

## INTERVIEW II

DATE: February 25, 1987

INTERVIEWEE: MELVIN C. WINTERS

INTERVIEWER: Ted Gittinger

PLACE: Mr. Winters' office, Johnson City, Texas

### Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

W: I had a boat up there myself; about the fastest boat there was in the country up there, a smaller boat. And, of course, the Secret Service was supposed to keep up with him. They had boats up there, too. And he took great pleasure in getting in that damned boat of mine and running off from the Secret Service where they couldn't find him. (Laughter) He'd leave the yacht, you know, and get in that boat of mine. And they finally got a damn boat up there--or two of them up there--that he couldn't run off from.

G: Did he complain about that?

W: Oh, yes, he complained like hell about it. He couldn't get away from them then.

G: Did he show a lot of pleasure when he could run away from them?

W: Oh, yes; he enjoyed it, getting away from them. Like a kid.

(Laughter)

G: Did he like to fish at all, or just boat?

W: No, no, he never fished. He liked to ride those boats. He had a nice one up there himself.

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G: Let me ask you something about the early years. Now I know he worked for you some on the road in the twenties. Was your association more or less constant from that time on?

W: Well, we stayed in touch. Of course, for two summers he worked for me out here, he was going to school at San Marcos, and he just worked in the summer out here on this road. Now that's when I first came.

G: Did he ever talk to you about going to Cotulla when he went down there to teach?

W: Oh, yes.

G: What did he say?

W: Yes, he got a teaching job down there. He was real proud of it.

G: Did he talk to you about what Cotulla was like, or how it was to teach down there?

W: Well, it was nearly all Mexicans, Spanish. But he got along with them good. Old man Jim Cage--[Richard] Kleberg and Jim Cage joined ranches down there in South Texas. They were big friends, and Kleberg told Mr. Jim Cage that he wanted to get a young man, after he was elected to Congress, to take to Congress with him. And Jim Cage said, "Let me think about it a few days." And he kept thinking, and he thought, "Well, goddang, Lyndon's the ideal man for that." He was teaching school down there at Cotulla at the time. So he went and talked to Lyndon, and Lyndon said he'd grab it right quick if he had a chance.

G: Do you think Mr. Cage actually went and talked to LBJ?

W: Oh yes, no question about that.

G: Down in Cotulla?

W: Down at Cotulla, he sure did. And he was the instigator of him going to work for Kleberg, when Kleberg first hired him. He made that connection himself, Mr. Jim Cage.

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G: Is that the same Cage that the construction company is named after?

W: Well, he was a brother to him. Of course, Jim never was in the construction end of it, other than to help finance it. (Laughter) He was in better shape than all the rest of them. Once in awhile they'd have to call on him for some damn money to help them.

G: What did LBJ tell you about working for Congressman Kleberg? Did he like that job?

W: I think so; I never heard him say anything about that in any way. I think he enjoyed it; I sure do.

G: There were some stories that he had a little trouble with Mrs. Kleberg.

W: He possibly could, but I never did hear anything about it. Everything was all right, as far as I knew.

G: When he went to take that NYA job, the National Youth Administration, did you have any contact with him on any of those projects that he was involved in?

W: No. He came up here and put a bunch on this Pedernales Electric building up here, and then [inaudible] built that first building there with that labor.

G: You had some connection with the LCRA in the early days, didn't you?

W: Well, I did, yes. When [Allan] Shivers was elected governor, he called me and asked me to get on the Lower Colorado River Authority board. And I said, "Governor, I don't want to be contrary, but I just don't want any more. I've got enough up here to tend to." And he said, "Well, if you would get on this board--" see, the Pedernales Electric and the Lower Colorado River Authority were fighting, ever since they began. They were on the outs. He said, "If you'd get on this board, you could neutralize them." And I got to thinking about it, and I called him back and I said, "I'll accept it."

G: Why did he think you could neutralize it?

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W: Well, in being on the Lower Colorado River Authority board.

G: I see.

W: He knew I'd try to neutralize them, which I did for six years there. And then I served six years on the Lower Colorado River Authority board. Then it came up for renewal, and I told the Governor I wanted to get off of it. He said, "All right. If you want to get off, you name somebody to take your place." And I said, "Well, we've got a man from Blanco in the American National Bank down there at Austin named Ben Brigham, and he would be ideal." And he put him on the board, and since that time, everybody that's ever been put on the Lower--we've still got a man on it--every governor calls me and asks me who in the hell to put on that board. We've got a man on there now, Charles Matus is on the board. He can't do anything other than let us know what's going on. (Laughter) But it has neutralized it a whole lot. We're getting along better now than ever, the two co-ops.

G: Did LBJ take a great interest in the LCRA?

W: Yes, he was interested in that, very interested. And the PEC, both of them.

G: I have a note here he came home for Christmas in December of 1931. Do you recall anything about that one, anything special about that trip?

W: No, I don't recall anything special. He probably--when did he and Lady Bird marry?

G: Well, that was much later. That would have been--

W: I guess--yes, that's later. That was before he married. Because after they married, they spent a lot of time at our home. The fact of the business is, after Luci and Lynda got up and started school, they stayed with my wife more than they did Lady Bird. (Laughter) She kept them, because Lady Bird wanted to travel around with Lyndon, and she'd just leave the girls over at our house with my wife.

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G: Did he ever talk to you about going to law school in Washington? Do you remember anything about that?

W: No, I didn't know that he did. If he did, I don't remember it.

G: Did he ever approach you about putting some of his NYA people to work, you know, the younger kids, when they would come out of the NYA?

W: Yes, yes. I worked some of them.

G: You worked some of them?

W: Yes, sure did. Helped them all I could.

G: Were they good workers on that?

W: Oh, yes. Yes, they were wonderful workers.

G: Did you ever plant any trees for any of his projects?

W: No.

G: I know you said you tried to stay away from landscaping at one point.

W: Yes, I never did do any [inaudible]. The only landscaping I got into, I got this contract from Johnson City out to Stonewall, and Lady Bird, she was in that beautification program, and she had told the highway department that she was going to save X amount of trees, and they weren't going to touch them, and all that. And she did me a favor, because I got the contract; the other contractors were all afraid of her. (Laughter) And then after I got the contract, well, she was out there continually, telling me, "Don't take those oak trees." I said, "Well, a certain amount of them have got to go out." But she fought it all the way.

G: She fought you for every tree?

W: Every dadgummed one that could be left from here to Stonewall, on each side of the road.

