

HHH REMINISCING ON LBJ SENATE DAYS

1-22-75

Yes Sir, I have a brief statement here and then if you wish to make any comments or ask any questions, I'll try to be helpful Yes indeed, since

1948, 49 actually when we came to the Congress. We both were members of the 81st Congress, coming into the Senate on the same day. ~~xx~~ Our friendship started to

develop in those early days but it became more so as our service in the Senate

continued and particularly after the Majority Leader of the Senate. He - I was

one of his legislative lieutenants and later on he recommended me to the Democratic Caucus

~~xxxxxx~~ as Majority Whip and as you know ask me to serve and run as Vice President.

Oh, I should say we will. We--very interestingly we have been with the Johnsons

in the last two months a couple of times. We visited with them ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ Texas

in the early part of December when I attended the civil rights symposium there at

Austin and then our most recent association with them was at the memorial services

at New Orleans for Congressman Hale Boggs. That was the last time that I was to

see the President. ~~xxxxxx~~ Yes, he didn't look at

all well when we saw him in New Orleans and Mrs. Johnson had told me that he had

been having a very difficult time of it. In fact on one other occasion when we

were going to stop by and see him she informed us that he was really not at all well.

You may recall that just about 6 or 8 months ago, that he had another flare up with

his heart. Yes. I just want to be sure that we got in touch with you. ~~xxx~~ Thank you.

Margaret Jacobs of AP - - Hello Margaret. It's a pleasure to see you. Welcome.

Thank you. I appreciate your time. Yes indeed. Sorry you have to be out at this hour.

I wonder if reminisce isn't coming back to you now? Yes, Margaret. Lots of them.

.....? Well I have had the privilege of knowing President Johnson for 24 or 25 years

Actually January 1949 is when we first met here in the Senate and I remember they

jokingly talked about landslide Lyndon at that time because he had won by 80 some votes

to the Senate. I also remember that he was well known here and I was a young Senator not well known with not many friends and he was a man who knew ~~R~~ the President, he knew Sam Rayburn. They were close personal friends and Lyndon Johnson had been on Capitol Hill for a long time at the House of Representatives. He had been an aide to a Congressman so that Capitol Hill was his home and I was a novice. I was a new ~~xxxxxx~~ comer. But I also remember that he was one - while we often thought of in those days in terms of regions, northerners, southerners, that he was one of those who always seemed to at least show a friendly attitude towards some of us so-called New Deal, Fair Deal northern liberals. I had many experiences with him here in the Senate. I remember his closest friends in those early days were men like Walter George, Georgia and Dick Russell, Harry Byrd and Scott Lucas. These were the powers in the Senate. Some of us, the newer ones from the north didn't have those associations. ~~xx~~ But the thing that always impressed me about Johnson, about Lyndon Johnson, then Senator Johnson, was that you couldn't put him in a pocket. You couldn't label him liberal or conservative or southerner or anti-civil rights or pro-civil rights. He refused to be put in a political stereotype. I think that was the basis of his overall strength and also it stood him well in the years to come because he maintained friendships or associations in the widest variety of people . . . a very young ~~xxxxxx~~ woman. Back in those days I supposed one of the most conservative Senators was Harry Flood Byrd, Senator Byrd. His son is now in the Senate here. He was number one conservative, yet he was very close to Lyndon Johnson. Also I suppose that in ~~xxxx~~ those early days the most liberal man in the Senate was Wayne Morse. Yet Wayne Morse and Lyndon Johnson got along beautifully. There was Dick Russell, the captain of the south of the southern block, most
and
prestigious and able southern Senator - I think the most prestigious able Senator. He was ~~xxxxxx~~ an extraordinarily able man but conservative, southerner and an intimate

