

G: Well, I guess when you're in a hurry that's not so bad.

I have a note that he lived in the Hopper house when he came back from Cotulla.

R: Well, Ardis Hopper, it's his mother that had a boarding house, and Aurelia was Hopper's sister, and Lyndon went with her some. So Ardis later became an FBI man for years.

G: Well, speaking of which, was LBJ a lady's man? Did he date very much?

R: No, he didn't--he tried to pick the important ones. He liked--he almost married some girl--I can't remember her name there in San Marcos. Her daddy was president of the bank, I believe, or something like that. He liked to be seen with people like that, but he didn't go out too much just with the ordinary one.

G: Was that Carol Davis [Smith]?

R: Yes, Carol Davis. That's right. Yes. He was just very thick with her for a good long time. In fact, that's who he had the date with the night he got the blind date for me.

G. I see. And this was a friend of hers that came. I see.

Was Babe Kennedy in the White Stars?

R: Babe Kennedy was a Black Star. No, he wasn't.

LBJ Presidential Library
http://www.lbjlibrary.org
ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

G: The reason I asked is that Bob Caro's book says that Kennedy was in the founding group of the White Stars.

R: No, he wasn't. No.

G: He wasn't in it?

R: No.

G: Okay.

R: Well, let's just--here's an actual list of them. My memory might fail me, but I don't remember Babe. I roomed with him. I knew him well. Of course, I thought it was alphabetical, but it's--

G: Oh, that's all right. We can look it up. I'll have it--

R: But I'm pretty sure he wasn't because I've argued with him all night long many a night, and--did I tell you about the night Lyndon and I argued all night?

G: No.

R: All night long sitting in the durn car. I wrote the streamer headlines for the College Star. He ran for this job as president of the senior class. He won by one vote. I ran the big headline that week, said "Johnson Wins by Nose." That really upset him. He said, "Horace, it just seems like you spend all of your time trying to dig me. You never will come out and say anything for me. You just say things that kind of hit at me, just kind of dig me." And I said, "Well, I don't know what you're talking about." He said, "Well, look what you could have said. You didn't have to say, 'Lyndon just barely got in.' You could have said, 'Lyndon Goes Over the Top', 'Lyndon Wins Again,' 'Lyndon's this..'" And I said, "Yes, but you did win by

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

a nose." He said, "It looked like I just edged in." I said, "You did." And so all night long, he gave arguments, and I gave arguments against them, and about that time I remember that night this old boy walked along who was a Black Star. And it was dark. We were sitting out on the street. And Lyndon called this old boy over to the car and said, "Now, let's see. You're a Black Star." And we kind of talked a little rough to him, both of us did. And he started to crying, and that like to scared us both to death. We let him go. He thought we were going to take him for a ride. We had a pretty rough name.

G: So there was no love lost there between the White Stars and the Black Stars?

R: Oh, no. Absolutely not.

G: Well, were there ever any fights, any confrontations?

R: No, I don't recall any of those. Insulting remarks and things like that. They were "The Beef," and we were "The Brains."

G: Did LBJ have people date girls to influence their vote the way some people have claimed?

G: Yes, I'm pretty sure he did. He's a politician from the word "go." If we had an election or anything like that, he'd buttonhole them and convince them to vote for one of our boys because we had somebody running in every election for every office, and at one time we had every office. Nobody else could get elected because not too many went to the class meetings, and we were presidents, so we could just run it through any way we wanted to, elect anybody we wanted to.

G: You mentioned the Gaillardians a while ago.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: I don't know. That's the first time I ever heard that.

G: Okay.

R: No, the White Stars didn't.

G: But you said a while ago that you were the one who swore LBJ into the White Stars, is that right?

R: Well, yes. I don't remember whether I personally did or not. I remember when he came in. I know he tried to get in twice, and they wouldn't let him in. He did get in, but I don't remember who did the swearings.

G: The objections to him was that they were afraid he'd talk too much?

R: About all it was, you just held your hand on a Bible and read this stuff here to him, and if he agreed to that, he was a member right then.

G: You read the constitution [inaudible]. And the original objection to LBJ was that he talked too much?

R: "Flapped," we called it, yes, and we wouldn't trust him.

G: Why did they change their minds? What prevailed upon you to finally let him in?

R: Well, like I said, he got to be a secretary there to the President, and he got a little power around there, and everybody needed a job, and he was in a position to kind of help you out, you see.

G: There's a story that I haven't been able to track down that LBJ was kidnapped by some Black Stars at some point.

R: No. That was Henry Moore.

G: Okay.

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R: Yes, they took his pants off, left his shorts on, and dumped him out on a road over toward Austin somewhere, you know, to catch a ride back.

G: I see. Was that a prank? Was that to take him out of the election, or what?

R: Yes. I don't remember just why it was done. Of course, Henry and I have been friends for fifty years, close friends, but I remember that happened to him. And then they threw one of them in the river.

G: Who was that?

R: I don't think it was Henry, but it was at this same time, and we had a reporter over there, and, boy, it got in the San Antonio paper and everything else. We had quite a deal.

G: It sounds like things got kind of rough.

R: Oh, they did.

G: Do you recall this story of LBJ maneuvering Henry and Medie Kyle out of the editorship jobs that they were expecting to get on the Star and the Pedagog?