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G: I have a note that in 1938 LBJ got approval of a bunch of CenTex electric projects. Did you have any work in connection with that?

W: No, not at all.

G: You did not.

W: No.

G: Okay. And then in 1939 the RFC [Reconstruction Finance Cooperation?] authorized a five million [dollar] loan to the LCRA to buy the Texas Power and Light properties. Do you remember that fight?

W: Some of it, not much. I remember some of it, but no details.

G: Okay. You said you had some connection with one of the dams. Which one was that?

W: Marshall Ford.

G: The Marshall Ford Dam. Okay, I see in March of 1939 the president approved five million dollars to raise Marshall Ford Dam, raise the height of it. Was that your part of it?

W: Part of it was, yes. Brown and Root had the original contract, and they let all this earthwork and rip-rap and rock and everything like that separate. And it was let there in Austin, and Mr. Tom Cage and I went to the letting, and Brown and Root, they didn't want anybody else in there. I don't blame them, you know. But anyway, we ended up with the job. We were low bidder on the job, Cage Brothers was. And before he left the room there, George and Herman Brown called Mr. Cage off and talked to him. They didn't let me in on it. And Mr. Tom came back and said, "They're offering you a hundred thousand dollars cash to let them have that job, to default on the bond and let them have it." And I said, "Well, Mr. Tom, I need the work, bad." And he said, "I know that, and

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I'm not asking you to do it. But I'm telling you that's what you can do. They'll give us a check for a hundred thousand dollars if you'll just let them have the job." And I said, "No, I'd rather not do it." And I knew that I had a better job than that, which I did have.

G: How much was your bond?

W: Oh, I forget what my total bid was on that thing. It was pretty high, at that time. I don't know.

G: But you made more money this way.

W: Oh, by far--yes, I had an awfully good job there. Of course, I had to battle them. They had to program their work to not bother us, and we had to program ours to not bother them. And they had a superintendent down there, his name was White, and he was a kind of a damned hard fellow to get along with. (Laughter) But we finally got through it all right and had no problems; nothing.

G: Did you ever have any construction of any of the power lines around?

W: No.

G: Never got involved in that?

W: No, I was never involved in any of that.

G: Okay. Did LBJ show a personal interest in that Marshall Ford Dam?

W: Oh, yes, he sure did.

G: Did he come and visit?

W: Yes, he was out there several times during the construction.

G: Did he talk to you about it?

W: Well, nothing, only he was just proud of it. I mean, he felt like he was part of it, getting it done.

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G: Did he ever tell you about taking pictures in to show President Roosevelt, of the dam?

W: Yes, yes.

G: Do you remember that story, at all?

W: No.

G: In fact, Roosevelt offered LBJ the job as REA [Rural Electrification Administration] administrator at one point.

W: I think that's right.

G: Did he say anything to you about that?

W: No.

G: I have a note that in November of 1939, LBJ and Mrs. Johnson had a reception down here at the Pedernales Electric Co-op building here in Johnson City and were staying at the Pedernales Hotel. Do you recall anything of that?

W: Well, they just had a kind of get-together on the co-op board members, to meet the people.

G: Did you know Walter Jenkins pretty well?

W: Oh, yes.

G: He joined the staff about this time, I think.

W: I don't remember just when it was.

G: Then there was a grant for some recreational parks let, about that time. Did you do any of that work?

W: No.

G: In December there was a big meeting at Buchanan Dam; I think LBJ had a bunch of the postmasters from the Tenth District down there. Did you go to that?



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W: No.

G: The last note that year I have is that Senator [Alvin] Wirtz was appointed undersecretary of the interior about that time.

W: Right.

G: Did you know Wirtz pretty well?

W: Yes, casually. I knew him. He was a lawyer. I know that he thought a whole lot of Lyndon, and Lyndon thought a whole lot of him; I know that, over the years.

G: In 1940, in January, I think it was, Roosevelt submitted his budget to the Congress and he omitted the five million dollars for the Marshall Ford Dam.

W: Omitted it?

G: Omitted it, and then went back and restored three million. Do you remember any of that?

W: No. I knew they had [inaudible] getting the money to do it, the last work. That probably involved some of the work we did, I don't know.

G: The big story that spring was when John Nance Garner announced that he was going to start a Stop Roosevelt campaign. Do you remember anything about that?

W: No, just talk, is all. I don't know details.

G: Did LBJ ever ask you to do any political work in that connection?

W: No.

G: There was a lot of talk about expanding military aviation about this time, and I guess that includes building more airfields.

W: More airfields.

G: Did you get some of that work?

W: What year was that?

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G: This would have been 1940.

W: Before World War II.

G: The year before the war.

W: Yes, we built a lot of airports. We built the Waco army flying school up there at Waco; that was during the war, though. And we did an awful lot of work at Mineral Wells, at Camp Wolters. We built all that thing. I did that as Cage Brothers, now; that's the way we bid the job. But we did that Camp Wolters.

G: How about down at San Marcos; did you do any of that?

W: No, didn't do--yes, wait a minute. No, no, I didn't do any of that. I did the road work down there, though.

G: You did the road work down there. I see.

W: [Inaudible] two highways.

G: The state convention was in Waco that year, and there was a lot of excitement, apparently. Did you go to that?

W: Yes.

G: Was LBJ there?

W: Yes, sure was. What year was that?

G: 1940.

W: Yes, sure was.

G: There were some reports that there were fistfights on the convention floor. Do you remember?

W: I didn't see any, no.

G: You didn't see any of that?

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W: I didn't see any, if I was there. (Laughter)

G: Do you recall anything in particular about that convention?

W: No, as far as I was concerned, it was just a big get-together. (Laughter)

G: Okay. Then they had the Democratic Convention in Chicago, I guess it was, that year.

Do you remember going to Washington on business any time around this period?

W: No. What year?

G: 1940.

W: No, I don't think so.

(Interruption)

G: Do you remember when LBJ brought Tommy Corcoran to Austin about that time?

W: Who?

G: Tommy Corcoran, FDR's aide. They called him Tommy the Cork.

W: No, I don't remember that.

G: Okay. He got sick late that year, and then in January. Apparently he had a bad case of bronchitis and had to stay in bed a good long while.

W: Lyndon?

G: Yes.

W: When?

G: December of 1940 and January of 1941, right after Christmas.

W: I don't recall that, sure don't.

G: Okay. In February, the President gave Congress a very large naval construction bill for Guam and Samoa and Alaska. Did you have any involvement in that?

W: No.

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G: Did you do any work down at the Corpus Naval Air Station?

W: No. Brown and Root did nearly all that.

