

G. Mennen Williams Oral History Interview –JFK #1, 1/27/1970
Administrative Information

Creator: G. Mennen Williams
Interviewer: William W. Moss
Date of Interview: January 27, 1970
Place of Interview: Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan
Length: 29 pp.

Biographical Note

Williams, G. Mennen; Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs (1961-1966). Williams discusses John F. Kennedy's [JFK] presidential campaign (1960), focusing on the campaign in Michigan and the state's Democratic Party. He discusses the issue of civil rights and the Black community as well as Lyndon B. Johnson's vice presidential nomination, among other issues.

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Suggested Citation

G. Mennen Williams, recorded interview by William W. Moss, January 27, 1970, (page number), John F. Kennedy Oral History Program.

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G. Mennen Williams

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G. Mennen Williams – JFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

G. MENNEN WILLIAMS

January 27, 1970
Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan

By William W. Moss

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Governor Williams, I'd like to begin this interview by asking you if you can recall your earliest contact with Senator John F. Kennedy prior to his nomination as presidential nominee for the Democratic nomination for president. Was this prior to 1956?

WILLIAMS: Yes, my earliest recollection of John Kennedy goes back to a meeting in the Senate dining room, and I can't give a time to it other than that it was prior to '56 -- at least I'm pretty sure it was. I can't recall the occasion of why I was there. I haven't checked my files, and I don't know whether there would be anything in them to locate that. But the purport of the conversation I remember quite well because I must have been talking to him about some specific thing. What he told me was, he said, "I wish I could be a liberal like you and Hubert Humphrey, but you can't do that in Massachusetts. You can't do in Massachusetts what you can do in liberal states like Michigan and Minnesota."

This is just sort of an isolated pinnacle that I remember, but outside of that I really have no recollection, with one other exception which I might as well give you at this time. I can't date this; it's datable, but I haven't dated it. There was a luncheon in the Copley Plaza in Boston on the St. Lawrence Seaway. I had been a vigorous proponent of that. Well, I don't know whether.... No, I'm sorry. It was a Democratic luncheon, but the seaway came into

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it. Furcolo [Foster Furcolo] was governor so you can place it pretty quickly from that time, at least within several years.

There were about three or four hundred Democrats there. And when Mayor Curley [James M. Curley], who hadn't been invited to speak -- or former Mayor Curley -- did get up to speak, he viciously attacked the St. Lawrence Seaway and JFK. Apparently Kennedy had said something about it which affected the local industries and this was Curley's effort to strike back. I hadn't spoken yet; I was scheduled to speak, and I wondered what I was going to say about that. But when Jack Kennedy got up, he just took Curley right on square and absolutely demolished him; and as a consequence, I had no occasion to say anything about the seaway, and I said whatever else I had to say about the thing. So that's my memory; and, as I said, these notes I made I don't know how far back, whenever.... You say they started these things [oral history interviews] in '64?

MOSS: Right.

WILLIAMS: So this may have been '64 or '65 that I just put these notes down. So I had a fairly fresh recollection, and I think if there had been other points they would have come to my attention. I don't dredge up any now.

MOSS: Okay. Fine. Let's move on then to the Democratic National Convention in 1956. John Kennedy made a nomination speech for Adlai Stevenson; and at this time, or at least as the general record goes, then Senator Kennedy felt that he had been given the chance to nominate Stevenson as sort of a sop for not being considered for the vice presidential nomination. And then there was great surprise when Stevenson threw the floor open for the vice presidential nomination. Do you recall your reaction at this time to that act of Governor Stevenson?

WILLIAMS: Well, yes. We thought that Stevenson's doing that was rather peculiar, because this certainly wasn't the traditional act of leadership; although, in many ways, it reflected the Stevenson personality, so it might have been expected. We'd been very close to Kefauver [Estes Kefauver], and so we actually were all geared up to go for Kefauver, more or less -- not regardless of what the President said, but we went to the convention with Kefauver in mind for that position.

MOSS: Do you recall at all any of the activities of the Kennedy people in an effort to get the nomination for their man on the floor and around the delegation?