G: Yes. I can't remember too many of the details, but I remember when that happened. I don't know whether he was the one that did it, but I know somebody did, and it was probably our bunch. All I remember about Henry Kyle, he jumped up in the junior meeting that day that we had the election, you know, and he said, "You can't do that!" He told me, "You can't do that! You can't just appoint these people." And I said, "Shut up, Henry, and sit down. I'm running this meeting." And so later on, he got to be district attorney or something else over

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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R: Yes.

G: And there's a story there that concerns a girl named Ruth Lewis. Do you remember who she is?

R: Yes, I remember Ruth.

G: She was going to run and then she decided not to?

R: Yes. Out on the highway or something like that. They tell that story, I think, on me, but I can't remember too much. I just remember I knew her real well. What was the story?

G: Well, the story was that they were out on the highway and--

R: Going to Austin.

G: The car had broken down, I think, and someone stopped to help them and asked her where she sent to school, and she was ashamed to say "San Marcos," so she said, "UT." And LBJ is supposed to have used that to blackmail her out of running. And I wondered if you knew anything about it.

R: Well, yes, I remember that story. Of course, I don't know whether he did or not, but it certainly wouldn't have been beyond him, and he--we went to pretty--

G: But you're not the source of that story [inaudible]?

R: No. It's been so far back. I might have been, but I just can't remember all the details. I've heard it so many times. I wasn't beyond it, I'll tell you that for sure.

G: Some people have said that the leader of the White Stars had a name. Did he have a name? I know the Black Star was the Jupiter, I think, wasn't it?

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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there. He was real smart. A nice fellow, too. And Medie, I remember her.

G: They say that they dropped out of school for a while after that.

R: I think I remember that. I think I did, yes.

G: Do you remember Ed Puls? Is that the way you pronounce it?

R: Yes, Puls, yes. Well, now he's not the one who wrote this book, is he? That's a different Pool.

G: Yes. This is P-U-L-S.

R: Oh, yes. Well, this other is Pool. Yes. I have a--

G: That's Bill [William C.] Poole that you're--

R: I had a lot of classes with him.

G: Did you know Osler Dunn?

R: Did I know Osler Dunn? Last time I saw Osler Dunn I was teaching school in Alamo Heights. He had been in the army, and he came by. He was dirty. He was ragged. He was an awful-looking guy, and he came by the school, and I gave him some money and sent him on his way. He was a real intelligent guy. He lived over at Hunter. Yes. I remember him very well. Now, he is the one that wrote these things and passed them out one night in a long, black overcoat. Now, what did I do with that? He had on a long--in the dead of the night, two o'clock in the morning, so nobody would know who he was, and that was about--

G: And you're handing me a piece of paper entitled "Democracy and Equality?"* Now, this is a--

* See Personal Papers of Horace Richards

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R: You see that was a Gaillardians'--they were appointed to start with, and we were agitating for them to be elected, you see.

G: I see. This is a pamphlet in favor of electing the Gaillardians rather than appointing them.

R: Yes, appointing, that's right.

G: Can I take this pamphlet?

R: Sure. Yes.

G: And you say he passed these out in the middle of the night?

R: Oh, yes. We had them printed down there. We all pitched in and had them printed. Two o'clock in the morning, and I remember it was real cold, and he had on a long, black hat and I think a mask. And [inaudible].

G: Someone has written 1930 on this. Is that the correct date?

R: That's when it was, yes. That's when we were in our heyday, right there.

G: You were at your peak then?

R: Yes.

G: Was it common to use this sort of electioneering?

R: Oh, yes.

G: Did you use pamphlets a lot in those elections?

R: Well, we didn't have any money. We just [did] whatever we could, we made signs, we did everything, underhanded and aboveboard, too.

G: What did you do underhanded besides some of the things that you've already talked about?

R: Oh, we spread gossip, and--

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(Laughter)

G: What sort of gossip?

R: I learned one big lesson from that outfit: what a few people can do if they cooperate and work together. You can just about run anything you want to. It doesn't take many people. It's just getting together. We ran that school, just about everything over there, and we did it with--well, of course, I reckon at any one time there never was over probably thirty-five or forty of us in school, but they came in, you know, as the years went by.

G: Well, fraternities were illegal in those days.

R: Yes. Well, we didn't have enough money for anything like that. They were illegal anyway, yes.

G: Well, technically speaking, you guys were illegal, weren't you?

R: Sure. Secret fraternity.

G: Well, how did you get away with it? Didn't the President know about it?

R: I'm sure he did. He had to know because Miss Brogdon knew all about it, and Greene knew all about it, and Professor [L. N.] Wright knew all about it, and I reckon every teacher over there knew about it. Some of them knew more than the other, but Wright belonged and Greene belonged. Yes, you can get pretty powerful. We had all the jobs, all the offices in the entire school. Yes.

G: Well, I think I've read somewhere that after a while someone noticed that all the White Stars had all the inside jobs and the Black Stars had the outside jobs.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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R: That's right. They were throwing rocks off the hill. But it was just the opposite when I formed this thing. We had nothing. Didn't even know what was going on, and this little clique was running the school. The athletes.

G: Right.

R: Yes, they were running the school.

G: Boody Johnson?

R: Yes. Boody Johnson and Vest--I can't remember his name.

G: George?

R: George Vest and Frank Arnold. All those were Black Stars.

G: Joe Berry?

