Dorsey Joseph (Joe) Bartlett, Brigadier General

Page, U.S. House of Representatives (1941–1944)
Chief Page, U.S. House of Representatives (1945–1953)
Reading Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives (1953–1971)
Clerk to the Minority (1971–1979)

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Abstract

In the summer of 1941, just before his 15th birthday, Joe Bartlett left the family farm in rural West Virginia to work as a Page on Capitol Hill. But what he expected would be a one-month position became a House career that spanned 38 years. Bartlett eventually served as the chief of Pages, then as a reading clerk and, in the 1970s, as Clerk to the Minority—the senior Republican staff officer in the House. In his series of interviews, he provided many details on House proceedings and insights on how each of his positions fit into the day-to-day operation of the institution. Bartlett witnessed and described many historic events during his long tenure on the Hill, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" speech on December 8, 1941 and the 1954 shooting in the House Chamber. His interviews touched upon the daily routines, customs, and traditions he observed in the U.S. House, as well as specific recollections of the House Page program, the Congressional Baseball Game, the renovation of the House Chamber from 1949 to 1951, and personal memories of the era's leading Representatives and House Officers, such as Sam Rayburn, Joe Martin, William Tyler Page, Joe Sinnott, and South Trimble. Bartlett provided a first-hand look at House Floor operations describing the interaction between Members and staff, and the impact of major technological changes—namely electronic voting and television—on House proceedings. With his long tenure and numerous positions on the Hill, Bartlett's oral history provides an invaluable and unique perspective on the institution.

Biography

Dorsey Joseph Bartlett was born on August 7, 1926, in Clarksburg, West Virginia. He was the sixth of ten children of Flavius Dorsey Bartlett, an efficiency engineer in the glass business, and Blanche (Hacker) Bartlett. Bartlett lived on the family farm in central West Virginia and attended local schools. After being named "America's Typical Schoolboy Patrolman," he was awarded a 30-day appointment as a House Page on August 1, 1941, with the help of Representative Wright Patman of Texas. Later, having impressed Doorkeeper Joe Sinnott and House Clerk South Trimble, Bartlett received Page appointments while serving as Page Overseer and attending the Capitol Page School. Upon graduating in 1944, Bartlett enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was honorably discharged as a Private First Class in September 1945.

Returning to the Capitol after his service in World War II, Bartlett was appointed the Republican chief of Pages by Speaker Joe Martin of Massachusetts. He oversaw the work of several dozen House Pages, some as young as 11 years old. Commissioned from the ranks of the Marine Corps Reserve, Bartlett was recalled to active duty in January 1951 and served until June of 1952. From 1953 to 1971, Bartlett was a House reading clerk, sharing duties on the rostrum and working with the Speaker's and the Clerk's offices on numerous floor-related and administrative tasks. Bartlett also served as chief reading clerk for six Republican National Conventions. From May 1971 until he retired, Bartlett served as Minority Clerk.

In January 1979, a year after retiring from the Marine Corps as a Brigadier General, Bartlett retired from the House. During his career, Bartlett received honorary law degrees from the Atlanta Law School and Salem College. He was also awarded the Legion of Merit, and in 1982 he was the Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the Federal Executive Institute. Joe Bartlett died on March 1, 2013, at his home in Richmond, Virginia.

Editing Practices

In preparing interview transcripts for publication, the editors sought to balance several priorities:

- As a primary rule, the editors aimed for fidelity to the spoken word and the conversational style in accord with generally accepted oral history practices.
- The editors made minor editorial changes to the transcripts in instances where they believed such changes would make interviews more accessible to readers. For instance, excessive false starts and filler words were removed when they did not materially affect the meaning of the ideas expressed by the interviewee.
- In accord with standard oral history practices, interviewees were allowed to review their transcripts, although they were encouraged to avoid making substantial editorial revisions and deletions that would change the conversational style of the transcripts or the ideas expressed therein.
- The editors welcomed additional notes, comments, or written observations that the interviewees wished to insert into the record and noted any substantial changes or redactions to the transcript.
- Copy-editing of the transcripts was based on the standards set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

The first reference to a Member of Congress (House or Senate) is underlined in the oral history transcript. For more information about individuals who served in the House or Senate, please refer to the online *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, http://bioguide.congress.gov and the "People Search" section of the History, Art & Archives website, http://history.house.gov.

For more information about the U.S. House of Representatives oral history program contact the Office of House Historian at (202) 226-1300, or via email at history@mail.house.gov.

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Interviewer Biography

Kathleen Johnson is a senior historical editor for the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. She earned a B.A. in history from Columbia University and holds two master's degrees from North Carolina State University in education and public history. In 2004, she helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of Members and staff. She co-authored two books: *Women in Congress: 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006) and *Black Americans in Congress: 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008).

— JOE BARTLETT—

INTERVIEW ONE

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing General Joe Bartlett, former reading clerk and Minority Clerk for the U.S. House of Representatives. This is the first interview with General Bartlett. The date is April 7th, 2006, and the interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building.

I was hoping that we could start off today with some biographical information. When and where were you born?

BARTLETT: I was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, on the 7th of August, 1926.

JOHNSON: What were the names of your parents and their occupations?

BARTLETT: Well, both of my parents were descendants of early West Virginia pioneers, or Appalachian pioneers. My mother was a Hacker. She was Blanche Hacker Bartlett. She had been a schoolteacher in her earlier years, before she started raising a big family of 10 children. And my father [Flavius Dorsey Bartlett] was an industrial engineer, way, way ahead of his time. He worked for the glass industry—Hazel-Atlas Glass Company—for some 42 years and was involved in time-and-motion studies using motion pictures, long before anybody was accustomed to that method, and long before {laughter} the labor unions learned to dislike it so much. Dad had come up through the ranks and was a very valued member of that executive team.

JOHNSON: Did you always have an interest in politics, even as a youth?

BARTLETT: I'm not sure that it took the form of politics. I got involved in politics very young. But I got interested in being a Page as a result of an article in a national magazine which told about a motion picture being made about Pages. And it was a casual interest. I didn't thereupon decide that I wanted to be a Page. I was just interested in the life. Ironically, both the magazine article and the motion picture which resulted were highly glamorized. And I was quite shocked when I finally arrived, to find that it was not that glamorous. And don't get me wrong, I was duly impressed. But it was misrepresented on film, which is often the case.

I'm sure you're wondering, well, how do I get from a magazine to a job as a Page, and it is an unusual story, I suppose. In 1938 I was singled out to be the lone representative of the Schoolboy Patrols of Central West Virginia at their national convention here in Washington. I gained notice because I was just a little guy who couldn't see over the counter at the 3A (the American Automobile Association) office. And they were intrigued with this and, some months later, really, called my mother and wanted to know if they could bring me to Washington for that parade. Well, they also brought a young West Virginia University journalism graduate, Herb Welch. And he had more imagination and more energy than you can imagine. As a result purely of his imagination, he created a news story which resulted in my being named America's Typical Schoolboy Patrolman—an awesome title. I {laughter} did nothing to merit that.

I was a patrolman, and I worked at it, like most school safety patrols do. And so, as a result of that publicity—it hit a very slow news day . . . And there were literally hundreds and hundreds of clippings of this little guy walking

down Constitution Avenue. Again, I'm the victim of circumstances, I had nothing to do with it. Well, it just happened that my sponsor had been a World War I trench mate of Congressman [John William] Wright Patman's.[1] And they, the foursome (with their wives) got together socially while we were here. We had come to the Capitol and seen the House in action. As a casual comment, Mrs. [Ethel] Brase, my sponsor, said to Mrs. [Merle] Patman, "Wouldn't it be nice if Joe could be a Page?" {laughter} I was not involved.

And so, months later, I was working on a barn roof, patching a barn roof, when I was called home—it's a long distance, almost an eighth of a mile—back to the house to answer the telephone. I fell from the shed and sprained my ankle, {laughter} but nonetheless hobbled over and got the phone. It was a call from Mrs. Brase, wanting to know if I would like to be a Page for 30 days. Well, of course, I said, "I'd love to, but {laughter} I'm not a bit sure that their folks' farmhand will be freed to go to Washington." Well, I approached Mother, and of course she called Father at the factory office. And as it turned out, it was strictly to be for 30 days, the month of August, 1941. And {laughter} that after much mulling over the circumstances, at midnight that night Dad put me on the B&O's National Limited [Train] to come to Washington, and he handed me a $20 bill, which was my total financing. And, of course, the next morning at about 7:00, I arrived at Union Station and looked out that portal at the Capitol dome, and I just went bananas. It was really quite a thrill.

JOHNSON: How old were you at the time?

BARTLETT: Fourteen. And, well, that pretty much summarizes how I got to the Capitol. The Patmans and Mrs. [Lucille] Spain, who was their secretary, were most cordial, most kind. And the Congressman from my West Virginia home, Andrew Edmiston, was very cordial. His secretary, Mrs. [Ruth] McGraw, arranged for me to get a room on Wyoming Avenue, where a lady, Mrs. Fisher, kept a rooming house. Many of the roomers were from West Virginia, mostly from Clarksburg. So when I got there they made me feel quite at home.

JOHNSON: Were these people who worked at the Capitol?

BARTLETT: No, I don't believe any of them worked at the Capitol at the time. But they were a nice group, and they did make it easy for me to sort of meld into the Washington scene.

However, this may seem strange now, but the school started at 6:00 in the morning. There was no school in the month of August, but there was soon to be. And when school started, well, at that hour, it meant that I wanted to get closer—or thought I ought to get a little closer—to the Capitol. So I lived on Wyoming Avenue only for one month, and then moved down to 326 Maryland Avenue, NE, and roomed with Mrs. Stewart, and boarded with her sister, Mrs. Wiley, at 314 Maryland Avenue. And that was full of folks, many of them of Capitol Hill. Very delightful experience. Mrs. Stewart was a motherly person. She ran a very {laughter} tight ship, though! Proper conduct was required. And Mrs. Wiley was a marvelous cook. They had a large number of people they fed there. Oh, yes, I should say—three meals a day for $24 a month! Now that was a pretty fine arrangement back in 1941. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Not bad! {laughter}

BARTLETT: And I was paying $12 for my room with Mrs. Stewart. That's $12 a month. {laughter} You can see the economy has changed a good deal over the years.

JOHNSON: How did your 30-day appointment turn into something longer?

BARTLETT: Well, that's a good question, a very interesting one. I thoroughly enjoyed being a Page. It was one of the most momentous months of all my years here. Within two weeks, we were voting on the extension of the draft; we had neutrality bills; we had arming of neutral vessels; we had Lend–Lease. All of this in the month of August of 1941. And I was just impressionable enough at that stage to try to absorb it all. Somehow or another, I guess, I realized there was something momentous happening. And that extension of the draft, I remember it. It's something people cite all the time. As a matter of fact, somebody was citing it to me, and I said, "Oh, yes. I remember. I was there." And you should have seen the look on {laughter} his face. That was General Leonard Chapman. And he was just incredulous, it took him aback. Well, I was there, and I do remember it. And it was a very impressive event.

Well, at the end of the 30 days, it was coming to Labor Day, and it was a holiday weekend, and they were taking the weekend off. And as I look back, I just went to say goodbye to the people who had been kind to me. I went to see South Trimble, who was the Clerk of the House, and thanked him. He was a fine old grandfatherly gentleman. Well, we talked a minute. He said, "Now, you stick around." Well, now, what does "stick around" mean? That doesn't put you on the payroll or anything. Stick around. "All right, sir." And then I went down to say goodbye to Joe Sinnott, who was the Doorkeeper of

the House, and who had charge of the Pages. He was a man very much feared on Capitol Hill. He was as gruff an old curmudgeon as you could find. I liked him! So we hit it off. And after a short conversation he used exactly the same words that South Trimble had used: "Stick around." Again, that puzzled me.

Well, I went home for the weekend, and used what they had told me as a sufficient reason to come back after Labor Day. And for the next three years I was not on any one Member's patronage.

JOHNSON: That's interesting.

BARTLETT: I assume that Joe Sinnott, with the collaboration of South Trimble—for as long as he lived—and then with their successors, saw to it that wherever there was an empty spot on the payroll, they'd put Bartlett on. And I had different pay different months. I can remember several of the Members whose payroll I was on who didn't know that they were employing me. I just got a reputation as a hustler. I was a farm boy; I didn't know what it was to not work, and to work hard, and work long . . . Dad's only advice was, "Get there earlier, and stay later, and do more than is expected of you." Well, that's pretty good advice. It wasn't hard for me. That was sort of my nature. But they saw how I worked, and I was soon assigned as Page overseer, which is nothing more than a senior Page, or someone they designate. And those were enjoyable years.

JOHNSON: You mentioned many interesting topics, and I wanted to go back to some of them. But I just wanted you to start off with some basics. What was a typical day like for you as a Page in the 1940s?

BARTLETT: Well, we went to school from 6:00 until 9:00 a.m., and work on the floor started at 9:30. Our first chore was called "filing the [*Congressional*] *Records*." In those days, there was a *Congressional Record* provided for every Member. And we filed it under his seat in a box that's still there, I'm sure. I don't think they do that very much anymore, but that was quite a ritual for us in those days. We filed the *Record*s each morning. We started running errands to the buildings, all of which were clocked out of our little location there at the northwest corner of the House Chamber, two benches there where the Pages would assemble and respond to phone calls coming in up until noon. When the House convened, our primary duty at that point became serving the Members on the floor.

And I must tell you one of the things that I would see as something of a distinction of that time: I knew every Member, certainly every Member on our side of the House. And the great thing was that virtually every Member knew me, by name. I don't think it is that way anymore. And I'm saddened by that because the friendships that I made were {laughter} priceless. I enjoyed them enormously. And, you know, when you see any Member who was here at that time, representing something like, I guess, some 350,000 constituents, and he had been elected to be their Representative in the Congress, there's something about that person worth knowing and worth studying. And I found that to be true. You'd often see a Member, and you'd say, "Gee! {laughter} How did he get elected?" Well, if you talked to him a little bit, you found out that there was something very special about him that attracted him to his constituency and brought him to Washington as their Representative. So it's a very, very rich experience, just to be in the presence, in the company, of such a group of chosen representatives of the people. I enjoyed it a lot.

JOHNSON: Did you work on the floor your entire time as a Page, or did you have other responsibilities, too?

BARTLETT: No, {laughter} my responsibility during those three years were right on the floor. And, as I say, as overseer I had some responsibilities for the conduct of the Pages and enjoyed that. I graduated from the Page School in '44 and immediately joined the Marine Corps. The war was still on. I didn't know what lay ahead for me. It turned out I didn't have to win the war. It ended before I got there.

But then I came back to Washington again, just to say hello. I had no expectation of returning to the Capitol. But during my visit, Jim [James] Wolfenden, a Congressman from Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, God rest his soul, said, "How would you like to be chief Page, chief of the Pages?" Well, I said, "Yegads, that would be wonderful!" It was a staff job. No one as young as I had ever held the job. But Congressman Wolfenden called the Minority Leader, Joe [Joseph William] Martin, [Jr.], and apparently resolved the matter over the telephone. And I went to his office, and Mr. Martin welcomed me aboard and signed me on, and I became the chief of Pages. Well, that was my job from 1945 until 1953. And during those years, supervising the Pages was very enjoyable. We even had General [Frederick] Funston's grandson as a Page, and we formed a drill team and went to Gettysburg to lead the parade for which Speaker Joe Martin was the grand marshal, or guest of honor, what have you, and the Pages got to lead his car down the parade in Gettysburg, which was a memorable event for many of them, and for me. I thought it was a fine thing. We did a lot of things of that nature. I should say that throughout the earlier years, and particularly during President [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt's years, Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt took

her role as "godmother" of the Pages very seriously. And, bless her heart, she entertained—very graciously and very generously—the Pages during that period. And we had a number of invitations to the White House. As a matter of fact, during those visits Mrs. Roosevelt asked, "Would you like to see the President?" Of course, everybody responded, "Oh, yes!" So we were . . .

JOHNSON: Was this in March of 1943? I found a newspaper article that mentioned that the Pages went to visit the White House.

BARTLETT: Does it mention Joe Bartlett of Clarksburg, West Virginia?

JOHNSON: And you, specifically. Yes, it does. It said that you were very curious about one of the items that President Roosevelt had on his desk.

BARTLETT: Well, that was this particular occasion. And there are not very many people alive who have had the privilege of making small talk with President Roosevelt in the Oval Office. But he was a very fascinating person, and it was interesting to study him sitting at his desk. He said this mask had come from China, by way of his grandfather. It was quite heavy. He picked it up and put it on his face, and everybody laughed. He couldn't have worn it. I don't know how it could have been used by actors in China, but apparently they held it in place and did their thing. The President was very kind.

But let me say, Mrs. Roosevelt was exceedingly gracious. And I could tell you stories that may be just as well not told. But inasmuch as I had some responsibility for the Pages, their conduct there was my concern. I shared a feeling of responsibility for them. And not all were brought up to be well-mannered. And so we had a couple of unfortunate moments, point being that

Mrs. Roosevelt was sitting right beside a boy who showed neglected table manners. If she saw it—and I don't see how she could help but have seen it—she didn't take any notice or indicate that it happened. And I thought that was exceedingly gracious. Then we had a party out in the Rose Garden, and we were coming back into the theater, and we were coming through a door that had just been painted. And I suggested to her that, well, "I'll stand here and make sure the Pages don't get their clothing in the paint." And in the most gracious way—and I cannot paraphrase what she said, but it was to the effect that, "I'm the hostess. I'll take care of my guests. Thank you." {laughter} She stood there and watched each one of them so they would not strike the paint. She was a very gracious lady. And the Pages were really honored to have that kind of attention.

Bess Truman followed on with it. But it was a different atmosphere at the White House after that. And I don't think that the White House visits have been a regular thing since then, which is regrettable because it was very, very nice.

JOHNSON: Earlier you mentioned that you went to school in the morning. Were your classes at this time held in the basement of the Capitol?

BARTLETT: Yes. I'm glad you asked. They were held down in what I think is now the air conditioning room. It's called the West Terrace, right close to where President Reagan established the new location for getting sworn in. It's in that part of the Capitol, on the west side. It was dank. We generated our own electricity. We . . . the Capitol generated its own electricity in those days. It was direct current. So if you brought an alternating current device in, you probably lost it. {laughter} But it was done right across the hall from Page

School. And the whine of those generators was constant. They were big! And we met down there. It was a private school. It was conducted by E. L. Kendall. He was the principal, a very spartan Baptist gentleman. I happened to like him very much. But he was strait-laced, there was no doubt about that. We paid $19 a month for tuition. And there were other maintenance problems down there. The roof leaked. And it was not uncommon to go in there and find that on the floor there was a puddle, and they had to put down planks so we could reach our seats. We'd walk in on the planks, take our seats, hold our feet up, and study Latin. It was unreal. And, incidentally, one time a fellow switched on the light, and the light globe was full of water, and of course it went "kapoop." {laughter} We had a darkened room. There was another problem down in that area. This was a forsaken area at that time. Nobody went down there without a reason.

Well, we had a person employed at the Capitol at that time who was a rodent control officer. Call him what you will, he was supposed to make sure we got rid of the rats. Well, he wasn't going to limit his job. But I swear, I think he was breeding rats. There were the biggest rats you ever saw down there! And you'd come around the corner at 6:00 in the morning, and here would be a rat going down the hall, loping like a Scottish terrier or something—that big! And it was something. Then because there were no doors to the generator rooms, there were only grilles, which were up from the floor a short distance—so the rats had easy access to go where they pleased. Well, right after the end of the war, somebody got serious about getting rid of the rodents. And then they realized that there was an even bigger problem: cockroaches. Cockroaches were overrunning the Capitol. And so they brought down from Brooklyn—and I've forgotten who did it—but they hired a fellow whose nickname was "Killer Miller." And "Killer Miller" had a

powder, which I think was nothing but DDT, and why not? It was good stuff. But you could, for years—and I mean many years—you could open a desk drawer in any office and out would tumble this little paper holder of this powdery material, which had been stuck up against the wall of each drawer of every office in the building. Miller earned his money, if anybody ever did, because he really got around. And for a long time, it was very effective. We didn't have cockroaches. {laughter} "Killer Miller" was quite a character around the Capitol for quite a while.

JOHNSON: Can you describe your curriculum? What were the classes that you took?

BARTLETT: We took a regular high school curriculum. You had some choices, just like any high school. Let me simply say that some thought we were not getting a very good education. And some thought we were not getting our $19-a-month's worth. But along came the tests that they gave: the A-5 and the A-12, the B-5 and the B-12—tests for officer material for World War II. And out at Eastern High School they had kids come from all over Washington for those tests being administered by the Army and the Navy. And the irony is that the little delegation that went out from Capitol Page School scored extremely well as compared to other schools in the District. You know, that sort of left you without much of an argument that the schooling hadn't been adequate.

We had a Capitol policeman—fellow named Pousson. We had bureaucrats—a patent attorney named Cooper, who was a genius. I loved his teaching. I took physics with him. He was just marvelous. We had a fellow named Lewis, who created on his own, incidentally, an embassy visitation group, which was very good. The kids went to a different embassy every Saturday.

And he had been a {laughter} West Virginia bug inspector, where they used to flag you down for Japanese beetles. And he had been in that, until one day he commandeered a car, got in trouble, and had to escape to Washington. So he was teaching English—and very good at it, as a matter of fact—in the Page School. So, no, we had an interesting group. But as I say, Mr. Kendall ran a tight ship. And he was pretty determined that each of these classes would provide what was necessary for a high school education. And I think he fairly well succeeded. Incidentally, in those days we had senior classes. They no longer have seniors, which I think is too bad. But we had a graduating class. We had a ceremony in the Ways and Means Committee room. Yes!

JOHNSON: Mr. Jim Oliver [a longtime employee in the Republican Cloakroom] gave us this image.

BARTLETT: Isn't that something?

JOHNSON: Yes. Since we're talking about it, could you describe it for me, please?

BARTLETT: Well, the picture that I have here shows the graduating class of 1944. And Senator Harold [Hitz] Burton of Ohio was the speaker. He had been the former mayor of Cleveland and was soon to be an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. He'd been very much interested in the Pages all along. Harold Burton was a splendid man. [John Jackson] Sparkman of Alabama is sitting beside him. And the minister is the Reverend Frederic Brown Harris, the chaplain of the Senate, again a {laughter} man I really learned to like a great deal. Starting at the other side was Principal E. L. Kendall. I got along with him very well. The next one is Dr. Robert Haycock, superintendent of

D.C. Public Schools. And then, of course, in the center is the First Lady of the land, Eleanor Roosevelt, who handed us our diplomas and wished us well. And she was a gracious, gracious lady.

JOHNSON: And the graduates at this time were House Pages and Senate Pages?

BARTLETT: There were House Pages and Senate Pages, one elevator operator that I see, who was {laughter} related to the Architect of the Capitol. I think he was his grandson. And there may have been a Supreme Court Page, I'm not real sure. But mostly House and Senate Pages, and all of them made a pretty good account of themselves after that. Many of the Pages beyond this did. They've had a recent reunion of the 1950 Pages, who had been kind enough to ask me to attend. And to the extent that I've been able to, I have. This particular era (1944) did not remain close, for whatever reason. I've known a couple of them relatively well, one of them because he became a Marine: Randlett T. Lawrence, who was center for Navy football and was East Coast boxing champion of the Navy and was a tough Marine colonel.

Now, of the Pages that I supervised and watched graduate, well, I have a much closer relationship with some of them. One of them, I grieved his passing recently. He was a Paulist priest, Bob Curtis from Silver Spring. I don't like to single Bob out, but he was sort of typical of the achievers within the group of Pages that I supervised, and for whom I've taken a great deal of pride.

JOHNSON: I just had one more question about your education.

BARTLETT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did you receive any training to prepare you for what was going to happen on the House Floor, for the proceedings that were going to take place?

BARTLETT: No. That's an interesting point. Whatever training we got there, we received from the older supervisors on the floor. As you probably know, the work of Pages, even then, was divided into several kinds. We had the so-called bench Pages, they were the primary group. We had the telephone Pages, usually somebody who was showing some special ability as a bench Page. And then we had door Pages, who were often merely a means of placing some patronage. Older people who were no longer suitable for the work inside would work on the doors.

I could cite one very special one, Buddy Jones. Buddy Jones had the east door. He was the grandson of Judge [John] Marvin Jones. Judge Marvin Jones probably spent more time in Speaker Rayburn's office than anybody who wasn't on the payroll. Judge Marvin Jones was the brother of Metze Jones, which doesn't mean anything to you except that she was married to Sam [Samuel Taliaferro] Rayburn. And everyone here thought Sam Rayburn was an incorrigible bachelor and never dreamed that he'd ever been married. His closest Texas friends did not know he had been married. But he had been. How that marriage terminated, I don't know, whether it was divorce or an annulment, I would rather imagine. But there were Sam Rayburn Joneses in that family before they were married. He was that close to the family. So Buddy Jones, when he had that east door, he had pretty good entrée because he was very close to Speaker Rayburn. But he was a nice fellow—very good Page. He happened to be tall and lanky, tall enough not to be a House Page anymore. And he later became vice president of an aluminum company here

and very prominent in Washington lobbying and social circles. Very fine fellow.

JOHNSON: With the Pages falling under the jurisdiction of the Doorkeeper's office, when you were a Page you worked under two doorkeepers. You mentioned Joe Sinnott. And then there also was Ralph Roberts.

BARTLETT: Ralph Roberts, correct.

JOHNSON: Can you describe these two men?

BARTLETT: Well, Joe Sinnott, as I say, was regarded as an awfully gruff curmudgeon. He scared people to death. I never could quite understand it because I found him to be a very easy person to get along with. But, nonetheless, there was that fear. His daughter worked as his secretary. There is a rumor {laughter} that she was married at the time, and he didn't know it. And she was married to one of his subordinates. And this became a big rumor. Whether it's true or not, I cannot verify, but I think it was. {laughter} But I liked him. His devotion to the House was unquestionable. He was getting up in years, and he died during the '40s. And Ralph Roberts, who had been his assistant, succeeded him. Ralph was an old Marine master sergeant. And so we were good friends. And Ralph was later Clerk of the House, from Indiana—a good fellow. I enjoyed his friendship and I miss him. He was a good friend.

JOHNSON: Did you notice any difference in the way the Page program was run, between Joe Sinnott and Ralph Roberts?

BARTLETT: Probably. Joe Sinnott took a very close interest in how they were performing. Ralph Roberts stood back and tried to get his subordinates to make sure they were doing it right. And as a Marine master sergeant, that's the way he would have done it. But it was his way. As a matter of fact, I remember at times I would bring to his attention something that I did not think was in his interest. And his answer was always, "They'll find out. They'll find out." In other words, the time would prove him right. Unfortunately, time was not in his favor as Clerk of the House, as you may recall. He had a difficult time. Congressman [William] Pat Jennings of Virginia was not his friend. And they had a confrontation. And then Ralph—there was a power struggle between the Clerk's office and the Committee on House Administration. And again, it was Ralph's way to just think he could wait it out and that people would see he was doing the right thing. He should have been more responsive to the problems. But that was Ralph's way, and who am I to fault it? He was my friend.

JOHNSON: You mentioned South Trimble, who was Clerk at the time when you were a Page.

BARTLETT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did you get to know any of the other House Officers?

BARTLETT: Yes, I sure did. I would say that, again, the Congress being absent a good deal of the year, in the old days, the truth of the matter was the House was run by the Clerk of the House. And South Trimble was a very powerful man. He was dignified and a splendid gentleman. His counterpart in our party was William Tyler Page. Now William Tyler Page was the Minority Clerk. He,

anonymously, wrote "The American's Creed," which won first place in a national competition for an American creed. And for years, long before you would remember, every Congressman got a huge supply of "The American's Creed," and they would distribute them to schoolchildren all over the country, by the millions. And William Tyler Page was a splendid man. He had that claw-hammered coat, you know. He dressed a fashion—a formality—100 years earlier. But he and Senator [Clyde Roark] Hoey continued to do this into the 20th century. I enjoyed visiting with William Tyler Page. And I must confess, if I ever had an ambition in the process of my career—and I didn't really have very many, because I thought how unrealistic it was for me to presume that fate might favor me that way, and I wasn't kidding myself—but I so admired William Tyler Page and his knowledge of Congress that, yes, I said, "Gee, wouldn't it be wonderful to follow in his footsteps." And so I must say, when I finally was elected to that job, it had much more significance for me than many people knew. Because I held up the memory of William Tyler Page right then and there. I've quoted him in speeches repeatedly—a very good man.

You asked about South Trimble. He really conducted the work of the House. And that's how he could say to me, "Stick around." Because at that time he and Joe Sinnott could do just about anything they decided to do. Now, let's face it, there's always this controversy about the powerful staff people on the Hill. Neither one of them would have done anything contrary to what they knew the leadership would want or allow them to do.

Probably the most powerful man in recent times would have been Lew Deschler, the House Parliamentarian. He would never extend himself to presume authority that was not his. And that was true of South Trimble. He

knew what was expected of him. He knew that whatever he did he could justify to the leadership of the Congress if he had to. And so there's a restraint upon, in a sense, responsibility in those jobs. Did all of them exercise it? No, we had a few people who didn't exercise that kind of restraint, and some who suffered serious consequences for not having done it. But with a South Trimble or a Joe Sinnott, you never had to worry that they were going to do something beyond their authority because they just weren't going to do it. They knew, whatever they did, they could go to Speaker Rayburn and tell him why they'd done it and receive his approval. That is just was the way they conducted themselves.

Incidentally, in those days there was a great deal of—what would you say—interrelationship between key figures on the Hill, families that got together: the Architect's (David Lynn) family and the Clerk's family. And their kids married. And you have familiar names to this day. I don't think it happened to Joe Sinnott, {laughter} bless his soul.

But there were other key figures around. We had a fellow named Gus Cook, who was the assistant Architect of the Capitol, who was the executive assistant because he did everything imaginable. And there's a story that goes that when the queen of England came here in 1939, Gus put on that show, quite a show. Oh, my goodness. So many things that I heard back about that. But they carpeted the grand rotunda with a plush, plush carpet, red—bright red, royal red. And somehow or another, nobody's ever been able to find that carpet since! {laughter}

JOHNSON: This was before your time, so other people had told you about it?

BARTLETT: That was before my time. Well, yes. When I arrived, we were still reliving the mysteries of the last few years. {laughter}

JOHNSON: You mentioned a while back, or alluded to, the cordial relationship among Members and between Members and Pages and staff. What do you remember about Speaker Rayburn?

BARTLETT: Nothing but wonderful things. He was a super presiding officer. His romance—his love—was the House of Representatives. And he was a big man—not a big man physically, as a matter of fact, he was quite slight. Most people don't know that because he had the command presence of looking larger than life. He'd put four fingers of his hand in his right coat pocket—and the cigarette, unfortunately, all too often in his left hand. I don't know that the Republicans ever fully appreciated it, but after I went up on the rostrum and where I was within close earshot of him, and learned my trade as reading clerk just a few feet from him and that made me privy to an awful lot of conversations, that I, of course, kept in confidence, always . . . But I can tell you that there were many times when Members would rush up and want to do something expedient to take advantage of the minority. And I can remember Mr. Rayburn on more than one occasion saying, "No, no. We're not going to do that." He felt a responsibility to protect the rights of the minority. And that's an unusual characterization. You don't find that very often. Not because the people occupying that chair aren't good guys. But they don't understand, sometimes, the nuances of legislative decorum and their responsibility to all the Members. And Mr. Rayburn did understand that. He was just a good man.