G: Brown and Root got all of that?

I have a note here that John Connally got appointed to the LCRA board about this time. Do you recall that?

W: Yes.

G: Was that at LBJ's insistence?

W: Oh, hell yes. (Laughter)

G: There's some indication that LBJ and Wirtz were upset with the LCRA board about this time. Do you remember anything about that?

W: Yes, vaguely. I knew they were squabbling all the time.

G: What was the problem?

W: I don't know. I don't know what it was. To tell you the truth, I really just don't know any details on it.

G: Okay. We're in 1941 now, and in April LBJ announced for the Senate, to run against Pappy Lee O'Daniel. Did you participate in that campaign?

W: Well, I helped him every way in the world I could.

G: Such as what? What did you do?

W: Oh, not a whole lot. I thought the worst campaign he had was against the ex-governor, Stevenson.

G: Stevenson.

W: Coke Stevenson. That was the hottest race he ever had.

G: Of course, this was the one he lost; this was the only campaign he lost, in 1941.

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W: That's right.

G: Do you recall what the local attitudes were toward LBJ at this time?

W: The local people? Hell, they were for him. The local people around here have been for him all the way.

G: Why do you suppose he did have so much opposition [out] west of here, in Gillespie County?

W: Well, I don't know. It's an old story, I guess.

G: Are those people just dyed-in-the-wool Republicans, or--

W: That's mainly it, yes. Fredericksburg is all Republican. (Laughter)

G: Were there any personal feelings about LBJ that entered into it?

W: I don't think so, no. There may have been some against his father. His father was a [state] congressman at one time.

G: Okay. In May, LBJ's mother was operated on at Scott and White. Do you remember that?

W: Yes, I remember her being in Scott and White; I remember that. No details.

G: In June, there was a motor caravan from Waco to San Antonio for LBJ, part of the campaign. Did you participate in that?

W: Yes, sure did.

G: Was that a big deal?

W: It sure was. We thought it was.

G: What did you do in that?

W: Just nothing. Just the cars all got together and went.

G: How many cars were you able to supply?

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W: I don't know. I didn't have--well, nearly all the people from here went. Individually, I just took care of myself.

G: On election day, I see that LBJ came here and spoke on the radio from the porch of his old homestead.

W: Right.

G: You remember that?

W: Yes.

G: And then he went to Austin to wait out the returns.

W: That's right.

G: Did you stay here during the election, or did you go to Austin?

W: No, I don't think I went to Austin. I might have; I doubt it. I don't think I did.

G: He came home for Christmas that year, and of course, that was right after Pearl Harbor. Everybody remembers where they were when Pearl Harbor was announced on the radio. Do you remember what you were doing?

W: When they bombed Pearl Harbor? Yes, I was riding around with Cecil Ruby on his ranch, and we heard it over the radio.

G: On the car radio?

W: On the car radio. I remember that.

G: Did you realize that that meant war, or what did you think?

W: Well, I don't know. We didn't know what to think. We were all pretty well stunned.

G: What did you do?

W: We just discussed it; that's about all. (Laughter)

G: LBJ went in the navy shortly thereafter. Did he talk to you about that?

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W: No, other than he was--I believe Roosevelt--didn't Roosevelt have something to do with getting him in the navy? Somebody did.

G: He may have. I don't know that story, though. What do you recall of that?

W: Well, it seems to me like--I don't know; I may be tangled up on that, but somebody in Washington helped him get in. Was Roosevelt president at the time?

G: Yes.

W: Well, that's where it came from then. He helped him get in the navy. And they gave him what?

G: Lieutenant commander.

W: Lieutenant commander. He came out that, yes.

G: He went on an inspection tour in the Far East, in the Pacific, for Roosevelt. Did he ever talk to you about that trip?

W: No, not a whole lot. He was Roosevelt's boy, though. I mean, he done everything that Roosevelt wanted him to do, in every way he could. He was for Roosevelt, all the way.

G: Did he ever talk to you about landing in Australia while he was over there?

W: No, I don't remember that.

G: Did he talk to you about [Douglas] McArthur? He met McArthur.

W: Yes, McArthur made an impression on him, I know that. I remember that. He thought he was very capable.

G: Of course, McArthur gave him the Silver Star for something he did on that trip.

Well now, during the war, what kind of contracting were you involved in?

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W: What kind of contracting was I involved in? We built Camp Wolters; that was one of the biggest jobs we did. And that was all this Cage Brothers--I mean, that's the way we took the job. And of course, everybody said that Lyndon Johnson got the job for us.

G: Did he?

W: No. We were accused of that, but we got it on the merits of having an organization and equipment to go in there and do the job.

G: Did you ever ask LBJ, not to intercede for you, but to keep you current on what jobs were coming up and what appropriations were coming up and so on?

W: Well, not necessarily. During the war, we not only built that, but we did a lot of government work during World War II, a lot of it. But we got that on our past reputation to go in and get a job done, and produce, and get out on time. In other words, we had a good reputation. Cage Brothers had a wonderful reputation.

G: Did you do any overseas work?

W: No.

G: Out of state, or was it all Texas?

W: No, we worked some in Oklahoma, some in Louisiana, and some in Mississippi.

G: Was this primarily roads and airfields, or--

W: Yes, mostly roads.

G: What other kinds of construction might you do?

W: Well, that's about all, earth-moving work. We did a lot of work in Central America.

G: Oh, you did? When was that?

W: That was in latter years, that was--

G: But that was after the war?



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W: Oh, that was after the war, yes. The Federal Bureau of Roads was putting up the money to build all those roads in Costa Rica and Nicaragua and El Salvador, and airports, and everything else. And I had a friend who was the division engineer at Beaumont, Texas, and he was sixty-five years old and the highway department was forcing him into retirement. And he said, "Melvin, I'm going to go to Costa Rica with the Federal Bureau of Roads, and I'm going to need some contracts when I get there." And that's how [we came] to get into Central America. He got down there and programmed a lot of this work to let, and we went down there and got a lot of the contracts, over the years. We were down there about twelve, fifteen years, something like that, I guess. We've still got a million dollars' worth of equipment down there in Costa Rica now, and real estate.

G: You can't get it out?

W: Well, it's piecemealing it out. We sell some of it, then we deliver it to the border, all that kind of thing. My partner, Bill Allan, is handling all that now.

G: When the war ended, what was the impact on your business?

W: When it ended?

G: Yes.

W: Let's see. It ended when?

G: 1945.

W: 1945. I don't know. It seems like we were building lots of roads at that time, still going. I don't think it hurt us.

