INTERVIEW I

DATE: August 1, 1985

INTERVIEWEE: R. VERNON WHITESIDE (with occasional comments by Walter Richter)

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Whiteside's residence, Marble Falls, Texas

Tape 1 of 2, Side 1

G: Let me ask you to trace your steps to San Marcos.

W: Well, I went to Texas University out of high school, and due to the fact that I was all day trying to register, these two friends of mine came by with the yearbook saying that I never would even have a date at Texas, so I'd better go with them over to San Marcos because there were eight and a half girls to every boy [there]. So we counted them up, and really that figured out to be about right. So I went and got my suitcase and Clyde Littlefield and "Shorty" [Curtis Jackson] Alderson looked for me for three weeks, wondered where their star hundred and two hundred and twenty-yard dash man was, and I was over at San Marcos.

I went over there, and in March I had made the track team, took pneumonia and was out about, oh, I'd say three months with pneumonia, and I went back that summer so I would be eligible for track team the next year. That was in 1927 and 1928, and I went part-time. I worked a little in between, as we used to have to in going to college when it wasn't a shame to not get a government loan. To go, the government

didn't care whether you went to college or not. They figured if you wanted to, you'd get you a job and go to work.

So I was able to get a job for the year 1929 and 1930, and Bryan Wildenthal, who was the auditor of the Southwest Texas State Teachers College, due to the fact that I had gone with the president of the board of regents' daughter, who was Mr. M. O. Flowers of Lockhart, and we lived about three doors down from him, and I ended up with a letter to Dr. [C. E.] Evans. And he didn't open the letter at all, he just glanced at the address on the corner and called Bryan in and said, "This is the young man I want you to work in your office in the boy's place that didn't show up." Bryan Wildenthal, being a little slow on the uptake, said, "Well, there wasn't anybody that didn't show up." He said, "Yes, the boy that didn't show up. This is the man that's going to take his place." "Oh," he said, "Oh, yes, all right."

So I went in there, and as a result I had no job to do at all. All I did was deliver the checks on the first of the month to the teachers, which didn't put me in too bad a stead. If one of them hadn't done just exactly to suit me, I'd see that his check got to him about the third or the fourth of the month. And since at that time they were just living from hand to mouth, the teachers, bona fide teachers, made $299.99 a month, while the heads of the departments got $333.33. As a result, why, I controlled their grocery bill pretty well and was treated very nicely by the entire faculty at that time, which amounted I imagine to about forty-five [people].

But I also had access to the records of some rental property that they had. Dr. Evans had a garage apartment behind his home that had a room and a half, and there was a half bed in one room, and a whole, big bed in the other room. So I marked that vacant, and Lyndon and Boody Johnson and I stayed down there, free, of course, because it was marked vacant. We ate at Mrs. Gates' house for sixteen dollars a month. So our total bill was around sixteen dollars a month to go to school.

G: When did you first meet LBJ, do you recall?

W: He had just come back, when I went down to this garage apartment, from the Democratic [National] Convention that was held in Houston that year, and that was I think 1928, when Al Smith was nominated for president. At that time you had to have a two-thirds majority to be the nominee, and I think they voted something like forty-eight times. And Lyndon came in, he had stayed inside the convention hall because they didn't have enough places for reporters, and he was a reporter for the College Star and he had gotten in and he wouldn't leave. He slept on the table, and they ran it day and night, and these other reporters, him being a young buck, brought him sandwiches and what have you and he stayed in there the entire week of the convention. He was back home from that, and it's the first time I think he had ever been out of sight of a town as big as San Marcos. He was so full of it that we couldn't get him to shut up.

G: What did he say about the convention?

W: Oh, he was flabbergasted by the way it was run, the maneuvering that took place. He said that if he hadn't have cut his teeth on the rung of the chair of Jim Ferguson, he wouldn't have known what they were doing. But he was real surprised at the nomination of Al Smith, since he was a Roman Catholic. So that was all we heard for about the first three months that I knew him down there, was his experience in that Democratic convention.

G: Did he have any contact with the politicians involved in the convention?

W: None whatsoever that I know of, because he came back, and that was when he began to say that he wanted to live such a life that after he'd been dead a hundred years somebody would know that he had lived on this earth, and that was his prime purpose in life, not to become a great politician or a wealthy man or anything of that nature.

G: Well, let me ask you to describe him when you first knew him. What was he like as an individual?

W: He was just another country boy going to a poor boy's school, trying to get along and get an education. The reason he was there in the first place is that he had gone to work for the county at Johnson City and he was on a grader. That's that alkaline soil up there. It was right in the middle of July and August that he was working, and by the time it got up his britches leg and him sweating on that grader back there and all that dust, it kind of got a little rancid, and he decided that he was going to listen to Boody, Boody [Alfred] Johnson--who was going with his cousin--who was also no relative of his and was

telling him to come on down there to San Marcos and get an education. Boody was the one that insisted on his going to college. That was quite a help when that alkaline dust began to get up his britches legs and sting and burn him. Then he decided that San Marcos River would look pretty good. So that's the reason he came down there to San Marcos to school.

G: Had he and Boody Johnson already lived in that garage apartment before?

W: He had moved in on top of--what's his name, Clayton--?

G: Stribling?

W: Stribling and Boody were living in there, football players. They kind of let them move in there. So they'd kicked him out there one time, and he got back in. When I was there Clayton Stribling was living someplace else. He had gotten him a job as one of the student electricians at the time. Your pay was thirty dollars a month no matter what you did; you could be an electrician or a janitor, or like I was over there sitting in the auditor's office doing nothing and I got thirty dollars a month, too. But that was the student salary if you worked anywhere.

G: Did Ardis Hopper also live in that--?

W: Not when I lived there, Ardis Hopper did not.

G: Why don't you describe that apartment?

W: It was a two-story affair. They put the old school bus underneath and Dr. Evans' car and another car. It was a frame, two-story deal and had an outside staircase going up to it, a little narrow hallway and

two rooms in it, a room and a half really. And at the end of the hallway was a commode and lavoratory. Across the street was the gymnasium, and since we had to take PE three times a week, that was enough bathing anyway. In those days and time you didn't bathe every time you had a date, you bathed every time you had PE.

G: Now, there would be three of you in there, Boody and LBJ and you, is that right?

W: That's right. We would match to see who would have to sleep with Lyndon or Boody. The odd man got the single room with the single cot in it. I managed to get that single room most all the time, and later on--I didn't know Lady Bird very well except over the telephone when she'd call for me, when I was mayor of Pasadena, to get a crowd up for Lyndon and get permission from the school board to let him land a helicopter on the school grounds. But I later told her, I said, "Lady Bird, I used to match to try to keep from sleeping with Lyndon, and I know what you married. I slept with him in a double bed before you ever heard his name mentioned, so I know you didn't get a whole lot."