of Lyndon Johnson and yet Herbert Lehmann was a devoted friend of Lyndon Johnson, the former governor of New York. He had the capacity ~~of~~ to have a broad kind of spectrum of friends and I was privileged to fit into that group. I think maybe without being immodest, I was maybe amongst the so-called northern liberals, the pitiful man, I mean I - just as he brought me in touch with men like Walter George who befriended me in many ways, a great ~~conservative~~ conservative Democrat, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, powerful man, chairman of the Finance Committee. I also brought him in touch with many of the northern liberals who would speak up for Lyndon Johnson because I thought I understood him better. Question: ^{What} do you recall about what he was saying about civil rights in those early days when you were in the forefront of . . . Well he was the man from Texas who refused to sign the southern manifesto for example. Now the southern manifesto was drawn up by members of the southern congressional delegation in defiance of the Supreme Court decision of the school desegregation. Johnson refused to sign that. Every southern Senator did. Question: Did he express any inner turmoil about that decision? HHH: No. He always used to say to me that the most important thing that the black man can get is the vote. He said you are always talking about fair employment practices and you want to get anti-lynching bills through and you want this and that. He ~~said~~ said, I am telling you that if you get their right to vote protected, all of those other things will fall in place, because then they are a political power and until they gain political power they'll never really be able to be in control of their own ~~destiny~~ destiny. And you know he was the man who came to Congress in 1965 as President and said - and offered that voting rights act, a special message to Congress and he used Dr. Martin Luther King's phrase as he ~~ended~~ ended his message, "We shall overcome." Now for Lyndon Baines Johnson of Texas, friend of the south, to do what he did, say what he said, was the most remarkable act of courage and of political leadership. And yet he was

the one man maybe who could get by with it at the time because he had built this strong fortification of friendship with so many people. Oh, I ~~xxx~~ could think of a hundred things during -- I went to his home, went hunting with him. (Question: What did you hunt? Deer. I didn't care about hunting deer myself. I don't like to shoot animals, but I went out for partridge and for grouse, birds. I took one of my sons down with me, my youngest son. We went down to his ranch. In fact when I was down there on that occasion, we looked at his guest house and he told Mrs. Humphrey. He said you know I built that guesthouse for \$10,000. We got the floor plans and we took the floor plans home and we built our home in Minnesota with the base. I always told Lyndon Johnson. I said you know that you are the world's best salesman. You got my wife to take those floor plans home and you told her you could build that house for \$10,000. You didn't tell her that the climate in Minnesota was greatly different from that in Texas. You didn't tell her that you didn't put a basement in your house. You didn't tell her that it didn't include the inside equipment and so on. Anyway the house that we have in Minnesota ~~ix~~ the base of the original house of course we have added on ~~to~~ it was the very same floor plan as the Lyndon ~~xxxx~~ Baines Johnson guesthouse. Now we added on patios and porches. That \$10,000 house is a \$50,000 house now. I always used to tease him about that. You know, he used to say to me you're such a tight wad you would ~~never~~ have never built your wife a house unless I got you trapped into it and ~~ix~~ he was always teasing us. I was just saying here to a ~~xxxx~~ friend that was in here the time that I remember so ~~vividly~~ vividly is when he came to my apartment - our apartment on March 31, 1968. It was about noon Mexico City. I have done everything I could to get peace in Vietnam. I have tried everything. I have tried the Poles. I have tried the Russians, I have tried the French, Harold Wilson, the British, the Canadians. We have done everything and he said now I am going to make another supreme effort.

I think I have a chance to get the peace conference underway, but he said if I do it and I declare as a candidate for re-election, it appears I am going to run for re-election, nobody will ever believe me. They'll think it's all ~~politic~~ politics and he said Hubert I want peace in Vietnam more than ~~xx~~ I want anything. And he said the only way I know that I can prove that I can do this without being suspect, where noone can say that I am trying to promote myself politically is to make an unequivocal statement that I am not a candidate for re-election and will not run or accept the nomination and I can devote full time to getting the peace conference underway. He said I believe I can make it. And the second reason is that the campaign is terribly hard and it takes a great toll and ~~six~~ also the burdens of office. He said you know I have had my physical problem, my heart attack in 1956. He said the ~~x~~ men in my family do not live long and that was primarily the end of our conversation except he said please just keep this to yourself now what I have said to you. He ~~six~~ said I think we are going to be able to get a peace ~~xxxx~~ conference underway if we just don't get politics mixed up in it. I couldn't help but think tonight; I said to Muriel that Nixon - President Nixon said on inaugural day that so to speak that we were right close to getting to the end of this war and that conference that brings the end of this war is in Paris. And it was Lyndon Johnson who brought the people together in Paris. It was Lyndon Johnson who brought North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Viet Cong to Paris. It was he who initiated the conferences and the negotiations and no man has had to take more abuse about the war than President Johnson and no man has received less credit ~~x~~ for having initiated the procedure, the process, the forum in which the possibilities of peace can be worked out and it just seems-- I tell you I really had a feeling that within this week as we bury President Johnson, I have a feeling that peace will come about. And that he actually set the framework for it.