G: Were you able to pick up any surplus equipment after the war? Was that an important facet of operations?

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W: We sold a lot of equipment about the time the war was over. We shipped a lot of equipment into Canada, sold it. Sold it here, then shipped it into Canada, and a lot of it went there.

G: Do you remember the 1946 campaign, when he ran against Hardy Hollers?

W: When Lyndon ran against him? Yes.

G: Do you remember anything about that particular campaign?

W: No. There wasn't much to it.

G: Some people accused LBJ of outspending Hardy Hollers that year. Does that ring any bells?

W: Yes, it does. I've heard that; I remember that.

G: What was your opinion?

W: I don't know whether he did or whether he didn't. Hardy Hollers--he just didn't catch on.

G: Did you know Hardy Hollers?

W: No, not personally.

G: What do you remember about 1948 in particular? What memories does that campaign against Coke Stevenson--you told me last time about offering to shear his sheep, or whatever?

W: That was the type of nasty campaign-- (Laughter).

G: Who do you think really won?

W: I think Lyndon did. No question about that. Coke Stevenson had gotten all of the South Texas votes, San Diego and [inaudible], he got all those. But they reversed themselves and gave them all to Lyndon this time. So it was just typical. They decided they'd rather have Lyndon than to have Coke Stevenson.

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G: Did LBJ ever talk to you about that campaign in later years? Did he ever reminisce about it, or--

W: No. See, they had to go to the Supreme Court to win the thing. Of course, in the meantime A. W. Moursund had gotten in as a young lawyer here, you know, and Lyndon was going to have to have some representative in the Supreme Court. And I said, "Hell, A. W.'s your man. He's the best damn man we've got for that." "Oh, he doesn't know enough about it. He hasn't had the experience." I said, "Well, if I were you, I'd let him handle it." And he did, and they won the damn case. And that's the first real opportunity Moursund had to show him he could do something.

G: Was that the beginning of Judge Moursund and LBJ's association?

W: Right, that was the beginning.

G: I see. What was his father's name?

W: Who?

G: Judge Moursund's father.

W: Albert Moursund.

G: Now, he and Sam Ealy Johnson were not friendly, were they?

W: No, no. They sure weren't.

G: What was at issue between them?

W: Oh, just--I don't know. Just an old [inaudible]. Jealous of each other, I guess.

G: They were political enemies?

W: Yes, sure were.

G: Were they personal enemies?

W: No, not necessarily. Political enemies, yes, Moursund and he were, sure were.

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G: That just reminded me of a question I forgot to ask. In LBJ's younger days, did he ever get into any scrapes around town that you can recall, Saturday nights or anything of that sort?

W: Oh, no. Run around with the girls, like all of us. (Laughter) Drink a little home brew. I don't know of anything.

G: Okay. Did you ever know him to fight?

W: Lyndon. Not necessarily. He wouldn't back off from one, but he didn't start any fights. He tried to get along with everybody.

G: There are some stories that when the Johnson City boys would go to Fredericksburg on a Saturday night--

W: Oh, God. They were rough.

G: Was it rough?

W: It sure was. (Laughter) I remember some of that.

G: Those German boys didn't appreciate it?

W: Oh, no, no. They didn't like for us to go with their girls.

G: They didn't like what?

W: They didn't like for us to go with their girls.

G: Were there any fights over that?

W: No, not to amount to anything. Lyndon and I never did get involved in them. Some of the other boys did. The Criders got into it, and the Casparises. But we never did get into it.

G: When LBJ came back to the Ranch after his first heart attack, did you spend a lot of time with him?

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W: Yes, we spent a lot of time with him.

G: What was his mood like?

W: Well, there wasn't anything wrong with his mood, other than he wanted company, and we'd have to go up there at night and walk with him at night. He had to do a certain amount of walking, and he'd call the wife and I, and call A. W. and his wife. We'd all go up there and all walk with him, you know, just the whole crew. He'd walk and walk.  
(Laughter)

G: Did he talk about retiring from the Senate?

W: About what?

G: About retiring from politics during that time.

W: No, I don't think so; I don't think he did.

G: He wasn't at all depressed, is that correct?

W: Well, yes he was, to a certain extent. He was to a certain extent; he was afraid he was going to die, just suddenly. I mean, I think he had a fear that he--he tried to cover it up, but I think he had it.

G: Did he ever mention to you that the men in his family didn't live very long?

W: Right. Yes, I've heard him say that.

W: But you don't recall that he ever said he was just going to stay at the Ranch and be a country gentleman?

W: No, no. I don't think he ever--if he did, I don't remember it.

G: I've heard you gave him a rocking chair about that time.

W: I think we did; I think my wife got him one. (Laughter)

G: Were you trying to tell him something?

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W: She was. I know he fussed at her about it; he said, "I appreciate the chair and all that, but I'm not going to use it as much as you think I am," or something; I don't know what he did say. (Laughter)

G: Speaking of gifts, I came across a reference to a telescope one year, and he thanked you and called it an argument solver or something like that. Do you remember that? It had to do with deer.

W: No, I don't remember much about that. I do remember when he was vice president, he came to our house on his way to Dallas, and tried to get the wife and I to go with him. A plane was going to pick him up out here on our airstrip. And he wanted us to go to Dallas with him, and I told him we weren't going. And he brought my wife a gun he had got in Belgium, a rifle for her, and he gave me a shotgun at the same time as--he called it a con--what did he call it? Some kind of present at the same time to console, or something.

G: Consolation?

W: Consolation prize; he gave me a shotgun. And he went to Dallas that night, and the next day he became president. I remember that very, very well.

G: But you didn't go to Dallas.

W: No, we didn't go.

G: Did you ever regret that?

W: Yes, I sure did, I sure did.

G: What did he want you to do up there, just go with him?

W: Yes, he wanted us just to go with him; he wanted us to be along.

G: Did he ever talk to you about the assassination?

W: No, not a whole lot, not a whole lot.

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G: Did he ever tell you what he thought really happened?

W: No, I don't guess. We talked about it, but if he ever had any different ideas on what happened, I never did--of course, John Connally was wounded at the same time, he was shot. And we visited John Connally, I did, several times while he was in the hospital. In fact, John wanted an airstrip down on his ranch.

G: Down in Floresville?

W: Down in Floresville, and I told him not to worry about it. We went down there and built that runway while he was still in the hospital. [Inaudible]. He was governor at the time.

G: Where were you when you heard the news that LBJ was president?

W: We were at home.

G: You were at home?