I think some of his biographers, who have sought to make him out to be a real partisan, for whatever reason, are wrong. I think they do him a disservice. Sure, he was a Democrat and a leader of Democrats, and he believed that the Democrat Party was the way to a lot of things. But he was a very big man. And his speeches down there about, "No more East or West, no more North or South," I've heard him make that. And I've heard him rally patriots in the well of the House in a way that . . . He showed that he was much bigger than any petty, partisan point of view.

At the end of my 20th year, which of course was August 1, 1961, I went to see him. And Miss [Alla] Clary, his devoted secretary, was there, and I said, "Just like to see the Speaker." Incidentally, he was in the little room that had formerly belonged to Minority Leader Joe Martin. And after they'd changed places a couple of times, they got together and said, "This is silly for us to keep moving. Let's just stay where we are." And he was actually in that little room and was Speaker of the House, but he was in that, and I've forgotten the number. But Miss Clary said to me, "Well, he's taking a nap," and "Would you come back?" And I said, "Sure." I turned to go out the door and had just about reached the door, when his door opened, and Miss Clary said, "Joe wanted to see you for a moment." And he said, "Well, come on in." And as we were walking in, he calls back over his shoulder, "What do you want me to do, double your salary or something?" {laughter} And I said, "Yes, Mr. Speaker. You said it. I didn't." {laughter} And we proceeded to have a fabulous session. I only wanted to recall that first day. I wanted to talk to him about that and thank him because he'd been so courteous. And he wanted to talk about other things. He wanted to talk about a lot of other things. And, in retrospect, I know why: He knew how sick he was. And he was trying to plant a few thoughts in the mind of a younger person, I'm sure, and

somebody he trusted. It saddens me to realize that. He told a story about flying home to Austin, I think he said, but I've forgotten which airport. It really isn't significant. But he noticed that a photographer was just trying to get his picture, and he was trying to maneuver all around. So then Mr. Rayburn said, "And I just, every time he got in position, I'd turn around." And so there was a little dance going on between him and the photographer. And he said {laughter} finally the photographer put his camera down at his side and said, "Mr. Speaker, if you know any other way I can make a living, I wish you'd tell me." {laughter} Mr. Rayburn laughed, and he said, "I told him to go ahead and take all the pictures he wanted." {laughter}

And I told you about his stature, which was really quite remarkable that people thought of him as a big man, when he really wasn't. But there were other physical characteristics that people didn't know [about]. When Felix de Weldon was commissioned by the Texas State Society to do his statue for the new Rayburn House Office Building, Mr. Felix de Weldon—who was a friend of mine, I might add, but he said that he knew Speaker Rayburn. Well, his statue shows that he didn't, no matter what he said. So on the day that the statue was to be unveiled . . . And I wish I had a perfect recall on all these names, but I don't. I cannot think of the old fellow who was a newspaperman, a very close confidant of the Speaker's.[2] But everybody knew him and liked him. And so when they unveiled the statue, all the reporters followed him because he was a reporter that had been close to the Speaker, and they wanted his comments. So he walked around the statue two or three times, and he slowly observed, "Well, I think he got the back of his head." {laughter} That was his judgment. Well, sadly—and Felix was a wonderful character—I think that's about all he got.

A couple of things he didn't seem to realize: Mr. Rayburn had no ears. I don't know what happened to them. They'd been frostbitten or something. But he had just little bitsy things for ears that just . . . He also—he had no eyebrows; he had no facial hair. I don't know why, but he didn't have. And it shows up in that statue, that makes it look a little odd. I don't know why—never had anybody give me any explanation of these things about him. But, oh, he was a splendid man. I wouldn't do anything to diminish his image. But those were physical characteristics that Felix de Weldon {laughter} obviously didn't know about. Why he didn't find out, I'm not sure.

JOHNSON: As a Republican Page, did you have a chance to interact a lot with the Minority Leader, Joe Martin?

BARTLETT: As chief of the Pages, I had a lot to do with him. Again—fine, fine man. He didn't go to college; he was helping other members of his family through college. He became a newspaperman. He was not sophisticated—very earthy, very wise. Very wise. I remember one time, right after the 80th Congress had been defeated in '48, and most of us were going around like it was the end of the world, and Joe Pew's daughter came down with a class from Hood College, I think. I was asked to take them into the cloakroom and see if we could get the Speaker to talk to them. And Mr. Martin was glad to. I'll never forget: Here we were, really at the dregs, politically. We thought this was the end of our political fortunes. And he came in there with the most upbeat, positive, and not at all Pollyannaish presentation. He was giving historical statistics to show that things could rebound. Well, of course, you know, less than four years later we elected Eisenhower President. So it wasn't the end of the world, we didn't know it.

But he sent those college girls home with a very positive message and just sort of amused me. But his English, his grammar, was not the greatest. When I became reading clerk . . . One thing a reading clerk tries to avoid is the mispronunciation of words. If you mispronounce it, you're apt to mispronounce it at the wrong time. And it was kind of funny. Lawyers and doctors and different professional groups have a lot of jargon that they use, and it's sort of accepted. So I used to go to that huge dictionary off to the left of the Speaker's Rostrum to find that my lawyer partner was misusing words because the lawyer profession misuses them.

Okay, back to Joe Martin. Joe Martin, bless his heart, had certain words that he could not pronounce. One of them is a word that you use often in legislative proceedings, and that word is "pursuant." He could not say "pursuant." {laughter} He said, "perswayant," "perswayant." Always. Well, the trouble was, one day I got up there, and here I was, and sure enough, I used it his way. {laughter} And that was rather unprofessional. But I was very fond of him, and I was just really, really sorry that he didn't retire a little earlier. He was a very pathetic sight. And people who only knew him walking on one or two canes, with very relaxed facial features, and who saw him only at that time, they thought that was Joe Martin. That wasn't Joe Martin. You know, that was what happens to people when they get old. I wish he had been back at Cape Cod, or whatever it is up there, and relaxed by himself and not let people have that sad image. He got defeated in the primary, which shouldn't have happened. And, oh boy, that saddened me because he had been such a splendid Member of Congress. Elsie Gridley and Jim Milne were his staff people. They really ran a good shop. That was a real good team. I think of them often, remember them with tremendous affection because they

were good people. And Joe Martin certainly was. His mannerisms were different.

When the Puerto Rican shooting came [in 1954]—and I don't want to jump ahead here because you've got plenty of time to get back to that—but they've always kidded him. He was presiding. And there are some pillars at the top of the rostrum. Standing between them he could not have seen Gallery 11. So he got back between those pillars. {laughter} Oh, golly. He was a good guy. And when we get around to it, remind me to tell you about Judge Louis [Edward] Graham's attempting an amendment that upset Joe Martin.

JOHNSON: One of our previous oral history interviewees, Glen Rupp was a Page during the 1930s, and he mentioned belonging to the Little Congress Club. Was this an organization that you were familiar with?

BARTLETT: Yes. Though I think it broke up during the war years. But it was still going when I came here. And I knew some of them. We had a Congressman from Texas, Nat Patton—not Wright Patman, but Nat Patton—and he had a daughter, Bonnie, who was one of the most popular people on Capitol Hill, a dynamic gal. Kept her daddy out of trouble often. But she was a key figure in that organization at the time I came. I don't know what ever . . . I'm sure Bonnie's gone on to her reward long since. But, yes, I was aware of it. And, of course, again, you know, you're talking about what happened just before I came. And the fact that they keep talking about it . . . Well, the alleged stacking of the Little Congress by staffer Lyndon [Baines] Johnson was still very much in conversation. And, of course, he became a Member of the House soon thereafter.

And so that activity, I think that it lost a good deal of favor with the leadership about that time. I think there was some presumption, and some press, that the leadership wasn't crazy about, and I may be guessing a little bit here. Nothing I ever heard on the part of the leaders—either staff or membership—suggested they wanted to encourage reassembling that group. So I think it fell upon bad times, for whatever reason. You know, you would not like to read in the paper that somebody who has been elected "Speaker" of the Little Congress was assuming stature. You can easily see why that might not find favor. Furthermore, the wartime Congress got very busy, not like the old days when Congress would come and meet and leave town for extended periods. And in those old days, you had a few staff around with not a whole lot to do. And so they had time to get into mischief. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Many sources have indicated that one of the reasons why Congress was able to stay in for longer sessions, especially during the summer, was the advent of air conditioning. By the time you started as a Page in 1941, were all of the office buildings air conditioned?

BARTLETT: I don't believe so. I don't believe so. For a lot of reasons. You had air circulation. The House Chamber at that time was in real bad repair. The roof had sunken 18 inches. And they could not repair it because the war was upon us. And they put up a superstructure that looked like the inside of a dirigible or something that held the roof up, until 1949. And we not only didn't have air conditioning (a farm boy doesn't worry too much about heat, but I was aware that it was not comfortable in the chamber), but we didn't even have lighting. We had skylights in the ceiling. We had the seals of the various states in stained glass around the perimeter of the ceiling. And so on a good, sunny day, we had a bright chamber. On a day that was not bright—rainy

day or after sundown—the chamber would get terribly dark. And what lighting they had, they didn't like to use. I know when we came in to work on Saturdays, it was dim.

You asked about a Page schedule. In those days, we worked a half a day Saturday—every Saturday—and worked hard. Because that was the day we took those *Congressional Record*s out from the seats and did what we called "stripping the *Record*s." And we took them down to a dungeon down below what was the then the Doorkeeper's Office. We had a—I don't know what it is now because they've decided to use much of that space for other purposes, but it was a dungeon full of steel lockers. And we put the *Congressional Record*s in there in order by date so that we could . . . As Members would call, "I need a copy," or "I need 10 copies," of a particular date. "Be right over." And they were always amazed that we had those resources. Well, the reason we had them was because the Pages spent Saturday taking them from the floor and putting them on file downstairs. And it was true, we were able to make a pretty good account of ourselves in retrieving those and supplying the needs of the Members.

Then we did what was called "skeletonizing." I made quite a reputation of this. But on Saturdays, when we didn't have any other thing to do, we would take a *Record* and strip out those things where 10 Members would have something significant in a *Record*. So I would skeletonize a *Record*, provide 10 Members with that portion of the *Record*. See, this was before Xerox. This was before duplication, printing. And so to be able to give a Member 50 copies of a choice item, he was very appreciative. This is why they knew my name. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Was this something that you started on your own?

BARTLETT: Yes. Yes, I could not see wasting what was a good raw material. And it is absolutely true, our technology has really changed so many of the things that we do on the Hill. And that was one of them. I was able to accommodate a lot of people by doing that. And it was not a problem. I was happy to do it—take a ruler and rip out a page and provide that service.

JOHNSON: Going back to the air-conditioning topic for a second, many newspaper accounts indicate that the chamber was air conditioned. Was it just a problem of it not functioning?

BARTLETT: It was air-circulated. And I don't think . . . How much it was treated, I don't . . . But if it was air conditioned, it was primitive. You see, back in those days, a lot of air conditioning was nothing more than circulating the air coming off of ice. That literally was true. We used to judge national convention demonstrations. You're familiar with that. Back in those days—not so much anymore—but you'd nominate somebody, and as soon as that nomination was completed, you have a demonstration. And you'd run around the hall—parade around the hall and stir up the delegates. They used to measure the enthusiasm on behalf of a particular candidate on the basis of how much that . . . They'd measure the air conditioning. And they measured it in terms of tons of ice. I don't know why, but they did. And that would indicate the amount of enthusiasm. I was an officer of the 1948 convention. And that was primitive in so many ways. First televised convention. Very interesting. If I may jump ahead just a little bit, only on that aspect of why Congress left town.

JOHNSON: Sure.

BARTLETT: And I think overall, it has not been a good thing because it runs contrary to what Howard [Henry] Baker talked about, a citizen legislature, dividing their time between a civilian occupation and their legislative work. But I remember very distinctly when we had a particular pay raise up. And [Thomas] Hale Boggs, [Jr.] was then the Majority Leader. And he said, "You know, this means we're going to be here the year round. This is going to be a year-round occupation with this particular pay raise." Said it in the well of the House. And sure enough, I saw that as the determination that Congress was going to change its way of doing business. I've written a little bit on this subject. Someday I'll try to find a copy of that thing and show you, that I think, in order to meet the constitutional requirement for the right of petition, the right of citizens to consult with their representatives, I think we're defeating it by the present system of undesignated times for home work, which, of course, is often a joke. If you want to talk about that another time, I'll be glad to renew my familiarity with the thing I wrote. But I wrote that for—the U.S. Chamber of Commerce asked me to, back some years ago. And I went down and presented to them what I thought should be some of the reorganizations of Congress. And that was what was involved in it, basically, was to reschedule and to create a new calendar for legislative business, which would include scheduled times to be home.

I've heard this so many times, this air conditioning. Well, I must say that it was not comfortable. And long before my time, before air conditioning—or air circulation or whatever—was there, I'm told that it was just terrible. And then when the British burned the Capitol [during the War of] 1812, the Congress met at what they called "the Oven," over in the building across the

street, where the Supreme Court is now. And apparently it must have been really awful.[3]

But we certainly take air conditioning for granted in this day and age. And it does cause us to ignore whatever the weather happens to be here and keep us . . . Maybe we {laughter} stay inside and stay here a lot longer because it is pleasant.

JOHNSON: That's true. I'm going to take this opportunity to stop and switch tapes.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: You were a Page during World War II. And I wanted to ask you some specific questions about that period. For obvious reasons, there was little notice before FDR's Joint Session on December 8th, 1941. First off, I wanted to know if you were involved in the preparations for this very quick Joint Session.

BARTLETT: Probably as involved as any Page would be, or any staffer. But, you know, we felt the tremendous importance of this occasion. I came to Page School that morning, and I had to present my pass seven times between First Street, where the Supreme Court is, and the Capitol entrance. And I was showing it to a bayoneted soldier. Overnight they had put up tents and a perimeter fence around the Capitol. Jump ahead just a little bit to say that they even put up anti-aircraft weapons on top of the Longworth Building. And if you were in the Longworth Building, and you look at the bank of elevators on the seventh floor, there's a door to the left there. That door leads to stairs up to a loft, which leads up to the roof, which is where they had their antiaircraft

guns. And after the session that day, I went over and went up there and, ho, ho, ho, I helped them load ammunition. The truth of the matter was, they tolerated me; I couldn't have been much help. But they were lacing .50-caliber ammunition in metal straps. And I tried to help. But that was the conditions in which we found ourselves up there that day.

JOHNSON: And these were put in place overnight?

BARTLETT: Overnight. They must have anticipated the need and had a plan. I would expect them to. That day was very, very exciting in many ways. At one point I had a rush to go over to the building, I don't remember what the purpose was. But I fell and skinned my knee and damaged my trouser leg in the course of doing it. And I got back on the floor in time for the events. I remember it very, very well. And I remember, when we finally got around to voting on it, which was the next day or so, which exciting sessions . . . What is the matter with me? The Representative who voted against the war.

JOHNSON: Oh, Jeannette Rankin.

BARTLETT: Jeannette Rankin. Well, Jeannette Rankin was sitting in the back row, and I was standing behind the back row, when Harold Knutson—who had been the only other Member of the House at that time who had voted against World War I—and he came running back to her and earnestly pleaded, "Jeannette, Jeannette, don't do it!" He knew what she was fixing to do. And she had such a look on her face, you know, this obstinate look. "Oh, you'll get in all kinds of trouble. Don't do it. Don't do it." He was begging her. And, of course, when came time for her vote, she voted no. And was the only one. It was her second time of sacrificing her seat in Congress for a vote

against war. The House adjourned very shortly [thereafter]. And in those days, the press was allowed to come onto the floor as soon as the gavel came down. And they did. Miss Rankin ran into the cloakroom. We had very large phone booths, not like the ones now. And she jumped in a phone booth and closed the door and put her knee up against the door and called the Capitol Police to come and rescue her, to escort her back to her office.

JOHNSON: There's a couple of famous pictures of that moment.

BARTLETT: Are there?

JOHNSON: There's one where Joe Martin is speaking to her while she's in the telephone booth.

BARTLETT: Is that right? I've not seen that. Well, that's interesting. I don't remember Joe Martin being in there. But, of course, he would have been. I just don't remember that aspect of it. But we had an old . . . Mike Bunke was in charge of the cloakroom at that time, from Chicago. And I remember Mike Bunke was really upset when all the press guys came running in there to chase her. And he was trying to throw them out. He'd been a part of that old Cook County crowd. [Robert Bruce] Chiperfield was his Congressman. My gosh, that's ancient history! But Mike was excitable. And this upset him quite a bit, that they were taking those privileges about the floor.

The security arrangements in the Capitol were kind of interesting. They divided security of the Capitol between the Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police. Captain Bert Sheldon was in charge of the detail for the Metropolitan Police. And they came on at 4:00 in the afternoon. And they

maintained security for the building overnight, until 8:00 the next morning, when the Capitol Police would take over again. This went on the whole war. Bert Sheldon was a wonderful friend of mine, a great Lincoln scholar. And, oh heck, a lot of fine memories of meeting with his Lincoln scholar group from the University of Harrogate, Tennessee, who came up here, and they would meet and discuss Lincoln at great length.[4] And they were all scholars, except I didn't feel that I was entitled to any credentials in that group at all. But I was privileged to be with them. But Captain Sheldon's maintenance of the Capitol . . . Incidentally, down in the crypt . . . Let's see if I can tell you where. Just inside of where the sales desk is down there in the East Front of the Capitol, there was a stairs. It was a strange-looking thing, but right there in that crypt, stairs ran down below. That's where they had soldiers bivouacked, underneath there, and police. And during the night session, the police would be taking over. There were accommodations that were found down there that I'm sure you couldn't find today. They've been gobbled up by these private offices and different things, but I doubt that you could find it.

Incidentally, let me say, that afternoon (December 8, 1941) that we were up the loft of the Longworth Building, preparing for an air war. The mood was serious. Nobody was kidding. They were looking to the eastern horizon. And I was, too. They were sincerely expecting to see the *Luftwaffe* come in from the east.[5] That's hard to realize now. We had a lot of air raid drills.

We had lots of them. Later on, as it went on, we got less and less uptight about it because it was obvious that we need not fear an air attack. But that took a little while. When the Army realized it wasn't going to happen, without telling anybody, they took the antiaircraft guns off of the Longworth

Building and off of the Department of Commerce at the same time and put up imitations. They were two-by-fours and what have you, and hammered together in the shape of a gun. {laughter} And Congressman [John Elliott] Rankin climbed up there and found out that they were all fakes, and he came back to the House Floor and very indignantly said that he didn't appreciate being protected with these fakes. It was quite a speech. {laughter} I'll bet later on he was sorry he had made that speech. Because it just—it showed that he was more concerned about his own survival, I guess, than whatever. But it made no sense to keep real antiaircraft weapons up there any longer. And that's what it was all about.

JOHNSON: Since this was such a historic day, I was hoping that you could set the scene during President Roosevelt's Joint Session on December 8, 1941. Was the mood somber, or was it more charged? Can you describe your recollections?

BARTLETT: Well, you had a lot of different moods. And I'll tell you why. Secretary of the Navy [Frank] Knox put out a public statement immediately that the United States would blast the Japanese out of the Pacific in two weeks. Now, of course, he probably was told to make that speech, and he knew perfectly well it wasn't going to happen. But there were some people who believed it and thought that this was something we could do in two weeks. So you had a mix. You had a lot of people who were draftable age, who were eligible for service. They took it very seriously. Some of them rushed to join or what have you. We had some Members of Congress in that group, several, including Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy [James Edward] Van Zandt, Mel [Melvin Joseph] Maas, and Al [Albert Arnold] Gore [Sr.]. There were several who responded to the thing at that time. But it was a broad measure of different attitudes toward the war. I think there were plenty of old-timers

with a mature perspective who were very concerned, very, very gravely concerned. The importance of passing the resolution, when we got around to that, that was serious business. I don't know how Jeannette Rankin could have resisted the appeal. I don't know. It was a fixation with her.

We corresponded after she left Congress, and she was an unusual lady. They had a little reunion here recently and honored her, and I felt kind of put out that I wasn't invited. {laughter} I would have liked to have been there as probably the only one there who would have remembered her. And she was an interesting person. We've had so many interesting Congressmen, women Congressmen. I talked to Charlotte [Thompson] Reid just recently and Shirley [Neil] Pettis. I talked to both of them recently on the phone, just to learn how they were. And they've each left their mark. Charlotte, kidding her because she's the same age as Gerald [Rudolph] Ford, [Jr.], which is 92 now. And she used to be featured on the Don McNeill Breakfast Club. It was a famous radio program. And she was the vocalist on Don McNeill's radio program. I remember the commercial songs. So I always kid her by recalling them. Yes, you know. But her husband was the candidate for Congress and died, and she took up the contest, won, and was a fine Member, fine Member.

JOHNSON: The Joint Session was broadcast by radio on December 8th, 1941, and one of the radio broadcasts had kept the microphone on inadvertently. And so afterwards—this is something that Walter Cronkite chronicled—you were able to hear what was happening on the floor and Speaker Rayburn and Joe Martin asking for unanimous passage of the war resolution. One of the things you're also able to hear in the background was some of the banter between Speaker Rayburn and Jeannette Rankin, and Jeannette Rankin

trying to get the attention of the chair. Were you aware of this? Did you recall this at all?

BARTLETT: I'll have to think on it. I do not recall it. There is no reason why it shouldn't have been.

JOHNSON: Well, I'm sure there were many things going on. You could just hear in the background that she was trying to get recognized by the chair, and Speaker Rayburn was ignoring her at this point.

BARTLETT: Was he? Well, of course, you don't recognize somebody during the call of the roll. And I'm assuming the roll was under way. If it was prior to the call of the roll, I may not have been there. Maybe I had come off the floor.

JOHNSON: This was prior to the call of the roll.

BARTLETT: Well, I may not have been in the chamber because I don't remember that, specifically.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the reaction when she stood up and voted no?

BARTLETT: Everything was focused on her. And by that, I mean whatever happened, whatever anybody else did, the whole thing, and, of course, that scene of Harold Knutson. Harold Knutson, incidentally, had to leave Congress under a cloud. I don't know whether you ever knew that or not. You know, people think certain things that are happening never happened before. Well, they have happened before. And he had a situation down in Alexandria, and quietly terminated his service. It was one of those things. It was kind of sad.

He was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee in the 80th Congress and had a formidable position. You know, inasmuch as that they didn't write about it, wasn't newspaper copy, so whatever you heard, you heard rumors, and you didn't know how much of it was authentic. Rumors have a way of being less than perfect. But that was what we heard at the time. But his reaction that day, he was trying to protect her from making what amounted, in his mind, to a terrible mistake. Rather interesting that she could not see it as he saw it at that point. I don't know how anybody, after the attack on Pearl Harbor . . . Maybe we weren't given sufficient evidence of what had happened out there, you know, that we're talking about a very short time, and here you've got Secretary Knox saying we're going to clean this thing up in a hurry. So there was plenty of reason for people to believe it wasn't as grave a situation as it certainly turned out to be in every respect, including the casualties at Pearl Harbor, about which we're probably still learning.

JOHNSON: Another one of our oral history interviewees was Irving Swanson, a former reading clerk. And he was the person that read the roll on this historic day. Did you get to know Mr. Swanson?

BARTLETT: I knew Irv Swanson real well. I would not have remembered that. He called the roll. But I knew Irv very well, and he was a good reading clerk and a good guy. Irv Swanson and George Maurer were the two reading clerks I guess I got to know best. I don't know what year. George had been the timekeeper of the House, and, when the vacancy occurred in the reading clerk's post . . . [Francis Eugene] Tad Walter of Pennsylvania was his Congressman. He arranged for George to just be promoted into that job. Unlike when I went after it! {laughter} There were 21 candidates, and we had a terrible time. I

hated that, to have to compete for something like that, and then audition. And the whole thing was very stressful. However, it turned out all right.

I guess I shouldn't complain. {laughter} But I was so amused when you told me earlier that you had talked to Irv Swanson. And the reason I was, was because, unfortunately, I had assumed that he had passed on to his reward because I just hadn't heard a thing about him in years. And the people that worked around the desk when he was up there—Curtis Christianson and Frank Hoye and all those people—are gone, long since. So I just assumed that Irv was among them. But it surprised me, and pleased me, to know that he's still enjoying life. And I hope someday to be able to read his memoirs because it would be very interesting to see what his perspective was. As you well know, no two people's perspective is going to be the same. When Ben [Benton Franklin] Jensen, who was one of the five shot on the House Floor at the Puerto Rican thing . . . And he came back, and I heard him telling some people how he was helped out this door. Except for one thing. I was there. He didn't go out that door! {laughter}

JOHNSON: But I'm sure that's how he recalls it.

BARTLETT: He recalled it. And, of course, he was shot at that point. He also would not have liked for me to tell the story about how he was shot. The bullet entered his right shoulder and, for some crazy reason, didn't penetrate his carcass, but followed under his skin and out the side. It didn't really do a lot of damage; it just followed the course of his body, just under the skin. And he was never what you'd call "life-threatened" by the wound. But Ben Jensen was a dear friend, he was a part of the old poker group. We'll talk about that another time. {laughter}

JOHNSON: And I'm certainly going to ask you more questions about the '54 shooting since you were an eyewitness.

BARTLETT: Sure.

JOHNSON: I just wanted to go back just a little bit more on the very historic days in December. December 11th, 1941, the declaration of war against Germany and Italy, Irving Swanson once again played an important role in the proceedings because he read President Roosevelt's message asking for a declaration of war against Germany and Italy. Do you remember the events of this day, on December 11th? Jeannette Rankin also played a role, in that she voted present this time. But what are your recollections?

BARTLETT: I have a less vivid memory of it. It's not the declaration of war. But the resolution called it "A state of war exists." I would need to refresh my own memory about some of that. Now that you mention it, I remember that she voted present subsequently, but . . . Well, those were momentous days, and so filled with stress, events, that some of it just gets lost, and as far as the particulars go. I don't remember anything, off the top of my head, about that particular event, the next Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. And let's see. You say that was Thursday? Was that the 11th?

JOHNSON: The 11th.

BARTLETT: My goodness. {laughter} It shows you how little I remember. I would have put those resolutions on Tuesday and Wednesday.

JOHNSON: Well, you were very young at the time. {laughter}

BARTLETT: Must not have been keeping very good track of the days of the week. And I haven't gone back and read some of that, which I should have done—would have done if I hadn't been so preoccupied.

JOHNSON: One of the topics that you mentioned was security measures. And there's very little documented on the security measures at the Capitol. So could you talk a little bit more about that, what happened afterwards? And then throughout the war. Were there more security measures that were implemented?

BARTLETT: {laughter} Well, it'll probably astound you to know how few. Now the soldiers put up a fence around the west lawn of the Capitol, put up their tents on the southwest lawn of the Capitol for a while. They maintained a perimeter guard, with their bayonets. They marched around the Capitol back there. The front plaza wasn't guarded {laughter} very well. As a matter of fact, we had many demonstrations on the front plaza for the sale of bonds. We had, I can remember, Jack Benny and Dorothy Lamour, and a group of them that came through there for a demonstration on the plaza out there, to help generate sale for bonds. At one point, they brought a two-man Japanese submarine that they had captured and installed it out there right at the foot of the east steps. And they built some wooden stairs up, that you'd go up and look down inside. Well, I came to school, again at 6:00 in the morning, and this was a new installation. It had gone up overnight. I didn't know it was there. And there was nobody around, nobody around. I walked over and climbed up those stairs {laughter} and looked down in there and screamed and jumped back off of that platform. I don't remember whether I hit stairs or not. I just jumped off. They had a dummy Japanese in that darn thing! {laughter} I didn't know.

JOHNSON: Not what you expected to see.

BARTLETT: Didn't expect to see that. I've often said that, having gone through a couple wars with the security at the Capitol, I'm a little astounded at our obsession with security at this point. It's not my responsibility, so I don't know what's required and what isn't, but I think of how we confronted a couple of other serious world enemies without going into garrison government, and I just wonder how much of it has to be. But this is a new enemy and new method of bringing the war to our shores and to our Capitol, so maybe it's necessary.

You know, after the Puerto Rican shooting, I would just inject the fact that there was a great hue and cry to put up bulletproof glass around the House Galleries. And Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Martin got together and said, "No, we're not going to do that. We owe it to the people not to impose a barrier like that between them and their Representatives." Which I thought was rather profound and rather, again, rising to an understanding of what should take place in a representative republic. And I wonder if there's anybody around today with that perspective, who ask themselves—and maybe there is—but who ask themselves . . . Whenever people come in whose whole life has been one of providing security and that their form of security has always been, "The best way to provide security is to keep the people away." Well, that doesn't go for the United States Capitol. And I think that there needs to be somebody around to say, "Hey, this is where the people govern. And you've got to accommodate them as well as provide the security for the Members."

But, you know, there's no such thing as perfect security. President [Rafael] Trujillo spent more of his national budget—Dominican Republic—on

personal security than any head of state we have ever known. The percentage that was to protect him was the biggest item in the budget. "National security," he would have said. But, by golly, they shot him in office. And no schoolteacher goes to school any day without knowing that there's danger there. No policeman takes his beat without knowing that there's a danger there. So I don't think that any public official should expect 100 percent personal security. I just think you've got to realize that if you choose to serve the public, that sometimes that public can turn on you! {laughter} So be it. I didn't mean to get on my stump here.

JOHNSON: No, that's fine. I have one final question. Did you have any role models during this period, when you were a Page, that may have inspired your long career on the Hill?

BARTLETT: I had lots of wonderful role models. I'm glad you asked that question because I feel a great debt to any number of people. I started to mention William Tyler Page . . . any number of people who were. But I must tell you a little secret, a very personal one. I've always had tremendous support from my home folks, well, not just my family, but my neighbors and my home folks. They've always held me to a standard that was a little unreal. And yet, in each instance where I had a question of whether or not I should do something, I've had to remind myself, how's this going to sound to the folks back home? And that's not phony. Many, many a time I've thought, "I can't let them down. I certainly can't let my family down. Because they have . . ." I told you. I left the farm. And that left them short one hand to do things that I would otherwise do. So people were sacrificing for me. And, gosh, I don't know whether in this day and age you dare mention it, but to this day I don't go out to keep an engagement that I don't repair to my faith to ask that I

might be used, in that instance, to do something useful. And I try never to forget, when it's over, if in fact things have gone well, to say thanks. But, you know, it's sad that you don't dare talk about that. Next question. {laughter}

JOHNSON: I wanted to ask if there's anything else you wanted to add for today.

BARTLETT: For today? You've gathered so many questions that were so pertinent to that period. I'll probably think of things that might be useful to add to it. But I think that you've covered the war years, the early war years—the one we won, as Jim [James Charles] Corman used to say {laughter}, pretty well. And if I think of anything, I'm sure we can add it at the appropriate moment.

JOHNSON: Exactly. Or bring it up for the next interview. All right. Thank you very much.

— JOE BARTLETT—
INTERVIEW TWO

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson, interviewing General Joe Bartlett, former reading clerk and Minority Clerk for the U.S. House of Representatives. This is the second interview with General Bartlett. The date is May 17th, 2006, and the interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building.

I was hoping today that we could start with a few follow-up questions that I had based on your last interview. You spoke very fondly of the former Clerk of the House, William Tyler Page.

BARTLETT: Well, now, he was not the Clerk during my time. He was the Republican clerk, Minority Clerk.