R: Joe Berry, yes. Fine people, but I knew there must be some way to help run the school.

G: I have a note here that Osler Dunn was the editor of the Star at one time.

R: He was.

G: And Harvie Yoe was business manager.

R: Yes. Harvie Yoe.

G: He was younger than you fellows?

R: Yes, he came in way later, about Fenner Roth's time, way later.

G: He would have been a freshman when you were seniors [inaudible]?

R: Yes.

G: I had a note to ask you about Welly Hopkins' campaign, but you talked to some degree about that. I think that was the summer of 1930. That was LBJ's last year in school, I think.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
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R: Yes. Lyndon and I and Wilton Woods and I believe Thomas Dunlap went with him on his campaign every night, and he spoke while we were there. Lyndon was the one that came out with all the fruit of it because Welly got him a job then as secretary to Kleberg.

G: Why didn't you get a job in the NYA when LBJ did?

R: It's in that book over there. He said I was too independent. I didn't need a job to start with. I didn't want a job. A lot of those boys had to have a job. They needed it real bad, and they got it. I wouldn't kowtow to him, you know. I'd say, "Oh, Lyndon. You're full of you-know-what."

Last time I really talked to Lyndon was here in Corpus in a hotel. I believe he was vice president or senator or something, and he came down here. The whole room was full of politicians up in the hotel, and Roth insisted that I go down and talk. I didn't want to go, but he insisted I go. Well, Lyndon, was holding forth in there, and when I walked in, boy, he jumped up and put his arm around me and walked off down the hall. He said, "Now, Horace, you know you can have anything you want." I said, "Oh, hell, Lyndon," and walked on. He was standing talking over the telephone, talking to everybody in the room, and writing notes at the same time.

G: That's a three-track mind instead of a two-track.

R: Yes, he could do it. When he'd come over in his helicopter, you know, when he was running for office he would throw his hat out of there, but I never would call him boss and all like that like a lot of those kids did. He just ate that up if you made over him and told him

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how great he was. He really went for that, but I didn't do it. Didn't need to. Didn't want to. Not that kind.

: You were teaching at Alamo Heights during the NYA period?

R: Yes, during that, yes. I thought you were talking about--see, I worked for the price control deal.

G: OPA.

R: OPA. I worked a couple or three years for them.

G: During the war, was that?

R: Yes. During the war, and that's when I came here, after that.

G: I see. So when Caro says that your attitude was too independent for you to get a job under NYA--

R: Yes. Caro said that.

G: You didn't say that?

R: Yes. I haven't read the other book you're talking about. Yes, he didn't ever offer. My wife worked for the NYA for a while. They got in such a mess there in San Antonio with the records and all like that, and she's a legal secretary and she knew how to get an office [in order], so they came and got her to get them straightened out over there. She worked for a while over there.

G: I think Caro also quotes you as saying, "You could get a job, but you had to ask."

G: Yes. That's right, yes. He said I had to ask for it. Well, I wouldn't do that for anything in the world. I didn't really need the job anyhow. I'm no politician. I ran for office twice. One time I ran for justice of the peace. I was teaching school out in the

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mountains, and I got elected over three old men that had been living there all their lives. Here I was, an upstart. And I did it just as a joke. The teachers in the school put up signs [that] said, "Vote for H. E. Richards for Justice of the Peace," just as a joke. So everybody was going to see that I got one vote. I got elected over all those old men, so I immediately--I was sent in to the county judge. He wanted my expense account. I told him I bought a dozen two-for-a-nickel cigars and smoked them all myself, and I put that in so--I resigned, because I could see right quick I could get involved there being justice of the peace and running the school.

G: Yes, indeed.

R: But then the other time was when I ran for state representative. I got beat. The guy was already in there. He beat me 1400 votes out of all Nueces County; there's lots of votes in this county, you know. And I was always so thankful because I couldn't afford the job. I got all the experience of running. Mr. [H. E.] Butt sent me over a hundred dollars. I had more money. That's what beat me. Every big thing in town--boy! They really shoveled the money in to me, because--not that they liked me so well, but they despised the guy that was in there. He was a real crook, you know, but being in there--taught me that that's a pretty powerful thing, you know, pretty hard to beat. Besides, I promised them three things when I agreed to run: that I wouldn't campaign, I wouldn't spend any money, and if I got elected I'd be the most ornery damn guy they ever dealt with in

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their lives. So they picked me. I had every big thing in this town pushing me.

G: Well, I'll be darned. Did you know Sam Fore?

R: No, he was over at Floresville. I grew up in Wilson County, however, but that was a long ways. It was twenty-five miles from Pandora over to Floresville.

G: Oh, I know where that is.

R: That was where I got kicked out of school.

G: I'm not going to ask you why you get kicked out of school.

R: Well, I can tell you. That's an interesting story.

G: Well, go ahead.

R: It was during World War I, and this airplane coming out of San Antonio and down to Pandora and landing, this old boy came over there and turned his airplane--no, broke the propeller, and I went over there with three other kids to help him put a new propeller--they always carried a propeller--put the propeller on and everything, and when I got back, the young teacher, who was eighteen years old and the principal of the school, said we had to stay in five minutes for every minute we were late. Well, I did it one recess, I believe, or two, and then I rebelled, and she said, well, we'd have to take a whipping. So I said, "Don't touch me!" So that's when I went to San Marcos.

G: How old were you then?