G: (Laughter) That's great.

W: She always seemed to take it rather well and laughed about it.

G: What was he like as a roommate?

W: You hardly ever saw him.

G: Why?

W: He was always up on top of that hill trying to promote something or do something. He was tied into the College Star, the college paper, to the extent that he was going to be the managing editor of that one way

or the other. And he was working on that constantly. Anybody had any idea or would write an editorial that he thought was worthy, he'd stick his name on it and put it in there. He had one friend there that did a lot of writing for him that I've never heard his name mentioned--he died rather young--and it was Bill Hormachea [?]. His daddy was called Joe the tailor and he had a taxi as well as a tailor shop there. He was of Spanish descent, and he and Lyndon were very, very close friends. He died soon after graduation I think in San Antonio. But he and Lyndon were real close friends as far as borrowing a dollar here and there, because when Lyndon first came to San Marcos, he had thirteen dollars and it took fifteen to register. I lent him one and Boody lent him one, and that's the way he got into his first quarter. It went by quarters then.

G: This was after he came back from the convention?

W: Yes.

G: Now, he went down to Cotulla and taught, is that correct, in 1928?

W: Yes. And came back.

G: Do you recall how he got that job?

W: No, I didn't know anything about that. I wasn't there at the time that he went to Cotulla to teach.

G: But wasn't that in the fall of 1928?

W: Yes, but I wasn't there in the fall of 1928. I dropped out due to this pneumonia situation, and I was working for the Texas Power & Light Company as a salesman. In 1927 and 1928 I went to New York University. They laughed at me for going to that little old school

over there. There weren't but about eight hundred and fifty students there. I decided that I would go to a first-class school, so I pulled out and went to New York University, got a scholarship up there for indoor track. I went up there in 1928 and 1929. So 1929 and 1930 was the year that I went the full year [at San Marcos] and lettered in track in 1930.

But after he came back, then I later moved down to the Miller house, which was down close to town, the one they turned around and redid, spent a hundred thousand on. The three of us roomed again in the downstairs room, and I roomed with Boody and Lyndon there about two months. A room opened up upstairs, a single room, and I went up there. I don't remember what year that was.

R: That's what they now call the Alumni House.

W: That's right.

G: Did he ever talk about Cotulla? Did you ever see him while he was [there]?

W: No, he never did say anything to me about Cotulla.

G: Did you ever know why he left school and went down there?

W: Why he left school and went down there? Because he had eaten at Mrs. Gates' house on credit the last three months. Mrs. Gates had such a soft heart she put about half the boys in San Marcos through school on credit down there. He went down there to try to get hold of a little money so he could come back to school. It wasn't a question of how much you had, it was a question did you have any.

G: But he had jobs, didn't he, and he had a free room there with the garage apartment? Why couldn't he make it on the budget that--?

W: Well, in between that, thirty dollars a month is a pretty close call. But I remember quite well Lyndon sending a dollar back to his mother in an envelope occasionally. He'd get one dollar ahead, why, he'd put that dollar in. One time when we were living at the Miller house he had bought a car, a Model A Ford roadster. Back in those days you could drain the hoses on these tanks and get about a quart of gasoline out of each one. There wasn't any difference, they were just--maybe a filling station had two tanks. And we'd get a can and go around and get enough to have a date with or something. He'd lend me the car occasionally. I had a date with a girl that Lyndon didn't think much of her boyfriend, so every time I'd get a date he'd lend me the car to go see her.

So he decided he needed some money one day, and I, having been to New York University a couple of years and I had been a traveling salesman for the Texas Power & Light Company and I was a couple of years older than he was and I had been around, and he hadn't--he was strictly a country boy. So anything I'd say would be all right with him, it seemed like. He'd take my advice on these subjects. So he decided that he had to have some money some way or other, so I said, "Well, why don't you go to Austin and get a Real Silk Hosiery kit and sell Real Silk Hosiery?" This was in the summertime then. I said, "All these schoolteachers back, you can sell them three pair apiece." They were bunched up, usually two, three and four in a room. At the

Pirtle house I think you had as many as six in a room, in bunk beds and what have you. The more you get in a room, the cheaper it was.

So he said, "Well, will you go with me?" I said, "Yes." And Boody and Lyndon and I went to Austin in his car to see the Real Silk Hosiery distributor, to see if he could get [a kit]. When we got there, it was I think the fifth floor of the Littlefield Building, we went up there to see the man. And Lyndon, just before we got to the door, he said, "I've never been anywhere and don't know nothing. You've been around. You do the talking, will you?" I said, "Yes, be glad to." I figured I'd been around. I knew my way around pretty well. So we get in there and I tell this salesman, I said, "Well, do you have a representative in San Marcos?" He said, "No, I don't." I said, "Well, I've got all those schoolteachers there that are back this summer and there's a pretty good market there. We'd kind of put you on the top shelf if you'll appoint us your representative over there for this summer." He said, "Well, that's all right with me." I said, "Well, if you'll give us three of these kits we'll get after it." And then the kit was a black sock and a brown sock, not a pair but just one of each, one with a clock in it, a real fancy type, and order blanks. So he set out three of them, and I thanked him. He said, "That will be fifteen dollars." I said, "For what?" He said, "For these kits." I said, "Mister, we're going to put you on the top shelf. You ain't going to help us none. We're going to get you the number one in the country here right quick, because we're going to

really sell these things." I finally talked him down to where he'd let us have one kit.

So we go back, we start back to San Marcos. And then you had to come off the end of the Congress [Avenue] Bridge and go out South Congress to get to San Marcos. They didn't have all these super-duper highways then. So we came off the end, and there was on the right-hand side a little hamburger stand there, and we counted our money and we had enough money to buy two hamburgers--it was about one o'clock by then--and one bottle of milk. It was quite a problem dividing two hamburgers three ways, but we finally got it divided up, and then we decided the way we would handle this milk situation, we got three straws and we got Boody to count to one-two-three and then we'd all suck up on the milk. By the time Boody said three, well, Lyndon and I had the milk.

(Laughter)

So we got on back home and we got there in time for--well, we called it supper then. Mrs. whatever her name was--

R: Miller?

W: --Miller was serving supper and so we ate. And Boody had a job--he was a janitor inspector. He inspected at night after all the boys cleaned and he'd go by and see that they cleaned properly. He also worked at King's Confectionery, and they made chocolate candy and had a big soda fountain down there. So he had two jobs, and Boody always had money in the bank. He had him a bank account. He was a pretty good businessman. We get home and after we get through eating, Lyndon grabs the case and says, "You want to use this tonight?" he asked me.

