

**Joseph S. Clark Oral History Interview—12/16/1965**  
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**Biographical Note**

Clark, a Senator from Pennsylvania (1957-1969), discusses John F. Kennedy as a senator, Senate infighting, Kennedy Administration legislation, urbanization problems, and the 1960 Democratic convention, among other issues.

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Joseph S. Clark

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Oral History Interview

with

Joseph S. Clark

December 16, 1965  
United States Court House,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

By Ronald J. Grele

For the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library

GRELE: Senator Clark, do you recall when you first met John F. Kennedy?

CLARK: According to my best recollection, which is not very good, I first met him at a meeting in the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia. I believe it was a Democratic Party rally, although it may not have been. He was then a Congressman from Massachusetts and he spoke briefly at this affair. My recollection

[-1-]

is very vague as to what he said. I remember at the time I was conscious of the fact that he was considered a comer in Democratic politics. My impression was that of an extremely young man, whose hair—being an Ivy Leaguer myself, as indeed was he—I thought was far too long for purposes of own personal appearance. Nevertheless, he made, on the whole, a favorable impression on me. My conclusion was that this young man is a comer but he has several years to go before he'll be an effective statewide or national figure. I tried to search my recollection for more complete details but they just don't come back.

GRELE: Were you mayor of Philadelphia at that time?

CLARK: No, I think this was before I was mayor. Do you know when he was first elected to Congress?

GRELE: 1946.

[-2-]

CLARK: Well, my guess would be that this was some time between '47 and '51.

GRELE: You were elected mayor in...

CLARK: In '51. I had been elected comptroller in '49.

GRELE: Did he come to Philadelphia when you were mayor?

CLARK: He probably did but I have no independent recollection of it.

GRELE: When you campaigned for the Senate, did Senator Kennedy come into Pennsylvania to campaign for you?

CLARK: He did actively in '62 when he was President of the United States. According to my best recollection, he did not in '56 when I was running for the first time.

GRELE: I asked that question because he was a member of the Senate Campaign Committee and I was wondering if he had come into Pennsylvania at that time.

[-3-]

CLARK: If he came in, and he may have, needless to say I would have been grateful. He did not take a particularly active part in the campaign. On the other hand, of course, he was in here several times in 1960 and came in, I believe, three times in 1962 to help me and my campaign for re-election and Richardson Dilworth in his campaign for governor.

GRELE: I believe that as mayor of Philadelphia you were one of the first so-called modern mayors who was interested in urban renewal.

CLARK: Well, there were a group of us who had come back from the war and gone into politics who were equally interested: Quigg Newton [James Quigg Newton] who was elected mayor of Denver; deLesseps Morrison [de Lesseps S. Morrison] who was elected mayor of New Orleans; myself. I don't recollect that President Kennedy played any particular part in that urban—at least not a leadership part—

[-4-]



in that urban renewal drive at the time. At least there was no visibility in Pennsylvania that I recollect.

GRELE: I was going to ask you if you ever recall whether or not he was aware at that time of what you were trying to do in Philadelphia, or if he was aware of urban problems?

CLARK: Oh, I have no doubt he was. My contacts at the time as mayor were largely with the American Municipal Association of which I was a vice president and the U.S. Conference of Mayors with which I kept in close touch and their staffs. Our primary drive was for the Senate and House Banking and Currency Committees. I don't think Senator Kennedy was a member of either committee.

GRELE: What were your relations with John Kennedy in the Senate?

CLARK: I'd like to go back a bit because there are two items I might forget. The first is that

[-5-]

I persuaded him to come to Philadelphia, I think it was early in 1958, to speak to the annual dinner of the Americans for Democratic Action [A.D.A.]. I had been with him in the Senate then for a couple of years. I persuaded him—he was quite willing—that his political image would be improved if he made some type of contact with the more liberal group in the party. It was not too difficult to get him to come, it was a little difficult to get him invited because there was a sort of a bias against the President at that time in the A.D.A. He came and, with his wife [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy], spent the weekend with my wife [Noel Hall Clark] and me. We had what I thought was a very rewarding and delightful time together. I remember a couple of little incidents. Do you like these vignettes?

GRELE: Yes.

CLARK: He spoke on Saturday night and was

[-6-]

enthusiastically received—did a fine job. I was very pleased and many of the doubters in the A.D.A.—I think their doubts were overcome. On Sunday morning Mrs. Kennedy, the then Senator, my wife Noel and I sat around and had a rather free and candid talk about politics: the problems that wives faced; the difficulties which husbands in politics faced in keeping their wives reasonably content. Mrs. Kennedy displayed to me an extraordinary tolerance in terms of not making any demands on her husband at all to be worried about her in concern with these constant political activities. I was quite impressed with her point of view.

We took a walk that morning from my place, which is on the edge of Fairmount Park, down into the Wissahickon Creek, one of the places of some beauty in this area. My wife has always been very active in the

[ -7- ]

Planned Parenthood Association. Coming back, he and I were walking ahead of the two women. I said to him it seemed to me it was going to be essential to have family planning information available not only in domestic matters—particularly in terms of poor and underprivileged people in the great cities—but also abroad. I asked him what his view as a Roman Catholic was to this problem. He said, “It’s bound to come; it’s just a question of time. The Church will come around. I intend to be as brave as I dare.”

We gave a lunch for him that day at which there were a good many fairly prominent politicians. He did well at the lunch also. My wife was somewhat annoyed, although I was not, at his insistence that we should ask Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] to lunch. I prevailed upon her; she had to do it. He

[ -8- ]

showed up. I became very fond of Ted later, but he was rather sphinx-like, almost to the point of being rude, that day.

Another interesting little to do which was that he was even then treated by his staff as sort of a royal person. We were called up and told various things we had to do. He was still in his first term as a senator. I remember particularly my wife’s annoyance, but not mine, at the fact that we were told that we had to provide a bed board to put under his bed—which, of course, I should have thought of because I knew about his bad back. We had a terrible time scurrying around getting one. Finally my cousin George Clark, who had a bad back himself, undertook to go far beyond the call of duty and let us have his bed board for the night that Senator Kennedy spent with us.

GRELE:       What were your wife’s objections to Mr. Sorensen?

[ -9- ]

CLARK:       Well, I think she’s a girl of peculiar lack of cant. She thought, “Well, this fellow is still in his first term as senator; so are you. Why all this build up? Why all this sort of grand prince approach? Why all this feeling that we’re dealing with a royal personage?” I think she did contrast to some extent the somewhat simple and informal position which Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] always used to take when he was do a similar A.D.A. mission. Estes Kefauver was the same way. This didn’t bother me I want the record to show.

GRELE:       You said there were people in the A.D.A. in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia who objected to John Kennedy speaking in front of the A.D.A.?

CLARK: Yes.

GRELE: Who in particular?

CLARK: Well, I don't know that I can give names and numbers. I'd rather make it general

[-10-]

this way. The A.D.A., of which I was a founding member back in 1947, of the Philadelphia chapter, was primarily an organization of liberal Jewish people, and, to some extent, Protestants, both negro and white. We never had much luck bringing Roman Catholics in. I think myself there was a certain religious counter prejudice on the part of the A.D.A. people towards an Irish Catholic from Boston. Our chapter here had been really organized with its primary objective of municipal reform. The "bad boys," so to speak, were the Catholic elements—the big city boss type—in both parties. I think this was perhaps a subconscious prejudice. However, I want to make it clear that he won them over. He did a first class job.

GRELE: Was there ever any discussion of his father's [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] pre-war record?

CLARK: Yes. His father was very unpopular—not

[-11-]

only his pre-war record but his aggressiveness, was sort of what seemed to some of us to be questionable capitalistic ethics.

GRELE: What were your relations with John Kennedy in the Senate?

CLARK: Very pleasant; very cordial; never intimate. In 1959 I became a member of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee and hence saw a good deal more of him than I had in the past. I would make the generalization that the President had an aloofness towards his fellow senators which I think to some extent was calculated and probably wise. He felt himself in the Senate but not of it. He, for example, never came to lunch at the stag dining room in the Senate where so many of us would gather when we had no other engagements, and which I thought it wise to participate in merely as a matter of getting to know better my colleagues and hopefully increasing my personal influence. But he

[-12-]

stayed out of that. You rarely saw him in the Senate dining room.