R: I was about seventeen or eighteen.

G: You were about as old as the teacher.

R: Just ornery as hell.

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(Laughter)

G: Let's see. I have a note here that Buster Brown took the job at Alamo Heights when you left.

R: Yes, I got him that job, to take my place.

G: You were partners with Fenner Roth for years here.

R: For about fifteen years.

G: In the Friedrich business?

R: Well, yes, we had a lot of other things beside that. That was the grocery store equipment, but we had air conditioning, Chrysler, and other things.

G: Friedrich was manufactured in San Antonio, I believe, wasn't it?

R: Yes, that was the reason it was such a wonderful deal, you see. Nobody could compete with us on price. Those walk-in coolers and meat cases weigh a lot. If you buy one in New York or Ohio somewhere, the freight was more than the box, you see, so they just put it on a truck in San Antonio and bring it down here, and we outfitted everything in the Rio Grande Valley. I had an exclusive territory: Rio Grande Valley, Corpus Christi over as far--including Victoria and all of that. Anything that was sold, I got a commission.

G: And, of course, in this part of the country air conditioning is a major industry [inaudible].

R: Yes, and it got all of a sudden, you see, like that story I was telling you about the auditorium down there. Either you had it or you're out of business.

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G: I have a note that Fenner Roth was the campaign manager in South Texas in 1948. Was that right?

R: Nineteen counties, and he worked--he just took off the whole summer. I don't know how many months, and I did all the work and stayed there. He worked for him, and then when he got through, he asked for this job and got turned down.

G: Well, did he talk to you about that campaign about any irregularities that might have taken place in [inaudible]?

R: Oh, no. He practically worshipped Lyndon.

G: There're some other names from that campaign that may strike some bells or sparks. Ed Linkenhoger?

R: Oh, yes. I know Ed Linkenhoger. He'd made a lot of money, and Fenner knew it--well, he was on the water board. Roth was on the water board, and so was Ed Linkenhoger, and then he went out to Kwajalein Island and made a lot of money out there. Yes, I knew him.

G: It was Brown and Root, wasn't it, out there?

R: I didn't know he was with Brown and Root. I thought he was just an independent. Yes, he was really a big shot here.

G: I may have that wrong. How about Burtt Potter?

R: Oh, I go to see him every few days. He was my attorney. I paid him by the month. I had an average at any given time of at least five cases in court where I was being sued or where I was suing somebody else. So one day he said, "Horace, you're driving me crazy. You can write just as good letters as I am. Take these envelopes and my stationery and just write these letters. Most of them are collection

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

things like that, you know, and just sign my name." After the second day, I called him up and said, "Hey, Burtt. I'm out of stationery." "You're what?" He had a nervous breakdown. I said, "There's a whole bunch of people I've been wanting to let have it and sign somebody else's name."

G: How about Neal Marriot [?]?

R: Oh, yes. Old Neal Marriot was a lawyer here. Last time I had a law case I gave it to Neal Marriot and just told him to write this letter. Let's see what--oh, yes. Well, that's too long a story. I was going to tell you about this. We sold this big ice machine for $6,000, so the guy wouldn't pay for it, and his nephew was a lawyer, so we sold the note to an outfit in Houston. I got my cash out of it. I thought I was out of the way, but that old man sued the finance company in Houston and me. Well, I wasn't going to stay tied for that because I didn't make the durn machine, so I sued the outfit I bought it from in San Antonio. Well, they weren't going to stay tied either, so they sued the people they bought it from and then they sued the factory. It was just a bunch of parts that had been put together, you know. I was down there; I bet there were fifteen or twenty lawyers for a week in that courtroom down there, and when they got through, they didn't charge me one dime, the law firm didn't, because one of them was on the water board, I believe it was, with Fenner. No, he was the lawyer for the water board, and so we had quite a big deal out of that.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

G: According to Fenner Roth's testimony, there wasn't a whole lot of money in the campaign in 1948 because the oil people went for [George] Peddy during the primary and promised to back LBJ if Peddy didn't get in, and when Peddy didn't get in, they just found convenient times to be out of town, so there wasn't any money for the run-off either. Does that ring true to your ears?

R: Well, I didn't keep up too much with that. You see, he wasn't a salesman, and I attended to almost everything, and while he was a full partner and all like that and an awfully fine fellow, nothing wrong with him, but he just wasn't a salesman. I did all the selling and the maneuvering around and everything. But I don't remember that because I wasn't interested in that part of it.

G: Did he talk to you about the Box 13 business down in Jim Wells County?

R: Oh, well, of course, nobody thinks that Lyndon had anything--he didn't even know about it, according to all of his friends. This whole thing was done by [George] Parr. Of course, I read where Lyndon went down there the night before. He was in on it. Don't ever think he wasn't. But I think it's like the election I stole for him. I don't think he actually did it himself, but he had somebody else to do it, you know.

G: Yes. How about L. E. Jones? How well did you know him?

R: I just knew him. That's all. Not very well. Cecil Burney.

G: Yes.

R: Now, Cecil Burney took over from--see, Fenner was running Lyndon's business here, but all of a sudden Cecil Burney, who's a big lawyer in this town, took over and just kind of left Roth out, you see. I don't

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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know whether he just didn't want it anymore or what, but anyhow, Cecil Burney was the man you had to see here if there was anything concerning Lyndon Johnson.