I said, "No. No. I can still write a check on my daddy for five dollars," so I wasn't going to go out and sell any hose. He asked Boody, said, "Are you going to use it?" He said, "No, I'm going to study the literature first so I'll know what I'm talking about." He said, "Well, if you don't mind, I'll just go and see what I can do."

The first stop was at Dr. Evans' house, who thought a great deal of Lyndon anyway, and he sold him one gross of socks, one hundred and forty-four pair, and the old man was seventy-two or three years old then. And at homecoming, Lyndon Johnson Day, [I] answered as alumni representative; Lyndon spoke and then I answered him for the college, and Dr. Evans was sitting right behind where I was at the mike, and I was telling about this and I said, "That is the reason that Dr. Evans has lived such a long and wonderful life. He's still trying to wear out the socks Lyndon sold him." And you could hear the old man say, "That's the truth," and he'd just laugh and that would encourage me. I think Lyndon spoke twenty-three minutes and I spoke twenty-eight, because the old man was laughing and clapping his hands every time I'd tell one of these yarns about him and Lyndon.

G: Who else did he sell the socks to?

W: He came in about two o'clock that morning and he made ten cents a pair commission, and he collected that and the rest was sent COD. He would walk in one of these rooms--he knew every boarding house there; you know, there weren't too many of them--he'd walk in and the light was hanging down, and he'd turn the light on. And these country boys had been teaching school and there were two or three to the room. He'd

get them out, joust them out of bed, and get them to look at these socks, and he'd sell them a dozen pair. Maybe there would be three in there, and he'd sell them four pair apiece, just cost them four dollars. That would be enough to carry them through the winter. When he got back at two o'clock that morning, he had forty-two dollars and twenty cents that he had made. So he had to sell--what?--four hundred and twenty-two pair of socks. That's what he did. There wasn't any use going out the next day. He'd sold everybody in town, all these schoolteachers anyway that wanted to buy them.

So the next day he takes his forty-two dollars and twenty cents. Bill Hormachea takes the sign off the taxi, and he and Lyndon pull out and go to Nuevo Laredo.

G: Is that right? Just the two of them, huh?

W: There went the sock money. (Laughter)

G: Did he ever talk about that trip to Nuevo Laredo?

W: Never did say nothing about it. Didn't invite me to go nor Boody nor anybody. Just he and Bill Hormachea took off.

G: Was LBJ still dating Carol Davis [Smith] when you knew him?

W: I never heard him say anything. I heard him say a time or two--he had very few dates that I knew of in the time I was living with him. We were living in the Miller house down there that summer and he said, "Well, I'll run over and see Carol." I remember him saying that a couple of times, and that's all. I never saw him with her. I never met her or knew anything about her. But he wasn't a lady-killer back then.

G: Is that right?

W: He was busy. I can see him going up the side of that hill now, swinging them long arms, just walking like the seat of his britches was on fire. He was headed for the College Star. He stayed up there in that office about two-thirds of the time.

G: There's been a lot written about his correspondence with his mother, that he wrote his mother almost every day or something to that effect. Do you think that's accurate? Do you think he did write his mother a lot?

W: He wrote her an awful lot. His love for his mother was outstanding, it really was. For his daddy, he didn't mention him. I went up there one time on a weekend; we stayed Saturday night. And they had two old poor cows just grazing out there, had them cut off from the water, and they had a well. That's where they've got the Johnson City [Boyhood Home]. You didn't have to ask what the weather was, you could see through where the piece of the batting was off, you could tell what the weather was outside. So we're out there that evening, and his daddy hollers at us, said, "Lyndon, draw us some water and milk them cows." I remember Josefa, that was his sister, and Sam Houston. His younger sister [Lucia], she was still in diapers almost, and I don't remember Rebekah being there. These cows came up to drink and when they did, well, they milked them. What we had for supper that night was cornbread and milk, fresh whole milk. I guess they gave a--they weren't on any feed that it produced a great deal of milk, they were just on grass out there. Lyndon was drawing this water for these cows

and they were slurping it up pretty good in a number-three tub. They had a horse there, and Lyndon got on a horse and went down and drove the cows up. No saddle, nothing, no rope, bridle. It was the poorest outfit you ever saw.

G: You mean the horse was the poorest or the ranch was--?

W: It wasn't no ranch--

G: It was just a house?

W: --it was just a couple of lots that they were using that had some grass on it. These cows quit drinking, and there was I guess about four or five inches of water left in the tub, so Lyndon quit drawing water. Old man Sam came out and said, "Lyndon, fill that tub up so I won't have to fill it up later on." So he had to draw enough water to fill up the tub. I remember him standing there, and he looked--you could see his mother through the window on a wood stove cooking corn-bread or whatever it was that we had for supper, and he said, "One of these days I'm going to be big enough that I'm going to put electricity on every farm, every house in the state of Texas. Think what the number of years that would add to my mother if she had an electric range in there instead of an old wood stove, and she has to chop the wood." I remember that just like it was yesterday that he said that. And sure enough he did just that.

G: What was the dinnertime conversation like when you were there? What did they talk about?

W: There wasn't much conversation going on. It was just "pass me this," "pass me that," and there wasn't much on the table to pass. Because

they were what I call poor people. I was raised in much better circumstances than that. Everybody then, in that day and time, was poor, but they were what you call not poor, but pore, P-O-R-E, pore.

G: They didn't talk about politics at all?

W: No, none at all, nothing. It wasn't mentioned. The next morning, about five-thirty, Mr. Sam came in our room, and we were sleeping in an old iron bed that had an old cotton mattress on it. He kicked that bed and it really shook us up. I opened my eyes and looked up at him--and it was about five-thirty in the morning--and he had a water glass that was about half-full of whiskey and water, what they called a toddy then, in his hand. And I remember I don't know why he said what he did, but he said, "Lyndon, get up from there. Every boy in Giles County has got an hour's start on you already." Where Giles County is I don't know; I thought Giles County was over in East Texas somewhere. But he said, "Every boy in Giles County has already got an hour's start on you." So we got up and got out of there and we went on back to San Marcos pretty quick. We didn't hang around too long.

G: What was the purpose of your going up there?

W: Nothing. He just wanted to go up and visit his mama, see the family I guess.

R: That was customary. You'd invite your friends to go home with you on weekends to see your family.

W: Yes, on weekends.

G: Others have remembered that he would have these long, very candid conversations with his mother. Did you ever witness those?