JOHNSON: Right. Newspaper accounts indicated that the House appointed a committee to attend his funeral in 1942. And they also explain that when the Democrats took control of the House in 1931, that they worked with Republican leaders to create the lifelong post of Minority Clerk for Mr. Page. What I was wondering is, do you think these actions were a sign of the close relationship between the House Officers and Members of the period, or do you think this type of behavior was something special, reserved for a select number of Officers like Mr. Page?

BARTLETT: I think you would have to assume that he was very special. As the author of "The American's Creed," I think he had a status that was unique. There were other Officers of the House who had great respect, and even affection, on the

Hill. But I think that William Tyler Page would have been in a category pretty much of his own. He was an extraordinary man.

JOHNSON: Could you comment a little bit more on the relationship between Members and Officers. Were they closer during that time period? Was it a more collegial relationship?

BARTLETT: It was a different relationship, there's no doubt about that. As I mentioned to you earlier, with the Congress gone for much of the year, in those days, the Officers of the House ran this institution. And I would say people like South Trimble were very definitely people of great prestige and respect because, in the absence of Congress, they were expected to carry out whatever institutional decisions were needed. And they did it, and they did it with great confidence and great responsibility. They had a charge to keep. I hope I'm interpreting their attitudes, as I viewed them as a youngster. But it was my impression that they took their roles very seriously. Their roles were much larger then. Part of that was due to the different nature of congressional sessions in those days. However, as we have discussed, where there is power, there is always bound to be a contest for power. There was competition. That is a nice word for the relationship that developed between the Office of the Clerk and the Committee on House Administration during a decade or so. Different personalities got into it, of course. But reading the daily newspapers after I had left here, I gathered that there was still some considerable contention that continued long after I left. Personalities were incidental—this was a struggle for power.

To put this into context, when Wayne [Levere] Hays was chairman of Committee on House Administration and Carl [Bert] Albert was the Speaker

of the House, there was an unmistakable competition to see who was going to control the affairs of the House. The rules of the House very clearly give the Speaker of the House control of everything on the House side of the Capitol and many related responsibilities. However, Mr. Hays was a very clever, resourceful, ambitious man, and he intimidated Speaker Albert in his determination to garner some of the Speaker's authority.

I had a personal experience where I got caught between them—a matter of a little $300 travel bill. I believe I am the only person ever to have been nominated to go to the Federal Executive Institute as a representative of the House of Representatives. That was done by Speaker Albert, bless his heart. He was a Rhodes Scholar, appreciated education and learning, and was very happy to endorse my nomination to go down to Charlottesville to attend that seven-week course, mostly during a time the House was not meeting. It was a splendid experience. However, I came back to the Capitol every weekend and attended to my duties in the House. I spent Saturdays and Sundays in my office. So it certainly did not feel as though it was inappropriate for me to submit a bill for the mileage from Charlottesville on those weekends. Well, it was a minor thing for a person who was a notorious junketeer, as Wayne Hays was. But when I submitted it, for reasons I will never understand—because most of the time I had a very good relationship with Mr. Hays—he turned it down. I went to the Speaker, Albert, and said, "As the nominee for this assignment in Charlottesville, do you not think I am entitled to this mileage?" Speaker Albert agreed, but he became strangely timid. It was obvious he was not going to confront Wayne Hays over a $300 bill. I never got the money.

It was said that the authority of the Clerk was emasculated during that period [1970s] and taken over by the Committee on House Administration. And without having a personal, first-hand knowledge of the details, I gather that that was the case. I know in one instance, the Garage Committee, the Parking Committee, which was made up of Wayne Hays, H. R. [Harold Royce] Gross, and B. F. [Bernice Frederic] Sisk. Wayne Hays got upset with the press one day. I saw this scene, and was later told by H. R. Gross what happened. Hays came across the aisle to where H. R. Gross sat, on the Republican side, on the center aisle. And they had a rather vigorous discussion. Hays went away, and you could see he was upset with H. R. Gross. Well, then H. R. told me—and he was a dear friend and a wonderful man—but Mr. Gross said that Mr. Hays had come over and wanted to throw the correspondents in the press gallery out of their parking spaces. And he thought that H. R. would go along with him. And, of course, H.R. was an old newspaperman himself, well, actually, a radio man. But he did some newspaper work. And he wasn't about to do a thing like that. And Hays just couldn't believe he could not roll Gross over and get him to do that.

So this is indicative of a theory I've shared with young Clarence [J.] Brown, Jr., a dear friend, a dear friend, a contemporary—we've experienced many things together, including national conventions. And we've sat and philosophized a bit. One of the things we philosophized about was that political power, like matter, exists only in a fixed quantity. And that you don't create or eliminate political power, it just changes locale, under different pressures, as influences are applied to it. And so, the theory was that any time that one entity gained power, they did it at the expense of another entity, who lost power. And we played the game of the flow of power. At one time you would hear concern about an imperial presidency, at another time

the fault might be lodged against an unrestrained committee, a despotic chairman, an overpowering Congress—or at least, one body or the other—a presumptuous Judiciary, or a Chief Justice who ought to be impeached.

Well, what's happening is that flow of power that we're talking about seems to lodge in one place for a little while, until somebody comes about with a different influence that brings more power to them. It's a game that goes on constantly. It's a perfectly human endeavor, and we've seen it, we've certainly seen it, within the power of the House of Representatives. Being where the people govern, it has the ultimate power on many things, as it should. And so, of course, that power is going to be contested from time to time.

JOHNSON: In your last interview, you made a statement—and I wanted to quote you because it's along these lines, as far as the Clerk goes, and the changing role of the Clerk. You said, "I would say that, again, the Congress being absent a good deal of the year, in the old days, the truth of the matter was the House was run by the Clerk of the House." And a couple of questions came to mind, based on this statement. First of all, specifically, how do you believe the role of the Clerk of the House has changed from when you first started as a Page to when you retired in 1979?

BARTLETT: Well, I'm not an authority on the present status of the Clerk. I've watched the House Administration [Committee] take over procurement and different things. The power of the dollar really dictates an awful lot of influence in this world. And that's one thing that the House Administration wanted, was the procurement dollars. And they got it, back under the time of [William] Pat Jennings, and the contention between him, as the Clerk, and the chairman of the House Administration Committee. I watched, in the days of South

Trimble . . . he had an assistant named "Harry" [H. Newlin] Megill, who was very knowledgeable. Not the most popular man on the Hill because he had decisions to make. But he was very, very effective, and, like a lot of other subordinates around here, knew what he could and should do in order to please his boss. He was a very significant member of that staff.

But I watched very closely the decision-making in those days. And there was no doubt that the authority lodged in that office, for the conduct of the business of the House, whether they were talking about the maintenance of furniture, refurbishing or whatever, it all went back to the Clerk of the House. And I think it was performed very responsibly and well.

When they eliminated the Office of the Doorkeeper [in 1995], this created a whole new shifting of power. There had been some similar experiences in days gone by. At one point, Lyle Snader held both the job of Clerk of the House and Sergeant at Arms of the House at the same time, a very unusual thing. And then we had, as you know, a Sergeant at Arms not long before who had been sent to the penitentiary for inappropriate conduct of that office. So I don't mean that every Officer of the House in the past has been a paragon. That just isn't the case. And we've had some very heartbreaking events with some of the splendid people who've happened to have offices. And quite frankly, as you know, the elevation of Officers of the House is not always based upon any determination of their qualifications. And there were many people who thought that some of them exceeded the "Peter Principle," went beyond their abilities. I would not mention any names but there were some who were thought to be inadequate to the responsibilities entrusted to them. But that did not apply to people like South Trimble, who carried out the Office of the Clerk with such great competence. At least, that was my

view. There may have been contemporaries of his who might have had a slightly different view. But I don't know that. But I know I've thought very highly of the way that office was filled.

And I must tell you, I lament (at the time I hoped someday to be the Clerk of the House instead of the clerk to the minority), and every time I saw somebody whittling away at the authority of that office, it pained me. Just as when I saw them moving functional offices of the House into obscure locations, in favor of having all kinds of activities that do not relate to the legislative product. And I've always felt that the Clerk of the House should be located where the Appropriations chairman is located now because he should be immediately available to the floor, and he (or she) should have the status and authority commensurate with the senior Officer of the House. Administratively, the Clerk should correspond to, and complement, the august role of the Speaker. That is the way I view the ideal organizational arrangement. And if the House is going to take away the authority and the function of the Clerk, then I guess it doesn't really matter whether or not the Clerk of the House is immediately accessible to the Speaker, as I've always felt that he should be.

JOHNSON: Well, would you say then that the Clerk remained a powerful figure during the time that you were here, through 1979? You mentioned the Doorkeeper's Office being eliminated, but that wasn't until 1995. So, do you think that the power stayed consistent?

BARTLETT: I'm not sure I'm qualified, Kathleen, to say what the present role is.

JOHNSON: No, not present. If you can just talk about while you were an employee here, how you think that the role had changed.

BARTLETT: Well, I always had great respect for that office. Other people have occupied that office. Regardless of who was there, that was an office that represented the authority of the Congress. I wanted the Clerk's office to have the utmost respect, and I wanted them to carry out that authority with a great sense of responsibility. I feel that during my time, it generally was done. I would not want to reflect anything but honor upon those that I've known who have held these offices. Because I honor the offices.

I was very impressed when Donn Anderson had to step down from the Clerk's office [in 1995]. The tribute that he gave to the opportunities, the privilege he'd had, was very impressive. I admired Donn for that. His attitude, at that moment in his life, impressed me a great deal. But Donn would be a far better authority on the transition of that role than would I.

There have been an awful lot of fine people who have worked within that office. I don't want to personalize it, but there were people who were transitioned into that post, and I knew them before they went in. And I thought they had a pretty good understanding of some of the intricacies of the sub-Clerk level. And then they got in there, they certainly didn't follow through on what we had discussed before they had been elevated. I have often wondered where the pressure came from that caused them to step back from some of the things, some of the reforms that were not brought to bear after they took office.

That's another story, for another day. But it just happens to be a curious experience, that I talked with them, knew them well. We had discussed the things that needed to be done, things that I would never have an opportunity to do. I didn't sit idly by during my many years pre-dating my becoming Minority Clerk. But I'd written up reforms like you wouldn't believe, only to find that they were not going to be a part of any plan. [Clarence] Bud Brown—again, back to my dear friend Bud—his point, "They say most politicians are paranoid, but I'm not, am I?" And that's sort of it. I think there is a paranoia. I think there has been a concern, in more recent years, and I think I could document this, that there are certain leaders who were paranoid and certain elected leaders of Congress who were afraid that some staff member might be made an Officer or what have you, and then would put together something that they would regard as a power base. This is unthinkable to me, just unthinkable, because the Members are always in charge. And no Officer would ever, should ever, knowingly exceed his authority, or exceed the license that he's given to perform. We've discussed this a little bit before, and I think it's the key to people like Lewis Deschler's many years of service, was that he always knew . . .

JOHNSON: Right. The longtime Parliamentarian.

BARTLETT: Right. And a brilliant mind. An autocrat, a tough son of a gun. I mean, he was much feared. I had a good relationship with Lewis Deschler, and not everybody did. {laughter} But I respected him so highly on that very thing that I knew that, when he directed anything, that he did it with the full confidence that he was carrying out the wishes of his boss, of the Speaker. And that's a crucial relationship, that anyone [must understand in] any line of business, Congress or anywhere else. Everybody has a boss, and you've got

to know what your relationship should be, in order to serve him, that boss, he/she, properly. And this has been pretty much my experience with the Congress.

But there is that paranoia. Oh, my plans are still in a file drawer. At that time, we had no organization. There was no such thing as a sick leave, no such thing as scheduled holidays. There was no job evaluation of any kind, by anybody. And we had a rather large payroll, by the standards of that day, and yet we had complete autonomy. People went their own way—they had their own sponsor, they served that sponsor, and they didn't really much care about what anybody else did. But this was the kind of staffing, at that time, that I felt, we've just got to get this thing organized. And so that was the basis of much of my table of organization that I prepared. But I took it before the leadership at that time, and I guess that wouldn't be hard to figure out who that was. But I took it before the leadership, and I'll never forget, the leadership was not going to accept it. And that was an interesting relationship, too. But Glenn [Robert] Davis, of Wisconsin, spoke up and tried to explain the word "compensatory time," which nobody had ever heard of in that room, apparently. {laughter} It was funny. But he was the only one who tried to advance the cause. So what I'm saying, really, was, at that point, there was no desire to see the staff put into a mode of organization. I just wanted to introduce self-evaluation. I wanted each person to evaluate what they were doing. But, oh, having said that, I think things were reasonably acceptable in the eyes of the membership.

JOHNSON: I'm certainly going to ask you more detailed questions about your time as Minority Clerk, but I just wanted to fill in a few gaps first. You mentioned a

few minutes ago Harry Megill. He was appointed acting Clerk for a short period of time.

BARTLETT: Yes, he was. You are so knowledgeable.

JOHNSON: Well, there's really not very much, except the *Congressional Record* that refers to this. I was hoping that you could shed some light on this period and this unusual circumstance of an acting Clerk.

BARTLETT: That's right. That is right. I remember that, his having taken that position. Harry was fully capable of that. He had never been elected Clerk of the House, although he had run for the office. He did not have the necessary base of support. Harry was very well informed. And the many, many details that come into running the Clerk's office, particularly in those days, the statutory requirements and the rules of the House, as they applied to the work of the Clerk, Harry knew all of that. And he worked long hours. He really was one of those devoted people.

JOHNSON: He had been a longtime assistant to South Trimble?

BARTLETT: He had been a longtime assistant. I don't know how far back it went. And he had a son who was a Page. He only had one son. And his wife, bless her heart, would come down and wait for him hours on end, while he would be working at carrying out the duties. So it was altogether appropriate. Now, he remained in an assistant's role under Ralph Roberts and Lyle Snader. I don't know when Harry left. And I frankly don't know when Harry died. I think we must not have been here because I would certainly have wanted to pay my

respects to Harry because I thought he was a very fine public servant. He carried out his duties devotedly.

JOHNSON: He was acting Clerk. He was appointed August 2nd, 1946, and he only served until the next Congress started, on January 3rd, 1947. And I know you were young at this point.

BARTLETT: Yes.

JOHNSON: But do you remember anything about the circumstances surrounding him being named acting Clerk?

BARTLETT: I thought Megill might have also been acting Clerk at the time of Lyle Snader's coming in. You have no evidence of that?[6]

JOHNSON: No.

BARTLETT: Well, he served. And I know that Lyle was very dependent upon Harry to provide the knowledge that he did not have. A funny story went with that. That Lyle was elected, of course, in the 83rd Congress. Back when the 80th Congress was elected, in November of 1946, Congress was not in session. I was back on the farm in West Virginia, doing what farm boys do. And I got a call from Speaker [Joe] Martin's office, soon-to-be Speaker Martin's office, saying I should get back here in a hurry. And I set a record of coming back across the mountainous Route 50 to get here. When I got here, they said—they didn't say, in so many words—"We're not prepared for this." But they weren't. They were totally unprepared. And Leo [Elwood] Allen was going to be the head of patronage, the Congressman from Galena, Illinois. And he

didn't know anything about patronage. That was kind of funny. He said, would you get together a list—sort of like the plum book for the House of Representatives? And here, I'm a kid. I'm 20 years old. I've never voted. No, I hadn't; I was 20 years old. {laughter} So I didn't even know where to start. I took a yellow pad and went down to the disbursing office, which was then located in what is now that corridor between what was the Doorkeeper's Office and the Clerk's Office. That was the disbursing office. That's where you went to get your money. And there were two ladies in there: Alice Sattgast and Anne Trimble, who had to be a Trimble. I never knew her relation. She ended up marrying a Congressman from North Dakota, named Don [Levingston] Short, a nice, nice fellow. And she was a sweetheart. Well, I went to them—Alice and Anne—in all innocence, and I said, "I've got this responsibility to put together a list for the new chairman of the Patronage Committee," or whatever. I don't know that I used that term because I didn't know what was going to be. Congress hadn't organized the new Congress yet, the 80th Congress.

JOHNSON: And at this point you were chief Page, correct?

BARTLETT: I was chief Page. I had been chief Page from October of 1945. Anyway, there were just not very many Republican staffers. So I sort of stood out like a sore thumb. And, obviously, they thought I could put this thing together. Alice Sattgast and Alice Trimble sat with me and drew up a list. Maybe they helped me because they wanted to be sure their names weren't on that list. I'm not sure. {laughter} But they were really nice to me, always had been. They were just a couple of real good gals in that office. So I took the list back up to the Speaker, to the soon-to-be Speaker. And Elsie Gridley, who was his secretary, was very pleased to get it. And Allen was overjoyed. He absolutely

was ecstatic about this. He thought this was a great list. I don't have a copy of it. I don't know whether it was any good or not, but he liked it. And he said, "I'm going to be chairman of the Rules Committee. Would you like to be my clerk?" And I said, "Would that mean I'd have to leave the floor?" And he didn't answer me directly. I'm not sure he knew. But I didn't want to leave the floor. And so I didn't accept the job, which Lyle Snader later got. {laughter} But Lyle was from Illinois, and Leo Allen was his Congressman. I never told Lyle in his lifetime that I'd been offered the job before he got it. {laughter} But it was an interesting time of transition. And I did want to stay on the floor and I was rather young.

JOHNSON: Another follow-up question that I had was, you talked quite a bit about Ralph Roberts. And, specifically, you mentioned a conflict that occurred between Mr. Roberts and the House Administration Committee. Could you elaborate a little bit more on that? You spoke briefly about it, but could you just provide some more details?

BARTLETT: Well, I probably can't. I may have already told you about as much as I know. But there was a conflict of personality between Pat Jennings, who was then a Member of Congress, and who later was Clerk. He was from Marion, Virginia. And I never could quite understand it. And I guess, maybe, that's where I ought to kind of leave it, that I couldn't understand it. But there was a conflict. And I told you that Ralph had a way of believing that time would solve all things, and that they would find out. You know, he wanted to be patient with them. A number of times, I said to myself, if I didn't say it to Ralph, "Really, you need to make an issue of this. You need to project your own point of view on this thing." And he was reluctant to do it. He was a

very fine fellow, in my book. I liked Ralph a lot. And I always hated to see him misused, as I think he was.

JOHNSON: So is your perception that it was more of a personality conflict, rather than an institutional one?

BARTLETT: And a power struggle. I think that always enters into it—that that somebody is exercising some power that somebody else would like to exercise. Of course, as I told you, Joseph Sinnott had been a powerful Officer. And he exercised power!

The two cloakrooms, where they had their little snack bars in each one, well, the one on the Democratic side was run by a fellow named Coats, C-O-A-T-S, and he was blind. And he had an assistant named Jimmy, whose last name I do not know. But Jimmy had a shoeshine stand up there. And that seems kind of funny today, but he had a shoeshine stand in the Democratic Cloakroom. And he had a good clientele. But he could imitate Joe Sinnott. Joe Sinnott had a gruff {grumble}, you know? And Jimmy could imitate him. And he would do it, if there was any misbehavior going on back in the cloakroom. It's an L-shaped cloakroom. And his stand was on one side, and the other side was where they had the couches. And if Congress wasn't in session, Pages frequently just lounged on those couches. And if there was misbehavior—occasionally a craps game might be going on back there—Jimmy would come around the corner with his imitation and have those kids trying to dig a hole through the wall to get out of there. It was funny.

People stood in awe and some fear of Joe Sinnott. I didn't. I was very fond of him, as I've testified. But he ran a different operation. Ralph was his assistant.

And you would have thought that Ralph would have garnered some of his attitudes towards the job, but he really didn't. Once Ralph took over, it was a different operation.

I told you they put me on a different payroll every month. They did. One month, I thought I was off the payroll. I went around to see Charlie Smith, who was then the operating engineer and in charge of the elevators. Charlie Smith put me on elevator number one, the Members' elevator that goes up to the [House] Press Gallery. So I'm on there, operating this elevator—nothing was automatic in those days you know, you had to crank the thing. I'm in there cranking the thing. Ralph comes, gets on the elevator. "What are you doing here?" "I'm running the elevator." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, I needed a job." He said, "You've never been out of a job." He said, "You've got to make up your mind. Do you want to run this elevator, or do you want to be a Page?" {laughter}

JOHNSON: And you chose the latter.

BARTLETT: I called good old Charlie Smith, and I said, "I'd like relief, because I'm going back up to being a Page." {laughter} Page overseer, in those days.

JOHNSON: Another topic that we spoke about in the last interview was the "Little Congress." And there really hasn't been much documented on this organization. [Robert] Caro's biography of Lyndon Johnson describes it in a few pages. But I wanted to ask you a specific question, because you seemed to suggest that Johnson's actions may have had a backlash effect on the organization, and may have actually led to its demise. Can you elaborate on this, or describe more of your insight?

BARTLETT: Very little. I think it was more of an impression than anything else. But you've got to remember that the war came on at about that time, and we had other things to be concerned about. But no, I don't think there was any question that. . . I've heard enough comments over the years, that there was a certain presumption of grandeur that took place among the staffers who conducted that. And the Members didn't think it was necessary to have them making the news. I heard enough of that to have formed that impression, that they were very glad when it started folding. And I do think that the stacking of that election discredited the operation, to the point where there wasn't that much feeling for continuing it.

JOHNSON: And you're referring to when Lyndon was able to maneuver to become Speaker of the "Little Congress?"

BARTLETT: That was the rumor, that he had stacked the election.

JOHNSON: By inviting the elevator operators and other employees that hadn't previously been included.

BARTLETT: You know, he enjoyed calling himself "Landslide Lyndon." He went through life knowing how to win a close election. So I don't think it was out of character for him to have been a part of an expedient election. It seemed that way.

JOHNSON: Another thing that I asked you about, and you provided some great detail, was the wartime security measures that were implemented. And you said that there were very few. But one of the ones, specifically, you said, was the air-raid drills. And I was wondering if you could describe these in more detail.

Specifically, were these something that Members and staff were involved in? Did they have to evacuate the building? Were they aware that these drills were occurring?

BARTLETT: Oh, yes. They were aware, and they did participate. And most of these took place in the evening, when Congress was not in session. I don't ever remember a drill during a session of Congress, but I do remember a lot of drills when we were around in the evening. There were several things that were required. Of course, the blackout of the windows was required. You were expected to go to certain areas. There were certain air-raid areas. I remember, having been caught on First Street, and went into the Senate office . . . it was the center of the Senate office building [Russell]. You know, the Cannon Building and the Senate office building, being very much of the same construction, had gardens with fountains out in the middle. That's hard to realize now because all of that space has been taken over by different activities, and they've built right over where the fountain was.

But one air raid, I remember I just ducked in through the driveway, into that center court. And I spent the time there until the air raid was over—until the air- raid drill was over. But we had—all of the Capitol community behaved just like any other community. We had buckets of sand around that were supposed to be used to put out incendiary bombs and things. Actually, down the corridor, you'd have buckets of sand. There were a lot of precautions.

You know, Kathleen, this thing faded fairly quickly. The grave concern was the first six months of 1942. People were excited. The first six weeks after Pearl Harbor [December 7, 1941], there was a lot of tension here. I got the impression, and it was a child's impression, that there had been a lot of

planning for civil defense that had preceded Pearl Harbor because air-raid wardens and things sort of came on the scene very quickly. And it didn't take them very long to start doing that, the black curtains that went up everywhere.

JOHNSON: What were those?

BARTLETT: For light. You couldn't have anything that showed the slightest light through a window. You couldn't have a lit cigarette. The light from a single cigarette was supposed to provide a target for the *Luftwaffe*. We did a lot of things that seem silly now, but we were certainly serious about defending the Capitol.

JOHNSON: But by mid-1942, you'd say most of this was not used anymore?

BARTLETT: Pretty quickly, at about that time, it started to be obvious that we didn't have to look for the *Luftwaffe*. We really had thought that was a threat.

JOHNSON: Related to the war years, even though this is going to seem like an odd segue, beginning in 1909, there were congressional baseball games that were held, almost annually, between the Democrats and the Republicans. Well, first of all, I wanted to ask if you remember any of these games?

BARTLETT: Oh, heavens, I was a part of them. Very much so. I was out with the team every day. And I've still got my *Washington Star* certificate that Sid Yudain was handing out at that time.[7] And I remember one of the early games up at old Griffith Stadium. And again, our friend Glenn Davis—I mentioned his name a while ago—he hit the first home run up there. And it was funny—he had a plane to catch—and he hit the home run and just kept running into

the locker room, changed his clothes, and went. And nobody got a chance to pat him on the back or cheer or congratulate him, or anything, because he caught the plane back to Wisconsin that night.

JOHNSON: Any idea what year that was or the period?

BARTLETT: Oh, golly, my certificate says 1953.

JOHNSON: Right. And just to explain my connection with the war period . . .

BARTLETT: Yes.

JOHNSON: In the research that one of my colleagues has done on the Congressional Baseball Game, it's unclear if there were games held during the war years. We know there was one in 1945. Do you remember any?

BARTLETT: I think, probably, that there was not during the war years. I don't remember anything at that time. The activities of the war years were bond drives. And we had so many of them. And so much talent and imagination went into the bond drives. I've mentioned earlier that Jack Benny and his crew showed up, in the old Maxwell automobile for which he was famous, out on the plaza. There were many things, as a matter of fact. The duck mobile—that amphibious thing which they created in World War II—was used as a medium for bond drives. You could get a ride into the Tidal Basin in the duck. And there were many things done. And if anybody had any energy, it was pretty much harnessed for the war, rather than for anything else. I don't remember anything other than that.

But the ball games, we had a heck of a good, young team after World War II. We had a lot of veterans who were real good ball players. And then, of course, later on, [Wilmer David] "Vinegar Bend" Mizell . . . and I've talked to Vinegar Bend, bless his soul. He's gone on to his reward. But Vinegar Bend—the other side was afraid of him because he was terribly good. And he told the stories about when he was a professional baseball player, how he had been instructed to hit a batter. And it was a gruesome story, to me. When he protested, his coach said, "Well, it's going to cost you $200 if you don't." Heck, I didn't have $200. Well, when he got on the Republican team, the Democrats were trying to think of all kinds of handicaps to "even the playing field." {laughter}

JOHNSON: It just wasn't possible.

BARTLETT: Oh, he was a tiger. But we had some good players, in addition to Vinegar Bend. There were many contests that were not much of a contest because we had some superior players.

JOHNSON: Were these competitive affairs that the Members took it seriously, and they wanted to win the game?

BARTLETT: Some did. Some took it terribly seriously. As a matter of fact, that was a concern, I might add, to Joe Martin and to Sam Rayburn. There was a real concern that a Member was going to get hurt. And they tried to talk them into playing softball, and they wouldn't have it. And I remember Speaker Martin's very serious concern about the physical well-being of his Members that they are going to go out there, and somebody's going to get hurt. Yes, it

was highly competitive. And Mr. Martin would have said that they were too competitive.

Silvio [Ottavio] Conte took over later, as the Republican whatever [manager]. And, as a matter of fact, he was probably a longer-term manager of the team than were the Democrat managers. They seemed to alternate, or be replaced a little more often, during that period. But they would take to the well [of the House] and have their little pre-game goading of one another and then gloating afterwards. It got to be . . . it was a lot of fun, but there was a degree of seriousness about wanting to win, certainly.

JOHNSON: What was the attendance like for the congressional staff? Was this a big event?

BARTLETT: It varied widely. At little Griffith Stadium, it looked like we had a crowd. When we started going out to Alexandria, and different places, to play . . . or Arlington. And anyway, across the river, in Virginia, there were games that didn't have very good attendance. Part of that would be publicity. When Sid Yudain had *Roll Call*, he gave it his all. He really had an awful lot to do with it. Have you ever done Sidney Yudain? He'd be a good source, certainly on this subject. I don't know whether he's still around. Last I knew he was living out on Potomac Avenue. But he certainly would know all about congressional baseball. Congressman [William Augustus] Ayres of Ohio was very close to Sidney Yudain. And they discovered . . . and promoted Mark Russell, the comedian.

[A 3-minute, 40-second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.]

JOHNSON: I was hoping we could switch gears to your time as chief Page.

BARTLETT: Absolutely.

JOHNSON: In the last interview, you described how you became chief Page. But what I wanted to know more about is your responsibilities and your duties in your position.

BARTLETT: Well, the chief Page job was a staff job. It was a permanent, year-round job, as against the Page job. And I was the youngest person ever to be chief Page, by quite a little bit. Obviously, because I was 19, I think, when I got the job. Of course, I was the Republican chief Page. I supervised the Pages on our side. It didn't occur to me, at that time . . . as I told you, I turned down the job with the Rules Committee, but there were other jobs. I rather enjoyed being chief Page. And at that age, I didn't really feel like I wanted to venture beyond that work. We had outstanding young people. But we didn't have girls.[8] That was not one of my problems. We did have young people. We had, at one point, I think, in the Page School, about 20 grade-school students, meaning they were not old enough to be in high school.

And I had a couple of Pages—the Kelly boys from Indianapolis, the Sughrue boys from Massachusetts—who were 10-, 11-, 12-year-old kids. Very, very young. And they did fairly well. The older Kelly became a priest and both of the Sughrue boys became lawyers. But Eddie Sughrue was the most mischievous Page I ever had. Among the tricks he would play, he would get a new kid to go up to the top of the dome—we had easy access in those days—and wait for the air-mail drop. And not to come back without it. That seems incredible today, but in those days they would fall for it. And Eddie was a

real con artist! We could buy a Coke for a nickel, so Eddie would go around looking forlorn, with four pennies in his hand, mumbling that if he had one more penny he could buy a Coke. Truth was, he had a pocket full of pennies, and he kept collecting more!

Burgess Meredith—who was a celebrity in those days—made an appearance in the gallery, and Eddie ran up and got his autograph. The next thing I saw, he was back at a little table we had in the cloakroom, taking some thin paper and tracing Burgess Meredith's autograph, and selling them. But the worst thing he did . . . this is incredible. Eddie went around taking up a collection for the widow of the Unknown Soldier. And he got away with it, for a long time, until I found out about it. But he was full of mischief. It was his nature. But bear in mind, he wasn't old enough for high school. I don't know, at that time, he probably was 11 years old. But these are part of the heartaches.

You were asking what does a chief Page do? In those days, the Members were paid by check from the disbursing office. It was not uncommon for them to get a Page to go down and pick up the check and bring it to the office. That wasn't all that strange. Well, one day—gee, I can't even remember now for whom this was—but we sent Chippie Melchiorre, from Philadelphia, down to pick up the Member's check. The next thing I knew, the check had been picked up, the Member had not gotten it, and Chippie Melchiorre was on his way to Philadelphia. I was frantic. I dashed to Union Station [Washington, D.C.] and ran up and down the train, looking for Chippie and calling, "Melchiorre!" And somebody's calling back, "Heathcliff!" You know, they thought it was a big joke. Well, I came back to the Capitol without Chippie and without any clues. The House was adjourned, and I slunk into the dimmed Democratic Cloakroom announcing the question, "Does anybody

here know anything about Chippie and a check he was supposed to deliver?" Most of the kids, off duty, didn't even bother to look up from their sport, but one Page, very much engaged, said, "Oh, yes, I have it here in my coat pocket. I promised Chippie I would deliver it for him." I aged a great deal that afternoon—$863 was a lot of money in those days. There were better days, and the Pages participated in a lot of interesting activities.

