

THE EARLY POLITICAL LIFE OF LYNDON B. JOHNSON,
1931-1937

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of
Southwest Texas State College
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements

For the Degree of

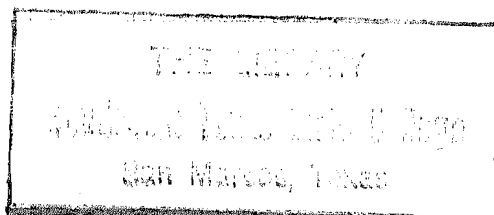
MASTER OF ARTS

By

Edwin William Knippa, Jr., B.S.
(Knippa, Texas)

San Marcos, Texas

August, 1967



PREFACE

The thesis that follows is an account of Lyndon Baines Johnson's apprentice years in national politics while in the service of Congressman Richard Kleberg, his role in the implementation of the National Youth Administration in Texas, and his first campaign for Congress. In the summer of 1965, while enrolled in a graduate seminar in Texas history taught by Professor William C. Pool, I did a research paper on the 1937 Texas special congressional election, the basis of which comprises a significant chapter in this thesis. As a result of this study, I was impressed with the political astuteness of young Lyndon Johnson, who, at age twenty-eight, exhibited qualities as a campaigner not unlike those of a seasoned professional. At the suggestion of Professor Pool, and with the encouragement of Professor Emmie Craddock, members of my thesis committee, in the fall of 1966 I began a study of Lyndon Johnson's early political life. My basic objective was to examine Johnson's political activity leading up to his first election to Congress and to determine the forces which shaped his spectacular victory in that contest.

While researching Johnson's activity as State Director of the National Youth Administration in Texas, I realized that another objective had come into view. It became quite apparent that President Lyndon B. Johnson's current domestic programs for youth comprised many of the same fundamental

principles that were applied in the National Youth Administration program launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt nearly thirty years before. In this regard, it seemed significant to give special emphasis to the administration and early accomplishments of the National Youth Administration in Texas, an account of which is given in chapter three.

During the course of this study I have attempted to gain information from numerous persons who were connected with Lyndon Johnson during his early political career, who for reasons of their own, chose not to respond to the request for information at this time. For this and other reasons, this thesis does not purport to be the definitive story of Johnson's early political career. I am hopeful, however, that this thesis will prove to be of some historical value to those historians who later chronicle more comprehensively the political life of Lyndon B. Johnson.

At this time very little has been written on Lyndon Johnson's political life, between the years 1931 and 1937. Published articles found in the usual periodicals that relate to this topic are scarce and give very little detailed information not already given elsewhere. There have been several biographies written, however, that give a brief sketch of Johnson's professional political career which began in 1931, the most notable of which are Booth Mooney, The Lyndon Johnson Story; Harry Provence, Lyndon B. Johnson;

A Biography; William S. White, The Professional Lyndon B. Johnson; Clarke Newlon, L. B. J.: The Man from Johnson City. The above-mentioned biographies have been studied carefully; ideas have been drawn from them; and, on occasion, pertinent material has been quoted from these books..

The history Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years, co-authored by Professors William C. Pool, Emmie Craddock, and David E. Conrad, deserves special consideration as it relates to this thesis. Chronicled in this recent work on the President is an account of his boyhood days in the Texas Hill Country, his college career at San Marcos, and his early life as a teacher and young politician in Texas. If the reader of this thesis is interested in gaining detailed information about Lyndon Johnson's life prior to the years contained in this study, he should read this book.

The source materials used in this study may be classified under four categories: newspapers; public documents and reports; scrapbooks and photographs; interviews with, and letters from, friends and associates of the President, all of whom knew him during this period. A special word is due with reference to the footnoting of newspaper sources in chapter four. In order to avoid excessive footnoting from identical newspaper articles, excerpts from political candidate speeches are cited at the end of the last reference from each specific article.

The reconstruction of Lyndon Johnson's activity as congressional secretary to Richard Kleberg and as Director of the National Youth Administration in Texas would have been an impossibility had it not been for his numerous Texas friends who took time from their busy schedules to help piece this story together. I acknowledge my special thanks to the following persons: Robert M. Jackson of Corpus Christi, now editor of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times, who lived and worked with Lyndon Johnson from the outset of his Washington career in politics until his marriage in November, 1934, and whose extensive accounts of the future President's first Washington experience proved invaluable to this study; Carroll Keach of Robstown, now editor of the Robstown Record, whose recollections of his political association with Richard Kleberg and Lyndon Johnson contributed materially to this study; Estelle Harbin of San Antonio, a former member of Kleberg's Washington staff, who told of her working association with Johnson; Sam Fore, Jr. (now deceased), former publisher of the Floresville Chronicle-Journal, who vividly recounted Johnson's early political activity in Texas; Robert H. Montgomery of San Marcos, former professor of economics at the University of Texas, who gave generously of his intimate knowledge of the President; and Sherman Birdwell of Austin, now State Employment Commissioner, who opened his scrapbooks on the National Youth Administration for my inspection and

who furnished many of the photographs contained in this thesis. To the numerous others who contributed materials for this study, I extend my appreciation and thanks.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Floyd W. Scott, Burt Rule, Jr., and Sarah Jeannette Pool who took time from their busy schedules to proofread this manuscript. To Professors William C. Pool and Emmie Craddock, who inspired me to complete this thesis, I am forever grateful.

Edwin W. Knippa, Jr.

San Marcos, Texas

August, 1967

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
II. WASHINGTON APPRENTICESHIP	6
A. First Trip to Washington.	6
B. The Office Manager.	13
C. Meeting the Professionals	20
D. The "Little Congress Story"	30
E. Johnson and the New Deal.	33
III. DAYS WITH THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION	44
A. The Youth Problem	44
B. The Organization of the National Youth Administration in Texas	52
C. The Student-Aid Program	57
D. The Work-Projects Program	64
E. The Vocational Guidance and Placement Program	74
F. The Administrator	76
IV. THE FIRST CAMPAIGN.	87
A. Introduction to the 1937 Special Election, Tenth Congressional District of Texas	87
B. The Candidates.	95
C. The Campaign.	122
D. The Election.	171
E. The Aftermath	178
V. CONCLUSIONS	184
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	189

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Following Page
I. Employment Information of the National Youth Administration Student-Aid Program in Texas, 1937-1938.	61
II. Quota Allotments and Applications for Student Aid, by Type of Aid, for the National Youth Administration in Texas, 1936-1937.	61
III. Employment Information on the National Youth Administration Work-Projects Program in Texas, 1937-1938.	74
IV. Results of Special Election for Representative in Congress, Tenth District of Texas, Held April 10, 1937.	178

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Following Page
1. A Selected Survey of Congressman Richard M. Kleberg's Voting Record, 1933-1936. . .	39
2. An Outline of the Early Organization of the National Youth Administration in Texas.	56
3. Photographs of Local National Youth Administration Work Projects, Milam County, Texas.	69
4. A Sketch of <u>La Villita</u> in San Antonio, Texas.	70
5. Photographs of Local National Youth Administration Work Projects, Milam County, Texas.	71
6. Photographs of Youth in National Youth Administration Resident Centers.	73
7. Photographs of Youth in National Youth Administration Recreation Center, Austin, Texas.	73
8. National Youth Administration Resident Centers in Texas--1939	73
9. Photograph of Lyndon Johnson, Lee McWilliams, and Sherman Birdwell	77
10. Photograph of National Youth Administration Mayors' Conference, Austin, Texas.	79
11. Map of Counties in the Tenth Congressional District of Texas.	87
12. Lyndon Johnson Campaigning at Wooldridge Park in Austin, Texas.	170
13. Photograph of Lyndon Johnson Convalescing at Seton Infirmary, Austin, Texas.	179

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recounting the events which led Lyndon B. Johnson out of the classroom of a Houston high school and onto the floor of the United States Congress in only six short years, one finds it helpful to give a brief biographical sketch of Johnson's family background, education, and early political activity before his first trip to Washington.

Lyndon B. Johnson, Thirty-Sixth President of the United States, was born in 1908 near Stonewall, Texas, in the "cedar brakes" district of Blanco County. He was the oldest son of Samuel Ealy Johnson, Jr. and Rebecca Baines Johnson. Politics in Lyndon Johnson's heritage was prevalent on both sides of his family. Sam Johnson, father of Lyndon, was the son of Samuel Ealy Johnson, Sr., the early-day pioneer founder of Johnson City. He served his district in the House of Representatives at Austin for twenty years and was known as a champion of progressive liberal legislation. On his mother's side Johnson was descended from a South-Texas family, a member of which had signed the Texas Declaration of Independence and had fought for his liberties in 1836 with a squirrel rifle. His great-grandfather, Reverend George W. Baines, was an outstanding leader of Texas Baptists during the Civil War period and was known as a student, educator, and author, being president of Baylor University for many years. Lyndon

Johnson's grandfather, J. W. Baines, was appointed Secretary of State by Texas Governor John Ireland. After he completed two terms and Ireland retired, J. W. Baines moved to Fredericksburg and later served for a series of terms in the Texas Legislature as the representative of the old Ninety-Eighth District (Hays, Blanco, Gillespie, and Comal counties).¹

The Sam Johnson family moved from Stonewall to Johnson City when Lyndon Johnson was five years old. He attended the public schools and graduated in 1924 from the Johnson City High School. Johnson completed his course at the Southwest Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1930. Throughout his college career at San Marcos, Johnson was compelled to make his own way because of a shortage of funds for his education. His campus work ranged from that of janitor to secretary to the president of the college. Mid-way through his college work, armed with a two-year teaching certificate, Johnson taught school for a year at Cotulla, a small Texas community located south of San Antonio.²

At college the youngster from Johnson City majored in history and also took English, government, economics,

¹Thumbnail Biography of Lyndon B. Johnson, campaign sheet issued for the 1941 Texas special senatorial campaign in Sam Fore, Jr. Scrapbook (hereafter cited Thumbnail Biography of Lyndon B. Johnson).

²Blanco County News, April 15, 1937, pp. 1-2.

education, and the standard math and science courses. In addition to keeping up with his studies and campus work, Johnson pursued a number of extracurricular activities which aided him in developing his natural political talent. He edited the College Star, the campus newspaper; served as president of the college Press Club; was secretary of the Schoolmasters' Club; was an active member of the college Literary Society; and headed the college debate team. As a debater, Johnson was recognized by both friends and colleagues for his ability to pick weak spots in the opposition's arguments, a trait he continued to develop in later years.³

Although he never held a "major" elective office on the campus, Johnson worked tirelessly as a behind-the-scenes manipulator of campus politics. After a few months at the college, he learned that the student offices were mostly controlled by a small group of athletes who called themselves the "Black Stars." Since the mid-1920's, this campus organization had run candidates for most every office and usually won because there was no organized opposition. In the fall of 1928, Johnson joined with several of his college friends to organize a rival group known as the "White Stars." Shortly thereafter, this secretive campus club had successfully gained control of the student council and elected many of its members to important class offices. The most

³Clarke Newlon, L. B. J.: The Man from Johnson City, p. 30.

significant political technique used by the "White Stars" in class elections was person-to-person relations, the same campaign technique Johnson used with skill in furthering his own political career.⁴

During his senior year in college Johnson cultivated his political acumen and gained valuable experience in the practical affairs of politics. He served as campaign manager for Welly K. Hopkins of Gonzales, a friend of Johnson's father and a member of the Texas House of Representatives who had decided to run for the Texas Senate from the Nineteenth State Senatorial District. This district comprised six counties, including Blanco, the home county of the Johnson family. As campaign manager, Johnson solicited funds and votes for his proponent in the San Marcos area in addition to taking a full course load at the college. He proved to be a natural at political electioneering in this his first professional campaign. Johnson's efforts were rewarded when Hopkins handily won the July Democratic Primary, which insured his election to the Senate since he faced only token Republican opposition in the 1930 November general election. In the months that followed, Hopkins and Johnson became close friends, and to celebrate Hopkins' victory in the July Primary and Johnson's

⁴Interview with Wilton Woods, Seguin, July 19, 1966. Woods, now Seguin Postmaster, was one of the original members of the "White Stars." Readers not familiar with Lyndon B. Johnson's formative years, including his activity in campus politics, should consult William C. Pool, Emmie Craddock, and David E. Conrad, Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years (Austin, 1965).

graduation in August, 1930, they took a brief vacation together to Monterrey, Mexico.⁵ Less than sixteen months after their brief vacation trip to Mexico, Hopkins assisted his friend and former campaign manager to secure the Washington appointment which started Lyndon Johnson on the long road to the White House.

After taking his degree at San Marcos, Johnson taught public speaking for three semesters at Sam Houston High School in Houston, Texas. He was appointed debate coach for the school, and in his first year he demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for the teaching profession; his debate team advanced to the State Interscholastic League finals at Austin.⁶ But teaching did not long hold Lyndon Johnson. When the opportunity came in November, 1931, to go to Washington as secretary to a Texas Congressman, he immediately resigned his position at Sam Houston and departed for the nation's capital to begin a career in politics.

⁵William C. Pool, et al., Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years, pp. 164-167.

⁶Thumbnail Biography of Lyndon B. Johnson.

CHAPTER II

WASHINGTON APPRENTICESHIP

First Trip to Washington

Lyndon Johnson's entrance on the Washington scene had been made under the sponsorship of Congressman Richard M. Kleberg (Democrat of Texas), one of the wealthy owners of the famed King Ranch, which lies in Southwest Texas, between Corpus Christi and Brownsville, at the Mexican border. In November, 1931, Kleberg was elected to the United States House of Representatives from the Fourteenth District of Texas in a special election necessitated by the untimely death of Harry M. Wurzbach, veteran Republican Congressman of Seguin. In this election Kleberg defeated his leading opponent, Carl W. Johnson of San Antonio, by a substantial margin, having won all but two of the eleven Southwest Texas counties in the Fourteenth District.¹ With the House of Representatives almost evenly divided at the time of Kleberg's election, the special Texas election had been of national importance; Kleberg's victory insured a Democratic majority in the House and the election of John Nance Garner of Texas as Speaker.²

¹San Antonio Express, November 25, 1931, p. 1. In 1931, the Fourteenth Congressional District included Lyndon Johnson's hometown of Johnson City, county seat of Blanco County.

²Ibid. The division in the House was as follows: Democrats--218; Republicans--214; Farmer-Laborite--1; vacancies--2. See page 8 in this chapter for information on the organization of the 72nd Congress.

Shortly after the State Canvassing Board certified Kleberg's victory, the Houston Press reported that he had appointed Lyndon Johnson, faculty member at Sam Houston High School, to serve as his personal Washington secretary.³ Throughout the 1931 special-election campaign Johnson had been busy teaching his classes in public speaking in Houston and was in no way connected with Kleberg's first campaign. His Washington appointment had been arranged by Senator Welly K. Hopkins, who had campaigned for Kleberg by making speeches in his behalf and by working at his headquarters in the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio during the last week of the campaign.⁴ Hopkins, who remembered and appreciated Johnson's loyalty and hard work in his own 1930 state campaign, recommended that Kleberg take the young Houston school teacher to Washington as his secretary. Emmie Craddock, in her recent work on the President, reported a statement by Hopkins in which he recalled the subsequent events as follows:

Immediately after Kleberg's election, I recommended to him that he take Lyndon to Washington as his private secretary. To help accomplish this I made a special trip to Houston (where Lyndon was then teaching) to talk with him and then paid a call on Roy Miller, now deceased (a close friend and advisor as well as campaign manager for Kleberg), outlining to him Lyndon's capabilities and why I thought Kleberg would benefit in having a private secretary of Lyndon's type. Roy listened carefully and, although he had never met Lyndon, accepted him

³Houston Press, November 30, 1931, p. 1.

⁴William C. Pool, et al., Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years, p. 172.

on my recommendation and agreed to arrange an interview with Kleberg. Within a day or two afterward, I recall Lyndon and his father driving by my home in Gonzales to tell me that he was en route to Corpus Christi in response to a call from Kleberg, who told him of my interest. That night Lyndon called me to announce enthusiastically that he had received the appointment, was resigning as debate coach at Sam Houston High School, and would be leaving shortly for Washington.⁵

Lyndon Johnson left with Congressman Kleberg early in December, 1931, to assume his new duties. He arrived in Washington during the depths of the Great Depression, only eighteen months before the start of Franklin D. Roosevelt's first administration. It had been Johnson's destiny to begin his Washington apprenticeship in the fine art of politics in this historic period of political upheaval and change.

Washington, D. C., was a beehive of activity when Johnson arrived during the first week of December, 1931. Lawmakers from throughout the country had crowded the Capital City to prepare for the opening of the 1st Session of the 72nd Congress. Bearing a fresh mandate from the American people, the members of the 72nd Congress faced a rising national demand to stem the ever spiraling depression which threatened to bring the economic machinery of the country to a halt.⁶ In the presidential election of 1928, Herbert Hoover had brought with him into office sizable majorities in both houses of Congress: the Republicans had 17 more

⁵Ibid.

⁶Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933, p. 224.

senators than the Democrats in the 71st Congress and 100 more representatives. But in the mid-term congressional election of 1930, the Democrats seriously weakened the Republican position in the House, gaining over 50 seats, while the Hoover Administration barely maintained a 48-47 plurality in the Senate.⁷

The outstanding political feature of the new 72nd Congress had been the change in the control of the House. When the House was elected in November, 1930, the returns gave it to the Republicans with a majority of two. Within the ensuing year, however, fourteen vacancies were caused by the death of Representatives-elect. As a result of special elections to fill vacancies in thirteen congressional districts, the Democrats made sufficient gains to give them a slim majority by the time the new Congress opened in December. With a two-vote clear majority, the Democratic Party elected the Speaker and all other House officers, although the Presidency and the Senate remained in the control of the Republican Party. The election held in New Jersey in January, 1932, which filled the remaining vacancy in the House,

⁷Ibid. The Republican majority in the Senate meant very little since the single Independent, George W. Norris of Nebraska, and the minority block of progressive Republicans opposed the Hoover policies.

came after the House was organized.⁸ This situation, while not unprecedented, was unusual.

On December 7, the 72nd Congress convened before a packed gallery. Young Robert M. Jackson of San Angelo, Texas, one of the spectators present for this event, had recently arrived in Washington to assume his duties as congressional aide to Representative Robert E. Thomason of El Paso. Jackson recalled that it was amidst the excitement of that opening day of the 1st Session of the 72nd Congress that he first met Lyndon Johnson. He reported that shortly before noon, the noisy chamber began to quiet as the Chief Clerk, William Tyler Page, entered the rear door and made his way to the well of the House to call the assembly to order. There was a sudden hush across the chamber. All eyes were directed to the Speaker's rostrum. At this point Jackson noticed a tall, country looking young man, who had come in late, trying to squeeze into a seat about three rows behind him. Upon finding a seat, the lanky youngster presumptuously introduced himself to those seated about him. Because of the commotion he made, most of the spectators sitting in the front rows of the gallery slid down in their seats somewhat embarrassed by the whole affair. A moment later Jackson

⁸N. T. N. Robinson, "Steps Taken to Organize the 72nd Congress," Congressional Digest, Vol. II, No. 1, (January, 1932), p. 5. On December 7, 1931, the division in the House was as follows: Democrats--218; Republicans--215; Farmer-Laborite--1; vacancies--1.

felt a tap on his shoulder. He jerked around to find this same young man facing him with his right arm extended! (He had somehow worked his way down to Jackson's seat) "My name is Lyndon Johnson," he said. "I'm secretary to Congressman Richard Kleberg of the Fourteenth District of Texas." Somewhat bewildered by this sudden confrontation, Jackson then haphazardly jumped to his feet and responded: "My name is Bob Jackson; I'm the new congressional aide to Robert Thomason of the Sixteenth District of Texas."⁹

Just twenty-four hours after he arrived in the nation's capital, Lyndon B. Johnson audaciously began making himself known to the Washington "crowd." Bob Jackson was Johnson's foremost companion throughout his days with Richard Kleberg; over the next four years the two young congressional secretaries worked and spent most of their free time together.

Lyndon Johnson, along with many of the Capitol Hill aides, lived in the Dodge Hotel on Capitol Plaza in the heart of Washington. Jackson had recommended the Dodge to Johnson the day they met in the House gallery. The hotel, originally the Grace Dodge, had been established as a hotel for working women; but with the coming of the depression years, its two lower floors had been opened to men. The rooms in the Dodge were designed for two occupants and rented for \$40 per month --\$20 per man; this price included daily maid service, use of the hotel laundry, and other privileges. Jackson shared

⁹Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

one of the basement rooms with Johnson until Johnson's marriage in November, 1934.

Arthur Perry of Austin, the experienced secretary to Texas Senator Tom Connally, lived in one of the more luxurious rooms on the first floor of the Dodge. Perry immediately took a fancy to Kleberg's secretary; he guided Johnson around Washington during his first few days there and introduced him to a host of congressmen and other secretaries.¹⁰ Perry recalled the impact young Johnson made on the group of established secretaries:

I remember when Dick Kleberg brought Lyndon around to our office and told me he wished I would teach his new secretary everything I knew and show him how to find his way around Washington. Lyndon started asking questions as soon as he knew my name. He followed the same procedure with everyone else he met. He was out to learn all he could and learn it fast.

According to Perry, Johnson did learn fast:

You never had to tell him anything a second time. This skinny boy was as green as anybody could be, but within a few months he knew how to operate in Washington better than some who had been here for twenty years before him.¹¹

The moment he arrived in Washington, Johnson resolved to learn the fine art of politics rapidly and thoroughly. His "technique" was to ask everybody who might know anything and

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Letter from Arthur Perry to the writer, March 21, 1967. Perry, now a special White House Assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson, referred the writer to the above-mentioned statement which is given in Booth Mooney's book, The Lyndon B. Johnson Story, p. 28.

then to make his own decision as to where to operate and how in behalf of Kleberg and the congressional district he represented. For all his youth and his total lack of seniority and Washington experience at that time, Johnson confidently prepared to assume his duties as Kleberg's executive secretary.¹²

The Office Manager

The 72nd Congress recessed for the Christmas holidays in mid-December, 1931, following the two weeks of preliminary organization of both houses. Shortly thereafter, Johnson departed for Texas and spent this short vacation time with his parents, who then resided in San Marcos. He returned to Washington from San Antonio on the Missouri Pacific Express early in January. Congressman and Mrs. Kleberg, and Miss Estelle Harbin¹³ of Corpus Christi, who had just been appointed to serve as Kleberg's second Washington assistant, accompanied Johnson on this trip. While on the train en route to the nation's capital, Johnson and Miss Harbin, his new colleague, talked of their past history and discussed their future plans for setting up Kleberg's Washington office. Harbin recalled that she was immediately

¹²William S. White, The Professional Lyndon B. Johnson, pp. 108-109.

¹³Roy Miller, Kleberg's chief political advisor, had been a neighbor and friend of Miss Harbin for many years. It was Miller who recommended to Kleberg that he take Harbin to Washington to assist Johnson in managing the congressman's office.

impressed with Johnson's enthusiasm concerning his new work, his striking appearance, and his quick mind.

Throughout the year 1932, Kleberg's "Texas Children" (as Johnson and Harbin were referred to by Kleberg) worked tirelessly to manage their Congressman's office.¹⁴ In the early 1930's representatives were forced to conduct their office affairs with a minimum of manpower due to the limited funds allowed, a total of \$5000 annually for staff salaries. They had the privilege of dividing this sum as they chose, with the stipulation that not more than \$3200 be paid to any one employee. Johnson received the maximum salary of \$3200 which left only \$1200 for additional personnel. For this reason, Kleberg's office had been woefully understaffed, with Johnson and his first assistant, Estelle Harbin, carrying the full work load of their Congressman's eleven-county Texas district.¹⁵

Because of Congressman Kleberg's extensive social and recreational engagements in Washington and elsewhere, Johnson functioned in the Texas Representative's office with considerably more responsibility and authority than most congressional secretaries. Although Kleberg usually answered roll-call everyday and normally was present for

¹⁴Interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967.

¹⁵Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

important roll-call votes, he had spent a fair share of his time at Washington's exclusive Burning Tree Country Club, where he played golf almost daily. Besides being an enthusiastic golfer, Kleberg also was an avid polo player, having competed in contests from Texas to New York.¹⁶ Robert Jackson reported that Kleberg, because of his immense wealth, was able to conduct many of his congressional duties while entertaining constituents or congressmen. Very soon, however, the practical political work in Kleberg's office was being done by his secretary, Lyndon Johnson.¹⁷

As office manager, Johnson read and checked the temper of the mail and answered most of Kleberg's correspondence personally. The cardinal rule was that all mail be answered the day it arrived. In addition, Miss Harbin was required to maintain a card-file on all "case mail," probably the most important mail received by congressmen.¹⁸ The card-file contained a record of each letter received from a

¹⁶Interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967; interview with Robert H. Montgomery, San Marcos, October 18, 1966. Montgomery, a close friend of Richard Kleberg, and a frequent Washington visitor, served as professor of economics at the University of Texas throughout the 1930's. His warm friendship with Lyndon Johnson began while he was working as Kleberg's secretary.

¹⁷Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

¹⁸Case Mail--mail requesting assistance in constituent dealings with government agencies.

constituent, its general subject, and comments on whether or not the constituent's request had been successfully processed. The card-file system had proven especially helpful when Johnson accompanied his employer to Texas to meet with constituents who had recently written their Congressman.¹⁹

Johnson gave special consideration to "case mail." He realized that these letters potentially offered great political benefit for Kleberg, since they affected the constituent personally. Much of his time was devoted to helping Kleberg's constituents with their special problems. In the early 1930's, over fifty percent of all "case mail" came from war veterans who requested adjustments in their monthly pension checks or who sought benefits not previously obtained. Estelle Harbin remembered that most congressmen merely passed these requests on to the central Veterans Bureau in Washington. Johnson, however, personally took charge of these requests. He persistently hounded the bureaucrats in the Veterans Administration Bureau and demanded a prompt hearing on each case. Unaccustomed to such relentless pursuit by a congressional staff employee, the Veteran officers gave prompt attention to Johnson's requests, usually ruling in favor of Kleberg's constituents. At one time in 1932, Kleberg's office was processing over 400 case-mail-letters from war veterans, including districts other than Kleberg's own.²⁰

¹⁹Interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967.

²⁰Ibid.

One of the most unusual pieces of "case mail" processed by the young secretary involved a request from a group of retired Texas Rangers. The Rangers contended that they were entitled to financial assistance on the basis of an old federal statute which allowed a monthly pension to law enforcement officers who had engaged in fighting Indians prior to 1900. Johnson energetically pursued the intricate and time-consuming matter with the assistance of other Texas Representatives whose congressional districts were affected by the case. Within a few months, the Rangers gratefully acknowledged that they had received their initial checks.²¹

Lyndon Johnson soon learned that congressmen who did not know the Washington bureaucracy did not know best how to serve their own people. He consistently called on every Executive Department where any form of federal relief was available; very soon Kleberg's office began to run up an extraordinary record in the matter of taking care of the "home folks."²²

An important consideration in measuring the success of a congressman in the early 1930's, as today, was the volume of mail he received from his constituents. So important did congressmen regard mail to their success that they actually sought it. As office manager, Johnson frequently prepared

²¹Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

²²Interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967.

"special mailings" which were sent throughout the Fourteenth District in an attempt to stimulate correspondence from Kleberg's constituents. These mailings included special reports on upcoming legislation in the House, newsletters of interest, and questionnaires. The result of Johnson's efforts was the receipt of an unusually large volume of mail from Kleberg's South-Texas constituents.²³

In addition to managing the mail, Johnson was often called upon to greet Kleberg's guests when the Congressman was out of the office. In the serious business of politics, the practice of good constituent public relations was of upmost importance to Washington legislators, a fact Johnson clearly recognized. Washington visitors from the Fourteenth District and elsewhere found a warm greeting awaiting them when they arrived in Kleberg's office. When guests so desired, Johnson arranged tours of the White House and other interesting spots of interest in the Washington area and issued them House passes when it was in session; and for the bewildered newcomer to the Capital City, he even helped in lining up hotel accommodations. Oftentimes, Johnson talked Texas politics with Kleberg's constituents for hours at a time. He listened to, learned from, and usually made a lasting impression on these visitors.²⁴

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

The usual working hours on Capitol Hill in those early days had been from nine in the morning till four-thirty in the afternoon. But for Lyndon Johnson, an eight-hour day did not give him sufficient time in which to warm-up. Jackson remembered that Johnson worked from seven in the morning till seven at night, seven days a week. "You couldn't imagine the enormous degree of energy that boy had," he said. Commenting on Johnson's unorthodox working hours, Jackson reported that even on Sundays Johnson would leave the Dodge early in the morning bound for Kleberg's office and more work. "It was unheard of for aides or anyone else for that matter, to work past noon on Saturdays, much less on Sundays," Jackson said. "We just couldn't understand what motivated Lyndon at times."²⁵

According to Estelle Harbin she and Johnson usually left the Old House Office Building each day around eight p.m. in the evening. Because her boarding house out on Massachusetts Street stopped serving supper at eight p.m. sharp, she rarely made it home in time to eat with the rest of the girls. "In fact," Harbin declared, "it was difficult to find any eating place open when we got off work, at least one we could afford." Harbin reported that lunch, however, was less a problem than supper. After they had been in Washington a few weeks, Johnson found out that several of

²⁵Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

the postal workers in the House Office Building were surreptitiously selling sandwiches as well as stamps. "From then on, Lyndon would buy us a cold sandwich for lunch, which we managed to gulp down while we worked through the noon hour."²⁶

From all accounts, Johnson's energy and devotion to his duties were something of a phenomena even in those hard depression days. His efforts, however, did not go unrewarded. He quickly proved himself to be an effective office manager; Kleberg's Washington office was recognized as one of the best operated in the House. But Johnson viewed his clerical duties as only part of his responsibilities in behalf of Congressman Kleberg. He recognized that to be an effective, well-informed secretary, he had to establish the necessary liaison activities with both other secretaries and congressmen. Johnson spent much of his time outside the confines of Kleberg's Victorian furnished office in accomplishing this objective.²⁷

Meeting the Professionals

John Nance Garner, Speaker and dominant Democrat in the House of Representatives before he became Roosevelt's

²⁶ Interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967.

²⁷ Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, October 10, 1966. Keach, a close friend of Johnson, was secretary to Congressman Maury Maverick at the time Johnson was in Washington.

Vice-President in 1933, had been one of Johnson's father's old Austin friends. The Speaker and Mrs. Garner had been especially kind to Johnson upon his arrival in Washington. Estelle Harbin remembered that Speaker Garner had been very fond of Kleberg's young secretary and frequently invited him over to his office to meet special Washington guests. On one occasion Johnson learned that Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyons (famous movie stars of that period) had recently visited the Speaker's office. Kleberg had been invited to meet the guests but somehow Johnson had been overlooked. Harbin said that "Lyndon really jumped on Kleberg for not asking him to go along." Kleberg laughed. A few days later Kleberg called his secretary from Garner's office and told him to come over to the Capitol to meet Will Rogers and Jesse Jones. In response to Kleberg's call, Johnson immediately grabbed Harbin by the arm, and together they raced from the House Office Building to the Capitol in record time. Upon meeting young Johnson and his assistant, Will Rogers said: "Dick, this must be one of your 'Texas Children.'" Kleberg nodded and then said: "Will, if I hadn't invited these two youngsters over here to meet you today, there would have been mutiny in my office tomorrow."²⁸

Mrs. John Garner, who had competently managed her husband's office for years, made a special effort to assist

²⁸Interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967.

Johnson in his efforts to operate Kleberg's office efficiently. Johnson frequently visited Garner's office in the Capitol Building, where he managed to become well briefed on the status of important forthcoming legislation. This was a privilege allowed few other Washington secretaries. At age twenty-three, Kleberg's secretary witnessed first hand the enormous measure of power wielded by the Speaker from Texas, a lesson in power politics Johnson never forgot.²⁹

Johnson rapidly established a good rapport with other members of the Texas Congressional delegation. In the early 1930's, Texas legislators achieved an uncanny degree of power in the hierarchy of the United States Congress; seven members of the delegation were chairmen of key standing committees. In the Senate, senior Senator Morris Sheppard of Texarkana was chairman of the powerful Military Affairs Committee. His junior colleague, Senator Tom Connally of Marlin, held an important position on the Foreign Affairs Committee, which he became chairman of during the Second World War. In the House, Hatton W. Summers of the Fifth District was chairman of the Judiciary Committee; Joseph J. Mansfield of the Ninth District was chairman of the River and Harbors Committee; James P. Buchanan of the Tenth District was chairman of the Appropriations Committee; Fritz G. Lanham of the Twelfth District was chairman of the Public Building and Grounds Committee;

²⁹Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

Marvin Jones of the Eighteenth District was chairman of the Agriculture Committee; Sam Rayburn of the Fourth District was chairman of the important Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee.³⁰ For a man so obviously politically inclined, Johnson was fortunate to have been an employee of Richard Kleberg, a member of this distinguished group.

Congressman Sam Rayburn, who served with Johnson's father, Sam Johnson, for two terms in the Texas Legislature, found Johnson to be an eager, ambitious young man. He imparted much of his wisdom to Johnson. Rayburn liked to say that the way to make a good congressman is to pick a good man and keep him in office. The rule of seniority puts a premium on the man who continues to be re-elected. This tenure brings dividends to the districts that return their representatives in unbroken succession, dividends in terms of influence and membership on key committees.³¹

Lyndon Johnson attentively listened to the political wisdom imparted by Rayburn, Garner, and other members of the close-knit Texas delegation, and he assiduously observed the actions of these powerful men as they functioned in Congress. From the vantage point of Kleberg's office, he noticed that the Texas members worked together as a team on nearly all

³⁰United States Congress, Official Congressional Directory, 73rd Congress, 1st Session, pp. 205-223.

