

INTERVIEW I

DATE: December 19, 1978

INTERVIEWEE: EMMA S. WEBB (MRS. CHARLES WILSON WEBB)

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mrs. Webb's office, Elgin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: Mrs. Webb, let's begin with the first time Lyndon Johnson came to Elgin to campaign in 1937.

W: Well, Buchanan, James P. Buchanan of Brenham, had died rather suddenly, and he had already been in Congress many years. So most of us people didn't know too much of what a congressman was going to do. But we had, of course, read that he had died and that there was going to be a special election to elect his successor. We noticed in the paper, of course, that Lyndon Johnson was the first one, I believe, of nine to announce his candidacy for that place.

So one morning--it must have been in March--he came. I heard a man bouncing up the stairs. Our law office was in (the) front of the building, the first floor of which was the Elgin Farmer's State Bank. So our office was above that. Then at the other end of that big building 2nd floor was this WPA sewing room that the government was putting on as a means of getting some money for the people who really were in great need of having some sort of income at that time. Mrs. Ed Outlaw was chairman of that particular group that was working. I heard this man bouncing up (the stairs). I could tell it was a man by the steps. Then I saw him go into that end of the building. It was Lyndon Johnson. He knew Mrs. Outlaw to begin with. I suppose she had had some communication with him in getting that job, perhaps. I happened to be where

my vision could go outside the door, and I saw that they were talking. She wanted him to meet me and Mr. Webb, too, so he came on down the hall. I was just immediately impressed with him. He was good-looking and fresh and had a good strong voice, a very vibrant personality. I was just carried away with him. And Mr. Webb was highly impressed, too. But, anyhow, then we had a few words.

Later on, very shortly after that, I looked down on the streets, and there I saw Lyndon going in one door after another, all the stores. I asked some of the people then, how did he approach them. They said he'd come in and shake hands and say, "I'm Lyndon B. Johnson, a candidate for congressional representative to take Mr. Buchanan's place. I'd like for you to vote for me". That was just an unusual way of making contacts and approaching the people, at least in our little town, because up until that time, like Buchanan, the candidates would only go to some of the key people in the community, like the Democratic chairmen of the precincts in which they were. Mr. Webb had been chairman of the Elgin Precinct Four for a long, long time. So, anyhow, if they wanted to ask anything, or if they had any question they wanted to have explained, why, then, he was there ready to make a reply or go into conversation. And if they didn't, why, there wasn't any need for him to waste any more time; and he'd just dash on to the next place. That impressed me very much, to think he (would endeavor to meet everyone). He was well-groomed. He was tall and had a fine physique, and he looked you in the eye when he talked. He just really made a marvelous first impression, I'm sure, to everybody.

Then that afternoon I happened to be in Bastrop. Mr. Webb and I, we had some business at the courthouse. I saw that young man dashing in stores, and doing the same thing that very same day as he'd

Webb -- I --3

done in Elgin. So I'm sure that's what he must have done all over the district. People were highly impressed! The editor of our Elgin paper was Mr. J.O. Smith who was up in years - not too much so - but he was quite mature. So when he saw anybody, especially among the young men, who were interested in politics or interested in leadership of any kind, why, he was ready to boost them up for it. So he gave a nice lot of publicity to Mr. Johnson in our Elgin Courier, which is an old, old paper. I'm sure that's one reason we got as much publicity in Elgin as we did.

Mr. Buchanan had died on February 25, and on March 4, Lyndon Johnson announced his candidacy for the congressional seat. The election had been set to be on April 10. Hence, there wasn't very much time. But in March, then, Lyndon came here and was going to address the people. All of us who had any chance of notifying people, key people, we'd give the word around that he was going to be here. It was going to be on the street. He had his own amplifier. So the place where he was going to do the talking (was decided on). I don't remember now who arranged for the location of where he would speak on Main Street, but, anyhow, they asked me then to introduce him. Well, I was very pleased to do it because I really admired him a great deal. I was young and full of vim, vigor and vitality, and I was ready to just let people know that we had a chance to get somebody who was really going to represent us, if we'd let him. So I remember well that I very boldly looked into the future and I said, "It won't be long, with this young man who has such a personality and has had the experience". He did have a lot of experience. He'd been a secretary or an aide to Mr. Kleberg,