G: Now, you say the last time you talked to LBJ was when he was vice president, and he was in [inaudible].

R: I can't remember whether he was senator or vice president, but he was down at the Driscoll Hotel. The room was full of politicians. I walked in. I didn't want to go, but I walked in, and he jumped up and put his arms around me and walked off down the hall. In fact, I was about ready to go, and he said, "Horace, you know you can have anything you want, don't you?" And I said, "Oh, hell, Lyndon!" I didn't want anything. Besides, I knew he was lying, because I'd had friends he'd turned down who had really helped him. I never had helped him.

G: You think he was just trying to win you over?

R: Well, he was thataway. It agitated him for anybody to be against him.

G: I've heard that he would spend an hour trying to just talk an enemy into changing his mind.

R: Yes. He would. He was a real politician, very persuasive. That's the reason he was so successful in Congress. He'd buttonhole those guys, and he knew how to do it. He just exuded confidence, I reckon, especially--if you knew him like I did, you wouldn't, but if you just barely knew him--I don't think he ever changed, either. I know Roth went up there and spent a week with him in the White House.

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something to him. He was strictly against him, you know, and Lyndon --I don't know who hit first or anything, but I've been told about it a dozen times, that they really went together and they had to pull them apart.

G: This would have been, I guess, in 1937 or so when Lyndon was making his first campaign.

R: Yes, I reckon so. It was during his first campaign.

I had a ranch out of Smithville, three miles toward LaGrange, right on the highway. I had a thousand acres right along the river there, and it ran from the highway all the way back to the river. I had about seven hundred head of cattle on there. I was known as the Coastal Bermuda King down there. I sold that Coastal Bermuda. They're still kidding me, call me--I tell the story about the guy that wanted to buy fifteen hundred bales of hay from over at Rockdale from me, and I said, "Well, before I sell it to you, I want to show you where it's going to be cut. I went down there, and the grass burrs were about this high, and they'd already turned black. Boy, I mean, just vicious things. And he said, "Well, Mr. Richards, I don't believe I would want that. I'd be afraid for my cattle to eat that." And I told him, "Well, that's what I wanted you to say because I know now you don't know anything about cattle. How long have you been in here and how long have you been out of Houston?" He said, "Just a few months. I just got started." I could tell that because--I said, "Cows have been eating grass burrs since time began. Nobody ever heard of a cow eating grass burrs and dying." And he said, "Well"--I

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Tape 2 of 2, Side 1

G: Some people have said that when he left San Marcos he was fully formed in his ability to buttonhole and persuade. Do you think that [inaudible]?

R: No. I don't know whether he was fully formed or not, but I know he got his early training there, playing poker and that. He was a good poker--

(Interruption)

--Shipp Lake, which is about a couple of miles, or a mile out of Smithville, going east there on the highway. There's a lake there, Shipp Lake, and it belonged to these friends of mine who owned the bank there and all. Old Lyndon came down there one day and they had a little political rally, and everybody was drinking beer; they had a beer joint out there and everything. And he started to making a talk, and this old boy owned most of the bank said something to him, and they got in a heck of an argument, and they went together and they had to pull them apart. That's the only fight I ever remember him getting in, but he got in a fight.

G: Do you know when this was? When he--?

R: Well, it was just about the time he was elected to Congress. Everybody there was out there. Anybody in that country can tell you about it.

G: Well, I'll be darned.

R: Yes, this guy, the banker, he wasn't a drunkard; he wasn't drunk or anything like that, but he was a smart son of a gun, and he said

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said, "To tell you the truth, a grass burr is just like a grain of corn, a bean, a pea. It's just chock full of protein. It will really do cattle good to eat it. It don't bother them. They can eat prickly pear. They've got a different stomach, a different tongue." So he bought the fifteen hundred bales of hay from me, and in a few months I got a letter from him one day. He said "Mr. Richards, I'll take your whole crop next year if it's got grass burrs. My cattle look better than they've ever looked before." They called me the "Grass Burr King."

G: Did you ever sell any to LBJ?

R: No. I went up there and saw his that he was trying to raise. I had about eight hundred acres of it. Boy, that was a good deal.

G: Did you ever go to the Ranch?

R: I was there one time and went on that little bus. My wife wanted to go look at it so--

G: But you weren't ever up there while he--

R: Oh, no. He came down to my ranch one time just for a little while.

G: Did he?

R: Yes.

G: What was he doing down there?

R: Oh, I don't know. Somebody else was with him, and I reckon they were riding around some or he brought my brother down there or something. I don't remember. It was too long ago.

G: Did he want to see your cattle?

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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R: No. No, he wasn't interested in cattle at that time. I don't believe that he had gone into the cattle business at that time. I don't remember. It was way back there; I just don't remember, but he didn't know anything about horses nor cattle. You saw pictures of him riding a horse with his spurs and a big hat on. Shoot! He didn't know anything about them.

But I reckon he was a great guy at that. I think he ruined the country. He and Roosevelt together were rewarding people for not working. I think other than that he was all right. He was a good politician, to be admired for that. And I reckon he got some good laws passed. I don't know what they were, but I've heard that. Some of his Democratic friends told me what wonderful laws he got put through.

(Laughter)

G: This is a point that we could clarify. There is one account that says the first meeting of the White Stars was in your room in the Hofheinz Hotel in the fall of 1929.