I remember on one occasion when his father-in-law, Jack Bouvier [John Bouvier], was still alive, he came down to the Senate with Jackie. My wife had grown up at

Easthampton with the Bouvier family. Of course Jackie was a good deal younger than my wife, but they had both gone to Miss Porter's School at Farmington, Connecticut. They were pleasant acquaintances as a result of this school connection and also the fact that their summers were spent in the same place. The President went out of his way to come over and ask my wife and me if we would come over and say hello to Mr. Bouvier—who, as I guess you know, was quite a character—which we did.

Also, of course, as I understand it, the President while he would take a drink

[-13-]

every now and then was certainly not a regular or habitual drinker. There was a very fine group of Democrats—I thought they were fine—from across the whole spectrum of political philosophy, who when Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson] was cracking the whip over us—and we had late sessions—would go in about 6 o'clock in the afternoon to the office of the Secretary of the Senate Felton Johnston [Felton M. Johnston], affectionately known as "Skeeter" to have a drink to stiffen us up for the evening ordeal. He never showed up there. Several fellows who didn't drink would come in just for the sociability of it, but he never did. He did have that aloofness while he was in the Senate. I've often wondered about the motivation, but it was very clear.

He and I had one torch we carried together to eventual success, although, as

[-14-]

I recollect it, in the first instance to defeat.

GRELE: This was the...

CLARK: Loyalty oath.

GRELE: Loyalty oath in the N.D.E.A. [National Defense Education Act]. Before we get into that, may I ask you one other question? Would you say that your impression was that John Kennedy was not intent upon making a career of the Senate, that he had already decided that the Senate was not going to be his permanent career?

CLARK: Yes, but I think he did intend to use the Senate as a vehicle to parachute him, so to speak, or to thrust him into national prominence. I think the occasional speeches he made on serious subjects like our relations with Algeria and his feeling for the labor legislation where he did have some responsibility, which I thought he handled very well, he used to indicate to the country, but not to

[-15-]

his colleagues, his capacity for effective action when given responsibility.

GRELE: You and John Kennedy cooperated in an attempt to remove the Communist

disclaimer within the National Defense Education Act. Can you detail that cooperation?

CLARK: My recollection as to the details is unhappily quite hazy. It was a co-sponsorship move. I don't even remember whether I was the principal sponsor or he was. In any event, we had a number of discussions about the tactics. We got it through the Labor Committee, I think, and out to the floor, although I might be wrong on that. We took about an equal part in the floor debate. Do you remember what finally happened? We ended up with a compromise, didn't we? I remember Karl Mundt [Karl E. Mundt] was strongly opposed to us. All the neo-McCarthyites gave us a bad time. I don't really remember what actually

[-16-]

happened, but I'm pretty sure we didn't have a complete victory, because I remember getting up either last year or the year before and joining Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] in what was the final nail in the coffin of the loyalty oath and speaking then with some personal inner feeling about what a sentimental occasion it was to be joined with his brother in completing this job which we had made some progress on earlier.

GRELE: In attempting to steer this legislation through the Senate, did you and John Kennedy rely upon different groups of senators?

CLARK: To some extent. There was overlap of course. He had some contacts that I didn't have; I had some that he didn't have. We still have what we call in the Senate "the back row" of which I was a charter member, and perhaps unduly egotistically think of myself as being leader. It started after

[-17-]

the election of '56 when Frank Church, John Carroll [John A. Carroll] of Colorado, and I were all elected to the Senate together. We didn't know each other at all. We found ourselves sitting next to each other. I was in between the two of them. A very warm and close friendship grew up. We decided we'd continue to sit together even though opportunities of seniority would enable us to move further up. When in the election of 1958 we got 15 new Democratic senators, they were naturally all in the back row, too. We stayed there and did a good deal of propagandizing to bring them along in what we then thought of as the liberal cause. There was some disillusionment with the majority leader at that time. Let's see, that was in the last days of Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] so we could cut our teeth on opposition to the Republicans in '59 and in '60.

The club grew very rapidly and it is

[-18-]

now a thriving organization. It isn't really an organization, but it has very loosely knit ties. We vote together, I would say, 90 percent of the time. We're always asking each other, "Well, how do we go on this one?" If a particular fellow has some expertise in a particular phase—I'm awfully apt just to ask Phil Hart [Phillip A. Hart] or Bill Proxmire [William Proxmire] on a subject where I know they have some expertise and I don't, "How do we go on this?" They say and automatically I go and most of the back row goes too.

Kennedy was never a part of that. He never sought advice. He never did any lobbying with his colleagues that I can recall—unlike Bobby and unlike Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy]. He was an aloof fellow, but thoroughly respected. For me I had a deep affection for him, although the fact that I

[-19-]

was a strong Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] man I suppose subconsciously may have played its part in keeping us apart.

My wife and I were a little startled that after having had them for that weekend in Philadelphia we were never asked to the White House except on formal occasions. Something must have gone wrong somewhere and neither she nor I have any idea what it was. It was never obvious in his personal relations with me which were very cordial.

GRELE: Did you cooperate with John Kennedy on any other legislation that you can think of? Did you discuss any legislation?

CLARK: Only to the extent that we were both on the Labor Committee. Our ideologies were practically identical. We would ordinarily be on the same side of different measures. I didn't become a leader in any area of Labor Committee responsibility until I

[-20-]

became chairman of the Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower. My recollection is that that was after he left the Senate. I'm pretty sure it was. I was working very closely with Wayne Morse [Wayne L. Morse] on education legislation, none of which we ever got through. He was always with us on that and took what I suppose might be called the Protestant side of the church-state issue. So we were friendly but there was nothing very close.

Because I may forget it, there are two additional vignettes I'd like to mention. I remember sitting with him in the Labor Committee room sometime in the spring of 1960 when he was actively campaigning in the primaries for the nomination for the presidency. There was a lull while we were waiting for a quorum or some other reason. We began to discuss the presidency and he knew that I was for Stevenson, but I had

[-21-]

told him that if Stevenson didn't wish to be a candidate or it looked hopeless, that I would be for him. We had a discussion about the vice presidency. I said to him—on this perhaps I'm unduly egotistical—I said to him, “You've got to take Lyndon for your vice president. You have the whole Northeast. You'll have trouble in the Middle West. You ought to be all right on the West Coast, but you're in desperate straits in the South and Lyndon is the only guy who can help you. He can carry Texas for you and nobody else can.” Well, he was always friendly and he said, “Thanks.” And that was that. I thought I looked like a pretty good prophet later on. I have just been reading Schlesinger's [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] account of how it really took place. It appears I really played no part at all in his decision.

The other one is that in 1960 he was

[-22-]

then running for president. I'm almost certain this was 1960, it might have been 1962. I have some information at home where I could clarify whether it was '60 or '62. I remember the occasion but not the date. He was campaigning—I think, for himself—this, I know, was '60 and I think the second incident was also '60—through Pennsylvania. It was towards the end of the fall. We were up in the mountains in the general vicinity of Johnstown and Altoona, somewhere in there. He always had this affectation of going without a hat or a coat. I think he admitted wearing electric underwear; I don't know. But this day he had a sore throat and while he had an overcoat and a hat which Governor Lawrence [David Leo Lawrence] and I who were riding in the car with him practically forced him to put one on in between stops, he didn't have any muffler. I brought in with me

[-23-]

today a muffler which is hanging in the arm of that coat there, which is a Harvard crimson muffler knitted for me by my daughter's [Noel Clark Miller] old governess, Anna Huettmeister, who died about 10 days ago at the ripe age of 83. I had it around my neck because my neck gets cold, too, and it was windy. He was at one of those states which he frequently got into where he was writing notes to us because he didn't want to talk. His voice was so sore and his throat so sore. So I practically forced this muffler on him. He took it and wore it for the rest of that particular day. Then I made him keep it when we parted. It was, I think, over a year later and it may—I'm pretty sure it was in the fall of '61. This was what makes me think it was in '60 and not in '62 that I got it back with a little note from him saying, “Dear Joe, thanks for the muffler. Sorry

[-24-]

to have kept it so long; I thought you might need it for the Harvard-Yale game this fall.” Incidentally, you can have the muffler eventually if you want it. It's an object of historical significance.