³¹Harry Provenance, Lyndon B. Johnson: A Biography, p. 43.

matters affecting their state, and that they respected each other and helped each other on a practical basis. Due to his own hard work and devotion to duty in behalf of Congressman Kleberg, Johnson soon gained the respect of the Texas House members; but in actuality, the young secretary had few personal dealings with them at that time. His liaison operations in behalf of Kleberg's office were channeled, instead, through their secretaries.³²

During his four years as first assistant to Richard Kleberg, Johnson worked with many of Washington's finest and most influential secretaries, including Dan English, the highly regarded secretary to Sam Rayburn; Victor Russel, executive secretary to Senator Morris Sheppard; Malcomb Bardwell, chief assistant to Congressman Maury Maverick; Miss Ann Kopecky, who worked for Congressman Mansfield; Mrs. Effie Garner, wife and office confidant to the Speaker. Other than the above-mentioned group, Johnson knew personally every member of the Texas delegation, members of their staffs, and the majority of other congressional secretaries in the House.³³

³²Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

³³Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, October 10, 1966; interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967; interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

Robert Jackson and Arthur Perry, however, were Johnson's two closest colleagues on Capitol Hill. They talked politics walking to and from their offices, at meals, and sitting around the rooms of the Dodge Hotel. Jackson remembered that Johnson was usually the catalyst in a debate. "He would toss out a subject for discussion and then listen to all sides of the argument; he would take just about any point of view to bring out more opinions and facts."³⁴ Even at meal time Johnson relentlessly argued politics. Arthur Perry reported:

When a group of us went to the cafeteria for lunch, Lyndon would be at the head of the line. He would grab a tray and pick out the food he wanted, hurry to a table and start wolfing his meal. Often--usually--by the time the rest of us reached the table he would have finished eating. That left him free to shoot questions at us while we ate. If he didn't like the answers he got, he would argue. Lyndon was the greatest arguer [sic] any of us had ever seen. It took me a long time to catch on to the fact that most of his arguing was done simply to bring out every possible answer to his arguments. He wanted to be sure he knew all the answers.³⁵

Johnson pursued his unexampled post-graduate course in politics by attending as many of Washington's political events as time permitted. He attended frequently House committee hearings, heard speeches made by the bureaucrats over in the Executive Department, and rarely missed a political

³⁴Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

³⁵Letter from Arthur Perry to the writer, March 21, 1967. Perry referred the writer to the above-mentioned statement which is given in Booth Mooney's book, The Lyndon B. Johnson Story, p. 29.

rally regardless of how inconsequential it turned out to be. Robert Jackson remembered the time that "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, the controversial Governor of Oklahoma, visited the Capital City to address a group of parishioners in one of Washington's more remote Baptist Churches. Determined to go, Johnson persuaded Jackson and Perry to accompany him. Despite the fact that the trio had spent two hours finding the church (that was located several miles outside the city limits), having missed over half of Governor Murray's speech, Johnson had felt extremely pleased with himself for suggesting such a memorable evening.³⁶

On another occasion, Johnson badgered Jackson into making a political meeting at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Shortly before the 1932 National Democratic Convention, a political club at Johns Hopkins had been inviting guests to speak in behalf of the various potential presidential candidates. Kleberg was asked to comment on the abilities of Texas' favorite son, John Nance Garner. He and Johnson worked for days preparing the speech. When the day finally came for the party to leave, Johnson hustled both Kleberg and Jackson down to the railroad station, where they boarded the afternoon train for Baltimore. When they arrived on the campus, only a hand-full of students and professors were present for the meeting. For hours Kleberg arduously delivered his very monotonous speech. About half-way through the meeting,

³⁶Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

Jackson noticed that several of the students and professors were quietly leaving, apparently quite bored with what Kleberg had to say. "But Johnson hadn't noticed; he was thoroughly entranced with the whole affair--as if it had been a Democratic National Convention."³⁷

Whatever local political events Johnson failed to attend in person, he closely followed in the news. He kept track of the Washington news and events back in Texas and around the nation by reading six or seven newspapers daily. Jackson said that Johnson could read a newspaper as fast as any professional editor he had ever seen. Other than newspapers, Johnson studiously read the Congressional Record and Congressional Digest. Of course, his reading was limited to political happenings.³⁸

Constantly involved with politics, Johnson had little time for the usual social activities of a young Washington bachelor. On occasion, however, he dated one of the congressional girl secretaries, and he attended the few parties that were given for congressional aides. One event at which Johnson was always present was the meeting of the Texas State Society, referred to as the Texas Club. At the Club's monthly meetings Texas Congressmen and their employees gathered for a buffet supper usually followed by dancing and other recreational activity. Estelle Harbin remembered that

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

Johnson seemed to enjoy himself at these meetings, particularly when he was able to corner a Texas Congressman or two on some political matter. When it came to the dance following the meeting, Harbin said that Johnson was an excellent dancer and was very popular with the girl secretaries but that he usually danced with the wives of the Texas Congressmen rather than with the single girls.³⁹ Besides attending the monthly meetings of the Texas Club, Johnson went often to the wrestling matches held in the city auditorium and on occasion took in a baseball game. According to several of Johnson's old friends, however, he was not very interested in baseball, the movies, or any other recreational event lasting more than an hour or so. But he would go along with the crowd to these affairs only because he did not want to be left behind. "Lyndon didn't give a hoot about baseball," Jackson recalled. "He would keep right on arguing politics through every inning."⁴⁰

In July, 1932, Lyndon Johnson was afforded the opportunity to enlarge his circle of friends and acquaintances back home when he returned to Texas to assist Congressman Kleberg in his bid for re-election in the July 23 Democratic Primary. In this election Kleberg defeated his chief opponent, Thurmond Barrett of San Antonio, winning every

³⁹Interview with Estelle Harbin, San Antonio, April 4, 1967.

⁴⁰Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

county in the district except Blanco, the home of his secretary.⁴¹ During the course of Kleberg's brief, but well-organized campaign, managed by his secretary, the Congressman had stopped at Floresville to meet with Sam Fore, Jr. (an important constituent and publisher of the Floresville Chronicle-Journal) for a round of political talks concerning this campaign. Fore, a powerful political figure in the Texas Democratic Party, had been a member of the State Democratic Executive Committee during Governor James V. Allred's Administration, and was a delegate to four National Conventions. He was known by party members throughout the State as "Mr. Democrat." One day while campaigning in the Floresville area with Kleberg and his secretary, Fore was deeply impressed with Johnson's political "know-how" and aggressive campaign spirit. That night, following an exhausting eighteen-hour day of electioneering and handshaking, the party dined at the Fore residence and then retired to the living room for what Sam Fore liked to refer to as a "sock-foot communion" (sipping bourbon whiskey while engaged in political discussion). Late that night, after Kleberg and his secretary had departed for Corpus Christi, Fore made his almost legendary prediction regarding Johnson's future. Turning to his wife, Fore declared: "I'm really impressed with that boy [Lyndon]. He's going places. It wouldn't

⁴¹San Antonio Express, July 25, 1932, p. 1.

surprise me to see him President someday."⁴² In the years that followed before his death in December, 1966, Sam Fore carefully watched Lyndon Johnson as he climbed the political ladder to the Presidency. In his special way, Fore had assisted Johnson in achieving that goal, as he aided in furthering the political career of Floresville's own John Connally, who is now Governor of Texas. Like other men who had been close to Johnson in those early years and who predicted that this young man was going places, Sam Fore had been impressed with Johnson's dynamic and persuasive personality and with his fiercely competitive spirit as a campaigner. He had been convinced that, given the opportunity, Lyndon Johnson possessed those qualities necessary to take him to the White House.⁴³

The "Little Congress" Story

The story of Johnson's triumph in becoming Speaker of the Little Congress in his first year as a congressional secretary has been widely told but should not have come as a surprise to anyone who knew him during his college days. In campus politics at Southwest Texas State Teachers College, Johnson had wrested control from the politically powerful "Black Stars" by helping to organize a rival organization

⁴²Interview with Sam Fore, Jr., Floresville, October 13, 1965.

⁴³Ibid.

known as the "White Stars." The campaign technique employed by the "White Stars" in electing its members to important class offices and to the student council had been person-to-person politics, the same technique Johnson used in his campaign for Speaker of the Little Congress.

The Little Congress, which served as a debating society for congressional employees, was patterned after the House of Representatives. The highest office in the Little Congress was the Speakership, a spot normally reserved for one of the senior secretaries. Shortly after his arrival in Washington, Lyndon Johnson became interested in the Little Congress and he had gone to a few meetings observing that they were poorly attended. One day, during a session of the organization of the society, Arthur Perry suggested that Johnson try for election as Speaker of the group. Knowing that many secretaries in the House had never bothered to join, Johnson took Perry's suggestion seriously and went to work organizing a campaign. With the help of his friends and colleagues on Capitol Hill, Johnson took his campaign to every congressional secretary in the House. Those men who did not belong to the Little Congress and who were not committed to the incumbant hierarchy were tactfully persuaded to pledge their full support to their fellow newcomer, Lyndon Johnson. Those men who had established their membership in the group prior to Johnson's arrival were prevailed upon to attend the election and to vote for Johnson because he promised to initiate exciting new meetings. On the

night of the election, the Little Congress met in one of the House hearing rooms. An unusually large crowd had gathered for this meeting. Johnson's name was put forward as a candidate for Speaker, and when the ballots were counted, he was elected the new Speaker by a comfortable majority. Jackson remembered, "The fifty or so hard-core opposition members sat in their chairs dumbfounded--they didn't know what had happened."⁴⁴

The news of Johnson's victory had spread throughout the House. Speaker Garner personally congratulated the young secretary. He told Johnson that he needed to have friends on both sides of the aisle and that "he wouldn't be worth much as a Speaker if he didn't."⁴⁵ Johnson lived up to his word in enlivening the sessions of the Little Congress. He persuaded leading representatives and senators, as well as other important Washington dignitaries, to address the group. The new Speaker also promoted several recreational tours in the Washington area and elsewhere. On one occasion the members of the Little Congress chartered a train and traveled to New York City on a sight-seeing trip. The membership of the society increased substantially while Johnson was Speaker.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Robert M. Jackson to the writer (conference telephone call), April 7, 1967.

⁴⁵Harry Provence, Lyndon B. Johnson: A Biography, p. 42.

⁴⁶Robert M. Jackson to the writer (conference telephone call), April 7, 1967.

The recognition Johnson received from both congressmen and colleagues upon his election as Speaker undoubtedly enhanced his prestige on Capitol Hill. In his first year in Washington, Kleberg's secretary had demonstrated a high degree of competence in the practical affairs of politics. The young man of twenty-three years was well on his way to becoming a professional politician.

Johnson and the New Deal

Richard Kleberg was easily re-elected to Congress in the 1932 November general election⁴⁷ the same year that Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democrats swamped the Herbert Hoover Administration at the polls. By the time the Democrats had come into power, however, countless thousands were unemployed and hunger and suffering were widespread. Lyndon Johnson had been one of the nearly 100,000 anxious spectators who heard President Roosevelt's inaugural address from the steps of the Capitol on March 6, 1933. He listened carefully as Roosevelt stated his plans to combat that economic crisis which had left millions unemployed.⁴⁸ Roosevelt said:

This nation asks for action, and action now. . . . Our primary task is to put people to work. . . . I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the

⁴⁷San Antonio Express, November 9, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁸Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require.⁴⁹

During the first stage of Roosevelt's New Deal, 1933-1935, Johnson crystallized his own thinking about action by government; he felt strongly that the national government had the political power and the moral requirement to do something for the little man; and as Kleberg's Washington secretary, Johnson had the opportunity to witness first hand President Roosevelt's initiation of his New Deal legislative program. He felt that Roosevelt was the champion of the poor and the underprivileged, and in so being, Roosevelt became Lyndon Johnson's champion also. Although his own official role in New Deal politics was at that time bound by the confines of his Congressman's office, Johnson proceeded to support the New Deal as a "can-do" congressional secretary.⁵⁰

In the spring of 1933, shortly after President Roosevelt had assumed his office, Lyndon Johnson became involved in Democratic Party politics. For more than a decade Washington Democrats had been deprived of their patronage rights due to the fact that most of the important appointed federal jobs in the various states had gone to influential Republican Party leaders and their supporters. Now, with a Democrat in the White House, representatives and senators within the party

⁴⁹The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. I, The Year of Crisis, 1933, p. 15.

⁵⁰Interview with Robert H. Montgomery, San Marcos, October 18, 1966.

hurriedly scrambled to obtain patronage jobs for their state or district. The rush for post office patronage was particularly acute among members of the Texas delegation.⁵¹ For days Johnson listened to Kleberg and other Texas Congressmen battle in heated debate over who was entitled to make federal appointments back in Texas. Late one afternoon Johnson confronted his boss with a plan to settle this dispute. He presented Kleberg with a legal-looking draft copy of what might be termed a "gentleman's contract" to be signed by each member of the Texas delegation. The "contract" stated that the representatives from the eighteen congressional districts of the state would have exclusive power to appoint the postmasters in their respective districts, while the two congressmen at large, George B. Terrel of Alton, and Sterling Price Strong of Dallas, would be entitled to share with Senators Connally and Sheppard the appointment of state-level jobs. When Johnson had finished explaining the terms of the agreement to Kleberg, the Congressman indicated that he had no objection to the scheme but said he felt that Johnson would "play hell" selling the idea to other members of the delegation. With Kleberg's consent, Johnson immediately took his "circular

⁵¹Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967. Several of the more important federal jobs filled by congressional appointment included: postmasterships in all 1st-, 2nd-, 3rd-, and 4th-class post offices; United States Marshalls assigned to each federal district court; Collectors of the Internal Revenue Service; Collectors of Customs.

contract" to Senators Connally and Sheppard, who both agreed to sign, provided Connally and Sheppard retained the right to appoint the postmasters in Marlin and Texarkana, their respective hometowns. With the Senators' signatures in hand, Johnson had little difficulty persuading the Texas House members to go along.⁵² This was but one example of the Johnson virtuosity in the behind-the-scene affairs of Washington politics.

Richard M. (Dick) Kleberg evolved into an able Congressman. He had been a most astute member of the House Committee on Agriculture, at that time headed by the late Marvin Jones of Texas. Carroll Keach, now editor of the Robstown Record, formerly served as a staff assistant to Kleberg after Johnson left the Congressman's office in 1935. Keach recalled, "The farmers and ranchers of South Texas attested to the fact that Dick Kleberg knew more about agriculture than any half dozen men on the agriculture committee." As a man of means and a member of a prominent family, Kleberg had associated with a different set of individuals in his social contacts in Washington than did members of his staff. Kleberg's friends and associates were, like himself, wealthy and conservative; and many of his close friends were lobbyists for some of the vested interests. Keach reported that undoubtedly some of Kleberg's legislative decisions were greatly influenced by

⁵²Ibid.

those lobbyists, who represented a variety of South-Texas interests.⁵³ Kleberg's close friend, Robert Montgomery, recently said that as a matter of political expediency, Kleberg arrived in Washington committed to the Texas cattlemen's clan and the South-Texas gas and oil industry.⁵⁴

It was not surprising that Lyndon Johnson frequently disagreed with Kleberg on the quite controversial and far-reaching legislation under the Roosevelt Administration. Young, idealistic, and liberal in outlook, Johnson was then, as in later years, a dedicated supporter of the Roosevelt Administration. But despite their political differences, Kleberg and Johnson had mutual respect for each other. Johnson soon discovered that his employer had a sincere concern for the people of his district. Once back in Texas, in spite of his so-called blue-blooded family ties, Kleberg's sympathies were with the people. He spoke fluent and beautiful Spanish and German, and he was particularly fond of the more humble people of Mexican extraction.⁵⁵ Carroll Keach remembered that Kleberg was a gentle and kindly man:

I have seen Dick Kleberg sit on the screen porch of the family home, then on Upper Broadway in Corpus Christi, sipping a "cooler" after a long hard day at the office. And a Mexican-American string quartet would slip into the

⁵³Letter from Carroll Keach to the writer, January 13, 1967.

⁵⁴Interview with Robert H. Montgomery, October 18, 1966.

⁵⁵Letter from Carroll Keach to the writer, January 13, 1967.

shrubbery and serenade him. He would sit there and listen, enraptured by the Spanish music, with big tears running down his cheeks. He was at heart very sentimental.⁵⁶

What friction existed between Richard Kleberg and his secretary was generated from other members of Kleberg's family. They thought Johnson was too influential with the Congressman. But Johnson saw that part of his job was to argue and debate the issues with his boss when Kleberg was trying to make up his mind on the controversial legislation of that period.⁵⁷ Clarke Newlon in his biography, L. B. J.: The Man from Johnson City, has given a vivid account of the manner in which Johnson persuaded Congressman Kleberg to vote in favor of the Agricultural Adjustment Act:

One important piece of legislation of the early New Deal days under newly-elected President Roosevelt was the Triple A--the Agricultural Adjustment Act. It was a controversial measure, both in its enactment and its enforcement. Among other things, it provided for the plowing under of crops and the destruction of livestock to reduce the nation's agricultural surplus. It was much discussed, both in Congress, in the press and throughout the country. Kleberg planned to vote against the measure. Learning of his decision, Johnson protested. He told Kleberg that, from reading the mail and talking to visitors, he felt Kleberg's constituents were for the bill; thought it would help them. The Congressman shook his head; his friends didn't like the legislation. He didn't like it.

Johnson spent the next two days analyzing and tabulating the mail from the 14th Texas District. He found the letters and telegrams were running some thirty to one in favor of enacting the Triple A measure. He got

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

on the telephone and polled the secretaries of other Congressmen--the "Little Congress" of Capitol Hill. From these friends and colleagues he learned that the bill would pass and by a considerable majority. Johnson talked to Kleberg again. He told him about the mail and its preponderance in favor of passage of the bill. "Mister Dick," he said, "these people are your constituents. They want that bill passed. You can't vote against it." Kleberg said he could, and he would. "The bill," he said, "is socialistic." "Then," said Johnson, "I quit. The people voted for you. They put you in office. You represent them. If you vote against this bill, you'll be letting them down and I don't want them to think I had anything to do with it. Besides," he added, playing the ace, "the bill is going to pass anyway. I've polled the House and I know it." Kleberg gave in.⁵⁸

Although Kleberg was not opposed to the basic objectives of the Agricultural Adjustment Act and similar legislation which provided for the relief and recovery of a nation submerged in depression, he had objected to certain sections of these acts which granted broad and far-reaching powers to the Executive Department in the administration of these laws. Kleberg believed strongly that the states, and not the federal government, should be given the responsibility for the administration of these relief and recovery programs.⁵⁹ A survey of Kleberg's voting record, however, on eight key administration-sponsored bills enacted between 1933 and 1936 is indicative of Kleberg's broad support of President Roosevelt and his legislative program. His voting record is given in Figure 1.

⁵⁸Clarke Newlon, L. B. J.: The Man from Johnson City, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁹Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, February 10, 1967; interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

1. On March 22, 1933, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Agriculture Adjustment Act (HR 3835) to relieve the existing national economic emergency in agriculture by increasing purchasing power; to reduce farm surpluses; to provide relief with respect to agricultural indebtedness.

United States Congress, Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, 1st Session, March 22, 1933, pp. 765-766 (hereafter cited as C. R.).

2. On April 25, 1933, Kleberg abstained from voting (on passage of) the act establishing the Tennessee Valley Authority (HR 5081) to aid interstate commerce by navigation; to provide for flood control; to operate the Muscle Shoals properties; to encourage agricultural, industrial, and economic development.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 1st Session, April 25, 1933, p. 2341.

3. On April 28, 1933, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the act establishing the Federal Housing Administration (HR 5240) to provide emergency relief with respect to home mortgage indebtedness; to refinance home mortgages; and to extend relief to the owners of homes occupied by them, who are unable to amortize their debt elsewhere.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 1st Session, April 28, 1933, pp. 2584-2585.

4. On May 26, 1933, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the National Industrial Relief Act (HR 5755) to encourage national industrial recovery; to foster construction of certain useful public works; to foster competition in interstate and foreign commerce.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 1st Session, May 26, 1933, p. 4373.

FIGURE 1

A SELECTED SURVEY OF CONGRESSMAN RICHARD M. KLEBERG'S
VOTING RECORD, 1933-1936

5. On March 4, 1934, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Federal Securities Exchange Act (HR 323) to provide for the regulation of securities exchanges and over-the-counter-markets operating in interstate and foreign commerce, and through the mails; to prevent inequitable and unfair practices on such exchanges and markets; to establish a Federal Securities Exchange Commission for the regulation thereof.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, March 4, 1934, p. 8116.

6. On April 11, 1935, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Social Security Act (HR 7260) to provide for the general welfare by establishing a system of Federal old-age benefits; and by enabling the several states to make more adequate provisions for the aged persons, dependent and crippled children, and maternal and child welfare, public health, and the administration of the States' unemployment compensation laws; to establish a social security board.

C. R., 74th Congress, 1st Session, April 11, 1935, p. 5462.

7. On July 2, 1935, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Wheeler-Rayburn Act (HR 5423) to provide for control in the public interest of public-utility holding companies using the mails and the facilities of interstate commerce; to regulate the transmission and sale of electric energy and natural gas in interstate and foreign commerce; to establish a federal power commission.

C. R., 74th Congress, 1st Session, July 2, 1935, p. 10639.

8. On January 12, 1936, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Veterans "Bonus" Act (HR 1) to provide for controlled expansion of the currency and the immediate payment to war veterans of the face value of their adjusted-service certificates.

C. R., 74th Congress, 2nd Session, January 12, 1936, p. 34641.

Although several persons have indicated that Johnson's influence was considerable, it is difficult to ascertain from the evidence available to what extent he influenced his employer's voting on the significant legislation of that period. Carroll Keach stated that throughout his years as executive secretary to Congressman Kleberg, Johnson strove to inform his employer of constituent and congressional sentiment on the up-coming legislation of that period. Kleberg's ultimate decision to vote yes-or-no on any given bill was usually made after he had consulted his secretary as to how these impending bills were being received by the people back in the Fourteenth Congressional District.⁶⁰ William S. White, in his biography The Professional Lyndon B. Johnson, stated, "What Johnson did for Richard Kleberg was to blend audacity with a passion for serving others along with himself."⁶¹

Despite their differences, Richard Kleberg considered Lyndon Johnson a loyal and devoted employee, an invaluable asset to his staff and the people of the Fourteenth District. If there had been any real personal conflict between the two men, it is unlikely that Kleberg would have named Lyndon's brother, Sam Houston Johnson, as his secretary when Lyndon Johnson resigned his position to come to Texas as Director of the National Youth Administration.⁶²

⁶⁰Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, February 10, 1967.

⁶¹William S. White, The Professional Lyndon B. Johnson, p. 109.

⁶²Letter from Carroll Keach to the writer, January 13, 1967.

In the fall of 1934, Johnson enrolled at Georgetown University, where he attended law classes in the evenings.⁶³ By this time, Estelle Harbin had returned to Texas to take a position with a Corpus Christi bank, and Johnson had brought up two of his star debaters from Sam Houston High School, where he had formerly taught, to assist him in managing Kleberg's office. Their purpose in venturing to Washington had been to find employment and an education in law. Luther E. Jones, now a lawyer in Corpus Christi, enrolled at Georgetown with Johnson. He worked in Kleberg's office until 1935, and lived with Johnson at the Dodge Hotel.⁶⁴ Gene Latimer, now with the Civil Defense Bureau at Denison, Texas, attended Washington College at Law, and roomed with Johnson until November, 1934.⁶⁵

Russell Morton Brown, now a senior partner in his Washington law firm, and a close Washington friend of Johnson's, also enrolled at Georgetown and attended classes with Kleberg's secretary. Whether or not Johnson had decided at this time to make a career in law is open to speculation. Russell Brown stated that he doubted Johnson would have continued in any case, even if he had not quit school at the end of the spring semester in 1935 to take a position with a youth program in Texas. Brown said:

⁶³Letter from Luther E. Jones to the writer, March 28, 1967.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, February 10, 1967.

The law is essentially a clerical profession. Lyndon was impatient to do things. He always completed his homework, but when the professor would cover the same ground as the book, Lyndon would get restless. . . . Lyndon certainly could have gone on and passed the bar had he wanted to, and he would have made a marvelous advocate--a courtroom lawyer. But he would never have had the patience to do the office work necessary to prepare a case.⁶⁶

In September, 1934, while on a business trip in behalf of Congressman Kleberg, Johnson met Claudia Alta Taylor in Austin, Texas. Two months later, the girl from Karnack, near Marshall, Texas, became his wife. Johnson had used his strong persuasive ability in bringing her to the altar.⁶⁷ After their wedding in San Antonio, the couple took a short Mexico City honeymoon then returned to Washington. Robert Jackson remembered that the young newly-weds had spent at least their first night at the Dodge Hotel before moving into an apartment they had subleased from Dr. and Mrs. Robert Montgomery at the Kennedy Warren Apartments on Connecticut Avenue.⁶⁸

The young secretaries at the Dodge Hotel, where Johnson had lived almost three years, missed Kleberg's dynamic secretary from their incessant debates, but the relationship hardly broke up. Johnson's friends saw him most every day at the

⁶⁶Clarke Newlon, L. B. J.: The Man from Johnson City, p. 55.

⁶⁷Ruth Montgomery, Mrs. L. B. J., p. 21.

⁶⁸Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

House Office Building and they were frequent guests at the Johnson apartment, where Mrs. Johnson proved to be a marvelous hostess and a great political asset to her husband. She assisted Johnson in organizing tours for Kleberg's constituents and on occasion helped to "get out" the mail down at the office. A serious student of politics and the ways of Washington life from the outset of their marriage, Mrs. Johnson worked tirelessly in furthering her husband's career while he worked for Congressman Kleberg and in the years that followed.⁶⁹

The next turning point in Lyndon Johnson's career came in August, 1935, just a few days before his twenty-seventh birthday. He was named State Director of the National Youth Administration in Texas. Congressman Sam Rayburn and other members of the Texas delegation, who knew of Johnson's proven ability as congressional secretary, are generally credited with bringing about his appointment.⁷⁰

In August, 1935, Johnson returned to Texas in a hurry to start the National Youth Administration on its way. Only four years before, he had come to Washington inexperienced in the ways of Capitol Hill politics; he left, an astute professional politician. In just eighteen months, Johnson was destined to return to Washington as a United States Representative.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Interview with Sam Fore, Jr., Floresville, October 13, 1965.

CHAPTER III

DAYS WITH THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION

The Youth Problem

During those hard initial years of the Great Depression the young people of the United States had special problems in addition to those shared with their elders. Their needs were greater and more far-reaching than the immediate demands of food, clothing, and shelter. They were confronted with the problems of getting an education, beginning in a trade or a career, and preventing the natural effects of long idleness and continued frustration. Theirs was a spiritual as well as a physical problem.

Writing in 1938, Charles W. Taussig, Chairman of the National Advisory Committee of the National Youth Administration, stated the "youth problem" as follows:

If we are to consider as normal the years of the present century prior to the Great War, the entire generation which we today call "Youth" was born into an abnormal world. Greeted by a world war or the economic aftermath, they have known only a condition of social and economic instability. Unprecedented post-war agricultural prosperity was quickly followed by collapse and dire distress. A few years of a riotous industrial boom, with all the attendant luxuries and banalities, were followed in 1929 by an economic crisis, from which we are now only hesitatingly commencing to emerge.

Youth, in an effort to throw off the non-essentials and inadequacies of a system that prepares them for a life they have no opportunity to live, frequently discard the fundamentals of a good life. Integrity, spirituality, and a reasonable moral code are sometimes sacrificed. On the other hand, hardship and suffering

have developed in them a social consciousness that did not exist in previous generations. The amenities of life are no longer taken for granted. Today young people have once more become explorers; explorers in a world in which even their elders fail to recognize familiar landmarks, a world in which many a landfall has proven but a mirage. With some justification, youth suspect the older generation of having worshiped false gods. Rightly or wrongly, they feel we have made a "mess of things." The very system we know as democracy is subjected by youth to a cruel analysis. . . .

. . . Youth are dissatisfied; they are sentient, restless, and explosive. Their demands are not unreasonable. They desire an opportunity to earn a living; marry at mating age; to attain education; to understand the principles and functions of our government. They ask only a willingness on our part to consider them fellow-citizens of a great Democracy. This is what is called the "youth problem."¹

From 1930 to 1932, bank failures in the United States increased from 2,700 to 4,000 a year, and millions of young people were affected. During these years, heads of families lost their jobs, life savings were wiped out by bank failures, thousands of young men and women, and even boys and girls, thronged the highways in search of work. Bread lines appeared with alarming frequency and national leaders became deeply concerned with the problems thus created.² Certain legislation of this period further aggravated the problem of unemployed youth. National Reconstruction Act codes, which prohibited the employment of persons under sixteen years of age in every major field of work, except agriculture and

¹Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration, pp. vii-ix.

²Samuel David Hendrix, "The Educational Values of the National Youth Administration Work-Program in Texas," (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation), pp. 1-2.

domestic work, necessitated considerable readjustment on the part of youth. After its passage in April, 1933, more than 1,500,000 employed youth were separated from their jobs as a result of these child-labor codes.³ Many states passed minimum-wage laws which served also to keep out of employment vast numbers of young people otherwise eligible for work, because employers who had to pay a definite minimum wage selected their employees from the vast number of unemployed adults rather than young persons.⁴ The adverse effects of the depression together with this legislation swelled the total number of unemployed young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five to approximately 3,000,000 persons by December, 1934.⁵

The first Federal agency created under Franklin Roosevelt's Administration for the benefit of unemployed youth was the Civilian Conservation Corps, set up in April, 1933. In August, 1935, the Corps had gathered approximately 500,000 young men from the streets and from idleness into a healthful outdoor work environment.⁶ The general purpose of this program was that of "restoring the confidence and self-respect of young men, building them up physically, making

³Tacher Winslow, Youth: A World Problem, pp. 85-86.

⁴Ibid., p. 84.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration, pp. 9-10.

them more useful citizens, and providing them with food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention."⁷ The Civilian Conservation Corps, however, was no help to girls and young women or to young people who wished to continue in school or college. From 1932 to 1934, 400,000 public school students dropped out of school and enrollment in colleges where tuition fees were charged declined by approximately ten percent.⁸

The severity of this educational problem prompted President Roosevelt to call a conference of educators who met in Washington, D. C., in October of 1933, and who subsequently recommended to the President the immediate extension of financial aid to college students.⁹ At this committee's recommendation, a program of college aid was extended in February, 1934, by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, which provided colleges and universities relief funds for the employment of students up to ten percent of their enrollment on useful part-time projects. About 75,000 students immediately took advantage of this program; and, later, with the quota raised to twelve percent, the number increased to approximately 100,000 students.¹⁰

⁷Ibid., p. 10.

⁸Tacher Winslow, Youth: A World Problem, p. 89.

⁹The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. IV, The Court Disapproves, pp. 285-286.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 286.

The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Federal Relief Administration's college-aid program, effective as they had been, still did not reach many hundreds of thousands of young men and women who were desperately in search of an education, a job, or both. In May of 1935, the Bureau of Census employment figures revealed that young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five represented thirty-three percent of the total unemployed in the country, or approximately 3,900,000 youths.¹¹ Most of these young people were on some form of state or federal relief. A report made by the Works Progress Administration on January 1, 1935, stated that 3,000,000 young people under twenty-five years of age were on direct relief; and of those on relief in cities, less than forty percent had gone beyond the eighth grade, and less than three percent had entered college.¹² Most distressing of all was the discovery of the large numbers of young people who, in final desperation, had virtually become hoboes. The transient service of the Works Progress Administration in a single day in May, 1935, counted 54,000 young people registered at its camps and shelters throughout

¹¹Tacher Winslow, Youth: A World Problem, pp. 83-84. This figure did not include youth in C.C.C. camps or on other federal programs.

¹²The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. IV, The Court Disapproves, pp. 286-287.

the United States.¹³ The varieties of direct and indirect aid to youth provided during the first two years of the Roosevelt Administration failed to reach the great majority of needy young people. As the magnitude and long-term social hazards of the idle-youth problem became more apparent, many persons in government and business urged President Roosevelt to deal with the youth problems more comprehensively. Among them, probably the most influential were Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt; Charles W. Taussig, President of the American Molasses Company; and Harry L. Hopkins, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.¹⁴

On June 26, 1935, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order Number 7068, which established the National Youth Administration for the purpose of combating the special problems which faced America's young people. Roosevelt said:

I have determined that we shall do something for the Nation's unemployed youth because we can ill afford to lose the skill and energy of these young men and women. They must have their chance in school, their turn as apprentices and their opportunity for jobs--a chance to work and earn for themselves. In recognition of this great national need, I have established a National Youth Administration, to be under the Works Progress Administration. This undertaking will need the vigorous cooperation of the citizens of the several States, and to insure that they shall have an important part in this work, there shall be a National Advisory Committee and an Executive Committee

¹³Ibid. There had been no way of recording the large number of unregistered youth, who had literally become tramps on the highways and on freight trains.

¹⁴Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration, p. 13.

for the National Youth Administration, the members of which shall be representatives of labor, business, agriculture, education, and youth.¹⁵

In order to decentralize the administration of the youth program, five regional offices were established, and State Youth Directors were established in each state and in New York City, supplemented by local directors and advisory committees throughout the country.¹⁶

The objectives of the National Youth Administration as set forth by the President were as follows:

1. To provide funds for the part-time employment of needy school, college, and graduate students to help them continue their education.
2. To provide funds for part-time employment of young people chiefly from relief families, on projects designed not only to provide valuable work experience, but to benefit youth generally and the communities in which they live.
3. To encourage job-training, counseling, and placement services for youth.
4. To encourage the development and extension of constructive leisure-time activities.¹⁷

To implement these objectives, President Roosevelt and the National Executive Committee, headed by Aubrey Williams, arrived at three broad operating divisions in the Youth Administration: the Student-Aid Program, the Works-Projects Program, and the Guidance and Placement Program.¹⁸

¹⁵The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. IV, The Court Disapproves, pp. 281-282.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 285.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 285-286.

On August 15, 1935, the National Advisory Committee of the National Youth Administration held its first meeting. Harry Hopkins, Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, within which organization the National Youth Administration functioned, addressed the conference. A few excerpts from his talk illustrated the official point of view at the commencement of the new youth program, and indicated the humility with which its leaders approached the youth problem. Hopkins said:

It is awfully easy to make a speech about youth; how they have been neglected and the difficulties and disadvantages which have come to them through unemployment. When you try to put some body to this however, and try to be specific, definite, and precise as to what we are going to do, then it gets complicated. I have given this a great deal of thought and I have nothing on my mind to offer as a solution to our problems, and I know of no one else who has anything to offer resembling a satisfactory program for young people. I want to assure you that the government is looking for ideas, that this program is not fixed and set, that we are not afraid of exploring anything within the law.¹⁹

On the same occasion, Aubrey Williams, National Director of the new youth program, spoke along the same lines:

We have no answers already written to the problems of young people. Those answers that we have are obviously meager and do not provide any general solution. I do not know that there are any answers we can write or put into effect. To do very much about this situation may be beyond any group of people, no matter how sincere and how earnest they are. Certainly it reaches out and has implications for the whole growing concern of the Nation.²⁰

¹⁹Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration, p. x.