Webb -- I -- 4

Congressman Richard Kleberg, of South Texas. Then he had been national (state) chairman of the NYA, the National Youth Administration, and he had innovated a whole lot of things that no one else had ever thought of before. He was just an original thinker. So then I boldly told them, "It won't be long. We'll all be wanting to go up to the White House, and there we will be greeted by President Lyndon B. Johnson". That was just a happenso, but it turned out that way.

G: How did the speech go? Was it well received?

W: Oh, yes. He didn't speak too long, whatever it was. Of course, it was out in the open. You know, if you don't have seats and the opportunity for the people to be (comfortable) -- to me, it takes a oneness to be able to put something over in a church or in a gathering. If you have them too far scattered, maybe they don't all hear; or maybe the person next to them is not interested sufficiently, or are there maybe just for curiosity. Well he was smart enough to know that there wasn't any use for him to give, to a big open meeting like that, too long a speech.

G: What were the issues that people in Elgin were concerned about in that campaign?

W: They wanted a higher price for cotton. Cotton was low to begin with. Then the President had, I believe about October of 1936, said that he was in favor of loaning money. I didn't realize until not long ago again that it was so recent - recent, that's forty years ago - that the matter of loaning money to the farmers to buy land was such an asset. That was one of Roosevelt's platforms or opportunities. So when Lyndon Johnson talked, he made it very plain that he was going to do his very best to carry out the program that FDR had. Of course, there were some who were in favor of FDR and others who were not. I believe--let's see--

Webb -- I -- 5

among the others, one of the people that ran against him--well, there was Houghton Brownlee of Austin, and C. N. Avery--he had been in Washington and had a lot of experience--and Merton Harris, who had been our district attorney for a good while. Well he (Harris) resigned from that office and went to East Texas. From there he was appointed assistant attorney general of the state. Anyway he was one of the candidates, and Polk Shelton was one of the candidates. But when the votes came in, Lyndon got 8,000, I believe it was, plus.

G: That's correct, I think.

W: 8,000 plus. This Mr. Merton Harris got 4,700 plus and Polk Shelton 4,100 plus. The others got considerably less. But of course there was such a wide difference between the first one, which was Lyndon, 8,000 plus, and Mr. Merton Harris of 4,700 plus that there wasn't any question about it.

G: Did any of the other candidates come to Elgin and attempt to get you to support them?

W: I don't recall that they did, but I would think maybe they did. I'm almost sure they had to. Of course, Merton Harris I would think - would, because this was his district. I mean, he was district attorney of this County.

G: What role did President Roosevelt's measure to pack the Supreme Court or add additional justices to the Supreme Court play in this?

W: Oh, one of them was very much vocal--I think Mr. Avery. I'd better not say which one--but one of them in his campaign had that as his public advertising, that he was opposed to that, that FDR would stack the Supreme Court. So there was vocal opposition to Roosevelt because of that by some people.

But anyhow, Lyndon had gone up and down the street and had met

Webb -- I -- 6

so many people, and they didn't know all the others maybe or didn't have as clear a picture of them as they did by Lyndon having just come and been with them so recently. Anyway, the rest of us who had any voice at all, we were kind of tooting the horn all the time, you know, making our knowledge and understanding clear. So we were all very happy indeed that Lyndon got it.

G: I know it's looking back a long way, but if you had to estimate in terms of a poll how the people of Elgin would feel about the Court reform bill, whether they would be for it or against it, how do you think they felt about it?