W: When Kennedy was assassinated?

G: Yes.

W: Yes, we were at home.

G: Do you remember when the first time was you talked to LBJ after that?

W: I don't know whether he came down here or whether we went to Washington. We went so damned many times. (Laughter)

G: Well, he came to the Ranch just a couple of weeks later, in December.

W: Yes, I believe that was it.

W: You saw him on that occasion?

W: Yes. Oh, yes.

G: He had [Robert] McNamara down, and Rusk, and--

W: All of them, yes. Dean Rusk, McNamara.

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G: How did he seem to you then?

W: Well, I don't know, exactly. He knew he had a--he knew he was president and he knew he had a different life to live, and a lot of other things.

G: How would you contrast LBJ as a person before and after he became president? Did it change him?

W: No, not personally, no. He was just the same all the way through, as well as I remember. He never tried to do anything--you know, lord it over people or anything else. He was just the same, as well as I remember.

G: But as a person, he was a very powerful personality, most people say.

W: That's right.

G: How did this tend to come out; how did this exhibit itself?

W: Twisting your arm, I guess. (Laughter) He had a way of getting people to do something.

G: Did he ever twist your arm?

W: To a certain extent, at times, yes.

G: Did it work?

W: Sometimes. Sometimes it didn't.

G: Can you give me an example?

W: No, no.

G: What would he try to get you to do?

W: That picture up there tells a story on some of it, there on the right.

G: The picture showing him signing the bill? I think you've told us about that one.

W: I told you about that one.



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G: Did he ever try to get you to do some construction work that you weren't interested in doing?

W: No. And I never did try to get him to give me any. You know, he could have handed out some to us. I never did ask him. Never did.

G: I think you talked about representing the construction folks in Washington to some extent.

W: Well, while he was in Washington, the Associated General Contractors have an office in Austin, and every damned thing they wanted done, or wanted pressure put on him, they'd try to get me to do it. And in fact, that picture up there was an example of the thing. He told my wife--he called us to come up to the lake and get on the boat with him up there, and he told her, "Melvin is determined that I sign that bill, and I'm not going to sign it." And she said, "Well, he doesn't care whether you sign it or not. You're not hurting anybody but yourself. But he knows it's going to hurt you if you don't sign it. He knows that."

And he called me the next morning about seven o'clock, or earlier, and said, "If you'll get some friends to come up here, I won't tell you I'll sign that bill, but I will talk to you." And that's when I got DeWitt Greer, my partner, and we went up there. But he did, right at the last minute, tell the Secret Service, "Bring a table out here," he was going to sign it. (Laughter) But I told him and my wife had told him the same thing, "You're not hurting anybody but yourself if you don't sign it. It doesn't make any difference to him. He can get by without it. But he feels like it's a good bill, and he knows that it should be signed. All the contractors think you ought to sign it." But he waited and sweated until the last minute before he did.

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G: Did he like to do that?

W: I guess he got a little kick out of it. (Laughter) I guess he [inaudible].

G: Keeping you in suspense?

W: Keeping you in suspense. I guess he enjoyed that; I think he did enjoy it.

G: One of my notes here says that you were buying wool and mohair right after World War II. What was that in connection with?

W: Well, at one time I had a chain of hardware stores. I had one in Johnson City and one in Fredericksburg, one in Marble Falls, and Blanco, and just had a chain of them. And Lyndon was involved in one of them in Marble Falls. He wanted a piece of it, so I let him have a partnership in the one in Marble Falls.

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And we bought lots of wool and mohair over there, and stored it.

G: Oh, you stored it.

W: Our store, yes.

G: Was this in connection with the hardware business, or--?

W: Yes, it was all in connection with the hardware. We had a wool house at Blanco, and we had one at Dripping Springs, and one here.

G: Did LBJ have any interest in any of that, in the wool and mohair business?

W: He did on that one store over at Marble Falls, whatever we bought over there he had an interest in. See, he was a director in our bank here, you know, and then when he became president, he had to give that up.

G: Right; he put all that in a blind trust, didn't he?

W: A blind trust. I had that trust.

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G: You had the trust?

W: Right.

(Interruption)

G: LBJ was often accused of being too active in the affairs of this blind trust. Do you have any comment on that?

W: Well, I was president of the Lyndon Johnson Foundation. We organized and started it here at Johnson City. And when he ceased to be president, I think we had something over a million dollars in that fund at that time. And Bill Heath [?] started this movement to build the LBJ Library in Austin. And Lyndon wanted me to get in on it, to head that damned thing up. And I said, "They can't anybody do it as good as Bill Heath's doing it. You better keep him where he's at. He's a lawyer. He knows what he's doing, and he's the best friend you've got, one of the best." See, he had appointed Heath as ambassador to Sweden, I guess, before this time, during his administration. Bill Heath was the ambassador to Sweden. [Inaudible]

G: During the time he was president, did he intervene in the affairs of the Foundation of the trust? Would he--

W: I just wouldn't put out any money in any way, shape, form or fashion unless Lady Bird or he approved. I just wouldn't give it to anybody. If somebody wanted forty thousand dollars, wanted a hundred thousand dollars, some organization, I wouldn't do it. I just wouldn't do it without somebody giving me an okay.

G: Right. How about the ordinary, day-to-day operations of the radio station and the ranches and so on? Would you say that he continued to supervise, or is that too strong a word?

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- W: No, Jesse Kellam did that. Jesse Kellam is a nephew of the Cage family, and Jesse handled all that. Jesse was a very valuable man to him, all his life, all the years. He and Jesse went to school together, somewhere. J. C. Kellam.
- G: Right. You said last time that he had a direct line established in your house.
- W: Yes, he had a telephone put in over there, a White House telephone, and he had one put in Moursund's house. And he'd wake up at two o'clock in the morning and wanting to talk, well, he'd just call and wake you up. (Laughter) He had it put in my bedroom, where I couldn't get away.
- G: Would he ever call and say, "Buy this," or "Sell that," or anything like that?
- W: No, no. He never interfered any way. He just trusted us all the way through.
- G: What would he talk about besides--would he ask about the weather, for example, or whatever?
- W: Oh, he'd want to know how the Ranch was doing, and how the cattle were doing, and all this, and everything like that. And I kept well up on that, and his ranch foreman reported to me on the Ranch, and I worked with him all the ways I could.
- G: He had trouble keeping ranch foremen there for a while, didn't he?
- W: He didn't have trouble keeping one, that Dale Malechek. He was an awful good man.
- G: But the ones before Dale Malechek; apparently he wasn't always satisfied with their performance.
- W: No.
- G: What was wrong?
- W: Well, they just didn't know what they were doing, couldn't satisfy him.
- G: Was he a hard man to work for?