²⁰Ibid., pp. x-xi.

On August 20, 1935, President Roosevelt spoke on a more optimistic note when he called the newly appointed State Directors to the White House for a final briefing. He said:

I am glad to see this particular group. We have been looking forward to the initiation of this youth program for a great many years. In previous days groups used to come down here to talk about education, child welfare, and various things like that. They had very interesting discussions and they passed very nice resolutions. Later, the whole proceedings were bound up and distributed around the country. Everybody went home; and little, if anything, resulted from these efforts.

Our procedure is different. We have asked you here to start something. We have given you fifty million dollars. It is the first time the Federal Government has attempted a great national project of this kind. It is an experiment, but we are going to get something more than mere resolutions out of it. We are going to get action. It is up to you to see that action is effectively carried out. . . .

. . . The success of the program depends, in large part on all of you. You are building for the future, not only for the coming years.²¹

The Organization of the National Youth Administration in Texas

His mind already filled with ideas on how to make the Texas youth program the finest in the nation, Lyndon Johnson walked out of the White House Conference of August 20, boarded a plane, and flew to Austin to assume his duties as State Director. At age twenty-six, he was the youngest State Director in the country.²² Johnson returned to Texas with considerable experience in the art of getting things done.

²¹The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. IV, The Court Disapproves, pp. 327-328.

²²Austin Statesman, August 26, 1935, p. 1.

As first assistant to Representative Kleberg for the preceding four years, he had demonstrated a pronounced degree of efficiency in helping the constituents of the Fourteenth District. Now, he prepared to help the young people of his state. Johnson had not returned to his native state, however, with the idea of giving anyone a handout; he meant to put young people to work and to bring young scholars back to school.²³ He prepared to meet this challenge.

During his first few months in Austin, the young administrator lived in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Montgomery (close friends), who then resided at 2808 San Gabriel Street. Robert Montgomery, brilliant Professor of Economics at the University of Texas and a strong supporter of President Roosevelt's New Deal program, helped to crystallize much of Johnson's political philosophy with regard to social action by government. A member of the President's National Resources Planning Board, Montgomery had been instrumental in formulating the Rural Electrification Administration, which eventually financed the construction of public-power utilities throughout the country. Johnson and his landlord talked for hours about this and other phases of the New Deal legislative program. Montgomery also assisted Johnson in recruiting his initial youth administration staff and later supplied him with many of his

²³Interview with Robert H. Montgomery, San Marcos, October 18, 1966.

ideas for work projects. Shortly after his arrival in Austin, Johnson asked Professor Montgomery whom he could hire for an "idea" man to serve as Deputy Director of the youth program. Montgomery immediately recommended Jesse Kellam, who then was Deputy State Supervisor of Education. Montgomery stated that Kellam had been a prize mathematics student of his at San Marcos High School in 1920. He went on to say that Kellam had a brilliant mind and would be perfect for the job.²⁴

Jesse Kellam, a friend of Johnson from Blanco County, preceded the young administrator through college in San Marcos. A few days later Johnson summoned Kellam to the Post Office Cafe in San Marcos to discuss the youth program. Sherman Birdwell of Buda, a close boyhood friend of Johnson, also received the same invitation. Birdwell recalled that Johnson lectured to them on the merits and potentials of the youth program in his typical enthusiastic manner. Kellam told Johnson that he had just been promoted at the Department of Education and was dubious about giving up his position to come to work for an emergency, possibly temporary, government program. Johnson assured Kellam that he would get him a year's leave from the Department of Education (which he later did) if he would sign up. After several hours of conversation, they both agreed to join the staff: Kellam as Deputy Director, and Birdwell as

²⁴Ibid.

State Finance Director. They were scheduled to begin work immediately.²⁵

Willard Deason, a former roommate of Johnson at Southwest Texas State Teachers College and one of the organizers of the secretive "White Stars" there, was the third man to join the staff. He was named Director of District Operations; and later, when Kellam became State Director, Deason served as his Deputy Director.²⁶ With three of his trusted friends at his side, Johnson went to work setting up the machinery for the administration of the new youth program.

In recalling his first few days on the job, Birdwell recently said that the staff joined in establishing headquarters on the sixth floor of the Littlefield Building in Austin. The staff went to work managing the best they could with the facilities at hand. In those first hectic days, the office was woefully understaffed. Johnson was busy night and day telephoning around the state for district and field supervisors; everyone was working overtime trying to get the school-aid program off the ground by September. "'Put them to work, get them in school,' Lyndon kept saying."²⁷

²⁵Interview with Sherman Birdwell, Austin, November 8, 1966.

²⁶Letter from Willard Deason to the writer, April 14, 1967.

²⁷Interview with Sherman Birdwell, Austin, November 8, 1966.

As State Director, Johnson's immediate responsibilities included the following duties, as prescribed in the national regulations:

1. With the approval of the National Director, he appointed his state and district personnel.
2. He appointed a State Advisory Board to assist in planning and sponsoring local work projects.
3. Within certain limitations imposed by the national office, he was permitted flexibility in the establishment of local work projects in both the works projects and student-aid programs; and he was directly responsible for the supervision of these projects.
4. He was directed to interpret the policies of the national office to his staff, and to adapt the national regulations to suit local conditions in his state.²⁸

An outline of the early organization of the National Youth Administration in Texas, which indicates key state personnel and staff relationships, is presented in Figure 2. The state office was divided into four administrative divisions: Division of Finance, Division of Works Projects, Division of Student Aid, and Division of Guidance and Placement. Other state-level positions were Public Relations Officer and the Director of District Operations.²⁹ For convenience and efficiency in administration, Texas was

²⁸Palmer O. Johnson and Oswald L. Harvey, "The National Youth Administration Report," U. S. Advisory Committee on Education, Staff Study No. 13, p. 9 (hereafter cited as National Youth Administration Report).

²⁹Interview with Sherman Birdwell, Austin, November 8, 1966; National Youth Administration; Texas, 1939, "A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas," pp. 2-3 (hereafter cited as A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas).

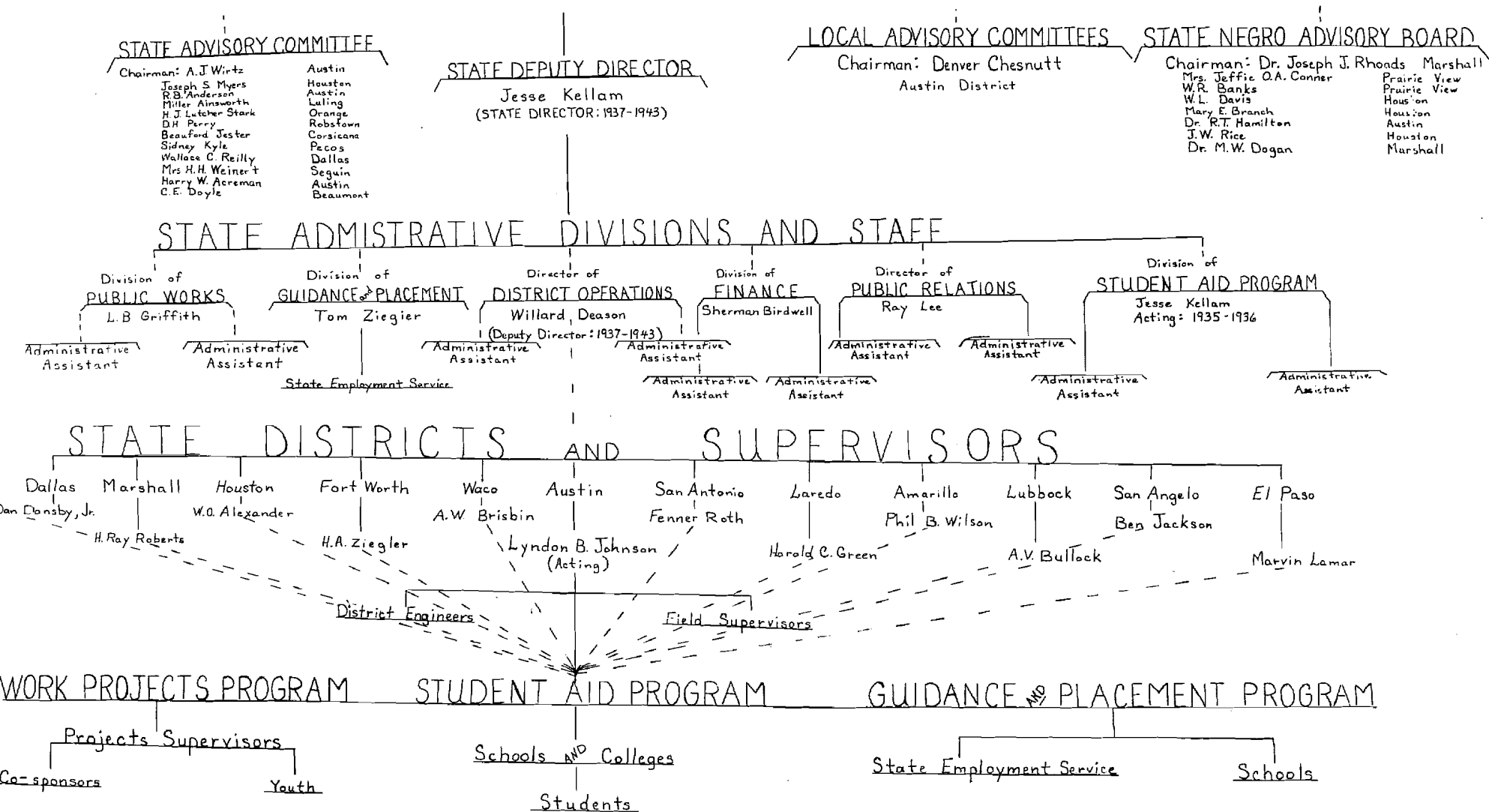


FIGURE 2

AN OUTLINE OF THE EARLY ORGANIZATION OF THE NYA IN TEXAS WHICH INDICATES KEY STATE AND DISTRICT PERSONNEL, AND THEIR STAFF RELATIONSHIPS, 1935-1939

National Youth Administration Report, "State Organization Chart," p. 12; "A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas," p. 28.

Note: The above organizational chart was prepared by the writer with the assistance of Sherman Birdwell.

initially divided into four districts with headquarters in Dallas, Lubbock, Houston, and Austin. By 1938, eight additional districts were established with headquarters in Marshall, Fort Worth, Waco, San Antonio, Laredo, Amarillo, San Angelo, and El Paso.³⁰ For every district there was a supervisor responsible directly to the state director; and responsible to the district supervisor were the field and project supervisors. The local advisory committees, organized variously on the district, county, and community levels, were an integral part of the administrative organization. They assisted the local officials of the Youth Administration by sponsoring and planning projects which would benefit the local area.³¹

To give the reader an indication of the scope and complexity of Johnson's job, a study of the administration and early accomplishments of the student-aid program, works-projects program, and the guidance and placement program of the National Youth Administration in Texas is given below.

The Student-Aid Program

Lyndon Johnson and his staff worked unremittingly in the weeks directly after the formation of the youth program to put into operation the student-aid program in order to

³⁰A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas, p. 28.

³¹National Youth Administration Report, p. 15.

lend financial assistance to needy high school and college students. On September 2, over one-hundred educators representing eighty-one institutions of higher learning gathered at the University of Texas to hear Jesse Kellam, then acting Director of the student-aid program, discuss this new program for college students.³² Before introducing Kellam to the educators, Johnson briefly outlined the basic objectives of the youth program:

Through check of relief rolls we know definitely that 123,890 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 are on relief in this state. We had various choices of what to do with these young people. We could starve them to death; we could send them to school; we could kill them through war. Obviously the answer lay in sending some of them to school; giving some of them vocational training; finding work projects for others. That briefly is the work cut out for the NYA.³³

The scope of the student-aid program had been to reach three classes of students: pupils in elementary and high schools, undergraduate students in college, and graduate students. All three divisions of the program required that the youth aided were to be from sixteen to twenty-five years of age.³⁴

The School-Aid Program

The nature and scope of the school-aid program as outlined in the National Youth Administration Report are

³²Austin Statesman, September 3, 1935, p. 1.

³³Ibid., pp. 1, 8.

³⁴National Youth Administration Report, p. 23.

summarized by the writer below:

The division of the student-aid program in which the recipients were elementary and high school pupils was designated the school-aid program. All institutions participating in this program were non-profit-making and tax-exempt organizations; and they were required to be bona fide educational institutions certified as such by the chief supervisor of education.

Certain requirements governed the eligibility of pupils who received aid. In order to qualify on the basis of need for such assistance, an applicant for aid had to produce satisfactory evidence that he could not enter or remain in school without employment on the student-aid program; that he was a United States citizen; that he had previously passed in at least three-fourths of the normal school load after receiving Youth Administration assistance. The determination of the eligibility of pupils for school aid, and the establishment of work projects were the responsibility of the school officials.

Without prior approval of the state youth director, no school was permitted to employ on school-aid projects a number of students greater than 12 percent of its total regular enrollment. The maximum amount that any pupil could earn was \$6 per month; the hourly wage rates were based on the rates prevailing in the institution or locality for the same type of work. The maximum hours of work were 7 per day on non-school days, 3 per day on school days, and 20 per week.

The work performed by school-aid students was classified and described under the following major categories: clerical, construction, departmental service, library work, duplication, grounds and building maintenance, research and surveys, home economics, art, laboratory assistance, recreation, and miscellaneous. It was stipulated that the work performed by pupils receiving aid should be practical and useful with emphasis placed on work adapted to the student's abilities and major interest. Youth receiving aid were not allowed to be employed to displace workers paid from other funds.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 23-26.

The College- and Graduate-Aid Program

The nature and scope of the college- and graduate-aid program as outlined in the National Youth Administration Report are summarized by the writer below:

The college- and graduate-aid program was designed for students in approved institutions that required high school graduation or the equivalent as a minimum for entrance; and, as in the case of the school-aid program, all institutions participating in the college- and graduate-aid program were certified by the chief supervisor of education as non-profit-making, tax-exempt, bona fide educational institutions.

The National Youth Administration established the fund quota for each institution accepted as eligible. The maximum quota for any institution participating in the 1935 school year was based upon the total number of resident undergraduate and graduate students under 25 years of age enrolled in that institution on October 1, 1935, who were carrying at least three-fourths of a normal load.

The average aid received by college students could not exceed \$20 per month for a period of 9 months; and the maximum hours of work for college-aid students were 8 per day and 30 per week. The institution was in each case responsible for determining the eligibility of the individual student to receive aid, establishing work projects, and the supervision of the work done.

It was stipulated that work projects were to be useful and practical with emphasis placed on work adapted to the abilities and major interest of the student. The work performed by college- and graduate-aid students was classified and described as follows: research projects, departmental service, library service and clerical assistance, minor construction projects on the campus, recreational and educational projects, community service projects, and ground and building projects.³⁶

Throughout the remainder of August and into the fall of 1935, State Director Johnson and his staff devoted their

³⁶Ibid., pp. 27-29.

energies exclusively to the student-aid program; and by the middle of December, eighty-one Texas colleges and junior colleges had qualified for assistance.³⁷ Employment statistics for the student-aid program in Texas in its first two years of operation are not available, but National Youth Administration records show that \$2,497,132 was disbursed to the state during this period; and by the end of the 1937-1938 school year, approximately 14,000 students were enrolled in the program.³⁸ Fund allocations and employment statistics for the National Youth Administration student-aid program in Texas for the 1937-1938 school year are given in Table I.

During his tenure as State Director, Johnson was forced to turn down thousands of needy youngsters who applied for student-aid assistance. No matter how much money he was able to get, it was always too little by the time it was divided among the various educational institutions scattered throughout the state. Quota allotments and applications for student-aid in Texas for the 1936-1937 school year are given in Table II.

In an effort to spread student-aid funds as far as possible, Johnson limited school-aid students to \$5 per month

³⁷Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks on the NYA in Texas (hereafter cited as Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks).

³⁸NYA records in Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration, Appendix XII, p. 302.

<u>Fund Allocation for:</u>	<u>Student Aid</u>
1935-1936.	\$1,106,468.40
1936-1937.	1,390,664.00
1937-1938.	895,170.00
Grand Total.	<u>\$3,392,302.40</u>

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT ON TEXAS YOUTH ADMINISTRATION

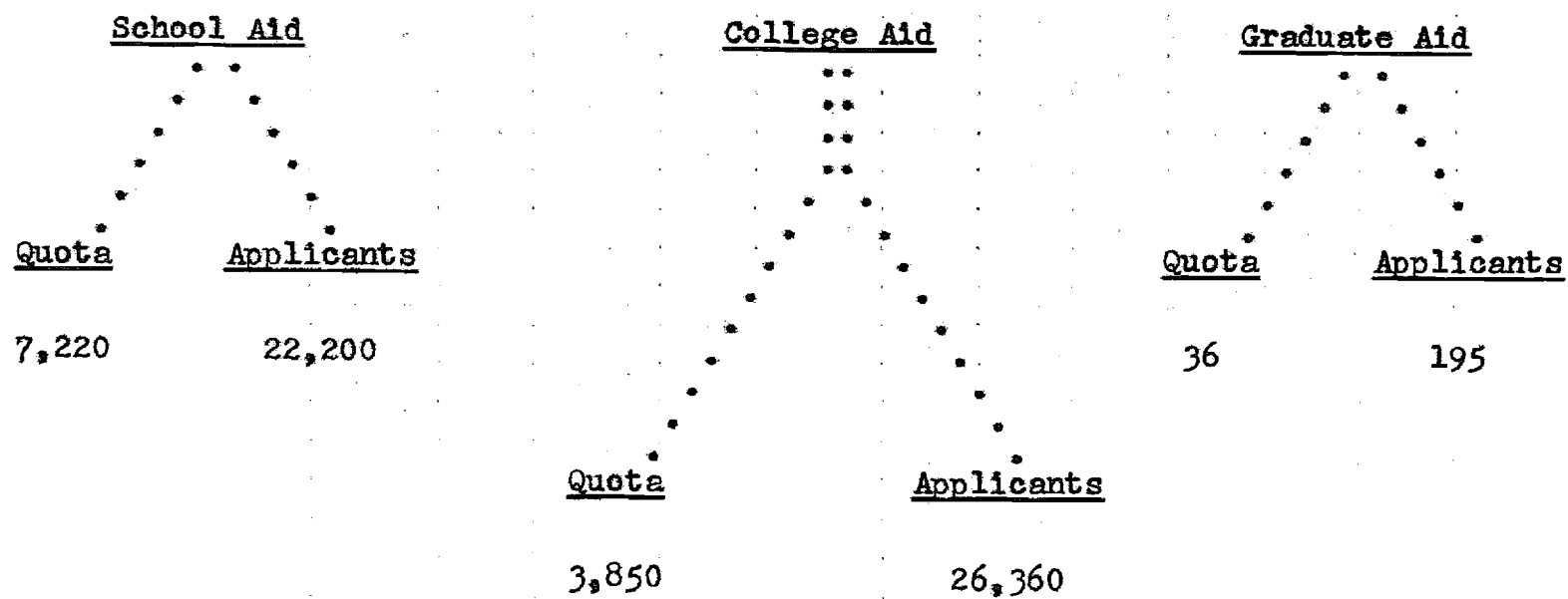
STUDENT-AID PROGRAMS FOR 1937-1938

Program	Number Institu- tions	Number of Persons			Total Earnings	Average Hours Worked	Average Hourly Earnings	Average Monthly Earnings
		Total	Male	Female				
Student Aid								
Total All Programs	2,087	13,895	7,294	6,601	\$102,531	28.3	\$.261	\$ 7.38
School Aid	2,002	8,929	4,615	4,314	39,810	20.7	.215	4.46
College Aid	85	4,940	2,666	2,274	62,323	41.9	.301	12.62
Graduate Aid	7	26	13	13	398	37.0	.413	15.31

NYA records given in Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, A New Deal for Youth,
The Story of the NYA, Appendix XII, p. 302.

TABLE II

QUOTA ALLOTMENTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT AID,
BY TYPE OF AID, FOR TEXAS, 1936-37 ACADEMIC YEAR.



NYA records given in the National Youth Administration Report, Appendix B, p. 95.

of the \$6 maximum allowable and limited college- and graduate-aid students to \$15 per month of the \$20 allowable. This practice allowed the Youth Administration to reach several thousand more students without exceeding the state's annual student-aid budget, which was based on population.³⁹

Those students who were fortunate enough to qualify for student-aid assistance worked on a variety of projects as they continued with their classwork. Throughout the state, thousands of high school students worked either in the school or in the community performing useful and, in many cases, educational tasks: they prepared visual aid and educational exhibits for use in the classroom; they assisted in school cafeterias and supervised various playground activities; they repaired textbooks and old discarded school equipment. This permitted them to earn an average of \$5 per month; a sum which was spent on such necessary items as carfares, textbooks, noon lunches, and adequate clothing.⁴⁰

Both college and graduate students performed, on the whole, similar types of work. Whenever possible, however, college projects were designed to increase and broaden the individual student's major field of study while he worked. At the University of Texas, history majors worked in the document division of the State Library; chemical engineering

³⁹Interview with Sherman Birdwell, Austin, March 14, 1967.

⁴⁰Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.

students helped with experimental work on the hardening characteristics and carburization of steel; biology students worked as laboratory assistants; and other students made annotated bibliographies on various subjects as well as of unpublished theses and similar pieces of research work. At Baylor University, sociology majors visited and worked to reinstate "drop out" cases in the Waco public schools and achieved the remarkable record of one failure in 1,700 cases.⁴¹

In summarizing the educational value of the National Youth Administration's student-aid program, Samuel Hendrix wrote:

As an emergency agency, flexible in its administration and with relatively large available funds, the National Youth Administration has been able to experiment in educational programs which, under ordinary circumstances, would have received little consideration by regular agencies of Government, and which even today are not fully recognized by the majority of educators. Through the extension of educational opportunities to the underprivileged, the Youth Administration has uncovered a reservoir of competent youth desirous of continued education for whom almost no provision has been made in the past. It has demonstrated the possibility of providing educational opportunities at small cost which have proved of considerable advantage to youth and to the institution involved.

Experimentation which grew out of the necessity for combining work with schooling has demonstrated

⁴¹Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.

possibilities of profound educational significance. . . . To the extent that the National Youth Administration has been successful in thus combining work and schooling, the more pointedly by contrast does it emphasize the inadequacies of the conventional current curriculum and guidance policies at both high school and college levels.⁴²

The Works-Projects Program

With thousands of young students enrolled in the student-aid program by December, 1935, Lyndon Johnson and his staff proceeded to initiate the works-projects program, which provided work relief for those youngsters who had already, to some degree, finished their education. Delayed by a number of unavoidable obstacles, funds for the Youth Administration's works-projects program were finally distributed to the various states in January, 1936.⁴³ The nature and scope of this program as outlined in the National Youth Administration Report are summarized by the writer below:

The works-projects program was designed primarily for the purpose of providing work relief for young men and women 18 to 24 years of age. Preference in employment was given youth whose need for relief had been certified by some public relief agency and approved by the Works Progress Administration. At least 90 percent of all workers on a youth project had to be youth on relief; the remaining 10 percent could consist of youth and adults of non-relief status.

⁴²Samuel Davis Hendrix, "The Educational Values of the National Youth Administration Work-Program in Texas" (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation), pp. 183-184.

⁴³National Youth Administration Report, p. 61.

Other than for supervisory and administrative employees, the working hours of youth on work projects were limited to 8 per day, 40 per week, and 70 per month. Hourly wage rates were established by the youth director in collaboration with the Works Progress Administration Director. No relief youth could earn more than \$25 per month, and at least 75 percent of funds allotted to a state for youth projects was expended as wages for those relief youth employed.

Although the state director was the official sponsor for all youth work projects, many projects were sponsored by some public, quasi-public, or non-profit-making agency in cooperation with the Youth Administration. The contributions of these co-sponsors were generally in the form of supervision, services, funds, or the provision of equipment and materials. Application to establish a youth work project had been made jointly by the sponsors to the state director. The official application form called for information on the following items: the location of the project, a description of the project and the character of the work involved, the expected dates of commencement and completion of the project, an estimate of expected cost in terms of labor, supervision, travel, materials; the qualifications of the project supervisor.

Ordinarily, approval of applications for the establishment of a youth work project was the responsibility of the state director alone, but copies of approved applications were filed with the national office. The proper conduct of each established project was the responsibility of the project supervisor, and he in turn was subordinate to the district supervisor, who reported directly to the state director. Thus, the state director maintained constant supervision over all of his youth work projects. The state director had the authority to terminate a project any time he saw fit.⁴⁴

The works-projects program in Texas was classified under two general categories: local work projects, which consisted of highway, workshop, and minor construction projects performed by unemployed youth in their local community; and

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 48-50.

resident-center projects, designed to provide room and board for unemployed youth while teaching them a variety of vocational skills in resident centers scattered throughout the state.⁴⁵

Local Work Projects in Texas

The Youth Administration's first major work-project program was a cooperative venture with the Texas Highway Department to build and landscape park areas along the highways of the state. Lyndon Johnson's decision to initiate this project was not entirely his own idea. While Johnson was in residence at the Robert Montgomery home in Austin, Mrs. Montgomery suggested that Johnson contact the highway department with the idea of building roadside parks which would serve as convenient rest stops for the thousands of motorists and transients who traveled on state roads each month. Impressed with this suggestion, Johnson went to the state highway engineer in Austin to work out the arrangements for such a program. Plans were made to build roadside parks; the land and materials for the project were furnished by the highway department, and the Youth Administration supplied the labor.⁴⁶ In December, 1936, highway projects were in operation throughout Texas. At the peak of

⁴⁵A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶Interview with Robert H. Montgomery, San Marcos, October 18, 1966.

this program in the summer of 1937, about 2,000 youth were employed and approximately 150 roadside parks were built.⁴⁷ Project workers constructed stone barbecue pits, benches, tables, shelters, and beautifully landscaped the wayside parks. The first highway project of its kind anywhere in the nation, this roadside-park beautification program proved so successful in Texas that it was later adopted by state directors in other states.⁴⁸ The Texas youth program cooperated with the highway department on other projects as well. Youth did a variety of road work: they flattened slopes, filled ditches, and sodded shoulders and slopes; constructed ditch retards and checked dams; painted guard fences and signposts; planted, trimmed, and cultivated trees and shrubs; constructed native-stone retaining walls; landscaped highways and entrances to towns and cities; constructed highway sidewalks; and constructed nurseries and erected greenhouses for the growth of plants to be transplanted to highway projects.⁴⁹

By tying Youth Administration projects with the largest public-operating agency in the state, the Texas Highway Department, Lyndon Johnson had been able to initiate quickly the works-projects program, putting several-thousand boys to work almost immediately after labor funds were made available

⁴⁷National Youth Administration Report, pp. 89-90.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 90.

⁴⁹Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.

from the national office in January, 1936. As a consequence, the youth program in Texas was a going concern long before many of the other states, which usually attempted to form self-independent agencies, had any effective plan of procedure.⁵⁰

Another significant part of the works-projects program was the construction of many useful and valuable structures built in local communities and on state properties throughout Texas. A sample of those projects included small rural schoolhouses, annexes to public buildings and schools, field houses, cooperative dormitories, county garages and shelters for school buses, small bridges, cabins and shelter houses in parks, and community houses for recreational purposes.⁵¹ These projects were co-sponsored by municipal, county, and state governments or by some other quasi-public or non-profit-making agency. Work-project applications submitted by local community and civic groups far exceeded the number of projects ultimately approved by the state office. Unfortunately, numerous work projects, which would have proved to be useful additions to Texas communities, had to be rejected due to the limited funds available for this program.⁵² By all accounts, the works-projects program was well received by

⁵⁰Letter from Fenner Roth to the writer, March 4, 1967. Roth served as San Antonio District Director of the NYA in Texas during this early period.

⁵¹Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.

⁵²Interview with Sherman Birdwell, Austin, January 29, 1967.

the general public; and had additional funds been available, the program could have been expanded considerably.

A few of the more significant projects constructed by youth workers in the late 1930's included youth community centers built at Canton, Taylor, Hempstead, Hallettsville, and Clarksville; park-beautification projects at Bastrop State Park, Garner State Park near Uvalde, Starcke Park in Seguin, Munson Park in Denison, Stevens Park in Dallas, and Brackenridge Park in San Antonio; school construction and improvement projects at Thorndale, Roby, El Paso, Buckholts, Johnson City, and Ben Arnold schools.⁵³ Photographs showing youth at work on the Buckholts and Ben Arnold school projects are given in Figure 3.

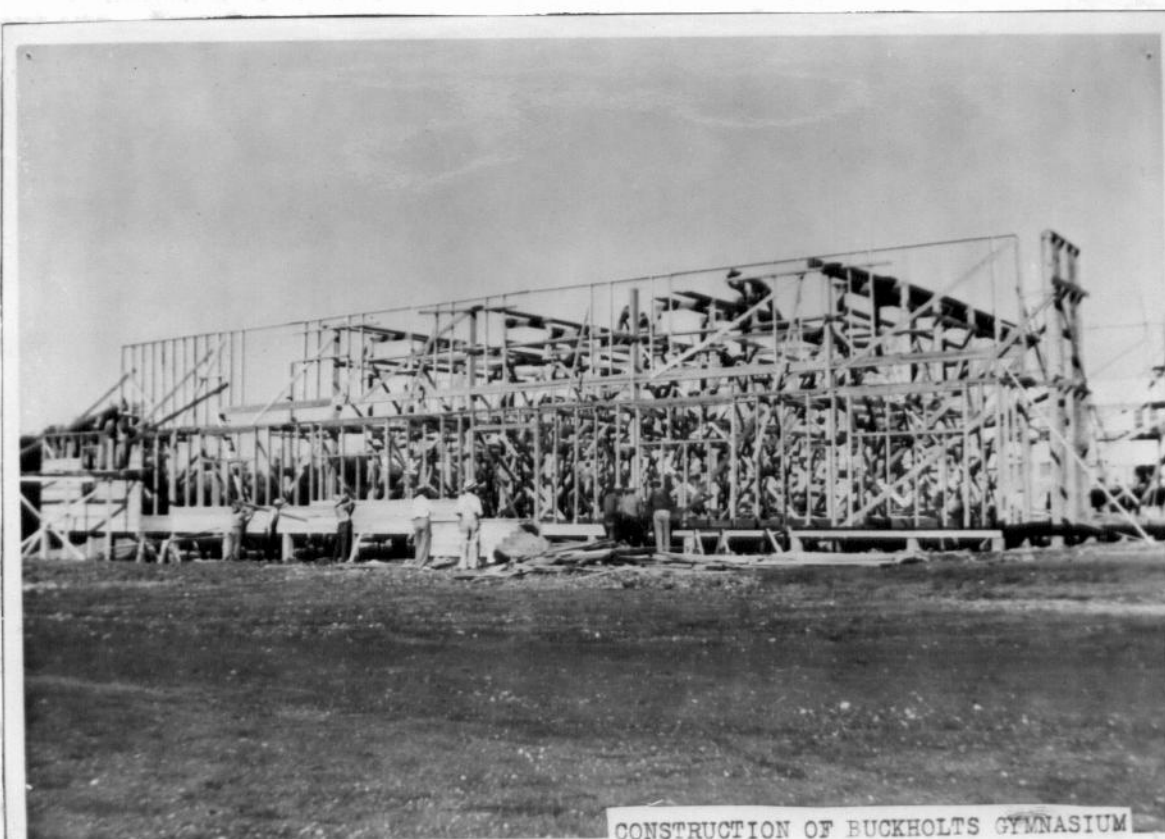
One outstanding project constructed by youth workers was the Villita Street Spanish Village restoration project in San Antonio. La Villita (the village) consisted of seven adobe and caliche houses at Villita and South Presa Streets in the city of San Antonio. The houses were part of the group which sheltered Ben Milam's volunteers during the first siege of San Antonio De Bexar in the year 1835, and were adjacent to the spot where the Mexican General, Martin Perfect De Cos, surrendered to the Texans. In restoring these houses, preserving them for the city, the state, and the nation for generations to come, it was proposed to use unemployed youth

⁵³Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.



CONSTRUCTION OF BEN ARNOLD SCHOOL BUILDING

Picture shows back brick wall of new school building under construction at Ben Arnold, Texas, 1937.



CONSTRUCTION OF BUCKHOLTS GYMNASIUM

Picture shows East view of new gymnasium building being built by NYA youth workers at Buckholts, Texas, 1938.

FIGURE 3

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOCAL NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION WORK PROJECTS, MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS--in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbook

in San Antonio who needed training in a craft or trade, and to aid those seeking private employment by providing work experience. Inspired by San Antonio Mayor Maury Maverick and sponsored by the city in collaboration with the Carnegie Foundation, La Villita was restored by the Youth Administration at a cost of more than \$100,000.⁵⁴ A sketch of La Villita project is given in Figure 4.

The Warm Springs Foundation hospital for crippled children, built in Palmetto State Park near Gonzales, was another significant early work project of the Texas Youth Administration. Buildings constructed included nurses quarters, treatment rooms, warm-water pools, and the central hospital. This complex provided facilities for 100 crippled children at a cost of \$26,000 and provided work for approximately 250 young men on relief.⁵⁵

Workshop projects were another important phase of the Youth Administration's local works-projects program. Initially, these workshops were established in conjunction with rural school districts to provide useful work and training for untrained youth in the local community. Those youngsters who demonstrated mechanical, carpentry, or related ability, were enrolled in the shop program. The workshop and the equipment therein were furnished by the local school district

⁵⁴La Villita, pamphlet prepared by the city of San Antonio, 1938, in Carroll Keach Scrapbooks.

⁵⁵Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.



FIGURE 4

A SKETCH OF LA VILLITA IN SAN ANTONIO

Sketch by Darlene Knippa (drawn from original plans) as given in
La Villita, pamphlet prepared by the city of San Antonio
1920 in Carroll Keach Scrapbooks.