General [Frederick] Funston had been General [John] "Blackjack" Pershing's right-hand man in the Expeditionary Force in Europe in World War I and his grandson, Eddie Funston, was one of my Pages and a very fine fellow. We formed a drill team, and Eddie was in charge of the drill team. And they went out on the Capitol lawn and drilled every day for a while. They got to be pretty good. And as I think I may have mentioned, they went to Gettysburg with Speaker Martin, who was the Grand Marshall of the Memorial Day parade, and they were the Honor Escort for Speaker Martin in that parade. Congressman Chester [Heilman] Gross had set that up. And it was a nice experience. There were many other activities with which they were involved. Of course, I was a graduate of the Page School, but as chief Page I did not have any direct involvement with the school. They had many splendid extracurricular activities: some White House invitations, embassy visits, travel club trips, and numerous social engagements. Back on the job, their duties were focused on the House Floor.

As most people, I think, know, there's a Page calling system on the floor. It works electronically. It's been upgraded. They have a much better system there now. The Pages have a diagram of the floor. And when a bell signals, the Page, taking his little card with the diagram, can go directly to that seat, without any trouble. And that's his number-one priority. At least it was when

I was chief Page. Your number-one priority is to respond to the Members' calls on the floor. And that could involve a lot of things. But the direct service to the Members of Congress, that was put above everything else.

Concurrent with that, we would get phone calls coming into the cloakroom, wanting documents from the old document room and things of that nature. That was the second priority. And we would dispatch Pages from the Page bench. In our instance, our central was located in the northwest corner of the House Chamber. We had two benches, without cushions. And we would try to maintain a few boys on those benches. We'd sometimes have eight or 10 sitting there, waiting for their next assignment. But most of the time, we were lucky to have two or three there, waiting to take care of the House Floor, if it was a busy time of day, a busy legislative situation.

JOHNSON: So would it be fair to say that you supervised to make sure that everything ran smoothly among the Pages?

BARTLETT: Yes. I felt a great responsibility to make sure that the Members were facilitated in their legislative work, in any way that the Pages could do it. I tried to impress upon the Pages the great opportunity we had to provide a very crucial service. And, oh yeah, it was not fun and games, as far as I was concerned. We had an important duty to carry out there. And I mentioned the lapses on that. But I could also say that, for 363 days of the year, I didn't have any of those kinds of problems. We simply performed. I had some awfully fine Pages. If you look back across the yearbooks of that day, it makes me maudlin just to think about what outstanding young people we were able to bring in. That, too, is kind of ironic. Because there's no test that's given to

decide whether or not somebody is qualified to be a Page. And the Member would select them, purely by his own standards.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: Would you be able to provide a description of the Republican Cloakroom, both a physical description and some insight on the atmosphere and the types of things that took place in this room?

BARTLETT: I hope so. It's been completely redesigned now, but I can give you a little better picture of the old cloakroom. It was in fact a cloakroom. It isn't anymore. There was a rack in the cloakroom that had a place for a hook for a coat and a place for a hat for every Member on that side of the aisle. Those had little plates that had their names on them. I have many of their plates because nobody else took them. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Really? That's interesting.

BARTLETT: I have given them to their families as a keepsake, whether they had any particular reason to want them or not, but that was my purpose in getting them, to distribute them to the families, but I still have many of them. One part of the institution that is long forgotten was the spittoons, of which there were many. And Ed Marshall—I know I've mentioned him—Ed Marshall was a sweet old fella who wore a little grey cotton coat, and he was something else. He had charge of many things. But his job was those darn "sugar bowls"—those spittoons all around the floor, which would get kicked and get splashed. I always thought they were a most unpleasant part of the chamber. Ed took care of them. He had a big old bucket with some kind of

disinfectant in it, and he would go up and clean them. That was the last duty of the day.

In the cloakroom, there was a huge fireplace back in the back. And the first thing that Ed Marshall would do, virtually every day in the winter and summer, would be to go back and lay down a fire in that fireplace and have that beautiful oak wood crackling back there, and what a marvelous scene that was. Alone, Ed would ruminate with ghosts, and we enjoyed visiting about it. There was a little round table that was in front of that fireplace. The overstuffed lounges back there were a rich red with headpieces that went up to a curl in the design of the couches—I don't know how to describe those things, I'm not knowledgeable—but they were lounging couches, and they were certainly a welcome sight in the cloakroom for the Members who needed to stretch out for a short while.[9] But they gave it an old club look. The phone booths were so different that it's hard to imagine how different they were from the ones that are there now. There are many more of them than there were then. The old ones were really sturdy booths, large enough to move around in and accommodate a much larger telephone instrument than you have today. Again, that was just a part of it. They now have a command center in there where they can really accommodate a lot of communications—that didn't exist in those days at all.

The food service was on the opposite wall. I mentioned earlier that Mr. Coats—black man who had the cloakroom . . . had the whole room, blind, on the Democrats' side. On the Republican side was Ben Jones—marvelous man. I saw a picture a couple days ago of the Pages being served in the cloakroom when they'd come up from Page School at 9:00 or 9:30 in the morning. They were a pretty hungry lot and he usually had something

waiting. It was terrible what they'd eat—Ben stopped by the factory every morning and brought in this big box of Krispy Kreme donuts. It was strange to mix them with Coca-Colas, but that was their choice. Ben was a good man, a leading member of the community, a pillar of his church, and a Lodge member, a homeowner up on 5th Street, right next to Soldier's Home, raising three girls: Florence, Helen, and Dorothy.

JOHNSON: And Helen ended up taking over the lunch counter.

BARTLETT: Helen did. But both of the other girls, Florence and Dorothy, had served their time. When Helen was out having a baby, Jamile, her sisters were there helping their dad. Helen took care of her folks in their old age. Helen's not well now. Helen has been a dear friend for so many years. I have not been in touch with her lately, but now that I'm reminded, I will be.

Ben cooked a roast beef every night before the House was going to be meeting. It was marvelous, marvelous roast beef. He served the most sumptuous sandwich for 25¢, and everybody had to line up and get one. But he did such a fine job. And he'd work a long day. I have a mind's image of Ben that's very kindly. I think back to him with real affection. He was a good man. He had one run-in with a fella who didn't realize that he was not in Rison, Arkansas. He treated Ben in a way that Ben was not accustomed to being treated, and, boy, did Ben let him know. {laughter} That was something that was not like the usual conduct there. Between Helen, the present thing, she has so many friends. When the Members come back, the first thing they ask for is: "Where is Helen?" "Is Helen here?" She has so many friends from among the former Members.

In the renovation, in 1949 and '50, in redoing the House, they simply redid the cloakroom completely, and it has a totally different atmosphere than it did before. They have huge television sets now. That was, of course, unknown; we didn't even have a radio! {laughter}

JOHNSON: What kind of activities took place, as far as the Members [in the cloakroom]? Do you remember if they came there to rest in between sessions? What kinds of things took place?

BARTLETT: Well, of course, even in those days the telephones were very busy and a very important part of their communicating with their offices and their constituents. A funny thing happened—one day Mrs. [Edith Nourse] Rogers from Massachusetts came in, and she says, "How aw ya? How aw ya?" That was her Boston accent. We had an eager beaver Page who was on the telephone, who said, "Where in Hawaii do you want?" He was going to get Hawaii for her. She said, "How aw ya?" {laughter} That's a true story.

The Members, of course, they would sometimes—oh golly, I can think of one very dear Member who would play poker all night and show up the next morning. There's a water fountain there. He'd take his hand in the water fountain, wash his face a little bit, then go back and insist that the lights on that side of cloakroom be turned down, and he would put those little white towels over his face, and he'd be up in an half an hour or so on his way to committee.

There were lots of dramas that took place in the cloakroom over the years. People would be hurt, be sick, be whatever, be grieved, and that drama would play out in the cloakroom. And there's one story that I'll tell you that's a real

pip. I know you've never heard this one. {laughter} [Margaret M.] Peggy Heckler.

JOHNSON: From Massachusetts.

BARTLETT: When they ran out of telephone booths, as they did, they moved a couple of huge tables into the cloakroom, which took up more space than people liked. But they just put on those tables some loose telephones—no booth, no nothing, just loose telephones. So I was on the other side of the cloakroom one day and I heard— we, several of us heard—we heard this female voice coming from the other side. See, when you're on one side of the "L," you don't see what's on the other side of the "L," but you can hear. She was screaming, "Oh, you can't do that. I'll tell ya, go get them. Get them back! Get them back!" And we're thinking, "What the heck is going on?" Well, I looked around the corner, and it was Peggy, and she was speaking very loudly to her office saying that "You've got to do this." Then we found out what it was that they had to do. They had to get back a mailing that had just gone out that day—a very large mailing, as most Members do. And that mailing had included a newsletter. And on the cover of that newsletter was a cozy picture of Peggy Heckler and the fella who was on the front page of the [Washington] *Post* that day with his girlfriend who jumped into the Tidal Basin. Peggy was posed with Wilbur [Daigh] Mills on the front of her newsletter. She didn't want it to go out, and so she was trying to get it back from the post office, and it was too late. {laughter}

JOHNSON: So those are the sorts of things that you witnessed in the cloakroom?

BARTLETT: Oh, that was funny. I told Mr. Mills that story; he got a kick out of it. Incidentally, he was a man who had tremendous respect. There's no way to overstate that. When he was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, one of the few people who could bring a bill to the floor unchallenged—no one dared amend it. It was just the way he put it. It reflected his vast, vast knowledge of the bill, of the subject, that very few people had. He was a real giant. So when this happened, I asked around if anybody had known he was having a problem. Only one Member ever told me that he thought he did, and I wasn't really sure. I had no idea, and I saw Mr. Mills every day and just had no idea that he was having this problem.

Long after these episodes, he came to the Federal Executive Institute and spoke at a luncheon, and I have never seen such candor. Contrition, I wouldn't even call it that. He just was simply acknowledging a terrible fact of life. He completely reformed. And while he had been discharged from his Masonic Lodge in Little Rock when this happened, he won his way back into the Lodge and was fully accepted, a fully honored member of the Lodge. He recovered from this, and I think a lot of people didn't know that—it didn't get a lot of publicity. His candor of acknowledging what happened to him was incredible. I've never heard anybody—I'm a big fan of Wilbur Mills. I think he was a great man, and I'm so sorry about his illness.

I mentioned that people listened to what he had to say, and I'm reminded of another member who brought the House to a hush. Jess [Jesse Paine] Wolcott out of Michigan—chairman of the Banking Committee. And Jess Wolcott was one of the few people that I've ever heard who didn't need a microphone. The minute he stood up, the House hushed. He was quite an extraordinary fellow. He was also a great wordsmith. An incident again, I

don't know how many of these sort of things I need to tell anybody, but it was rather funny. We had a Congresswoman from Illinois, Jessie Sumner.

JOHNSON: Jessie Sumner.

BARTLETT: Did I tell you that?

JOHNSON: No, no.

BARTLETT: She and Jess Wolcott were good friends. She got down to the committee table, where apparently we had a banking bill up because he was at the table. He said, "Now, Jessie, I didn't say that you were steatopygic." And of course she looked quizzical, but she did not want to admit she did not know what he was saying. So she went running over to that big dictionary that's on the right-hand side of the rostrum and looked it up, and then she came back with fire in her eyes. It was a fake fire nonetheless; they were such good friends. And he was backing off, "Jessie, I told you, I didn't say that you were steatopygic," which means "heavy in the buttocks."

JOHNSON: I see.

BARTLETT: Oh, there was no question that she qualified, but it was a funny, funny thing. Probably the greatest wordsmith that I can think of, next to Jess Walcott, would have been John [Bayard] Anderson of Illinois. He had a tremendous vocabulary. Unfortunately, most of the Members couldn't understand him when he spoke because he did use words that were a little large for the occasion. Possibly the most powerful speaker, that I can recall, would have

been Dewey [Jackson] Short, from Galena, Missouri. Does that ring a bell with you at all? Well, Dewey . . .

JOHNSON: Yes, about his skills as an orator?

BARTLETT: Yes. Did I ever tell you the story about him and Helen Gahagan Douglas?

JOHNSON: No.

BARTLETT: That's a good story too. Helen Gahagan Douglas was in a little group of about six people who ran their own show completely. Dewey was more than a match for any challenger. First of all, you know, he had trained at Harvard, at Heidelberg, at Oxford. He was an ordained Methodist minister. He loved to play it down. He loved the role of an Ozark hillbilly, but he was erudite, and he was smart. He had a very famous speech, which incidentally I don't think you will ever find in the *Congressional Record*, it was called, "The Vermin in the Temple." It told about the downfall of various civilizations. It was brilliant. He didn't put it in the *Record* because he was selling it on the rubber chicken circuit. He and Martin Dies, [Jr.] the only two people that I know of at that time who were making money on the circuit—making $100 a night, you know, big money.

But Dewey was also a well-known drinker—one of a group of five, an interesting, accomplished, and wonderful group. Dewey would not have been embarrassed for me to say that. They liked to drink. Yet, when he drank, he was able, notwithstanding, to speak eloquently. He was a powerful speaker. So he came in one day—we had a defense bill up, I don't know what it was—he came in and was granted time to speak. It was a limited amount of

time, as is all debate in the House. Whatever the limited time, he just got wound up and was really going strong and his time expired. He asked unanimous consent for an additional five minutes, usually routinely granted. Helen Gahagan Douglas squeaked up, "Mr. Speaker, I object!" Carl Albert, then the leader, was aghast. He ran over to her. "Oh, Helen, don't do that! Everybody wants to hear Dewey, don't do that!" She was adamant. So Dewey sized up the situation. He starts back up the aisle toward the Republican Cloakroom as it elevates slightly. He got to the top of the aisle, and he looks around, and he sees that Carl Albert is not having any success getting her to relent. And he was inebriated and with a sweep of a hand, he said, "Mr. Speaker, I care not to cast my pearls before swine." You could have heard a pin drop. The moment was electric. Dewey stumbled into the cloakroom. That was a great scene.

But of all the speakers—one you would probably never identify—but the most eloquent speaker that comes to my mind was Guy [Adrian] Vander Jagt of Michigan. He, too, was an ordained minister. He, too, had a sophisticated education, a brilliant mind. Guy has never gotten his desserts as a speaker. He made the keynote address at a Republican [National] Convention that was out of this world, and he got no media. I forgot what they broadcasted instead; it was something totally extraneous. And I think it was because they knew how good he was. He was a fabulous speaker. He was eloquent. And he worked at it. I always got this impression that Dewey Short had this in his mind that he could go out and just roll it out whenever he wanted to. Not so with Guy Vander Jagt. If you ever watched him preceding a speech, he would go off by himself and really mentally prepare himself for it. But if you haven't heard him, I'm sorry. If you ever get a chance to see a film copy of Guy Vander Jagt speaking, they don't come any better.

JOHNSON: This has been fascinating; thank you. You talked a few minutes ago about the remodeling that took place in the House between 1949 and 1951. What are your recollections of this period? And one of the things I'm very interested in hearing is about the temporary headquarters for the House that was in the Ways and Means Committee Room and what that was like.

BARTLETT: That was certainly memorable. It's hard to imagine the House meeting in the committee room under those very tight circumstances, trying to host some press, trying to provide for some visitors; the circumstances were chaotic. There was a terrible breakdown in the dignity of the House, the formality of the House, the rules of the House.

JOHNSON: Was that unavoidable, do you think, because of the situation?

BARTLETT: People respond to circumstances, and you had a situation that was so undisciplined, uncontrolled there, you couldn't maintain order. There were things that happened there that I could not repeat. The pranksters took advantage of the informality to "humanize" one of their colleagues. They worked Connecticut Congressman John Davis Lodge over rather unmercifully. A great guy who became an ambassador of some great merit; he was after all, a Lodge. And when he came to Congress, I remember I was in the cloakroom one day, and John Davis Lodge came in to make a telephone call. I was sitting there with Paul [Werntz] Shafer when John Davis Lodge came in. He had trousers on—it was summer—but they were up about six inches above his shoes. Paul said to him, "You borrow your brother's trousers; is he out of town this week?" Or something like that. And then he said, not necessarily to me, but I was within immediate earshot, he said, "You know, I'm going to make a human being out of that guy if it's the last thing I

do." There's an irony in that. John Davis Lodge became one of the most popular Members of the House, with everybody. I think it had more to do with the fact that they broke down that Brahmin façade, and he became very popular with the other Members. But that didn't happen instantly by any means. In the meantime, his brother, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, was not popular and for good reason. But it was an interesting comparison.

During this session, in the Ways and Means Committee Room, as an example, Shafer worked John Davis Lodge over until I thought Lodge was about to quit. Only in the casual atmosphere of our temporary quarters could that mischief have been carried out. It's hard enough in the present setting to always know what's going on and what is the status of a particular transaction. Over there, it was just about impossible. It served its purpose. We had to meet some place; I guess it was better than "the Oven," where they went following the British arson. But it was not a satisfactory situation. The Members were mighty glad to get back into their own quarters.

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example of some of the institutional changes that took place?

BARTLETT: Over there? Well, it was just so doggoned informal when the Members would come in, just to find a seat. In order to get as many seats as they could, there was virtually no well. So it was a real tight situation. And then that little robing room or whatever you call it in the back, where they put some of the press. It really was very, very difficult.

I'm sure you're familiar with the layout of the room, and you've got that entrance that comes in behind the rostrum, and there's a little anteroom back

there. That was a scene of a lot of negotiations. I don't think the quality of legislation during that period was up to par by any standards, simply because the atmosphere didn't lend itself to deliberation. Over next to the entrance, there would be a little gaggle of Members—right just as you came in the entrance where the Members came in. There'd be a little gaggle of Members there, some of them leaning against that end of the rostrum. But to get their attention, to get their order, was very, very difficult. I remember that so well because it was very frustrating for the presiding officer. Of course, this was before I became reading clerk. So I didn't have that responsibility, and I'm glad.

JOHNSON: Well, for you specifically, did your job change at all, and the work of the Pages?

BARTLETT: Well, of course, we managed to provide some Page service from there, and I think it, again, was as good as we could do. People were understanding when we weren't able to function quite as effectively as we might otherwise have. I don't remember any particular incident, other than the informality of it and the confusion. There are people who believe that our business thrives in chaos and that may not be altogether untrue. For those of us who are idealists, that is a contradiction of what we think circumstances should be. But people do differ in their attitude toward it.

I remember a reorganizational plan that I presented to the national chamber of commerce at one point and in that group—a very distinguished group—who was kind enough to sit and hear me out. John [William] Byrnes of Wisconsin was then Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Committee. And one of my tenets, one of my strong tenets, was calling for the maximum

participation by the Members of Congress in the process. So I was writing suggestions for different reforms that would allow a larger participation by the Members in the floor activity. (Television has really messed this up because many Members use the television, or use it as an excuse if they don't use it.) But John Byrnes spoke up at that time and said, "Well, Joe, I don't know about this maximum participation. I'm not sure about this. You know, Wilbur [Mills] and I get together, and we work things out, and it does pretty well that way." In other words, what he was saying—and I said to him (gee, talk about being impertinent), but I said to him, "You just don't believe in deliberative government." John shook his head. We had all been young Republican friends, but I was still being impertinent to challenge him. He was very serious. "No, Wilbur and I get together, and we work these things out. It works out all right." He didn't want maximum participation. So when we met in the Ways and Means Committee room, there's a very good chance that there were people there who got their legislation through in a way that was more satisfactory to them than having a full-blown debate before the public, God, the whole world. That's a perspective that I'm not really ready to adopt. But it was certainly chaotic. Oh, golly, order was hard to come by. Attendance was off.

JOHNSON: I was going to ask about attendance.

BARTLETT: It was off.

JOHNSON: Were the sessions generally shorter?

BARTLETT: Well, there were times where you had to have a quorum. And when you had to have a quorum, they had to come, and even if they came and went, there

had to be a presence. I remember the presence of the ladies in there—Mrs. [Frances Payne] Bolton of Ohio, I remember particularly. It was uncomfortable. It was just uncomfortable.

JOHNSON: Why was that?

BARTLETT: Well, just to get around. I remember in one instance trying to get around this gaggle of them there at the door, trying to get through, take a seat, and avoid the horseplay that was going on there. Incidentally, did I tell you about the documentary on Mrs. Bolton? You ought to have that. But that ought be a part of your archives. She was an interesting personality. This documentary movie, I went out for the premiere, to Cleveland, to see it. It was done professionally. It is not a puff piece. It is warts and all. I was, "How did the family let this get through?" But they did. It's a wonderful piece of work. The man who did it, I know him, and I give him credit because he had to be pretty brave to do it. That was the only way he would do it. Play it straight in our temporary chamber.

She was very uncomfortable. You asked about the situation—I just remember that one incident in particular where she had a hard time getting past this group and then to find a seat and to try to find a seat far enough away that she wouldn't be hearing what they were saying, or so she could hear at all. It was pretty difficult.

JOHNSON: What are your recollections of the Members' reactions to their new quarters, the modernized House Chamber?

BARTLETT: It was very impressive. The décor in the new chamber was beautiful. They had coordinated the carpet and the upholstery on the chairs upstairs beautifully. They have not done it since. It has not had that beautiful appearance since.

At one point, {laughter} I cannot put a date on this, but I came back one day when Congress was not in session, and they were putting down new carpet on the floor. I was absolutely taken aback; it was the most horrible stuff you ever saw in your life. I have a piece of it. If I could find it, I would show it to you. You would have to agree with me, I know. It was a horrible design, this particular design. So I thought, "Gee whiz, what do I do about this thing?" So I took a little swatch of it and sent it to Mrs. Bolton out in Lyndhurst, where she was spending her time. So she came back, and she was aghast. She had tremendous good taste. One of the world's wealthiest women. She said, "Joe, where did this come from?" I finally got the story, and this is the story that you'll enjoy. Ralph Roberts was Clerk. He was buying the carpet for the chamber. The old carpet probably did need to be replaced—I don't think that's questioned. But he got hold of a manufacturer, and they submitted three samples that could be had at a bargain. Now, the bargain becomes the key to this almost.

JOHNSON: And was this for the carpet that was going to be laid in the new chamber?

BARTLETT: The whole chamber. Now, this is after the earlier carpets wore out. So he brings these three samples up to the Speaker's office to get the Speaker's collaboration on what they should put down. Mrs. McCormack happened to be there. Faithfully, John [William] McCormack either went down to the Washington Hotel to dine with her, or she came up to the Capitol to have

dinner with him. They had dinner together every night. They were that devoted. She unfortunately wore very thick glasses. Her sight was very poor. So John McCormack, being the gentleman that he was, deferred to his wife to make a choice of these three samples, and she made the choice. Horrors. {laughter} So I told Mrs. Bolton how the choice was made, and she said, "Mercy!" {laughter} That was the end of that story. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Was a change made?

BARTLETT: Nope, it was not. We put up with it for maybe a year or two before somebody got the courage to get it out of there. It was awful. I hope I can find that piece. I keep telling you things that I'm going to bring and show you, but that's one thing that I think you'd get a kick out of. It was something. Ralph got a bargain! {laughter} That tells you something about Ralph, too.

JOHNSON: You talked about several women and that brings to mind a question I had about Congresswoman Ruth Thompson. In 1954, she sponsored a bill to establish a Page academy or dormitory. And newspaper articles and other documents show that this wasn't a new bill that was presented, that there were other Congressmen before her that thought this . . .

BARTLETT: Harold Burton.

JOHNSON: Right, that thought that this would be a good idea. So, since you were chief Page, and you were a former Page, I was wondering how this concern had arisen about the lack of supervision for the Pages. Was this a big concern that people had?

BARTLETT: Well, it was a concern, but it was a wish of mine, a desire, to have a decent place. I have a hard time putting a date on it—it was during World War II—they found a house that belonged to somebody, a foreign government. It was on Rhode Island Avenue, off Connecticut Avenue; it was a very handsome place. It could be had. It had a garden, and it had a huge dining room, and it would have been ideal except it would have been a little far away from the Capitol. But a trolley ride on the old Lincoln Park line would have come right by and brought them to the Capitol. Harold Burton was alerted to this, and we thought we were going to get it, but there was a Page named Bill Ethington, who was a Page of Congressman [Victor Eugene] Wickersham of Oklahoma. But Bill did not want it, and he got his Congressman to oppose it. And when Senator Harold Burton heard that Congressman Wickersham was taking a strong opposition to it, those who were even considering it just said, "Forget it."

I must tell you, Kathleen, I'm one of those that's really saddened by the fact that the Page School does not provide a graduating class. It does not provide for seniors. It was such a wonderful experience that I hate to see it discontinued. I recognize all of the advantages to having short-term junior class Pages who come and go and don't get into mischief and all of this. But I think there was also something to be said for those who came and spent a couple years here and got their high-school education in the Page School and graduated. I just think it was a wonderful experience. Longer service for some would mean fewer openings for others. Many fewer, but I kind of regret it. Forget it. It's the past; it isn't going to happen, and we all know that there were some shameful scandals that happened which soured the whole Congress as to whether or not they should continue to have any Pages. They came up with the idea that maybe they should have college boys and girls,

and I thought, "You think you have trouble with these kids, if you had college boys in here, you'd really have your hands full." The thing was debated back and forth.

But the idea of a dormitory was a superb idea. I kind of hate the fact that the House and the Senate have gone different ways on this thing, and, of course, the Supreme Court isn't even in the same picture in the same sense. I regret that because, again, there was something to be said for their togetherness. I suppose in this day of modern communication, it could be argued that we really don't need Pages. Most of the things the Pages did in my day are now easily done electronically. And if that's the case, why do we need to have that echelon of employees? A case could be made for that. I'm not making it, and I'm not sure I would subscribe to it at all because there are some advantages to having Pages—live Pages—on the floor serving the needs of the Members.

There are other things that I have always felt that they should not do. They should not be delivering flags. For a while we had a Page force that their major occupation was delivering flags between the Architect's Office and the individual Members' offices. A very bad idea in my opinion. A very poor use of their talent, and that's not their role. There were other things. We had some misuse of Pages. I hate to tell you how many things I was able to deal with myself. You know, there were Pages who needed to be sent home, and I never went to a Member and told them that they had a Page that needed to go home, that I met any resistance at all, any argument, anything at all. They immediately understood. They did not want a Page who wasn't making the grade in school, who was misbehaving, living a life that he did not want their parents to find out about or that was going to do something that would displease his electorate back home. So I never had a problem with that.

It should be obvious—I enjoyed supervising the Pages, and I thought we were quite successful. I didn't think that all of the reforms that were made needed to be made. I think they were made in the absence of testimony based on experience. I was never asked. I was never asked. Can you imagine that? They're going to reform the whole Page thing, and they don't ask a former Page, a former chief Page? Well, I was never asked.

The dormitory thing—I was on that committee at the time that Senator Burton was quite active. Bless his heart. He was sincere. He was one of the best friends that the Pages ever had. There were other Members of Congress who took a kindly interest in Paging—out of 535, not too many—but there were those, and I appreciated them. I had a good relationship with, I remember, [John Martin] Costello of California. My goodness, he was very intent upon the welfare of the Pages. He was just one of a number who had that feeling. The dormitory idea had a lot of merit. And could have been done. But as with most things congressional, there is nothing strange about the fact that Members are home-district oriented. They have to be concerned with their constituency. There are very few Members of Congress who are really intently interested in the institution of Congress. This is what made Sam Rayburn so different from most. He loved this institution. I'm not unmindful of the fact that given the 24 hours a day that each and every one of us has, that a Member of Congress has to spend most of his waking hours being concerned with the folks who sent him here. I understand that. But it's wonderful when you have somebody who will show a real interest in this institution as it functions on behalf of the people. There have been others. Mr. Rayburn is the best example you could find of someone who devoted themselves to the institution. The whole question of Paging probably needs

review regularly. I'm not an authority at this point. I wouldn't pretend to be. There was a time when I would have felt qualified to respond to almost any suggestion of reform that anybody might have. But that's not my claim anymore. I trust that those who have that responsibility are carrying it out faithfully and well.

JOHNSON: This is a good stopping point for today, unless you had anything else that you wanted to add.

BARTLETT: No, I hope that we have made a contribution to advance the cause here today. I have some former Pages coming to town on the first of June for a get-together, and I'm looking forward to that. They're Pages mostly of the 50's, a former Speaker's Page. You know, Kathleen, we really do have some outstanding people who have been Pages. You can't help but come to the conclusion that that experience has served them well. I certainly take a lot of pride in their accomplishments. And if they are kind enough to remember old Joe, that's kind of nice too. {laughter}

JOHNSON: I have many more questions, so I hope that we can have another session.

BARTLETT: Sure, whenever.

JOHNSON: Great, thank you.

BARTLETT: Thank you.

— JOE BARTLETT—
INTERVIEW THREE

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson, interviewing General Joe Bartlett, former reading clerk, and Minority Clerk for the U.S. House of Representatives. This is the third interview with General Bartlett. The date is June 14, 2006, and the interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building.

What kind of impact, if any, did the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 have on your job and the responsibility of the Pages?

BARTLETT: Probably not much direct effect. Things did get a little better organized. We eliminated a lot of committees. We consolidated committees. The order of business in the House seemed to be much, much more orderly. Of course we had a target date for adjournment. We had a few other things that were required by law that made for a little different situation, but paging goes on, and that was the service we provided to the Members to facilitate their conduct of the legislative business. That was my primary concern, and we had a Speaker whom I admired, and of course, that is not to say anything negative about the Speaker whom he replaced because I certainly loved Sam [Samuel] Rayburn. But Joe [Joseph William] Martin was a wonderful man, a pleasure to work for. He was so wholesome, such a fine man. Different? Of course. {laughter}

JOHNSON: How do you think the Legislative Reorganization Act of '46 affected the House in general?

BARTLETT: Well, let me just say, the 80th Congress—if I had to pick a Congress, of all that I've served or witnessed—the 80th Congress would probably get the highest marks for a lot of reasons. It was after World War II. The 80th Congress had been elected by a simple slogan. Billboards read, "Had Enough?" That's all it said, "Had Enough? Vote Republican." That proved to be a brilliant message. People were very much oppressed by the regimenting of the war. Price control, rent control—all the different regulations that war required—but there was a great sense of subjugation, the rationing, and people still had stickers on their windshield telling them how much gas they could have. They had to go get a ticket to buy a pair of shoes. We were a country that was chafing under this terrific superintending. So, when they saw those billboards, "Had Enough? Vote Republican," the people elected the 80th Congress. A great many World War II veterans were elected. Outstanding young people who had no thought of a political career. They were coming to Congress to put the country right. Marvelous, young, bright people right out of the war, most of them highly motivated young officers. They didn't come around to Washington to mark time or do any of the things that people associate with the sluggishness of the legislative process. They wanted to get at it and get it done. Well, they ended up by passing unprecedented tax cuts.

They passed the Taft-Hartley Law, which was really a splendid law because although much was said about it being a "slave labor" act, decades went by of Democrat Congresses; none of them ever attempted to repeal it. They didn't even attempt to amend it. It was a bill of rights for American labor. That was the work of the 80th Congress. Bob [Robert Alphonso] Taft in the Senate had contributed tremendously to the wisdom of that particular piece of legislation. At about the same time, you had the Hoover Commission trying

to redefine government and being given a lot of credit for doing a lot of things that needed to be done and refocusing different responsibilities of government. All of this concurrent, but that 80th Congress, in its new approach, using its new reorganization authorities, produced a remarkable product. It's ironic that it was accused of being a do-nothing Congress. And that that was a struck . . .

JOHNSON: And by President [Harry S.] Truman.

BARTLETT: Yes, and that was an effective political ploy. And it was wrong. It was just plain wrong. We were called back in August of '48 for what they called the Turnip Day Session.[10] But, anyway, that was what that session was called. And it was called back with a couple of things in mind.