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W: I wouldn't say he was a hard man to work for if you knew what you were doing. If he had confidence in you, he was all right. And he had a lot of confidence in Dale Malechek.

He really put a lot of confidence in Dale, and Dale earned it; he was worthy of it.

G: Did he ever call you just to tell you his troubles, or to bounce ideas off of you?

W: Oh, once in awhile. He'd get to worrying about something, and maybe missed it. Hell, I didn't know what he was talking about half the time.

G: Did he talk to you about Vietnam, for example?

W: Yes, he did. And my advice and my theory was, and everybody else's was, drop a damn bomb on Hanoi and get it over with, clean it up. And he never would do it. And he said, "If I do that, Russia will drop one on Washington the next day." And he thoroughly believed that. He was convinced that that's what would happen, and he never did it. And I guess he was right, I don't know. I wouldn't have put up with what he did. I'd have gone ahead and blown the hell out of that Hanoi and got it over with. Wouldn't you? Everybody else besides you have said the same thing. (Laughter)

G: Was he a liberal or a conservative, or how would you label him?

W: I don't know. I guess both ways; he was a liberal and a conservative, too. (Laughter)

G: You mean it depended on the issue?

W: I guess; I don't know. He wanted everybody to have something. Is that what you mean, something like that?

G: Yes.

W: He wanted everybody to have something. At the same time, he didn't want them to throw it away, or something--I don't know.

G: Was he a New Dealer, do you think? Was that his chief political heritage?

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- W: Well, he got that reputation, I think, to a certain extent. But I don't know.
- G: A lot of people have said that his Hill Country background influenced him all his life that way. That is, that the people out here were poor in the early days, and didn't have anything.
- W: That's right, that's right. And he wanted them to have electricity, and he did everything he could [inaudible] put electricity in everybody's home. And he accomplished that, pretty well, while he was Congressman, I'll say that.
- G: There's a note here in August of 1958 regarding a landing strip on Mr. Cecil Ruby's place. Do you remember what that was about?
- W: A landing strip?
- G: Yes. Apparently Mr. Ruby wanted to put a landing strip on his place, but it conflicted with the operation of a park nearby.
- W: I don't recall that.
- G: You don't recall that, okay.
- W: I don't know anything about that. He hasn't got a landing strip on his place, I know that. He's got a little short one there, but it doesn't--
- G: Here's a claim on behalf of Clyde Gardner, and had to do with some veteran's affairs. Do you recall anything about that? Apparently you had written--
- W: That name, Clyde Gardner, sounds familiar to me.
- G: Apparently you had written LBJ trying to get him to intercede on a case that Mr. Gardner had before the Veteran's Appeals. It's probably not significant.
- W: I knew Clyde Gardner; I remember him.

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G: Okay. In 1958, LBJ's mother passed away. How did he react to the death of his mother, that you recall?

W: Very bad.

G: Very bad?

W: Oh, he missed her, he really did.

G: Of course, you probably remember the death of his father, too. How did he react to that?

W: Same thing; he really missed him, really did.

G: Of course, there are some stories that he and his father didn't get along as well as they might have. What kind of relationship do you recall?

W: I don't recall anything along that line, of being bad, at all. He always thought his father was one of the smartest men in the country. His father was congressman here at one time.

G: Yes. Here's a note saying that the Associated General Contractors have been working on you to try to get you to find out if anything could be done to get the interstate program going. (Laughter) Do you remember that?

W: Oh, yes.

G: What was the problem there?

W: Money. (Laughter)

G: Money? They didn't have work?

W: The contractors didn't have; they were getting out of work. Eisenhower was the man that put that program on. Eisenhower worked under this theory that every city needs to be in shape to evacuate in a hurry, if they bombed the cities. And he plumped that while he was president.

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G: Here's a letter from--

(Interruption)

Here's a letter from Naomi Haines. Who was Naomi Haines?

W: Naomi Haines was my secretary for many, many years. What about it?

G: Well, she's asking if LBJ will autograph an official portrait from *Look* magazine--

W: For her?

G: For you, and send it to you.

W: Well, maybe so, I don't know. (Laughter)

G: You don't remember that?

W: I don't remember it. She and Lyndon grew up together and knew each other.

G: I have a note here that you were interviewed back in 1965, and you told that story about bringing the first black people into Johnson City, working on the road gang, and LBJ didn't want that story published. Do you remember that?

W: No, I can't remember him not wanting it published. He was for it.

G: Well, that's what puzzled me.

W: He was for it; told it in Washington over and over [inaudible]. (Laughter) He was for that.

G: All right. We'll work on it from another angle, because it didn't make sense to me.

W: That doesn't make sense. He always--there were no niggers in Johnson City during his lifetime. The only niggers in the county were down in--we called it the colony down here below Blanco.

G: What was the name of it?



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W: There was a colony down there, a colony of niggers, old slaves that had been in there, and they did all their business in Blanco, back and forth. Occasionally some of them would come over here. But there was a colony of them, and when I built this road out here when I came here in 1927, I used to send a truck up there and load up those niggers and bring them over here and work them during the week, and then take them back, back and forth.

I did that for many years after I left and got through here, all over the country I did that.

G: They'd spend the week, though, and then go back on weekends? Is that right?

W: I'd take them home on weekends.

G: Where would they stay?

W: At their homes; they had a colony down there. They all had homes.

G: But I mean during the week; did you take them back and forth every day?

W: No, during the week they had a camp; put them in tents, camps, and cook shacks and everything. We had them during the week.

G: I see. Okay. Here's a letter of thank you from you to LBJ, dated April 21, 1965, apparently for the kindness that he showed you during the inauguration when you went up in January of 1965 for that. Where did you stay when you went up there?

W: At the White House?

G: At the White House? How long were you there?

W: I don't know.

G: A few days?

W: A few days, I guess.

G: You mentioned Mr. Frank Matusek of the White House garage as doing an exceptional job of taking care of you.

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W: Well, he was furnishing us cars, and seeing we had drivers, and everything else. He was ferrying us back and forth and taking care of us. He had somebody doing it.

G: What did they do; did they give you a pretty good tour of the city, and so on?

W: Everything you wanted, anything you wanted to see. They sure did.

G: What was LBJ's mood like right after the inauguration? Was he upbeat, or serious, or what?

W: Well, I thought he enjoyed it all.