Teachers for the shop program were furnished by the vocational division of the State Department of Education. Youth workers had the opportunity of deriving considerable knowledge and practical experience in manipulating wood-turning machines, using tools, applying paints, and using other skills connected with production of needed school equipment. Project workers built or repaired desks, filing cabinets, book shelves, chairs, and various types of recreational equipment for the school district concerned. In this program, young men received a start in a definite trade which prepared them for future employment in private industry, and school districts benefited from the services provided by these production shops.⁵⁶ Photographs showing youth at work in the model Sharp, Texas, workshop are given in Figure 5.

Shortly after Johnson was elected to Congress in 1937, his successor, Jesse Kellam, expanded the workshop program and linked it with critical defense preparations underway throughout the state. By 1940, seven shops had been built in Texas to train airplane mechanics, and two production shops which concentrated on training youth for defense work were established in Waco and Dallas. In its first year of operation, the Waco shop trained 2,000 young people in

⁵⁶Ibid.



Picture shows youth at work in Sharp, Texas, blacksmith workshop, 1937.



BEN ARNOLD YOUTHS TAKING OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Picture shows NYA youth taking oath of allegiance at Ben Arnold School, 1937.

FIGURE 5

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOCAL NYA WORK PROJECTS, MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS
Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks

defense work at a cost of approximately \$600,000 per year.⁵⁷

Resident Centers

In addition to the local works-projects program, the National Youth Administration in Texas developed numerous part-time and full-time resident training centers for the purposes of training out-of-school youth in a variety of vocational skills and providing cooperative living quarters for them. Each resident center had one or more sponsors who provided training equipment and housing for the program. The vocational division of the State Department of Education cooperated with the Youth Administration and supplied the instructional staff. Young men received classroom instruction in vocational agriculture and agricultural engineering, auto mechanics, metal and woodworking, radio repair, and electronics. Young women received commercial and clerical training. Other girls learned home economics and related trades, including cooking, sewing, mattress making, interior decorating, first aid, and other useful domestic skills. Youth enrolled in resident centers were provided part-time work by the Youth Administration to allow them to earn enough money to cover the cost of subsistence and to leave

⁵⁷Ibid.

them about ten dollars per month for their personal use. Knowledge and skills learned in the classroom or in the workshop were applied on related projects located near the center.⁵⁸ To boost the morale of those persons enrolled in the resident center, ample time was allowed for recreation and entertainment. Dances were held periodically at the various resident centers, and athletic contests were scheduled with neighboring centers where youth workers engaged in competitive sports, such as volleyball and baseball. After spending from six to twelve months in residence at the center, youth were assisted in finding employment through the guidance and placement division of the Youth Administration.⁵⁹ Photographs of youth at work and play in resident centers are given in Figures 6 and 7.

In January, 1939, seventy-five part-time training centers were in operation where approximately 1,200 youth received valuable work experience, and approximately 750 additional young people were enrolled in twelve full-time resident centers.⁶⁰ The location, the type, and the sponsors of the twelve full-time training centers of the National Youth Administration in Texas are given in Figure 8.

⁵⁸A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas, pp. 15-27.

⁵⁹Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.

⁶⁰A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas, pp. 15, 19.



Picture shows a group of NYA girls in living room of NYA resident center in Bryan, Texas (Brazos County), 1938.



MATTRESS MAKING AT CAMERON RESIDENT CENTER

PHOTO Picture shows NYA girls assisting in mattress making demonstration in Cameron, Texas, resident center (Milam County), 1938.

FIGURE 6
PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUTH IN NYA RESIDENT CENTERS
Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks



Picture shows NYA barn dance and party in Austin, Texas
(Travis County), 1937.

FIGURE 7

PHOTOGRAPH OF YOUTH IN NYA RECREATION CENTER, AUSTIN, TEXAS
Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks

<u>Location</u>	<u>Type of Center</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
1. Inks Dam Project. . . .	Building Trades.	Lower Colorado River Authority
2. Brenham	Clerical	Blinn College
3. San Marcos.	Auto Mechanics	Southwest Texas State Teachers College
4. Lubbock	Agriculture Engineering. . .	Texas Technological College
5. Woodlake.	Agriculture Conservation . .	Farm Security Administration
6. Kingsville.	Agriculture Engineering. . .	Texas College of Arts and Industries
7. Luling.	Agriculture Conservation . .	Luling Foundation Farm
8. Canyon.	Radio and Electronics. . . .	West Texas State Teachers College
9. Ranger.	Agriculture Engineering. . .	City of Ranger
10. Prairie View.	Domestic Trades.	Prairie View State Normal and Indus- trial College
11. Center Point.	Domestic Trades.	Center Point Independent School District
12. Johnson City.	Building Trades.	Pedernales Electric Cooperate

FIGURE 8

NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION RESIDENT CENTERS IN TEXAS--1939

A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas, p. 19.

In summary, the works-projects program provided work experience for thousands of youths who otherwise might have remained unemployed and idle for years or who, if employed, might have proved temporarily a liability to their first employers. At the same time it helped to supplement the income of relief families. Thousands of young people throughout the nation were given practical and useful work experience which allowed many workers to find jobs later in private industry.⁶¹ Fund allocations and employment statistics for the National Youth Administration works-projects program in Texas for the year 1937-1938 are given in Table III.

The Vocational Guidance and Placement Program

The vocational guidance and placement program of the National Youth Administration in Texas was established in March, 1936, and was referred to as the Junior Placement Service. It was designed primarily to give vocational guidance to, and to provide a placement service for, the vast number of unemployed youth who were out of school. Eligibility for registration, interviewing, counseling, and placement services was limited to unemployed youth sixteen to twenty-four years of age.⁶² The Youth Administration

⁶¹National Youth Administration Report, pp. 97-98.

⁶²Vara L. McKaye, "A Study of the Work of the National Youth Administration in the Fields of Guidance and Placement and of College Aid," (unpublished Master's Thesis), p. 33.

TEXAS

<u>Fund Allocations for:</u>	<u>Work Projects</u>
1935-1936.	\$ 654,893.17
1936-1937.	1,020,843.00
1937-1938.	1,037,359.00
<u>Grand Total.</u>	<u>\$2,713,095.17</u>

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT ON TEXAS YOUTH ADMINISTRATION

WORK-PROJECTS PROGRAM FOR 1937-1938

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION ON NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION WORK-PROJECTS PROGRAM IN TEXAS, 1937-1938

TABLE III

WORK-PROJECTS PROGRAM FOR 1937-1938							
Program	<u>Number of Persons</u>			Total Earnings	Average Hours Worked	Average Hourly Earnings	Average Monthly Earnings
	Total	Male	Female				
Work Projects							
Total All Persons	7,319	3,640	3,679	\$84,408	42.6	\$.271	\$11.53
Relief	7,241	3,596	3,645	77,221	41.8	.255	10.66
Non-Relief	78	44	34	7,187	115.3	.799	92.14

NYA records given in Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, A New Deal for Youth, The Story of the NYA, Appendix XII, p. 302.

supplied funds to provide personnel to staff the program with trained counselors, who functioned as members of the Texas Employment Commission. Junior placement offices were housed in the state employment service headquarters at Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio.⁶³

To assist youth, junior counselors were assigned the following duties as specified in the National Youth Administration Report:

1. Interviewing young people who apply for jobs.
2. Referring them to available jobs in private industry.
3. Placing eligible youth on work-relief projects and following up their success on these projects as a basis for placement in private industry.
4. Referring eligible youth to apprentice-training committees and Civilian Conservation Corps recruiting bureaus.
5. Advising young people as to the desirability of returning to school, and providing them with full information about available educational institutions.
6. Referring youth eligible for the NYA student-aid program to the proper awarding authorities.
7. Providing young people with information as to the available resources for training in the kinds of work they are seeking.
8. Giving information about opportunities for leisure-time activities available in the community.
9. Cooperating with all local agencies, educational and social, which deal with young people of youth age group.⁶⁴

Guidance and placement employment statistics for Texas are not available for the early period. National statistics, however, indicated that the Junior Placement Service did a remarkable job in placing thousands of youth in suitable

⁶³Ibid., p. 35.

⁶⁴National Youth Administration Report, pp. 80-81.

jobs. In the eighteen-month period ending December, 1937, over 190,000 youth registered with junior placement offices scattered throughout the country; and almost 100,000 placements were made, of which nine-tenths (93,771) were in private employment.⁶⁵ It is evident from these statistics that the junior counselors of the National Youth Administration devoted a major share of their attention to placement of youth in private industry.

The Administrator

In the spring of 1936, the Lyndon Johnsons moved into a duplex apartment located on Holly Lane on the Southwest side of Austin. Sim Gideon, then a young attorney associated with the Alvin J. Wirtz law firm, lived in the adjoining apartment. Gideon recalled that the Johnson apartment was a beehive of activity where almost every night impromptu staff meetings were held over dinners cooked by Mrs. Johnson. Even after putting in a hard day at the Littlefield Building, Johnson frequently brought his staff home for more National Youth Administration business. These meetings often lasted well into the night. What little time Johnson allowed himself for recreation in those days consisted of an occasional hand of bridge or a game

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 85-86.

of dominoes with friends. "The National Youth Administration meant everything to him."⁶⁶

The young administrator was always in a hurry to get things done, and he had little patience with inefficiency of any fashion. He doggedly kept watch over work projects scattered throughout the state by making personal inspection tours.⁶⁷ Willard Deason recently spoke of the manner in which Johnson directed youth work projects:

Johnson was not the kind of administrator that stayed in his office and directed operations through channels and tables of organization. When things did not work fast enough for him or according to his wishes, he went into the field right onto the projects and talked with the youngsters there. In this way he learned their thinking and had an opportunity to interpret first hand the National Youth Administration program to them.⁶⁸

A photograph of Lyndon Johnson and two of his assistants on an inspection tour of the just completed Blanco, Texas, High School is given in Figure 9.

Clarke Newlon, in his recent work on the President, related an incident characteristic of the manner in which Johnson reacted to haphazardly run projects:

One day the State Director drove out to Brackenridge Park, in San Antonio, to look over a project there, designed to train young men and women as athletic and recreation leaders. He found the supervisor all alone. "Where are the workers?" Johnson queried. "They're due a little later," was the reply.

⁶⁶Interview with Sim Gideon, Austin, September 29, 1966. Since 1956, Sim Gideon has served as General Manager of the Lower Colorado River Authority with headquarters in Austin.

⁶⁷Interview with Sherman Birdwell, Austin, March 14, 1967.

⁶⁸Letter from Willard Deason to the writer, April 14, 1967.



Picture shows Lyndon Johnson(center), Lee McWilliams (left), and Sherman Birdwell (right), inspecting the newly completed state office Blanco, Texas, High School--1937.

FIGURE 9. He was not only a fine

PHOTOGRAPH OF LYNDON JOHNSON,
LEE MCWILLIAMS, AND SHERMAN BIRDWELL

Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks

Johnson asked how many there were. The supervisor was vague. The Director drove back to the San Antonio office, had a few words with the District chief and returned to Austin.

After he had gone, the District man called the recreational supervisor on the phone and asked him if he had had any visitors lately. "Yes," answered the supervisor. "There was a tall man named Johnson who came by. He seemed to speak with some authority." "He speaks with enough authority that your project is closed out--and you with it."⁶⁹

On one occasion, Carrol Keach accompanied Johnson on an inspection tour of an agricultural resident center located in Woodlake. Arriving at the center, the two men stepped into one of the men's cooperative dormitories to have a look around. Keach said that he will never forget how perturbed Johnson was when he discovered how sloppy the beds were made. Johnson had the project supervisor round up the boys and then proceeded to give the young men a thirty-minute lecture on the vices of poor housekeeping and on the virtues of keeping a neatly made bed. Keach said that Johnson was always a stickler when it came to such details.⁷⁰

Besides overseeing the administrative divisions of the Youth Administration and making sure that they were functioning properly, Johnson spent much of his time out of the state office traveling across Texas to speak with college groups, high school students, and civic groups, always promoting the work of the new agency. He was not only a fine

⁶⁹Clark Newlon, L. E. J.: The Man from Johnson City, p. 65.

⁷⁰Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, February 10, 1967.

administrator, but a first-class salesman as well. In this regard, Sherman Birdwell said that Johnson had the drive and persuasive ability necessary to sway local officials and community leaders (who were often a little too conservative to coincide with the ideas of the New Deal) that the work of the National Youth Administration was worthy of their wholehearted support.⁷¹ A photograph of State Director Johnson at a National Youth Administration mayors' conference is given in Figure 10.

As youth director, Johnson was a hard worker and a persistent and aggressive leader. A man of enormous energy, he expected his staff to work with equal energy and determination. Willard Deason remembered an incident that was descriptive of Johnson at that time and probably to a large extent of his later years:

One day Lyndon and three of his supervisory people had been working in the San Antonio area inspecting projects and contacting project managers. They had been going at a rather high speed since early in the morning. Between 2:00 and 3:00 in the afternoon, not having had lunch, one of the persons riding in the back (Lyndon was driving), in a stage whisper calculated to be heard up front, remarked to the fellow next to him; "Maybe we are not going to get to eat lunch today." Without visible response, Lyndon wheeled into the next drive-in restaurant and when the waitress approached, he immediately barked out; "Eight hamburgers, four bottles of milk, and make it in a hurry." Even today, things like stopping for lunch are inconsequential to him when there is work to be done.⁷²

⁷¹Interview with Sherman Birdwell, Austin, November 8, 1966.

⁷²Letter from Willard Deason to the writer, April 14, 1967.



Picture shows Max Starkey, a Director of the Lower Colorado River Authority, and Sherman Birdwell looking over the shoulder of State Director Johnson (center). James Lederer of Universal Newsreel is standing beside camera in the right hand corner of picture.

FIGURE 10

PHOTOGRAPH OF NYA MAYORS' CONFERENCE, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks

By all accounts, State Director Johnson was an exceptionally fine administrator. In launching Roosevelt's new experimental program for youth, he demonstrated flexibility in adopting work programs that would best help the young people of his state; and in selecting his key staff members, Johnson chose men who were equally as dedicated to the task at hand as he was--men whom he trusted to get the job done. But, ultimately, it was Johnson's enthusiasm and great energy that made the Texas youth program successful. Willard Deason recently commended Johnson by saying:

Due to his untiring efforts, zeal, long hours of work, and determination, the Texas program got "under way" faster than it did in many of the other states. Lyndon B. Johnson was considered by many people as the outstanding State Director in connection with the early days of the National Youth Administration.⁷³

Eighteen months after the youth program began, Aubrey Williams, National Youth Director, singled out Johnson as one of the outstanding State Directors in the nation and cited the Texas program as a model for other state organizations to follow.⁷⁴ Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who helped to inspire the creation of the youth program, also congratulated Johnson for his efforts when she came to Austin in the spring of 1937 to find out for herself how the young Texan conducted his program.⁷⁵

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Austin American, March 1, 1937, p. 1.

⁷⁵Newspaper clippings in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks.

From the inception of the National Youth Administration until March, 1941, less than a year before the program was terminated, approximately \$175,000,000 was disbursed nationally to almost 2,500,000 students to permit them to continue their education; and approximately \$540,000,000 was paid for the work of about 2,650,000 youngsters for out-of-school work projects.⁷⁶ Better than 5,000,000 young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five were given part-time work which enabled them to continue in school or to receive work experience of a practical nature. Because of this youth program, young people gained their self-respect and were given new hope for the future.

In his recent work on the President, Booth Mooney reported a statement by Johnson in which he recalled his exciting days with the Texas youth program:

Those were great days. Those kids came into the units as we established them railing at fortune and circumstance and cowed by the economic conditions that had left them without jobs or the hope of jobs. After they came to us, their scowls were changed to smiles.

For a time after we began to work I tried to be the first person on the job every morning, but I found that I had just set up a contest. They were as anxious to show me that all they had lacked was the opportunity as I was anxious to have them show it. Skills grew with practice. Opportunities came to them as they perfected these skills.

If the Roosevelt Administration hadn't done anything else, its contribution to the young people of the

⁷⁶Lewis L. Lorwin, Youth Work Programs: Problems and Policies, p. 417.

nation through the National Youth Administration would have justified it as a great administration.⁷⁷

When Johnson went to Congress as a Representative from the Tenth Congressional District of Texas, he continued to speak out forcefully for the National Youth Administration. In an address made from the floor of the House of Representatives on May 31, 1939, Congressman Johnson urged his colleagues to approve President Roosevelt's recommendation for an increase in the National Youth Administration appropriation for 1940, from \$75,000,000 to \$123,000,000. He said:

It is my conviction, Mr. Speaker, that no agency of the Federal Government has done more constructive work both for the present and for the future of America than the N.Y.A. . . . Had it not been for the N.Y.A. during the last four years thousands of American boys and girls never could have seen the inside of a high school or college. They would have been dumped uneducated, unprepared, and untrained into a world unable to give jobs to half the experienced persons applying for them--requiring them, in fact, to live and support their families swept out in the depression.

The N.Y.A. has relieved the pressure upon our overtaxed labor market like a great dam, storing flood waters to be released in times of thirst and drought. It has kept thousands of boys and girls in high school and college, where they belonged. It has eased the emergency and insured youth the training twentieth century life demands as a requisite for success.

Those deprived of the opportunity to attend high school or college, or through with their formal education, have been allowed to earn about \$10 a month on constructive part-time work projects. Evidences of it lie across every State of the Union. It is a monument to the youth which built and which trained and learned under competent leaders and instructors while it was working.

Not one dime paid out by the N.Y.A. to boys and girls for education or on work projects has been

⁷⁷Booth Mooney, The Lyndon B. Johnson Story, pp. 33-34.

disbursed except in return for actual and useful work performed. It has not been work of gestures, but work of accomplishment. Something for nothing has not been tolerated.

During four years, under restricted appropriation, N.Y.A. officials have been aware that they were like a short-handed crew in a field white unto harvest. For every boy or girl they have been able to reach there has been another just as worthy who has had to be turned away. . . .

Mr. Speaker, I am saying what I believe to be a universal opinion in urging approval of President Roosevelt's recommendation for an increase in the N.Y.A. appropriation for 1940. . . . The N.Y.A. program should be adequately financed. It has been and will continue to be Constructive, Beneficial, American.⁷⁸

Jesse Kellam, who served as Johnson's Deputy Director, and later as Director of the National Youth Administration in Texas, recently summed up the accomplishments of the youth organization:

An evaluation of the National Youth Administration tempts one to mention the Little Chapel in the Woods at Denton, La Villita in San Antonio, a work shop here, a training program there, numerous roadside parks throughout the State and the Student Aid program. Three decades later the vantage point translates these tangible things into what then were the intangibles--and now are the educators, business and professional men and women, who, had it not been for the National Youth Administration, would have become "drop outs."

The real contribution made by the National Youth Administration involved people--not things--and the program is still paying dividends.⁷⁹

Sherman Birdwell, now Texas Employment Commissioner, recently stated that he often ran into men and women who got their training with the National Youth Administration. "For years

⁷⁸C. R., 76th Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, May 31, 1939, pp. 2238-2239.

⁷⁹Letter from Jesse Kellam to the writer, March 28, 1967.

I've been amazed at the number of secretaries and dietitians and even heads of big factories who come up to me and say they got their start in the youth program."⁸⁰

In February, 1937, after Lyndon Johnson had been at his job for eighteen months, Representative James P. Buchanan (who represented Johnson's home-congressional-district) died of a heart attack. A special election was called to choose a successor; and on February 27, Johnson resigned his \$4000-a-year-job and entered the race.⁸¹

The National Youth Administration experience had been one of the most rewarding jobs of his life: it combined the functions of a teacher, an administrator, and a politician. But Johnson's desire to run for political office had long lain dormant in his mind, perhaps since his boyhood days. Johnson had often heard from his parents that on the day of his birth, his grandfather boasted to the neighbors that "a United States Senator was born today, my grandson."⁸² In his youth, as a boy of the Texas Hill Country, Johnson had spoken to friends and neighbors about his desire to enter politics. Two former residents of the little town of Henly (located in the northern part of Hays County, only a short distance from Johnson's home), John McCarty and Jesse

⁸⁰New York Times, December 1, 1964, Sec. 1, p. 18.

⁸¹Austin American, March 1, 1937, p. 1.

⁸²William C. Pool, et al., Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years, p. 50.

Haywood, remember young Johnson at age twelve or thirteen walking into the Henly country store boasting that he very well could become President if given half-a-chance. Jesse Haywood said that "none of us folks around Henly took him too seriously, but at the same time we figured Sam's boy had as good a chance of becoming President as anyone else's son."⁸³ Robert Jackson recently said that he suspected Johnson was taking the National Youth Administration job back in Texas so he could eventually run for office:

Johnson never came right out and said he wanted to run for office, but we all knew he did. As Kleberg's secretary he was forever saying; "If I were a congressman I would vote for this bill," and "if I were a member of this committee I would handle the problem this way." None of us congressional aides were surprised to hear that Lyndon had entered the race for Congress in 1937."⁸⁴

In serving the young people of his state, Johnson had built for himself a strong and lasting foundation of political strength. There were thousands of young men and women who called him "Lyn" and regarded him as the one man most responsible for their fresh start in life. During his brief tenure as State Director, Johnson had made many new friends and permanently renewed old friendships as well. He had met literally hundreds of top state officials, including Governor James V. Allred; and in his travel throughout the state he

⁸³Interview with Jesse Haywood, May 16, 1966, San Antonio; interview with John McCarty, San Marcos, November 22, 1966.

⁸⁴Interview with Robert M. Jackson, Corpus Christi, February 10, 1967.

had enlisted the support of college presidents, school superintendents and principals, municipal and county officials, and members of the business community--all of whom helped to make the Texas youth project one of the finest in the nation. It was this band of people, representing all walks of life, who formed the human base from which Johnson emerged as an elected politician, forever leaving his old role as a political appointee.⁸⁵

⁸⁵Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, February 10, 1967.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN

Introduction to the 1937 Special Election, Tenth Congressional District of Texas

Located approximately in Southeast-Central Texas, the Tenth Congressional District comprised ten counties in 1937: Blanco, Burnet, Hays, Travis, Williamson, Burleson, Bastrop, Washington, Lee, and Caldwell.¹ A map showing the counties of the Tenth Congressional District is given in Figure 11. Two natural regions, the Texas Hill Country and the Coastal Plain, transversed the Tenth District from north to south to divide it generally into hilly ranch country in the western one-quarter, and the agricultural plains in the eastern three-quarters. Austin, the capital of Texas, located near the geographical center of the district, was the leading trading city of this ten-county area.

The Tenth District was distinctly rural in 1937. With the exception of Austin (population 53,120 in 1930), there was not a single community with a population of more than

¹Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide, 1936, p. 324. In 1933, the Texas legislature reapportioned the state on the basis of the 1930 census. Blanco County of the Fourteenth District and Burnet County of the Seventeenth District were added to the Tenth District. Austin County, formerly in the Tenth District, was placed in the Ninth District.

Bastrop
Blanco
Burleson
Burnet
Caldwell

Hays
Lee
Travis
Washington
Williamson

TEXAS

(21 districts)



FIGURE 11

COUNTIES IN THE TENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS

Official Congressional Directory, 74th Congress, 1st Session,
1936, p. 671.

8,000 people.² Most of the people lived on farms or in small towns, and they depended chiefly on agriculture for their livelihood. The national and racial mixture of the district, including Germans, Poles, Wends, Swedes, Bohemians, Negroes, and Latins, but dominated by the Anglo culture brought from the Old South, represented a typical cross-section of the state's greater population.³

Tenth-District politics in the mid-1930's centered on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislative program. After experiencing the adverse effects of the Great Depression, this traditionally conservative Democratic constituency had shown considerable willingness to accept Roosevelt's relief and reform measures. Nearly all of the people in the Tenth District, whether farmers or small town merchants or college students or youngsters looking for work, had benefited from the actions of the federal government. In the 1936 Presidential election, Roosevelt carried the district by an impressive nine-to-one majority over his Republican opponent, Alfred M. Landon.⁴

The most important long-range effect of the New Deal on the Tenth District had been the construction of a series of dams designed to prevent flooding on the Colorado River as

²Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State, pp. 340-357.

³Ibid.

⁴Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide, 1936, p. 289.

it flowed down through the rugged hill country and across the coastal plain to the Gulf of Mexico. These dams were constructed not only to remove the threat of flood but also to provide for the generation of hydro-electric power so urgently needed by the rural farm families of Central Texas. Tenth-District Congressman James P. Buchanan and his colleague from the neighboring Ninth District, Representative J. J. Mansfield, had been chiefly responsible for obtaining the initial twenty-million-dollar federal appropriation for this highly significant river project, which was administered by the Lower Colorado River Authority.⁵ When Buchanan died of a heart attack on February 22, 1937, after serving his district for twenty-four years, the Colorado dams program was in its first construction stage. With his death, Tenth-District constituents had been deeply concerned that Buchanan's successor, who would be chosen in a special election, be sufficiently competent and familiar enough with Washington New Deal politics to insure completion of the late Congressman's unfinished work.⁶

⁵Years of Progress at the Lower Colorado River Authority, L.C.R.A. publication, issued in 1965, pp. 3-5. Organized as a conservation and reclamation district of the State of Texas and created by a special act of the Texas Legislature in 1934, the L.C.R.A. launched the Colorado River project in February, 1936.

⁶Interview with Max C. Smith, San Marcos, July 17, 1966. Mr. Smith, now Hays County Judge, was a member of the Texas Legislature at the time the L.C.R.A. was created by that body.

The Constitution of the United States gave the governor of Texas power to call a special election to fill vacancies in the House of Representatives; and Texas law provided that if Congress should be in session at the time of the vacancy, the special election should be held not less than twenty nor more than sixty days after the vacancy occurred.⁷ On March 5, 1937, Governor James V. Allred announced that a "sudden-death" election would be held on April 10, the candidate having the highest number of votes to be declared the winner.⁸

National as well as local significance was attached to this election due to the approaching congressional showdown on President Roosevelt's proposed Supreme Court revision bill, designed to enlarge the membership of the Court. Even though the Republicans were greatly outnumbered in Congress in 1937, they held a majority of justices on the Supreme Court. The five Republican judges, conservative and generally opposed to the far-reaching and revolutionary legislation of that period, had declared several New Deal enactments unconstitutional; and by the end of 1936, they threatened to cast out a number of other relief and recovery laws.⁹ Determined to

⁷ Austin Statesman, March 3, 1937, p. 2.

⁸ Ibid., March 5, 1937, p. 1.

⁹ C. Dwight Dorrough, Mr. Sam, pp. 260-261. The two most significant New Deal enactments struck down by the High Court during this period were the National Recovery Act and the Agriculture Adjustment Act.

break this Republican stop-gap, President Roosevelt introduced to Congress his Supreme Court "packing" bill in January, 1937. With six of the nine Supreme Court justices over seventy years of age, the President's bill called for the appointment of "one new judge, but not more than six for every justice who, having passed the age of seventy and served for ten years, failed to retire."¹⁰

The Supreme Court "packing" plan sparked controversy throughout the country, with particularly sharp repercussions in Texas. Many of the President's ardent Texas supporters deserted him on this issue; Vice President Garner, Senator Tom Connally, and other influential members of the Texas delegation opposed the measure.¹¹ Throughout the 1937 Texas election campaign, the Court question had been vigorously debated in both Houses of Congress and in the Texas Legislature. Certain events which occurred during the early weeks of the Texas campaign forced the Court question forward as the predominant campaign issue.

Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of Interior, addressed a joint session of the Texas Legislature late in February, lashing the Court as "obstructive to the will of the American people and their progress." Ickes' speech had been directed to members of a Texas Senate who had disapproved the

¹⁰Ibid., p. 261.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 261-262.

President's Court plan by resolution earlier in the month, having been the first legislative body in the country to do so. Members of the Texas House of Representatives, who had vigorously debated the Court question and were reportedly divided on the issue, had not formally voiced an opinion on the matter.¹²

Ickes' Austin address stirred controversy with regard to the Court question and prompted a wave of editorial comment in several Texas newspapers of wide circulation. Late in February the San Antonio Express went on record as opposed to the Court plan as did the Dallas Morning News and the Houston Post. Two Texas dailies, however, were vociferous in support of the President's Court plan: the Houston Chronicle, owned and operated by millionaire-oil-man Jesse Jones, and the Austin American-Statesman.¹³

In an editorial of February 28, the Austin American emphatically endorsed Roosevelt's New Deal program and pointed to the fact that passage of his Court measure was imperative if the New Deal was to continue unobstructed. The editor suggested that the oncoming special election would be a testing-ground for this national issue:

The next few weeks will see the Tenth Congressional District thrust forward as a testing-ground for a national issue, that issue will be: President Roosevelt or the Supreme Court. People of the nation spoke last

¹²Austin Statesman, February 20, 1937, p. 1.

¹³Texas Democrat (Austin), March 1, 1937, p. 3.

November. Their emphatic answer to pyramided threats against the integrity of the president was an overwhelming endorsement of his policies. Voters of this district will have the first privilege of delivering another endorsement of President Roosevelt in the election of a successor to the late Congressman James P. Buchanan.

The name "Roosevelt" in this national drama centering in Central Texas is the battle flag of one side. With all deference to a venerable institution, the name "Supreme Court" is only a label for the other side. These two banners will be carried up and down the political arena of a Texas district, with the New Deal hanging in the balance.

Within a few months the congressional roll will be called in Washington. In terms of the nation's future, it will be the most important question settled since the Civil War was declared. The answer of this district in its election will confront those now in the Congress who are accountable to the voters. . . .

. . . A successor must be chosen to a beloved servant, Congressman Buchanan. His memory lives on, not only in the minds of people, but in the enduring monument which bears his name--Buchanan Dam. This product of his devoted labor, is, too, a product of the president's program now under fire. The Tenth District should send to Washington only one in sympathy with such achievements, and who will carry on in the spirit of the two men, Roosevelt and Buchanan.¹⁴

The day following this editorial, Lyndon B. Johnson announced to the press that he was in the race for Congress "as a New Deal candidate." Johnson stated at the outset of his campaign that he would support Roosevelt on all issues, including the President's bill to "unpack" the Supreme Court.¹⁵

It was shortly after Johnson had filed for office that Senator Tom Connally addressed a joint session of the Texas

¹⁴Austin American-Statesman, February 28, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁵San Marcos Daily News, March 1, 1937, p. 1.

Legislature, in answer to Secretary of Interior Ickes' speech. Connally declared that he opposed the Court re-organization plan and linked by innuendo Roosevelt's motives for proposing such a plan with those of "a Hitler, a Stalin, a Mussolini." He called attention to conditions in Russia (January, 1937) and stated: "Only a few weeks ago we heard the rattle of musketry from over the seas, where citizens were lined up against the wall and shot. They don't have a Supreme Court in Russia." The Senator continued by saying: "Real liberalism means the rule of law and constitutional processes. Our Court must be defended in this dark hour."¹⁶

Connally's speech clearly forced the Court issue into the limelight of public discussion among the voters of the Tenth District; and on March 4, Polk Shelton, a talented and well-known Austin lawyer, announced for Congress in strong opposition to the President's Court bill.¹⁷ When two extremist candidates for-and-against the President's Court plan announced their candidacy early in the contest, national political observers considered the 1937 Texas special election to be the first plebisite on the Court question. They anxiously awaited the outcome of this political contest seated deep in Central Texas.

¹⁶Austin American, March 3, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁷Ibid., March 4, 1937, p. 1.

The Candidates

Speculation in regard to the identity of the next congressman began almost as soon as news of Buchanan's death had reached Texas. As early as February 28, the press reported that Mrs. James P. Buchanan had considered entering the race to fill out her husband's twenty-two month unexpired term. Friends close to the Buchanan family stated that the late Congressman's wife was familiar with the problems of the Tenth District and would be qualified to represent all of the people of the district in the fine Buchanan tradition.¹⁸ Mrs. Buchanan held the strategic position during the first week of the campaign by blocking definite commitments of those who aspired to enter the race. Most of the potential candidates delayed their announcements until March 3, at which time Mrs. Buchanan officially declined to seek her husband's seat in Congress.¹⁹

The names of several prominent men on the Texas political scene were mentioned as possible contestants late in February. The press reported that former Governor James "Pa" Ferguson seriously considered entering the contest for Congress. Ferguson suggested that if the voters liked the things he stood for, they should drop him a post card or letter, giving him their views on current problems of state

¹⁸ Austin American-Statesman, February 28, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁹ Austin American, March 4, 1937, p. 1.

and the congressional race. Anticipating that a large number of candidates would file and that a primary would not be held, Ferguson said, "Our crowd can put it over."²⁰ But on March 10, the former Texas governor announced that he did not want to run and gave no reason for his decision. He said that he and his wife would consider carefully the field and try to pick out the candidate who would do the least harm in Washington.²¹

Among those residents of the Tenth District listed as possible aspirants by the press but who had not given indications of preparing to announce were Fred Blundell, Lockhart district attorney; State Senator Albert Stone of Brenham; D. B. Wood, Williamson County district attorney; former state representative T. J. Dunlap, San Marcos; B. P. Matocha of Austin, former secretary of state in the James E. Ferguson administration; ex-governor Dan Moody of Austin; T. H. McGregor, Austin Attorney; E. H. Lawhon, Taylor attorney; Dr. Robert H. Montgomery, professor of economics at the University of Texas; and Tom Miller, Austin mayor.²² These prospective contestants, however, did not file their names for office before the March 10 deadline, and as the campaign progressed their support was divided among the officially announced candidates.

²⁰ Austin Daily Dispatch, March 1, 1937, p. 2.

²¹ Austin American, March 10, 1937, p. 2.

²² Austin American-Statesman, February 28, 1937, pp. 1-4.

During the first ten days of March a large field of contestants filed for Congress. According to the Texas special-congressional-election law of 1925, candidates could file either with the secretary of state's office or with the county clerk in each county of the district. For filing through the secretary of state's office, a petition signed by five-hundred qualified voters was required. No petition was required for filing with the county clerks.²³ The following candidates filed their names with the secretary of state, and they were printed on the official ballot: C. N. Avery, Polk Shelton, Lyndon B. Johnson, Ayres K. Ross, Houghton Brownlee, Sam V. Stone. With the exception of Ayres K. Ross, who announced as a Townsendite candidate, all of the above-mentioned contestants said they were Democrats. Two other Democrats filed their names in the county clerk's office: Merton Harris, in Bastrop County; Edwin Waller, III, in Hays County. One member of the Republican Party filed with the Travis County clerk: Stanley S. Smith. There were two Democratic contestants who announced their candidacies early in the contest but withdrew in time to prevent their names from appearing on the ticket: C. F. Richards and R. W. Bowers.