Question: It's just ~~xx~~ really sad that . . . Yes, yes, because this weighed very

heavily on me, very heavily. Well those are a few reflections for you. Question: Would you remember about the night he called you and told you that you were the man he wanted to be his Vice President? Oh, I remember that so well. I remember most vividly when I was at the White House. I had flown down from Atlantic City on that afternoon and there was this Tom Dodd business along. That was just a cover to kind of put the newsmen off the scent because he had told me through his emissary privately what was going on, and then I came in and he said ~~x~~ to me, do you want to be Vice President? Do you want to be a candidate for Vice President? He said you know it's not a very interesting office and he said one other thing. He said you also Hubert that we have been very close friends. He said I have studied the history of the Vice Presidency and there are very few if any Presidents and Vice Presidents that have been friends after a year or so in those respective offices. And he went on to tell me, he said, you know ~~two~~ of the closest personal friends in the Senate were Truman and ~~Barkley~~ Barkley. He said, within one year after the election of Truman, Barkley never attended a cabinet meeting. He said I don't know what it is about those two offices. He said, I want you to know what it is. He said we had a warm friendship. He said he would like very much ~~for~~ to have you for my running mate. He said ~~that he wanted me~~ I want you ~~to be~~ ~~x~~ to understand how I deal with the relationship and we talked it out, and he said it's like a marriage. He said, without divorce He said, hopefully it could be a happy one. I can tell you that it most likely will not be without its ups and downs, without its difficulties and I think that was an apt description. I have never forgotten it. I have got that all written up. But he was a man who had been Vice President, a man who knew Barkley. He knew Truman, he knew Roosevelt. He knew Wallace who knew Roosevelt. He had that sense of perspective you know, the historical view, and every since then I have read a number of books on the Vice Presidency. There has never been a President and Vice President

that has ever gotten along. Whether it was Coolidge and Daws or whether it was Wilson and Marshall or whether it was Hoover and Curtis. Whoever it was, ~~it~~ ^{they} always had a parting of the ways and I think it's fair to say we never have. We made it through let's put it that way. Question: . . . subject of his anger at times. Oh, everybody got a little of that. I have been the subject of my wife's anger at times but I love her. I am pretty good at that too. Question: You have kept it a secret though. HHH: I guess ~~some of the press~~ maybe it's because some of the press around ~~me~~ here doesn't know me that well. I am rather an earthy fellow out our way in Minnesota, but there's a difference, ~~between us~~ ^{obviously.} We are different physically, a different makeup, ~~a~~ different personalities and I think somewhat complimentary because of it. Johnson was a big, rugged, strenuous, vital man. He was very much a very earthy, mannish man. But both of us ~~were~~ were what I call political people. We loved politics, literally live it, eat it and breathe it. I maybe a little less so than he. His was a total ~~app~~ appetite for politics. I do like other things. I do like ~~a~~ good music. I like to go to a dance. I like a night out and I like to go to a ball game and I really like it, not because of the politics of it. I really like it. The fact that politics is related to it is detrimental. It inhibits me but we were both I think on the same wave length in terms of working with people. I have always felt that in order to be a successful politician you had to have more than just a good idea. You had to have a knowledge of people, reactions; one of the real problems ^{their} of intellectuals in politics is they forget about people. They are great on ideas but somehow ^{or other} they never get around to remembering that ideas ~~come~~ come from people. And a good idea is really no good unless you put it to work. You have got to make it work. You have got to give it some action and I think both Johnson and I felt that way. We were both legislators, doers, and I believe that is one of the reasons he looked to me or at least saw me as a good ~~partner~~ partner. He had a legislative program