The other thing was, I remember sitting with him in the car with Lawrence that day—I'm a hopeless optimist—and I said to him—there was a fantastically enthusiastic crowd as we came into Johnstown lining the streets in a typical Kennedy enthusiastic display. I said to

him, "You're going to carry Pennsylvania by at least 300,000." He said, "I'll bet you 5 dollars I don't." And I said, "I'll take you." I remember I had to pay him the 5 dollars later for which I never got any acknowledgement which I suspect was probably good public relations on his part.

GRELE: Did you ever discuss the problem of reform

[-25-]

of the Congress with Senator Kennedy?

CLARK: I don't remember that I ever did. I think that he was generally responsive to the need for it. I don't recollect that. I was pretty much a loner and still am pretty much a loner on congressional reform.

GRELE: I interviewed Congressman Reuss [Henry S. Reuss] yesterday and he...

CLARK: Well, Henry and I worked very closely together.

GRELE: To what extent did John Kennedy cooperate with the liberals in the Senate and to what extent did he disagree with them?

CLARK: I would think that when he was there, and some of us got irritated in '60—I think unjustly irritated—about the large number of votes he missed, you could practically always count on Kennedy being on the liberal side but never in terms of making a speech. He

[-26-]

was never in the inner council.

GRELE: I understand that at one time there were Friday afternoon meetings on the staff level of the liberal senators.

CLARK: I'm sure there were and I have no doubt his staff cooperated. The group around which the liberal legislation more or less centered was: Paul Douglas [Paul H. Douglas], Hubert Humphrey, Pat McNamara [Patrick V. McNamara], Carroll, Church, and myself—Church a little bit less than Carroll and myself because Idaho had different interests—and, after he came to the Senate, Phil Hart. Kennedy was never in on any of that. I may have left out one or two in the group.

GRELE: Do you recall...

CLARK: Pete Williams [Harrison A. Williams, Jr.].



GRELE: Do you recall any agreements or disagreements with Senator Kennedy when you both served on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee?

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CLARK: No, I don't.

GRELE: Did you endorse his labor bills?

CLARK: Yes and worked fairly hard on them, although I was not on the subcommittee. I was under the same implicit, although not explicit, pressure from the labor people to go along because they had been extremely helpful in both of my campaigns. They're always far too smart to come out in the open with it but it was perfectly clear to me what they felt I ought to do.

I think Landrum-Griffin was probably an awful disappointment to Kennedy because he got a pretty good bill through the Senate. Then he went to conference where it was murdered. He came to the conclusion, which I guess was right, that he had to take the conference agreement or else there'd be no bill at all. He thought the bill that was brought out was better than no bill at all.

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I wasn't at all sure he was right on that. But as I recollect it I think I went along with him on the votes on the conference report.

GRELE: You voted for it. I was wondering if you had any disagreements in committee.

CLARK: I was not on the conference committee. I, at the time, thought it was too bad the Senate conferees couldn't have stood up more stiffly than they did, but I concluded, "Well, he's a knowledgeable fellow, this was the best deal he could get, I guess."

GRELE: At one time you were quoted by the *New York Times* in a discussion of the Minimum Wage Bill and Senator's Kennedy's handling of that bill as saying, "If sonny boy gets back from the cricks and hollers long enough to have a subcommittee meeting, we will have a bill this year." Would you like to comment on that criticism of his record?

CLARK: Well, of course it was true, but it couldn't have been more foolish of me to say it.

[-29-]

When I said it, I didn't think it was going to get in the papers. I could have bitten my tongue off afterwards. The fact of the matter was he was so busy campaigning that he couldn't adequately fulfill his duties in the Labor Committee.

GRELE: Would you say that in general this was his committee work effort that...

CLARK: Well, I think this showed up first only in 1960, although it was to some extent the case in 1958—not nearly as much because he was a shoe-in in Massachusetts for re-election to the Senate. I don't know much about his record on the Foreign Relations, but my understanding is he was a chronic absentee.

GRELE: Senator Morse has told me that he did attend the Latin American Subcommittee.

CLARK: Senator Morse's recollections would be much more accurate than mine.

GRELE: You were a very early spokesman on the problems

[-30-]

of urbanization and mass transportation and so forth. John Kennedy, as President, became a spokesman on several of these issues. Did you ever cooperate on any of these problems, share ideas on these problems?

CLARK: Much more implicitly than explicitly. We had a terrible time with housing, urban renewal, mass transit and open space during the Eisenhower Administration. John Sparkman [John J. Sparkman], of course, was the titular leader for the Housing and Urban Redevelopment bills. Pete Williams became such for the Mass Transit Bill, but I was the number... No, I guess that's not fair... I guess Paul Douglas was the number two and I was the number three on the Housing Subcommittee working this legislation up. There was a period though, and I think it was about 1961, when Paul Douglas said to me, "Joe, I'm going to leave Housing to you now. Try to keep

[-31-]

Sparkman in line because I'm off on this truth in lending business. The Joint Economic Committee is giving me a bad time. I'd appreciate it if you'd take that responsibility. I'll always be with you." And indeed he was and I did.

Of course, the Kennedy program was just what we wanted when he came down to ask for it. The Housing Act of '61 was a pretty good act. He wasn't as bold as Johnson later was but of course he didn't have the congressional situation that Johnson had. The real flowering of the whole urban program from the point of view of federal legislation was the Housing Act of 1965.

GRELE: I know that prior to the election of 1960, he had asked several professors at

Harvard and M.I.T. for background papers on urban problems. Did he ever confer with you?

CLARK: No. The job he gave me was civil rights.

[-32-]

On the housing business, we worked very closely with Bob Weaver [Robert C. Weaver]. It was more down at that level than it was at the White House. We got the go ahead sign, the green light, from President Kennedy at the White House. From there on we took it pretty much alone with Bob Weaver and Milton Semer [Milton P. Semer], counsel for H.H.F.A. [Housing and Home Finance Agency].

GRELE: Do you recall anything interesting or significant about John Kennedy as a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers?

CLARK: We served together. I was elected before he was. I remember the pleasure with which I ushered him in by rights of seniority on the Board of Overseers. He was his charming self—said very little, spoke only when spoken to. I don't recollect his taking the lead in much of anything, but the Board of Overseers at Harvard, as I'm sure you know, is a ceremonial institution not unlike the

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House of Lords in England. While we have a legal right to veto acts of the Corporation, it's only been done two or three times—maybe four or five times—in the last century. To my way of thinking the principal function of the Board of Overseers is to improve the adult education of its members. This it did for me to a conspicuous extent. I think Kennedy was very pleased to have been elected to the Board as the first Irish Catholic to ever serve. He was quite conscientious in his attendance considering the fact he was president of the United States. I'm sure he enjoyed the meetings and I know that he was well liked by the other members. Other than that, I have no distinct recollection.

GRELE: In general what were the other members like? Who were they?

CLARK: Well, a curiously mixed bag—a very high level of ability. They were far from being

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all the Boston "Brahmins" who constitute the overwhelming majority of the Harvard Corporation. When Kennedy and I were on it Judge Wyzanski [Charles E. Wyzanski, Jr.] was chairman of the Board; he's a terrific guy, as I guess you know. There were physicians, scientists, businessmen—geographically pretty well separated—a very stimulating group to be with and not only the formal meetings but at the luncheons that

would take place between the morning and afternoon sessions—a great deal of very useful conversation for purposes quite unconnected with Harvard. Roy Larson [Roy E. Larson] of *Time* was a very active fellow. His views and mine were quite often not in accord but we were extremely friendly. Barry Wood [W. Barry Wood], the old Harvard football player now a physician in St. Louis was an overseer for awhile. George Gunn, a Cleveland banker—oh, I can't recall the names. You have them available. It was

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a very high level group who were pleased to meet six times a year to see each other and to get the impressions which they got from the reports which were made by President Pusey [Nathan Marsh Pusey] and the very interesting work which is done by the visiting committees in the different departments. I don't know whether President Kennedy ever went to those visiting committee meetings. I can well understand that he couldn't because of the time factor.

GRELE: Were there objections to his selection to the Board?