R: That's wrong!

G: Does that strike you as wrong?

R: That's wrong. The first meeting was five of us down on the banks of the San Marcos River at night, and we had a candle for a light. And my Bible. And I swore in--

G: It was your Bible [inaudible]?

R: My Bible, and this--

G: One person said it was a dictionary.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: No. Now, by golly, I believe it was because they kid me a lot because I said, "Where in the hell is that damn Bible of mine?" (Laughter)

G: Well, you think it was a dictionary then?

R: Well, I think maybe it was now since you mentioned it. Yes. But, anyhow, we used it. The same thing, you know.

G: It's the biggest book around.

R: That's right. But it was awful impressive. Boy, I mean, we got through with a guy, he really took this thing seriously.

G: Oh, there're some folks who, to this day, won't talk about it because they--

R: I know. I know.

G: --took the oath that seriously.

There's another story that LBJ took a dislike to Frank Arnold and tried to break up the romance that he--

R: Yes.

G: Is that true?

R: Yes. It was the Hofheinz girl that Frank was going with, and I can't remember, but there was some conflict there, but I just don't remember what it was. But anyhow, he married her, Frank did.

G: Well, what did LBJ do to try to break them up?

R: I don't remember. I don't remember the details of it. I just remember the story. There was a rumor and all, but it was too long ago.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

I don't remember if Lyndon ever talked over my radio station or not. I was just trying to think. He was there.

G: Now, this radio station you had. This was while you were a student, of course.

R: I heard that you could build one of those things, and I had eighty dollars. I went over to Austin and got this old boy to build me one for eighty dollars. Things were awful cheap then. Then I went to the Ford Motor Company and talked them into furnishing me a studio free. Then I went to another place and got burlap free for advertising. Then I went to Rogers Furniture Store [?] and talked them into furnishing me a piano, advertising. Then I went to the picture show and talked him into letting me put on a program every day at noon by remote--I had a microphone down there, and I sold the students, the smart ones, on announcing free of charge for the experience, "Someday you might want to be an announcer." Of course, they loved it, you know. No regulations. Say whatever you wanted to say, you know.

So I had everything free, and it cost me--the electric bill was six dollars a month. Of course, I had all the lights and everything. So one day, to show you how crazy you can be when you're nineteen or twenty years old, or twenty-two, the Ford Company furnished me this place for advertising, so I got up with a bunch of Chevrolet literature and asked the public. Ford had come out with an all-steel body. Chevrolet still had wood in it, and I told the story about these friends of mine over close to Fentress or Staples who had had a wreck the other day in a Chevrolet, and a splinter went right through this

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

guy's brain and killed him, a wooden splinter. And then I'd get another piece of literature and tell the difference. Boy, it got me--everybody in town called the Chevrolet people, Scrutchin's Chevrolet. They'd call them and say, "Boy, you better listen to what that guy's saying about the Chevrolet." I was in there announcing by myself. I heard a car hit the curb outside, and somebody knocked on the door and said, "Somebody's out here to see you. Scrutchin wants to see you." I said, "Well, I can't leave now. I'm the only one here." So I was playing records, of course, and they were so mad, and I just looked like a [inaudible]. They went down on the square, found the man who owned the Ford [dealership], and got in a fist fight with him on the sidewalk.

(Laughter)

I burnt them up, I'm telling you. It was the funniest durn thing. I'm telling you. It was the funniest durn thing.

I had the news, college professors making talks; boy, it was interesting. You didn't dare not listen to the Prosperity Broadcasting Station. You could walk around the square, and every radio on that square was tuned to the Prosperity Broadcasting Station.

G: You went through the announcing spiel for me before, I think off tape. How did that go again?

R: This was during the Depression, you know. "This is the Prosperity Broadcasting Station, located on San Marcos' main downtown thoroughfare, coming to you through the courtesy of Joe the Tailor."

(Laughter)

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

G: You don't remember if LBJ ever bought time, or--?

R: No, he didn't buy any time. He didn't have any money.

G: Did he ever broadcast?

R: Just about everybody else talked on it. I don't remember if he ever did or not.

G: Well, speaking of talking now, wasn't LBJ big on the debate team?

R: Yes, he was good at debating. Yes.

G: Do you remember the time they went to Sam Houston [State Teachers College] and beat them in a match?

R: Yes, I remember it, but I wasn't there or anything, but I remember it. I wasn't too interested in scholastic things. I had too many other things going, see?

G: Elmer Graham, I think, was his partner, wasn't he?

R: Elmer Graham.

G: Do you remember him?

R: That name sounds familiar, but I can't place him right now.

G: Somebody said that Henry Kyle was the only person who could argue LBJ to a standstill in the classroom. Does that seem to you [inaudible]?

R: Well, I would imagine because I don't think either one of them would have got real mean or bad or insulting or anything like that. They held it on a higher plane. Both of them were pretty good talkers. Of course, Henry turned out to be a lawyer; so did Lyndon, I reckon. I think he got his law degree, didn't he?

G: No, he never did.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: He didn't? Bill Deason got his. They got it up there somewhere at sort of a correspondence school, I think. What was it? I can't remember. Cumberland, Tennessee.

G: I know LBJ went to law school for a while, but dropped out.

R: Well, he was good in government. I had government classes; I sat next to him, and he was plenty good at that. Of course, he and I argued all the time about it.