He wanted to get it done and he knew I could help. He had cabinet officers. He wanted somebody to needle them. He knew I could do it and I would and above all I think he wanted somebody who was loyal. I found in this town of Washington a very strange thing that loyalty is looked upon as a liability sometimes. Not in my book. They are certain old virtues. There is ~~x~~ only one President at a time. My loyalty was not only to him but to the program that was agreed upon. We had a program. Once the program was worked then we tried to follow it through. That didn't mean that before the program was worked out we didn't have some disagreements because many times on legislative items that I would bring back a message to the White House about a program and tell the President where I thought we were wrong, the Administration was wrong and ~~want~~ what we had to do to make a change, and those were times I was ~~was~~ maybe most useful.

On the war in Vietnam I had some ideas that were not exactly ~~the~~ the same that were expressed by the officers of government but I wasn't the most influential person either for good or bad in the war. He trusted his Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense. These were good people. Rusk and McNamara, Clark Clifford, McGeorge Bundy and Walt Rostow. These were the people who were closest to the President on matters of National security and the war, but I was committed to give my point of view and from time to time I would do so. Frequently though, when there was any sharp difference it would be private. We had an understanding between Mr. Johnson and myself. From day one if we had anything that he really wanted to discuss where there might be a difference of view, we ~~x~~ would do it privately. He used to say to me, anytime you want to talk to me you can talk and I will talk to you, because we learned early that even in the closed circuits of a cabinet, nothing seems to be juicier than to have somebody leak that there has been an argument between Vice President and the President. That's news copy of the day, you know. And it's been so not now, just now, but you know it's Agnew or Nixon, Johnson or Humphrey, Kennedy or Johnson. It ~~was~~ always that way and its been

that way since the beginning of time because these are the two nationally elected offices. So we just had a plain understanding that will be written up in detail as I write my book, which I am doing. Namely, that whenever we had a disagreement, I could pick up that phone, or maybe it wasn't even a disagreement. Maybe it was just a different point of view, and say Mr. President, could I have ten minutes of your time tomorrow, today. Generally he would say come right over and frequently, as I said to somebody on the radio just a while ago, he would get up in the morning 6 o'clock and call me and say, what's the matter? Aren't you up yet. And I would say, My God I barely got to bed. Why, he said, I thought you were a country boy. He said that's the trouble you have been down around Georgetown here too long. You have been messing around with all these columnists and all these fancy people around here and I don't suppose you get up until 10 o'clock. He said, you know, my father used to say to me, Lyndon, aren't you up yet. You know the other fellows ^{have} already gotten a half-days start on you. He would say to me, you had better get down here Hubert. So I would be down there at 7 or 7:30 and have breakfast with him, ~~not~~ not often, but once in awhile. Betty remembers, there would be times on Sunday or Saturday I ~~it~~ would be sitting home or someplace and he would pick up the phone and say, what are you doing? I would say well, what do you think we ought to be doing? He would said, get over here I want to talk to you. You know, that kind of relationship. Some weeks he wouldn't have anything to talk to me about.

. Question: Did you always call him Mr. President? Oh, always.

Never anything else, except when he was Senator, I called him Lyndon, but he used to tell that story about Sam ~~Rayburn~~ Rayburn and Harry Truman. Now when Harry Truman became ~~President~~ President, the very next morning, Sam Rayburn was over to the White House. When Truman got the news of the death of Roosevelt, he was in Rayburn's office and they were ~~having~~ playing a few cards and having a . . . of whiskey and that's what they

called the school board. They used to meet at 5 o'clock in the school board and they would sit down and talk politics. And so when he got that notice Harry Truman immediately went over to the White House. And the next day, Sam Rayburn ~~is~~ said to him Harry I want to see you tomorrow morning. He said, can I come over. He said yes indeed come right on over. So the next morning Rayburn went over and he said now Harry. He said by the way this is the last time I will ever be able to call you Harry. ~~But~~ After this it will be Mr. President. He said, Harry there are going to be a lot of people -- he said I am not going to get over here to see you very often. The President said why Sam of course you can come over. He said I'll come when you call me but I want to tell you that it's going to be difficult. You are going to have a staff around you. They are going to make their business to see that not ~~many~~ many people get to see you. I have been here a long time. He said every President is the same way. Every President, and he said that that staff is going to tell you, Harry, everyday that you're the smartest man in the world. They are just going to keep telling you that and they are going to make you believe it and ^{Harry} you know damned well that isn't true. Then he said now Harry you and I know damned well that isn't true. Now from here on out Harry it's Mr. President. Isn't that something? . . .