W: I don't think that the Elgin people (were concerned about it). We're from a small country town and it didn't make any difference to them who was on the Court. But they were interested in cotton and parity, and Roosevelt had said he was in favor of parity. Oddly enough, just a few weeks ago, some of the farmers around here got very vocal about it. Well when (Johnson) came and spoke in March, he said he wanted to carry out the platform that President Roosevelt had, and pledged himself that, if he was elected, he was going to do that. So they were in favor of better cotton prices and the then so-called parity. He said between the cotton farming and industry there was a parity. I don't know much about parity myself; I'm not a farmer, and haven't had too much experience in that. But, nevertheless, it was a big issue. So that was the thing that they were concerned about.

Another thing, for instance Elgin, at least, was anxious to get a federal building. We didn't have one. We had a post office, and were renting a building. So they had already presented it to Mr. Buchanan, but he didn't quite get into the swing of it as Lyndon always did. After Lyndon had taken the oath of office, I think it

Webb -- I -- 7

was just four days later, he wired and said that he was seeing about this federal building. That was just his way of doing.

G: He got it, too, didn't he?

W: Yes, he did. Yes. It's a fine building and we're proud of it. Then I think one of his techniques was that anybody that wrote to him, would within twenty-four hours they'd get a reply. Well, that was unheard of up to then, you know. But of course, he had a lot of people working for him. But that got the results.

G: How about rural electrification? Was that a hot issue then?

W: Oh, yes. Well, those who could get it, yes, they were grateful. It meant a lot to the country people.

G: But the power companies opposed it, private power, didn't they?

W: In our little town, as far as we were concerned, they probably did, but they were not as strong then, didn't have as much voice and power at that time as they do now. Of course, now they've really built up a big machine with a lot of assets. But almost everybody that then lived in town had country people who were (relatives or friends). Many of them had come from the country themselves, gotten their education or business or something since. Naturally, they appreciated the fact that their folks back home could have washing machines and electricity, and not have to worry about old kerosene lamps. A few of them had acetylene lights in the churches and public places, but it was just a godsend as far as (we were concerned). That was a big asset. He was much appreciated for all that.

G: I guess also the President (Johnson), after he was a congressman, helped locate a camp in the district between Bastrop and--

W: They had a park. They call it the Lost Pines Park. It's still there.

Webb -- I -- 8

That was one of the things that was needed; I mean they used it; it gave a lot of employment. Have you ever been to the Bastrop Lost Pines Park? It's very nice. Buildings are all of native stone. Of course, it was great for us, country-town people. Like me, I've got so many things that I must do, and there are so many activities around, that by the time you do that locally, you just don't have too much time to get around and see what the rest of the world is doing. That was really a revelation to a lot of people. Until lately you didn't have to pay to go in; now you have to pay so much for a car, whatever it is. But people still go, of course. Nevertheless, that was a big asset, and Bastrop has always been very proud of its heritage. They've got a marvelous background. So any time you get on their good side of history and historical preservation, you can almost count on them putting their whole soul into it.

Another thing, in a county seat (it's different). But in Elgin our people here were so tied down with their own little business and everybody had to tend to what he had to be doing. If he was a merchant, if he was a lawyer, whatever his job was, a teacher, or whatever, he was kept busy doing what he had to do to make his thing successful. But in Bastrop, I mean at the county seat, there was a whole county personnel. They were on salaries, and they had been elected to those good jobs, and the people were working. So they had a kind of a working unit that could take their time and do things that needed to be done in a community to get the thing going. But in a small town we didn't always have the people free to do that. We grew up and we did develop some. We had trade days and our businessmen would go in a caravan to the communities and put on

Webb -- I -- 9

little programs and talk and have sing songs and maybe domino tournaments. That gave them an opportunity to express themselves and have a feeling of a camaraderie.

G: If someone needed something or wanted their congressman to help them, would they write LBJ directly, or would they come to you since you were identified with him?

W: Well, lots of times--I still do that; I would or Mr. Webb. C.W. was really a big spokesman then. People will come and maybe they figure that with our experience maybe we would know how best to make an approach. So I'd write letters and they'd sign them. Sometimes you could just tell them, "Well, how about this and that?" and let them take it from there and be responsible for it. But we were all learning as we went along.