W: No.

G: How would you describe his relationship with his father?

W: As distant as he could keep them. (Laughter)

G: Really? Why was that?

W: I have no idea. They just didn't gee and haw too well. He always had something for Lyndon to do, and Lyndon wasn't a great doer, as far as physical labor was concerned. That drawing that water was just about the extent of his--

G: And yet he pursued his father's profession of politics.

W: Yes, he seemed to--he told me that he cut his teeth on the rungs of Jim Ferguson's chair; that's where he learned his politics, from Jim Ferguson. And his daddy I know at one time was a bus inspector under Jim Ferguson, and he lived in Johnson City, and you couldn't have gotten anything more than a Model A to Johnson City over the roads, much less a bus. There were no buses in that part of the country. Yet he was classed as a bus inspector. I remember that. I asked what he was, and he said he was a bus inspector for Mr. Ferguson.

G: How about his relationship with his mother? You said that they were close.

W: I guess Lyndon would have laid down his life for his mama. He was very close to her. I really thought he was kind of a mama's boy, and I guess he was. But he realized what a load she was carrying. She came from a very high type of family to a life in Johnson City then [which] wasn't what it is today. It was coal oil lamps if you had the

money to buy the coal oil, and a wood stove, and she wasn't used to any part of that.

G: What was she like as a person?

W: She was a very kind, considerate woman that was completely out of place in the environment in which she had been placed.

G: They did take a house in San Marcos, didn't they, while he was in school?

W: That was later on. That was after I left San Marcos.

G: Did you ever see that house? Did you ever go over there?

W: No. When we were staying at the Miller house Lyndon said, "I'm going to rent Mama a house up here and the family is going to all move up here, and she's going to keep boarders." So he went out and rented a house, looked like about an eight-room, single-floor house. I remember it was over west of the school, but it was several blocks over. I remember he paid thirty dollars for the month's rent, and they didn't move down there. So he wanted to get some use out of the house, so I lived at Lockhart and he had this car. We went to Lockhart and got a mattress and a bed, springs, and stacked on this car and brought it back over there and put it in that house. The water was automatically turned on then; you didn't turn it off at all. You could turn it on yourself. It was a pretty crummy place, really. And in the back, why, you didn't have meter loops like you have today but just the wires were hanging there, so we just hooked the wires up. We didn't go down and put up any deposit or anything. All we had was one fifty-watt light bulb in the room where we stayed, and we had the bed in

there. We stayed about forty days, and we changed the bedroom three different times because we didn't have a broom to sweep out. So we just changed bedrooms, and we lived there about forty days, got by.

G: What did you do for entertainment?

W: Well, we had football games and track, basketball games. But Lyndon never--he wasn't the athletic type at all. They talked about him playing baseball, and he'd throw overhand like a girl. He couldn't throw a ball from a side. He wasn't any part of an athlete. He was strictly with that paper, that College Star. That was his--

G: Did you ever go to San Antonio or Austin for--?

W: No, the only trip we made [was when] Boody's brother got killed in a motorcycle accident, and they buried him at Lytle, Texas. We went from San Marcos down to Lytle and spent the day with Boody and went to the funeral. That's about the only time I--that and twice I went to Johnson City with him. Then occasionally I'd take him to Lockhart. I'd call my mother and tell her I was bringing Lyndon home with me for Sunday dinner or something. She'd always kill an extra chicken because she knew that Lyndon could eat an entire fried chicken. She was a very good chicken fryer. Back in those days you didn't have fried chicken on every corner. That was a real specialty. So when I'd call her and tell her that he was going to come, why, she'd kill an extra chicken to be sure that he had enough.

R: How about dancing? Lyndon had the reputation of being quite a dancer later on.

W: I never knew of him going to a dance in my life.

Tape 1 of 2, Side 2

G: There was what they called Riverside or Riverbend or whatever the riverfront down there was [called].

W: Yes. I never saw him down there in my life. He wasn't a swimmer, he didn't go down there swimming. The dances were in the gymnasium and I don't remember him even having a date to go to a dance down there. I never saw him dance a lick in my life. We would gang up, some of us, and go over to New Braunfels and get hold of some Schlotzsky's [?] moonshine, you know, a little bottle of it. We'd pool our money and they'd give us enough to get it on our breath anyway to where we could play like we were drunk when the fights started. But he never went to any of those. I don't remember it.

G: Let me ask you about his relationship with President Evans. Do you know how he got the job working for Evans?

W: He didn't really work for Dr. Evans, if you want to know the truth. The truth is that Tom Nichols--and it used to make Tom so mad every time, even after Lyndon was president, for them to call Lyndon Dr. Evans' secretary, because he was not the secretary to Dr. Evans. He was a chore boy for Tom Nichols. I can't prove none of this now because Tom Nichols is dead. Tom Nichols' stepson, Connors [?]--you knew Connors, didn't you?

R: Deadeye.

W: Deadeye. It would make him mad even, because he had heard his step-father say so many times that Lyndon wasn't nothing but the paper basket emptier. Tom liked Lyndon but he thought he was too pushy, and

he was always trying to do something for Dr. Evans. He knew which buttons to press, all right.

G: What did he do for Dr. Evans?

W: I don't know that he ever did--

G: I mean, did he sweep the floors or empty the--you said he emptied the trash cans.

W: Tom would try to embarrass him by [saying], "Lyndon, empty that waste-basket over there," you know, if there was anybody around. Tom tried to put him in his place. But he was pretty hard to put in his place. You knew that he wasn't going to stay in that place long.

G: Was he close to Evans?

W: He must have been. Dr. Evans thought a great deal of him, because he was pushing; he was a pusher. And he always looked busy. He could look busy doing nothing. He was the busiest-looking fellow and walked just so fast like his coattails were on fire all the time.

R: May I say something?

G: Sure.

R: Wasn't the fact that Lyndon's daddy was in the legislature partly responsible for Evans' interest in Lyndon, just like he was because of Flowers' interest in you? In other words, he was very conscious, as I recall, Evans was, of members of the legislature and the importance of those legislators to the college as far as appropriations were concerned.

W: I think Lyndon's daddy was already out of the legislature before Lyndon ever went to college.

R: I didn't know that.

G: Yes, that was some time earlier.

R: But I have a feeling they had a relationship based on--

W: Could have, because Mr. Sam retained his rank in Austin, someway or other, past his time of being a legislator.

G: Did LBJ ever go with Dr. Evans to Austin to lobby before the legislature, do you know?

W: Not that I know of. I was gone by then.

G: How about LBJ's relationship with Professor [H. M.] Greene?