CLARK: Well, the overseers have nothing to do with that. There's a committee called the Committee to Nominate Overseers which meets twice in the fall—once before the Harvard-Princeton football game and once before the Harvard-Yale football game—either in New York, when the game is in New Haven,

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or in Boston when the game's up there. I served on that committee for some time; I don't think he ever did. It's one of the most pleasant occasions I can remember because in complete secrecy you can blackball the people you dislike and push the people who you think ought to be pushed ahead. I rather enjoyed being the “bad, anti-Boston boy” bringing up people like Barry Bingham from Louisville and getting them on the slate. Of course, there was always the problem as to whether somebody shouldn't be nominated from Philadelphia. That group presented the slate of overseers with, as I recollect it, twice as many candidates as there were vacancies and that automatically approved by the overseers themselves, and then it goes on the ballot. The ballots are counted a week or so before commencement day. The announcement of the overseers is made about the time

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of graduation. There was a good deal of university politics involved in it which is rather interesting.

After I was elected mayor in '51, to my great gratification I was given an honorary degree at commencement in '52. This automatically made me a candidate for overseer in '53 and I was elected by a fairly nice majority, which I'm sure would not have been the case if I hadn't gotten the honorary degree.

GRELE: Would you say that your position on the Harvard Board of Overseers, or Senator Kennedy's or your connection to Harvard, had in any way influenced your attitude towards the disclaimer in the N.D.E.A.?

CLARK: Oh, yes without any question. Pusey went to Kennedy. I think he had a number of other college presidents with him but, you see, Kennedy was Pusey's senator. And Pusey knew I was all right. He was delighted when he

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found Kennedy would pick up this torch.

GRELE: Was he that personally involved?

CLARK: Pusey... very much so. He was practically the leader of all the college presidents... Well, I probably shouldn't say the leader. He was one of the outstanding leaders in this movement to free the academic community from the Loyalty oath.

GRELE: I remember at one time they went so far as to refuse funds from the N.D.E.A.

CLARK: Yes. Several other colleges did too.

GRELE: When John Kennedy announced he was a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency, what was your reaction?

CLARK: Well, I wasn't surprised. It had been in the offing for a long while. As I told you earlier, I was a Stevenson man—a little bit uncertain as to who I would go for after Stevenson if he would not be a strong candidate, but convinced that

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I would never be for Lyndon Johnson; flirted a little bit with Stuart Symington [Stuart Symington, II]; and finally came to the conclusion that Kennedy would be my number two choice which, I think, he knew. When we went out to Los Angeles I was still plugging for Stevenson, but there was a meeting of the Pennsylvania delegation the night before the Convention opened at which Matt McCloskey [Matthew H. McCloskey, Jr.] and David Lawrence reported to us that they had had a couple of hours with Stevenson the night before and that he still was strongly of the view that he did not want to be a candidate. He did what he could to discourage them from putting his name in nomination, although he did subsequently change his mind. Lawrence and McCloskey, both of whom had been strong Stevenson men, had come to the conclusion that nothing could be done about Stevenson. We were convinced—the three of us who were

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pretty close—that Bill Green [William J. Green, Jr.] would take the delegation away from us in any event and go for Kennedy. It was a largely Catholic delegation. The wise thing to do was to go for Kennedy ourselves, which I reluctantly did. I voted for him in our caucus. I voted for him on the first ballot.

I then did another unwise thing. When it looked as though he might not make it on the first ballot and when McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] made that magnificent speech—I gather from mixed motives—nominating Stevenson, and there was a great to do in the Hall, I made a statement that if Kennedy did not get the nomination on the first ballot, a number of us from the Pennsylvania delegation would have to reconsider our position. This earned me what I hope is not, although it seemed

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at the time, the undying enmity of Robert Kennedy. I remember well his intense and determined look conferring with Lawrence and Green and the others as to what the effect of this statement of mine would be which, in the end, turned out to be nothing.

But I'm sure that the Kennedys don't forget. I should add, however, that my relationships with Robert Kennedy since he came to the Senate and while he was Attorney General—while he was Attorney General they were cool but correct, but we had so many things in common, including the breaking up of organized crime in Pennsylvania, that I never had any trouble with him. There was a problem about a judgeship in which I was unwilling to take his strongly urged candidate. I prevailed; he didn't like that. Since he's come to the Senate, our relations have been, I would say, not only cordial but

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warm. I do appreciate his sense of humor; he's quite a fellow. This is a little bit off your point.

GRELE: Back to the pre-Convention days. Why did you favor Stevenson over John Kennedy?

CLARK: Experience, understanding of foreign affairs. I felt a far wider philosophy of life.... I'm not much for these very ambitious fellows. I never felt that Stevenson was indecisive. I thought he just waited until variables had been reduced to a minimum before he made a decision. There was a deep emotional commitment. He was a really good friend of mine. That summarizes it about as well as I can.

GRELE: During the time of the primaries, did you confer with Senator Humphrey at all about the primaries? Did he talk to you about them?

CLARK: Yes, I talked with Hubert who—I should have said this earlier. Hubert was very anxious for me to come out for him. Hubert

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is a really close friend on a sort of personal and emotional basis which John Kennedy was not. But my head was a little bit stronger than my heart and I told him I could not support him—that I was for Stevenson, that I thought he, Humphrey, didn't have much chance, and even that I thought he was foolish to make such a strong run for it, of course, I always gilded the lily, painted the lily, by saying, "If you shape up to the point where you're a real threat at the Convention, of course I'll have to take another look at it." He wanted me to come out for him in the early days of '60 and I wouldn't do it.

GRELE: Then work for him in the Pennsylvania delegation?

CLARK: Yes.

GRELE: Former President Truman [Harry S. Truman] at one time listed you among the number of possible nominees whom he felt were more qualified

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than John Kennedy to receive the nomination. Was there ever any serious discussion about this possibility?

CLARK: I don't think so. I think it was fairly early in the day that I made a Sherman [William Tecumseh Sherman] type statement about the presidency—if nominated, would not run; if elected, would not serve. I couldn't handle that job and I'm too old anyway—was too old then. I never took that seriously.

GRELE: Was there a great deal of Stevenson strength in the Pennsylvania delegation?

CLARK: Oh, yes—solid outside of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. You see, Genevieve Blatt, who was even then quite a leader, voted for Stevenson. All of central Pennsylvania and a good bit of all the Southeast Pennsylvania counties, except Philadelphia—in fact, to be a little crude about it, all of Protestant Pennsylvania was for Stevenson and most

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of Jewish Pennsylvania was for Stevenson. There's still a latent religious bigotry in our state which I think affected the extent of his majority.

GRELE: You said that you felt that Congressman Green could have taken the delegation away from you and Governor Lawrence.

CLARK: Yes.

GRELE: Was that because of the make-up of the delegation?

CLARK: Yes.

GRELE: Over-concentration of Philadelphia in the delegation?

CLARK: Over-Catholic concentration. One thing you have to remember about the Democratic party in Pennsylvania is that it is entirely a Catholic-dominated party with the Jews coming in second and the Protestants a bad third. The only reason I'm in the United States Senate was because in the end of the '40s the party was so predominantly Catholic

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in Philadelphia and they were so convinced when Jack Kelly [John B. Kelly] failed to be elected Mayor of Philadelphia in 1935, it was due to religious bigotry. They were desperate to find a couple of Protestant candidates. This gave Dick Dilworth and me our chance.

GRELE: You were the first Democratic mayor in 67 years.

CLARK: Yes, and Dick was second.

GRELE: Was Governor Lawrence fearful of the religious issue?

CLARK: Very, very fearful.

GRELE: Did you have any private discussions about this?

CLARK: Yes. He just kept saying, "I don't think a Catholic can be elected president of the United States." Of course he was the first Catholic governor to be elected governor of Pennsylvania in 1958. I think that's what gave him some heart to believe Kennedy might carry Pennsylvania, and, of course, he did.

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GRELE: Did he ever transmit these feelings to John Kennedy that you know of?

CLARK: I don't know, but David Lawrence is as shrewd and astute a politician as I've ever known. Like all good politicians he likes to keep his foot in every camp like a centipede. I suspect he did. I think Matt McCloskey, who was quite close to Dave, was a pretty good friend of old man Kennedy's. I think they have places together, not far apart, in Palm Beach. I have no doubt that they discussed this matter from time to time, although I don't know that personally.