It was generally accepted that there were six "major" candidates: Avery, Shelton, Johnson, Brownlee, Stone, and Harris. Their previous political records will be sketched

²³Austin American, March 10, 1937, p. 5.

in the order of their entry into the contest. Available information will then be given concerning the "minor" candidates: Waller, Ross, Smith, Richards, and Bowers.

Lyndon B. Johnson

Lyndon B. Johnson, first of the big-six candidates to file for Congress, resigned his position as State Director of the National Youth Administration in Texas late in February and formally announced for office on March 1. His decision to enter the 1937 special election hinged on several key considerations.

Alvin J. Wirtz of Austin, chief legal counselor for the Lower Colorado River Authority and a former state senator, was the first person to talk with Johnson about his candidacy. Wirtz met Lyndon Johnson when he was employed as Kleberg's secretary. When Johnson came to Texas to organize the National Youth Administration, he named Wirtz chairman of the state youth advisory board. From this vantage point Wirtz had the opportunity to witness Johnson's administrative ability in connection with the youth program, and on frequent occasions the two men had conferred on political matters as well. Shortly after Congressman Buchanan's death, Wirtz urged the State Director to enter the congressional race. He had been particularly anxious to guide the Lower Colorado River project to its completion without delay because of lack of federal funds and felt that Lyndon Johnson would be highly competent to represent the Tenth District in this

capacity. Wirtz told Johnson that he would give him full support if he decided to run for office. He warned Johnson, however, that due to his brief residence in the district and because he would in all probability face strong opposition in the oncoming election his chances of winning the contest could not be predicted with any degree of certainty.²⁴

After listening to Wirtz's words of both encouragement and caution, Johnson went to speak with Governor Allred at the State Capitol. Carroll Keach, one of Johnson's close Washington friends who had returned to Texas by this time, accompanied Johnson on this visit. Keach recalled that when Johnson told the Governor of his desire to enter the race, Allred immediately responded by donning Johnson with his big statson hat with the words, "Go after it, my boy." As Governor, Allred was not able to endorse officially Johnson's candidacy with so much prominent Democrats in the race. But according to Keach, Johnson had the Governor's full support; and as the campaign progressed members of the Liquor Control Board and other Allred appointees openly supported the Johnson ticket.²⁵

Shortly after his conversation with Allred, Johnson went to see his close friend and political advisor, Professor Robert Montgomery, to seek his endorsement. Montgomery, who

²⁴Interview with Sam Fore, Jr., Floresville, October 13, 1965.

²⁵Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, October 10, 1966.

had seriously considered entering the contest himself, having had the support of San Antonio Mayor Maury Maverick and other influential New Dealers both in Texas and in Washington, recalled Johnson's visit. Montgomery said that when Johnson darted in to tell him he had decided to make the race, he immediately told Johnson that he had been giving the matter a great deal of thought himself. "Lyndon turned white as a ghost," Montgomery said. Later, Montgomery told Johnson that he and Mrs. Montgomery had talked the matter out and decided that it would be best for him to stay out of politics at this time. Johnson was relieved to hear both this news and that Montgomery would support his candidacy wholeheartedly.²⁶

By this time, Lyndon Johnson had undoubtedly decided to enter the 1937 special election, although the means by which his campaign was to be financed still remained an open question. Dan Quill, now San Antonio Postmaster, who had actively supported Johnson in the 1937 special congressional election, recalled that Johnson's father-in-law, T. J. Taylor of Karnack, contributed a sizable sum of money to the Johnson campaign about the time the young candidate announced for office. Quill said that this initial contribution had been sufficient only to pay for organization expenses and that as

²⁶Interview with Robert H. Montgomery, San Marcos, October 18, 1966.

the campaign progressed, the Johnson campaign was financed by smaller donations from friends and supporters.²⁷

On the night of February 28, Johnson informally announced his candidacy to friends and supporters who had gathered at the Johnson apartment located on Holly Lane in Austin. Among those supporters present for that momentous occasion were Alvin Wirtz, Sam Fore, Wilton Woods, Carroll Keach, Tom Crider and Otis McCarty (two of Johnson's close boyhood friends from Blanco County), Sherman Birdwell, Willard Deason, and other members of the Texas youth program.²⁸ To kick-off Johnson's campaign, these supporters contributed what money they could afford, and Otis McCarty even donated his trust deer rifle, undoubtedly a terrific sacrifice for this loyal hill-country supporter.²⁹

On March 1, Johnson released a formal statement to the press announcing his candidacy. He said:

I am impelled to run for office because I believe the paramount issue of this campaign should be the issue which is most vital to the welfare of the people; that is, whether the president shall be sustained in his program for readjustment of our judicial system. I have always been a supporter of President Roosevelt and I am wholeheartedly in favor of his present plan,

²⁷Interview with Dan Quill, San Antonio, July 27, 1966.

²⁸Interview with Sam Fore, Jr., Floresville, October 13, 1965.

²⁹Interview with John McCarty, San Marcos, November 22, 1966.

including an increase in the membership of the supreme court.³⁰

In his opening statement, Johnson termed himself a progressive and asked for a mandate for the continuance of Roosevelt's entire program. He stressed the fact that he had lived in many of the counties of the district, having worked as a laborer on the highways while finding time to educate himself at Southwest Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos. Johnson stated that he would discuss fully Roosevelt's Supreme Court revision plan in San Marcos where he would open his campaign on March 5.³¹

Johnson joined with his key supporters in setting up campaign headquarters on the mezzanine of the Stephen F. Austin Hotel during the first week in March. Alvin Wirtz agreed to write Johnson's speeches and to serve as general coordinator of his campaign. Claude Wilde of Austin, Jimmy Allred's former campaign manager, and Ray Lee, former public relations director for the National Youth Administration in Texas, were designated campaign managers.³²

Lyndon Johnson opened his campaign in San Marcos at the Southwest Texas State Teachers College auditorium on March 5 before many of his opponents had announced their candidacies.

³⁰ Austin American, March 1, 1937, pp. 1-2.

³¹ Ibid., p. 2.

³² Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, February 10, 1967; interview with Sam Fore, Jr., Floresville, October 13, 1965.

Hays County Judge Will Burnett introduced the young twenty-eight-year-old candidate to more than seven-hundred interested constituents, including Johnson's father and mother, who had journeyed to San Marcos from Johnson City to hear their son kick-off his campaign. At the outset of this speech, Johnson declared his stand on the most controversial issue of that period:

I don't hesitate to tell you at the very outset that I favor the president's proposal to "unpack" the supreme court and return the government to the people. I am willing that this question be settled as a case between the president and the people on the one side and the supreme court and vested interests on the other. That is the whole case.

The only thing that stands in the way of the successful completion of the Colorado River project and like projects on the Brazos and Blanco Rivers is the supreme court. I am informed that there are 100 projects of the public works administration which involve, as do these projects, the generation and distribution of hydro-electric energy. These projects have been tied up by injunction in the federal courts awaiting decision by the supreme court on the constitutionality of the public works administration. . . .

In answer to the charge that President Roosevelt had tried to dictate the Court's actions, Johnson said, "I say to you that the real dictatorship lies in the hands of one member of the Supreme Court when it renders a five-to-four decision on a Constitutional issue." The candidate said that his opponents in the race had been inconsistent, for they had declared themselves favorable to the Colorado River project yet had taken a strong stand against changing the membership of the Supreme Court. While speaking over radio station WOAI, San Antonio, during part of his address, Johnson hammered further

criticism at the Supreme Court, lamenting the fact that the Court's decision to invalidate the Agricultural Adjustment Act had cost Hays County farmers \$80,000 in much needed revenue. He concluded his San Marcos address by stating his challenge to the voters:

I believe the hungry should be fed; I believe that jobs should be furnished the unemployed; I believe that the home of the farmer and the city dweller should be saved from the greedy grasp of foreclosing mortgages; I believe that agriculture should be put on parity with industry; I believe that the people of this country are behind the president in his effort to bring all this about. If the people of this district are for bettering the lot of the common man; if the people of this district want to run their government rather than have a dollar man run it for them; if the people of this district want to support Roosevelt on his most vital issue; then, I want to be your Congressman. But if the people of this district don't want to support Roosevelt, I'll be content to let some corporation lawyer or lobbyist represent you.³³

C. N. Avery

C. N. Avery, age fifty-nine, was the second major candidate to enter the race for Congress. Avery came to Texas from Alabama in 1899, having resided in Austin since 1906. His father, C. N. Avery, Sr., served four years in the Alabama Legislature and was also appointed a member of the World Peace Conference in 1912 by Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan.

Avery engaged in a variety of vocations while in Texas, including life insurance, merchandising, ice manufacturing,

³³San Marcos Daily News, March 6, 1937, pp. 1-2.

rock quarrying, and the carbon-black industry. He served four years as State Highway Commissioner in the William Pettus Hobby Administration and later served as Austin Water and Power Commissioner. In 1933, Avery was appointed special Washington advisor to Congressman James P. Buchanan, whom he had previously served for twenty-five years as campaign manager. While in the service of Buchanan, Avery served as Vice-President of the Texas Quarries Corporation of Austin.³⁴

Avery announced for Congress on March 3, a few hours after Mrs. J. P. Buchanan declined to enter the contest. He had been mentioned by many persons as a formidable candidate because of his close Washington association with the late Congressman Buchanan. In his brief press statement announcing his candidacy, Avery stated: "My twenty-five years in the service of Mr. Buchanan has given me a keen appreciation of all his unfinished plans and ideas. Thus equipped, I should be the logical man to carry out the work he instituted."³⁵

Avery formally opened his campaign for Congress on March 8 in an address to a small crowd of some 125 farmers in a dimly-lit grocery store at the Cedar Creek community, located twenty miles southeast of Austin. On the day of his Cedar Creek address, Avery had motored throughout Travis, Bastrop, and Lee

³⁴"Biographical Sketch of C. N. Avery, Jr.," Austin American-Statesman, March 7, 1937, p. 4.

³⁵Austin American, March 4, 1937, p. 2.

counties, conferring with friends and trying to decide whether to make his opening address at Taylor, his former home, or Brenham, home of the late Congressman Buchanan. Toward nightfall on the way back to Austin, a side trip to Cedar Creek was decided upon. Arriving, the candidate found the group of farmers assembled in Mrs. Howard Smith's cross-roads store for the purpose of electing a school-board member. Turning to his campaign manager Robert Lyles of Austin, Avery said: "Boys, the question has been decided; I'll open my campaign right here. We can let the ballyhoo go." Avery made a speech lasting about twenty-five minutes which evoked spontaneous applause. He first told the farmers why he had decided to run for Congress:

I have come before you to tell you why I am in the congressional race. About a month-and-a-half ago Mr. Buchanan told me I was the only man in this district qualified to carry on his work. He told me he was a sick man, that he believed the end was near. He said, "the New Deal program started by President Roosevelt may not be what you would like it to be in all respects, but it marks the first time in this country's history that anything from a national standpoint has been done for the farmers." Congressman Buchanan got through the first appropriation to help the farmer, and I helped him shape this and other legislation in the five years I was with him in Washington. I was with him in Washington and I believe I know what the farmers and cattlemen are up against. We need to pay more attention to the people who give us our bread and meat. That is the program of the president, a program Mr. Buchanan followed, and one I will follow.

Avery gave scant attention to the President's Court plan in his first speech, saying only, "I will not indulge in political breast-beating and eyeball-rolling over the President's plans, although I will go along with the President if the

Court issue is still paramount when the election is over." Avery then briefly outlined his platform to the Cedar Creek crowd. He emphasized the need for governmental economy, reduction of taxes, and rapid completion of the Colorado River program; and he said he was wholeheartedly in support of the President's social security program for the elderly. Avery indicated, however, that he favored the elimination of all emergency governmental programs as soon as they were no longer needed.³⁶

Polk Shelton

Polk Shelton, the third major candidate to announce for Congress, was born in Austin, Texas, in 1900. His grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Greer, settled in Hays County, near Dripping Springs, immediately after the Civil War; they were among the first pioneer families of that community. Shelton was educated in the Austin public schools; and after graduating from high school, he answered the call to colors and enlisted in the United States Navy at age seventeen. After serving on the Destroyer, U.S.S. Mug-Ford, for seventeen months during the First World War, Shelton enrolled at Southwest Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos. Two years later he entered the University of Texas, and finally

³⁶Bastrop Advertiser, March 12, 1937, pp. 1-2.

took his law degree at Cumberland University, located in Lebanon, Tennessee.

Shelton returned to Texas after graduation and organized a law firm in Austin with his brother, Emmett Shelton. He was appointed Assistant District Attorney of Travis County in 1930 and served in that position for two years, losing only four cases while prosecuting. The well-known criminal lawyer served also as Democratic committeeman of the Tenth Congressional District during the mid-1930's and was a prominent leader in the American Legion. He served as vice-commander of the Texas Department, American Legion, and later as judge advocate of the State Legion. Shelton was the only disabled war veteran in the congressional race. He had been active in the Texas National Guard, having served in the grades from second lieutenant to major.³⁷

Polk Shelton announced briefly on March 4 that he would be a candidate and would open his campaign at Taylor later in the week. He stated that he would run on a strong platform opposing the President's Court "stacking" plan and said that he had established campaign headquarters in Austin under the management of Henry Brooks, prominent Austin attorney, and Elbert Hooper, Governor Allred's former campaign aide.³⁸

³⁷"Biographical Sketch of Polk Shelton," Austin American-Statesman, March 14, 1937, pp. 1, 4.

³⁸Austin American, March 5, 1937, p. 1.

In his opening speech, held on the public square in Taylor, Shelton was met by a crowd of several hundred who cheered him throughout his speech, a part of which was made in light rain. Calvin Hughes of Bluff Springs and James A. Patton of Oak Hill, confederate soldiers, sat upon the speakers' platform with members of Shelton's Travis County delegation. Before introducing the candidate, Austin District Judge Harry Holan stated:

If you prefer a Mussolini or a Hitler or a Stalin, you may have it; but I'll take the United States and its constitution. Without the constitution there is no curb to political power or oppression. Without the constitution you can't have the churches of your choice, or the schools you prefer. A vote for Polk Shelton will assure the preservation of your constitution and your supreme court.

Opening his speech, Shelton stated his position with regard to the Court question:

I am opposed to the Court "stacking" plan, because I do not believe the executive power should make the judicial power subservient to its will. Such a course would do violence to the constitution, the great document under which this has become the greatest and most progressive nation on earth. If this problem cannot be effectively solved by the legislature within the constitution, then we shall seek such clarifying amendments necessary to remedy the problem.

In declaring his opposition to the President's Court bill, Shelton termed the Supreme Court "the lone sentinel of real democracy." He said he stood on the National Democratic Platform and vowed never to be a "yes-man congressman in order to vote yes-man justices on our supreme court." Shelton ridiculed "me-too" and "rubber-stamp" candidates

who promised to support the President. He said: "I yield to none in admiration for President Roosevelt; but the president should not want to assume the onerous burden of telling a congressman from the Tenth District what he should do to properly represent his constituents."

Turning to domestic issues, Shelton recited a list of non-controversial issues on which most of the other candidates had taken a similar stand. He promised to work for the completion of public-power projects, such as the Colorado River flood control and electrification program, and said he favored the continuation of Roosevelt's farm, housing, and social security programs. Shelton closed his address by briefly mentioning his stand on the possibility of America's entry into a second world war: "I hate war. I love peace. If war comes, I will demand that conscription shall be extended to every phase of industry, business, and finance."³⁹

Houghton Brownlee

Houghton Brownlee of Austin was the fourth major candidate to announce for office. A forty-nine-year-old native of Burnet County, Brownlee had lived in the Tenth District his entire life. He attended Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas, where he graduated from the law department in 1909. Soon after completing his formal education,

³⁹Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), March 19, 1937, pp. 1-2.

Brownlee opened law offices in Austin, where he practiced for many years. He held extensive farm and ranching interest in Burnet County and declared himself to be the only farmer in the race for Congress.⁴⁰

In 1936, Brownlee was elected to the Texas Senate from the Twenty-first State Senatorial District (Travis, Burnet, Williamson, and Lee counties), having defeated the incumbent, John Hornsby of Austin, by a decisive margin in the July Democratic-Primary election.⁴¹ During his first few months in the Senate, Brownlee attracted attention for his efforts to bring new industry to Texas. He sponsored a bill to exempt new processing industries from county and state taxation for a seven-year period. He also authored a bill which would allow Texas war veterans to attend state schools without paying tuition. Brownlee was recognized by his colleagues in the Senate as an ardent anti-prohibitionist, strongly opposed to the continuation of legalized horse-race gambling in Texas, and against President Roosevelt's Supreme Court reorganization plan.⁴²

Brownlee announced that he would be a candidate on March 5 but delayed issuing a formal statement of his platform to the press until March 14. In this news release,

⁴⁰"Who is Houghton Brownlee" (Political Advertisement), Austin American-Statesman, March 14, 1937, p. 6.

⁴¹Ibid., April 4, 1937, p. 8.

⁴²Austin American, April 1, 1937, pp. 1, 6.

Brownlee emphasized his desire to help the tenant farmers of the Tenth District and said he was in full support of Roosevelt's farm program, including federally financed power projects for farmers. Brownlee stated that he favored the following: payment of a \$150 per month pension to persons over the age of sixty-five, legislation which would raise the price of livestock by means of a government-support plan, the establishment of a federally financed teachers-retirement fund, continuation of the President's work-relief programs, a strong national-defense program, the establishment of a game and fish preserve near Buchanan Dam, continuation of the President's labor program, and the immediate balancing of the federal budget. Brownlee pointed out that he was the only candidate in this congressional contest who had ever held an elective office and called upon the voters to send a man of experience to Washington. He said: "I believe my legislative experience, even as brief as it has been, exceeds that of any other candidate in the race. I believe that this fact gives me an edge on the field."⁴³

During the first three weeks of the campaign, Brownlee limited his electioneering due to his busy schedule in the Senate. On several occasions, the candidate stated that his attention was required on several bills of special interest to the voters of his senatorial district and that he would

⁴³Austin American-Statesman, March 14, 1937, p. 2.

begin an intensive campaign as soon as he could put his legislative affairs in order. It was not until March 27, midway through the campaign, that Brownlee formally opened his drive for Congress with a speech from Burnet, his hometown. In this speech, Brownlee limited his campaign remarks to a series of charges against his opponents in connection with the Colorado River project. A discussion of his opening Burnet speech will be given later in the chapter.

Sam V. Stone

Sam V. Stone, veteran Williamson County Judge and the fifth major candidate to enter the congressional race, was born in Austin County, Texas, in 1890. Stone, a resident of Williamson County for thirty years, was graduated from Southwestern University in 1911 and later took a business administration course at the University of Texas. Upon leaving school, Stone worked as general manager of a large cottonseed-oil mill at Georgetown. During the First World War he enlisted in the Air Service, United States Army, and served overseas as a first lieutenant. He attained the rank of captain in the Air Service Reserve Corps in 1935. Stone was elected tax assessor-collector of Williamson County in 1922 and served in that position until 1934, at which time he was elected county judge.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), March 11, 1937, p. 1.

While serving as Williamson County Judge, Sam Stone had distinguished himself as a leader in Georgetown civic affairs. He had been a charter member and former president of the local Lions Club, a trustee of the First Methodist Church, and a past commander of the Georgetown American Legion Post. Stone was especially well-known for service rendered to the Austin area Boy Scout movement, having been conferred the Silver Beaver award by President Herbert Hoover in 1931.⁴⁵

On March 14, Judge Stone opened his campaign in Taylor in the face of a fresh norther with a brief, neighborly talk to approximately 125 shivering Williamson County citizens, who sat in the open air around the city plaza. His speech consisted primarily of an endorsement of Roosevelt's domestic program with emphasis on the "farm problem" and social security. The candidate pledged his best efforts to secure "a permanent soil-conserving, crop-rotating, profit-making federal farm program." He promised to work for lower interest rates on federally financed farm-home loans and said he would strive to bring a better system of highways and lateral roads to the farmers of the Tenth District. Expressing thorough accord with the current social security program by which the old, crippled, and the blind are aided, Stone said, "The old order has changed. We are now our brother's keeper."

⁴⁵Austin American-Statesman, April 4, 1937, p. 7.

Turning to the Supreme Court issue, Stone expressed approval of the Court "packing" plan, but in the same breath said, "I will not follow blindly anyone; not even the president. You ought not want a spineless puppet to represent you in Congress." Stone then announced that he would do his best to keep America out of another foreign war if elected to Congress and advocated a strong army and navy defense as the best insurance against a second world war.

Due to the uncomfortable weather, Stone cut his speech short and said he would elaborate on his platform at a later date. The candidate stated that he would rely on old-fashioned handshaking tactics to win the race and urged all his Williamson County friends to send out letters and literature to voters in other Tenth-District counties where he was not so well-known.⁴⁶

Merton L. Harris

Merton L. Harris of Bastrop, the last major contender to enter the special congressional election, was born on a farm in Bastrop County in 1889. He was educated at Baylor University and later at the University of Texas where he took his law degree in 1912. After completing his formal

⁴⁶Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), March 11, 1937, pp. 1, 5.

education, Harris was admitted to the Texas Bar Association and returned to Bastrop where he established law offices.⁴⁷

Merton Harris entered politics in 1932. He announced as a candidate for Congress from the Tenth Congressional District and ran a surprisingly strong race in that campaign against the incumbent, James P. Buchanan. Harris polled approximately thirty-eight percent of a total vote of 33,345 cast in the July Democratic Primary and won Caldwell, Lee, and Bastrop counties.⁴⁸

In the fall of 1932, Harris was appointed District Attorney of the Twenty-First Judicial District (Bastrop, Lee, Washington, and Burleson counties) by Governor Miriam Ferguson. He distinguished himself as a highly competent prosecuting attorney and was later appointed Assistant Attorney General of Texas by Governor James V. Allred.⁴⁹ Harris resigned his position as Assistant Attorney General on March 10 and immediately announced for Congress. He had been mentioned frequently as a possible candidate by the press, and he was considered to have formidable strength among the voters in the eastern part of the Tenth District, his old judicial district. In his brief announcement to the press, Harris said that the Tenth District was primarily an

⁴⁷ Austin American, March 19, 1937, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid., July 25, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Blanco County News, March 18, 1937, p. 1.

agricultural district and that its prosperity was determined almost entirely by the prosperity of the farmer. He said he would do everything in his power to help the farmers of the district if elected. With reference to the Supreme Court question Harris said:

I expect to deal with realities in this campaign at all times and not waste time on far-fetched, crack-brained proposals which can never be realized. On the contrary, I shall devote my time to those immediate problems concerning evils which I believe must be eradicated if this country is to remain as it always has been; a land of opportunity for all classes of people.⁵⁰

Harris opened his campaign at Brenham on March 17 and addressed a large partisan crowd of approximately 750 persons. The south side of the Brenham courthouse lawn was roped off for the listeners, and seats were placed in the street. The Brenham High School and American Legion bands gave a thirty-minute concert before the speaking began, adding color and excitement to the political rally. Before the candidate spoke, State Senator Paul Page of Bastrop predicted that ninety percent of the Bastrop County vote would go to Harris.

Harris was introduced by city attorney W. J. Embry as "a man not trying to get into office on the coat-tails of any other man." Harris told his farm-oriented audience that the great problems facing this district and the nation were farm problems and stated that the welfare of the nation was

⁵⁰Bastrop Advertiser, March 12, 1937, p. 1.

dependent on an adequate solution to the "farm problem." He promised that, if elected, he would give his best efforts to encourage soil conservation, new and broader markets for farm products, and stabilization of farm markets. He declared in favor of long-time loans at low-interest rates so that tenant farmers could purchase and pay for their own farms and said that he was in full support of the Colorado River project. With reference to the current social security laws, Harris said he favored changing the old-age pension laws so that a person who had lived in this country twenty-five years but for some reason had failed to become a citizen would be entitled to a pension under social security.

Turning to foreign affairs, Harris said that he was for strict American neutrality and stressed his stand on keeping this country out of all foreign conflicts. He said that he was unalterably opposed to the federal government permitting money to be loaned or credit to be extended to foreign nations to carry on their "harrid" wars of aggression.

Referring to the federal government's new and changing role in agriculture and other sectors of the economy, Harris declared:

We are in a new age; we must cope with new conditions whether we want to or not. We cannot live in the past. The individual who fails to realize this fact will be left at the switch. The most pathetic sight I have ever seen is a horsefly sitting on a radiator cap."

In closing, Harris handled the Supreme Court controversy in a single sentence saying that he was in support of the

President's entire domestic program, including his Court proposal.⁵¹

Other Candidates

Edwin Waller, III of San Marcos, known in political circles as "the most defeated man in Texas politics," filed his name in the Hays County Clerk's office early in March. The perennial Hays County candidate had run for various offices, from justice of the peace to state treasurer and commissioner of agriculture. It was reported that Waller had run for office so many times that even he could not tell the exact number of races he had entered. According to Ripley's Believe It or Not (the syndicated news column), Waller had run for office on thirty-four occasions, having been unsuccessful on each try. There had been a legend around San Marcos that Waller used to receive two votes in his home box, but after his wife died, he received only one.⁵²

In an interview with an Austin reporter early in the campaign, Waller stated that he hoped to get a good vote in counties where he was not known, but he said he had little expectation of carrying his home town. Waller explained his defeats as follows:

Most of the races I have run have been for city offices here in San Marcos, and the fact that this

⁵¹Brenham Banner-Press, March 18, 1937, pp. 1-3.

⁵²San Marcos Daily News, March 15, 1937, p. 4.

bunch of exceptionally fine people are mostly related to one another makes the running for office hard for me as I am not even related to a "yellow" dog in San Marcos.

Waller based his chief qualification for holding office on the fact that he was the son of a Confederate cavalry officer and a grandson of a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. His grandfather was also mayor of Austin. Waller, who earned his living as a "mobile" notary public, stated that he favored the Townsendite plan, which would give a \$200 per month pension to citizens over the age of sixty-five. He said he was a great admirer of President Roosevelt but differed with him on the Court issue.⁵³

Ayres K. Ross of Austin announced his candidacy on a Townsendite platform on March 3. A native of Central Texas, Ross had been defeated in the 1936 congressional election by J. P. Buchanan but polled approximately 12,000 votes in that race. In his brief announcement to the press, Ross reaffirmed his stand for the establishment of the Townsend old-age plan and said that he would support the work of the Lower Colorado River Authority. He stated that he was opposed to the President's Supreme Court plan and said he would give the voters a "fresh" alternative plan later in the campaign.⁵⁴

Stanley S. Smith of Austin, the lone Republican candidate to enter the congressional election, announced for

⁵³Austin American-Statesman, March 14, 1937, p. 16.

⁵⁴San Marcos Daily News, March 4, 1937, p. 2.

office on March 10, a few hours before the deadline for filing. Smith, age forty-three, was a local insurance broker and income-tax consultant. In a statement accompanying his application for a place on the ticket, Smith termed himself the "original Roosevelt bolter." The candidate said that he believed the government should be run according to the Constitution and said: "I am, therefore, bitterly opposed to the Roosevelt Administration, especially his plan to 'stack' the Supreme Court."⁵⁵ After conducting a quiet campaign, Smith withdrew from the race on March 25. He stated that he did not have sufficient funds to compete with several of his opponents who were receiving huge sums of money from certain "special-interest" groups.⁵⁶ Smith did not withdraw in time to prevent his name from appearing on the ballot.

C. F. Richards of Lockhart, a former state representative and senator, entered the race for Congress on March 10. He was a graduate of Lockhart High School and the University of Texas Law School. He withdrew from the contest four days after he entered in favor of Lyndon Johnson. He termed Johnson "honest, able, fearless, and experienced in congressional matters," and pointed out that if Johnson were elected, his record of service would be one of which the entire district could be proud.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Austin Statesman, March 11, 1937, p. 2.

⁵⁶Austin American, March 26, 1937, p. 7.

⁵⁷Austin American-Statesman, March 14, 1937, p. 12.

R. S. Bowers, of Caldwell, a member of the state board of education and a former state senator, let it be known early in March that he would be a candidate. But on March 9, Bowers withdrew from the race for Congress without giving any reason for his action.⁵⁸

The Campaign

The special-election campaign of 1937 was one of the most spirited political contests ever held in the Tenth Congressional District. All of the major candidates waged active campaigns, taking their appeal for votes into each county of the district, even to the smallest crossroad stores. Constituent interest was heightened by the Supreme Court controversy which was being hotly debated in all parts of the country and by the need to send an experienced and competent legislator to Washington to insure rapid completion of the Colorado River program.

The issues of the campaign were not as complicated as the candidates might have caused one to expect. All of the contenders for Congress except one of the minor group, Stanley S. Smith, pledged their support of President Roosevelt in various degrees and shades. Johnson, Harris, Avery, and Stone emphasized their degree of support of the President, in the order stated. Brownlee and Shelton did not express

⁵⁸ Austin American, March 10, 1937, p. 1.

opposition to the Roosevelt domestic program, but they opposed his Supreme Court bill. All of the candidates pledged their general support of the following non-controversial issues: Roosevelt's domestic legislative program with emphasis on the rural electrification and farm programs, opposition to America's entry into a second European war, the continuance of federal programs designed to assist the elderly.

The labor question was a minor issue until the second part of the campaign, but it came in for vigorous discussion by candidate Polk Shelton late in March. Shelton, who condemned the recent wave of sit-down strikes which had swept through the nation's big-three auto makers in early 1937 leaving tens-of-thousands unemployed, challenged his opponents to state their views on the issue. Except for Shelton, however, all of the candidates side-stepped this issue entirely.

The President's Supreme Court reorganization plan was the most controversial issue in the 1937 campaign. Lyndon Johnson, who announced his full support of Roosevelt on all issues including his Court bill early in the campaign, attracted the attention of both the press and the voters because of his vociferous and aggressive support of the national administration. As the campaign progressed, Johnson's opponents bitterly attacked him on a variety of issues aimed at weakening his ever growing popularity. Although Avery, Harris, and Stone announced in favor of the Court plan, they were reluctant to amplify the issue early in the campaign. As

election day neared, however, and after several newspaper polls indicated that a large percentage of the voters were in favor of the Court plan, they steadily increased their support of the Roosevelt Administration on all issues. Polk Shelton, who announced his opposition to the Court reform plan early in March, continued to oppose the measure throughout the election campaign.

The issue of sending an "experienced" man to Washington was especially pronounced in the 1937 campaign. Each candidate called attention to his own record of achievement. Johnson emphasized his "Washington experience" and his "Washington connections" and said that, if elected, he would be a "second-year" freshman congressman. Avery referred often to his years of experience as personal advisor to Congressman Buchanan and his intimate knowledge of "Bucks" unfinished plans. Brownlee repeatedly stated that he was the only candidate in the race with previous legislative experience and said that he was the only farmer in the race for Congress. Harris spoke frequently of his distinguished legal career as District Attorney and Assistant Attorney General of Texas. Both Shelton and Stone referred often to their war records and long residency in the Tenth District as qualifications for office. The candidates frequently emphasized to the voters the danger of electing one of their untrained, inexperienced opponents; and from this issue came most of the "mud-slinging" in the 1937 contest. A major share of the candidate's remarks to the voters consisted of charges and counter-charges

with respect to their inestimable opponents. Several of the candidates were accused of representing the private-power utilities and other "special-interest" groups.

Methods used in campaigning varied somewhat from preceding Tenth-District contests in that a much wider use was made of the radio. The leading candidates spent large sums for radio time, and an unprecedented use of the radio in a congressional contest was made late in the campaign. Johnson and Harris used the radio microphone frequently--Brownlee, Stone, Avery, and Shelton to a lesser extent. In addition to the use of radio, the major candidates crisscrossed the district by motor car and conducted old-fashioned handshaking campaigns to win the election. Several of the candidates gave "free beer and barbecue" rallies as a means of winning votes.

The 1937 congressional campaign may be divided into three parts chronologically. Representative Buchanan was buried in Brenham on February 26, and the special election was held on April 10, exactly six weeks later. The first three weeks after February 26 constituted a period of uncertainty, plans, conferences, and decisions on the part of many, with all of the candidates announced by March 10, the deadline for filing. The next two weeks, March 21 to April 3, saw all of the major candidates organized and out meeting the voters. At the end of this period, all of the candidates had formally opened their campaigns, having outlined their platforms to the voters. The final week, April 4 to April 10, constituted a period of

intense campaigning on the part of the major candidates, especially in Travis County, where approximately thirty percent of the ten-county vote was cast.

During the first three weeks of preliminary organization and early campaigning, newspapers reported that streamers announcing campaign headquarters placarded lobbies of the Stephen F. Austin and Driskill Hotels in Austin and that card-tackers were on the highways with an abundant supply of campaign posters being put on display.⁵⁹ All of the candidates had filed for office during this period and were busy organizing their campaigns. Four candidates had opened their campaigns with major addresses by the end of the second week; Johnson, Avery, Stone, and Shelton.

During the third week of the campaign, March 14 to March 20, the weather severely handicapped the efforts of the candidates to interest the public and draw large crowds to speaking engagements because Texas had a late and cold spring and a period of unusually heavy and continued rains. Most of the candidates continued to strengthen their organizations in their home counties and relied principally on handshaking and printed literature to attract the voters' attention.

C. N. Avery conducted a quiet "front-porch" campaign during the third week, receiving delegations at his Austin

⁵⁹Austin Statesman, March 16, 1937, p. 1.

home.⁶⁰ Polk Shelton, who had been even less active than Avery during the week, announced to the press on March 19 that he would launch an extensive speech-making tour in the near future. He said that he planned to speak on fifty-four occasions in every county of the district before the close of the campaign.⁶¹

Sam Stone continued to strengthen his organization in Travis and Williamson counties, but he did not schedule any speaking engagements for the week. His supporters announced that "Stone for Congress" clubs were being organized in every Williamson County precinct. Kelly McClain, Williamson County Attorney, predicted that Stone would receive ninety percent of the vote in his home county.⁶²

Senator Houghton Brownlee had spent a busy week at his desk in the Texas Legislature. He issued a statement to the press on March 18 which announced that he had introduced a bill in the Senate that would convert the Austin Confederate Veterans' Home into a federal hospital for all war veterans. The Senator stated that this and other pressing legislation of special interest to his senatorial district had prevented him from conducting an active campaign.⁶³

⁶⁰Austin American, March 18, 1937, p. 7.

⁶¹Ibid., March 19, 1937, p. 2.