Right now one of our liaison officer citizens is Lawson Rivers. Whenever we need a voice for (something), he is the one that takes time. He's a cotton buyer and has independent assets in South Texas and so forth. It's not like where he has to just stay on the job with his own thing. So he gets to go to these meetings and knows all of the people that are active. Whenever we want anything, like this hospital thing that we're working on now.

Mrs. Johnson was down here, you know. She did a big thing when she did that. We were just so proud. By the way, I should have gone up to see her since then, but we've had one crisis after another with that hospital business. She sent me her cancelled (check). She gave a hundred-dollar check that night that she was here. Boy, that was really a surprise thrill. I wrote her we'd like to have that check--I'm still to do it--to make a framed picture and just have that and keep it intact for an Elgin history memorial. But I just haven't had

Webb -- I -- 10

a chance yet to get the proper-size frame that we're going to use. We've had so much commotion. The hospital is still in a very bad state. Dr. Ray bought it, but we're not getting it off the ground like it should be. So we're still meeting, met this last week, the steering committee.

The 1948 high school graduating class of Elgin--you see, Mrs. Amis, our high school speech teacher, had gotten to know our Congressman. I mean, the children had had him (Johnson) as a speaker. Mrs. Amis was a very staunch friend of his. When they graduated the class decided they would have a bus trip that year and go to Washington. Mr. (C. E.) Brown, who was the school superintendent at the time, worked up the itinerary. They went to town on the route and arranged ahead where they would have to spend the night, and at that time arranged with the different school superintendents, and so forth. Maybe they'd stay in a school building and spend the night. Of course, nowadays (with) motels and such, it's a different situation. But it was a big event. Let me see, when we had our centennial in June 1972, I took it (the picture) down. I have a picture, Lyndon sent it to me, about that big, of the Elgin school children with Lyndon on the Capitol steps. He gave them a tour himself. I mean he, himself, directed a Capitol tour, which was unusual. I believe I see from here (reading a document) he did maybe give some things to Elgin that we had never dreamed about before. But then he got the results.

G: I understand at one time he brought Secretary Stuart Symington here. Do you remember that occasion?

W: I just barely remember it, yes. I know that was a big feather in our cap to think we were going to meet two big dignitaries. In a little country town, like I say, in our small communities, we just don't

Webb -- I -- 11

have too many people that are free economically and time-wise to just get too involved in some of the activities that need leadership. You'd give it as best you can, but you just can't make it a real choice.

G: Do you remember the 1941 campaign when he ran against W. Lee O'Daniel for the Senate?

W: Well, I do to some extent, of course. W. Lee beat him on that! But, fortunately LBJ had not resigned. A special election was set. Since Johnson had not resigned, that still left him in the House, which was great, because he was able to get in after W. Lee.

G: Did you work for him in that 1941 race?

W: Oh, yes. We worked for him all the time! We have a picture of him in our office waiting room and in Jack's room; and Lyndon, or somebody from Lyndon's office, sent us this one in my room. "Mrs. Emma Webb, with best wishes." That's from Lyndon!

You know, he never forgot a friend. When they had the autograph party at the LBJ Library, selling his book, The Vantage Point, of course we went up, a bunch of us. As Pickle and Johnson were coming down from that floor where they had gone up with some others to see something, and a bunch of us were going up, Pickle saw and knew me; so he said, "You remember Mrs. Webb, do you?" And the President said, "Oh, sure, Webb and Webb, Attorneys, Elgin, Texas," loud and clear. I could hardly believe my ears! So, I wrote him after that, and just the other day I came across a copy of my letter in which I told him that with the thousands of people that he knew all over, and as it had been at least ten years since our paths had met, I was amazed and overwhelmed that he would just instantly remember me. Of course we were then, in November 1971, when I was up there, Webb, Webb and Meredith, and had been since 1960. But he remembered us

Webb -- I -- 12

as Webb and Webb, Attorneys, Elgin, Texas.

G: What sort of people voted for him as opposed to W. Lee O'Daniel in that 1941 race, and what sort of people voted for Governor O'Daniel?