Now of course repealing Taft-Hartley was supposed to be the top of the agenda—well, that was ridiculous. But there also was pressure to amend the McCarran-Walter Act, although little has been said about that. But the truth of the matter is that was what candidate Thomas Dewey wanted done. He wanted a redefinition of displaced persons in Europe to create a date that would get—he, apparently, was under some pressure in New York to get an extended date in order to get larger numbers of people qualified as "displaced persons"—or political prisoners.

Well, I'll never forget [William] Chapman Revercomb, the Senator from West Virginia, was the chairman of the pertinent Senate subcommittee. Really splendid, splendid man. But Governor Dewey gave him instructions that he was to pass this amendment to the McCarran-Walter Act to make this happen. And Mr. Revercomb, being a Southern gentleman that he was,

said we are not going to do that under these kind of pressures. He said, we'll hold hearings in January, and we'll do whatever is necessary, whatever is desirable to make that amendment do what we want it to do, but no, not under the pressures of a Turnip Day Congress. And, for that—Governor Warren and Governor Dewey—neither one made an appearance on his behalf or did anything to help him, and of course, Revercomb lost the election. And of course, a lot of people lost the election in '48 who had thought they would be Members of the 81st Congress. But I don't know, Kathleen, other than to say that I just simply think that it's probably the most underrated Congress ever, and I suspect that students, regardless of any political bias, would have to conclude that the 80th Congress deserves a lot of credit it never received. It is ironic that they were defeated for something that was just not true.

JOHNSON: Well, while you were a House employee, you experienced two party changes. The one that you just spoke of in '47, and then there was another in . . .

BARTLETT: The 83rd, in 1953.

JOHNSON: Right. What are your recollections of these periods of transition?

BARTLETT: Well, I suspect that my memory would be that of the disruption of the lives of some of my friends in each turnover. I had, as all staff people do, many affected friends, and it's inevitable that as these jobs become a part of the patronage system and new officers are elected, somebody will be displaced, and your heart's going to ache for somebody who . . . the disruption of their life is something they hadn't counted on. So you feel sympathetic, no matter which way it is going. I suppose we all believe that new leadership gives us an

opportunity to do things a little better than we've been doing them, and we'd like to think that happens sometimes because a fresh look will give you a new start. But many of the things that you had hoped would be reformed just don't always happen that way because there may be a reason why there hasn't been a reform take place earlier. This I alluded to in the thing we transcribed here—that I have sat and plotted changes with prospective Clerks of the House, both parties. But, specifically, with my Democrat friends. Well, we were staff members together, and we understood problems, and we thought we had the solution to those problems. We could hardly wait for a chance to put them into effect, and it didn't happen. And as I said earlier, I just, I've never understood why that didn't happen because I knew that they had an understanding of something that did need to be done. But that's all right. Time marches on. {laughter}

JOHNSON: How did the Members and the leadership adjust to the transition? Do you recall? Speaker Martin, and Speaker Rayburn, and other Members?

BARTLETT: Well, the relationship between Mr. Martin and Mr. Rayburn was unusual. They were good friends. And they respected one another thoroughly. And I don't think there would ever have been any rub of any kind between them over the transition. They would have understood it; they would have been pragmatic about it. Mr. Rayburn would have understood that the House Majority had changed. I don't think between them there ever would have been a problem. Now there were committees where I'm sure—well, I can go to the Appropriation Committee between Mr. [John] Taber and Mr. [Clarence Andrew] Cannon—you can bet your life there was some rankling. Had to be. Two personalities—very strong, very different—very different. And I'm sure there were . . . it frequently showed itself. Sometimes you get

accustomed to calling somebody Mr. Chairman, and all of a sudden he is Ranking Minority Member, and you're still apt to call him Mr. Chairman in the course of debate down there, until you embarrassingly correct yourself. But this sort of thing did happen. Some people cannot let loose of power gracefully. That much we can say about certain committees. It was very difficult.

They tell a story about General [Archibald] Henderson, who was Commandant of the Marine Corps. Got so accustomed to living in the Commandant's house down here, on 8th Street, that when he died, he actually willed that house to his family. Of course, it was the oldest government building in town. So people do get accustomed to things, and they become possessive or think it is their entitlement. That happens in the political, legislative agenda, too. I can recall that certain people just simply had an awfully hard time getting used to being in the Minority. But when the roll is called, you either have the votes, or you don't. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Staying with this time period, the first live televised floor proceedings of the House occurred during that opening session of the 80th Congress. And this was a two-hour session; it was broadcast up until the official House business began. Do you remember this event, and do you remember it as being something considered very special by Members and staff?

BARTLETT: I don't remember a whole lot about that aspect of the 80th Congress. The Convention of 1948 was the first convention that had ever used television. I can remember that very well because the size of the camera was so enormous. It was the size of a boxcar, and the cable to provide power for that thing was, oh, several inches in diameter. And it took a crew just to haul it down the

corridor. We know Mr. Rayburn was not very keen on broadcasting the Congress, nor was Mr. Martin. Although Mr. Martin did permit Edward R. Murrow to come on the floor and do a broadcast one Sunday evening. They kept them as unobtrusive as they could. I remember the first time a television camera was brought onto the floor. And that was because President [Lyndon] Johnson did not like to be photographed from gallery number one. Two things: He didn't like his right side photographed, and he didn't like in the background Senator [Carl Trumbull] Hayden. Hayden was the president *pro tempore* of the Senate. The "Sheriff," as they called him, was up in years, and could not sit very long, in any situation, without his eyes closing. President Johnson did not want that as a backdrop, so he insisted that a camera be brought to the center aisle so that they could focus upward, and just completely avoid the two people behind him, the presiding officers of the two Houses.

JOHNSON: And this would be for one of his State of the Union addresses?

BARTLETT: It would have been for one of his State of the Union addresses. I also remember Robert Montgomery, who was an advisor to President Eisenhower. And he spent a lot of time bringing Hollywood to the House Floor when President Eisenhower was coming to address the session. He also showed . . . I talked to him quite a bit while he was there. He also showed that he did not understand the political arena. And it was not going to be Hollywood, so we shared realities with each other. He was very pleasant about it, but he also felt a sense of responsibility. Of course, the cameras now are so much smaller and less obtrusive, and the lighting is not what was required then. We were using a good deal more light than they would feel

was required now. But the early use of it, and I don't—to be perfectly honest—I don't remember that 80th Congress' use of television.

JOHNSON: It was just that opening session . . .

BARTLETT: I understand.

JOHNSON: And then a few days later, Truman's State of the Union. That was the first State of the Union address that was televised.

BARTLETT: Well, I was not at the rostrum yet, and so a real awareness of the fact that that was the focus of the day's filming escaped me. I just don't recall anything right now that would reflect upon the use of media in those particular sessions. Other than the fact that both Mr. Rayburn and Lew Deschler, the Parliamentarian, wanted to keep all media at arm's length. And they succeeded pretty well. And as a matter of fact, I know that Mr. Rayburn was not happy when Mr. Martin let Edward R. Murrow come on the floor and do that program. He was not happy. I don't think he was cross about it with Joe Martin, but I'm sure he was commiserating with the Parliamentarian that this was a bad precedent.

JOHNSON: In an earlier interview you commented that you were part of the . . . this is your quote here: "the old poker crowd." Along these lines, do you have any personal memories or insight on Speaker Rayburn's Board of Education?

BARTLETT: Yes. Let me straighten that up. I was not a part of the poker crowd. This was a little group that met Thursday evenings, either in the University Club or at the Army-Navy Club. John McCormack was a member of that group and

Senator [Warren Grant] "Maggie" Magnuson; Senator George [Harrison] Bender was a key member, and then Ben Jensen of Iowa, one of the victims of the Puerto Rican shooting. It was a little group. And they were really devoted to one another.

Mr. McCormack did something . . . I'm sure you've never heard this. John McCormack had a great sense of honor. Whatever else, I could define part of it. He really was a remarkable man in his own right. He wanted to walk in the footsteps of Sam Rayburn. He wanted to be as favorable in the light of history as his predecessor, but he was different. But he had this marvelous sense of honor at the poker club. I know this is a fact because I was pretty close to somebody who was there, playing every time, with the deal that if anybody was losing at midnight, they apparently had this pot from which they could take their losses and go home—no questions asked. But, if they played beyond that—it was at your own peril—whatever happened, happened. I don't know how this worked; I just know it did work. And I know that Mr. McCormack insisted upon this as his value system would dictate. Mr. McCormack brought Tip [Thomas] O'Neill, [Jr.] in as a guest, and Tip O'Neill was not taken seriously by the assembled group. And, as a matter of fact, they made a lot of Irish jokes at his expense. Now you ask about . . .

JOHNSON: Also about the Board of Education.

BARTLETT: Board of Education. Okay. Very good. Let me see—there have been a few designated rooms. The Board of Education, that's famous. Of course, as in the film, that's where President Truman had learned that he had become President. Something was said about this was where Mr. Rayburn took new

Members. You had to be here a while to qualify for entrance into the Board of Education, but it was an interesting little room. Then also, Lew Deschler had for himself a room right next to it that had the same kind of exclusiveness. There's only two rooms in that corridor, and one of them was the Board of Education, which was Mr. Rayburn's, then the next room to it was Mr. Deschler's. I don't know who has that now. But the fact that Vice President Truman was there on that occasion gives you some idea of the kind of people who were invited.

There is a story in Robert Caro's book about Johnson, in which it points out that, at one point, Mr. Rayburn was very much out of sorts with Lyndon Johnson. And keeping him away. He was not being permitted into the Board of Education. And he complained bitterly to Lew Deschler, "What does a fellow have to do around here to get readmitted to that place?"[11] And so, that's all in Caro's book, and I'm sure it's true. It took World War II and Lyndon Johnson reporting to the colors to get Mr. Rayburn to befriend him again because there was a period there somewhere between the Little Congress and this that they were not on very good terms.

Now that room served the purpose which it suggests, the Board of Education. But you had to be in pretty good graces to be allowed to go in there, and Mr. Rayburn didn't have to take a freshman Congressman in there to get to him; he could get to him in the Speaker's Lobby and just do whatever was necessary.

Now there were two other rooms at the same time. "The Clinic," which was around the corner—I think it's a ladies' restroom now, then it was Room

Number 17—but that was Charlie [Charles Abraham] Halleck's room. It served a similar purpose.

JOHNSON: For Republican Members?

BARTLETT: For Republican Members. It's a smaller room. Nothing fancy. It was well supplied with the tools of persuasion. And across the hall from that was a Room 18, the Joe Martin Room. It was larger room, and it was actually used for conferences. Speaker Martin had room enough for a dozen people there, without any problem, for breakfast or lunch. And his approach to the whole legislative scene was so different from either one of the others. Mr. Martin would never have twisted anybody's arm in the way that Mr. Rayburn would have. And he certainly would not have tried to compromise a fellow by liquor, which might very well have happened across the hall. But those were the three rooms, at that time, which were very much in use.

Now, there was another famous room down there, and that was called the Speaker's Dining Room. It was around on the northeast corner of that first floor of the House Wing of the Capitol building. Mr. Rayburn had one wall decorated with a huge painting of the bluebonnets of Texas, a whole field full of these gorgeous blue flowers. Beautiful painting. I understand that painting went back to his museum in Texas. I understand he got a few real goodies out of the Capitol, but that was one of them, that went back to Texas. And as a matter of fact, there was a big fuss about that at that time. We were not accustomed to having Speakers or Members of Congress have a museum in which they would take things back, and there was a real controversy, and I never know to what level it got before they decided how do we account for these things. This is government property. And you may have a better

understanding of the final resolution than I do because it was just a controversy, as far as I was concerned, and nobody had ever come up with an answer. It's possible that when Speaker McCormack wanted to take some things, that we passed a resolution for that effect, but I'd have to go back and check that. I know that was one of the things that they wanted to do. If we're going to do it, we've got to make it legal, and we would pass a resolution to make it possible. But in that room we could always make arrangements.

I held many, many breakfasts. Our Marine Corps that we got together. The Speaker's Dining Room could be obtained for special occasions. We organized our congressional Marines group there in July of 1953. We had many breakfasts in that room. Oh, I could tell you about some really interesting people attending those breakfasts, and, likewise for the Speaker. When he wanted to really entertain somebody . . . the President of the United States wanted to come up on St. Patrick's Day for lunch. They held it in that little Speaker's Dining Room. For 50 or 60 people, it was comfortable. When he got many more than that, it started to get uncomfortable. But those are the rooms that occur to me, in that time period, that were designated for purposes other than legislating.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Lew Deschler [the longtime Parliamentarian], who, by the way, was a frequent guest in the Board of Education. So it would make sense that Lyndon Johnson went to him to ask how to be reinstated.

BARTLETT: Yes. Right.

JOHNSON: What are your recollections of his personality and his dealings with the Members of Congress?

BARTLETT: I have a great respect for the memory of Lew Deschler. He was not an easy person to understand. He was the expert. He would answer any question you asked him. He would not expand upon it. Knowledge was his stock-in-trade. He was not going to unload everything he knew because he wanted to keep you coming back. This was true of the most senior Members. I've seen it happen. He had a great knowledge of the House. I asked him many things. I sought his advice many times. And I was always satisfied with that relationship. He felt he supervised everything on behalf of the Speaker, so in a sense, he supervised the role that I played as a reading clerk. As a matter of fact, it was more than supervised. Many of the things that I dealt with were things that were his primary concern. Bills in different stages of incompletion and things like that were his primary responsibility. He had hypertension, he really did, and he was being treated for it. And I remember George Maurer, my partner as reading clerk, at one point saying, "Gee, he must have taken his pills this morning," because he was rather placid on that particular day, when normally he was highly tense.

I think he served the Speaker brilliantly. I think the Speaker served him well, too in many ways. I think they did a little business together, among other things. But the relationship he had with the Speaker, and I think we've spoken to this before, was proper in every respect. He would never have done anything on his own. And something I've tried to make a point of more than once is that a member of the staff who has any sense would never extend himself beyond the things that are appropriate for him to do. In other words, he would not assume the authority of anybody else. Mr. Deschler never acted as Speaker. He often did things that he knew the Speaker wanted done, but he would never have imagined them to be his actions or his initiative. He had

this long tenure. He studied under [Speaker] Cannon when he was the Parliamentarian.

I've nothing but respect for him, and I think that his service of the House is unique. He carried out the dignity of the House. I've seen people, in a sense, violating the dignity of the House, and Mr. Deschler made sure that the right people knew very quickly that that was to cease and desist, and he didn't always go out and grab a guy by the collar and say, hey, you're doing the wrong thing. But he made sure that the person who could do that was informed immediately and told that that should be done. So, he was a very wise man, really.

JOHNSON: How did he get along with the Members? Did Members feel comfortable coming to him and asking him questions, you know, the personality you just described.

BARTLETT: It varied widely. I can tell you an inside on this one, too. One of his [Deschler's] favorites was Richard [Walker] Bolling of Missouri. Now, I'm going to contradict myself a little bit because he liked to have Richard Bolling in the chair as acting presiding officer (Mr. Bolling wielded the gavel with authority!) They were simpatico; they got along very well. Mr. Rayburn did not have the same regard for Mr. Bolling. He didn't dislike him, but he didn't have this high esteem for him. And I've seen a couple of times when Deschler would be promoting or pushing Bolling for something, and the Speaker would question him. Rayburn went along with it; it was all right, but it wasn't his idea—it was Deschler's idea.

Your question is a good one, and I think it would probably have 435 answers because, at any given time some Members got along pretty well with him. Mr. Deschler knew he sized up his colleagues or his constituency pretty doggone well. He knew exactly to whom he had to provide information and how much. Bear in mind, he might be aware that one side was plotting a particular course of action. And they may even come to him for advice on that. And all the time he knows that when it comes to a decision, he's going to have to tell the Speaker to rule against them. So it's very difficult. He had a strange role.

There were people who absolutely did not trust him when the Republicans took over and he remained the Parliamentarian. There were Members on our side who just did not trust his advice. I heard some of that very pointedly. I was never too uncomfortable with the fact that Mr. Deschler was going to have to be giving advice on both sides of the aisle. I was privy to some of that, and frankly, I thought he acted as a good lawyer. I think he provided the counsel that was appropriate in each instance, in spite of the fact that it sometimes had to be contradictory from one side of the House to the other. So what was his relationship? Yes, there were those who did not trust him. They thought he was a partisan, and they thought that he was in the pockets of not just Mr. Rayburn but of the Democrat leadership. I doubt . . . I never heard that sort of thing from Mr. Martin. I never heard it from people at that level. It was mostly from people who had a particular piece of legislation, out of a particular committee, who wanted to advance something. Maybe they were told by Mr. Deschler that if it comes to a decision, "I'll [Deschler will] have to advise the Speaker against it." Well, that isn't what they wanted to hear. So I suspect there was more of that than a little, but, again, given his

track record, it's pretty doggone hard to not acknowledge that he performed with a great deal of wisdom.

JOHNSON: In your first interview, you referred to your difficult route to becoming reading clerk—difficult in the sense that it was a very competitive process with 21 candidates vying for the position. I was hoping that you could describe this process in greater detail.

BARTLETT: Happy to try. I didn't remember that I had said those things. This is my problem; I'm going to have a hard time remembering what I've already said on a previous occasion. But Lyle Snader, having become the Clerk of the 83rd Congress, and Alney E. Chaffee was the senior reading clerk. He was up in his 80s. He had been reading clerk 52 years. A remarkable man. Very small in stature, but a very good man. And when I think that he was able to carry out his duties before they had amplification, it just boggles my mind. Permit me to pay a little more tribute to Chaffee, before I get to the point where I fail to do it. He was a real godsend for me. He had nothing to hide; he had no reason to hold back on the inside knowledge of that role. He was so generous of his time and of his knowledge that he made the transition for me so much easier and more effective. I am eternally indebted to Alney Chaffee for that. In spite of the fact that he had been reading clerk 52 years, he became reading clerk at an age older than I was then. In other words, I think I'm the youngest reading clerk on record.

When the vacancy occurred, they realized that Chaffee, although he was still taking messages to the Senate, and could, in a pinch, get up to the microphone, he really was no longer active. He had done a very foolish thing. When they had the chance to opt for retirement, he opted out. I don't know

why. But he didn't have a retirement plan, so therefore he wanted to stay on the payroll as long as possible. And nobody was fighting that, although, I can't tell you how many times people told me that I should have the top salary and he have the salary that I was then getting. But that didn't bother me for one minute. As far as I was concerned, Chaffee earned everything he got.

Well, when this vacancy occurred, the word spread. And of course, following a tenure of 52 years, it was recognized as a rare opportunity. The Republican Patronage Committee was Leo Allen of Galena, Illinois; Chairman John [Joseph] Allen, [Jr.] of California; and W. Sterling Cole of New York—a three-member committee. The Patronage Committee, under Mr. Allen, started accepting applications for the job and announced that they were going to have auditions. Soon, they had 21 people lined up for auditions. They had a professional broadcaster from Akron, Ohio; the clerk of the Maryland state senate; they had some people who had various qualifications for it, and they all were in line. And when they, with the House not meeting, held auditions on the floor. And one of the tricks they had—we were not allowed to audition in the presence of the other candidates—but one of the tricks they had was to turn off the microphone. And these professionals had no idea what to do when the microphone went off. And so some, in a sense, sort of lost it. I didn't have enough sense not to continue, and so I just raised my voice a little bit more, which was what they were looking for.

And it ended up there were two of us who were singled out of the 21, and we started on the job competition that went on for several weeks. I've forgotten now how long, but I know it was a very uncomfortable thing to have day-to-day competition in the actual work of the reading clerk. Ultimately, the

committee reported to Speaker Martin that they preferred Joe Bartlett, and I got the job. Everybody had a different opinion about what I needed to do but without their advice, I went to George Washington University and took some advanced training in speech and delivery. And that was worthwhile. Then I learned an awful lot on the job with Chaffee's help.

We had one Congressman from Ohio, Tom [Thomas Albert] Jenkins, and I have relatives by that name. I thought I knew how to pronounce the name, but he wanted a very pronounced, two-syllable word: "Jen Kins." And I had a long time before I could say it the way he wanted it. Then there was the word "million," which comes up so often in legislative parlance—billions now, but it was millions then. And there were those who thought I had a pronunciation that needed some adjusting on that word. So there were challenges, but as we were discussing a little earlier, there are so many tricks that confront the reading clerk that it takes a long time to get accustomed to it. Did you want to expand on that reading clerk's role?

JOHNSON: Yes, but one thing, for people that may be listening to this at some point or reading the transcript, could you just describe your duties and responsibilities as reading clerk?

BARTLETT: I'd be happy to, and it's so much more complex than most people recognize. You're the vocal point of the House. And they think that's it. Well, of course, that is just the beginning. That's part of it. All legislation is read three times, and the reading clerk reads it to the House; you're the voice of the Speaker. Whether you're reading legislation, or whether you're reading a communication, and you get many communications. The Speaker could read it, but that's why we have clerks. The Speaker hands it down to his clerk, and

"lays before the House a communication, which the clerk will read." And that is a frequent occurrence, and there are many things, such as the leaves of absence, and things which are routinely handled by reading clerks, but a lot of people would not associate that with the legislative process.

The process of enacting legislation falls very heavily upon the reading clerk. As a bill is read, whether it's read by a section or by paragraph, as they do with appropriation bills, the reading clerk accepts the amendments; he hopes he can read them because sometimes they're scribbled, and they're not always cogent. So he has many challenges to simply read what's sent forward to be reported. All too often he does not have an advance look at an amendment, nor a chance to review it, which can be quite important, as I'll try to point out in a moment.

The reading clerk does what's called initiating the engrossment. The engrossment is the bill as it is altered by amendments in the House. And there's a heck of a good story with respect to how that can go astray. But normally you have an engrossing copy there at the desk, and as the amendments are adopted you mark them. That's your responsibility as reading clerk—to mark them properly. Then by the end of the day, you've got this piece of legislation, with as many amendments as have been adopted by the House, or as many changes, and that goes down to the enrolling room to be engrossed on blue bond paper, and it comes back in that form and it transmitted to the Senate for its pleasure, for its disposition.

[A 1-minute, 14-second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.] [12]

The two Houses obviously have to work out their differences and come up with an agreement. So you get bills at many stages of incompletion. The reading clerk has a file at his desk which contains these documents. The Senate may send back a bill with an amendment; they may request a conference; they may request the House to concur in their amendment. The House may concur with an amendment and send it back to the Senate, or the House may send it to a conference. Any of these different measures of incompletion are right there at the reading clerk's reach. The Parliamentarian is primarily interested in them, and he may tell you to get these documents out, or he may take them out and then the Speaker may call the legislation up for the action of the House. That has a certain precedent in the House. And the reading clerk has to be ready to do his duty.[13]

For the reading clerk in my day, probably his most challenging responsibility was to call the names of the Members of Congress for roll calls. And that, in itself, was a very interesting procedure. Incidentally, I've had several Members tell me they wish that they still had it because it was during that call that they got to know one another. They would hear their colleagues' names called; they would identify with a person; they would also have to wait for their name, so they would have time to visit with one another. And it gave them a collegiality that has never been possible with the electronic system. As soon as the election was over, and even before that, as a matter of fact, when somebody was an obvious winner in the upcoming election, you would start to get his biography and get his or her picture and get familiar with them. It is amazing how much a biography will enable you to know a person in advance—a person you've never met. There were many newcomers. There were Congresses where you had 80 or 90 or more new faces. And on the first day they came in to answer that first roll call, you had to know them. And

you had to know them by name, by state, and it was an enormous challenge, but it was fun, real fun! The look on a Member's face—on a new Member—he would be down there trying to mouth his name to you, and you, of course, knew it. It was amazing what a look would come over his face as you would identify him in a call. And his quizzical expression, "How the heck does he know me?"

JOHNSON: Did you have any tricks besides the biographies that helped you when you had so many new Members coming in?

BARTLETT: Study, study, study. But I enjoyed it. I loved that challenge. To do that was a thrill I just can't describe. It's like anything else in life when you have something that is very challenging, and you master it, you feel good. And the good feeling that came from being able to identify 435 Members was rewarding. In calling the roll, you call the 435 names, and you get responses. Those who fail to respond are called a second time. And then those who have not responded on either call, in most instances, were allowed to come to the well and be recorded. Sometimes you would end up with, maybe, 80 or 90 Members in the well. And you would have to go from the Majority side, across, one right after another. And call them by name and take their vote. Talk about a challenge—that's a good one. And sometimes, you would see somebody, about three or four ahead of you, and you'd say, "Oh gosh, I can't think of his name." Well, fortunately, by the time you got to him, it would come to you. I never got caught—never, never, never—17 years, I never got caught with not knowing a name in the well.

JOHNSON: That's an impressive record.

BARTLETT: Well, I was lucky; I've been blessed. Heck, I'm not that good. I can tell you a story on that. One of my colleagues one time—we had two Members who didn't like each other very well. One was a Democrat, and one was a Republican. Both from California, both whose name began with "H." And Mr. [John Carl Williams] Hinshaw was there, and my colleague called him Mr. [Chester Earl] Holifield, and he didn't like Mr. Holifield. And he didn't like being called Mr. Holifield. And {laughter}, he called him again, "Mr. Holifield." And he called him a third time. This Member sputtered an expletive and said, "My name is Hinshaw," and he barged out and never did vote. {laughter}

JOHNSON: And for an outsider, they wouldn't understand the history and why he was so angered by that.

BARTLETT: That is true, that is so true. But the calling of roll is now history. When Mr. Wayne Hays was chairman of the Committee on House Administration, he instigated this electronic voting system. He got Frank Ryan, who was a Cleveland [Browns] football player and who also happened to be a doctor in electrical engineering, and he brought him in to study the House system. And initially they installed a very primitive system. Before they did, I was asked what I thought about converting to an electronic voting system. We had had a scandal shortly before that, and my point about the voting system, which is another story for another time, but I said if you can restore confidence in the voting procedure by an electronic system, why, I think that would be fine. Unfortunately, it proved less than perfect in this respect. But I said you're not apt to save much time. In retrospect, let me simply say that I had called many roll calls under 20 minutes. I had called one roll call in 12 minutes. Completely through—recorded all 435 Members, everybody

voting—everybody voting the same way. It was a Ways and Means bill. And we just zipped through it. I had a real good tally clerk doing the tallying. We took a great deal of pleasure in the fact that we could do it and do it right.

This whole voting process is a very heavy responsibility on the reading clerk. I don't know where I was headed at that particular moment, but we were talking about doing something about the system. Time-wise, with the electronic system, because a Member did not have to wait to answer to his name, he could somewhat inconsiderately call for a roll call and take his plastic card and go up to one of the 48 stations, vote, and leave and be gone in seconds. And never mind the fact that he was inconveniencing 434 others who weren't quite as handy to the vote. That was sort of beside the point. Now the thing about that was it inspired many more calls than we had previously. Although they were set up for a 15-minute vote, very rarely did you ever get a 15-minute vote. It was extended—held open, what have you—sometimes five, 10 minutes to tidy up the well so that the individual roll call was not expedited very much.

Now they have this thing they call a five-minute roll call—that's when you have a series of calls, and I understand that that can be very expeditious. But as far as the average roll call is concerned, individual call, we could call them faster than they can by this electronic system. But the mischief comes with misinformation. So many news stories went out telling how much time the Congress was using calling the roll. And that was not untrue. But the irony is I have yet to see a story that tells how we are now spending twice as much time as they ever did when we were vocalizing, but that happens to be the fact. I did a study some years ago. I'm about out of the habit of being concerned about that now, but I did a study at one point to show the

comparison. I have it down minutely—each portion of the call and how much time it has taken. If you want to evaluate or quantify the amount of time spent calling the roll, there's been nothing added, in the way of efficiency, by this electronic system. And the fact that it has not been 100-percent reliable is unfortunate. Human nature being what it is, I guess that's bound to happen.

JOHNSON: Electronic voting wasn't established or installed until 1973. So, as reading clerk, were there experiments with other systems that you had to use?

BARTLETT: No, no; this you point out very well. I never had to be directly involved with the electronic system. I was the most recent former reading clerk on hand at the time, and so I was supposed to have had some experience. And we had a lot of discussions of it—I still could see little reason to change—if a mechanical system could restore confidence, if it could give a reliable reading that was more important than holding on to tradition. Because the old method was under a real cloud—as we may talk about it at another time—but, and I would be quick to say that never was there any reflection upon the integrity or the ability of those who happen to be holding the reading clerk's job, that was not where there was ever a problem. "Fishbait" Miller's book, which is not a very good book, I don't know how to put that.[14] I don't think "Fishbait" wrote the book to begin with. I think it was written as a commercial venture to sell books, but one of the things he said in there was to suggest that Charlie Hackney and I had a different way of calling the roll depending upon our political bias. Absolutely unthinkable, unthinkable. It would never happen and didn't happen, and I resented the fact that "Fishbait" made it appear that it had happened during one very long session.

JOHNSON: Since you just mentioned Charlie Hackney, I wanted to ask you a question about the relationship that you had with the other long-term reading clerks—Charlie Hackney and George Maurer?

BARTLETT: George Maurer was reading clerk when I became a reading clerk. George had been the timekeeper. As you know in the House, all debate is held under time limitation, and the timekeeper sits to our right of the presiding officer and informs the presiding officer, whether it's the chairman of the Committee of the Whole or whether it's the Speaker in the House, of the expiration of time. This is very, very important. They make jokes about a Republican minute and a Democratic minute, and they mean to be funny. But the truth of the matter is, the timekeeper, during my time, had been fastidious about being perfectly precise with his 60-second minute. The Speaker can delay hitting that gavel, but the timekeeper will have told him, at the end of 60 seconds, you can be darn sure of that. {laughter} George had been the timekeeper. That comes under the Parliamentarian. He used to sit at a desk in the Parliamentarian's Office. So when there was a vacancy on the rostrum—well, George's patron was [Francis Eugene] Tad Walter of Pennsylvania, who was chairman of the Democrat Patronage Committee and a very fine man. He arranged for George to become the reading clerk. And George was a very excellent reading clerk. He was also studying law and then opening a law practice downtown, so during my later period of service with George, he was devoting a good deal of time to developing this practice. A lot of people would have something to say about that, I didn't, I got along very well with George.

George had a very unfortunate demise. He drove to New Jersey to see his aging, ailing mother and sat down in a chair and dropped dead at the

untimely age of 56. I have forgotten what year that was, but Charlie Hackney had been in the Democratic Cloakroom as a supervisor of the telephones. He was from North Carolina. He was one of the sweetest guys that ever lived. I could not have asked for a better working partner than Charlie Hackney. And the team of Bartlett and Hackney was just—it was perfect.

JOHNSON: Can you describe how you worked together as a team?

BARTLETT: Well, there was never any worry about responsibility or time; we were helping one another all the time. We were simpatico . . . the total product was our priority. Charlie was just super. He was fastidious in his work, very selfless. I've counted my blessings many times. As a matter of fact I was privileged to do a eulogy at his memorial service. And I tried to pay him just that kind of a tribute. Donn Anderson [former Clerk of the House] was . . . I'll let Donn speak for himself, but he thought I had eulogized Charlie's life pretty well. Charlie had a marvelous disposition. He wanted so much to do what was right. Poor son of a gun couldn't quit smoking—that was his only problem. {laughter} He wouldn't smoke in front of me. Ever, ever. If he'd see me coming down the hall, the cigarette would disappear before I got anywhere near. And I didn't preach to him, but he just was that sensitive. A real gentleman, one of the most popular people on the Hill. And justifiably so—very, very thoughtful. One of the great blessings of my life was that Charlie got that job and joined me at the rostrum. So when "Fishbait" would suggest that there was ever any difference in the way we approached our job, that's just so absurd—unthinkable. The work of the reading clerk is too crucial to be mischaracterized.