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WILLIAMS: Yes, I have just exactly one recollection. As I was leaving the floor at one point -- and it was rather later than earlier in the proceedings -- I

apparently had my head down and was thinking as I was walking out. Suddenly I heard somebody say, grabbing me by the arm, "Why are you against my brother?" I looked down and was amazed to see a very exercised Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy]. And I was just flabbergasted because we had actually, at that point, no animus either for or against Kennedy. We had come as Kefauver supporters. That Kennedy was running didn't affect our strategy or our loyalties one way or another; and to be asked why I was against Jack Kennedy made no sense at all to me, or would it have to any of us, because we had no feeling against him whatsoever. We just happened to be strongly for Kefauver. Now, that was really the only Kennedy incident I recall whatsoever in '56.

MOSS: Okay. Just for the record I'd like to mention the story that I mentioned before we started taping. There is in the book called *Ballots and Bandwagons*, I believe it is, a story of you and Neil Staebler getting together with Hubert Humphrey, who reportedly was being very ambivalent on the whole thing, back in Sam Rayburn's room behind the rostrum, and trying to talk Humphrey into coming strong for Kefauver instead of sitting on the fence. You'd said that you didn't recall this at all?

WILLIAMS: Well, I don't have any independent recollection of it, although when you just mentioned the position of the room that seemed to strike a dying ember. So, it may very well have something of truth in it. Have you talked to Neil Staebler?

MOSS: Not on this point, unfortunately. I didn't talk to him; someone else did, and they...

WILLIAMS: He may have a recollection of it because he was more directly concerned in the operations of that kind of a strategy and may have planned the meeting and so have a better recollection of it. But it sounds like a very natural thing. We, of course, were close to Hubert and we were for Kefauver, so it sounds like the kind of thing that we might very well have done.

MOSS: The story further indicates some contact between you and Jimmy Roosevelt [James Roosevelt] and Paul Ziffren of the California delegation before the second ballot, the decisive second ballot when it went and then switched.

WILLIAMS: Again I have no independent recollection of that at the moment, but I was close to Paul Ziffren and Jimmy Roosevelt,

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and so it may very well have happened.

MOSS: Do you recall the incident of the vote switching at the end of the second ballot? Do you know what turned the tide?

WILLIAMS: No, I....

MOSS: Okay. Because this is one of the things that nobody seems to be able to pin down, just who did what to whom to make that switch at the end.

WILLIAMS: No, I....

MOSS: All right. Well, let me ask you...

WILLIAMS: May I just....

MOSS: Surely, go ahead.

WILLIAMS: This is out of order, but I might forget it when the time comes. When Jack Kennedy was in the '60 campaign he several times alluded to our opposition to him in 1960, and with a smile he always...

MOSS: You mean in 1956?

WILLIAMS: Yes. No, in the 1960 campaign he alluded to this incident in 1956. He several times thanked Michigan Democratic audiences for keeping him from a disastrous defeat in 1956 and hence enhancing his 1960 chances.

MOSS: Okay. Let me ask you what your general impression of John Kennedy as the 1956 convention closed, the way that he had conducted the whole business of his try for the vice presidential nomination and his potential as a national leader?

WILLIAMS: I guess my answer to that is somewhat disastrous. I don't have a too specific recollection of it. As I say, we were very actively for Kefauver. I had no impression antagonistic to Kennedy at that time except I was somewhat perplexed and, oh, maybe annoyed with Bobby, an annoyance which held for quite a while, although we subsequently became, I think, fairly good friends. But Bobby -- it wasn't only with me -- he had a very unfavorable reputation here in Michigan. Maybe "reputation" is strong, but the impression of him was unfriendly or unfavorable, let me say.

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MOSS: Moving on to the time between 1956 and the 1960 presidential campaign, several things happened, particularly Senator Kennedy's involvement in

the McClellan [John L. McClellan] hearings, in the labor legislation. Do you recall any activity on the part of you or Michigan Democrats in connection with that?

WILLIAMS: No. I was what you might call a very dark horse candidate for the presidency in '60. As you know, I'd been a favorite son candidate in '52 and in '56. I think it was probably '52, although I'd have to check my records, when we made the biggest outburst. And I think it was then that Kefauver and the Democrats in Michigan came strongly together, because while they were pushing their own candidacy, they, for political reasons or otherwise, supported us too. For example, in the demonstrations, all the Kefauver people marched with the Williams people and so on. But he did campaign in Michigan frequently, and we had a close personal association. But I say that mostly to indicate that we were so busy with our own preparations that we weren't at that time.... It wasn't until about, oh, in '59 that we started looking into the Kennedy situation.