W: Well, you know, I'm not a rock-and-roll devotee, personally. I was brought up on good music. I had a sister who went to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, so when she came home from that conservatory many, many years ago, why, we had classical stuff!! Of course, this rock-and-roll business and this jigging stuff came later, and there are people who admire it and appreciate it and think it's tops, so one has to recognize the present, I guess. But, nevertheless, at that time there were just a lot of people who liked "Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy." Leon (Huff) was one of his players, and they'd have that little combo. That just pleased ever so many people, and he made a lot of friends by such. They would hear that on the radio, and if they didn't have newspapers--you know, a lot of people in the country as well as in town, did not have daily newspapers--why, that was their information. "W. Lee O'Daniel, W. Lee O'Daniel". It was a name that rang true. So some of them did vote for him for that.

G: You think there was some entertainment value to him?

W: Yes, he made a splash.

G: The Light Crust Doughboys.

Well, I suppose in that election LBJ was very closely identified with President Roosevelt.

W: Yes, he made it plain always that he was. In fact, Roosevelt and... who was our representative (Senator?) at that time? Was (Morris) Sheppard still living? Anyhow, Roosevelt and some other important person in Washington were good friends of Johnson. I believe that

Webb -- I -- 13

was the case. They took a picture which showed where Lyndon was on the Capitol steps with the President bidding him farewell and Godspeed. FDR was in favor of Lyndon. To that extent he endorsed Lyndon. But I don't remember the details.

G: In 1946 he ran for re-election against Hardy Hollers. It just appears from the files that perhaps some of his support in Elgin had tapered off by then, and there was an anti-Johnson element here.

W: Well, I don't know that it was so much anti-Johnson as the Republican (element). For many years the Democrats, they were the people of Elgin. I mean the vocal people. There were always some Republicans here, of course. But by then they had increased in number. Right now, on the last two elections, we've had quite a number of Republicans. So it was more their friends who were (supporting Hollers). It was on the matter of the Republican side, I believe, rather than actually (against) Lyndon.

G: I see. So they would vote for Hollers for that reason.

W: Yes.

G: Did you notice any change in his own philosophy? Did he seem to become more conservative by 1946 or 1948?

W: Well, it looked like every time we'd pick up a paper he was doing something, but I didn't particularly (remember anything). Of course, he didn't get to make as many personal contacts, visits, as he once did. But he was Honor Guest at the Chamber of Commerce banquet, and he was our speaker very shortly after he was elected to Congress. I remember I went one Sunday to Smithville--I belong to the American Legion Auxiliary--and he was there at that District Legion meeting. He's like Pickle. Pickle somehow manages where he can go to a whole lot of things we have here, and you just wonder, "Well, if he's doing

Webb -- I -- 14

that to every town, how can he function at Washington?" Anyhow, Lyndon was there and he seemed to be pleased to see me. So, as I say, he remembers all of his friends. At a big meeting, I mean at a general meeting, we could count on him and he always had something good to say as far as information, patting them on the back, polishing apples occasionally.

G: Do you think that the people here were more concerned with how he looked after the district and making sure that he touched the bases, rather than his stands on particular issues that might not affect Elgin that directly?

W: I remember when I was County Chairman of the Democratic Women, why, we always had two or three people who we could count on to be speakers, I mean, to express themselves. One of the ladies was a Mrs. Jack Gillum (?). Her husband was this big farmer down here. They had had lots of hard luck with the cattle and with the cotton and even watermelon. They had no children, so she was able to put in quite a bit of her time--she was an ex-schoolteacher--studying and talking and doing philanthropic things. She was very generous in her positions and what she was doing in the community. She was one of the people that I could always count on that would get up and speak and be forceful. So people like that, whenever we had a meeting, why, we'd generally see that there were two or three of them that were ready to (help). Whenever you asked for volunteers or something, they had something in mind. They would always call attention to (things Johnson had done). Like having that LCRA, that was a big, big thing for Central Texas. The rural people just never forgot that.