We had a civil rights bill up—'57 I think it was—and we had 64 amendments to the bill. It was very fought over, tough. We had a system prior to that—the two reading clerks working together, but the amendment being put into the engrossing copy of the bill would bear the initials of the person who was on the microphone at that time. Don't tell me that's stupid because I know. It was stupid. The initials that should have gone in there were those of the person putting it into the bill, but we had been doing this . . . they had been doing it long before I came, so I went along with the system. Okay, we had entered some 64 amendments into this very thick, complex bill. And the next day I took the engrossment to the Senate. When I arrive at the Senate, I noticed that there was an air of anticipation there. And Senator [John Cornelius] Stennis was waiting. I got the message in. "I'm directed by the House to inform the Senate that the House has passed H.R. so-and-so, a civil rights bill, in which the concurrence of the Senate is requested." That's the way you say it. At this point Senator Stennis got the attention of the chair. Oh, they wanted to refer the bill to a committee. He questioned the integrity of the engrossment. He alleged that a crucial amendment had been put in at the wrong place, and I think he even mentioned my name because my initials were on it. Well, the irony was they debated it for several days, and Vice President [Richard Milhous] Nixon presiding, finally ruled favorable to the House and favorable to Joe Bartlett.

This was after some days. In the meantime, I return to the House, and because my initials were on the bill, Lew Deschler assumed I had put it in there. And I hadn't. My partner George had put it in there. And because of the traditional thing of writing somebody else's initials, my initials were on it. And George was beside himself. He was so sensitive. So this was driving him crazy. I said, "George, I've only been on the job a couple of years, nobody's

going to hold me accountable for this thing, just blame it on me, it's got my initial on it, just let them think so." Lew Deschler went to his grave thinking Joe Bartlett had messed up that bill, and I had not done it. However, the system changed as of that day. {laughter} From then on, you put your own initials on each transaction, but that was quite a momentous thing. Obviously, if Senator Stennis had been successful in making this an imperfect engrossment, then the whole house of cards would have collapsed. The House and Chairman Bill [William Moore] McCulloch of Ohio had spent weeks getting this thing up to this point, and it was really quite an achievement as far as the House was concerned. But Vice President Nixon ruled. I am not really sure it was right. {laughter} But it didn't matter—I think it was pragmatic. He realized that if we had to send it back to the House at that point, the legislation would have been in real trouble.

Anyway, that's a little aside about the critical nature of the work of the reading clerk in formulating legislation. It's very crucial, and there is no room for error. Normally, when you step away from the mic you have a duty to double-check all amendments. You don't send the bill down to the enrolling room without the two clerks having checked it. But that day, because it was this hot civil rights bill, everybody wanted it in a hurry. They didn't give me a chance to look at the doggone thing. So that was why there [should have been] a double-check, but there wasn't.

JOHNSON: Right.

BARTLETT: Only because they were in such a hurry to get that bill to the Senate, they were pushing the process.

JOHNSON: So that was an unusual circumstance.

BARTLETT: Very unusual. Normally you would not allow something like that without a second check. I don't know that they still perform that function in exactly the same way we did. We really did take it extremely seriously. I just don't know whether, without a Lew Deschler or a Sam Rayburn holding you accountable, that things would be the same.

[A 2-minute, 28-second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.]

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: I was reading over some of the tributes offered by Members upon your retirement, and I was specifically looking at what they had to say about your time as reading clerk, and many of them express gratitude for your willingness to take Members aside and offer advice and assistance in helping familiarize them with the House procedures. Would you be able to comment on your role as a counselor, in addition to being reading clerk?

BARTLETT: Well, I was glad that I did have some experience that was useful to the Members. As chief Page, my role was to facilitate the legislative process by helping the Members every way I could. I don't think I could have changed that outlook, or that commitment, and didn't when I went up to the front desk. If there was any way that I had knowledge that would be helpful to somebody, I was just happy to go to them when I could and impart whatever might prove to be helpful or I thought might prove to be helpful. So, no, that was just natural for me. I wasn't looking for anything. I was very happy with

what I was doing and the fact that it provided opportunities to be helpful. And, yes, there were many such instances, and that was what it was all about.

JOHNSON: Well, 17 years as a reading clerk, I think you would be very qualified to say what you think would be the qualities necessary for an effective reading clerk. What do you think some of those major qualities would be?

BARTLETT: I think, as with any other job, you have to recognize the product that you are there to facilitate, to augment. I think first of all, you have to realize that you're the voice of the Speaker. In other words, you're sort of Charlie McCarthy to the Speaker.[15] You're the voice of the process, and I think, as with any occupation, your first requirement is to understand your role, and in that case, you're not up there to perform—you're not up there to entertain. And incidentally, I could contrast that with—you've seen reading clerks at national conventions, who would get into a colloquy with the people who were voting. And that always annoys me because that person is forgetting their role. But the point that I'm getting at is, that if you understand your role, you will be much better prepared to perform it. And so understanding of the legislative scene, the legislative process, democracy, representative republican government, just to put that in the context and say "Okay, now here is my role." Having gone beyond that, I think that the actual duties up there, you learn every day that you're in that role, no two days will be alike.

But the basic things, any intelligent person can learn fairly quickly, particularly if you happen to be lucky enough to have a good mentor, as I did. I've paid my tribute to Alney Chaffee before, but that was a great godsend. I've been very, very, very fortunate. In everything I've done, I've

always had somebody there to keep me from falling off the deep end. And, the familiarity with the jargon of legislation, it comes, and it is different. You have a distinctive vocabulary, you learn a new language. It's so different than some other occupations. Or even that of other people who make a living at a microphone. It's just a different role, as with the professional broadcaster who didn't fit into this. Chances are he might not have, but even had he been given the opportunity, it would have been a struggle for him to learn a new trade, a different approach to things. But I know you would like for me to come up with some real specific qualifications for a reading clerk, and maybe I have.

To appreciate your role in the process is fundamental. And I would say that general qualifications are what you would expect from anyone in a responsible position. If you were looking for examples, the ones I've mentioned, the Charlie Hackneys, and Bob Berrys were ideal. We have been very fortunate to have had excellent staff on the rostrum who have projected a very good image of the process, of the House, without being a star. If you get too self-conscious in that role, you're dead. {laughter} I think.

JOHNSON: Well, from what you're describing, it sounds like you're a member of a team. It's a very large team, and you're just one person in that.

BARTLETT: It's true; it's true.

JOHNSON: I asked you, a while back, to describe your relationship with the other reading clerks, but something else that I was hoping you could talk about was how the reading clerk related to other staff on the House Floor, the other people

that were involved in operating the legislative proceedings. What was your relationship with the other floor staff?

BARTLETT: We got along real well. Obviously, the reading clerk and the tally clerk have to be very simpatico because the tally clerk is tallying the vote as the reading clerk is reading it, and if either one is doing their job slower or faster than the other one, it doesn't work. With the tally clerk, you have to work very closely. In the days when I was there, we had all the very best court reporters taking the proceedings by shorthand. Oh, they were super; they were super. We had a team of reporters of debate, the likes of which you just wouldn't find anywhere else in the world. They were incredible, but they required a lot more coordination than I gather. They practice now since they're broadcasting the proceedings into the reporters of debate room downstairs. So, they've changed a lot of things. None of that would have been possible in my day. And so, the process is bound to be different. But we were very dependent on one another. As a matter of fact, when the reporters were taking it down, somebody would want to alter what he's been doing, an amendment or something, verbally. Terrible thing to do, but it has happened. And you had to be sure that you got his intentions such as when somebody's words are "taken down." When somebody's words are "taken down," the reading clerk has to get the transcript from the reporter of debate, then the Speaker directs him to read the words objected to. Well, talk about coordination, man, that better be . . .

And incidentally, there have been incidents of adjusting words in years past. I don't want to make an issue of that, but there has been some editing between the time words were uttered, and the time I got it. I could go back; I've got notes on that someplace. And it was just made slightly less offensive.

But nonetheless, there's a close coordination required. You have a little less coordination with the bill clerk, who sits further to your right. You might have to compare notes at the end of the day, but you wouldn't have a whole lot of to do during the course of the legislative day. As I mentioned before, we zealously guarded the sacredness of the roll call. You would try your best to have a cooperative relationship with everybody, but they had to understand that what you were doing up there with the roll was sacrosanct. You don't deviate, ever! And I've had people come to me, and say so-and-so just came in, and he was just outside the door when you called his name. Forget it. {laughter}

JOHNSON: While you were reading clerk, you fell under the jurisdiction of the Clerk's Office. What are your recollections, generally speaking, of the organization and the operation of the Clerk's Office during this period?

BARTLETT: Well, of course, Lyle Snader was the Clerk when I became reading clerk, and Harry Megill was still in that office. I did more dealing with Harry than I did with the Clerk. I never had anything but good relations with the Clerk's Office. I cannot think of anything that wasn't satisfactory. I'm a great one for organization, and I've always felt that certainly when Republicans had the responsibility, they had an opportunity to give structure to the organization, there was some paranoia, and I think they just did not want anyone to put it all together. And I wanted it so badly. I really wanted to put together a team, an organization, and it just wasn't desired. They wanted the autonomy. The New Jersey or the Pennsylvania delegation wanted their guy to be responsive only to them. And that's frustrating because you have a payroll, but you're not doing anything with it. There's no synergism about it at all. That's

contrary to my disposition. I'm a team player. I'm a committee person. And those are attributes that are not always appreciated.

Like back to John Byrnes. You know I said, we need to get everybody working together, and he said, "No, no, Wilbur [Mills] and I work it out." You know, this is a different mindset. And I'm not saying that I'm right and they're wrong because people are disposed differently toward life, and toward their work, and John Byrnes was a good man. But I couldn't have disagreed with him more about the process of legislation that two people could go off and write a bill. I just think that misses the whole deliberative effect of democracy. And, as I say, he was a good man, good friend of mine; I loved John Byrnes. I knew him as a kid! He had been in "Young Republican" politics, and I went out to a convention in Milwaukee, and we had a good time together—this was when we were both kids, you know? But how he could go through as much as he did and not realize that this is supposed to be a product of a cooperating, deliberating body, I've understood . . . And the irony is, it is true that he and Wilbur could put together great Ways and Means legislation. Wilbur Mills was a genius, and Byrnes was a complement to him. But they—really to solo or to duet something like that is not my concept of democracy.

I've often thought, I wish I had . . . John's dead now. I'd like to have talked with him a little bit more about the subject. I'd like to have forced him to justify that attitude to me, just a little bit, so I would understand the mindset that would say hey, you could do this. Because if you can do it there, where do you stop? If a society isn't what . . . See the point of that was maximum participation by the Members of Congress in the legislative process. That was the whole idea. And if you, you either believe in that, or you don't believe in

it, and I'd like to understand better the fellow who says, hey, I don't really want . . . But you know, as you go through life, there are a lot of people—don't annoy me with the committee. A camel is a horse put together by a committee. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Getting back, for a moment, just to your time as reading clerk and how you worked with others in that capacity, were there any committees that you worked with on a regular basis?

BARTLETT: Every committee, every committee.

[A 2 minute, 22 second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.][16]

I should point out something that we didn't point out before, with respect to that—I guess maybe that's into the next session—but a Clerk to the Minority or a Republican Clerk is nominated for Clerk of the House. Did you know that?

JOHNSON: Yes.

BARTLETT: And he goes through the process of election, and you mentioned something about the job they created for William Tyler Page. I suspect, without looking it up, that he was nominated for Clerk of the House in the newly Democratic House, and having failed that, they then created the job of Minority Clerk. I would expect that's what happened. It is in that way that the Minority has Officer status. You have Officer status, in a sense, because you have stood and failed for that office. And this is why the Sergeant at Arms and the Clerk

and the then Doorkeeper and the Postmaster were all Officers of the House—in the Minority status. I'm not sure that that continues today. But the last I heard they had a half a dozen names listed as "floor assistants," and that was their nondescript status. We better save some of this for the next session because we're getting into the Minority Clerk thing, and it's a little complicated, and I think you'll find it very interesting.

JOHNSON: A recent article that I came across in *The Hill* described how reading clerks sometimes work on crossword puzzles to pass the time during long House debates. Did you ever need to find ways to pass the time?

BARTLETT: No way. {laughter} George Maurer, my partner, took great pride in his penmanship, and he would sit there and practice his penmanship. I thought that was fine. There are times, when particularly on special orders or something like that, when time can hang heavy. But not much. You know, we alternated on the microphone.

I don't think we've mentioned before, but our arrangement was an hour on the mic and an hour off the mic. Now, the hour off the mic didn't mean you were free to do anything else because you had other duties right there—preparing the engrossment or whatever you had to do—all kinds of things that were required. Getting the consent calendar ready for the next day. All of that is done right there at the desk, during the time that . . . you're so-called "off" an hour. But you also have time to run back in the cloakroom and get a cup of coffee or whatever you have to do. You know, one of the few nightmares I have had—and I would wake up in a frightful sweat—that I had been caught back in the cloakroom, and I was needed at the microphone. But, no, our responsibilities at the desk were such that . . . I found myself

required to read the rules of the House or something and to refer to what we were doing, or the *Cannon's Precedents*, which were over on—we had a bookcase over to the far right—and yes, I could draw those and get prepared for the next event, but there was little idle time.

JOHNSON: That wasn't a luxury that you had?

BARTLETT: I never felt oppressed. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Okay. As a reading clerk, as we both mentioned, for 17 years, you administered many roll calls, witnessed numerous debates and speeches. What were some of the most memorable, in your opinion?

BARTLETT: There have been a lot of anecdotal incidents that happened in the House. You have to know that Otto [Ernest] Passman was one of the more colorful Members of Congress. He moved around in a constant dance, flailing his arms and being given credit for being very profound. Nonetheless, on October 12, 1972, he was escorting the newly elected Congressman John [Berlinger] Breaux of Louisiana into the House Chamber when they passed Dan [Daniel John] Flood of Pennsylvania. Passman was heard to instruct his new colleague, "There goes one of the real characters in the Congress! It takes one to know one!" The incident was thought to be very funny.

I've mentioned in the last series [of interviews] about different great speeches, and there have been some. Mr. Rayburn very rarely took the well. As a matter of fact one of his Pages that I was with the other day said that he was reluctant to go into the well. And I'm sure he was. I think he realized that when you're the Speaker, you don't go to the well very often. But I heard

him make some remarkable and patriotic speeches from the well. His "No east, no west, no south, no north" had a profound effect.

[A 5-minute, 3-second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.][17]

JOHNSON: Two particular issues—and one you mentioned a while back—civil rights (a piece of civil rights legislation) and then also legislation having to do with Vietnam. Do you remember anything specifically about those two areas?

BARTLETT: Well, about Vietnam, I would have to say that one of the most difficult times was about the time when Pete [Paul Norton] McCloskey, [Jr.], was elected from California. Pete was a real hero of the Korean War. Silver Star—really a tremendous guy. Marine. General Lewis Walt thought the world of him. But he came to Congress completely opposed to the Vietnamese War. Charlie [Charles Samuel] Gubser was from California, the senior member of that delegation, and he was on the Armed Services Committee and very, very much concerned about this. Charlie got me aside, and asked, "What can you do with Pete?" Well, I had a talk with him, and I've forgotten the circumstances or the particulars, but I went back to Charlie Gubser, and I said, "Not a darn thing anybody's going to do with Pete. He's got the bit in his teeth, and he's determined." There was a lot of feeling that you have got to support the Commander in Chief, even if you don't think that this is going well. And I think a lot of people at the time realized that the Tonkin Bay was a trumped-up thing. That became a little more apparent as time went on. And of course, by now we know it was a total fabrication.

I remember that after the Tonkin Bay incident, when they called the roll, Charlie [Charles Albert] Vanik didn't answer. He had been in the cloakroom making a phone call when his name was called, so he immediately came down to the well and made the darndest *mea culpa* you've ever heard about how he was sorry and ashamed that he had not voted to support the President. If there ever was anybody who regretted a speech, I'm sure it was Charlie Vanik regretting that speech, because he took a totally different position later. But the speech stayed in the *[Congressional] Record*.

There was a lot of talk about having both "guns and butter." This was so different than the commitment of World War II and, for that matter, Korea. There was a feeling that we were trying to win the war on the cheap, and that was not going to happen. I think we had some feeling in the country that we were not mobilized to win a war. And I can understand. I find it interesting that Pete McCloskey is running for Congress again. I don't know where that contest stands in California, running for a seat based upon his opposition to the war in Iraq. The only thing I would observe to differentiate dramatically from the mobilization that we felt in World War II was that in both of these later conflicts, we were trying to have both guns and butter. And Congress sort of went on its way, without ever having a sense of wartime mobilization. We did not have—we did not have it, and maybe it wouldn't have been appropriate. I don't want to make any great judgment about that, but it was a fact. We were not as involved. You had the fantastic number of casualties in Vietnam, and a limited number of people involved directly, those who were engaged, but the general population never really got committed to a national purpose. And that was sad because we had a noble purpose for being in Vietnam. We made a promise to certain people, mostly Christians, mostly Catholics, if they would come south, we'd provide protection for them. But

you never heard that rationale repeated by the Secretary of State or the President. Nobody ever said, that's why we were there. And so the American people were waiting to find out, "Why are we there?" And they were never given a national purpose. Here we were having tens of thousands of men killed over there, and nobody was providing a national rationale. That was tragic.

[A 3-minute, 27-second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.]

JOHNSON: I wanted to wrap up today by asking you about one of the more famous events in House history, one of the more violent events in House history—the 1954 shooting in the House Chamber by the Puerto Rican Nationalists. As an eyewitness to this event, can you set the scene before the shooting started and then retrace your memories of the shooting?

BARTLETT: You mentioned the business of transmitting to the Senate the actions of the House, and I had just had a bundle of bills and had just stepped out the center door, on my way to the Senate, with these bills. I heard what sounded like, a stack of folding chairs falling—these metal folding chairs. When we were having a special session and they needed additional seats up there, they would stack some of them against the wall. And it sounded just as though they had all fallen over. Bada bum bum. I turned around and ran right back into the chamber, and they were sorting out the casualties. They were scrambling in the gallery. I guess that would be gallery . . .

JOHNSON: I think it was Gallery 11.

BARTLETT: Eight, nine, 10, 11, yeah. So I saw what was happening and, of course, read a lot more about it a little bit later. One of the real heroes was a colored doorman by the name of [William] Belcher. He had just been released from the hospital; he had a heart condition. And Belcher was actually trying to manhandle one of them, and he was an 80-year-old man. But the truth of the matter was Carl Champ, who was a lieutenant on the Metropolitan Police Force, was in civilian clothes and on duty over on the other side of the gallery when this happened. He had circled around and actually was very instrumental in getting the two that they got right on the scene. I wrote a letter of commendation. He got a Metropolitan Police Department Silver Medal for his performance, but it was kind of funny, when they got my letter they accused Champ—and Champ was a gentleman—they accused Carl of having put me up to it. He didn't even know I'd written a letter. I think they still thought it was trumped up and didn't even invite me to go down to the presentation. But he deserved it.

They made a big joke at the time: "Never were so few captured by so many." If you read about all the people that thought they were involved in that, and I'm not going to question anybody's veracity with respect to it, but it was a helter-skelter scene. I went down the center aisle, and as I went down the aisle, [Clifford] Davis of Tennessee was sitting there. And you're going to think this is weird, but Davis had been shot through the calf, and he had his foot up on the seat in front of him and holding both sides of a bullet wound. It seemed so unreal, but that's the way it was. I walked right into the well, where poor Al [Alvin Morell] Bentley was stretched out there. And Al Bentley.

JOHNSON: And he was the, the most critically injured.

BARTLETT: Yes, the wound contributed to his early death years later. Al was very wealthy. He was also in darn good shape. He played baseball. He was wealthy enough that his personal physician was flown in from Michigan immediately, and they took him to the closest hospital that was accustomed to street casualties. And Dr. [Walter Henry] Judd was working on him there in the well. Bentley had been shot through the abdomen, but there was not a lot of blood. They brought a couple of towels from the cloakroom with some ice. I should have kept those towels; I didn't. But there was not much blood, so the bleeding was internal. As I recall, there wasn't a pool of blood on the floor when they took him away. Representative [Kenneth Allison] Roberts of Alabama probably suffered more, maybe longer than anyone. He was shot through the knee. And that bullet had come through the chair that Sam Rayburn, as the Minority Leader, had regularly sat in. Fortunately, Mr. Rayburn was not sitting there at that moment. The bullet shattered Roberts' knee. Representative [George Hyde] Fallon of Maryland was shot in the buttocks—uncomfortable, but not in any great danger. Representative Ben Jensen of Iowa was shot in the shoulder, and the bullet followed under his hide to his waist.

JOHNSON: What was going through your mind at this time? It must have been a shock.

BARTLETT: Bewilderment, mostly. Surrealistic. And mad—you're mad that somebody would have hurt your friends. But why? I knew nothing about the Independista Movement; I knew nothing about the Puerto Rican discontent, and I didn't even know that they were Puerto Rican at that moment. I had no idea what was going on. I knew that things up in Gallery 11 were under control, I wasn't apprehensive anymore. And, of course, they made a joke

that Mr. Martin, Speaker Martin, stepped back between the pillars. I don't know whether he did or not, but they told a story that he just stepped back of those pillars, which put him out of sight of the gunmen.

JOHNSON: In his memoirs, he may have said that.[18]

BARTLETT: Did he? Well, that's true. I know his memoirs didn't tell you that Graham story. Did I tell you that story?

JOHNSON: I don't think so.

BARTLETT: Oh, heck, that's a good story. I told you about the Pennsylvania row, about the precedent, how they sat there in order, and Dick [Richard Murray] Simpson was senior. Well, Representative Louie [Louis Edward] Graham was a little roly-poly guy. Really, roly-poly describes him. And he didn't walk, he waddled. We had this resolution up a day or two after the shooting . . . Congress was trying to find some way to express our sympathy for the people who had been shot, so this resolution was to pay the bills for their hospital, ambulance, and everything. It was a token; it was the only thing we could do, so we were trying to make it dramatic, solemn. There had been a couple of speeches about how our hearts went out to these people. Now we've got this resolution before the House. And Mr. Martin, bless his heart, he had a one-track mind; you did not interfere with that. If you gave him another distraction, it was frustrating as all get out. So, he's up there trying to put this question with great dignity, you know, trying to make it reflect the seriousness of the occasion. Louie Graham comes waddling down that center aisle, into the well, and he stage-whispers up to Mr. Martin, "Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, can I amend this resolution?" Now you've done it! "Louie, what

do you want to do?" he asked with some irritation. Graham replied, "I'd just like to include a small laundry bill." {laughter} Mr. Martin caught on. He thought it was very funny, too. Nobody else heard that but those of us right in that direct line of hearing. {laughter} It was funny. And you wouldn't have guessed that Judge Graham—we called him "Judge"—had such a sense of humor.

JOHNSON: Well, since you were talking about the time directly following the shooting, what was the atmosphere like among the Members? Was there any sense of apprehension, or was it more of anger, of what you referred to?

BARTLETT: Frustration, bewilderment. Everybody's trying to get a handle on it. They didn't know what this was all about. And of course, the doctor's office responded quickly; they got the victims out of there. Of course, every second seemed like a long time, but they really were very efficient in getting them out of there. There was great concern for Al Bentley, great concern. As reflected through Dr. Judd—he had really grave things to say about him, about the situation, about his condition. Dr. Judd was an interesting fellow. He looked out the cloakroom one day and looked up at Speaker Rayburn, and he said: "I'll bet he's got pancreatic cancer." Here's a physician making a diagnosis clear across the House Chamber—maybe unprofessional, but accurate.

JOHNSON: Just looking at him.

BARTLETT: A doctor doesn't do that, normally, so I assumed that he made some observations earlier, but nonetheless, he was right. And we didn't know it.

That was quite a scene. But, okay, back to the House. You wanted to know—let me tell you one thing.

JOHNSON: In the days following, was there added concern?

[A 5-minute, 24-second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.][19]

JOHNSON: This is a great session today, thank you. Was there anything else that you wanted to add?

BARTLETT: No, Kathleen. Thank you.

— JOE BARTLETT—

INTERVIEW FOUR

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing General Joe Bartlett, former reading clerk and Minority Clerk for the U.S. House of Representatives. This is the fourth interview with General Bartlett. The date is July 12th, 2006. The interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building.

You served as the reading clerk for the Republican National Conventions from 1960 through 1980. Can you describe the role, the specific role that you played in these events?

BARTLETT: Very much the role that I played in the House of Representatives. In each instance, your primary duty was to be the voice of the procedure and when resolutions or amendments were offered, if the person proposing them didn't choose to do the reading themselves, I did. There were some interesting incidents of that because, in the House, we do what is called "reading scientifically," which means nothing more than jumping ahead. In an appropriation bill, you read the title, you read the sum involved and then you move on and you can expedite the reading quite a bit. It always impresses some people. Some people it impresses quite negatively because they don't know what you're doing and they don't realize that you're not leaving out anything that's essential and that you're prepared to stop whenever it's necessary, whenever somebody has an amendment and you're aware of it. This is talking now back about the House of Representatives because that's where it happens. And parenthetically, it has defined the different leadership

of the House in a very interesting way. May I expand upon that just a little bit?

JOHNSON: Yes.

BARTLETT: I think it's an interesting story. For example, Speaker Sam [Samuel] Rayburn and his splendid knowledge of the procedures of the House and what was expected and who was supposed to do what, it was just wonderful to work for a man who had this understanding. And what would happen, an uninitiated Member would have an amendment to an appropriation bill and here we would be going through there scientifically a page a second. They'd get all excited that I was going to overrun a place where he had an amendment. And it was not uncommon for the Member to protest and say, "Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the reading clerk is not reading the bill!" Well Mr. Rayburn, bless his heart, he knew exactly what was called for. He would bang the gavel—"The reading clerk is reading the bill. The reading clerk will proceed to read the bill." Now that had a double meaning. It also meant, "Look out for that fellow, he's got an interest here." And you're a reading clerk, you're supposed to respect that. Okay. You were saved. The Speaker knew that the criticism, if there was any, was aimed at how the House was being run, not merely at the reading clerk who was just a hired hand and doing his job. So your relationship with that Speaker was validated.

Well, Mr. Rayburn was succeeded by Speaker John McCormack, whom I loved. He really was a wonderful man. He wanted so much to measure up to the footsteps into which he was stepping. But he was different and his background was so different. His understanding and the House was markedly different. {laughter} You'd come to the same situation. From the

well, "Mr. Speaker, the reading clerk is not reading the bill!" And Speaker McCormack would look down, "Well, are ya?" {laughter} As a reading clerk, you're dead.

At the [Republican National] Convention, there was one time when Hugh [Doggett] Scott, [Jr.], had an amendment. It had something to do with civil rights, I have even forgotten exactly what the amendment was or even the year that it took place. But I was told by the presiding officer at that time that he really wasn't interested in my reading this rather long amendment in its entirety. But that he really wanted was the time that came with it. He would be allowed to speak at the convention on behalf of his resolution. So I was handed this long amendment and I proceeded to read it "scientifically," just like we did in the House. Well, the irony is, that nobody objected or caught on or realized what was going on except one reporter down there. He later told me, he said, "Joe, I just couldn't follow you." {laughter} I said, "You weren't supposed to." {laughter} And Mr. Scott, a dear friend, got his time, made his point, and of course lost his amendment, as he had expected.

The chief reading clerk is an elected officer of the convention, and there usually is a contest. Even as there had been when I was elected chief of the pages in 1948. The election was usually conducted by the executive committee of the committee on arrangements. I was delighted to win, but I must admit the chairman of the committee, Walter Hallahan, was a dear friend, so I am sure my candidacy was presented favorably before the committee. Later it was decided they wanted to give the secretary of the convention some exposure. Always elected from among the national committeewomen, and rarely with any experience, it was assumed that she was qualified to call the roll of states. So we proceeded with a sometimes

uneasy duet, the secretary calling states, and the reading clerk eliciting and recording the votes. The viewing public thought it went all right, but it wasn't that easy.

Then I would do what was the professional side of it, making sure the vote was correct. I have some records to show that we had in one instance, for Vice President, a long list of candidates and so the recording of those different votes for the different candidates was a challenge.[20] We tried to do a professional job.

We usually worked as a reading clerk team. The last few times, I had Bob Berry, who was then the active reading clerk of the House, having replaced me in that role, serving as my deputy, or my associate, reading clerk at the conventions. That worked out beautifully because he knew what he was doing and it was a real joy to work with somebody who understood what we were trying to accomplish. And there were challenges. And nobody in this world knows how much of a challenge we confronted in that instance because it was done professionally, if you will, it looked to be effortless. And the truth of the matter was we were really sweating. We were having a tough time with the call. That never was conveyed. The public got that image of what we were doing, which is very gratifying to us. As my mentor told me, when you make it look easy you are simply demonstrating your professional competence.

I thoroughly enjoyed the convention role. The nature of conventions changed considerably during the period of which we're speaking. The '48 convention was vastly different than the 1980 convention. And as you know, one of the things that is being observed by the political pundits today is that

the conventions are not really a contested setting, that these things are all decided by primaries, and what have you, before the convention convenes. There's a lot of truth to that. The vice presidential thing is pretty much the choice of whomever the standard bearer is, so that the suspense, the drama of a convention definitely is much, much different than say the 1952 convention where [Dwight D.] Eisenhower and [Robert Alphonso] Taft were competing, or the '48 convention when Taft and [Governor Thomas] Dewey were competing. There were lots of things that transpired that made the life of an official very exciting. It would not be fair, nor accurate, to suggest that at the conventions of 1976 and 1980 there was not a spirited contest going on between President [Gerald] Ford and Governor [Ronald] Reagan, but it was not the public fight of earlier years, nor the pre-determined contests of later years.

JOHNSON: Now, the conventions you mentioned, the earlier ones, you weren't reading clerk at that time at those conventions.

BARTLETT: No, but I was an official of those two conventions. The first one as a chief of pages, which was a very interesting role in '48. I was quite young, but I had a couple of hundred pages and they were sterling, they were wonderful. And some of them are prominent people in the country today who served as pages in the 1948 convention.

JOHNSON: Were these Pages that served for Congress?

BARTLETT: No. Not many. A couple were, but by and large, they were not. And they really had to be trained from the beginning. They didn't have any idea what they were going to be involved in. We were headquartered at the Bellevue–

Stratford in Philadelphia, and I had an office on what amounted to the mezzanine floor. My sleeping room was up on the 8th or 9th floor. But I never got up there, I was so busy in the office, and the elevators were so inadequate that I spent practically the whole convention living in convention hall—which was very nice, I had an office over there, too, of course, but sleeping was something we didn't do much of that week. A well-known private police force headed by Andy Frain was in charge of security for several conventions, and they did a good job. They were guarding the huge doors at the back of the stage in the Philadelphia hall when Governor Dewey's entourage arrived with a phalanx of burly New York state police. The two groups did not recognize the authority of one another and a physical confrontation ensued. While the fight was going on, Dewey slipped into the hall.