G: What kind of arguments? What didn't you agree on?

R: I don't think we ever agreed on anything. (Laughter) Oh, Lordy!

G: Professor Greene would encourage that sort of thing, wouldn't he?

R: Yes. He would, but we had it under Tanner [?]. Tanner was the government teacher that we had this under. Greene was a history teacher, and he could make it interesting. He'd prove to you how old Lincoln started the Civil War. Absolutely, no question about it. He deliberately came down and had them to shoot at Fort Sumter to get that thing started. You know, he could tell good stories there. Poorer than a church mouse; he never did have a thing.

G: Did you ever go to his house?

R: Oh, yes. I knew his wife and his kids and all. His son and I are the only Republicans in this A&O bunch.

G: They say his house looked like a regular nature preserve.

R: Oh, man, it was awful. That little old green thing, just dirty, and the yard full of stuff. But everybody liked old Prof Greene. Yes, everybody liked him.

G: Everybody liked the Prexy, too, I understand, didn't they?

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: Who?

G: Prexy. Professor Evans. Dr. Evans.

R: Oh, yes. Well, you know, his brother was the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. You've heard that, haven't you? Well, he [President Evans] had an indelible memory. I never will forget one day. I'd been teaching school out in the mountains at the head of the Nueces River, Edwards County, Barksdale, and I walked by him. I hadn't seen him in several years, and you know thousands of students come and go there. He hollered at me, said, "Hey, Horace! How is Barksdale?" That old man, he had a memory that was out of this world. Yes, he was a good old man. He called me in one day, and he said, "Now, Horace, you are agitating for a college dance. You're living before your time. I think someday there will come a time when it's all right for teachers to dance, but now it's not good for teachers to be seen dancing, you see?" And he gave me a good fatherly lecture about it. Then he called me in another time when I--this bull session. He didn't like that title. He said, "That doesn't sound very sophisticated for a college newspaper to have a 'bull session.'" "Bull" was kind of a vulgar word then. I can remember when you didn't say "stomach" in public company, you know. But he was nice. He always knew everybody. He was there for years and years.

G: Did LBJ have a special relationship with him?

R: Yes, apparently he liked what he saw in him. He sure did give him more headway than he'd ever given anybody else. Of course, he was getting older himself then, and Lyndon was a guy that would grab it,

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

you know, and take it. Just give him an inch and he'd take a mile, and if you wanted to throw rocks off the hill, he could put you on at twenty-five cents an hour.

G: He had control of the campus patronage at one point?

R: Yes.

G: Is that too strong a statement?

R: No, no. He did. You just about had to see him if you got a job. But I had too many other things. I didn't need his job, and I was too independent for him. He didn't like people like me.

G: Who would you say actively disliked him?

R: You know, I don't know anybody that just actively disliked him. They made fun of him, ridiculed him at times, but more or less respected him. He wasn't a guy that rubbed you the wrong way or anything like that. He would put his arm around you and tell you how great you was, you know, if he thought you didn't like him, but it agitated him to have anybody crossways with him. He was a real politician. But he still would walk over your dead body for one more vote, which, I think, maybe they all do. I think that's pretty general. You get a politician right down to where it's votes or principle, he's going to take the votes. We don't have any statesmen; we've got a bunch of politicians. I don't mean any. We have maybe some, but--

G: Well, they say that's a definition of a statesman, is a dead politician.

R: That's right.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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Roth knew his wife real good, and I got all my information from him. Over in East Texas. He [her father] was just an old dirt farmer, and he had a whole bunch of niggers living there, and then they were poverty-stricken and he bought the land for nothing. He was just sort of land poor. And when he died, she didn't inherit but thirty thousand dollars, but she took that--like her daddy, she's businesslike, you know. She made money out of money, and Lyndon was not that way at all. He never was money-minded. He didn't have his money. Enough to live on was about all he cared for, and his daddy was the same way. But he made a lot of money that you and I and anybody else could have made. After all, if I'm a United States senator or congressman, I could probably get the only television station in town, you know. That wasn't too hard to do. Once you do that, you don't have to give your money. If you want a big contract, you advertise with it. That's not against the law.

G: No.

R: See? And he was smart enough, and he made that.

He came down here to buy this newspaper one time.

G: Oh, he did?

R: Yes.

G: The [Corpus Christi] Caller, was that what it was?

R: Yes, and Roth was telling me all about that. They met down here at night, but I think he either did, or tried to buy several newspapers or radio stations, but I don't know how far he ever got like that.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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G: Do you remember about when this would have been when he was discussing buying the newspaper?

R: No. It was when I was partners with Roth. It must have been a long about the time he ran for the Senate.

G: I see.

R: Or right afterwards. But he wasn't a financier. I think she was. They tell me she used to get down on her knees and scrub the floor up there in that television station. I never, I don't believe, saw her but one time. He brought her by the house when I was in Alamo Heights. He brought her by there one night.

G: This would have been in the 1930s, I guess.

R: Well, I quit teaching there in 1941, and I was there I believe seven years, so it was probably 1933 or 1934 or 1935, somewhere along in there.

G: What did you think of her at that time?