I am going to try to do something about that, and you may recall that as Majority Leader of the Senate he started on protection of the right to vote. He never considered himself a southerner. I thought the most important - one of the most impressive things about Johnson was he was hard to pigeon hold so to speak. He was from Texas but he refused to sign the southern manifesto. He was neither a conservative or a liberal - stereotyped or tagged. You couldn't tag him. Here is a man that had the devoted friendship of Dick Russell, one of the most brilliant and powerful of the southern Senators but yet at the same time had the friendship and the help of Wayne Morse, a liberal, a maverick. ~~Wherever~~ If ever there was a person of independent

liberal judgment, it was Wayne Morse. Here was a man who had the complete confidence of Harry Byrd, the most conservative of the Senators and yet at the same time had the devoted friendship of Herbert Lehmann of New York. It was his ability it seems to me to be able to work with many different kinds of people and to hold their confidence that made him such an ~~ex~~ impressive leader. And I worked with him I think as one of the bridges between the south and the north and I believe that's where we really developed our relationship more than in any other way. I think he saw in me what he thought was a pragmatist, somebody that wanted to make progress but wasn't a bullheaded all or nothing liberal, and ~~that~~ I think that was his approach too. . . . Well I thank you very very much .

Mike Simpson. . . . Well, I can just say to first of all that it was a great shock to both Mrs. Humphrey and myself. I have prepared a statement ~~about~~ Well I remember some very human things that maybe tell a little bit about him. He always seemed to take a special joy in remembering people of his early days Whenever he had a party at the White House it would be for a President of another country or a prime minister. He never filled up the White House dining room with just dignitaries. There were people ~~wh~~ he grew up with, people that had befriended him along the way, maybe somebody that was a neighbor or somebody from Johnson City or somebody that went to college with him. I remember one time that a lady came all the way from Australia that - when he was in the Navy he had stayed at their home and he brought her over at the time I believe ^{the} ~~an~~ Australian Prime Minister was here. Of course Johnson - President Johnson the man I think ^{was} typified so much in his personal relationship with members of Congress. A member of Congress could denounce him, disagreeing - take for example Wayne Morse with President Johnson on the war. And yet President Johnson would call Wayne Morse right over to the White House and say

look Wayne I need your help on that education bill and they would walk arm in arm and work together. There are many other things that one could remember as I am sure ^{if} that/my mind of tonight wasn't quite so weary from the shock of all this would be much more forthcoming. Oh, you bet. I don't know what the plans are for the services but I'll be there. I was with him when he was our leader and I ~~will~~ will be there when we return him to the good Lord. I will be there, both us. We loved the President very, very much and what's been ~~good~~ good in my life has been due to the opportunities that he gave to me and I'll never forget. Thank you.

Robert ?

. . . . You must have some good curse stories Betty: How was your relationship with him Senator? Was it cordial? Cordial? I was afraid of him. I'll be honest with you. I never felt that he was a person that you could ever -- fortunately, most every issue I was on the same side except taxes. But he was a real Populist, liberal Democratic Senator you know on ~~any~~ anything that was pro-labor, pro-farmer, pro-worker, a 100 percent . . . He was just a powerhouse in the Senate. The only man that had this nation and that whole Senate was LBJ. He had this nation. Listen that was like training ~~x~~ ... a wild stallion. I see that Johnson -- he used to get up in that office of his - I can remember him crossreading these different Senators including me. He used to have trouble with Paul Douglas you know. He and Paul would get mad as the devil and he would get made with Paul. Paul would get mad with Johnson, but Paul really got to respect him afterwards. He always figured he was a wheeler-dealer which he was, but you don't run the Senate any other way. My God, the way they run it.



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