MOSS: All right. Let me ask you about the background of your own favorite son campaign in the '60 business. When did this start, and what were your motivation in launching it?

WILLIAMS: Well, as to the motivations, we had in '52 and in '56 the favorite son campaign; and as I was in my sixth term as governor, there were a lot of us that felt that a six-term governor commanded some recognition nationally. We had, of course, fought the civil rights battle, oh, beginning in '52 and '56, and these liberal platforms were one that we wanted to espouse. And so we had something of an organization.

We never had any sizable amounts of money, but I was interested in looking over the records, well, people like Adam Yarmolinsky, Vic Navasky [Victor S. Navasky], Al Davidson [Alfred E. Davidson] at one time or another were all working on our brain trust here for a while. We had four people combing the country: Quimby [Thomas H. E. Quimby], our national committeeman who was more or less in charge of this operation, traveled extensively; and Margaret Price; and then to a lesser extent Adelaide Hart, who is our vice chairman; and, of course, Neil Staebler was working on it. We had -- oh, I can't remember his name -- a liberal, young Democrat from Denver who worked with us for a while. And, for a short while, India Edwards.

We, as I say, maintained close contact with all of the organizations around the country. I spoke extensively around the country,

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and we had brain trusts preparing various kinds of papers and so on and were ready to go. During the course of these trips, you know, we kept getting reports and sounded out where Humphrey was, where Kennedy was. And so we were watching Jack's campaign all during that time. Now, when we sort of shifted from feeling that I was a real potential candidate to looking elsewhere is a little hard to say because I don't have any specific record of that. Well, I'll say I have not looked where there's any specific record of it. I would assume that in the

latter part of '59 we were convinced that the best role that I could play would be one of espousing a liberal platform rather than seeking the Presidency for myself. We built up our alliances and our political operations on that basis.

MOSS: Were you deliberately maintaining an independent position as long as possible to keep your power intact?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

MOSS: Okay, let me go back a little bit to 1959 and the question of the Midwest Democrats Conference. As I understand it, you and your people, in effect, took that conference away from Jake More and his people, the Iowa people who had been running it more or less, and were using this as a base of support, with a view towards making your position as powerful as you could in 1960. Is this fair?

WILLIAMS: That's correct. We in Michigan put together a Democratic manifesto. I forget just exactly when, but we could check that in the records without too much difficulty. That sort of was the basis of our operations. We had close ties with friends in Minnesota and in Wisconsin. Hubert Humphrey had been "our" senator for those dark years when we had no Democrats, and I'd campaigned extensively for Proxmire [William Proxmire] and Gaylord Nelson when they were running for their various offices. And we, along with the Minnesota Democrats, did what we could to turn the break up of the old La Follette [Robert M. La Follette] Republicans into the Democratic Party. So, we had ties there; we had ties into the young people in Indiana, and so on and so forth. And we did take over -- on an ideological basis mostly, but also with a candidate drive in mind -- the Midwest Democratic organization. And it was part of our instrumentality to push the civil rights program.

MOSS: Do you recall the occasion of the Midwest Democrats Conference, I believe it was in Milwaukee in '59, in which just about everybody who was a potential candidate showed up, or at least a representative? Not in any specific way. I recall more closely the.... _____ here in Detroit in the Sheraton-Cadillac, and we had not necessarily the candid.... I remember Lyndon Johnson and all of the other candidates made strong efforts to control this group.

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WILLIAMS: Not in any specific way. I recall more closely the.... We had a similar meeting here in Detroit in the Sheraton-Cadillac, and we had not necessarily the candidates, but I remember Lyndon Johnson and all of the other candidates made strong efforts to control this group.

MOSS: That may be perhaps the one I'm thinking of.

WILLIAMS: Yeah.

MOSS: Okay. Let me move to your decision not to run for governor for another term. When was this decided, and who did you talk to about it before you decided? I know the formal announcement was on the second of March in 1960.