GRELE: Was there any possibility that the delegation would have switched after the



first ballot?

CLARK: We would have split it.

GRELE: It would have been split?

CLARK: Yes.

GRELE: Like California?

CLARK: Yes. We had no unit rule. Incidentally,

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for background to indicate what happens this is perhaps a little irrelevant. In 1952 Dick Dilworth and I led a rump group for Estes Kefauver in the Pennsylvania delegation. There was strong support from Jim Finnegan [James A. Finnegan], Lawrence and everybody else—but not Bill Green—for Stevenson. We got 17 votes for Kefauver on the first and second ballots. Then the inevitable occurred. That was another of my mistakes.

GRELE: You were for Kefauver in '52?

CLARK: Yes. I tell you why...

GRELE: You were for Stevenson in '56 and Kefauver in '52.

CLARK: Yes. I think since this is going into history, and even though it's wildly irrelevant—I'd like to put this down if you don't mind. In early spring of '56, I was at the Washington airport one morning getting off a plane. I went in the men's room

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and standing next to me was Adlai Stevenson, who, at that point was a pleasant acquaintance but not a friend. I said to him, "What's all this talk I hear about you running for president?" He said, "Well, you know, Joe, that I don't want it and I'm not all sure that I'd take it if it were offered to me." I said, "Would you like me to go to work for you?" He said, "Please don't." I concluded that this was the fact and then became committed to Kefauver.

GRELE: Did you attend the '52 convention?

CLARK: Oh, yes.

GRELE: Who did you vote for in the vice presidential contest?

CLARK: Kefauver—didn't he get it then?

GRELE: Yes.

CLARK: That wasn't Sparkman then, was it?

GRELE: No, oh, forgive me, yes it was. I meant '56. Who in '56?

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CLARK: In '56 it was Kefauver.

GRELE: Kefauver, yes.

CLARK: I was for Kefauver largely for old times sake. That was quite dramatic and this might interest you. You probably know it. When Stevenson decided to make it an open fight for the vice presidency, Kennedy, Albert Gore [Albert Gore, Sr.], Kefauver—and who would the fourth have been—Humphrey—all appeared before the Pennsylvania delegation starting early in the morning and running down through noon. All four of them made first-class appearances although all four of them were absolutely exhausted. I was never so impressed in my life with the ability in the Democratic party as evidenced by those four fellows in their efforts to swing the Pennsylvania delegation for themselves. I don't recall the background politics. I was very much impressed with all four, very much impressed with Kennedy. I don't remember

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the infighting of the politics, but my recollection is that we were somewhat at sea—we didn't split particularly, although you will know the delegation did split. I thought we went pretty much overwhelmingly for Kefauver. Do you happen to remember?

GRELE: Yes, yes you did. Do you recall a religious factor entering into the discussions at that time?

CLARK: *Sub rosa.*

GRELE: The Pennsylvania delegation in 1960, of course, was a very important and crucial delegation.

CLARK: It remained uncommitted until almost the end.

GRELE: Do you recall any of the efforts made by the Kennedy organization to woo people of Pennsylvania? It must have been great.

CLARK: They never came near me.

GRELE: Never came near you?

CLARK: No, never came near me.

GRELE: You were never approached.

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CLARK: Never approached by anybody.

GRELE: Have you ever thought of why?

CLARK: Well, I've wondered about this because actually nobody ever comes to lobby me, much of any. I don't know why, but my views are usually pretty much on the record fairly far ahead of time which is not always wise. But it's been very rare since I've been in the Senate that anybody has lobbied me about anything. Now they'll talk to my staff. I don't know; I think they probably think it would backfire. Or else they say, "Well, we know how he stands; there's just no use fooling around with him." I don't know what the motivation is; it has often puzzled me.

GRELE: During the campaign Senator Kennedy spoke in favor of several proposals which you had long endorsed, especially in urban affairs, etc. Did you ever confer with him or

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influence his opinions on any of these particular issues?

CLARK: I think, but I'm not sure—maybe I was—was I on the Platform Committee?... No, I wasn't... Chester Bowles [Chester B. Bowles] was in charge of that Platform Committee, but my administrative assistant, James L. Sundquist, practically wrote the platform.

GRELE: We interviewed him on the framing of the platform.

CLARK: Huh?

GRELE: We interviewed him on the platform.

CLARK: He was talking to me all the time. I just thought the platform was perfect, so I had no occasion—and Kennedy accepted the platform. I remember very

well—I suppose tens of thousands of others do—what I thought was a perfectly splendid speech he made out there in Los Angeles after he received the nomination as the sun was sinking behind the hills there.

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I was just reading Schlesinger's account of it a few days ago. It was very dramatic. By that time I was all the way over on his bandwagon.

GRELE: Were you at all upset or shocked when you heard about the nomination of Lyndon Johnson?

CLARK: Well, I had urged him to do it. Don't you remember? I told you I'd been pushing for him.

GRELE: You were not in the liberal group that was...

CLARK: Not at all. I kept telling the A.D.A. people and other liberals, "You're crazy." I said, "Do you want to win or do you want to get licked? Just for once try to show some practical common sense." They didn't like it.

GRELE: Did you campaign with John Kennedy in 1960 through Pennsylvania?

CLARK: Oh, yes. Vigorously.

GRELE: Do you remember any particular incidents or what Kennedy...

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CLARK: Well, I told you about the scarf. My overall impression now, over five years later, is one of great stimulation by the terribly enthusiastic crowds; the pleasure that he did so well under such trying circumstances; undue optimism about how there was going to be a landslide in Pennsylvania; an argument that I had with him about Quemoy and Matsu. I was all for the position which he took on Quemoy and Matsu which Nixon [Richard Milhous Nixon] went after. I urged him to follow it up and to rebut Nixon and stick with his position which I thought was completely sound. As you probably know, I'm rather a peacenik, world federalist, disarmament addict and I urged him to continue on that line. He said to me, "No, Joe, that's the end of Quemoy and Matsu." I said, "Why?" I gave him an argument. He said, "I think I've done all I should. I just don't think it's

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good politics to carry it any further"—or words to that effect. That's not a quote.

GRELE: Did you have any other discussions with him during the campaign with issues like this?

CLARK: Well, yes. He asked Manny Celler [Emmanuel Celler] and me to prepare the civil rights legislation, to implement the plank in the Democratic platform.

GRELE: Did he ask you that at the New York meeting?

CLARK: Before. I think it was at the New York meeting that he did it. My recollection is—pretty hazy—that it was sometime in the course of—when was the New York meeting? September.

GRELE: It was between the Convention and the election.

CLARK: Oh, yes. I know that. Manny and I had done a lot of work before the New York meeting. We had had a number of expert draftsmen and civil rights fellows working with us:

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Joe Rauh [Joseph Louis Rauh, Jr.]—people like that. We came in with a series of bills which we both subsequently introduced in Congress with speeches indicating that these were the bills which President Kennedy had asked us to prepare. It got some little publicity at the time. That was the last we heard of civil rights for quite a while.

GRELE: Did you ever talk with him about it?

CLARK: Yes. I indicated my disappointment to him that he wasn't going through. But I also indicated an understanding of the fact that he felt that he could not bring civil rights up early in the day without prejudicing the rest of his legislation. I had political sympathy with the position he took. Of course he was pushed by events into finally coming back into something not very different from what Celler and I had prepared, although, in the meanwhile of course, Bobby Kennedy and

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Nick Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach] got into the act, and the legislation was quite different from the way Celler and I had prepared it in detail, but not in substance.

GRELE: Did you ever discuss with him, in the early days of his administration, his claim that no new legislation was needed?

CLARK: In civil rights.... Yes, I did, again in a friendly way. I differed with him. I am trying to recollect the purpose of a luncheon I had with him at his house in Georgetown before he was inaugurated. I'm pretty sure after the first of the

year. We were alone—a very pleasant occasion. We covered the waterfront. I had some points I wanted to make with him, and I can't for the life of me remember what they were now. I remember—here's another vignette—that he had some wine for lunch which I avidly drank. He poured a glass for himself and didn't touch it. This may have

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loosened my tongue a little. I don't know. I was anxious not to overstay my welcome. As I left a rather tall, thin fellow with glasses walked in. I said to the reporters who were waiting for me, "Who is that?" They said, "That's a fellow named Bob McNamara [Robert S. McNamara]. We don't know what he's doing here."