There were a lot of exciting things. [Brazilla] Carroll Reece was a Member of Congress—the most decorated World War I Member of Congress from Johnson City, Tennessee. He was the national chairman. And he told me to go back in the hall and get the Dewey children and bring them to the platform so they would be there when the governor arrived. {laughter} In all innocence, I went out to get the Dewey children. When I arrived, there was a nanny and a huge, huge police sergeant. And I said that I had been sent to bring the children to the platform. The police man said, "Let me see it in writing." I said, "I don't have it in writing." I said, "the national chairman told me to do it." I'm dumb enough to think that that was going to persuade him. He looked down and growled at me, "Who do you think they are, the Roosevelt kids?" (Known as seekers of the limelight.) {laughter} So we waited for the governor.

It was the first convention for television and you've never seen such monsters as these cameras that were wheeled down to the platform. But another thing, and this would never occur to many of us, the so-called shopping cart was initiated at the 1948 convention. Grocery stores did not have shopping carts before that. Now I know that sounds strange. How did you do your shopping? Well, you did your shopping without shopping carts. These were new devices. And the McCormacks of Chicago had put together a campaign for General [Douglas] MacArthur, and they had had petitions signed, zillions of petitions, rolls of petitions.

And they had a herd of these new-fangled shopping carts filled with these petitions. At the strategic moment in the nominating speech for General MacArthur they wanted the carts wheeled down the center aisle to the platform for what they hoped would be dramatic effect. They asked me if the pages would be willing to push the carts. It was within the general scheme of their duties, so I consented. The McCormack operation out of Chicago had so much unspent MacArthur campaign money that they tipped the pages very generously. The chief pages refused all gratuities.

Anyway, the real story is that the opposition was controlling the convention schedule, so the MacArthur nomination and demonstration was diabolically timed for the wee hours of the morning, when any hope for dramatic effect was pretty well squelched. And nobody was listening or hearing. Of course, television was a new thing, I don't suppose there were very many television sets to receive what was broadcast. Nonetheless, radio was and it was a real downer for General MacArthur because they had so positioned this event that it would have no public notice. Very interesting.[21]

JOHNSON: We learned with our interviews with Ben West, who was the former superintendent of the House Press Gallery, that his office had an official role in the nominating conventions. Now, you as reading clerk of the Republican nominating conventions, was this an official role of your duties in the House?

BARTLETT: No. That's interesting. No. No. Ironically, as with Bob Berry, it was not unusual for the person in the House who had that role—those were good credentials—but you went before the committee along with other people who sought the job. And it was not an entitlement, I think that's what you're trying to say, and not an obligation. It was neither one.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that there was a competition.

BARTLETT: There was a competition, but I must confess in all modesty, I had an advantage. I had Walter Hallahan, who was a major official in national conventions for some years. He chose for himself the post of chairman of committee on arrangements. The committee on arrangements ran the convention, absolutely. So whatever he said went. An oil company executive in Pittsburgh, very prominent, very effective, national committeeman for the state of West Virginia. And he ran the convention.

Now, Benny West's role, I was familiar with that because the radio and television correspondents, Bob Menaugh [superintendent of the House Radio-TV Gallery], had similar responsibilities, and, yes, their little group went to the convention and set up shop to provide the credentials for the media. They were allowed to do it pretty much independent of the other officials of the convention. They were given the credentials and held

accountable for who got them. As a matter of fact there were times I would claim a convention press credential for somebody.

JOHNSON: In a previous interview you talked about the transformation to electronic voting. What are your recollections, as reading clerk at the time, of the "ghost voting" scandal of 1968 involving Congressman [Robert Carlton (Bob)] Wilson of California?

BARTLETT: Ooh, ooh, ooh, you just opened Pandora's Box. {laughter} Well, gee, I wasn't sure if you wanted to get into that at this time, but I am certainly willing to share with you what I know about it. It's a little bit involved. Frank Eleazer, who was head of the UPI [United Press International] desk, came down to the Speaker's Lobby, called me out, and he said, "Is Bob Wilson of California here?" I said, "I'll go look." I went back and checked my records and reported, "No, he's not here." "Well," Frank retorted, "he's recorded on the official roll call." You see, there's two records. The reading clerk's records are one thing, the tally clerk's are quite another. And the tally clerk's record is the official record. The reading clerk's record is only for his own purposes and as a confirmation. The tally clerk's record is a large square 30 inches or so. All the names are listed on it and there are blocks which he checks off as the reading clerk calls them. One copy of that goes to the press gallery immediately. And sure enough, here was Wilson checked off. I said, "I don't have him on my record." So Frank called Wilson's office and the office called Wilson, who was then in San Diego. So things started breaking badly and Wilson hurried back and declared he didn't know how he got on the roll. He took the well [on the House Floor] and apologized.

Now, Drew Pearson had a reporter, Tom McNamara, on the Hill at that time, and one of the staffers on the radio television gallery tipped him something that wasn't true suggesting that there were ghost votes. There had been no ghost vote. Believe me, the reading clerk becomes so accustomed to the call—we did in those days—that it would have been very difficult for anybody to cheat on it, very difficult.

[A 5-minute, 51-second segment of the interview has been redacted.][22]

But I have some very interesting correspondence with Speaker John McCormack later, and he asked me, met me in the lobby the day after this thing blew up and said, "Joe," the House was adjourned and he was on his way to the men's room, and he said, "Joe, how could this have happened?" I said, "I can tell you how it could have happened." "Would you please prepare me a brief on this?" So I went back upstairs and worked on a report. No names, just the mechanics of calling the roll and where the weak points were, where something like this could happen. It obviously pointed to people, but it did not name a name. And I took it back down to the Speaker's Office and told one of his assistants that I had something that the Speaker wanted. And he said, "Well, I'll give it to him." "No, the Speaker asked me to bring it to him." "Well, that's my job." And he insisted that I give this report to him. And at the bottom of the report, I said, "If you want me to elucidate on this, I'd be glad to." In other words, this is the mechanics of it. And so I ended up very reluctantly turning it over to this assistant who's supposed to deliver it to the Speaker. And I waited. I greeted the Speaker the next day, waiting for him to say something and he didn't. I waited days for him to say something and he didn't. Didn't thank me, didn't say anything. So after he left office, at one point I got very curious and I wrote to him and said, "You

know, I've always been curious as to why there wasn't a follow-up on the report I gave to you." He wrote back in his own long hand and he gave me the dickens. He said, "I never saw that report. If I had, there would have been a follow-up." What a revelation!

Another thing had happened the evening after that first meeting with Frank Eleazer. Frank went back up and wrote the story and it was accurate. He called me and said, "I've got something I want you to see." We were on opposite sides of the gallery floor. I walked around. He pulled out of his file drawer his story and handed it to me to read. I sat down and read it. I said, "Frank, you're right on target. Everything you say here is accurate." But I said, "You love this House of Representatives as much as I do, do you really want to throw into jeopardy the confidence of the people in how their laws are made?" And Frank, who was a hard-bitten reporter, not a namby-pamby guy at all. Believe me, he was of the old school tough. So I was amazed when he looked at me rather seriously and just slipped that thing right back in the file drawer and it never was printed. Well, of course, then, on Thursday Drew Pearson had this horrible column, and it was completely wrong, but it broke the story. I was sick for Frank because Frank was right, and he was ready to file it and he would have gotten credit for having broken the story. I felt guilty. I'm quite sure Frank is deceased. He went to St. Petersburg, Florida, and was the political editor of the paper down there. But dead or alive, I have the utmost respect for Frank. I was to speak to a press meeting in Cleveland. And before I left, I went around to talk to Frank. I said, "Frank, I think what you did was very noble. Would you mind if I told this group that story?" "Oh, Joe, I hope you won't." He said, "They'll think I'm a poor newspaperman." So I didn't tell the story. As a matter of fact, this might be the first time I've ever told that story. But Frank was a good guy.

The compromise of the vote was a very serious thing. Ironically, I lost sleep over it. Now, I wasn't involved. As a matter of fact, of all of the hundreds of thousands of calls that I elicited and recorded, they would have loved to have been able to find at least an error, because that would have made it a bipartisan thing, no matter how the error had occurred, it would have still made it a bipartisan thing. And there were people very intent on making it a bipartisan thing. They found not a single error in all of my recordings. You think I haven't said a prayer over that? I mean it's just incredible. I'm not that perfect. But I was so pleased, so gratified, so relieved, to find out that there was nothing in there that anyone could point to as an error. And so honestly, I felt very keenly about this, yet the very people who did it, I didn't see them losing any sleep—I didn't see them being affected by it. And worse than that, worse than that, within weeks after that, they got a pay raise. They had been helping the right people, hadn't they? And it was sad. And to this day, that was the low mark of my congressional experience, because I think the vote is sacred. I think the carrying out the will of the people through their elected Representatives is just beyond any other consideration, any other value system. That's something you just don't in any way compromise.

So when I found out that it had been, deliberately so, and to a fairly large degree, I was crushed. And this is why, I think I told you in the previous session, that when they started talking about an electronic system, my only answer was that if it will restore credibility, then it's worth it. Otherwise, it isn't. There's nothing else to be gained from it. If that can be achieved, and unfortunately the results have been less than perfect. The degree to which the earlier votes may have been corrupted is something that no one—if they ever looked into it, they didn't share it with me. And I have always been

suspicious that there probably were some close votes that should have been studied very carefully. But now, that was '68, it's a long time ago, nearly 40 years ago, and it still affects me a little bit to even talk about it.

I'm still in touch with Tom Cooke [tally clerk at the time of the ghost voting scandal] occasionally and all I can say is there was no larceny in his heart. Whatever he did—very religious fellow I might add, naturally being the nephew of the Cardinal [Cooke]—but he was so innocent of guilt, yet he was the one who had to take the rap. The others got away with it. The real culprits got away with it, with a pay raise. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Up until this point I've been asking you to focus on your years as reading clerk and your time before that. But today I was hoping you could explain how you made the jump from reading clerk to Minority Clerk.

BARTLETT: Well, there's a bit of a story that goes with that. There had been a vacancy for Minority Clerk in the spring of, I think, 1957. Representative Clarence [J.] Brown, Sr. of Ohio got in touch with me and said I should consider running. Clarence Brown was a real formidable Member of the House, a powerful Member. He knew how to use power. He also was shrewd as the dickens, but he could have picked up the phone and known within a minute whether I was the right candidate for the job at that time. He didn't. He told me some people to go see. He told me to go see Clare [Eugene] Hoffman, among others. And I'll never forget my interview with Clare Hoffman.

Clare Hoffman was a friend of mine. He was not given to close friendships. But he was a very capable man, a good lawyer. So when I went in to see him,

it was very cordial because we were on excellent terms. I asked him if he would support me if I ran for the job. He answered, "No, I won't support you. I think that job should go to a," and he listed a group of negatives that you wouldn't believe, "no good SOB" and the most unflattering characteristics. He actually wanted the job to go to a vicious agent of partisan skullduggery. And he said, "I don't think you qualify." {laughter} I said, "Thank you, Mr. Hoffman. I'm awfully pleased to know you don't think I have those qualifications." {laughter}

JOHNSON: An unusual compliment.

BARTLETT: An unusual compliment. But, what I found out later is that he was already committed to Harry Brookshire. Harry had worked for Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield from Michigan under Eisenhower. I found out that the Postmaster General had already contacted Hoffman as the senior Member of the Michigan delegation and made his commitment to Harry Brookshire. And I think he thought Harry did qualify. {laughter} I'm mixing up a couple of events.

Bill Bonsell quit as a Sergeant at Arms in the spring of 1969. In this instance, I had the support. There wasn't much question about it. Representative Frank [Townsend] Bow, of Ohio, ranking member of the Appropriations Committee was really in my corner. So Mr. Bow, God rest his soul, he was a dear, dear friend, a very effective guy, but he came to me in the Speaker's Lobby and said, "Joe, I just talked to Jerry Ford," and he said, "He would like for you to pass on this one. He would like Bob Hartmann [Representative Ford's legislative assistant] to have that job [Sergeant at Arms]." He said, "This is to relieve him of payroll and give Hartmann entry

to the House Floor," and all of these things. He said, "Joe, you've got the job, it's up to you whether or not you want to press for this." I listened to Mr. Bow and he was such a good counselor. He said, "Joe, I'm not telling you to withdraw because you've got the job if you want it." But he said, "I think you'd really make yourself—you'd be doing Gerald Ford a big favor—he's told me as much." And he said, "I think you'd gain an obligation there." So I said, "Mr. Bow, if you think it's a good idea for me to back away from this, I'd be glad to do it. Whatever you say, you're the boss." And he said, "Well, I think you might be well served to do it. Jerry Ford is back there in the back row right now. Go back there and tell him." He said, "I won't do it, you do it." So I went back to see Mr. Ford. And, oh boy, he put his arm around my shoulder and he was just ecstatic. "Oh Joe, I appreciate this so much." He said, "Now, there's going to be a vacancy," (he had already told Mr. Bow this). "There's going to be a vacancy in the office of Minority Clerk." How he knew this, I'll never know. How he knew it because the way it unfolded, I don't see how he could have anticipated it. But he said it. He said, "There's going to be a vacancy in the office of Minority Clerk." And he said, "That'll be your job." He said, "I'll support you for it." Well, I said thank you and we both left very cordially. And he was absolutely overjoyed the job had been fixed for Bob. And Bob was elected the next day or two.

Then in October, or early November of that year, Harry Brookshire, without any notice to anybody, and in some state of displeasure—I never knew quite what he was upset about, but he was upset. And he quit. He retired. His wife had a good job on one of the committees and the two of them had a good retirement. But Harry quit. He didn't live long enough to really enjoy his retirement, but he was around awhile. So here now is a vacancy. So I go to Mr. Bow, and everybody just assumed Joe is going to be elected Minority

Clerk. But mysteriously, they won't even call a conference to hold the election. Well, now they're up to some mischief. Pair clerk Walt Kennedy has thrown his hat in the ring and worse than that, our friend Les [Leslie Cornelius] Arends has brought in from Illinois, Bob Bradford, who was a Republican state chairman out there. Bob had formerly worked for Representative Dick [Richard Harding] Poff of Virginia, and I knew him quite well. I also knew his reputation quite well. Bob was a very bright, a very gregarious fellow, a very popular fellow. {laughter} I'll leave it go at that. He had gone out to Illinois, I was told initially, to get away from his complications here. And now he gets out there and I gather he found some more complications because Les Arends now wants to get out of Illinois. And his choice is to get him into the Minority Clerk's job, which was now vacant and apparently Arends had enough influence with Ford, to lean on him, to get Ford to back off his support for me, which needless to say, was a real bad moment in my life because I believed him. He certainly pledged his support. And he pledged it to Mr. Bow. Mr. Bow was very upset because it was just simply a contradiction of his word. {laughter} So they wouldn't hold a conference for the purpose of election in November or December or January or February or March or April. It was May before they allowed that thing to come to a conference. By now, you have a lot of people upset. People—not only my friends—but people who are upset with the way Ford and Arends are behaving.

JOHNSON: So for this whole period, there was no Minority Clerk.

BARTLETT: That's right. That's right. Well, when they came and brought it to a vote, of course, I wasn't there, but it was a secret ballot, as the rules then called for. And the nominations came from the floor, as it was called for, and

Representative Bill [William Edwin] Minshall, [Jr.] made my nomination. On the first vote, nobody had the majority. But Bob Bradford had 12 votes.

[A 2-minute, 2-second segment of the interview has been redacted at the request of the interviewee.][23]

There were also some other things. I know this was all confidential. So I kept it that way. I've had some correspondence with Bob Hartmann about this and he disagrees. I had a little office on the floor. The only office there; it measured 10 by 13. The Minority Leader [Ford] came in every day and would sign mail on my desk or make a phone call or ask me to call Betty [his wife] and get her on the phone. He used it, and I was glad, because he should have, but it was my office. And I had it fixed up, thanks to the Clerk's Office, very nicely. But at the time that they were looking for a Vice President, a secret poll was conducted of the Republican Members of the House. Les Arends and Bob Hartmann collected those. Bob Hartmann collected the votes, the ballots, whatever they would call them. And the two appeared in my little office one day and I was there. I was incidental to being there, but it was my office, so I was there. They had a shoe box and they had counted the votes. And I will go to my grave telling you what I believe to be true, that that poll, and they said as much, that that poll showed a favorable vote for George [Herbert Walker] Bush Sr., who was then Republican National Chairman. I heard the comments. I heard their concern, their consternation. But the next thing that I heard was the shoebox had been delivered to the White House, which showed that Gerald Ford won the vote. Now, Bob insists that that was the vote and that he carried it to the White House. If I didn't think I was making a valid contribution to history, I wouldn't be telling that story because frankly Les Arends is dead. There's

nobody else around. Bob Hartmann insists on his story. I'm just as insistent and just as assured of my account.[24]

JOHNSON: Did you hear any feedback about the poll from Members of the party that thought that there was something wrong with it?

BARTLETT: I can tell you, there were Members who supported Ford. This is an awful thing to say, but I can even give you the names of Members who supported Ford for Vice President, to get him out of the House leadership. That's sad too. But that's all right. As a matter of fact, one of them who said that very thing to me ended up being a floor manager for Ford at the 1976 convention, so you know, people are flexible and unpredictable. These are the vicissitudes of politics. People do things that are erratic, unfathomable, but they do them. This is why when you encounter someone who plays their life straight, it's really very, very heartening. Paul [Bartram] Dague and the people like that, you just admire them so much, because they have the same temptations, they have the opportunities, the same as anybody else. And it's how they deal with those.[25]

Speaking of keeping one's word, did I mention that with respect to the late Speaker John McCormack? He had a real obsession with his word being his bond. Some people do. This may have come out of the [James Michael] Curley tradition in Boston where you just don't violate your word.[26] But it was beautiful to see him do it, where I sat there at the rostrum. A Member would come in and he would call him up and say, "Now, I promised you that I would do this. And I will do that, but I want you to know I'm under a great deal of pressure from this other side and they would like for me to do something else. But I'm with you, I made my pledge. You can count on it.

But I just wanted you to know about these various pressures." You know what would happen. Invariably, the Member would say, "Well, it isn't that important to me. I don't want to put you in a difficult position. If you feel it's necessary to do it—go ahead John. It's all right." {laughter}

I've also seen it the other way. John would say, "Listen, this means something to you and it's yours, I have no intention of changing my pledge." He had a second thing that was exceedingly honorable. He was not a young man, but if a Member had a problem, if his wife was sick or died, or a child was hospitalized, the first person over to the House Office Building to knock on that door was Speaker McCormack. Amazing. He had that tremendous sensitivity about personal things that happened that affected the individual. And, of course, he made friends forever because of the way he felt about them. And I just simply admired both of those characteristics, and they are not characteristics one gets to witness often enough. Okay, I wanted to not fail to mention those two things because they are unusual. And I just thought the world of John McCormack's living that kind of a life.

JOHNSON: Well, I certainly want to go back to your time as minority officer, in part because there's been very little written on your position. Can you describe an average day while you were Minority Clerk?

BARTLETT: On an average day, I would come in as early as was necessary to get prepared for the day's session. I usually took a breakfast break at about 10:30, for the simple reason that there was no time for a lunch break. And I would go down usually to the staff table in the House Restaurant. It gave me an opportunity to mingle with some people that I needed to share with. It was

usually a second breakfast rather than a lunch. They took good care of us down there and that was a pleasant thing to do.

Then I would go back up and assemble the documents for that day's activity, whatever would be coming up, so that I had the report and I had the calendar and the *Congressional Record*, which I had hoped by that time I would have looked through and made sure there wasn't something that I ought to be aware of, and the committees that were meeting, so that I would know who to expect or where they would be. I assembled a list of locaters for all of the Members. It was kind of funny, I don't think anybody else has done quite the same thing. Maybe the leader did, but not in those days. So I asked the Members to tell me private things about who I could contact if I couldn't reach them at this place or that place, who and what their secretary's number was and what the other organization's number was. I had a real good list. And most Members were very cooperative. Of course, I had to tell them in advance that it would be guarded—nobody else would get it. And nobody else ever got it. If anybody wanted to locate a Member, I would tell them to get me, I would try to reach the Member and get him to call the party. But I did not give out names or numbers, no matter who it was. I didn't.

There was one time, one Member who wouldn't give me his information, wouldn't give me anything. Well, it was kind of funny. He had a committee assignment that caused the *Today Show* to want to reach him. And they called me—that wasn't surprising because I had pretty close contact with the [House] Radio-Television Correspondents Gallery—and they called me and wanted to know if I had a locator. So I said, "No, I've never been entrusted with any locator for him." {laughter} The next day when that Member came

in, I said, "The *Today Show* was trying to reach you last evening, I tried awfully hard to reach you." The next day I had his locator. {laughter}

But no, I kept that. I felt that was a pretty helpful part of my job. The little room there on the floor was extremely useful. The Members frequented it. I had a typewriter. I had several Members who would come in and type their own amendments or ask me to type one for them. And that was a facility that I was able to use effectively. I had a fair amount of filed resources. I simply made myself available.

One of the things that evolved during that time was this electronic voting system. It was computerized. We went from electronic to a computerized system. There were evolutions there. And the computer system had the capability of breaking it down by party, by state, by sex—it could give you all kinds of statistics. And the leaders were not really computer ready. Mr. Ford—it was almost funny at the time because I would get a print out and I would put it in front of him at the table thinking that this print out would be something that he would immediately want to go over. It was strange to him. He was not comfortable with it. He would immediately throw it aside. It never got any study. I say this with kindness because quite frankly, this was so new that people just didn't know what to make of it. And it took a long time for us to learn to utilize it. A bit later, Mr. [John Jacob] Rhodes decided that he wanted all of this.

JOHNSON: He was Minority Leader after President Ford.

BARTLETT: He was the Minority Leader. I would provide a lot of that information. There was no evidence that it was utilized to any degree. But it was there.

The thing about it, Mr. Rhodes, prior to his being elected Minority Leader, had been regarded as rather independent. He had not been regarded as a Republican regular by many of the Members. The so-called discipline, we had known at different times didn't take place. From my standpoint, he was a very uninspiring leader. He had a superego that needed to be bolstered, constantly, and that was a role that others did a lot better than I. That wasn't my way of doing things.

JOHNSON: As a Minority Clerk, did you fall under the jurisdiction of the Minority Leader?

BARTLETT: Good question Kathleen, good question. When I ran for it, things were different. I was an officer of the Republican Conference. I was nominated by the Republican Conference, I was elected by the minority conference and I defeated the Minority Leader's candidate. This was totally unacceptable to some people. So I was elected six times by secret ballot, if the ballot was necessary, but I was elected six times to that position. Somewhere halfway through there, under Rhodes, it was declared that this was intolerable. And the word was passed—John Williams [staff director for Representative Rhodes] was quoted as saying, "We can't let that terrible thing happen again." Meaning, we cannot elect a staff officer who is not the nominee or not the candidate of the leader.

They changed the rules of the conference, so that the leader nominates, not the conference. The conference can elect them. If they don't elect the leader's nominee, they go back to the leader for another nomination. So he becomes a Member, an employee, a staffer, a subordinate, of the leader, which is a very unfortunate thing. I don't care who the personalities are, that

has nothing to do with it. It was to the advantage of the party and advantage of the House of Representatives to have that nominee chosen by the conference to be an officer of the conference. Just like I think it would be for the Clerk of the House, who would not want to be only a subordinate of the Speaker. And it's the same principle exactly. The Clerk of the House should be the choice of the House, the choice of the majority conference. And if anybody understood that. But they didn't. They don't. John Rhodes did not understand that.

JOHNSON: Did this transition also take place for the other minority officers?

BARTLETT: Yes. Yes. All of them.

JOHNSON: Since I just asked about Officers, and you mentioned the Clerk of the House. One of the questions I was interested in was your relationship with the Clerks at the time. There were two Clerks, [William] Pat Jennings and Ted Henshaw during your tenure as Minority Clerk. Can you describe your relationship with them and your working relationship?

BARTLETT: Well, not as good as it had been with South Trimble. {laughter} No. Ted was a very nice guy, highly partisan. He had grown up in that. He was very pleasant. We were good friends, but always at arm's length, because he saw his role as a partisan role. Pat Jennings, he was so busy fighting Wayne Hays and the House Administration Committee—I had pleasant relations with him, but I didn't have many dealings with him. I can't ever remember sitting down with Pat Jennings and saying, "Here's something, for the good of the House." I can't ever remember doing that. But I never had an unpleasant

word with him. Never, ever, anything that would suggest that there was anything but cordiality. But I didn't have a working relationship with him.

Previously, I had worked very closely with Ben Guthrie, because I had thought that Ben, having come from the Government Printing Office—I thought organization was probably something he would understand. Some of the things we agreed upon—I made reference to this earlier, he abandoned when he became Clerk. He must have done it under pressure from somebody else because I know that he knew there were things that needed to be done. I had an extremely cordial relationship with Ben, and when he was in the assistant's office to the Clerk's Office, we accomplished quite a bit. Routine, but I worked with him very closely and enjoyed doing it. I don't know if there's anything I can add to that Kathleen.

JOHNSON: Well, from what you're saying, it sounds like you had separate agendas, separate job descriptions, you didn't have joint projects that you worked on together: the Minority Clerk and the Clerk of the House.

BARTLETT: Not during those two periods, that would be true. That would be true. I have always felt that the clerical staff members were a real asset to the Clerk's Office, whomever that Clerk is. The Clerk's Office, I don't have to tell you, has changed so much. I lament that. I really do. I would have liked to have seen it grow in meaning and power and prestige. That didn't happen, and perhaps someday the worm will turn again. I hope it does. The various Clerks, if they're competent, are in a position to provide useful service and ought to be treated in that sense. Directions shouldn't come down from above. It's unfortunate when it does, in the sense that they shouldn't be told how to do certain things. They should be asked, "What's the best way to do

this?" Because they are in a position to know. And I'm awfully sorry that they've turned their old office into a kids' playroom on the third floor gallery level and exiled the various clerks down to the bowels of the terrace because, just as with the Clerk himself, I had said how important I thought it was that the Clerk be readily accessible to the Speaker, and to the House. I've always felt that the Clerk staff's functions were important enough that the consideration for their accessibility ought to be a high priority.

And I felt the same way when they abandoned the document room and some of these other rooms. I think it's sad because the person doing that doesn't put a very high value on the facilities, the tools of legislation. That's what's needed. But bear in mind, I know that I'm of a different era. And I know that my era has passed. But these are basics. If I were advising people to this day, I would point out that the product of this institution is legislation, and anything that facilitates meaningful, intelligent, useful legislation is something that we all ought to be intent upon doing over and above any other consideration. But that doesn't always get the attention. And there are people who don't understand that. They are often in a position to help make decisions which then affect everybody, and the way we govern.

JOHNSON: Well, it seems like a good moment to pause so I can switch CDs.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: Previously, I asked you about an average day as a Minority Clerk and was hoping you could elaborate a little bit on some of your responsibilities.

BARTLETT: Again, I just happened to be at the highest level there among the staffers, the hired hands. And my job was to facilitate the process, to accommodate and support the Members in every way that I could. Fortunately, I did have some resources, with the little office that I had there on the floor and the records that I had in there. I was able to provide a lot of legislative support. And that was what I did. I mentioned earlier that I tried to keep very close touch with where the Members were so that I could alert them to the fact that there was a need for them on the floor. That was something that would occur almost every day. A piece of legislation or amendment was going to be coming up in which an individual had an interest, and they're not here. So getting them there and getting them up to speed on what had happened before they arrived, that was what I did. And I was supported in that by the other staff members over there. There were other very capable staff members there who not only provided information to me but carried out the things that needed to be done thereafter.

JOHNSON: Did you have your own staff?

BARTLETT: No. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Or was this of the Republican Conference?

BARTLETT: Thank you. Good question. No. There was so much autonomy that only a few really responded in that role, but those few were very, very capable. I think of the Ron Laschs and the Tom Winebrenners [longtime House Floor staff], and others who were very supportive, highly capable in their own right and in a sense provided a very informal team. I think, Kathleen, I had mentioned that I had prepared organizational plans for the minority staff and

that I had done my very best to institute some degree of organization there. The formality of it was never accepted by the leaders, by whom it would have had to have been accepted in order to put it into play. The cooperation I got was individual and among some of those individuals it was very satisfactory and very gratifying, very—I would have to say synergistic. We did more than we would have done if we were operating as individuals. Again, the cloakroom, the Page bench, the services that they provided, the people within there were very responsive to my wishes. Again, I had no authority that was given specifically by the leader to the Minority Clerk unfortunately. It would have been far better if I had had that sort of support. But as [Clarence J.] Bud Brown said, as I told you he said, "Politicians are paranoid, but I'm not, am I?" I think that there's a truth to that. There's a paranoia that they simply did not want the staff to have an organization that might represent a power base. I understand that. I think they're wrong. I think they're always the boss, no matter what else is going on. There was that sense.

I remember, heck, I had beat the power structure to get the job so, I guess I was a little suspect from the word go. But again, I had excellent relations with so many people. My relationship with the Members, it was good. It was good. I have so many friends among them, who remember, who still communicate their respects and appreciation. And I had lunch last week with Bill [William S.] Broomfield and his wife. Bill has some awfully nice things to say, and I appreciate that. He's still fighting my election [to Congress] of 1980, he wants a recount even yet. {laughter}

JOHNSON: When you ran for Congress?

BARTLETT: I don't want to sound maudlin, but, you know, what a privilege I have had. Someone calculated that I served over 2,000 Members. And my sense of service didn't really change from the time I was a Page until the time I was a Minority Clerk. I always felt so fortunate to have the opportunity to be a useful influence, if possible, on what went on here. But I have always counted my blessings. Now, I say my attitude didn't change because in a sense, I tried to not miss an opportunity to serve. That was the sort of thing that South Trimble's Joe got noticed and was appreciated for. That same attitude never changed. The irony was I served every Member. I didn't care which side of the aisle he was on. If I could provide a service to somebody, I did. I've still got a lot of friends who respond from the other side. I'm not talking about doing anything that would be a disservice to my membership. Of course that's not what I'm talking about. But if it was an accommodation, if it was a friendly service that I could provide, I was tickled to have the opportunity to do it.

I did have, and do have, although by golly, that's the sad part, my numbers are—when I was over at Arlington Cemetery here the other day and there's one little patch of former Members and it was really terribly emotional to walk in this one little area over there where so many Members—back when the Members had no problem getting space over there. It was an emotional walk.

Among those people I ran across the grave of Charlie [Charles Edward] Wiggins of California. It was coincidental. The House was considering the extension of the Voting Rights Act. And when I was Minority Clerk and Charlie Wiggins was a senior member on the Judiciary Committee and we had up another one of the extensions of the Voting Rights Act. I went down

to Charlie at the committee table and said, "Charlie, tell me, am I wrong? This just doesn't look like a good piece of legislation to me. To think that five states have been singled out to be supervised by the Department of Justice. There's no equity there. It seems unconstitutional to me. It certainly seems improper." I said, "Am I wrong?" And Charlie Wiggins, one of the best lawyers in the House and certainly on the Judiciary, he said, "No." He says, "Joe, you're right. But politically, it's compelling. We just have no choice. We've got to renew this bill." And I thought what a shame, what a shame.

If you have a piece of legislation because of its sensitivity, have to perpetrate a wrong upon the people of five states of this nation. But that represents the kind of relationship we had. He would never have said that to anybody else. That was something he was telling me and if I hadn't just visited his grave I might not even be repeating it. But he was a good man and a good lawyer. I felt justified. I felt fortified in my position that he had been willing to say, "You're right, that's not good legislation. You're right."