⁶²Ibid., p. 3.

⁶³Ibid., March 18, 1937, p. 6.

Merton Harris motored through the eastern edge of the district early in the week, having conferred with supporters and friends in Burleson and Washington counties. His opening campaign speech at Brenham on Thursday highlighted his activities for the week.⁶⁴

Lyndon Johnson conducted a vigorous campaign during the week despite the uncomfortable weather. He spoke to small groups of farmers and merchants in Williamson, Bastrop, and Caldwell counties, ending up at Austin for the weekend. Speaking at Thrall, Johnson told a group of Williamson County farmers that parity prices for farm products could be best achieved by sending a dedicated Roosevelt supporter to Congress. He asked the voters to send a man experienced in congressional matters to Washington and reiterated his own experience:

If you want a man who has served the people for four years in congressional matters; if you want a man who stands for parity prices for agriculture; if you want a man free from political henchmen to reward and enemies to revenge; if you want your congressman to fight to preserve peace, to promote decent living and working conditions, and to make this nation a better place to live; then I want to be your congressman. But if you want an inexperienced congressman, or a Liberty League spokesman, or a self-centered politician, you better play the field opposing me.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 3.

⁶⁵Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), March 19, 1937, p. 3. The American Liberty League Party was founded in August, 1934, to fight against what its supporters termed the increasing radicalism and contempt for property rights displayed by the New Deal.

In a speech made at Smithville on Thursday, Johnson charged that his opponents had been reluctant to support the President and his program:

These "but" experts are all catspaws for disgruntled Liberty Leaguers, economic tyrants, and back-sliding Democrats, who, whipped to a pulp last November, have been stewing around plotting revenge. They couldn't scape the president at the polls, so now they are hunting in through another door. It didn't take me long to decide upon planks in my platform affecting this district--the Colorado project, for instance, or farm relief, labor legislation, and unemployment relief. I didn't have to hang back, like a steer on the way to the dipping vat. I didn't have to peek around dark corners to see what the next fellow was going to do. Besides, I had some pretty good backing in my judgment about the main plank of my platform--full support of the president. Even as late as November [1936], the people went to the polls and decided, by a majority of more than ten million votes, that they were in favor of the courageous program of the president during his first four years in office. I could be only stupid beyond words to make silly, petty, and insignificant reservations on the issues at hand.⁶⁶

Johnson reaffirmed his desire to help Tenth-District farmers in speeches at Elgin, Granger, Hutto, Taylor, and Coupland in Williamson County late in the week and addressed a meeting of the Austin Trades Council on Saturday. He told the Austin workers:

We cannot afford a candidate who paused to send up trial balloons before he knew where he stood on the supreme court issue, or who is against the president. I have worked on the president's program from 1933, until this day, and as long as the president has as his objective the betterment of Mr. Average Citizen and his

⁶⁶Bastrop Advertiser, March 19, 1937, pp. 1-3.

wife, I'll support his program without any hesitation, ifs, and's, or buts.⁶⁷

There was little activity among the minor candidates during the third week. C. F. Richards withdrew from the race, leaving nine candidates still in contention. Edwin Waller and Stanley Smith spent a quiet week in Austin. Ayres K. Ross spoke at Hutto, in Williamson County, and proposed his own solution to the Court crisis. He said he would introduce a constitutional amendment that would fix the membership of the Court at eleven, with all succeeding members of the Court to be retired at the age of seventy-five on a salary one-half of the original. Under the Ayres' plan, two-thirds of the justices would have to vote against a law before it would be declared unconstitutional.⁶⁸

The Forty-Fifth Legislature took action during the third week on the Supreme Court question. On March 16, Representative W. E. Jones of Dallas introduced a resolution commending the President's Court "packing" bill. This resolution was defeated by a close vote: for, 54; against, 69.⁶⁹ This House resolution followed an earlier resolution by the Senate which condemned the Court plan.

The fourth week of the campaign, March 21 to March 27, saw the weather in Central Texas still unseasonably cool and

⁶⁷Austin Statesman, March 20, 1937, p. 9.

⁶⁸Ibid., March 14, 1937, p. 12.

⁶⁹State Observer (Austin), March 19, 1937, p. 18.

wet. Heavy rains fell over the state during the first half of the week. During the second half, the congressional campaign had begun to warm up and to give promise of becoming a typical Texas political contest.

A significant development occurring early in the fourth week was the opening of the Austin American-Statesman straw-vote concerning the president's Court proposal. Ballots appeared daily in the Austin American during the week, whereby Central-Texas readers had the opportunity to record their views. The ballot read:

I am in Favor of President Roosevelt's plan to name additional judges to assist the Court.

I am Opposed to President Roosevelt's Court plan.⁷⁰
Name _____

Throughout the week the paper announced the results of the test-vote, which showed the voters strongly in favor of the Court plan. On March 27, the ballots were tabulated by Governor James V. Allred, Austin Mayor Tom Miller, and Secretary of State, Edward Clark. A total of 1,569 ballots favored the President's Court plan and 156 were against it. The paper reported that support shown the court plan by the voters held almost precisely the same ratio as did support of President Roosevelt himself in the 1936 general election.⁷¹

⁷⁰Austin American-Statesman, March 21, 1937, p. 1.

⁷¹Ibid., March 28, 1937, p. 1.

C. N. Avery began the week with a speech in Smithville in which he insisted that there was no use getting excited over the Court problem. He said, "It will probably be settled before any of us get up there." Avery then declared that the most important issue of the campaign, that of ability, had been played down entirely too much in this campaign. He said that some of his opponents had been "tearing their hair over the supreme court issue, but not once have they gone into detail to explain to the voters what they could get done for them if they were elected to congress."⁷²

In a speech at Burnet later in the week, Avery continued to emphasize his experience and to play down the Court question. He challenged his critics and opponents in the race to say something about the Colorado River program other than that they would "save it" from the Supreme Court. He said:

Any man with the mentality of a jackrabbit knows that the entire program of dam construction is menaced by the supreme court, and that the court must be changed as the president directs in order that this program may go on. But what candidate in this race can tell you definitely that he had a part in starting this great program?

Avery then proceeded to tell his audience how he assisted Congressman Buchanan with the Colorado River Project:

One night Buchanan, worn out by the duties of the day, threw the plan for the whole Colorado River program down on his hotel room bed and said: "Avery, I'm through with it." But his despair was born of exhaustion. I picked up the plans and finished some of the detail

⁷²Bastrop Advertiser, March 26, 1937, p. 3.

work. Then I told the congressman to "buck-up." He did. And in a few days we were both at the job again, hammer and tongs. The point I'm trying to make is, that I believe in this instance and in many others, I have already shown my willingness, and my desire, to serve this district.

Avery called attention to the leading proponent of the President's Court bill, Lyndon Johnson, by saying: "I refuse to be greatly moved by the loud outbursts of some secretary, some stenographer, who got his Washington experience serving as some office boy for a Congressman from another district." Avery said that his "young" opponent would be sadly embarrassed if the Court bill were passed tomorrow. He continued:

What else could he draw up as his platform? The bitter truth probably would come out that he is not running for office because of a genuine desire and a genuine ability to serve this district, but simply because he wants to leap from obscurity to the golden glamour of the public trough.⁷³

Polk Shelton campaigned in Lee, Burnet, and Travis counties during the fourth week, ending up his activities at Austin with a radio broadcast over radio station KNOW. Shelton brought a new issue into the campaign in a speech at Giddings in Lee County. He warned the voters that the recent wave of sit-down strikes, which had hampered activities in the auto industry in early 1937, threatened the stability of the American economic and social structure:

In the sinister hands of communistic agitators and hoodlums, the sit-down strike is a deadly weapon that imperils the future of America. This newest public enemy No. 1 is destroying private rights and extorting

⁷³Austin American, March 26, 1937, p. 7.

a heavy tribute from the consuming public. While I am for law-abiding organized labor, I am not for mob violence. John L. Lewis, perpetrator of the sit-down movement, is trying to organize labor in one gigantic political party and seize control of the government. Unless a federal law is enacted to jail those who would seize property and disregard the courts and our rights, this vicious movement to tie up the auto industry will go to limits undreamed of. Lewis wants a political party based on class hatred. This is the weapon which has destroyed every government where it has been allowed to survive.⁷⁴

Shelton invaded Burnet County later in the week and continued his attack on organized labor. He told groups at Marble Falls, Burnet, and Bertram that paid agitators were spreading unrest in the East and Middle-West and were now coming into the Texas oil industry to stir-up strife and bitterness. Shelton declared that he would advocate legislation that would prevent the spread of sit-down strikes into Texas. At Burnet, Shelton linked the sit-down strike movement to his basic plank of supporting the Supreme Court:

No business is safe and no man's job is secure unless each has the protection of the constitution and the constituted courts of the land which stand between him and those who usurp constitutional rights of American business. Texas has a glorious history of independence and action that tells a story of red-blooded Americanism for more than a hundred years. I firmly believe that Texas will forever be a stronghold for government by the people and the home of men and women who believe in the independence of the United States Supreme Court.⁷⁵

Merton Harris opened the fourth week with a radio talk over KNOW, Austin, and later addressed planned rallies in

⁷⁴Ibid., March 22, 1937, p. 8.

⁷⁵Blanco County News, April 1, 1937, p. 2.

Lockhart, Bastrop, and Smithville. In these speeches, he reaffirmed his support of President Roosevelt's farm-relief legislation but avoided the Court question entirely. At Lockhart, Harris spoke to a large crowd of approximately 1,000 spectators who had gathered to watch a St. Louis Browns intra-squad baseball game. He vowed to pursue a militant campaign in Congress "to secure the right of the farmer and small-salaried man to a prosperity in proportion to that enjoyed by big industrialists of the North and East." Harris said: "Too long has Wall Street and associated interests made millions of dollars at the expense of the farmers of the South; farmers who were helpless to prevent their exploitation." Harris then enumerated his broad three-point legislative program:

First, a government should be such that it will provide adequate and proper education and training for its boys and girls in order that they will grow into useful and proper citizens. Second, the government should assure its adults such citizenship protection and such opportunities as will provide them with an opportunity to successfully pursue a gainful livelihood. And third, the government should properly look after the aged who are unable to care for and look after themselves.⁷⁶

Senator Houghton Brownlee opened his long-awaited campaign for Congress late in the fourth week in a speech from Burnet on the public square, less than a block from where he had been born. Former state representative Thomas C.

⁷⁶Austin American, March 26, 1937, p. 7.

Ferguson, Burnet attorney, introduced Brownlee to a crowd of about 300 people. The Senator, who spoke from a soundtruck in a severely cold blizzard, pledged his continued efforts to fulfillment of the Colorado River program and warned the voters that "the power companies have a candidate in this race." Brownlee limited his remarks to what he termed:

. . . the principal issue in this campaign: whether the Morrison-Insull power interest can elect their candidate; or, whether the people shall elect their own candidate and keep the electric power, to be produced from the Colorado dams, in the hands of the public.

Brownlee charged that the Texas Power and Light Company (owned and operated by the Morrison-Insull Electric Bond and Share Company) had recently spent hundreds of thousands of dollars for the purchase of contracts to electrify all the accessible farms and ranches in the Tenth District.

He said:

They have done this for the sole purpose of trying to tie up all the markets that the Colorado River Authority will have for its electricity. If they can't get in the front door, they will try to get in the back. The Texas Power and Light Company does not intend to furnish electricity to these people under these contracts, unless, they can sneak in some way and get control of the power from these dams. These power companies are trying to put the Colorado River Authority in a position of forcing to sell them this cheap electricity at their prices. Why shouldn't these power companies be interested in this congressional race and have your congressman's political influence in Washington to allow them to get this electricity. . . .

Brownlee then implied that candidate Lyndon Johnson was the representative of this "special-interest" group in this election. Brownlee stated that he had information which

showed that Johnson had already spent more than \$10,000 in the congressional race, and asked the question: "Where is he getting his money? What private interests are so vitally concerned about electing this 'young secretary' to Congress." Brownlee warned the voters not to be misled by false issues and smoke-screens, such as the Supreme Court question. "That is always the old trick of utilities and big corporations," Brownlee declared.⁷⁷

Sam Stone continued to concentrate his campaign in Williamson County during the fourth week and relied chiefly on friends and supporters, who were busy with the organization of "Stone for Congress" clubs. Stone issued a statement to the press late in the week which helped to explain his modest campaign efforts. He stated that he did not have a "slush fund" as did some of the other candidates in the race and that his campaign expenses were coming from his own savings. Stone declared that he was not a rich man but that he held the interests of the farmer and laborer at heart and was relying on these groups to elect him to office on April 10.⁷⁸

Lyndon Johnson had scheduled 36 major speeches for the week and campaigned in almost every town in Caldwell, Hays, Travis, Williamson, Burnet, and Bastrop counties. On this road tour, Johnson concentrated his efforts in the smaller

⁷⁷Austin American-Statesman, March 28, 1937, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), March 27, 1937, p. 1.

towns and hamlets of the district. He insisted in his speeches throughout the week that the only significant issue in the campaign was "Roosevelt and Unity" concerning the Court question.⁷⁹

Johnson spoke at Luling early in the week and asked the voters to write Albert Sidney Burleson of Austin for comment about sending a young man to Congress. Johnson said that Burleson served as Congressman from the Tenth Congressional District for fourteen years and then resigned to enter President Woodrow Wilson's cabinet, where he served as Postmaster General for eight years. Johnson said, "If you want to know what he thinks about sending a young man to congress, just write him a letter at Austin. I have a pretty good idea he will answer you."⁸⁰ Later in the week, Burleson released a signed statement to the press that said:

In the impending congressional election, I hope the people of this district will elect a young man who can develop, and who will support the president at all times. To elect an old man is for the people to throw away the office.⁸¹

At Bertram, Johnson spoke to a group of Buchanan Dam construction workers and warned that continuation of the entire Colorado River project was dependent on the future action of the Supreme Court. He said:

⁷⁹Austin American, March 27, 1937, p. 2.

⁸⁰Ibid., March 24, 1937, p. 6.

⁸¹Ibid., March 26, 1937, p. 6.

We cannot undertake to guess what the supreme court may do about the injunction suit now pending, but we know that every bucket of concrete now being poured goes down under permission of a federal-court order. If ever the injunction suit is tried the supreme court probably will be asked to pass on the decision. In view of recent court decisions on farming, labor and other parts of the Roosevelt program, we may safely conclude that the job of every workman on this river job hangs upon the decision of the nine men on the supreme court bench. . . . I fear the supreme court has come to govern us all. That sort of thing must be changed.⁸²

At a mid-week talk in Bastrop, Johnson related his effort to prevent the removal of two companies of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Bastrop State Park. Johnson said that these camps were scheduled to be removed on April 1 but that he had telephoned to Washington and explained to friends there that the Tenth District was without a congressman to ask for a delay on this action. Johnson then read a telegram he had received several hours after his telephone call to Washington. It stated: "Concerning your request to retain [C.C.C.] camps at Bastrop; on account of your intervention they will be maintained at least until April 15." Johnson said:

I did this while some of the other candidates were worrying themselves with trying to get on somebody's private car, or else were sitting behind glass-top desks working out an organization. If elected, I promise you that I will direct my best efforts at retaining your camps.⁸³

On Thursday of the fourth week, Johnson spoke at Leander, Liberty Hill, Briggs, and Florence in Williamson County, then

⁸²Ibid., March 25, 1937, p. 7.

⁸³Bastrop Advertiser, March 26, 1937, p. 2.

returned to Austin for a radio broadcast. In this radio speech, Johnson charged that his opponents had failed to discuss their views concerning the Court question. He said that the "original sit-down strikers" are the Democrats who try to affirm that the Supreme Court reform issue is unimportant to the nation. "One man in this race has taken a positive stand on the issue. I am that man," Johnson said, and added:

. . . Two have openly criticized the president's program, and the rest have been non-committal, vacillating, and temporizing in all their statements. One has even gone so far as to say the supreme court issue could be dismissed with a word and forgotten.

In contrast with his "Washington experience," Johnson called up the records of some of his opponents. He described C. N. Avery as the "'lobbyist prince,' who has spent a great many years of his life in Washington selling stone to the government and keeping an eagle eye on his 'private interest.'"

Johnson said that Polk Shelton and Merton Harris had devoted their entire careers to the practice of law in the criminal courts, but he asked: "Should you send a man to congress because he had the ability to send a man to the penitentiary or keep him out?" He continued by saying:

I am not trying to cast aspersions upon my estimable opponents. I would say the same thing if a doctor were running against me, or a ranchman, windmill salesman, or steeplejack. Any one of these might be of the very highest type, an ornament to his profession, and yet worthless as a congressman. Herbert Hoover was a great engineer, organizer and promoter of projects. Yet he was dismal as a president. President Roosevelt, however, was not an engineer nor an organizer of projects, but he has spent his entire life in public service and in that field he is top in all the world.

Johnson continued by saying that his opponents were "stewing about his age," which was twenty-eight. He asserted: "The fact that I am approaching the peak of a man's powers, abilities and talents appears to shock them more than if they could dig-up proofs that I advocated cannibalism."⁸⁴

Johnson carried his vigorous campaign for Congress through Hays and Travis counties late in the week, shaking hands with hundreds of old and new friends. On Friday, March 26, the Johnson motor-caravan traveled to Manor at 8:00 a.m.; Buda at 9:30 a.m.; Kyle at 10:00 a.m.; Niederwald at 11:00 a.m.; Umland at 11:30 a.m.; San Marcos, 12:00 noon till 2:30 p.m.; Wimberley at 3:00 p.m.; Dripping Springs at 3:45 p.m.; and then back to Austin for more political talks and a briefing on the next day's schedule.⁸⁵

Speaking from Manor, "Roosevelt's Fair Haired Boy" (as Johnson was called by friends and supporters) predicted that his opponents would soon change their views with regard to the Court issue. Johnson reviewed the results of the Austin American poll, which showed that the Tenth District was decisively behind Roosevelt's Court plan by a ten-to-one majority. He said:

Now that the returns are in, those who dismissed the president with only a sentence in their speeches last week or who were only willing to go along like a steer to

⁸⁴Austin Statesman, March 26, 1937, p. 8.

⁸⁵Ibid., March 27, 1937, p. 2.

the dipping vat, will be yelling that they didn't mean it that way. Watch out for these half-way candidates. If they couldn't make-up their minds when this campaign started, they can't be depended upon to represent this district now.⁸⁶

At a country store in Uhland, Johnson said:

Wherever I go, we find the story is this: It's Johnson and one of the other candidates, but it is always Johnson. Johnson is running first and somebody else second. A man who says he wants a permanent program for farmers which will produce farm prosperity but who is against reforming the supreme court is talking nonsense. This is a fight for our bread and butter. This is the people's fight. The corporation lawyers on one side, and the plain, average citizen on the other. The lobbyists and criminal lawyers are too wishy-washy to be trusted on this issue. There is only one candidate who has made a clean, clear-cut stand on the issue, and that candidate is Lyndon Johnson.⁸⁷

James A. Farley, United States Postmaster General and chairman of the National Democratic Executive Committee, came to Texas early in the fourth week to campaign for the passage of President Roosevelt's Court bill. Farley toured the state and made major speeches in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin. On March 24, he addressed a joint session of the Texas Legislature where he answered Senator Tom Connally's recent denunciation of the Court measure. Farley said:

The dice of destiny have so fallen that we have a reactionary majority on the supreme court, with the final say on the destinies of a progressive nation. The nation has given President Roosevelt a mandate to carry through his program. There is no way for immediate relief, other than the court enlargement-retirement plan, proposed by the president's court plan, I think, those Democrats who oppose the president's

⁸⁶San Marcos Daily News, March 27, 1937, p. 2.

⁸⁷Ibid.

court plan are making a grave error, and lending aid and comfort to the enemy.

Farley did not publicly endorse a candidate in this congressional race, but after conferring with A. S. Burleson at his Austin home on Wednesday, he released a statement to the press which said that the people of the Tenth District should send a "young, industrious and one-hundred-percent Roosevelt man up there in this crucial hour."⁸⁸

With the exception of Ayres K. Ross, the minor candidates were almost as inactive as previously during the last week of March. Ross spoke at Taylor, Blanco, and Burnet and continued his efforts to attract the "old-folks" vote. In these speeches, the Townsendite candidate stated that he favored a two-percent "transactions" tax to raise money enough to pay all the aged \$200 per month, with the requirement that the money be spent as paid. He also urged the creation of a national labor agency for arbitration of sit-down strikes and industrial disputes to help quiet the current labor crisis.⁸⁹

Smith, the lone Republican candidate in the election, withdrew from the race during the fourth week. He stated to the press that he had neither the organization nor the money to compete with "those other candidates who are spending extravagant sums to get elected."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Austin American, March 25, 1937, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Blanco County News, April 1, 1937, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁰ Austin American, March 26, 1937, p. 7.

During the fifth week of the campaign, March 28 to April 3, competition became very keen, and the weather was warmer than in previous weeks. The citizens had become thoroughly aroused over the Court issue, and they began to argue the respective merits of their favorites.

C. N. Avery made three major speeches at Smithville, Granger, and Burnet during the week. He emphasized his experience in Washington affairs and spoke more often of supporting Roosevelt on all issues. At Smithville, Avery declared that a "calm, clear-headed discussion of the vital issues should be continued right-up to mid-night of April 9." He said that the vital issues were:

First, the candidate's ability to carry on Mr. Buchanan's work in congress with the least delay; and second, the candidate's willingness to back the president on his entire program of social and economic betterment for the common man.

Avery pointed out that:

. . . One young candidate in this race has resorted to 'mud-slinging'; and you can be sure of this, that the candidates showing the greatest artistry in personal abuse are the ones most in fear of defeat at the poll on election day.⁹¹

Avery was honored by Williamson County supporters at Granger later in the week. Approximately 400 persons attended this lavish "free beer and barbecue" affair and heard Avery reaffirm his desire to assist the farmers of

⁹¹Ibid., April 1, 1937, p. 11.

the Tenth District. Avery said he had a personal interest in farming and a genuine desire to see the tenant farmer own his own place. The candidate tried to show to the voters of the Tenth District the political value of his family's relationship with the Speaker of the House, William B. Bankhead. He said that his father was campaign manager for Speaker Bankhead's father when that gentleman was in Alabama politics. Avery said: "I know Bill Bankhead personally. He will help me win the battles of the farmers. We have worked together on many measures and we are very much alike in that farming is one of our chief interests." Avery reemphasized his desire to carry on the work of the late Congressman Buchanan. He stated that Buchanan had planned to reduce taxes by "weeding out unnecessary governmental expenses and by eliminating emergency 'set-ups' as they are no longer needed." Avery said he favored such a plan and felt that federal spending should be reduced if the government ever hoped to balance the "books." Avery closed his Granger talk by reading a telegram from Mrs. J. P. Buchanan, who endorsed his candidacy.⁹²

Polk Shelton carried his campaign to Caldwell, Bastrop, and Washington counties during the fifth week and continued to speak forcefully against the sit-down strikers and Roosevelt's Court reorganization plan. His campaign was boosted early in the week by the fact that the Supreme Court had

⁹²Ibid., April 2, 1937, p. 9.

upheld several New Deal enactments previously in dispute. By a five-to-four decision the Court upheld the right of states to fix minimum wages for women. It unanimously sustained the Frazier-Lemke farm-mortgage act, making billions of dollars of farm indebtedness eligible to three-year moratoriums. In another unanimous decision, the Supreme Court upheld the railway-labor act which guaranteed collective bargaining to railroad workers.⁹³

At an Austin rally, held in the Travis County Courthouse, Shelton attempted to capitalize on these recent Supreme Court decisions:

The decisions of the supreme court in upholding the railroad-labor act, the state minimum-wage laws, and the farm mortgage moratorium, prove beyond any doubt that our constitution and our supreme court are big and broad enough for all necessary reform. The decisions the court handed down this week have taken away from my opponents any excuse they ever had for running. They were all in the race as "me-too" candidates, ready to vote for everything the president proposed without knowing what those proposals would be.

From the start of this campaign I have said that the constitution was broad enough and liberal enough for all necessary reforms, and I have repeatedly defended the court against abuse and vilification of demagogic politics and politicians. My faith in the court and the faith of thousands of others in the district who are backing me, has been fully vindicated.⁹⁴

Henry Brooks, former Travis County District Attorney, and Mrs. J. M. Loving of Austin, prominent woman leader, spoke in behalf of Shelton over KNOW radio on Friday. That

⁹³Austin Daily Dispatch, March 30, 1937, p. 1.

⁹⁴Austin American, March 30, 1937, p. 10.

night, Shelton was received by several-thousand students at the University of Texas. He reviewed the sit-down strike movement and said: "The most important issue before America today is the sit-down strike menace, but my opponents in this race won't face it." Shelton continued:

They have not condemned this frightful menace to America's future, but they have said they would go blindly along with everything the Roosevelt Administration wanted. Send me to congress and I'll propose a law and fight for it to eliminate the sit-down strike from American life. The only barrier between communism and the illegal seizure of property in violation of the United States constitution is the supreme court. What we should do is employ "direct-action" against the enemies of the constitution and the rights of Americans guaranteed under it.⁹⁵

Merton Harris began the fifth week with a radio broadcast over KNOW, Austin. He stressed his stand on keeping the country out of all foreign conflicts and criticized the government's policy of extending military aid to those European countries engaged in the ever spiraling arms race. Harris advocated a national embargo on all military hardware being sent to Germany, England, and France. He said America should maintain a policy of strict neutrality in case of a future European war and explained a bill he proposed to introduce and work for if elected. His proposed bill would give the people the power to declare or veto a war by referendum instead of leaving this decision in the hands of the Congress.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Ibid., April 3, 1937, p. 6.

⁹⁶Austin Statesman, March 31, 1937, p. 12.

Harris conducted a vigorous campaign in Williamson, Bastrop, Burnet, Hays, Caldwell, and Blanco counties later in the week, ending up in Austin with another radio broadcast. He spoke to small groups and employed handshaking tactics to win votes. In these brief speeches, Harris repeatedly stressed his enthusiastic support of the Roosevelt Administration, including the President's Court reform plan. He said:

The great program for social security and economic reform that President Roosevelt has worked out is as practical a plan as can be devised, and because I do believe that, I have pledged myself to support the president's proposal for reorganization of the supreme court in order to insure the completion of his plans.⁹⁷

Senator Houghton Brownlee concentrated his campaign efforts in Burnet and Lee counties and continued to strengthen his organization in the Austin area. He followed his previous policy of campaigning only in the afternoon, after the Senate had adjourned for the day, and made few speeches during the week, relying on supporters in each county of the district to carry on his campaign.⁹⁸

At Bertram, Brownlee re-emphasized his earlier statement that the paramount issue in the campaign was whether the people of the Tenth District would control the power projects being built by the Colorado River Authority, or whether the

⁹⁷San Marcos Daily News, April 1, 1937, p. 3.

⁹⁸Austin American, April 3, 1937, p. 5.

Morrison-Insull Utilities would take over that control. He told the Burnet County voters that it was he who had first approached Congressman Buchanan with the idea of building Buchanan Dam and that he had supported the Colorado project from its inception. Brownlee said he would never let the private utilities get control of the power to be generated from Buchanan Dam and the other Colorado River dams to be constructed in the near future.⁹⁹

Brownlee traveled through Lee County during mid-week and defended his record in the state legislature. At New Sweden, the Senator declared that he had favored the Swedish as well as the Czech and German people in the New Sweden area in proposing his amendment to the state fire-insurance bill, which would exclude all mutual fire-insurance associations from paying state taxes. He said that this bill would be signed by the governor in the very near future and stated that he had consistently fought against the tax on fraternal insurance organizations, many of which were sponsored by the Swedish, Czech, and German people of Lee County. Brownlee closed his speech by reiterating to the New Sweden crowd why he had not been more active in the campaign:

I have attended to my business in the legislature and that is why I haven't been able to see all of you. I intended to go out much this week but have remained in the senate fighting for the fireman's insurance bill which I know to be most worthy.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹Blanco County News, April 8, 1937, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰Austin Statesman, April 3, 1937, p. 9.

Judge Sam Stone conducted a spirited campaign during the fifth week, speaking to small groups of voters in Williamson, Hays, Lee, and Travis counties. He steadily increased his support of the President's Court plan and continued to emphasize his desire to help the farmers of the Tenth District. At San Marcos, Stone told the voters that he "wished to get into congress a building program for you people of the Tenth District." He said that he wanted to see a farm program permanently established for Tenth-District farmers where profits could be made from farming activities without there being a "one-hundred-percent gamble." Stone continued by saying that to understand the problems of the farmer "I believe one should live among them as I have and have their view point." He referred to Lyndon Johnson as Richard Kleberg's secretary by saying:

I do not think "Washington experience," whatever that may have been, qualifies a person to represent the farmers and businessmen of the Tenth District. I may not know the ropes in Washington, but I do know the essentials which our people are interested in.¹⁰¹

At Fiskville, Stone warned a group of Williamson County farmers and stockmen that a congressman who had spent a lifetime in the district and knew the problems of the district and its people was better able to serve them than one who was a stranger to local conditions. He reaffirmed his support of a constructive program of soil conservation,

¹⁰¹San Marcos Daily News, March 30, 1937, p. 2.

erosion and flood control, improved highways and lateral roads, and cheaper government loans on farm homes. With reference to President Roosevelt's Court plan Stone said: "I will cooperate with the president and do all in my power to assist him in working out his program." He said that the old order had to be changed to meet new conditions. "The president is right, in my opinion, in asking for a more vigorous personnel on the supreme court, but I will not be a spineless puppet in your seat in congress,"¹⁰²

In a speech at Giddings, Stone referred to candidate Merton Harris by saying: "One of the candidates in this election campaign is getting very excited over the next war, but did nothing about the last war, and he was eligible for service." Stone continued: "He declares he hates war, and I'm sure he is right, for he hated the last one so much he didn't offer his services."¹⁰³

During the fifth week, Lyndon Johnson swung through Lee, Caldwell, Burnet, and Williamson counties and climaxed his week of campaigning with a radio broadcast from Brenham. Because of the rapidity of the Johnson road tour through the Tenth District toward the close of the campaign, he was dubbed the "Blanco Blitz" by friends and supporters.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), April 1, 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰³Austin Statesman, April 2, 1937, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴Interview with Carroll Keach, Robstown, October 10, 1966.

At Giddings, Johnson charged that Houghton Brownlee was the first Texas legislator to attack President Roosevelt and his Court plan. He said that Brownlee had voted for Senator T. J. Holbrook's Senate Resolution which condemned the President's Court plan:

Brownlee is red-hot against the president. He voted in the Texas senate recently to condemn the president's proposal to reform the supreme court. He was so hot for passing this resolution that he couldn't stand to let the president's friends talk. He just made a motion to cut off the debate, and then cast the first vote condemning the president. All this is recorded in the Senate Journal, page 228, issued February 9, 1937.

Johnson said he would speak at Burnet on Wednesday and said that he would review the Senator's anti-Roosevelt record again at that time. "I invite the Senator to come to Burnet Wednesday and share time on the platform. Let him explain the evidence. Let him tell his home folks how he got mixed up with the Liberty League and the Jeffersonian Democrats." Johnson continued by saying that the anti-Roosevelt "clan" was in session as he spoke. "Senator T. J. Holbrook, who offered the resolution in the Texas Senate to condemn President Roosevelt's program is the chief speaker, and the good old San Antonio 'Distress' [Express] is sponsoring this meeting."¹⁰⁵

On Tuesday, Johnson addressed a large crowd in Lockhart. He told the Caldwell County voters that those

¹⁰⁵Brenham Banner-Press, March 29, 1937, pp. 1-2.

candidates who declared their "admiration, love, and praise" for President Roosevelt, but who voted to condemn his program, "are stabbing the president and the people in the back." "How much did the state senator love, admire, and praise our great president when he voted for the senate resolution condemning Roosevelt's court reform plan?" Johnson inquired. "That was the first stab the president had in all the nation. And when he stabbed the president in the back, he stabbed every farmer, every working man, every little businessman-- in fact, the great masses and majority of the people." Johnson reminded his audience that the attention of the nation was focused on this election:

This election is the first and only test of the president's program. The liberty league and others who so vigorously opposed the president last year will be tickled to death if they can flash news abroad that Texas has sent a congressman to Washington who voted against the president's court plan. Nothing would please these "interests" more than to have some pussy-footer playing both ends against the middle while declaring love and admiration for the president.¹⁰⁶

On Wednesday, Johnson spoke to approximately 200 Burnet voters in the Burntex Theater. He reiterated his charge that Houghton Brownlee was one of the group of Liberty Leaguers who had "stabbed the president in the back" on the Supreme Court issue while "the utility lobbyists looked on like

¹⁰⁶Austin Statesman, March 31, 1937, p. 12.

vultures from the galleries." He asked Brownlee to answer the charge that he had voted for the Holbrook Resolution which condemned the President's Court plan. Brownlee was not present in the theater, but Robert Long, a member of his campaign committee, was in the audience. Johnson said; "Bob, I want you to explain why the Senator from Travis County voted for the utilities to raise your power rates. I want you to explain what legislation has been proposed by Senator Brownlee to regulate the utilities." Long, however, who had been asked to reply to Johnson if he so wished, was among the first to leave the theater after hearing Johnson's speech. Johnson continued his speech attacking Brownlee's voting record in the Texas Senate:

The only candidate in this race who declared his stand on the utilities is Lyndon Johnson. I read my platform declaring against utility control of the Colorado River projects while Brownlee was trying to make up his mind what to put in his platform. It was Senator Brownlee who voted for an amendment to a bill in the Texas senate which raised the profit of utility companies from eight to ten percent. He was the first to vote in favor of the utilities in the senate.

The biggest vital issue in this campaign is the president's proposal on the supreme court. You can't have dams like you are building here if you have the present supreme court. If you want to show Roosevelt how you appreciate what he has done for you don't send him an "off-again-on-again Finnegan," not one he'll have to pull like a mule on a rope. I can't come out here and bring Austin beer to get votes. If you vote for the man who can buy the most mutton and beer, you won't vote for Lyndon Johnson. I can't give you lot of barbecue; but if you elect me, I'll give you an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. I'll get the job done.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Austin American, April 1, 1937, p. 11.