GRELE: Were there any serious disagreements because of the civil rights legislation that he had asked you to draw up and forgot?

CLARK: I sniped a bit. I sniped a bit on a good many things because I was to the left of him and I was for the platform. There were some parts of the platform he didn't seem particularly enthusiastic about. Now I realize the pragmatic political problems and I don't question the fact that his judgment was probably sounder than mine. But I thought he could have been a little bit more

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aggressive than he was in pushing the liberal platform which he'd agreed to support. He was not very deft with Congress, I don't think. I think some of this goes back to what we discussed a little earlier—that he never considered himself in and of the Congress. I mean he was never in or of the leadership, and he was aloof. While he did exercise his enormous charm and the power of his office in advocating positions which he felt strongly about, I felt he was too willing to compromise on a good many occasions. Of course, he was getting the shrewdest of all possible advice from the Vice President and also from Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell]—very shrewd, able people. I thought the liberal bloc, in the Senate at least, got rather short shrift, but it may well be that they were better in those encounters than we were.

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Of course, don't forget that Bobby Baker [Robert G. Baker] was still in the saddle in those early days. He was a really pernicious influence, not only because of his ethics but because he had this aura of infallibility about him. He was supposed to know how a senator would vote on everything. I don't think he did. I think he gilded the lily to suit his very deep South Carolina southern prejudices. He wasn't nearly as smart as he pretended to be. There was quite a feud between Baker and me. Probably you can tell it from the way I am talking.

GRELE: We have never had any real discussion of Bobby Baker and his function in the Congress. We've had a lot of discussion about his ethics but nothing about his

role in Congress. Was it that crucial?

CLARK: I thought it was very crucial. You see, he had Lyndon Johnson's complete confidence.

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Mansfield [Mike Mansfield] took him on, I think, at Johnson's insistence. He played a very active role in the whole infighting and politics of the Senate, attempting to influence who should go on what committees. He lied to me in connection with a vacancy on the Judiciary Committee which was badly wanted by both Steve Young [Stephen M. Young] and Quentin Burdick [Quentin N. Burdick] and which, due to Bobby's finagling, went to Ed Long [Edward V. Long]. Bobby told the Steering Committee that Burdick and Young had both withdrawn their applications—they both had seniority over Long—and they hadn't. I was angry enough to go to Hubert and to Mansfield about it and say, "That guy ought to be fired and fired now. You cannot have a man around who will lie to an important committee like this." Well, I was given the "now, Joe" treatment and "take it easy" and so forth and so on.

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You see, when you went into vote, Bobby would be at the door—which was his job. I guess it's no secret that half the Senate doesn't know half the time what the vote's about. If you're playing ball with the leadership, you would naturally seek the majority leader or his secretary to find out what the leadership position was. But Bobby would go far beyond that and almost always on the Southern and conservative side. He was the faithful tool of Bob Kerr [Robert S. Kerr] who was the one guy that I could never get along with in the Senate and who had enormous power. He had Bobby in his corner. Anything Kerr wanted, Bobby was for and would pretty much undertake to get the votes for Kerr in quarters where Kerr might not have been able to get them himself by his very strong arm methods.

GRELE: He was a rather blunt man wasn't he—Senator Kerr?

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CLARK: Very. A real bully.

GRELE: Did you ever have it out with him?

CLARK: Oh, yes. On the floor of the Senate—tongue to tongue. We both enjoyed this—not once but several times. He had a great gift of sarcasm. I pride myself on having a little myself.

GRELE: Excuse me. I'm going to just turn the tape over now.

[END TAPE 1, SIDE 1]

GRELE: During the first years of President Kennedy's administration you were sponsor of a number of particular pieces of legislation which were endorsed by the administration. Would you like to comment on these proposals and the history of the proposals? Firstly, the Manpower Development and Training Act.

CLARK: Well, the Manpower Development and Training Act was cooked up in large part by Arthur Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] and me. I had had the chairmanship

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of the Subcommittee on Manpower and Employment for a year or so at that point, maybe a little longer. We had done a good deal investigating, and when Goldberg came in, I found that he was enthusiastically in support of my concept which went back to the days right after I was mayor of Philadelphia and was given the Bok Award. I was asked to make a speech at the time I got it. I talked on a subject which I have since called "staffing freedom." The central concept is that we need a much more effective manpower policy in order to cope not only with chronic and persistent unemployment but with the shortages of skills in a wide variety of professions and occupations. I did not and do not believe American civilization is moving forward as fast as it could because of this shortage of skilled manpower—dealing a good deal with the problems of rewards and punishments. We didn't pay the right

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people enough money, we didn't give enough status and so forth and so on. This had been a torch of mine for some time and I found to my glee that Goldberg thought exactly the way I did. He was more interested—naturally, as Secretary of Labor—in the massive unemployment concept than he was in the skilled shortages although he was interested in that too. Between the two of us with our staffs we wrote the Manpower Development and Training Act including Title 1 which actually uses the words "staffing freedom" and is a general, and I think, very fine statement of the needs for an overall manpower policy, Goldberg sold it to the administration. I think there was something in the Platform about it. I never had to go to the White House because Goldberg carried the ball. We had no trouble getting it through the Congress. We had the administration's support.

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GRELE: I understand you proposed a number of amendments to the administration's proposals. Do you recall what they were?

CLARK: On manpower?

GRELE: Yes.



CLARK: No, I don't. We took some pretty comprehensive testimony. My subcommittee has never been a rubber stamp. We felt we could strengthen the Act in a number of categories. I can't remember now what they were. Of course Goldberg was in on it. He was content with the amendments that we proposed.

GRELE: I have heard that he was not content with the amendments and that he threatened to resign, or told people that he would resign.

CLARK: I am unaware of a single cross word or even a difference of opinion between Goldberg and myself on that legislation. It may be that he was unhappy about the initial draft sent down by the administration which could have

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been changed by the Bureau of the Budget over what he and I wanted. It may well be we changed it back. One of my troubles in this whole interview is that I'm getting old. My memory is not as good as it used to be. I'm quite worried about saying things positively which the written record might show were not correct. But this is my best recollection.

GRELE: The Accelerated Public Works proposal—you prepared a bill which was sent to the White House in 1961. Do you recall that?

CLARK: Yes. This came out of the Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower. I was very strong for a big program of accelerated public works. Certain areas of the administration were, too. We had the usual Bureau of the Budget problem. We did get through, as you will recall—not in the form I initially proposed it, but fairly effectively. I think it was 900 million dollars in public works.

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Wasn't it? We wanted two billion, but then of course when the 900 million ran out, to my chagrin the administration was unwilling to support its continuance until finally this year in two or three different pocket holes we got significant amounts of new public works money through Appalachia, the poverty program and various other devices for getting this program going. That public works program was the most effective bit of legislation passed in the Kennedy Administration so far as Pennsylvania was concerned. Between the Manpower Act, the Public Works Act, and the Area Redevelopment Act, they got me re-elected.

GRELE: Were you involved in the Area Redevelopment Act?

CLARK: Very much so. You see, that was in the Banking and Currency Committee.

GRELE: I had the impression it was Senator Douglas' bill.

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CLARK: Yes, he was the number one guy, but I was the number two guy. Yes, it was his legislation.

GRELE: A very important bill for Pennsylvania.

CLARK: Extremely.

GRELE: On the Department of Urban Affairs, how did you become identified with this proposal?

CLARK: When I was mayor of Philadelphia, I was down testifying before Congress in support of such a department. As soon as I got to the Senate, I put my own bill in. I put it in every year after that. It had its ups and downs, as you know. Finally, Abe Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff] got credit for it which I thought was perfectly appropriate because by that time they had taken the bill away from Banking and Currency and put it into Government Operations. I was no longer on Banking and Currency. There was no reason for the administration to give it to me. The bill which I put in ahead of his was almost identical to the one which was passed. Incidentally,

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Senator Keating [Kenneth B. Keating] was one of the early supporters of that legislation, too, although of course he didn't come to the Senate until '59. I came in '57.