W: Well, Professor Greene was a friend to all the poor boys.

G: Why was that?

W: Because he was so poor himself. What did he have, nine kids, or something? The last one he ran out of names and named him Sambo--not Sambo, what was it? There was a little cartoon in the Austin paper. Hambone.

R: Hambone.

W: Named his last kid Hambone. I had class in civics under Professor Greene. I had just left an old gal out on the Quadrangle, and his room overlooked that, and it was up on the second floor. I always came up there and I'd wave at her and I'd say, "I'll be out in fifty-five minutes. Don't run off now." But Lyndon would sit down and listen to what Professor Greene had to say and he said the same thing every time. He'd slam that book down on that desk and say, "Never accept an appointment nor run for a job that doesn't pay better than a

living wage." I never heard that, because I had every nonpaying job known to politics. Lyndon had all the paying ones.

G: What was Prof Greene's political philosophy?

W: Horace Richards put in a little radio station that was an outlaw station--it had no license--in the Ford Motor Company. He'd broadcast day and night if he could get any advertisers. He did pretty well with his advertisers. And he got Prof Greene to come down at noon and give the news and his ideas as to what was going to happen in Washington. Prof Greene was so close on his prognostication, you might call it, that it was amazing. They had no commentators then, news commentators, on radio. They only had one station in Austin and a couple in San Antonio, and they had no news analysts at all. But Professor Greene would come down at noon and give what he thought was happening in Washington and what have you. And he was so close that people began to notice this. But about that time, the Interstate Commerce Commission had charge of the radio stations, and you could have a radio station as long as they couldn't pick it up across the state line. But they had picked Horace's station up in Oklahoma and he looked out the door one day and saw them pull up and stop. He cut it off and opened the doors, and they walked in and said, "We're going to give you a week to get this thing off the air." So he sold it to a friend of his and they shut the friend up. It was one of our boys that--

R: Yes. Right.

G: What did Prof Greene predict? Do you recall what his predictions were?

W: No, but at the time it was depression time and Hoover's era. He kind of prophesized this tremendous depression that we went into, because nobody was listening to what the President had to say. And Prof Greene was a staunch Democrat. There wasn't nothing in his vocabulary that spelled Republican at all. He was a Democrat.

G: Was he a populist type, would you say?

W: Yes, he was.

G: Did LBJ adhere to Greene's beliefs, do you think?

W: I think that Greene was his main source of information while he was running for his first office. After he got to Washington he'd call Prof Greene and get his opinions on stuff. I think he had him up there on several occasions to advise him. He was just a plain old country boy that had studied and gotten an education and got to teaching. But he was a tobacco chewer and he had his second drawer full of ashes and sand and he'd spit in there. We had a club--the class was fifty-five minutes long, and we had a certain size plug of tobacco that if you put in the side of your jaw and you could keep from spitting until you came out of his class, then you were a member of this chewing tobacco club. I never made it.

(Laughter)

G: LBJ was also on the debate team, is that correct?

W: He wasn't the main debater. There were two fellows. One of them made a preacher named Graham that was--

R: Elmer.

W: Elmer Graham, and there was another one that was a kind of semi-preacher--I can't think of his name--that were the main debaters. And then Lyndon and somebody else was the. . . . Lyndon would have you believe, if you'd listen to him, that there wasn't anybody in the Alamo except Johnsons and whatever his mother's name was. What was her name?

R: Baines.

W: Baineses and Johnsons is all that was in the Alamo. But you know, you cross him up, why, he'd kind of straighten it out. That's the way he got his name Bull Johnson.

G: Tell me about that.

W: Well, I don't know, they were calling him Bull Johnson when I heard of him the first time. That's the name he answered by. You'd holler across the campus, "Hey, Bull, so-and-so and so-and-so."

After he got to be a congressman, I was in Houston and Boody and I went up to his hotel room. This is when he got beat by Pappy [W. Lee] O'Daniel. Boody and I went up there about four o'clock and he was at the Texas State Hotel, and he had several people in his room there talking to him and all. We went up there and he said, "Y'all go and go to the picture show or something and come back about six o'clock and I'll cut all this off and we'll visit." So Boody and I went to the picture show and we came back about six o'clock, and he picked up the telephone and told the girl, said, "I'm not in. No more telephone calls, please." That was on Thursday after he had been beat. The day before, it was announced that Pappy O'Daniel beat him. Lyndon was leading by twenty-four hundred and something votes on

Saturday night when they quit counting and had the big victory party and everything. Monday and Tuesday they found some extra boxes in Fort Worth that had been overlooked and they brought them in. Where Lyndon had been breaking even with Pappy O'Daniel in that area, all of a sudden he was getting nine out of ten votes.

G: Pappy was getting nine out of ten votes.

W: That's right. Pappy was getting nine out of ten of the votes that were in these boxes that they happened to find. And when the count was finished on Wednesday about noon, why, they declared Pappy O'Daniel the winner. So Lyndon came on down to Houston, and when we went back up there, why, he called the girl and said, "No more telephone calls." He poured him a drink and me a drink and Boody didn't drink. We were sitting there. He had a habit of, as soon as he'd get everybody out, why, he'd strip down to his underwear and his socks, and he was sitting there with his feet propped up and the telephone rang. He said, "Yes, sir. Yes, sir, I know, but--yes, sir. Yes, sir," and he motioned to me and I leaned over to listen, and you could tell whose voice it was. He said, "Yes, sir. Yes, sir. I know, but--yes, sir, I'll see you when I get back to Washington, sir. Thank you. Goodbye." FDR had called him. And what I heard him say, he said, "You don't have a victory party and leave the people that are counting the votes until the last one is counted."

G: You heard FDR say that?

W: That's right. He said, "Did you know who that was?" I said, "Everybody knew who that was."

G: Did he talk about that election while you were up there in that room?

W: No. That was about all of it. He said, "I'll tell you one thing, I've learned how to count votes." Then later on when he beat Coke Stevenson, Johnny Crooker, Sr., an attorney in Houston that had backed him so strongly, had a party for him at the Sam Houston Hotel on the second floor, and there was a big banquet room. They called me and invited me up there from Pasadena. This old boy that was out there was a great admirer of Lyndon's that was a real estate man wanted to go with me to meet him. He was an ex-politician from Oklahoma. He'd been one of Alfalfa Bill Murray's boys. So I carried him up there.