On Thursday, Johnson spoke before a group of Austin laborers at the Labor Temple. He told the workers that he hated war and said: "Never will I cast a vote which will cause a single American boy to spill a drop of his blood on foreign soil." Johnson said that in the event of an enemy attack "we must conscript all our billions of wealth, all our industry, as well as our manpower to defend our nation. We must make war so unprofitable that nobody will want a fight." Turning to the issue of horse-race gambling, Johnson reminded the Austin workers that race-horse gamblers had moved into Austin in an attempt to put a man in Congress who would support legalized horse-racing in the District of Columbia. He said:

You won't find any Johnson campaigners running around the district in hired automobiles or giving big barbecues. I am opposed to legalized race-track gambling in the District of Columbia, and the race-horse gamblers are opposed to me. The horse gamblers are trying to get vicious programs approved by the congress. They are trying to elect a horse-racing and race-gambling backer in the tenth district. I shall vote against race-horse gambling every time the issue is put forward.¹⁰⁸

Johnson closed his busy week of campaigning with a major speech at Brenham, part of which was broadcast over WOAI, San Antonio. Johnson directed his remarks primarily to the farm audience. He cited how the Agricultural Adjustment Administration had brought cotton prices up from six to twelve cents per pound and stated that the American

¹⁰⁸Ibid., April 2, 1937, p. 8.

farmer had the right to demand federally sponsored farm subsidies through the democratic process;

I believe this nation wants a democratic form of government and if that is true, this nation is just about as competent to decide what it will do when it has too much cotton, and too much mohair as when it has too little cotton and mohair. Agriculture is a national problem as well as a local problem. As a result of the AAA and soil-conservation program, cotton that once sold for six cents now brings twelve. Farmers of this country must continue to have low-interest rates, improved marketing conditions for their products and soil conservation must be practiced. All of these things have been done under the Roosevelt Administration. . . .

. . . Most of you remember the dark days when cotton was selling for a nickel, mohair for six cents, wool for eight cents and cattle for six and seven dollars a head. What are you receiving today for these same products? Did this happen by accident? I think not. I stand for continuation of the program begun by President Roosevelt to improve the conditions of the farmer. The president has proved himself a true friend of the farmer. I pledge you my cooperation in continuation and completion of that program.¹⁰⁹

The last week of the campaign opened with a general feeling among the experts that Harris, Avery, or Johnson would be the next representative from the Tenth Congressional District. The Austin American election poll of April 4 showed that Johnson and Harris were "neck-and-neck," drawing slightly ahead of Avery. Bracketed just below the three leaders were Shelton, Brownlee, and Stone. The Austin newspaper survey had been made during the fifth week of the campaign, and it was conceded by the poll-takers that any last minute bandwagon movement in the final week could change the situation

¹⁰⁹Brenham Banner-Press, April 2, 1937, pp. 1-3.

radically in several of the counties where voter sentiment was evenly divided.¹¹⁰

C. N. Avery greatly increased his campaign activity during the last week. He made several radio talks, spoke at large rallies in Taylor and Prairiehill, and closed his campaign at Wooldridge Park in Austin. At Prairiehill, only a few miles from the resting place of the late Buchanan, Avery delivered a solemn pledge to do all in his power to serve the Tenth District in Congress in "the great Buchanan tradition of fairness to all and common sense in government." Avery said:

No man in this race can step right in and take Buchanan's place. He was too big a man, and in comparison, all of us are too small. All the voters can do is select a man to replace him who was close to him, who loved him, and who can with the least delay do his humble bit to see that Buchanan's dreams of a greater central Texas are fulfilled.¹¹¹

On Thursday, Avery reviewed his previous record of service to the people of Central Texas and jibed Lyndon Johnson in his first Austin radio speech of the campaign. Avery told his radio listeners that he was chiefly responsible for the beautiful highways in Central Texas and said that as Highway Commissioner under Governor W. P. Hobby, he personally saw that every county in the Tenth District received its share of good roads. Avery pointed out that it was in his administration as Austin Water and Light Commissioner that the

¹¹⁰ Austin American-Statesman, April 4, 1937, p. 1.

¹¹¹ Brenham Banner-Press, April 6, 1937, p. 2.

present Austin water-filtration plant was built. "Before that," Avery said, "Austin citizens drank muddy water drawn from wells along the banks of the Colorado River." He also mentioned that as Austin commissioner he started the beautification program at Barton Springs in Austin and said he would continue to fight for similar beautification projects for Central Texas if elected to Congress. Avery took time in this radio address to charge Lyndon Johnson with deceit, saying:

Johnson has been in Austin on a federal payroll, and so far as I know, has been doing a pretty good job as state youth administrator. But he says that President Roosevelt gave him \$5,000 and hurried him off to Texas to handle this movement. He received his appointment like everyone else, from the organization in Washington set-up to handle those things. But he would lead you to believe in his advertisements and speeches that the whole administration is hoping and praying that he will be elected. This is deceit on his part. I have information that the president and other high officials are taking no interest in this campaign except to see that a friend of the administration is elected.¹¹²

At Taylor, Avery candidly answered the charge made against him that he had been a Washington lobbyist for the Texas Quarries Corporation of Austin. He said: "Some of the kids in this race against me have called me a lobbyist. I say you need a lobbyist in Washington and you ought to send me up there if I'm such a darn good one." Avery, who spoke to a large crowd assembled on the city-hall plaza, fought back by saying: "I suppose this young squirrel Lyndon

¹¹²Austin Statesman, April 7, 1937, p. 3.

Johnson would have all the stone sold for government buildings bought from Indiana instead of from your own Williamson County quarries." He continued: "I heard your county agent say last week at a farmers' meeting that what we need in Washington is a lobbyist for the farmer. The barbers have more power than all the farmers because they are organized and have their lobbyist." Avery said that he was a farmer and that he wanted a chance to lobby for the farmers of the Tenth District in Washington.¹¹³

Avery closed his campaign on election eve at an Austin rally held in Wooldridge Park. He continued to stay on the defensive by answering a charge made by Lyndon Johnson that Avery had paid \$8000 a year for a Washington hotel suite while lobbying for the Texas Quarries Corporation. Avery explained the charge by saying:

I'm Scotch. I'd have bought myself a house before I would have paid that kind of money for rent. The reason I took decent living quarters in a hotel was I can't work in a basement like Johnson says he did. I need fresh air. I can't be in a rat hole.

Avery then countered with the charge that Johnson had spent huge sums of money in the campaign despite his claim that he was financing his campaign with his "meager savings." Avery referred to his young opponent as that "burr-headed boy and that horn-blowing young man who mistakes the echoes of his own noise for votes." Avery quoted a member of Johnson's

¹¹³Austin American, April 8, 1937, p. 3.

organization to the effect that Johnson planned to go outside the district to make his closing speech of the campaign in San Antonio. "That's very appropriate. He might do better down there where I hear most of his support is coming from." Avery closed out his campaign at Wooldridge Park by saying that he was not "going to talk about his opponents." He asserted that "I felt like taking the bark off some of them, but I was advised against it. I feel like under the circumstances that I will leave these other gentlemen to the winds as I am sure you will tomorrow."¹¹⁴

Polk Shelton began the final week by issuing a news release which stated that the Austin American election survey was totally inaccurate. He said:

Now, the trouble with these polls the Austin American is running is that they ask the wrong people what they think. I conducted a poll by long distance to every part of the district and I was pleased to find myself so far out in front I couldn't even recognize the other candidates in the race. The only poll that matters in this race will be cast April 10 when the voters express their views on the plan to wreck the supreme court. Their one chance to say they are against the sit-down strikes and against destroying the court as the only barrier between them and the lawless seizure of property by sit-downers, is to vote for my platform which opposes both of these un-American ideas.¹¹⁵

Shelton's brother and law partner, Emmett Shelton, spoke before a group of Hays County voters in San Marcos early in the final week. He stated that Johnson had borrowed money

¹¹⁴Ibid., April 10, 1937, p. 3.

¹¹⁵Austin Daily Dispatch, April 5, 1937, p. 4.

from the student-loan fund while he attended college in San Marcos and that he had failed to repay this loan "until last year when he got the congressional bee in his bonnet." Emmett Shelton declared that "Landon" (as he jibed Johnson) was trying to run both on the President's coat-tail and also on the coat-tail of Richard Kleberg. He accused Johnson of being like Kleberg and said that last week Kleberg had voted against the Jones-Bankhead bill in Congress which provided for long-term loans at low-interest rates for farmers. Emmett Shelton continued his assault on Johnson by saying that Roy Miller, a vice president of the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company, had written letters into the district asking the voters to support Johnson. He said that Johnson's heavy expenditures of money in the campaign had been charged to Miller and his associates and that Johnson had the complete support of the sulphur interest in this campaign.¹¹⁶

On April 8, Shelton spoke to his native South Austin in a home-coming rally where he was cheered by lifetime friends. He spoke before an audience of 800 to 1,000 people made up mostly of family groups. He renewed his denunciation of sit-down strikers, and said, "these candidates and those politicians who would destroy the integrity of the United States Supreme Court have set the example for the disregard of law of 'sit-down anarchy.'" Shelton said that his third trip

¹¹⁶San Marcos Daily News, April 5, 1937, p. 2.

around the district had convinced him that the people realized that they were voting on the question of "stuffing" the Supreme Court and reinterpreting the Constitution with or without their consent. He said:

The voters know that this is not a pro-or-anti-Roosevelt election. They realize that they are asked the question: Are you for or against permitting congress to stack the court? They recognize the issue as fundamental and of greater importance than personalities and parties. They will answer it the American way at the ballot box Saturday.

Shelton closed his campaign at a rally in San Marcos on Friday. His campaign manager, Elbert Hooper, addressed the voters over radio station KNOW, Austin, on election eve.¹¹⁷

Merton Harris steadily increased his support of President Roosevelt on all issues and stressed his platform plank which called for strict American neutrality in the event of a foreign war as he swung through Williamson, Burnet, and Hays counties during the final week. Harris spoke to a large crowd at the college auditorium in San Marcos early in the week. He was introduced by Dean J. E. Abney who firmly endorsed Harris's candidacy. The candidate devoted much of his speech to the question of the entry of America into a second European war:

On this twentieth anniversary of America's entrance into the world war, it is only fitting that we stop and think. I am sure that you have noticed the large amount of scrap iron that is being gathered onto trucks and shipped away. That iron is going to European countries to be made into guns. Europe is rapidly preparing for another war. All indications point in that direction. . . .

¹¹⁷ Austin American, April 9, 1937, p. 3.

. . . I know there are mothers listening to me, to whom the last great war brought nothing but memory of a beloved son, who parted from them forever to die fighting a stranger's battle. I promise you that I will never vote to plunge this country into another foreign war. Furthermore, I am going to introduce a bill which will take the profit out of war by providing for conscription of industry as well as man-power in the line of war.¹¹⁸

In a mid-week radio broadcast from Austin, Harris promised to work for a larger federal allocation of funds to the Texas State Department of Health. He said that Texas lawmakers had been unable to obtain sufficient funds to look after the health of Texas school children properly and that many deserving young people have been forced to start life under a severe handicap. Harris said that he considered this fight against disease in schools so important that he would promote legislation in the Congress to have the federal government allocate funds to the states for a variety of public health programs in the public schools.¹¹⁹

Harris closed his campaign at Smithville, where he addressed about 1,500 partisan supporters on the city plaza. He declared that he would support Roosevelt on all issues and said that if the President should lose in his current fight to pack the Supreme Court, "it will likely weaken his influence, and possibly destroy a large part of the plans which he has so conscientiously worked out for the benefit of the masses of the people."¹²⁰

¹¹⁸San Marcos Daily News, April 5, 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁹Austin American, April 6, 1937, p. 3.

¹²⁰Bastrop Advertiser, April 9, 1937, p. 1.

Houghton Brownlee traveled to Brenham for a major speaking engagement on April 6; then he campaigned in Austin during the remainder of the last week. In his Brenham speech, Brownlee restated his charge that the utility interests were attempting to elect a congressman in order that they might get control of the Colorado River dams. Turning to the farm issue, Brownlee said that he was appealing to the farmers for support because he was a farmer himself. "I have always been and still am a farmer. I am the only candidate who can say that they are the farmer's friend." Brownlee said that "I believe a farmer knows that only a farmer knows his real needs."¹²¹

Late in the week Brownlee addressed a crowd of approximately 250 persons at East Avenue and First Street in Austin. He devoted a major portion of his speech to a denunciation of the Austin American, the paper which had recently predicted that Brownlee would place nearly last in the oncoming election. "If you hunt for the truth you don't read it in the American," Brownlee declared. "I take this Austin paper, but I have to read a Houston paper to see whether the Austin American is telling the truth." Brownlee said that the Austin paper was owned by a Yankee who did not live in Texas. "It is a chain company with papers in both the North and the South. The same editor writes a Democratic editorial for some papers and

¹²¹Brenham Banner-Press, April 7, 1937, p. 2.

a Republican editorial for the others. I would rather have them against me than for me." Brownlee continued by saying that the Austin American editors were told to do anything they could to beat Brownlee. He said that he had a bill up for consideration in the Senate to spend \$250,000 for construction of new office buildings to house several state departments which had offices in the Austin American-Statesman building.¹²²

Brownlee closed his campaign on election eve with a speech at Fulmore School in South Austin. He reviewed his legislative record in the Senate, pledged his support to the problems of old-age assistance, and advocated a reduction in electric rates to Austin consumers. Brownlee compared the Austin American election poll to the Literary Digest poll which predicted that Alfred Landon would upset Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1936 Presidential election. "I will win this race and I tell you this because this 'Literary Digest Newspaper Poll' has been publishing a lot of misinformation." Brownlee said that the Austin newspaper editors were trying to destroy the faith of his friends and get the band wagon vote for some other candidate. In conclusion, Brownlee vigorously denied the charge made by his opponent Lyndon Johnson that Brownlee had voted for the Holbrook Resolution which condemned the President's Court plan. "I'd soon as

¹²² Austin American, April 8, 1937, p. 6.

say they were ignorant as to say they lied," Brownlee declared. "I voted for the resolution by Senator Edward Moore that said adding to or taking from the supreme court is not for the best interests of the country. I still believe that way, and if you don't agree with me, I can't help it."¹²³

Sam V. Stone campaigned in Austin during the last week and revisited the larger towns in Hays, Williamson, and Caldwell counties. In a news statement, Stone declared that he would not withdraw from the race before the election on Saturday despite rumors to the contrary. He stated that even though he had been approached by several candidates to withdraw from the race, "the only way I will be retired at all will be by the voters themselves on Saturday."¹²⁴

Stone spoke frequently during the last week of his "very good chances of being elected" and referred often to his long residency in the Tenth District as an important qualification for office in this election. At San Marcos, Stone said:

I have a very definite conviction after traveling all over the tenth district that the voters of the district want a congressman who has lived here long enough to know something of their problems, and not a candidate who has never lived in the district as a private citizen. I have lived here all of my life.

I haven't much faith in newspaper polls which give first place in this race to a candidate who has never paid but one poll tax in this district. I am coming out of my home county of Williamson with 4,500 or more votes, and I believe that will be substantially more votes than any of the five Travis County candidates

¹²³Ibid., April 10, 1937, p. 10.

¹²⁴Ibid., April 7, 1937, p. 7.

will get in their home county. I believe that this lead, together with other support will be sufficient to win the race.¹²⁵

Stone relied on friends and supporters to close his campaign during the last two days. District Judge Will Nunn of Georgetown spoke in Taylor late in the campaign and blasted C. N. Avery and Lyndon Johnson, two favorites to win the election. He charged Avery with being a lobbyist for the Texas Quarries Corporation and said that Avery would not have time to represent the Tenth District due to his extensive business interest. Nunn said:

This Lyndon Johnson is a young, young man. It is bad enough when you get too old a man in congress, but it's worse to take off the baby robes and put on the togs. Let Johnson get some more experience before you send him to congress.

Nunn said that most of the candidates who claimed to be for the President would get just about as much attention from the President "as a safety-razor salesman at a barbers' convention."¹²⁶

Lyndon Johnson climaxed his campaign activity with a series of speeches in Travis County. On Monday, Johnson addressed 200 Blanco County supporters at the Travis County Courthouse. The Blanco County delegation had motored to Austin to hear their favorite son in the closing days of the campaign. Johnson ridiculed Avery and Harris, the two

¹²⁵San Marcos Daily News, April 6, 1937, p. 3.

¹²⁶Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), April 8, 1937, p. 2.

opponents ranked closest to him in the Austin American poll. He referred to Avery by saying: "One good friend in this race is all mixed up. He thinks he is running for the third house--you know, there is the upper, the lower, and the third house. You Austin people ought to know about the third house. Johnson continued:

Two of us in this race have Washington experience. I had mine in the first house serving the farmers and the working men, taking care of the little problems of the people of a Texas district. This other fellow got some experience in Washington--twenty-five years of it, he says. I know when I was living in the basement room of a little hotel, he had a suite in a big hotel and was eating caviar. That hotel suite must have cost him \$8000-a-year.

If you want a congressman who will serve some particular special interest part of the time and you when he has time, you don't want me. I didn't get my experience in the cloak rooms or in the cocktail bars buttonholing congressmen to ask when public buildings were going up in their districts so I could seal them stone from the company I represented.¹²⁷

At Smithville, Johnson debated Polk Shelton's brother, Emmett Shelton, before several-hundred people who had gathered downtown for the weekly appreciation-day prize drawing sponsored by local merchants. Shelton began the debate with an urgent appeal in behalf of his brother's anti-Court plan plank and his opposition to sit-down strikers, and then leveled fire with a series of charges against Lyndon Johnson. Shelton said that Johnson had spent from \$15,000 to \$20,000 in the campaign for a job that pays only \$10,000 annually. He charged that Johnson had the backing of the sulphur

¹²⁷ Austin Statesman, April 6, 1937, p. 3.

interest and the utilities and that Johnson's declaration that the Supreme Court question was the paramount issue in the campaign was only a "smoke-screen" to hide the fact that he was being backed by the private-utility companies. Shelton said that Johnson was a newcomer to the Tenth District, that he came from the smallest county in the district, and that he had paid his poll tax for only two years. He concluded by challenging Johnson to state his views concerning the recent wave of sit-down strikes.

Taking his turn in the debate, Johnson countered by saying:

I am not going to attempt to answer all the wild charges made here this afternoon by a dying desperate candidate. But there's one I have to plead guilty to--and gladly. Sure, I was born in Johnson City in the small county of Blanco, and I've paid my poll tax there ever since I could vote. Now, I didn't have any jurisdiction over where I was born. If my mother had known that you wanted a city slicker or a ward boss for a candidate, maybe she'd been able to do something about it.

Johnson declared that his campaign was financed by his own "meager savings" and said that he had never accepted a dime from any special-interest group. Johnson concluded his debate with Emmett Shelton with a statement that elicited laughter and four rounds of applause from the Smithville crowd. He said that earlier in the campaign candidate Shelton had taken photographs of a large Smithville crowd, who had gathered for the weekly appreciation-day drawing, and that Shelton then had those pictures published in an Austin newspaper saying that the entire crowd had gathered just to hear him speak. Johnson said that he was not going

to have any photographs made of this large Smithville crowd and then go back to Austin and have them published saying that the crowd had all come out to hear him speak, even if Polk Shelton thought this campaign-trick appropriate.¹²⁸

On Wednesday, Johnson summarized his campaign platform before a large Austin crowd at Wooldridge Park. He said:

When I first announced I told the voters of the district that I wholeheartedly supported President Roosevelt and his program. I have repeated this statement in every speech I have made and I repeat it now. The Roosevelt program has been aimed at improving the conditions of Mr. Average Man in this country and that's why I am for it.

Some other candidates came out and yawned about the program and said, "yes, it's all right." But soon the Austin newspapers took a poll on reform of the supreme court. Sentiment was ten to one for a change, and right away all these balky candidates started yelling that they had been misunderstood. I guess one of them had been taking a referendum on it, because he soon expanded his one sentence about the supreme court to a whole speech full of eagle screams and flagwaving. The voters need to send a champion of the president to congress, not somebody who will go balkily along like a mule at the end of a rope.¹²⁹

A photograph of Lyndon Johnson campaigning at the above-mentioned Austin rally is given in Figure 12.

On Thursday, Johnson swung through Elgin, Bastrop, and McDade in Bastrop County and then returned to Austin where he spoke before a large crowd in the Travis County Courthouse. Reverend Luther Norman of Austin introduced candidate Johnson and read a telegram from Elliott Roosevelt, son of the

¹²⁸Bastrop Advertiser, April 9, 1937, p. 4.

¹²⁹Austin Statesman, April 8, 1937, p. 4.



FIGURE 12
LYNDON JOHNSON CAMPAIGNING AT WOOLDRIDGE PARK
IN AUSTIN, TEXAS
Carroll Keach Scrapbooks

President, which endorsed Johnson's candidacy. The telegram stated:

May I wish you every success and a glorious victory in your race for congress. I feel sure that when you get to congress the administration will have a young vigorous and ardent supporter representing the tenth district from Texas. Your past record as state director of the NYA has demonstrated your organizational ability and high fitness for this office.

Sincerely your friend,

Elliott Roosevelt¹³⁰

After the reading of Elliott Roosevelt's telegram, Johnson was stricken ill during the course of his speech at the Travis County Courthouse. He had cut his speech short because of his illness but insisted upon shaking hands with a number of listeners at this rally before pain forced him to give up the job and he was taken home by friends. Later that night friends took Johnson to Seton Infirmary in Austin where he underwent an emergency-appendectomy operation. Newspapers reported the next day that Johnson was resting well and that his scheduled closing rally at Luling, which was to be broadcast over WOAI, would be held as scheduled with friends of Johnson speaking in his behalf.¹³¹

The Election

The Austin American-Statesman poll of April 4 was the only comprehensive election forecast of the 1937 special

¹³⁰Austin American, April 9, 1937, p. 2.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 1.

election. Editors Gordon Fulcher and Tom Whitehead had traveled approximately 1,000 miles throughout each county in the Tenth District. They talked with farmers, day laborers, local newspaper editors, bank presidents, lawyers, doctors, and laymen to reach their conclusions. The survey was conducted along the same successful lines as that of the Institute of Public Opinion and attempted to give readers a cross-section view of the contest as it stood going into the final week. Although designated percentages of its findings for each candidate were not given, the survey concluded that Johnson and Harris were running very close to top position and that C. N. Avery was in third place. Shelton, Stone, and Brownlee were bracketed just below the three leaders in the order stated.

The survey indicated that over the eastern end of the district where Merton Harris was formerly District Attorney he held the edge over Johnson, but in the western part of the district Johnson appeared to lead by a substantial margin. The survey revealed that Johnson had solid support in Blanco County, heavy backing in Hays County where he attended school, and an even chance to win Burnet County, where he was challenged only by Houghton Brownlee. Although Sam Stone was well entrenched in Williamson County, Johnson was running very close to Avery for second position there. The survey showed that in the western counties Harris's support was less than several of the other candidates.

Avery appeared to be closer to Johnson than Harris in most of these counties.

The poll-takers concluded that in the eastern end of the district Harris had a substantial lead in Bastrop and Burleson counties and strong support in Washington, Caldwell, and Lee counties. Johnson's support in the eastern counties, however, had increased toward the close of the campaign, and he was rated even with Harris in Caldwell and Washington counties. The anti-Court reform candidates, Brownlee and Shelton, had cut into Harris's strength in Lee, Washington, and Burleson counties late in the campaign--a fact which would help candidate Lyndon Johnson.

The survey concluded that the election would be decided in Travis County with its 14,714 vote potential. A substantial lead by Harris, Johnson, or Avery in that county would probably swing the election for one of these contestants. If the Travis County vote were split evenly between the major candidates, however, then an entirely different situation would develop, according to the survey. Sam Stone, who reportedly would receive about 4,000 votes in his home county, was given an outside chance of winning the election if the Travis County vote were split somewhat evenly among the leaders. Neither of the anti-Court plan candidates was given much of a chance to win the election, although Polk Shelton was given some hope, assuming the entire block of

anti-Court reform votes went to him and were not split with Brownlee.¹³²

Shortly before election day, county officials over the district estimated that sixty percent of the voting strength would be cast. That meant that approximately 30,000 persons were expected to vote. There were 41,135 poll-tax payments in the district, but "over" and "under" exemptions brought the total to approximately 50,000 voters. The average voter turnout in off-year elections had been about fifty percent of the District's voting strength, a fact which indicated that the 1937 special-election campaign had generated a great deal of voter interest.¹³³

The weather, always a factor, had a "double attack" on this election. Observers predicted that if the weather was clear many farmers busy in the fields planting their spring crops would not take the time to vote. On the other hand, a heavy rain would cut down the vote by discouraging voters from going to the polling stations. Political observers agreed that Johnson and Harris, who expected a large farm vote, would welcome a light rain--just enough to keep the farmers out of the field. Avery and Shelton, however, who found a great deal of their support among merchants and

¹³²Austin American-Statesman, April 4, 1937, pp. 7-8

¹³³Austin American, April 9, 1937, p. 12.

bankers, would be happy to see the weather clear and dry on election day.¹³⁴ The official weather forecast showed a prospect for partly cloudy weather with a chance for rain over the eastern end of the district. This was interpreted as favorable to both Johnson and Harris.

All of the candidates expressed their confidence in the outcome of the election in the last days of the campaign. Another swift tour of the entire Tenth District had been made by trained reporters from the Austin American-Statesman just before election day. This survey revealed that Harris, Johnson, and Avery were bunched so closely at the top that it was impossible to predict with any degree of certainty who would win. This latest survey predicted, however, that Roosevelt appeared certain to have a congressman elected pledged to support his New Deal program, including reform of the Supreme Court.¹³⁵

Lyndon Johnson had taken an early lead Saturday evening shortly after the polls closed. During the next day as additional returns came in, the Johnson lead was increased to approximately 3,000 with an estimated 1,000 votes not accounted for. The Texas Election Bureau reported that ninety-seven percent of the vote had been counted by noon,

¹³⁴Austin American-Statesman, April 4, 1937, p. 9.

¹³⁵Austin American, April 9, 1937, p. 1.

April 11, and that Johnson won the election by an overwhelming margin. The unofficial returns for the six leading candidates were as follows:

Lyndon B. Johnson. . . .	8,156
Merton L. Harris	5,023
Polk Shelton	4,308
Sam V. Stone	3,987
C. N. Avery.	3,846
Houghton Brownlee. . . .	2,911 136

A study of the returns showed that Johnson had won a majority of votes in six counties, including Blanco, Hays, Caldwell, Washington, Burnet, and Travis. Johnson's overwhelming victory in the western counties, his decisive win in Travis County, and his better than expected vote in the eastern end of the district had given the young candidate a plurality in the election. Johnson had won in the home counties of three of his principal opponents: Travis, where Avery, Brownlee and Shelton resided, and Burnet, where Senator Brownlee was reared and had ranching interests. He placed a strong second in two counties which had favorite sons in the race, Williamson and Bastrop counties. He placed third man in Lee County but was only 163 votes behind the leader there. Johnson's biggest set-back was in Burleson County where he placed third, approximately 400 votes behind the leader, Merton Harris.

Harris had been unable to amass a sufficient lead in his old judicial district in the eastern part of the Tenth

¹³⁶Austin American-Statesman, April 11, 1937, p. 2.

District to overcome Johnson's lead in the west. He lost Washington County to Johnson and Lee County to Shelton. Although Harris carried Bastrop and Burleson counties, he failed to do well in Travis County, finishing fourth behind Johnson, Shelton, and Avery. Harris had very little support in Hays, Blanco, Burnet, and Williamson counties, where he polled less than 500 votes.

Polk Shelton's overall strength throughout the district proved surprising. He carried Lee County, finished second in Travis and Burleson counties, and placed third man in Hays and Caldwell counties. Shelton, however, had to split the anti-Court plan vote with Brownlee, who polled approximately 3,000 votes across the district. The combined vote for Shelton and Brownlee totaled 7,439, about one-fourth of the total cast.

Williamson County voters, stirred by reports that they would switch from their native son, Sam Stone, had gone to the polls in great numbers and cast a sufficient vote to make Stone a factor. He received approximately sixty percent of the Williamson County vote but failed to gain the necessary votes outside his home county to challenge the leaders. His combined vote in the other counties amounted to only 824 votes.

The big surprise of the election had been the low vote received by C. N. Avery. He placed second in only two counties, Hays and Blanco. Avery found almost all of his support

District to overcome Johnson's lead in the west. He lost Washington County to Johnson and Lee County to Shelton. Although Harris carried Bastrop and Burleson counties, he failed to do well in Travis County, finishing fourth behind Johnson, Shelton, and Avery. Harris had very little support in Hays, Blanco, Burnet, and Williamson counties, where he polled less than 500 votes.

Polk Shelton's overall strength throughout the district proved surprising. He carried Lee County, finished second in Travis and Burleson counties, and placed third man in Hays and Caldwell counties. Shelton, however, had to split the anti-Court plan vote with Brownlee, who polled approximately 3,000 votes across the district. The combined vote for Shelton and Brownlee totaled 7,439, about one-fourth of the total cast.

Williamson County voters, stirred by reports that they would switch from their native son, Sam Stone, had gone to the polls in great numbers and cast a sufficient vote to make Stone a factor. He received approximately sixty percent of the Williamson County vote but failed to gain the necessary votes outside his home county to challenge the leaders. His combined vote in the other counties amounted to only 824 votes.

The big surprise of the election had been the low vote received by C. N. Avery. He placed second in only two counties, Hays and Blanco. Avery found almost all of his support

in Williamson and Travis counties, the two most populous counties in the district, where he placed third. Brownlee finished sixth in the contest behind Avery.

One of the minor candidates, Ayres K. Ross, polled more votes than expected. The Townsendite candidate received 1,088 votes to finish seventh. Edwin Waller, the perennial San Marcos candidate, finished in eighth position with 18 votes. Stanley S. Smith, who had withdrawn from the race after the ballots were printed, challenged Waller with a total of 12 votes across the district.

The official returns showed that all of the ten counties had sent in their totals for a grand total of 29,947 votes cast. Johnson had received 8,280 votes to 21,667 for his opponents. The State Canvassing Board's official count by counties is given in Table IV.

The Aftermath

Lyndon Johnson happily received reports of his election to Congress at the Seton Infirmary where he was convalescing from his recent appendectomy operation. He immediately issued a statement to the press in which he acknowledged that his election had come as the emphatic endorsement of President Roosevelt's program by the voters of Central Texas. In this news release Johnson said:

I take the results of this election, not as a tribute to myself, but as a vote of confidence in President Roosevelt and his program. I am thankful of course for

TABLE IV

RESULTS OF SPECIAL ELECTION FOR REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS,
TENTH DISTRICT OF TEXAS, HELD APRIL 10, 1937.

Candidates:	Merton Harris	Lyndon Johnson	Ayers K. Ross	Sam V. Stone	C. N. Avery	Houghton Brownlee	Polk Shelton	Stanley S. Smith	Edwin Waller	Total
<u>Counties in 10th District</u>										
Bastrop	1,303	520	79	22	271	222	207	0	2	2,626
Blanco	32	688	18	11	82	44	49	0	1	925
Burleson	624	231	45	60	142	173	370	2	1	1,648
Burnet	53	518	39	90	155	471	69	0	0	1,395
Caldwell	418	663	141	52	155	67	236	5	2	1,739
Hays	149	940	171	66	270	60	218	0	9	1,883
Lee	351	285	12	75	70	283	443	0	0	1,519
Travis	1,483	2,962	479	297	1,893	1,023	2,167	4	3	10,311
Washington	538	735	8	195	190	362	341	0	0	2,369
Williamson	<u>160</u>	<u>738</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>3,180</u>	<u>723</u>	<u>314</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5,532</u>
Totals	<u>5,111</u>	<u>8,280</u>	<u>1,088</u>	<u>4,048</u>	<u>3,951</u>	<u>3,019</u>	<u>4,420</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>29,947</u>

1936 Congressional Election Register, p. 532.Records in office of Secretary of State,
Texas Capitol Building, Austin, Texas.

the fine support which was given me, for the friends who have worked hard for my election, and for the confidence which has been expressed in me. I shall be out of the hospital in a few days and I shall then endeavor to make this district a representative of which it will be proud.¹³⁷

A photograph showing Lyndon Johnson at the Seton Infirmary shortly after his election to Congress is given in Figure 13.

The press reported that Johnson had received over 200 telegrams from friends, members of the Texas Congressional delegation, and other well-wishers. James A. Farley wired his congratulations from New York. Governor Allred called on the young candidate at his hospital bed and told him that he had personally broadcast the news of the election over the radio during the course of a political dinner at Fort Worth on Sunday. House majority leader Sam Rayburn telegraphed Johnson his warm congratulations and said, "It will be a great pleasure to serve with you." Other Texas Congressmen who wired or telephoned were: Senator Tom Connally, Representatives Richard Kleberg, Robert E. Thomason, and W. D. McFarlane.¹³⁸

The voter's verdict was interpreted as a strong endorsement of the President's Supreme Court reform proposal. The New York Times hailed the election as an argument in favor of the President's Court plan and the Administration's entire

¹³⁷Austin American-Statesman, April 11, 1937, p. 1.

¹³⁸Ibid., pp. 1-2.

Happy Days Are Really Here for Him



Photo by Neal Douglass

FIGURE 13

PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING A HAPPY LYNDON JOHNSON CONVALESCING AT SETON INFIRMARY AFTER HEARING NEWS OF HIS ELECTION TO CONGRESS. Photograph by Neal Douglass in Austin American, April 11, 1937, p. 1.

program.¹³⁹ The news of Johnson's election also stirred comment from several members of the United States Senate where the Court question had been vigorously debated throughout the 1937 election campaign. Senator Edmund Logan, Democrat of Kentucky, and a strong proponent of the Court bill, said that the election was the first and only test of the President's Court reform plan since it had been proposed. He said, "It ought to serve notice on those members of congress who are in opposition that they are not following the popular course." On the other hand, Senator Van Nuys, Democrat of Indiana, asserted:

Johnson's advocacy of the president's court plan, I suppose, was the popular thing to do from a partisan standpoint, but even if the result is indicative of how the people feel some of us would rather sacrifice personal ambition than succumb to a popular movement which strikes at the very fundamentals of our government.¹⁴⁰

In the months that followed Johnson's election, the President's Court "packing" bill was substituted by a compromise bill which revamped procedural reforms in the lower federal courts, but not in the Supreme Court.¹⁴¹ Johnson's vociferous and aggressive support of the President's Court plan had, therefore, little effect on the fate of the bill which would have given the President power to appoint six

¹³⁹New York Times, April 11, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰Austin American-Statesman, April 11, 1937, p. 1.