An incident that happened there--I have a distant relative that's a lawyer down in Austin in the firm of Thomas, Clark and Winters. You may have heard of it.

G: Yes. Is it Sam Winters?

W: Yes, I believe it's Sam.

G: Is that the one whose seat you had to get vacated at the inauguration?

W: That's the same one; he never has forgotten that. (Laughter) [Inaudible] some lawyer work for us [inaudible], he doesn't ever have anything to do with it. He lets somebody else have it. Thomas'll do it, or somebody.

G: Did he think that you were doing him out of something, or did he never--?

W: No, he never--he just told them his name was Winters, and they just got seated.

G: Here's a note from somebody in El Paso complaining that while LBJ is trying to save money by keeping American tourists home, you're using French Michelin tires on your equipment, and they're complaining about that. Did LBJ refer that to you, do you remember?

W: Yes, I think he referred it to me. (Laughter)

G: What did he say?

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W: Well, he didn't say not to do it or anything; he just let me know it was going on. That's about all I remember.

G: Do you have any idea who was doing the complaining?

W: No.

G: Here's a note that says some folks in Mexico City are working on some Mexican boys for you. Was this for labor?

W: Labor.

G: I see. What was the deal there; were they bringing laborers up from Mexico?

W: Well, over the years, we have worked with aliens, and nearly always--we just sent back a bunch of them here about a couple or three months ago. We've always had a bunch of wetbacks, but we've never had any trouble because we've always tried to do it legally.

G: I see. Okay. Do you remember going to the Ranch to talk about this at any particular time?

W: About the wetbacks?

G: Yes.

W: I might have; I don't know. All contractors were doing just what I did. There might have been something come up.

G: Was there ever any problems involved with this?

W: What?

G: Any trouble involved, or any red tape that got in your way, or anything of that sort?

W: No, not necessarily. We worked them all over the state. But we always tried to get along with the immigration people, to let them alone, which we've done over the years.

G: Well, LBJ had some Mexican men working at the Ranch.

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- W: Oh, he had a bunch of them up there, too, at the Ranch. Sure did. Had a bunch of them.
- G: Of course, he had some interest in a ranch in Mexico in later years, didn't he?
- W: Right, sure did.
- G: Did you ever go down there?
- W: No, never did.
- G: What did he have, a part interest, I guess?
- W: No, he tried to get Moursund in on it, and Moursund went out there, and went over the thing, and told him it was all right, but he said, "I'm not in shape financially at this time to go in with you on it." I'd probably have told him the same thing. He went on it--
- G: He offered you an interest in it, too.
- W: Oh, yes.
- G: What did he offer you?
- W: Partnership. Neither one of us took it.
- G: Well, wasn't Mike Guajardo part of that?
- W: Who?
- G: Mike Guajardo. Do you remember him?
- W: No, I don't remember anything about that man. He's a stranger to me. Was he a partner on that place?
- G: I think so.
- W: He could have been. He had a partner on it somewhere, I don't know who.
- G: Did you ever go to Mexico with him, down to Acapulco or anyplace?
- W: I don't believe we ever made a trip into Mexico that I recall. I don't recall one.

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G: Here's a note from you that says O'Neill Ford called you to say that he was going to be the architect for the post office building in Johnson City.

W: Right.

G: Did you have any involvement in building that, or--?

W: Through Lady Bird. She wanted a special design. She wanted it to look like she wanted it to look, and that's the only connection I had with Ford, to do what she wanted to do. O'Neill Ford was the architect on that, and the hospital up there, too.

G: Okay, here's a note; maybe you can tell me whether this is typical or not. "February 21, 1968, Melvin Winters at the LBJ Ranch for domino game with the President, Congressman Pickle and Sam Houston." Was that a pretty common sort of a thing?

W: Yes. Yes, he liked to play dominoes.

G: Who would be partners in that situation?

W: Usually me, he and I.

G: You'd be his partner?

W: Yes, nearly all the time.

G: What kind of signals did you folks have worked out?

W: He did the cheating, I didn't. (Laughter)

G: How would he cheat?

W: Oh, he'd do everything. (Laughter) He was pretty open with it, you know.

G: Pretty open?

W: Everybody pretty well knew what he was doing.

G: Did you ever play against him when Judge Moursund would be his partner?

W: No, no, I never did. I always partnered him. We were always partners.

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- G: What kind of stakes would have been involved in a game like this?
- W: Oh, anywhere from twenty-five to a hundred dollars. I don't think anything over a hundred dollars.
- G: A game?
- W: Yes. Always had to bet; he had to have money in it. He always liked that.
- G: Of course, for some folks that wouldn't be a lot of money, but I don't think Sam Houston had a lot of money, did he?
- W: No. He didn't play with us very much, either.
- G: I think there was a birthday party in 1955--that would have been the year of the heart attack--and you were invited, but I think Sam Houston was not invited, and there were some hard feelings going on at that time. Do you remember that?
- W: I don't know. He brought Sam Houston in here and kept hounding me to put him in the bank down there and try him in the bank, and I did. I put him in the bank. But I didn't keep him very long.
- G: Was he undependable?
- W: Well, he just--"My brother is--" He tried to use that on the director and on the people working down there.
- G: So he was kind of disruptive in that way.
- W: He was disruptive of the whole thing. I was ready to let him out; run him out.
- G: Was his drinking a problem?
- W: Yes, he was drinking. Sam Houston always drank. (Laughter)
- G: Did you know Sam Houston in the later years, after the President came home?
- W: Yes. He lived up here in town; stayed drunk nearly all the time.

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G: How did LBJ react when Sam Houston's book came out?

W: He didn't like it. He didn't like it. One time Lyndon sent Sam Houston and Josefa--she was a pretty wild sister--sent them to Mexico City to try to get them involved over there, and got them a job over there some way or another, with [inaudible]. But it didn't work out, either. He was trying to get them clear out of the country.

G: Well, Sam Houston could have been a source of embarrassment to LBJ when he was president.

W: He was, he was.

G: How did he keep it quiet?

W: I don't know. At one point he sent him off to Mexico for awhile. (Laughter) He got rid of him. Didn't last too long.

G: Did they ever reconcile, do you think?

W: I don't know. I don't know whether they ever did or not. Sam Houston was a problem to him; so was Josefa.

G: Did this go back to the early days?

W: I guess so. Josefa would get drunk. She'd come to our house, and she'd try to borrow money off of me. She'd do everything in the world that--you know. She was always broke. And you'd give her money, and then she'd just get that much more to drink. And she'd come here, and my wife would put her to bed and lock her up in the damned room. (Laughter) But she was a problem, Josefa was. So was Sam Houston.