We went up and walked in in this big double door here, and I walked up to this big double door and I looked in to see for sure that was the right place, and there was Lyndon standing--that was when he had that 87-vote landslide. There were all these old white-haired men with their arms up around him. He kind of broke out of the middle of them and excused himself and headed towards me at the door and shook hands with me, and I introduced him to this fellow with me. He said, "I am so glad to see somebody that I know that I can tell something to. I'm just busting to tell it." I said, "What's that? This fellow is all right. He's an old politician from Oklahoma." He said, "Well, this little boy was sitting on the curb Sunday morning at Alice, close to Box 13, crying, a little Mexican boy. And this fellow walked up and said, 'Son, are you hurt?' He said, 'No, I no hurt.' He said, 'Are you sick?' He said, 'No, I no sick.' He said, 'Are you hungry?' He said, 'No, I no hungry.' He said, 'What's the matter? What are

you crying for?' He said, 'Well, yesterday, my papa, he been dead four years yesterday, he come back and voted for Lyndon Johnson, didn't come by to say hello to me.'" He thought that was the funniest thing he ever heard in his life. And I can't prove that because the fellow that was with me is dead, too, now. (Laughter)

G: Let's go back to San Marcos. Let me ask you, was LBJ disliked by the other students there?

W: He wasn't disliked or liked, he just wasn't--he wasn't too popular because he didn't have time to fool with them. The only story I ever heard him tell, and I heard him tell it all summer long one summer, was that this rancher had four or five boys, and one of them was a little addled, you know. He didn't have all of his marbles. He had his other three sons on horses and they were trying to drive up this bunch of mules. They were in a brushy pasture, about two hundred acres; they called them a trap then. And they were trying to get them in the lot so he could load them out and take them somewhere. And as he came down and brought them around the barn where they'd hit the gate and go in the corral, there was this old half-witted boy of his swinging on the gate. Well, wild mules are kind of skittish anyway, and when they saw him, boy, they took off. He gave that kid a good talking to and said, "Get down off of that gate and stay off of that gate! Get down from there!"

So the kid got down and went off. And, man, in about thirty minutes, after riding and working pretty hard in that brush and fighting that black brush and huajillo and mesquite, here they come with

the mules again. And the kid is swinging on the gate and the mules break and leave again. And he really gives him a tongue-lashing that time. So they take off and take them another thirty minutes and here they come with the mules again around the corner of the barn and they break and run again. And the boy says, "Daddy, I know what you want, you want me to get off the gate, don't you?" (Laughter) That was his main story. And it has got a moral to it. (Laughter) Well, he told that all summer long, and that's the only story I ever heard him tell in my life.

G: The recent biography [The Path to Power] by Robert Caro depicts him as being disliked by the other students.

W: Well, he wasn't too popular. He wasn't trying to be popular. He was busy. He was so busy, like I say, his coattail was on fire all the time.

G: But there's a difference between not being popular and being unpopular. How would you characterize him?

W: About halfway in between. Like some of them Bohemian cotton pickers from down around Gonzales or someplace, they thought he thought he was more important than he actually was. But in his estimation, he was just that busy.

G: Did he have a general attitude of self-importance or wanting to show that he was--?

W: No, I don't think he--he was pushy when he wanted something. But I thought he was just average--they asked me when he first started getting to be high up in the ranks if I didn't realize when I was

going to school with him that he was going to be an outstanding man in his lifetime. I said, "No, I guess there were a hundred and twenty boys in the school, and outside of three or four of them Bohemian cotton pickers, I rated him along towards the bottom." (Laughter) He didn't impress me one way or the other. But he had a way of getting his way.

G: What was his way of getting his way?

W: Push.

G: How do you mean?

W: He just had more energy than anybody else. When you'd stop to get your breath to push again, he'd have you out of the way and gone.

G: Can you give me an example of this?

W: No, I don't think I can except it was just--he was just constantly pushing. He never let up. He started out to be governor of the state of Texas. That's what he said he was going to do.

G: Can you recall the context of his saying that?

W: No, other than that he said it. I said, "What are you going to be, Lyndon, a teacher or what?" He said, "No, I want to be governor of the state of Texas." Then I think is where Bull Johnson really got his name. And later on he found out that a senator was bigger than the governor, so he changed and he was going to be the senator. He had about the same chance as that little boy that lives in a house behind us over there does. It was a hundred billion-to-one shot. A boy from Johnson City who couldn't pay his room rent going to be a

United States senator, it was just a little farfetched for anybody to believe.

G: Two criticisms that are commonly given are: one, that he tended to brown-nose the faculty, and two, that he was not truthful with the other students. Can you talk about these? Were these valid?

W: I never found him untruthful in any way. I've seen him in a corner, even later on in life, where he could have hedged around, but he didn't.

G: But I mean at school, when he was at school. If he had the name Bull Johnson, does that mean that he wasn't truthful, that he would embroider?

W: No, I don't think he was untruthful. I never caught him in any big lie in anything.

G: Well, why did they call him Bull Johnson then?

W: Well, he'd have you--you know, there's a lot of difference between doing a little bragging and being a bull-shooter.

G: So you wouldn't consider him dishonest, is that right?

W: No, he wasn't dishonest at all.

R: Then you'd say he talked a lot, he had an opinion about a lot of things.

W: He had a definite opinion about everything.

G: The other criticism that he brown-nosed the faculty, that he was obsequious to the professors?

W: Didn't we all?

G: You didn't consider him different from the other students in this connection?

W: Well, I think if anything he would express his opinion at a time that wasn't conducive to brown-nosing at all, it was just the opposite.

W: Can you give me an example of that?

W: Yes. Deacon [L. N.] Wright, he and Deacon Wright had words when he was in that class, and he had to have that grade to graduate. He told Deacon Wright what he thought about his type of teaching that wasn't complimentary.

G: What did he say, do you recall?

W: No, other than he just didn't think that he was much of a damn teacher in that subject. He was fixing to fail Lyndon in it, and Lyndon told him what type of teacher he thought he was and it wasn't complimentary.

R: Did it work? Did he get a grade then because of that? It seemed to me like that might have been counterproductive.

W: I think he got a passing grade in a way.

G: Tell me, what was the controversy over? Do you recall why they had the disagreement to begin with?

W: No, it was something, an opinion about an author or something, and their opinion was different.

G: Were you there when this argument happened?

W: Oh, yes. Everybody in the class was there. It wasn't an argument. Lyndon just stated what he thought, and Deacon stated what he thought.

And later on it grew to the point where later on Deacon Wright had to find him another job after Lyndon got to be a congressman.

G: This was in the fifties, is that right?

W: Yes, I think that was about in the fifties.

G: Do you think LBJ had any connection with Wright losing his job?

W: I think Lyndon had Wright fired.

G: Did you ever have any evidence of that?