GRELE: Senator Lehman [Herbert Henry Lehman] at one time...

CLARK: Lehman yes. I picked up the torch from Herbert Lehman. You're quite right. You see, he left the Senate before I got there.

GRELE: Why did the proposal fail to pass the Congress in the Kennedy Administration?

CLARK: It was badly handled politically. It could have been passed if it had been handled right.

GRELE: By whom?

CLARK: The White House.

GRELE: Larry O'Brien.

CLARK: Yes. One of Larry's few mistakes. On the whole he was very good. There was

a built in objection from all of the rural elements which of course are very strong in the Senate because of the two senators per state requirement.

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The rural states are vastly over represented in the Senate. Nothing can be done about it. They had the Jeffersonian point of view towards cities as the haven of all evil. They didn't want to see anybody moving in on the same basis at the Cabinet table as the Secretary of Agriculture [Orville L. Freeman] who has done pretty well for the farmer through the years feeding at the public trough. Of course, they were subconsciously, I think, worried about having Bob Weaver, a Negro, in the Cabinet. That still seems to plague Lyndon Johnson right this minute. I think those are the principal motivations.

GRELE: As an urbanite, I'm amazed that people would take a position that's based on this kind of rural prejudice they don't want to...

CLARK: You ought to sit in the Senate day after day.

GRELE: That's amazing. On the Civil Rights Bill, is there anything else that you'd like to enter into the record?

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CLARK: Yes. My particular segment of civil rights was fair employment practices because that was within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower. Senator Humphrey put in a bill which I thought was far better than the administration proposal. We pressed that bill with some modifications through the Labor and Public Welfare Committee. There was a lot of infighting getting it by Lister Hill, but in the end I had the votes, and he was a gracious loser. We saved his face in a variety of ways. It was on the calendar. I was hopeful of proposing it as a substitute to the administration's bill as it came through. But it became obvious that for parliamentary political reasons it would be unwise to do that. It was much more drastic than the bill which was passed. I'm confident in my own mind we'll come to our bill in the next five years; I agreed not to press it then because of

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the parliamentary situation.

GRELE: Did you ever discuss this with the President?

CLARK: I don't think I ever got beyond the Attorney General's office. You see, I was one of those who felt that I had a certain cup of goodwill to drink with the President, and I didn't want to start sipping it until I had to. If I could get what

I wanted out of Arthur Goldberg or Bobby Kennedy or even Nick Katzenbach or Abe Ribicoff, when he was at H.E.W. [Health, Education, and Welfare], and Tony Celebrezze [Anthony J. Celebrezze] afterwards, I would always go there. I don't suppose I went in to see the President more than three or four times while he was in the White House. I wish I could remember what I went to see him for but I can't. It seemed terribly important at the time, and it's gone out of my mind.

GRELE: Were you still on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee?

CLARK: Well, you see, I went on before he became President,

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and I'm still on.

GRELE: Do you recall any of the debates over the Aid to Education or was that apart?

CLARK: Yes, I do indeed but not that he participated in personally. You see, Senator Morse is the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Education. In a way I was his right bower although Pat McNamara and Ralph Yarborough [Ralph W. Yarborough] had greater seniority. I don't want posterity to think that I think Pat wasn't a conscientious senator because he was. But he didn't take an awful lot of interest in some of these drafting sessions. He's not a lawyer. Why should he, after all? Ralph was active. I'm senior in the Senate to Ralph but not on the Committee. Morse and I, I think, are somewhat more compatible than Ralph and Morse. I was up there. Of course, Frank Keppel [Francis Keppel] and I are quite close. Ribicoff was pretty ambivalent about it. He was obviously frustrated and worried. He had Wilbur Cohen [Wilbur J. Cohen] at his right hand. Wilbur thinks

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he's the greatest politician in Washington; in my opinion, he is not. He's a very good civil servant but he thinks he knows where all the bodies are buried. I don't trust his political judgment. Abe was in the process of making compromises with the White House which made him unhappy and made us very unhappy. Wilbur Cohen was telling us he knew the situation and this was all we could get. We might not even be able to get that. So we were all pretty unhappy with the education program. As you know, it didn't get anywhere. It's too bad.

GRELE: Did you sit in on the conferences?

CLARK: Not at the White House.

GRELE: I mean the House and Senate conferences on the...

CLARK: Yes, I was on the conference committee.

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GRELE: I understand Mrs. Green [Edith S. Green] changed her position over a period of time.

CLARK: Well, Mrs. Green is quite a character. I think one has to say even for posterity that the relationships between Senator Morse and Mrs. Green have some impact upon the positions they both take, which is too bad. But I've always felt able to talk pretty candidly to both of them. I like this infighting. I like this intramural discussion and compromise. I always felt that I could play, and I think I have on occasion played a part in bringing Senator Morse and Mrs. Green closer together and in dealing, to some extent, with that curious character, Adam Clayton Powell [Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.]. We have on the House conference committees some first-class people, like John Brademas, who were very useful. Somebody ought to write the story of Federal Aid to Education one day with due emphasis on the personalities involved

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which, in my opinion, played a very real part in the eventual outcome. As the President's views were reported to me, he was pretty frustrated about feeling that he couldn't get done what he'd like to get done, but he was also pretty timid. I think an analysis would show that when Johnson finally found the way to get around the church-state issue not necessarily he, but his advisors—and it seemed a very wise and shrewd political maneuver to me when it turned up—we were able to do an awful lot more than we could before. I have never been too sure who's entitled to most of the credit in that but I suspect the President himself, President Johnson, should receive a good part of it.

GRELE: How important was the church-state issue in those years?

CLARK: Vital.

GRELE: Senator Hill was also on that conference committee.

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CLARK: Absolutely. He was just straight down the line, always in his charming very, very nice and quiet way, but he was just going to be against any type of federal aid to education for parochial schools or, for that matter, for the church-related Protestant institutions.

GRELE: Was Congressman Powell at that time insisting upon the desegregation amendment?

CLARK: Yes.

GRELE: And all of this welled up at the conference committee?

CLARK: Yes. And before the bill was passed in the sessions with Ribicoff and Powell and Morse, the other Senators and me and the H.E.W. people. Let me see, who sat in from the White House on those meetings? I think it was Larry O'Brien. He would report the President's position. Larry was very good on education.

GRELE: At one time I believe Senator Morse informed

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the Committee of the President's position.

CLARK: Yes, Morse went up to see him several times—just the two of them. He would come back and tell us the results. I don't remember what they were at the moment.

GRELE: What was your impression of Secretary Ribicoff's handling of the whole bill in both the Senate and the House? You said he was ambivalent.

CLARK: You hate to say things that might be unfair about your friends which are going on permanent record. I would say that in my opinion he was not particularly distinguished.

GRELE: Other people have told us that too. You have been involved in many attempts to alter the rules of the Senate. Did you ever receive the support of the President?

CLARK: No.

GRELE: No. Did you ever discuss it with him?

CLARK: Nor with the present President neither.

GRELE: Did you ever discuss it with him?

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CLARK: Yes.

GRELE: What was his opinion?

CLARK: His opinion was that it was too hot to handle and that the executive should

keep his big nose out of it.

GRELE: Do you feel that way?

CLARK: No.

GRELE: What is your opinion?

CLARK: My opinion is that if the Democratic party and its liberal wing is going to effectively control the Congress in the years ahead, once we lose our more than two to one majority—which, in my opinion, we have only Barry Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater] to thank; nobody else—we'll be right back in the situation we were in those frustrating Kennedy years when a small minority can thwart the will of the majority when the majority is ready to act. I feel this very strongly.

GRELE: What was the result of your attack upon the senatorial chairmen who refused to support

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the national ticket—most notably Senator Byrd [Harry F. Byrd, Sr.]?

CLARK: They're all gone, haven't they? I suppose a tactful way to put it is that the Grim Reaper and the health factor were on my side. The Senate "establishment" has practically disintegrated, but this is not because of my attack or, if so, only in part. It's because of the passage of time and the working of the seniority system.

GRELE: Did you ever discuss with President Kennedy the attempt to hold back patronage or other favors from these senators?

CLARK: Yes, I'm pretty sure that I suggested that to him as an alternate method for getting his legislative program through—civil rights and all that. His political judgment was different from mine. I suspect he was right.