G: Did LBJ ever talk to you about that?

W: Well, he wanted to do something for them; he wanted to help them. And he tried every way in the world he could to help them, to get them sobered up and to keep them sober,

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but it didn't work, never did work. And it worried him a whole lot. He'd just--they both turned that way, and there wasn't anything he could do with them. But he did try to help both of them every way he could.

G: What kind of a domino player was Arthur Krim?

W: He was a pretty good one. (Laughter)

G: Was he?

W: He was a pretty good player.

G: Would he usually lose, though, when he played?

W: Yes, he usually lost all the time. (Laughter)

G: You mean he wasn't just quite good enough?

W: He wasn't quite good enough. Lyndon would hound him and get him upset and everything else, to keep him from winning. (Laughter)

G: What, to keep him from concentrating?

W: Yes, to keep him from concentrating.

G: Here's a note here that you were at lunch at the Krims' house with the Johnsons and Walt Rostow, and Ephraim Evron, from Israel. Do you remember that lunch?

W: Who?

G: Ephraim Evron, from Israel.

W: Yes. Yes, I remember that. That was up on the lake.

G: Up on the lake, that's right. Do you remember anything in particular about that? There's a ride around the Ranch, I understand, and went to the beach house. Miss Penney Owen was there. Who was Penny Owen, do you recall?

W: I don't remember her, sure don't. Was she an employee of some government--



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G: Could be.

W: --agency or something?

G: Could be. I see the Evrons had their son there.

W: She might have been a reporter. I don't know.

G: Then at ten o'clock everybody except the domino players left the Ranch. I guess you had a domino game that night.

W: Probably did.

G: Judge Moursund, Melvin Winters, Arthur Krim and the President.

W: Sounds about right.

G: Would Moursund and Krim be the partners against you and the President?

W: Yes.

G: How much money do you think you made playing all those dominoes over the years?

W: Not a whole lot. (Laughter)

G: Not a whole lot?

W: No. Probably lost. I don't know.

G: Well, aside from cheating, how was LBJ as a domino player?

W: He was a good one, real good. He didn't have to cheat. He was just an exceptionally good domino player.

G: Would he bawl you out if you made a mistake?

W: Oh, hell yes. You bet. He'd let you know right quick.

G: Did you ever cut his last six by mistake?

W: I don't know; I might have. (Laughter) I could have. I don't know, really. I've been accused of it, anyway. (Laughter)

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G: How about John Hill; did he ever play dominoes with you?

W: Some, yes. He sure did.

G: How good was he?

W: He was a pretty good player. John was a good player. Good businessman.

G: LBJ liked to spend some time in the pool out at the Ranch, didn't he?

W: In that swimming pool? You bet. He enjoyed that. He sure did.

G: Did he actually swim very much, or did he just like to get in?

W: He liked to get in the water, that was all.

G: I guess when you were boys you'd just go down to the Pedernales, pretty much the same.

W: [Inaudible]

G: Do you remember any of the fish fries on the banks of the Pedernales from those days?

W: No, I don't know. We didn't do that fish frying until latter years; I think I started that fish frying somewhere. (Laughter)

G: Oh, you did?

W: Yes.

G: How about Ernest Stubbs; was he a pretty good domino player?

W: Ernest was a good domino player. The story on Ernest is that he was in the construction business at the same time I was, and he was working with Morris Ruby, and I was with the brother, Cecil Ruby. But we were all with Cage Brothers. And then Ernest, after he got out of the construction business, he bought a ranch up here at Cypress Mills, and moved up there on it. And I had organized this bank down here, and the man that I had in there for several years just wasn't doing the job, and we wanted to get rid of him. I told Ernest one day, "Ernest, why don't you come in there and take that damned bank over for

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us? You're wanting something to do, and you need something to do." "Oh, I don't know whether I want to be tied up with [inaudible]. I don't know." But in a few days he came back and said, "I believe I'll take it." So we put him in the bank down there. After that--well, of course, Lyndon was always interested in the bank with me, and he saw right quick that Ernest was a damned good man in it, and the bank was doing a lot better after Ernest got in there, a hell of a lot better.

G: Was he still in the bank when LBJ sold out?

W: Yes, yes, he was still there.

G: Was he against it, too?

W: Yes, hell yes. We were all against it.

G: How has it worked out?

W: What?

G: How has that bank business worked out?

W: Well, it's changed hands two or three times since then. It's not in good shape now, though. It could be in trouble.

G: Of course, a lot of them are these days.

W: Right.

G: Did Wesley West ever play dominoes with you?

W: Yes, yes.

G: Do you remember anything about his abilities?

W: Well, Wesley was just there to enjoy the game, and liked the company and liked the drinks and all that. (Laughter) Wesley was a fine man, one of the best friends I ever had, personally. He'd do more for anybody than anybody I ever knew, and get less credit for it.

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G: And get less credit? Can you remember an example?

W: Yes, one example. Lyndon had an aunt up here living in an old run-down shack up there, and Wesley and I went down there one night. I don't know why we went down there. We went down there for some reason or another. Her name was Oreole, Oreole Bailey. We went down there, and Wesley looked the house over and everything, and so after he left he said, "Goddammit, I'm going to remodel that house. You're going to have to oversee it, but I'm going to fix that damned house up." And so I got hold of Oreole and told her we were going to--"Well, who's paying for it?" And I didn't want to tell her. And she said, "Well, I'm not going to accept any charity." I said, "Well, we'll work out something." I finally talked her into the notion of letting me get in there and remodel the house and everything. And she thought that maybe it was Lyndon that done it. She said, "Well, is Lyndon doing it?" And I finally laid it on Lyndon; I said, "Yes, he's got something to do with it," something like that. [Inaudible] But he did, Wesley fixed that house up and remodeled it for her, and made a nice place out of it.

G: Did LBJ know that you had pulled it off?

W: Oh, yes, he knew we did it, he knew we did it.

G: Did he know that you'd told her that he was doing it?

W: Yes, I finally told him that, "You are going to get credit for it." And he did.

G: Was LBJ a generous man?

W: In my opinion, yes, too damned generous.

G: How do you mean?

W: Well, every way.

G: Are you thinking about Sam Houston and Josefa when you say that?

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W: Well, not them, no. I will say he was generous with them. He was too generous with them, I'll say that. He shouldn't have done anything for them. They didn't deserve it and didn't appreciate it.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II

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MELVIN C. WINTERS

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