Then, of course, whenever anybody graduated, these little old kids from high school, (he even wrote them a letter). By the way, Zoe, my

Webb -- I -- 15

daughter-in-law, has kept a lot of things pertaining to Lyndon. She, too, when she graduated from Austin High School, like all those other youngsters that graduated received a letter of congratulation, you know, and it seemingly was personal. The recipients were impressed and never forgot that letter they received. When we had our chili supper in March here, there were several in the audience then that said they still had their letters they had gotten. He did that for a number of years. I don't suppose he continued that when he was senator, but while he was representative (he did). Also, if anybody had a big wedding anniversary or somebody died, he'd write. Why, when Mr. Webb died I got the nicest telegram from him. Well, that meant he had his lookouts or his aides, and it was their job to find out what it would be that he might want to be concerned about. But those little things (were important). I mean it was a little thing, seemingly, but it was a big thing and it meant a lot for him to take time to even direct somebody else to do that type of work for him. Just like this (indicating a document), chances are he didn't write that. But anyhow, those were his sentiments and his aide would know how to word it. As far as we were concerned, it was he that was actually sending it.

G: How would you go about organizing Elgin during one of these campaigns? What did you do to get people to vote for him?

W: Zoe, that's my daughter-in-law, she has a scrap book of every year ever since she was married in 1942, telling all about the things that she did. This was something that was one of the decorations she kept, "Rural Texans for LBJ and HHH"--that's Humphrey, you know--"cowboy stew and feature attraction, Dan Blocker, October fairgrounds." This was at Giddings. But, anyhow, Zoe has some of these things that she kept. Now

Webb -- I -- 16

that was of that. Here is a bunch of other things she had put in her scrap book: "Hello, Lyndon". But that was her joy, and she appreciated it. She first knew about him because when she graduated from Austin High he sent her one of his letters which she still has.

But you asked how would we get our people together? Well, we'd have a nice tea or something in a nice home, and a lot of people would go to (it). If they hadn't been going to political gatherings, it was an opportunity to get to see a nice home and to be mixed with the people who are really interested in things like that. So at this (coffee at the) Rivers' home--Zoe was on that committee, and that's where some of this stuff came in--you were supposed to come and bring a contribution. (It was called a) green and silver coffee. Then after we had the home set, we would telephone or maybe write to some people that didn't even have a phone. This evidently must have been in the paper: "A green and silver coffee in the interest of the Lyndon Johnson for President campaign will be given at the home of Mrs. W.H. Rivers, Jr."--and it gave the place and street--"on October 25 from three to five in the afternoon. All interested supporters from every community in Bastrop County and all surrounding trade areas are most cordially invited to attend. Hostesses for the affair will be Mrs. W.H. Rivers, Jr."--she was the wife of the president of the bank at that time--"Mrs. W. H. Rivers III, Mrs. Jack Webb, Mrs. A. P. William," her husband was a big man in one of the brickyards, "and Mrs. Tom Cameron," that was a schoolteacher.

So, anyhow, by keeping some of these mementoes, when you see them just like your letters today, that calls to mind things that were.

G: Do you remember any other episodes during any of these campaigns?

W: Well, I remember one time when he was having a victory dinner--I guess

Webb -- I -- 17

it was a victory--and he wanted some watermelons. It seemed like there weren't just too many watermelons that year. Evidently he'd had one the year before and it went over good, so he called down and Mr. Grover Westbrook was one of our Chamber of Commerce men in those days. He got the watermelons. Lyndon had different ways of getting people together, and that's Texas hospitality. It's really a wonderful thing for the people, as well as other states, to see the hospitality and the homeyness of such a man as our LBJ was.

G: Do you recall the last time that you saw President Johnson?

W: When I went up there to see him get off the plane at Bergstrom Air Force (Base) on his return to Texas, that was the last time. No, no, I was in the (LBJ) Library, that's right. That was the last.

G: Do you want to recount what he said to you then?