GRELE: With the construction of the Senate at that time do you see any alternative to dealing with the powerful chairmen?

[-83-]

CLARK: I thought that if he had thrown the full weight of his office behind the leadership and if he could have stiffened Mansfield's back, or put it this way: if Lyndon Johnson had still been the majority leader with the loyalty of the Democratic President, the leadership plus the back row could have beaten the chairmen down. This is one of the most important things in terms of congressional reform: the power

of the chairmen of committees must be made subservient to the leadership, just as the power of the House Rules Committee has now been made subsidiary to the leadership in the House. Kennedy didn't see this; Johnson hasn't seen it. I had it in my book, but I don't know whether anybody read it to him.

GRELE: Do you think the situation will change once the liberals become chairmen of the committees?

CLARK: Yes, but there's a latent danger there always

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which might result in a great unfairness to a preponderantly conservative Senate or House. The chairmen have too much autonomy, too much power. It's been cut down substantially by the erosion of the conservatives. The only three committees in the Senate which the "establishment" still controls and controls them by the narrowest of margins are, first, the Appropriations Committee; secondly, the Committee on Rules and Administration; and third the Armed Services Committee. In Appropriations it's very close and in Rules and Administration it's five to four. I don't think Senator Hayden [Carl T. Hayden] will always be with us and that might change.

GRELE: Who were the President's particular friends in the Senate?

CLARK: He had no friends.

GRELE: He had no friends in the Senate?

CLARK: In the sense that I use the word friends.

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He had many pleasant acquaintances.

GRELE: When he was President, whom did he rely upon in the Senate?

CLARK: I think he worked consistently through the leadership—Mansfield and Humphrey.

GRELE: Did you get any impression that he was bucking a particular element in the Senate?

CLARK: Well, his whole philosophy would have caused him to buck the conservative establishment, but as I say, he was never willing to declare war. I thought that was unwise. Perhaps I'm too much of a firebrand.



GRELE: Were you on the Foreign Relations Committee during the presidency of John Kennedy?

CLARK: No, I was kept off by Lyndon Johnson.

GRELE: How?

CLARK: There were two vacancies in 1960, I think. Stuart Symington had been asked to go on by Fulbright [J. William Fulbright] because Fulbright thought there ought to be an overlapping

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membership between Armed Services and Foreign Relations. Symington had seniority over me so that left one. Lyndon Johnson then pushed Tom Dodd [Thomas J. Dodd] in ahead of me, although I had two years' seniority on him. He was paying a political debt because Dodd was the only Northeastern senator or congressman who was for Johnson in Los Angeles. Also, by that time, Johnson and I were on the "outs" on a number of other matters. I should hastily add for the record that we kissed and made up several years ago. The relationship now is a good deal more than correct; I would say quite friendly although our temperaments are so different we could never be very close.

GRELE: In view of your long criticism on the organization of Congress, do you have any general statements to make about John Kennedy's handling of the Congress in his abilities or inabilities to get legislation passed?

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CLARK: Well, only my general criticism that he was a good deal more timid than he needed to be. But again I say I am in a sense sitting out in the left field bleachers with a good deal of information not available to me which I'm sure he had as manager of the team not only personally but through his quite astute congressional liaison team.

GRELE: As a self-described "peacenik," how did you feel about the campaign for more armaments and the missile gap?

CLARK: Well, I think it's developed, hasn't it, that there was no missile gap, that Symington was wrong, that we were all mistaken.

GRELE: You ascribe this to Symington?

CLARK: Oh, I think Symington was the leading missile gap fellow in the Senate at least. I don't recall that Kennedy took any particular part in it. Perhaps he did and I wasn't aware of it. You see, in those days—in

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retrospect—we all underrated Kennedy. Nobody paid an awful lot of attention to him except as a brash young man who wanted to be president and who would never make it.

GRELE: I was talking about the campaign.

CLARK: Oh.

GRELE: The presidential campaign itself.

CLARK: We had a strong peace plank in the platform.

GRELE: And a strong military armaments plank.

CLARK: Strong military armaments plank—yes. I thought, or I think I thought that Kennedy steered between Scylla and Charybdis pretty well which is not too hard to do. You say, “We are for a vastly strengthened United Nations [U.N.]. We support disarmament, arms control measures, but until we can persuade our adversaries to do the same, we must keep America strong.” This causes me no trouble.

As a peacenik, of course, my delight with Kennedy, and I think the thing I admire

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him most of all for, were those three magnificent speeches he made in September of ‘61 at the United Nations; in June, I think, of ‘62 or it might have been ‘63 at American University; and then the final one at the U.N. shortly before he was assassinated, which I think are the most magnificent, eloquent statements for the cause of world peace through law than any public figure of his stature has made.

I played a part, although a small one, in the negotiations that went on with the White House in the summer and the early fall of ‘61. I was working at that time fairly closely with Arthur Dean [Arthur Hobson Dean], Jack McCloy [John Jay McCloy] and Arthur Schlesinger. We knew that Kennedy was going to go to the U.N. to make a speech. We were all slugging for him to come out for general and complete disarmament under enforceful world law

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which of course had been started by Christian Herter [Christian A. Herter] when he was Secretary of State but very *sotto voce*. There was a tug-of-war going on as to what he should say between the hawks and the doves. I had been useful, although to some extent also a nuisance, to Hubert Humphrey in his successful efforts to get the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency established. And I had been to the White House urging that on the President before it came down. The reason I say I was a nuisance was because Humphrey felt

that it had to be handled *sotto voce* and sort of slid through. I wanted to get up and make a fiery speech. I remember George Aiken [George D. Aiken] made the suggestion on the floor to amend the title from the Disarmament Agency to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I got up to object, and Humphrey came over and said, "Sit down.

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Do you want the substance of this bill, or do you want to kill the whole thing?" I said, "Come on, Hubert. Why do you give up now? You got it out of committee that way. Why do you have to give in to old George Aiken?" He said, "Just take it from me. We've got to take this amendment." So I kept quiet.

In any event, I had been very active in that and I went up to the White House one day with Dean and Schlesinger, I'm pretty sure McCloy was there, too. I had been working through Schlesinger who had indicated to me that it was just "this way-that way" what the President was going to do. I said, "If we can get McCloy and Dean in to see the President, I'm sure we can put this thing across." We waited for awhile, and then Schlesinger came back and said Kennedy would see McCloy and Dean. They came out twenty

[-92-]

minutes later looking like cats who had swallowed two canaries. He made this magnificent speech which I think was the best thing he ever did while he was President.

GRELE: Including the Test Ban Treaty?

CLARK: Well, the Test Ban flowed from that. The Test Ban was an appendage.

GRELE: Can you think of anything we missed?

CLARK: No. If I do I'll write you.

GRELE: Well, put it in on the transcript

CLARK: Yes, when it comes to me.

GRELE: Is there any final comment you would like to make on John Kennedy—his place in history, his attitudes, style...

CLARK: Well, I suppose I should wax eloquently which doesn't come easily at this kind of a show. I always liked him, always respected him. I came to have a very deep affection for him as I saw him grow under the responsibilities of office. I think had he lived

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he would have gone down as one of the very great presidents. I think he's apt to go down as an absolute first class president anyway. In the brief thousand days which he had in the White House I think he lifted the sights of the American people, on the basis of his own inherent but carefully concealed idealism, to levels which few people if any since Lincoln [Abraham Lincoln] have been able to do. I think the world and the United States are richer for his having lived.

GRELE: Thank you very much, Senator.

CLARK: You and I have just been looking at a picture of President Kennedy and me. I can't remember where it was taken but it was after he was President. I suspect it was when I left his Georgetown house that day I told you about having lunch with him. It's a very bad picture of me. This reminds

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me of a very happy and gay picture of President Kennedy, Vice President Humphrey and myself, autographed by the two of them to me and by me to them. It was taken, I think, sometime in 1958 at the top of the steps of the Capitol on the Senate side. I still look at it with great affection and the happiest of recollections of the times we spent together in the Senate: the marvelous humor which he had just below the surface, accompanied of course by Vice President Humphrey's terrific sense of wit. This was a gay moment recorded by this photograph which I shall always treasure.

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[END OF INTERVIEW]

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