JOHNSON: While you were Minority Clerk, a major national event occurred involving the House of Representatives, the impeachment hearings of President Nixon by the Judiciary Committee. Can you describe your recollections of these 1974 hearings?

BARTLETT: I had a lot of contact with different members of the committee and different friends of Richard Nixon. I think about the different Members and their attitudes at that time. My daughter was interning at the White House at that time. So she had very close relationship with the family and has remained very close to Julie. But there was a lot of feeling that he was not . . .

Incidentally, I had a very good conversation with President Nixon out at San Clemente. That would have been in 1977. Had a good meeting with him largely on the subject of some of this. I'm sure that's too involved to get deeply into it. But I have always felt that there were Members of the House who had prior information as to what was in the tapes, the so-called "smoking guns" and had it before the committee ever started the impeachment hearings. That is another story, Kathleen, I'm not sure how deep we ought to get into it.

President Nixon didn't disagree with me, when I outlined how I thought the root of that had been. But {laughter} this is a bit involved. I watched every day. I watched Peter [Wallace] Rodino, [Jr.] and Jack [Bascom] Brooks and Tip O'Neill gather in front of the desk over there before the House met. And they had this jolly little conference where it was obvious—they were like cats that just swallowed the canary. And it was so obvious what they were plotting, and so gleefully that it was hard for me to watch. But I did. And I've never had the slightest doubt. And I've never had the slightest doubt that they knew how that whole scenario was going to end. It was just a matter of playing the mouse until the end.

JOHNSON: Many scholars have commented in retrospect that they think that the hearings could have turned into a partisan affair, that they didn't, that it was handled by Chairman Rodino and Members on both sides, in both parties very seriously. They understood the importance, historically speaking and it didn't turn into a bitter partisan affair. Do you think that's a fair assumption?

BARTLETT: Well, I think it's a fair assumption. But I'm not going to give credit where those historians would give the credit. I'll give the blame to the Republicans who abandoned ship so early and so readily, the so-called smoking gun. And I'm not condoning for one minute some of the—I ought to get off of this subject because it gets involved. The President's role in this—what he did afterward to try and cover it up, to try to—there's no way you're going to justify that. But he was so involved in dealing with China and Russia at that time, and he had not known, he had not known about Watergate. The people, Chuck Colson [special counsel to President Nixon] and company and the "plumbers," who did what they did, they didn't have direct authorization.

However, to throw in one quickie, you never heard a complaint from Larry O'Brien [chairman of the Democratic National Committee], not one time, about what they did at Watergate, and that was his office. The reason he didn't, among other reasons, was it was a rather common practice to engage in mischief between political parties and there had been some on both sides. But the President was so anxious to sweep the thing under the rug. He wanted to get on with his international accomplishments, which were phenomenal, which—he will have been robbed by history of what a phenomenal thing he and Henry Kissinger put together, it was just be unbelievable. Nobody else could have done it. If a Democratic President had done what he did, they would have been crucified. He was in the position to do it and did it. But the idea of resolving Watergate the way he suggested was wrong, unfortunate and no matter what else I would say, it would not be to condone that.

JOHNSON: What kind of impact do you think the hearings and the aftermath of Watergate had on the institution?

BARTLETT: Well, of course it's unique in history. There's never been anything quite like it. The Johnson impeachment and none of the others were of this nature. It set an unfortunate precedent. I suspect that impeachment proceedings will be much more readily brought against future Presidents than they were in the past because of that and I think that part is too bad. We talked earlier about power and how the competition for power between the three branches is something that goes on constantly and by impeaching a President, that certainly raised the power quotient of Congress at that time and in that sense. They were proud of that. They were talking about an imperial presidency. They didn't talk about that very much after they had voted an impeachment.

I'm sure history has recorded the visits of the most loyal Members to the White House the night before President Nixon indicated he was going to quit. And there were still some loyalists. We've got a picture of Mrs. Nixon posing with John Rhodes in which she said, "Have John stand beside me, let's pretend we're friends," or something to that effect. There were people whose role in expediting the impeachment move, the Republicans who were never regarded quite the same. It's a very bad, sad, sad, sad period. As I've said earlier in our review, I had a tremendous respect for the abilities, the intellect of Richard Nixon. And it was real sad for me to see his public service concluded as it was.

JOHNSON: Was your role as Minority Clerk diminished at all with the influx of the Watergate Babies, the new Democrats that came in, in 1975?

BARTLETT: My work was a lot less, I had a lot fewer people to take care of, in a hurry. It was an interesting time to observe the kind of people who were brought in by that tidal wave. Many of them only lasted one term because they were sort of political accidents. That happens often—wasn't only then, it just happened to be a time when an awful lot of them were swept into office and were amazed to find themselves a Congressman.

But just as I had mentioned earlier about Joe Martin responding to the defeat of '48 with such a positive point of view and the fact that four years later, Eisenhower was re-elected. I felt in '74, there was a good deal of that on the part of a few people who were far-sighted, had vision that this was something from which we would recover if we did what was right. There's an irony in the Ford role. There was a lot of favorable publicity. I remember *Parade Magazine* one time, referred to him as "Everybody's Mr. Nice Guy," and that was sort of the image that he had, sort of an all-American politician. So that was a healing influence upon it. What he did in pardoning Nixon, I think was not a mistake. I think the pardoning of Nixon was absolutely essential, but he did it in the wrong way, and did it in a typical Gerald Ford way. He thought by doing it on Sunday morning and sort of slipping it out unnoticed, that he could get away with it. It was exactly the wrong thing to do. Had he done it on Friday evening and justified it to the press and let them go to the Sunday papers with it, it would have been a totally different story. But this is, unfortunately, fairly much in character for him.

I'll tell you another inside story here real quick. When I met with President Nixon in San Clemente we talked about a lot of things, but we got to talking about Ford's lack of compassion at times. This was a strange thing, I mentioned that Mr. McCormack would run to the building the minute there

was a problem. On the other hand, I would go to the floor and tell Mr. Ford that a Member's wife had been hospitalized or something, expecting him to send me to go around to see Frank Meyer [his administrative assistant] and have Frank Meyer send flowers or something. Instead, he didn't even acknowledge that I was saying something that required a compassionate response. So President Nixon and I were talking about this. I don't remember whether he brought it up or I brought it up. It doesn't really matter at this point. But this was all on audio. At one moment, President Nixon reached over to the end table beside his chair and picked up a microphone and silently waved it at me to tell me that we were being recorded. We are being recorded. Okay. We were recorded. And it was Saturday. The only other person around was an unseen Secret Service agent. This particular conversation would sound terribly offensive to the man who undoubtedly figured he lost the presidency because of his compassion for the person who is here discussing his insensitivity! And this conversation got back to President Ford almost immediately. (This may have had something to do with President Nixon discontinuing the services of the Secret Service.) Other conversations about Members of the House got back to Washington before I did.

Sometime later I took my friend, Stuart Knight, the retired director of the Secret Service, to a very private lunch at the Capitol Hill Club, with the intention of asking him what he thought about these breaches of security. When I finished my story, he roared with laughter. Then he caught himself, and very quickly said, "Oh no, Joe, they wouldn't do that." I said, "Stu, you already answered my question." Isn't that some story? Crazy. But again, the things that we talked about out there, I might not initiate the conversation, but I would not have been reluctant to say the same thing to President Ford,

but I didn't like to have somebody else say it to him and that's what happened. He reacted very badly I might add. There was evidence of it later and I've often wondered how he reacted when he talked to President Nixon. {laughter}

JOHNSON: I can probably imagine that response.

BARTLETT: I do wonder. He is not somebody who can keep a secret, as I've mentioned. What he feels. As a matter of fact, I marveled at his relations with President [James Earl (Jimmy)] Carter. He must have disliked President Reagan very much for him to keep this cordial relationship with Carter because it isn't like him. Carter defeated him. It isn't like him to forgive and forget. He doesn't. He doesn't. But they both disliked Ronald Reagan so much, that it must have driven them together. People are funny and that's just one of them.

Again, I'm very pleased that I've had good relations with all of them but I've never had a discussion yet with Ford. He's 93 now. I probably never will. When I ran for Congress in '80, he came into West Virginia but gave me no endorsement, although in writing I had an endorsement, and had used it. That may not have been pleasing to him. It appeared in the paper, the endorsement was quite good. But he made a speech in Charleston [West Virginia] in my presence and didn't say, "Vote for Joe Bartlett." He also didn't say vote for any of the Republicans in the state. There were four, I think, candidates for Congress there that night, and he did not endorse any of them, which upset their wives something terribly. He only endorsed Arch [Alfred] Moore, [Jr.]. We all know about Arch. By golly, you've got a

different story there all the way around. But people are funny and these cross currents make for a very interesting life. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Let's switch gears before we run out of time. In an earlier session, you spoke of a series of Marine Corps breakfasts that you organized.

BARTLETT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Was this an annual event?

BARTLETT: This was a monthly event. I've got some material that I'm going to give you on that subject that is rather rich in congressional relations. It tells about a period of the post-World War II types. We organized in July of 1953, with the help of Congressman Paul Dague and Senator Francis [Higbee] Case, largely. And it was a robust organization. We had a very large Marine membership. Now we have very few. Very few who have worn any uniform. But at that time we had a fantastically fraternal group. The whole story will be available to you. I think you'll find it very interesting. And in the early '60s General [Wallace M.] Greene was chief of staff and then the Commandant of the Marine Corps for a period, and his participation with this group of Congressmen, through the congressional marines, was fantastic. He was a thoroughly enjoyable social thing but it can't have hurt his interests in sustaining the Marine Corps because it was a marvelous relationship that he had. He built up a reservoir of good will that all of the other commandants have been using ever since. He was just that kind of a man. That's also told in this little account thing that I have prepared for you. I'm going to put together a number of documents which you can deal with as you please, but that's one of them that I've put aside for that purpose.

JOHNSON: Did this organization include staff and Members?

BARTLETT: The Members were the members of the organization. The staff were guests, and they were regular guests. They were always invited. But we made sure they understood that the Members were the members. That was so important to the success of the organization. Members don't want to be diluted with too many staff. Also, we kept to few the number of people who you might call lobbyists, even if they were former Members, we were very careful that they understood the nature of the group. We had a fellow who was promoting the Boy Scouts, at one point. He wanted to leave some Boy Scouts stuff around the table. No way. We weren't against the Boy Scouts, but we didn't want the Members to feel used. We had very few uniforms. A general from headquarters might get invited once a year, not once a month. I had some who didn't understand that. We tried to make it clear why we limited the number of uniforms because if it appeared to be a Marine Corps activity, the Members wouldn't come.

And when we first organized it, General Lemuel Shepherd was the Commandant and Colonel [James] Hittle, put me up to call him and ask him if he would come to this Marine breakfast, the first one, July of '53. He said he had tried to get the Members down to the Commandant's house to have a steak dinner and nobody came. With some skepticism, he said that he would come to breakfast, and I promised him that we would have a good gathering. Well, about 50 to 60 came that first time and it was a complete success all the way around, which, of course, was a great relief. I figured I would be hung from the yard arm if it weren't. And it was just a lot of fun.

We had at that time some really bright Members. Don [Donald Lester] Jackson of California, had been a public relations man, he was so scintillating. He had stories, Marine Corps sea stories. As General Wilson said the other day, "His stories were of times that never were and never will be," {laughter} which wasn't necessarily true. But no, we had a marvelous group and it continued. I mothered it for 25 years. And 25 years later I threw a heck of a big breakfast on the land over around the Iwo Jima Memorial [in Washington, D.C.]. We had a field kitchen brought in. We had a breakfast in the field and a huge number of members there, not only marines but friends of marines who wanted to come and at that point I said, "Okay, 25 years, this is as much as I can give to this." It has not been the same. It still exists, but it's not the same.

JOHNSON: In conducting some research, one of my colleagues came across a group that was called the 9,999th Air Force Reserve Squadron of the Capitol. Do you have any insight on this group?

BARTLETT: I don't know what I'm free to say. Barry [Morris] Goldwater was key to that. They did a couple of things that I think were mistakes. They welcomed into their number, reserve Air Force people who were not congressional staffers, some of whom had special interests in mind. Then they did a second thing, because they had lots of airplanes, when they did their annual reserve stint, they'd send one airplane in one direction and another airplane in another direction, so they were a really mobile traveling group, junketing group. And that got some bad publicity. Of course, Secretary [of Defense Robert] McNamara was very skeptical about the group. He was skeptical about all our groups. We had a Navy-Marine Corps Reserve group at the same time, 5-48—and I said at the time that I would invite Secretary McNamara into

any drill we had because they were all business—Heck, I would have paid—we were not a paid unit—but I would have paid just to get those Thursday morning briefings. They were excellent. They kept me abreast of things that I felt I had a need-to-know. I haven't felt as well briefed since. We had excellent briefers. The briefer of the Chief of Naval Operations would come over and give us a disposition of forces briefing on Thursday morning, at 7:30.

JOHNSON: This was for Members that were Marines?

BARTLETT: Yes, this was for Members and staff who were reserve officers.

JOHNSON: Okay. How long did this group exist for? Do you remember? Because I know that the Air Force [Reserve Squadron] was formed in '61 and disbanded in 1965.

BARTLETT: That's about right. We [Marines reserve group] were before that. We probably started about '55 and abandoned in '65, by order of the Secretary of Defense.

JOHNSON: Did the other armed services have similar reserve groups? Or was it just the Marines and the Air Force, as far as you know?

BARTLETT: All services did. Marines-Navy, that was a composite company, Navy and the Marine Corps. Ours was under the command of Admiral [James Edward] Van Zandt, a Congressman from Pennsylvania. And Jimmy Van Zandt was so highly professional that really there was never any monkey business. Ours were strictly professional military briefings and he was

competent. He was succeeded by Congressman [William Somers] Mailliard of California, another admiral, and he too was very professional. And Major General Russell Blanford, who was on the House Armed Services Committee staff, another guy who was just all business. If Secretary McNamara had ever—in that day he was paranoid, suspicious that we were doing things that were inimical to their interests. Not so, ever, I never heard a single thing said in one of those meetings that would have caused him any concern at all. But somebody in that shop was determined. And there may be some justification for not having a reserve unit on Capitol Hill, there may be. That may not be the worst thing in the world. Those of us who were reserve officers up here at that time simply joined another unit. I formed a unit downtown and commanded the unit later on. It was probably all right. I'm not going to stand in judgment, but I must say, whatever he did, if it was done because of paranoia, they were wrong. Now I can't answer for the 9999—{laughter}—because they did things that were probably not in their own interest when they included people who were not staffers and included them on their trips. That didn't go over at all well.

JOHNSON: Well, we are just about finished with this interview, but I wanted to give you the opportunity to offer some advice for a new staff member or for someone that was thinking about working in the Capitol. What kind of advice would you offer them based on your very long and successful service here?

BARTLETT: Well, anyone who wants to enter into public service, who is motivated to serve the public, I say go for it. Bear in mind, it will not be financially rewarding, and that is something that one needs to understand. Fortunately, you won't starve to death either. As with any occupation, you'll be working with other people, some of whom will enrich your lives, and some of whom

will cause you distress. That's just human nature when you're working with people. But the opportunities for public service exist if you really want to extend yourself to do good things for your fellow man, the opportunities are there. They are very gratifying.

I think I use that word with respect to the accomplishments that I felt in particular as reading clerk. I felt as though I had come up against a real challenge and somehow or another dealt with it. That's a very good feeling. Well, anytime you can serve the public, bureaucracies are frustrating, by the very nature of their organization. The course from an idea to an accomplishment is often pretty rugged and often frustratingly difficult. And when that is the case, why, you've got to bear with what you have in your heart and what you really want to accomplish.

I would say to young people that democracy is worth serving. Representative government is an ideal that has more than justified itself in the last 200 years and to be a participant in it is very enriching. To have an opportunity to work with the elect of that process, there's just nothing like it. I've watched many people enter into government and be disappointed because of the things that I've outlined and frequently left for greener pastures as they viewed them. But my testimonial would be that having spent half a century and most of my life in the service of the Congress, I'm just so grateful that I've had that privilege. If I had it to do over again, I wouldn't change very much. It's been a great life. I don't think there's anything so unusual about my experience that couldn't be pretty well matched by somebody, or something of an eager beaver, who went after a life's work in this field. I think it's there waiting for them. Opportunity to serve your fellow man always seems to be there, if that's something that fulfills you.

JOHNSON: Is there anything else you wanted to add before we wrap up?

BARTLETT: I want to add one thing. I think you are terrific.

JOHNSON: Thank you.

BARTLETT: I think you've done a marvelous job with this. I don't know what the final product will be, but you certainly carried on your role with a great knowledge of the institution which impresses the heck out of me. I don't know how a young lady like you can have come by as much information as you obviously possess, but it's made it a lot easier for me to organize what little contribution I've been able to make because you obviously can condition my response by your knowledge and that's wonderful.

JOHNSON: Thank you.

BARTLETT: I'm indebted to you for your very fine work.

JOHNSON: This has been a wonderful experience, thank you.

NOTES

[1] George M. Brase served in World War I with Congressman Wright Patman. Mr. Brase and his wife, Ethel, helped Joe Bartlett attain his first appointment as a Page. According to Bartlett, a temporary spot opened when House Page Bill Patman (son of Congressman Patman) left Washington, D.C., to spend a month in his home state of Texas.

[2] Joe Bartlett later recalled that the reporter's name was Cecil Dickson.

[3] Reference to the temporary headquarters where Members of the House met from 1801 to 1804.

[4] Reference to Lincoln Memorial College of Harrogate, Tennessee.

[5] Reference to the German Air Force.

[6] General Bartlett subsequently requested an addition to his interview at this point of the transcript. It follows: "South Trimble died on November 23rd, 1946, and is buried in his native Kentucky, which had elected him to Congress for three terms at the turn of the century. Without a specific memory, I think we can assume that Mr. Trimble had become disabled in the summer of that year. There are so many official requirements on that office that the Speaker would have thought it prudent to give legal authority to his deputy [Megill] to act on his behalf, and without looking it up, I am sure the House passed such an authorizing resolution. With Harry Megill, those duties were in good hands. His authority was until the organization of the next Congress. As it turned out, the Republican 80th Congress [1947–1949]. That Congress elected a Clerk about whom we have not spoken: John Andrews of Massachusetts—a sterling gentleman in every sense, a fine cut of a man who walked the eight blocks down Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, from his residence, and brought to his job all the integrity and dignity of his illustrious predecessors. He enjoyed the confidence of Speaker Martin and the friendship of many. Andrews had been a World War I Marine, and when he died some four years later, he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, in a very ordinary grave. For reasons I cannot recall, I rode to his interment in a car with Congressman John McCormack. He, too, had great affection for Andrews. I remember him pointing to a little black insignia on his lapel and declaring that it was a high honor he was proud to share with John Andrews. They were Knights of Malta. And both were famous for honoring friendship. You will be interested to know that when Republican John Andrews was elected Clerk, he named H. Newlin Megill as his administrative assistant! And, of course, we know, Harry went on to similarly serve Clerks Ralph Roberts and Lyle Snader.

Incidentally, during the 80th Congress, Snader was clerk to the Rules Committee. After the 80th Congress I think he tried lobbying for a time. But in 1951 he was listed as assistant reading clerk and Irving Swanson, who had been assistant reading clerk, was now listed as Minority Clerk. I do not remember the mechanisms of this transition, but Snader's patron was the very powerful Chairman Leo Allen of Illinois, who was not reluctant to use power."

[7] Sid Yudain founded the Capitol Hill newspaper, *Roll Call*, and was instrumental in reviving the Congressional Baseball Game.

[8] On May 21, 1973, Felda Looper became the first female to serve as a Page in the House of Representatives.

[9] General Bartlett later recalled that the earlier versions of the "overstuffed lounges" were black leather.

[10] "Turnip Day" refers to a farmer's adage from Missouri, "On the 25th of July, sow your turnips, wet or dry." During the 1948 Democratic National Convention, President Harry S. Truman announced his intention to call Congress into a special session on "Turnip Day."

[11] Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Means of Ascent* (New York: Vintage, 1990): 17–18.

[12] The interviewee requested that the following statement replace the redacted segment: "This transmittal is performed by the reading clerks. They carry the matter to the Senate, where they are received by an officer of the Senate. Standing at the head of the center aisle with the Senate Secretary is, the presiding officer will announce: 'The Senate will receive a message.' The Secretary will respond: 'A message from the House of Representatives.' The reading clerk will bow and state: 'I am directed by the House to deliver to the Senate the enactment of H.R. so-and-so, providing for such-and-such, in which the concurrence of the Senate is requested.' And bowed again and handed the documents to the Secretary, and departed. I sometimes lingered for a brief visit with a friendly Senator, such as Prescott [Sheldon] Bush. He was high among a number of favorites."

[13] The interviewee asked that the following statement be appended to his response: "Ultimately, the concurrence of the two houses is committed to a document printed on large sheets of parchment paper and called the 'enrollment.' This document is signed by the presiding officers of the two houses and transmitted to the President for such disposition as he may be pleased make."

[14] William "Fishbait" Miller and Frances Spatz Leighton, *Fishbait: The Memoirs of the Congressional Doorkeeper* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977).
[15] Reference to the ventriloquist dummy puppet, Charlie McCarthy.
[16] The interviewee requested that the following statement replace the redacted segment: "We had a little organization composed of the Republican clerks to the various committees. It was known as the 'no name' club. We met regularly to discuss upcoming legislation and procedures. It was a very positive, useful organization. One of the organizers was Hyde Murray, son of the late Congressman Reid [Fred] Murray of Wisconsin, and a valued member of the staff of the Committee on Agriculture. When I retired, Hyde took my place on the staff. Most regrettably, Hyde abandoned the title of 'Minority Clerk.' I had coveted this historic title that had been distinguished by having belonged to William Tyler Page, but Hyde was a lawyer and chose the title of 'Counselor' to the leader. This made him not the chosen officer of the Republican Conference, but another subordinate employee of the leader. I lamented this change a great deal. The difference is far more substantive than it appears."
[17] The interviewee requested that the following statement replace the redacted segment: "But speaking of impressive, the most momentous forensic event in my memory took place on January 26, 1950. A young Congressman from California, in only his second term, Richard Nixon, really mesmerized the House. It is rarely cited, but it was an electric event. I do not remember how the word got out, but the whole House gathered to hear this young Member report on the discovery of the Whittaker Chambers so-called 'Pumpkin Papers.'" [Whittaker Chambers placed several rolls of film of U.S. State Department documents in a hollowed-out pumpkin. Turned over to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1948, the documents were pivotal evidence in an espionage case against Alger Hiss.] "The end-of-day special orders rarely attract a full House, but there were few empty seats when Nixon began his 60-minutes allotted time—and no one left. A rapt House heard every detail, and when his 60 minutes was up and he was not finished, the Member who was to follow, [William] Kingsland Macy of New York, stood and yielded to allow Nixon to complete his remarks. What followed was even more unprecedented. To the last man as far as I could see, on both sides of the aisle, they rose in a standing ovation. Two of my Pages, leaning on the rail at the back of the chamber, Bob Curtis (later a Paulist priest, now deceased) turned to Jim Wesberry of Georgia and predicted, 'Someday that man will be President!' And he was."

"We also had some memorable moments, procedurally. I remember one of the few times we were unable to obtain a quorum." [The minimum number of Members needed to be present for the House or Senate to conduct business. The Constitution requires simple majorities of Members to achieve a quorum; in the modern chambers, given no vacancies, the numbers are 218 for the House and 51 in the Senate. In practice, however, both bodies act on the assumption that a quorum is present unless a Member suggests the absence of one or requests a quorum call. Additionally, according to a House rule, only 100 Members are required to achieve a quorum to conduct business in the Committee of the Whole.] "We had an unusual Saturday meeting. I think we met at 9:00 and immediately there was a demand to establish a quorum. That was the most reluctant response I can recall. The numbers just were not coming. I stood at the rostrum adding one name at a time as they appeared. The Speaker must have kept that call going for at least two hours. Finally, I overheard him say to the Parliamentarian something such as, 'It is no use . . . better get ready to wind it up.' While I was still standing there pretending to call the roll, I learned a very embarrassing lesson. We had a Member from Virginia, best known for his travels abroad and his low score in the media annual appraisal for Members, but surprisingly he was among those present. He came up to the rostrum, approached me, and asked: 'How many have we got?' I thought I was being helpful, when I answered, 'It doesn't matter. I understand we are going to quit.' He snapped back, 'I asked for information, not advice!' It was a good lesson, but I was mortified."
[18] Joe Martin, *My First Fifty Years in Politics, as told to Robert J. Donovon* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960): 216-220.
[19] The interviewee requested that the following statement replace the redacted segment: "Well, of course there was concern on Capitol Hill, but there was concern across the country expressed in letters and editorials. There was a movement to install bulletproof glass around the gallery, but Speaker Martin and Speaker Rayburn both said, "No way. No, we are not going to inhibit people by putting a glass barrier between them and their Representatives." I have always admired them for their wise leadership in taking a strong position on this. It was the right thing. On that day, after the shooting, we adjourned fairly promptly. I do not remember the exact time of our adjournment, but we did not extend the session. Quitting was a little bit ragged, but we quit. Many of us hung around trying to figure out in our own minds

what the dickens happened. It was such an inexplicable experience. We were curious about the shot that splintered Majority Leader Charles Halleck's desk. It went through the leader's table into a drawer, but the drawer was locked. Halleck's secretary, Jess Nolph, was sent for to fetch a key. Finally, they got the drawer open and dug the bullet out of the side of the drawer with a penknife, leaving a hole much larger than the bullet had made. Another bullet was found over the Page bench, and we marveled gratefully that no Page was an innocent victim. In their search the police located some 31 holes in the chamber. It is remarkable that only five persons were struck."

"An amusing follow-on story involved Congressman Martin Dies, Jr. of Texas. He was the very controversial chairman of the Committee on Un-American Affairs and reputed to be a master mimic. He and President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not get along. Roosevelt tried to purge him, to get him defeated, but it did not succeed. I have the word of a good friend, Carter Manasco, as to the origin of this angst. Carter had been a secretary to Speaker [William Brockman] Bankhead and was later elected to Congress from his native Alabama. And there was little going on that Carter did not know. The Democrats in Congress frequently held Sunday outings on Jefferson Avenue, a retreat in the Patuxent River. The story goes that Dies was putting on one of his performances, mimicking a recent presidential fireside chat, when Roosevelt came on the scene. He was offended, not amused, and they were never friendly again."

[20] The interviewee asked that the following statement be appended to his response: "Challenge? This was an unprecedented and unimaginable challenge! We had no advance warning. No lists. No identifications. No spelling! Each nomination had to be treated with respectful dignity, at least by the reading clerk. I had called the roll for the nomination of the President, and had turned over to my good associate, Bob Berry, the calling of this role for the Vice President. Neither of us knew what we were getting into. As Bob repeated the names of the nominees, and their votes, I had to record a list. We had to be prepared, at the end of the call, to provide the presiding officer with the list for his formal announcement! We were collaborating, when we could, with the tally clerks, but they were totally unprepared and very little experienced. Somehow, with lots of sweat and prayers, we managed to meet the challenge, and produce the roll. The convention was amused, but the officials were embarrassed by this unprogrammed charade. I am not sure they even published it in the official proceedings. You will note that this is an interesting study!"

[21] The interviewee asked that the following statement be appended to his response: "Another sidebar of the convention/congressional story was the role of young Congressman Charles Halleck of Indiana. Parting company with the Taft-inclined Hoosier delegation, Halleck made a spirited nominating speech for Dewey. The reward was supposed to be the Vice Presidential nomination. Unfortunately for the naïve young Congressman, Governor Dewey had run up his lead by making several key delegates think that they were going to be the anointed one for the second spot. There were a number of crestfallen forsaken when Dewey determined that Governor Warren had more to offer. But possibly none more crushed than Mr. Halleck. He left the convention in an utter funk that was apparent for a long time after the event."

[22] The interviewee requested that the following statement replace the redacted segment: "With this discrepancy in the roll call receiving extensive publicity it came under the inevitable purview of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, the 'Ethics Committee.' They launched an investigation under the supervision of committee clerk John Swanner, with Bob Allett, formerly Mr. Halleck's administrative assistant, as the associate clerk. Both were very capable, respected staff members. They recruited top investigators from the FBI and the General Accounting Office. They divided such assignments as examining records for per diem claimed for travel abroad and compared them to voting records in the House. Our records for years past were called back from storage in the National Archives. Only Swanner coordinated the results of the study. When it was completed the committee met to go over the report. Ultimately, the committee filed a report, putting all of the blame on the tally clerk [Tom Cooke], who was supposedly suffering from fatigue."

[23] The interviewee requested that the following statement replace the redacted segment: "On the second ballot, I won the majority and was elected. I was down in the Speaker's Dining Room, waiting for the word. Frank Bow, Bill Minshall, Ed Derwinski, John Rousselot, and a group of Members came rushing in, and they were quite ecstatic. Now, they weren't ecstatic just because Joe was going to be Minority Clerk. They were ecstatic that they had spanked Gerald Ford. That had really become a major factor in the contest. I said to Bob Bradford one day—Bob had then become a vice president of Safeway Stores, in public relations, out of Oakland, California. And I said to Bob, 'You elected Gerald Ford President of the United States.' 'How did I do that?' 'Well, when you ran for Minority Clerk, and you became his

candidate, he had become so unpopular with the Members—and didn't seem to know it. The Members were so upset with his leadership. You gave them an opportunity to discipline him, to chastise him, without the occasion being something of a great moment.' I said, 'If you had not been in the contest, and if he had supported you, he probably would have learned in time that he had a problem.' As a result, his personality changed—you never saw such a difference! He started courting Members like crazy, and that is just what they wanted. He had been so indifferent. Some would say, arrogant. There is little question in my mind that what I said to Bob Bradford was true.

[24] The interviewee asked that the following statement be appended to his response: "But as I think I told you earlier, Bob wrote a book, *Palace Politics*, in which his recollections are so often faulty that I cannot place a lot of confidence in his memory. One of the things that amused me most was his recollection of the night President Nixon announced his selection of Mr. Ford for Vice President. I arranged with Max Friedersdorf, the President's legislative liaison, to attend the announcement. He extended an invitation to Bob Hartmann. So, while we were waiting, I invited Bob to be my guest for dinner at the Capitol Hill Club, and then we could down to the White House together. Of course, much of our discussion was on who the President's choice was going to be. Bob hoped it would be Ford, but he was anything but certain. When we arrived at Max Friedersdorf's office, waiting to be escorted upstairs, Bob spotted a photograph on the wall of Max's old boss, Don [Donald Henry] Rumsfeld. Bob jumped on it—'That's who it is going to be! Rumsfeld just flew in this afternoon from his post from NATO! He's the one!' Well, we soon found out he was not 'the one,' and the irony of that is the unfriendly relationship that Bob details in his book that the two must have developed in the ensuing years.

[25] The interviewee requested that the following statement be included as part of the response he made during the interview: "Well, no. It really did not matter. The choice was the President's to make. The opinions of the Members of the House would have been just that—their opinions. The President might have been influenced by their opinions, but he had no obligation to be. If there had been any 'campaign' for the job, I had not been aware of it. Bush spent a lot time in collegial activities in the House gym. He is an extremely likable guy, and was widely popular. Inasmuch as the poll had no force in law, I can easily see how the gym crowd could have responded to the suggestion to pick George. Which I am sure they did. However, we are told that the President made his choice for very prudent and pragmatic reasons, and so be it!

[26] Reference to James Michael Curley, a former U.S. Representative, mayor of Boston, and governor of Massachusetts.

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