¹⁴¹C. Dwight Dorrough, Mr. Sam, pp. 160-161.

new judges on the Supreme Court. Lyndon Johnson's campaign efforts in behalf of the President, at a time when his entire domestic program was under fire by members of both parties, insured for the young twenty-eight-year-old Congressman a warm reception by the Administration upon his election to Congress.

At the time Johnson was released from the hospital, President Roosevelt happened to be on a much publicized fishing cruise in the Gulf of Mexico off the Texas coast. Roosevelt had sent word to Governor Allred that he would like to meet the young belligerent from the Texas Hill Country who had fought and won under the colors of the New Deal in his first election campaign. When the presidential-craft docked at Galveston on May 12, Johnson was brought aboard and introduced to Roosevelt by his personal friend, Governor Allred. Roosevelt then invited Johnson to ride with him through Texas on the President's special train.¹⁴² It was on this journey that the President and young Johnson began a friendship that endured for the remaining eight years of Roosevelt's life.

Lyndon B. Johnson served the people of the Tenth Congressional District effectively and with distinction for six consecutive terms following his election in 1937. During his first four years in Congress, he broadened and developed the program for electric power, water conservation, and flood

¹⁴²Houston Post, May 13, 1937, pp. 1-2; Harry Provence, Lyndon B. Johnson: A Biography, p. 55.

control of the Lower Colorado River Authority. He was a member of the Committee on Naval Affairs and played an active part in the establishment of the Naval R.O.T.C. unit at the University of Texas, the Naval Reserve station at Dallas, and the expansion of the shipyards at Houston and Orange, where defense construction was being carried on. He gave every possible aid to farm-credit advancement, fought for lower-freight rates for the Southwest, and was active in obtaining the first slum-clearance projects in Texas. Johnson continued his support of the National Youth Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and other youth projects. In 1939, President Roosevelt offered Johnson the appointment as federal administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration. This was a recognition of Johnson's success in establishing the largest rural-electrification project in the world in the Tenth Congressional District, the Pedernales Electric Cooperative. But Johnson declined the appointment to continue his work as Congressman.¹⁴³

Of all the members of the Texas delegation in Congress, Johnson was considered by many to be closest to the President and his policies. When Senator Morris Sheppard died in April, 1941, Johnson entered the Texas special senatorial election with the blessings of the Roosevelt Administration. In this

¹⁴³Lyndon B. Johnson for United States Senator, campaign sheet issued in the 1941 Texas special senatorial election in Sam Fore, Jr. Scrapbook.

election Johnson suffered his first political setback, being defeated by W. Lee O'Daniel in the second Democratic Primary. Johnson tried again for the Senate in 1948, and this time defeated former Governor Coke Stevenson by a slim margin in the runoff election. Following his overwhelming re-election to the Senate in 1954, Johnson was elected Senate majority leader by his colleagues and continued to serve in that position until he became vice-president in 1961. His sweeping victory in the 1964 presidential election marked the highpoint of Lyndon B. Johnson's eminently successful political career.

CONCLUSIONS

The period of Lyndon B. Johnson's early political life, beginning with his first trip to Washington in December, 1931, and climaxed by his election to Congress in April, 1937, constituted a highly significant period in the development of both his political talent and political philosophy. The training and experience he gained in the 1930's proved to be an invaluable asset in furthering Lyndon Johnson's brilliant career in national politics.

As secretary to Congressman Richard Kleberg, Johnson gained a superb education in the art of practical politics. While serving Congressman Kleberg and his Texas constituents, Johnson learned as Harry Provence wrote:

. . . that a friend is worth a thousand letters; that knowledge is indeed power; that a reputation for helping in return for help is the open sesame to nearly all doors of bureaucracy; and that insistence, if properly applied, can speed up the normal pace of government business.¹

William S. White, in his recent work on the President, summarized Johnson's first Washington experience as follows:

Lyndon Johnson's four years as secretary, alter-ego, and vital first assistant to Congressman Richard Kleberg transformed him from a boy to a man in far more than the chronological sense. These years formed an odd, indeed an unexampled, post-graduate course, for a very apt pupil, in several subjects of a curriculum which instinctively he laid out for himself and which he

¹Harry Provence, Lyndon B. Johnson: A Biography, p 43.

pursued with dogged persistence. At the end he had extracted the last ounce of knowledge from all its aspects: the identification, pursuit, capture and use of political power in the great public community of Washington--the White House, the Congress, the bureaucracy, the party national committees. The identification, pursuit, capture and mutual use of friendships with low and high; the clerical help in Congress; members of Congress; and the Roosevelt assistants of that moving and sometimes chaotic New Deal era. . . .²

Lyndon Johnson's exercise in practical politics, however, by no means constituted the full range of his political education during his four years as a Congressman's secretary. From the vantage point of Richard Kleberg's office, Johnson observed the efforts of President Roosevelt to ease the economic disorder produced by the Great Depression; and it was during this perilous period in the history of the nation that he crystallized much of his political philosophy. As a congressional secretary, Johnson supported Roosevelt's relief and recovery legislative program; and later, as head of the National Youth Administration in Texas, he helped to implement the New Deal in his native state. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the man, and his political philosophy had made a lasting impact on young Lyndon Johnson.

Marjorie Hunter of the New York Times recently wrote of Johnson's days with the National Youth Administration. She stated that President Johnson's memories of those hard depression years spurred his current domestic programs for youth:

²William S. White, The Professional Lyndon B. Johnson, p. 133.

It was in the summer of 1935, and young people by the thousands clung to the dusty boxcars of freight trains rumbling through Texas. Ragged and hungry they rode the rails heading away from where they had been, but not knowing where they were going. The depression was heavy in the land. It was this sight of a constantly moving army of the jobless young that greeted a tall young Texan not quite 27 years old, when he came home from Washington that summer. His mission was to get the young people off the boxcars and the street corners and onto a payroll. He said: "As I see it, my job is to work myself out of a job."

Working a 16 hour day, then sitting up half the night to talk about what had been done and could be done, he moved swiftly to put young people to work or back in school. It was the same pattern of life he was to carry into the White House nearly 28 years later. He was also to carry into the White House the same determination to help the nation's poor of a later generation--the estimated 30 million Americans who today live in poverty or on its fringes. His declaration of a total war on poverty in January of 1964. . . can be viewed as a direct outgrowth of his experience in the middle 1930's.³

The National Youth Administration that Lyndon Johnson operated in the 1930's, like the anti-poverty program he has now launched as President, had one central focus: to help people to help themselves. In a speech delivered at the inauguration of James H. McCrocklin as president of Southwest Texas State College in November, 1964, President Johnson outlined his current philosophy of government, the same philosophy that guided his direction of the National Youth Administration program nearly thirty years ago:

The objectives we seek, will not be handed to you by a beneficent Government. The work of a few men in Washington will not make life easier. No one man can lead this nation, and you cannot sit idly by, quietly

³New York Times, December 1, 1964, p. 18.

waiting for the day when someone else will make everything better. My success and America's success will depend on you.⁴

In the spring of 1937, Lyndon Johnson was twenty-eight years of age. By this time he had demonstrated a remarkable talent as a teacher, as a young politician, and a youth administrator. At this early age, he had prepared himself for political life as few other men in the history of American politics have ever done. When the opportunity came for him to run for Congress from the Tenth District of Texas in March, 1937, Lyndon Johnson entered the race as a New Deal candidate, determined to win.

In an editorial of April 15, 1937, the Blanco County News paid tribute to Lyndon Johnson's successful election to Congress, and summed up the forces, both human and physical, which shaped his ultimate victory:

This dynamic young man who will succeed Congressman James P. Buchanan is a typical Central Texan. His forbears helped run the Indians out of the hill country. He himself has met and conquered the obstacles that stand in the way of the average country boy without money or influential friends. He is just "folks."

After a campaign marked by drama and human interest, Johnson was stricken with acute appendicitis on the night before the final day. His last speech was read by Claude Wilde, his campaign manager, at Luling, while Johnson fumed and fretted under the bonds of physical incapacity. Out from under the knife less than ten minutes, young Johnson said: "Get me a cigarette fellows. Lets get going. We're losing lots of time. We've got an election on you know."

The dramatic finish of a dramatic campaign is typical of Johnson. Twenty-eight years ago he first saw the

⁴Ibid.

light of day on a farm in Blanco County, and he early realized that statement made by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes that "all of life is a struggle." When Johnson finished high school he enrolled at San Marcos Teachers College with less than ten dollars in his pocket. He got a job chopping weeds on the campus, when he finished school he was secretary to the president of the college.

After two years of teaching he was called into service by one of the Texas Congressmen as his secretary in Washington. Driving, ambitious, Johnson soon learned the "ropes" in Washington. He made friends, he labored long and hard. In less than one year he was the speaker of the "little Congress," the head man of all the secretaries of all the congressmen. Then the President sent him back to Texas as N.Y.A. Administrator. He put young people to work. He did it fast. He did it efficiently. When Congressman Buchanan died, Johnson decided to run for his place. Against the advice of seasoned politicians, who told him he could not win because he had no machine, and not enough money, Lyndon Johnson declared: "I have a story to tell the people. I will not depend upon political bosses or the controlled vote. I believe if I can see them and look them in the eye, shake their hands and declare my position, I can win."

That program was strenuous. It called for climbing through barbed-wire fences, eating lunches in country stores, munching cheese and crackers and drinking soda pop. It called for driving through cold wet March winds and asking the folks to come to community stores and listen to a twenty-minute speech. It was hard. But all life has been hard for the new Congressman from the Tenth Congressional District of Texas. When he shot marbles on the streets of Johnson City, Lyndon Johnson learned to fight, and he has been fighting ever since. His background and training assure the people of this district that he will continue to fight and to battle for the interest of the home folks.⁵

⁵Blanco County News, April 15, 1937, pp. 1-2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Unpublished Materials

Birdwell, Sherman, Scrapbooks, Austin, Texas.

Fore, Sam Jr., Scrapbook, Floresville, Texas.

Keach, Carroll, Scrapbooks, Robstown, Texas.

Published Materials

Public Documents.--United States Congress:

Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, 1st Session, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1933.

Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1934.

Congressional Record, 74th Congress, 1st Session, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1935.

Congressional Record, 74th Congress, 2nd Session, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1936.

Official Congressional Directory, 73rd Congress, 1st Session, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1934.

Official Congressional Directory, 74th Congress, 1st Session, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1936.

Reports

Johnson, Palmer O., and Oswald L. Harvey, "The National Youth Administration Report," United States Advisory Committee on Education, Staff Study No. 13, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1938.

National Youth Administration; Texas, 1939, "Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas," A Report Prepared by the National Youth Administration, Austin, 1939.

Years of Progress at the Lower Colorado River Authority, A Report Prepared by the Lower Colorado River Authority, Austin, 1965.

Books

Lindley, Betty and Ernest K., A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration, Viking Press, New York, 1938.

Lorwin, Lewis L., Youth Work Programs: Problems and Policies, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1941.

Rosenman, Sammuel I., comp., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. II, The Year of Crisis, 1933, Random House, New York, 1938.

Rosenman, Sammuel I., comp., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. IV, The Court Disapproves, Random House, New York, 1938.

Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, Texas Centennial Edition, 1936, A. H. Belo and Company, Galveston and Dallas, Texas, 1936.

Winslow, Tacher, Youth: A World Problem, National Youth Administration, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1937.

Secondary Sources

Books

Dorough, C. Dwight, Mr. Sam, Random House, New York, 1962.

Mooney, Booth, The Lyndon Johnson Story, Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, New York, 1956.

Montgomery, Ruth, Mrs. L. B. J., Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, 1964.

Newlon, Clarke, L. B. J.: The Man from Johnson City, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1964.

Pool, William C., Emmie Craddock and David E. Conrad, Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years, Southwest Texas State College Press, San Marcos, 1965.

Provence, Harry, Lyndon B. Johnson: A Biography, Fleet Publishing Corporation, New York, 1964.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr., The Age of Roosevelt: The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1957.

Texas, A Guide to the Lone Star State, compiled by workers of the Federal Writers Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Texas, American Guide Series, Hastings House, New York, 1940.

White, William S., The Professional Lyndon B. Johnson, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1964.

Article

Robinson, N. T. N., "Steps Taken to Organize the 72nd Congress," Congressional Digest, Vol. II, No. 1, January, 1932.

Unpublished Manuscripts

Hendrix, Samuel David, "The Educational Values of the National Youth Administration Work-Program in Texas," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Education, University of Texas, Austin, 1942.

McKaye, Vara L., "A Study of the Work of the National Youth Administration in the Fields of Guidance and Placement and of College Aid," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Education, University of Texas, Austin, 1938.

Newspapers

Austin American, July 25, 1932; March 1, 1937; March 3, 1937; March 4, 1937; March 5, 1937; March 10, 1937; March 18, 1937; March 19, 1937; March 22, 1937; March 24, 1937; March 25, 1937; March 26, 1937; March 27, 1937; March 30, 1937; April 1, 1937; April 2, 1937; April 3, 1937; April 6, 1937; April 7, 1937; April 8, 1937; April 9, 1937; April 10, 1937.

Austin American-Statesman (Sunday), February 28, 1937; March 7, 1937; March 14, 1937; March 21, 1937; March 28, 1937; April 4, 1937; April 11, 1937.

Austin Daily Dispatch, March 1, 1937; March 30, 1937; April 5, 1937.

Austin Statesman, August 26, 1935; September 3, 1935; February 20, 1937; March 3, 1937; March 4, 1937; March 5, 1937; March 11, 1937; March 16, 1937; March 20, 1937; March 26, 1937; March 27, 1937; March 31, 1937; April 2, 1937; April 3, 1937; April 6, 1937; April 7, 1937; April 8, 1937.

Bastrop Advertiser, March 12, 1937; March 19, 1937; March 26, 1937; April 9, 1937.

Blanco County News, March 18, 1937; April 1, 1937; April 8, 1937; April 15, 1937.

Brenham Banner-Press, March 18, 1937; March 29, 1937; April 2, 1937; April 6, 1937; April 7, 1937.

Houston Post, May 13, 1937.

Houston Press, November 30, 1931.

New York Times, April 11, 1937; December 1, 1964.

San Antonio Express, November 25, 1931; July 25, 1932; November 9, 1932.

San Marcos Daily News, March 1, 1937; March 4, 1937; March 6, 1937; March 15, 1937; March 27, 1937; March 30, 1937; April 1, 1937; April 5, 1937; April 6, 1937.

State Observer (Austin), March 19, 1937.

Texas Democrat (Austin), March 1, 1937.

Williamson County Sun (Georgetown), March 11, 1937; March 19, 1937; March 27, 1937; April 1, 1937; April 8, 1937.

Letters

Deason, Willard, to the writer, April 14, 1967.

Jones, Luther E, to the writer, March 28, 1967.

Keach, Carroll, to the writer, January 13, 1967.

Kellam, Jesse C., to the writer, March 28, 1967.

Perry, Arthur, to the writer, March 29, 1967.

Roth, Fenner, to the writer, March 4, 1967.

Interviews

Birdwell, Sherman, Austin, Texas, November 8, 1966; Austin, Texas, March 14, 1967.

Fore, Sam Jr., Floresville, Texas, October 13, 1965.

Gideon, Sim, Austin, Texas, September 29, 1966.

Harbin, Estelle, San Antonio, Texas, April 4, 1967.

Haywood, Jesse T., San Antonio, Texas, May 16, 1966.

Jackson, Robert M., Corpus Christi, Texas, February 10, 1967; Conference Telephone Call, April 7, 1967.

Keach, Carroll, Robstown, Texas, October 10, 1966; Robstown, Texas, February 10, 1967.

McCarty, John, San Marcos, Texas, November 22, 1966.

Montgomery, Robert H., San Marcos, Texas, October 18, 1966.

Quill, Dan, San Antonio, Texas, July 27, 1966.

Smith, Max C., San Marcos, Texas, July 17, 1966.

Woods, Wilton, Seguin, Texas, July 19, 1966.

1. On March 22, 1933, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Agriculture Adjustment Act (HR 3835) to relieve the existing national economic emergency in agriculture by increasing purchasing power; to reduce farm surpluses; to provide relief with respect to agricultural indebtedness.

United States Congress, Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, 1st Session, March 22, 1933, pp. 765-766 (hereafter cited as C. R.).

2. On April 25, 1933, Kleberg abstained from voting (on passage of) the act establishing the Tennessee Valley Authority (HR 5081) to aid interstate commerce by navigation; to provide for flood control; to operate the Muscle Shoals properties; to encourage agricultural, industrial, and economic development.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 1st Session, April 25, 1933, p. 2341.

3. On April 28, 1933, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the act establishing the Federal Housing Administration (HR 5240) to provide emergency relief with respect to home mortgage indebtedness; to refinance home mortgages; and to extend relief to the owners of homes occupied by them, who are unable to amortize their debt elsewhere.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 1st Session, April 28, 1933, pp. 2584-2585.

4. On May 26, 1933, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the National Industrial Relief Act (HR 5755) to encourage national industrial recovery; to foster construction of certain useful public works; to foster competition in interstate and foreign commerce.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 1st Session, May 26, 1933, p. 4373.

FIGURE 1

A SELECTED SURVEY OF CONGRESSMAN RICHARD M. KLEBERG'S
VOTING RECORD, 1933-1936

5. On March 4, 1934, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Federal Securities Exchange Act (HR 323) to provide for the regulation of securities exchanges and over-the-counter-markets operating in interstate and foreign commerce, and through the mails; to prevent inequitable and unfair practices on such exchanges and markets; to establish a Federal Securities Exchange Commission for the regulation thereof.

C. R., 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, March 4, 1934, p. 8116.

6. On April 11, 1935, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Social Security Act (HR 7260) to provide for the general welfare by establishing a system of Federal old-age benefits; and by enabling the several states to make more adequate provisions for the aged persons, dependent and crippled children, and maternal and child welfare, public health, and the administration of the States' unemployment compensation laws; to establish a social security board.

C. R., 74th Congress, 1st Session, April 11, 1935, p. 5462.

7. On July 2, 1935, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Wheeler-Rayburn Act (HR 5423) to provide for control in the public interest of public-utility holding companies using the mails and the facilities of interstate commerce; to regulate the transmission and sale of electric energy and natural gas in interstate and foreign commerce; to establish a federal power commission.

C. R., 74th Congress, 1st Session, July 2, 1935, p. 10639.

8. On January 12, 1936, Kleberg voted for (on passage of) the Veterans "Bonus" Act (HR 1) to provide for controlled expansion of the currency and the immediate payment to war veterans of the face value of their adjusted-service certificates.

C. R., 74th Congress, 2nd Session, January 12, 1936, p. 34641.

1935-1937

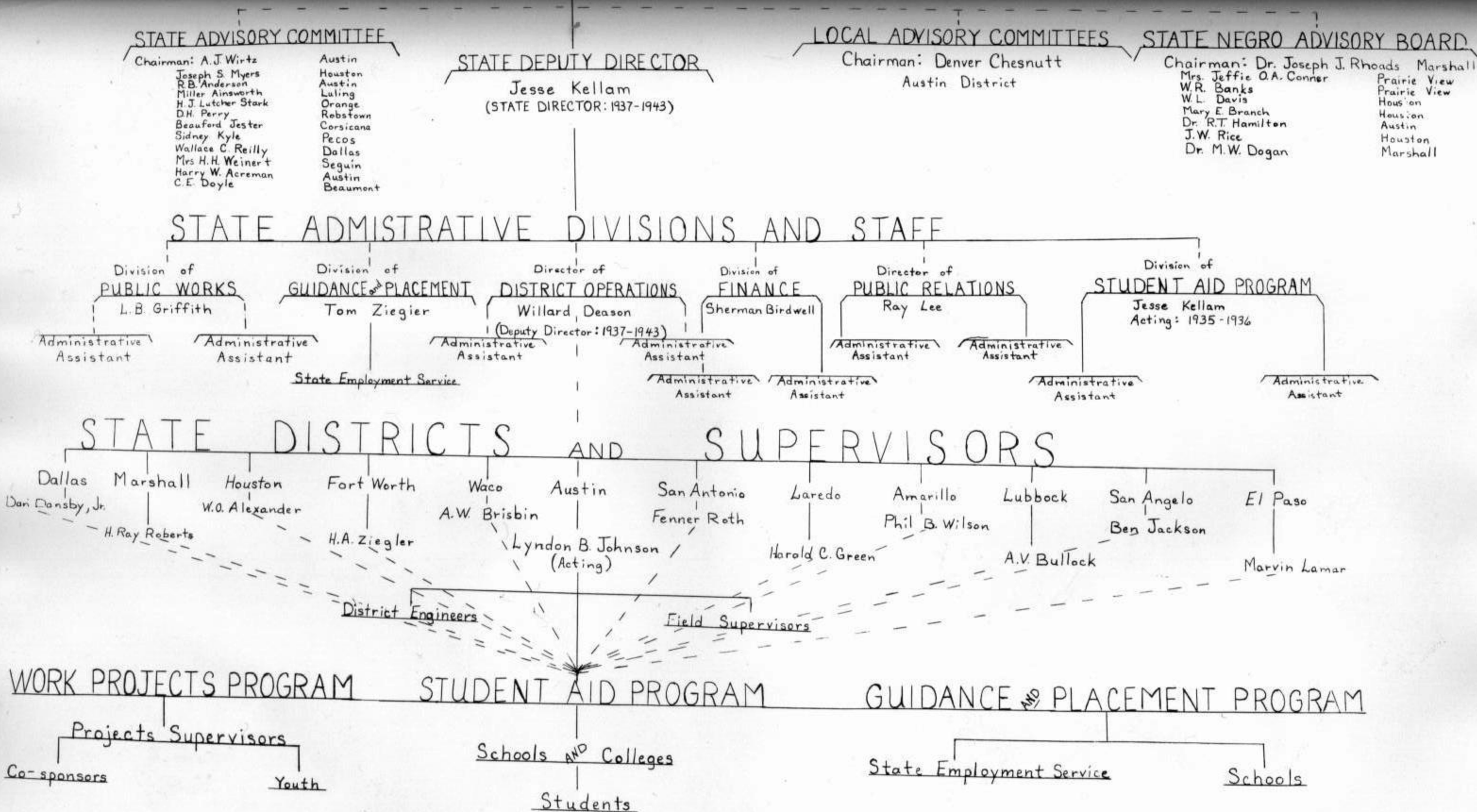


FIGURE 2

AN OUTLINE OF THE EARLY ORGANIZATION OF THE NYA IN TEXAS WHICH INDICATES KEY STATE AND DISTRICT PERSONNEL, AND THEIR STAFF RELATIONSHIPS, 1935-1939

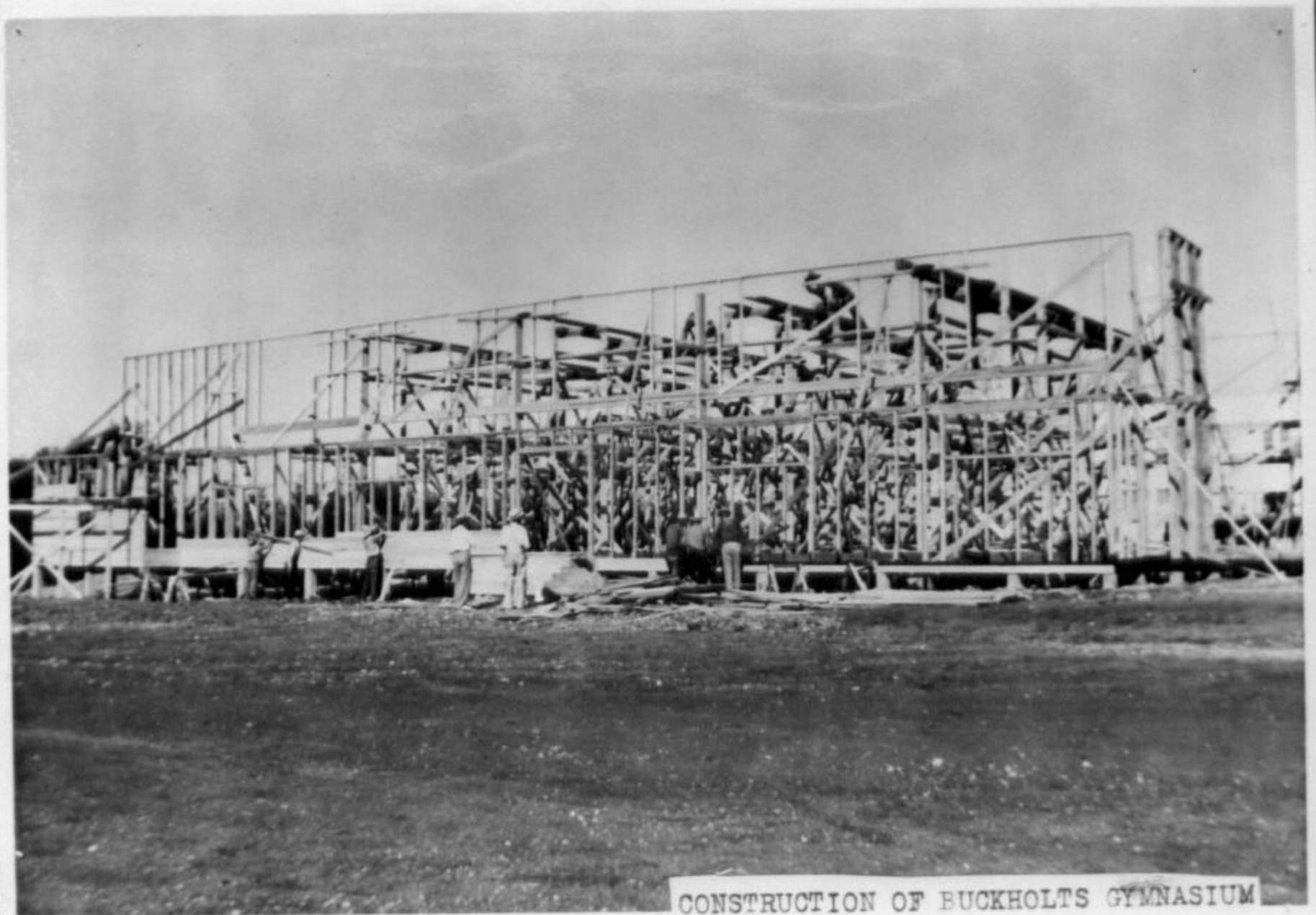
National Youth Administration Report, "State Organization Chart," p. 12; "A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas," p. 28.

Note: The above organizational chart was prepared by the writer with the assistance of Sherman Birdwell.



CONSTRUCTION OF BEN ARNOLD SCHOOL BUILDING

Picture shows back brick wall of new school building under construction at Ben Arnold, Texas, 1937.



CONSTRUCTION OF BUCKHOLTS GYMNASIUM

Picture shows East view of new gymnasium building being built by NYA youth workers at Buckholts, Texas, 1938.

FIGURE 3

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOCAL NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION WORK PROJECTS, MILAM COUNTY, TEXAS--in Sherman Birdwell Scrapbook

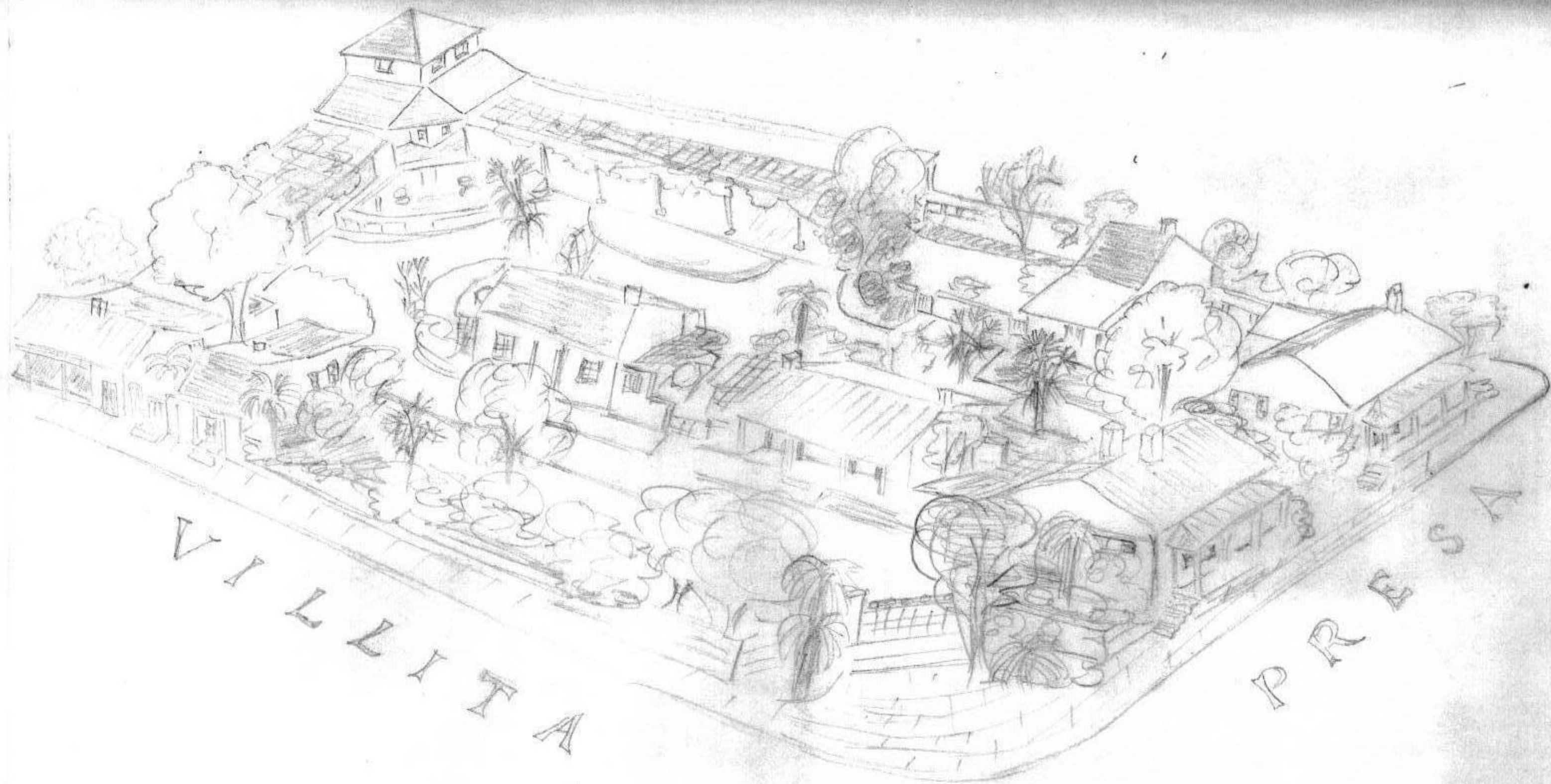


FIGURE 4

A SKETCH OF LA VILLITA IN SAN ANTONIO

Sketch by Darlene Knippa (drawn from original plans) as given in
La Villita, pamphlet prepared by the city of San Antonio
1920 in Carroll Keach Scrapbooks.



Picture shows youth at work in Sharp, Texas, blacksmith workshop, 1937.



BEN ARNOLD YOUTHS TAKING OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Picture shows NYA youth taking oath of allegiance at Ben Arnold School, 1937.

FIGURE 5



Picture shows a group of NYA girls in living room of NYA resident center in Bryan, Texas (Brazos County), 1938.



MATTRESS MAKING AT CAMERON RESIDENT CENTER

PHOTO Picture shows NYA girls assisting in mattress making demonstration in Cameron, Texas, resident center (Milam County), 1938.

FIGURE 6
PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUTH IN NYA RESIDENT CENTERS
Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks



Picture shows NYA barn dance and party in Austin, Texas
(Travis County), 1937.

FIGURE 7

PHOTOGRAPH OF YOUTH IN NYA RECREATION CENTER, AUSTIN, TEXAS
Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks

<u>Location</u>	<u>Type of Center</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
1. Inks Dam Project. . . .	Building Trades.	Lower Colorado River Authority
2. Brenham	Clerical	Blinn College
3. San Marcos.	Auto Mechanics	Southwest Texas State Teachers College
4. Lubbock	Agriculture Engineering. . .	Texas Technological College
5. Woodlake.	Agriculture Conservation . .	Farm Security Administration
6. Kingsville.	Agriculture Engineering. . .	Texas College of Arts and Industries
7. Luling.	Agriculture Conservation . .	Luling Foundation Farm
8. Canyon.	Radio and Electronics. . . .	West Texas State Teachers College
9. Ranger.	Agriculture Engineering. . .	City of Ranger
10. Prairie View.	Domestic Trades.	Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College
11. Center Point.	Domestic Trades.	Center Point Independent School District
12. Johnson City.	Building Trades.	Pedernales Electric Cooperative

FIGURE 8

NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION RESIDENT CENTERS IN TEXAS--1939

A Brief History of NYA Activities in Texas, p. 19.



Picture shows Lyndon Johnson(center), Lee McWilliams (left), and Sherman Birdwell (right), inspecting the newly completed Blanco, Texas, High School--1937.

FIGURE 9

PHOTOGRAPH OF LYNDON JOHNSON,
LEE MCWILLIAMS, AND SHERMAN BIRDWELL

Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks



Picture shows Max Starkey, a Director of the Lower Colorado River Authority, and Sherman Birdwell looking over the shoulder of State Director Johnson (center). James Lederer of Universal Newsreel is standing beside camera in the right hand corner of picture.

FIGURE 10

PHOTOGRAPH OF NYA MAYORS' CONFERENCE, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Sherman Birdwell Scrapbooks

Bastrop
Blanco
Burleson
Burnet
Caldwell

Hays
Lee
Travis
Washington
Williamson



FIGURE 11

COUNTIES IN THE TENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS

Official Congressional Directory, 74th Congress, 1st Session,
1936, p. 671.



FIGURE 12
LYNDON JOHNSON CAMPAIGNING AT WOOLDRIDGE PARK
IN AUSTIN, TEXAS
Carroll Keach Scrapbooks

Happy Days Are Really Here for Him



Photo by Neal Douglass

FIGURE 13

PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING A HAPPY LYNDON JOHNSON CONVALESCING
AT SETON INFIRMARY AFTER HEARING NEWS OF HIS ELECTION
TO CONGRESS. Photograph by Neal Douglass in Austin
American, April 11, 1937, p. 1.