R: Well, I never did know her well enough. Apparently, she's not a brilliant woman but a likeable person, and always, what I could see of her, she's shrewder than he was about money and probably politics, too, you know, but her old daddy, he was land poor. He didn't have any money. But a lot of people think she inherited millions, you know, and bought the radio station and television station. Lyndon had the only television station there. He finally got Bill Deason to license, but he could tell him what to do. He could sort of control Bill, but he did that because he didn't want some other guy to come in there and get it. Then I think Bill must have sold out for a

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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million dollars. He bought some land there next to the station and all. I know he bought an $80,000 house in Washington while he was up there, and he was awfully good to him.

R: And to Roth, you see. Roth quit, got out of my business. I bought him out, so he heard that there was a vacancy in the head of the Social Security in Houston. They had a hundred and twenty people working there then, so he called Lyndon and asked him--that's when he was president--what about that job. He said, "Just get in your car and go on down there and tell them you're in command. So Roth did. He had written him two or three times and all that stuff and never did get an answer, but then this day, he called him. I was there. He called him and he said, "Get in your car and go on down there, and tell them you're in charge."

So Roth went down there and told them, and you know that Social Security outfit is an old outfit. You have priorities there. Some of these guys had been there for fifteen or twenty years; they were supposed to be next. Here comes this smart aleck guy that knew nothing and took over. Boy, they were mad. He really had an uproar there. But he stayed right on in there, and I reckon did a pretty good job.

But before that, he gave him a big job in Austin, the head of--I can't remember what that was. A whole bunch of these fraternity brothers were there, you know. Dunlap, and, oh, I don't know how many of them were in on that deal, this government deal. But, anyhow he gave--he stayed there, I don't know, several years before he retired.

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

I reckon he went out when Lyndon went out, so--

G: Let's pause here while we gather our thoughts.

(Interruption)

Was LBJ religious?

R: You know, he joined the Catholic church, along later, after his daughter got married.

G: Well, I have heard that rumor, but I haven't been able to verify it.

R: Well, now, I heard it, too. He may not, but that's what I heard. She married a Catholic, and he decided he wanted to be one, too, and he joined. But I never knew of him going to church or Sunday school or never heard him say anything in a religious way. I've just always figured he was just like 99 per cent of us, sort of nonplussed and noncommittal. I don't know what you'd call it.

G: I've heard that he was a member of the Christadelphians.

R: What are they?

G: I'm not expert enough to tell you. I know there's a Christadelphian church out near Stonewall.

R: Well, he might have been, but I know he--I would never consider, well, I don't know, maybe--played poker; he drank whiskey; he cussed.

G: Well, his mother was a pretty devout Baptist, wasn't she?

R: I don't know whether--she was a Baptist, but I don't know how devout. I know his daddy wasn't and that old Sam Houston wasn't, and I never have--nothing religious connected with him that I have ever known about. Of course none of us were. None of that whole bunch that I ever knew was religious at all, and I don't think he was. But I'm

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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT
Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

sure he could get up and make you a good talk on it any time he wanted to and prove to you that he was.

Do you ever listen to this old boy on radio all night long? What's his name? Oh, golly, I hear him every night, and now, I can't think of it, but he's on practically every station all night long. What's his name?

G: Well, I'm trying to think of who you're referring to.

R: I was astounded. People call in. You know, they call in and ask questions, and they said, "Are you religious?" He said, "I'm agnostic." Then he explained. Of course agnostic means I don't say yes and I don't say no. I say I don't know. And I was very astounded that he would say that. Then he named off the presidents of the of the United States who were not religious and so on.

G: Did he name LBJ?

R: No, he didn't name him. He named several. The president of Harvard, and I don't know, several big university presidents and great names in the past who weren't, and to me, it's one of the most interesting subjects there is. I just love to read. I'm not religious, but I love to read about it.

G: Do you think agnostic would have described LBJ?

R: Yes, I'm sure it was.

G: Or did you just--would it be fair to [inaudible]?

R: Well, I think if you just get down and get to asking questions 95 per cent of the people are agnostic. As I see it, being religious and believing every word in the Bible, that's kind of like--you can't be a

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

little pregnant. If there's one part of that Bible you don't believe, then you can't say, "I believe in the Bible." See? And so I think if you just get out and say, "Do you believe this? Do you believe that?" nine people out of ten, there are parts of it they'll say, "No, I don't believe it at all." Well then, they're agnostic.

G: Okay.

R: Because they don't know for sure. Nobody knows for sure. That's what gets me with preachers when they get up and say, "I know this. I know this. Now, God said this and this and this." Nobody knows what God said because nobody ever saw him. They never smelled him. They never heard him, nor nothing else. There's just no way for you to quote God word for word. The only thing we know about God is one thing, and that's what the Jews tell us he said. And after thousands of years, you know, that can get pretty turned around.

G: Well, speaking of religion on campus, now, didn't they have sort of a required chapel period?

R: Yes, yes. Well, I don't know. I don't think you had to go. I don't remember what the deal was, but I know they did have a chapel, services there.

G: Who would conduct services?

R: Oh, I'm sure some of the religious teachers. I never went. I don't know.

G: You never knew LBJ to go?

R: No, I never knew him to go to church unless he was going with some old girl and she was religious, and he could probably go with her. But he

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

never took off on it, never talked about it. Now, he'd talk about everything in the world, but I never remember him discussing religion. In these editorials, these great editorials, I was reading one yesterday, it said in there, "Most people think that the Bible is the most widely-read book in the world. It isn't. It's the Sears and Roebuck catalogue."

End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I

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