W: Well, there was such a big, big crowd there. We were going up the stairway to a certain landing for some purpose. There was an exhibit or something on that floor. He and Pickle and some others were coming down. So about halfway on the steps, Pickle, he knew me, and so he said, "Well, you remember Mrs. Webb, do you?" (Johnson said) "Oh, of course, Webb and Webb, Attorneys, Elgin, Texas." It was just unbelievable to me that (with) all of the people, all those many years, he had met, not only in Texas, but throughout the United States, to think that he would still be able to recall that much, just getting the name and immediately putting it in place. So that was quite a thrill to me.

G: Anything else on LBJ that you remember and haven't talked about?

W: One of the things that impressed me, as a member of the Democratic committee, we had different meetings and Mrs. Jud Collier and Jane McCallum--Mr. McCallum was school superintendent of Austin many, many years, and Jane Y. was his wife. She was a very dynamic somebody, and

she was interested in women's work. Was she secretary of state for one of them? (1927-1933) Anyhow, she had a nice position. They'd have meetings in Austin, calling this committee to come and attend general opening. So I remember one time we were (meeting), I don't remember which hotel it was, but it was (at) a big assembly place in Austin. I had occasion to go to his office for something, and there were four desks--I think there were four--with telephones. There was somebody at each of those desks. He had all those people working for him. As soon as he got through with one, why, here he'd be ready to swing and immediately go to the next. So I said then, "There's no success like success", because with all of his background and all of his experience, of course, those who knew him were ready to let him know that they appreciated it. But he was able to respond immediately, no matter what came up, he had something in hand that could just carry on the ball. That was something that I was very much impressed about, that he could go from one subject to another, and there these telephones were ringing. Every one of them was busy.

G: Anything else?

W: I told you he was at our house for dinner one time; and had our Courier editors J.O. & Daisy Smith .

G: I was going to ask you one other question, as long as I've got the machine on, that I'm curious about and I think others (are). How did you get into the practice of law?

W: Well, my mother's father was a lawyer in Illinois, so maybe that had something to do with it. But I had been a schoolteacher. I taught school here that year and met Mr. Webb. We married that summer. He thought I was real clever, I guess, and so he encouraged (me). Something was said about studying law. I said, well, if I could study law, why, then I could help him in his office some. Then I took a course,

Webb -- I -- 19

at that time by correspondence. Everybody had to take Blackstone's Commentaries, you know, the foundation of English law. I was lucky enough and made good grades. (Ira Polk) Hildebrand, Judge Hildebrand, was in charge of that and he was real pleased with what my answers were on different things. So anyhow, that fall, after I had taken the correspondence work and got good grades and good comments, I went to Texas U School of law and studied. Of course, Mr. Webb encouraged me. He was pleased. I was elected to--there's my Texas Law Review. Then I belonged to at that time--I don't believe they have it in Austin now anymore--Kappa Beta Pi, which is an honorary legal sorority. I still belong to the alumni; there's a big chapter in San Antonio, so I still keep that up. But that's how it happened. After you once got started, there's no place to stop.

Mr. Webb used to say that in a small town like ours a lawyer really is a social engineer, and I guess that's right. Because we get a lot of people (who) come in there, they have their little family problems and neighborhood things where you can't maybe charge them for it, or we didn't at least. We would just be folks with them. If in your direction or in your conversation you were able to give them a boost or a lift or an insight, why, it was rewarding. But, anyhow, you get more and more of that as you go along.

But now, when the government is giving these free-clinic lawyers, of course, they get plenty good pay as far as they're concerned. They're not doing it out of the fullness of their heart. Those who are doing that kind of work, legal aid I believe they call it, it's just not done for any reason on their part to be just philanthropic. It's just a matter of having a job. Of course, they're good lawyers, and naturally will have to study their cases, but it's just a different attitude. We still have to (help people). I do at least, every once in a while. Right now

Webb -- I -- 20

I've got two or three of them, they need something. Somebody's got to talk to them and kind of let them know that they're human beings, and maybe there's something or some way you can direct them, it helps them and helps the speaker, too, perhaps.

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

(End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I)

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