W: (Laughter) By everybody that I knew. I said, "What happened to Deacon Wright?" and they said, "Lyndon had him fired." And I'm sure that if I were in his place, I'd have had the same thing done.

G: Well, this was in the 1950s though, wasn't it? I mean, this was years after--

W: Yes, but Lyndon had a long memory. You take--there's a book that was written, Lyndon Johnson's Formative Days [Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years], by three college profs up there. They never asked me to come up there. They quoted me in there, but they never asked me to come up there for an interview. Oh, yes, one of them did, and I said, "No, I don't believe I've got time. I'm just a little too busy to get up there." Well, Lyndon was still alive at the time, and I wasn't going to go up there and say something that would have the Internal Revenue down there checking me out. Because he had a memory like that. So I didn't go up there to be interviewed at all.

G: Another criticism of LBJ as a student is that he tended to dominate conversations, that he talked to the exclusion of letting other people talk. Was he like this?

W: Well, I was a little bit that way myself, and I had had much more experience than he had, and he realized it because we had roomed together enough times that he knew I had been to New York University, I'd run on Milrose Athletic Club [?] track team, I'd worked with the Texas Power & Light Company as a salesman and as a crew manager and had covered almost the entire state. I had experience that he hadn't had. He'd been to California and back as a fruit picker or something out there, and that was the extent of his travels. I think he recognized that fact and I would dominate the conversation just about like he did, if it was something that I knew anything about.

G: Any other examples of his arguing with faculty on the one hand or--?

W: No, I don't think he had any difficulty with any one of them but Deacon Wright was the only one.

G: He seems to have made an F in another English class, or maybe it was debate the first time. Do you recall that?

W: No.

G: Okay. I want to ask you about the founding of the White Stars.

W: 1930. I guess I was a Black Star as well as a White Star, but I just realized it in the last few years. If you were a letterman, well, you were classed as a Black Star. Well, I was a letterman. I'd been out for football, but I didn't letter because I wasn't eligible, but they left me out and took me on two trips. But I had transferred from New York University back down there, and in 1930 I lettered in track, only time I was eligible. But in the winter of 1929 and 1930--I think it was early 1930, January or February or so--I was going with a young

lady and I knew Horace Richards real well. He and I were always jousting around, and we went to this college dance. We got cut in on pretty frequently by these football players, what have you. I knew them all; I knew them better than I did the White Star group, because that was the bunch I was with most of the time because I was out for football, track, what have you.

We were in the library building, the west entrance to the library building, Horace was coming down the steps and I was starting up. I said, "Say, Horace, I saw last night that you got cut in on pretty good, too, at the dance." He said, "Yes, them football boys are giving me trouble." I said, "Well, they gave me trouble, too." I said, "Let's just start our own little deal. Let's get us up a little secret organization, so they won't even know we're here." He said, "That sounds like a good deal to me." So in a couple of days, Horace said, "I got all the articles drawn up. Let's get started on it." I said, "All right, who we going to take in?" He said, "Well, we'll take in Wilton, Wilton Woods." Later on Lyndon ooched him out of his place. Lyndon was number seven and Wilton was number three [two?]. So we went to gathering people up. I never was a devout member of the White Stars other than I made the first few meetings with them, you know, and we'd rent a room down at the hotel and swear them in, the secrecy and all this, with the candlelight and everything. It was kind of . . . the oath they took and all this, that and the other. It was a very short little ritual.

G: What criteria did you use for selecting members?

W: Well, we tried to kind of go after the ones that were well liked and tended more to brains than we did to brawn.

G: Who were the first, say, eight or ten members? You mentioned you--

W: He's [Richter's] got a list of them, and they've got numbers. I know Lyndon was number seven. Wilton was number two, and then--

G: Well, now I thought you said Richards was number two.

W: Well, we classed ourselves as one and a half.

G: Oh, I see, okay.

W: Just between us, that was the way we did it.

G: How about Bill Deason?

W: Bill Deason was one of the first ones. That was funny. I don't remember Bill Deason ever being friendly with Lyndon at all. Bill lived at the Pirtle house. Lyndon had nothing ever to do with the Pirtle house; that Pirtle house gang was a different bunch altogether. But I don't remember Bill Deason and Lyndon ever being close at all.

G: How about Harzke? Albert Harzke?

W: Albert Harzke? Well, Albert Harzke never was--he was well liked and he could laugh to where you could hear him for four blocks.

G: But he was a member also, wasn't he?

W: Yes.

G: Walter Grady [?], do you remember him?

W: Yes.

G: Was he one of the early ones also?

W: It seems like you've got--

R: I've got the list. I'll give you the list. I mean, I can show you the first ten.

W: Slats [Hollis] Frazier. Slats I guess was about number four or five.

G: Did LBJ come to the first meeting, do you recall?

W: No.

G: How did he get in?

W: I don't know. We just voted him in I think or something. I don't remember him being sworn in at all. I don't remember much about that. I didn't follow it too close. I wasn't--Horace and Wilton and Slats, they were the devoted type, you know, and they'd suggest these, [and I'd say], "Yes, that sounds all right to me." A lot of the meetings I missed.

G: Really?

R: Does it mess up your manuscript if I talk?

Tape 2 of 2, Side 1

G: --history of the organization.

R: Well, a few things that I've felt I could have added something. On this particular matter of the document that you showed me the other day, the interlocutors started off I believe with a reference to the White Stars saying that Lyndon, he understood that Lyndon had applied for or had been considered for the Black Stars, and the Black Stars had blackballed him because one of the members had got jealous because he had cut in on somebody on the dancing. I thought maybe you wanted to ask him about whether or not there was any truth to that. I had never heard that.

W: None that I know of whatsoever.

R: In the legends that I heard on the White Stars is that Lyndon had never--this idea that Lyndon had been blackballed by the Black Stars.

W: He couldn't have been blackballed by the Black Stars because he wouldn't have been considered. You had to be a letterman to be considered, and he was no letterman of any--

G: Boody Johnson and Ardis Hopper recall his having been blackballed by the Black Stars.

W: Well, I don't see how they could. They were both honest, honorable, good friends of mine.

G: Well, that's what they remember. In any event--

W: I don't believe his name was ever presented as a Black Star because he was not eligible.

G: Perhaps that's one of the reasons why they blackballed him.

W: It's like me trying to be pope of Rome. I couldn't be because I'm not an ordained Catholic priest. So how could they have turned him down? I think they're just bragging. (Laughter)

R: Well, memories get fuzzy, you know.

G: Let me ask you the purpose of the White Stars as it was founded.

W: The purpose of the White Stars was to get them Black Stars off our back.

G: And how would you do that?

W: They were running--they got themselves elected to every office, every thing. All the Gaillardians were their girl friends and all. So we just decided we'd get us up a little deal and publicize them as being

a secret outfit that was trying to run the school. Well, we were the secret outfit that was trying to run the school, and sure enough, we got a couple of our boys elected and they demoted a couple of the teachers. They demoted Dean [H. E.] Speck from dean of students to dean of men, cut his salary a little. They cut--

G: The White Stars did this?

W: The White Stars did, yes. Thomas Dunlap got elected state representative, and Slats Frazer was a state representative from Franklin County. They got Oscar Strahan's salary cut--he was the head coach--because he was called athletic director. Isn't that what you call them? And all he was was the coach. That's what--now, I'd already gotten out of school by then and I didn't condone that treatment of those two, because they were both good friends of mine. I was closer to the Black Stars--Boody, Ardis Hopper, all that bunch--than I was to the White Stars, really. I had been initiated into the T Association, and that was equivalent of being a Black Star, but so was Sub [Sidney] Pyland, so was--what is his name? He died, one of our boys. He pitched in the Texas League later on. Lived up here on the lake. I can't think of his name.

G: He was both a White Star and a Black Star?

W: Well, he had lettered; he was a letterman. Sub Pyland was a letterman.

G: But there's a question whether all lettermen were actually Black Stars.

R: That's a serious question. The lettermen were not necessarily Black Stars. What he's saying is that you couldn't be a Black Star without being a letterman. I had never heard that, but that's probably true.

W: Yes, you had to be a letterman to be invited to be a Black Star.

G: So you were going to oppose the Black Stars by publicizing that they were a secret organization and fielding a slate of candidates against them in a student election.

W: That's right. You read what Henry Kyle said. We used him for two years, and he thought he was fighting the Black Stars. All the time he was helping the White Stars, and we didn't have any use for him either.

G: Why not?

W: Well, he was kind of a pantywaist. He was a local boy, San Marcos boy. You know, the San Marcos boys or girls didn't have much to do with the trash that came to the school up there. They considered us all trash because they were the hoi polloi. And later on, the last two years, they'd go to Texas University. I think we took about eighty-five dollars and ran Thomas Dunlap against Henry Kyle and beat him for state representative.

G: So there was sort of a social cleavage between those who lived there in San Marcos and the kids from out of town?

W: Oh, yes. They looked down on anybody that came over there to school.

G: Was there also an economic difference generally in terms of--?

W: Well, they were living at home and they were still pursuing their

activities as hometown students, but they didn't give to the college much.

G: It seems like perhaps later there developed more philosophical differences, too. Was Kyle considered more conservative than, say, members of the White Stars?

W: No, he wasn't more conservative. I don't know what you mean by conservative. There wasn't any conservatism to the whole bit. We just got ourselves elected president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, head of the College Star, got our Gaillardians in.

R: Kyle eventually--

W: --caught on to the fact that he was being used.

R: --became a Republican, and I think that was incidental and not necessarily characteristic of individuals involved.

G: Tell me how you defeated the Black Stars, though. Did you use leaflets at all?

W: No. We didn't let anybody know we had anything to do with it. We'd just get all set up and--back then you went to a class meeting. Well, maybe this year I'm a sophomore and there's a different bunch of dogs there to what was there last year. You didn't just go to school and go four years, you know, like you do nowadays. Then you went a year or you went and you taught and you came back in the summertime. Then maybe you got enough money ahead to go another year. Why, didn't anybody know whether you were a sophomore, junior or senior. So we usually got Horace nominated as chairman and he wouldn't recognize anybody. We had it all set up. Maybe three of us would hit the

sophomore class: "I move Horace Richards be chairman." "Second." "Nominations cease." "Second." "All in favor, aye." And we had one of our boys up there and then Horace would take over as chairman. And he'd accept nominations. Well, that's true what old Henry Kyle would say. He was back there screaming and hollering. Horace wouldn't recognize him at all. (Laughter) "Shut up and sit down," you know. So maybe the same bunch they'd have the next day, the juniors might have their meeting and about half of them in there were the same bunch that were in the sophomore deal.

So I think the first time we really got set for them, they weren't set for us at all. I think we missed one secretary's job maybe in the junior class or something, and then we were just strictly organized.

R: I think that was a large part of [inaudible].

G: What role did LBJ play in all this?

W: I don't remember that he played any great role in any of it, did he?

G: Was it his plan?

W: Oh, no, no.

G: Whose plan was it?

W: Horace's plan, I think.

G: Really?

W: Horace is the one. By then I was out of school.

G: Were you there in January of 1930 when Bill Deason was elected president over Dick Spinn?

W: Yes.

G: Is that--

W: I wasn't a senior though. That was a senior deal. I think I was a sophomore or junior, sophomore I guess or something.

G: Yes. Here's a list of some of these candidates.

W: I was elected sophomore president one time there. I don't remember when it was though.

G: Well, did the students as a whole ever find out there was another secret [organization]?

W: No, because it was a mobile--you know, used to, in a small town in Texas, the same people lived in the same houses from the time you were born until you died, and nobody moved in, nobody moved out. Maybe four or five families would change in a couple of years. In that teachers college up there, they were all trying to get a certificate to go out and teach so that they could make a living, to get a paycheck. And as a result it was a very mobile student body. The student body this quarter wasn't nothing in the next quarter, unless it was the same--Breedon, Upton Breedon was the other one that was a letterman. But as far as being the bunch that--the town kids, I knew most all of them because I was right there at Lockhart and I played against them in football, track, what have you. But it wasn't the same bunch there every quarter; it was changing constantly.

G: Was the use of the blanket tax funds, the allocation of those funds collected from students, an issue?

W: That became an issue, yes.

G: Tell me how it worked.

W: Well, all the blanket tax was for was for athletics. There was no money appropriated--there wasn't any money back in those days. They weren't going to give any to any dramatic club. Now, the glee club was pretty well set up. That was well organized. They had a fellow that taught them voice and what have you and all. That was pretty well set up. But outside of that, the debating team, if they wanted to go debate somebody they'd go debate them. Prof Greene didn't like that part of it. Several of the other teachers didn't either. The same way with dramatics, they just put on plays whether or not. It meant nothing to nobody, they charged for nothing. You could come if you wanted to. But there was no money appropriated for any part of it.

End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of R. Vernon Whiteside

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, R. Vernon Whiteside of Marble Falls, Texas do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on August 1 and 6, 1985 at Marble Falls, Texas and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the tape.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

R. Vernon Whiteside
Donor

December 17, 1985
Date

acting Archivist of the United States

DEC 30 1985
Date