WILLIAMS: Oh, again offhand I can't give you an exact date, but in 1958, of course, we'd had a heart searching debate as to whether I should run for the Senate or run again for governor. And as the next term wore on the question as to whether I should run again for governor or move into something else again was discussed extensively by us. And as I was thinking about the presidency, that was a part of the picture. Then as we moved our thoughts into supporting Kennedy, whether I should stay on as governor or seek to perform some service in the federal government took over. So I would suspect that probably it was in the fall of '59, thereabouts.

Who the specific people were I don't know, except that we had a rather close group of Neil Staebler, Adelaide Hart, Paul Weber, my press secretary for ten years, and John Murray who was then press secretary, probably Lawrence Ferrell who had been my executive secretary, Sid Woolner [Sidney H. Woolner], who was my last executive secretary, Adelaide Hart, Margaret Price, Tom Quimby. I've probably forgotten some, but this was more or less the group that turned these things around -- Al Fitt [Alfred B. Fitt]. You place him? He was my legal advisor, subsequently in the Defense Department, now up at Yale. I think this is the group. We had a pretty egalitarian staff, and all of the people were in the act.

MOSS: Okay. In May, May 7, 1960., you had your state convention and the convention endorsed you as a favorite son for any office. I presume this was still keeping your options open and your power independent as much as you could. AND yet at the same time there was a professional poll of Democratic voters in Michigan indicating a strong Kennedy trend. Did this influence your thinking at this time at all?

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WILLIAMS: Well, we'd make our decision before then.

MOSS: You'd already made up your mind on it. And yet at the same convention you gave Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] a pretty rough time, the famous inquisition of Ted Sorensen on John Kennedy's liberal image and so on. Do you recall that?

WILLIAMS: Now that you mention it, I do. Well, we were a party dedicated group, ideologues you might say, when it came to politics. We believed in programs and called ourselves programmatic Democrats, and we probed John Kennedy too. Sorensen was just part of the general feeling that we wanted to be sure

that we were backing somebody who, you know, wasn't going to be a Curley politician, but somebody who was really dedicated to Democratic principles and programs.

MOSS: Okay. It's my understanding that between the state convention and the Mackinac meeting you and Neil Staebler went to Georgetown personally to talk with John Kennedy. More of the same thing?

WILLIAMS: Yes. Now, we went to visit him before then. I don't recall all of the exact dates. but we talked to Jack in a tentative fashion considerably before West Virginia. What was that day?

MOSS: May 10.

WILLIAMS: May 10. We had, oh I don't know, in February, April or March a discussion with Jack about what we were generally feeling around about. We, as I've already pointed out, had been very close to Hubert, and so we were naturally having our own personal dilemmas. And, of course, the Democratic Party itself had a dilemma. You spoke about a poll being strongly for Kennedy, but I think even as of that time there was still a very strong Humphrey feeling in power centers. So that as 1960 developed, from the beginning we had our own decisions to make, and then we had to decide how, or if and when, we could swing the party. And so we had had early in the year discussions with Jack to feel him out to see what kind of a person we thought he was. And we were quite frank with him about our feelings about Hubert and all of that. And then there was the Wisconsin and subsequently the -- let's see, I think I've got this right.

MOSS: Yes.

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WILLIAMS: Then the West Virginia primaries. And we had more or less in our own minds decided in favor of Jack before Wisconsin, but we weren't in a position to move politically until about West Virginia.

MOSS: Okay. I understand that on the occasion of the Mackinac meeting Walter Reuther was a little nervous about coming out for Kennedy, making a public endorsement at that time, because he was still worried about putting the Medicare bill in jeopardy in the Senate. He had had some approaches on this. Do you recall anything of this?

WILLIAMS: Now that you mention it, I seem to recall something about his hesitancy. I don't recall the reason as you mentioned it. But in any event, he wasn't there. But Millie Jeffrey [Mildred Jeffrey], who of course was a UAW [United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implements Workers of America] person, was a part of the whole operation.

MOSS: Let me ask you what the Mackinac thing was set up with such formality and show.

WILLIAMS: Well, two reasons, One, we had at our -- and I'm pretty sure there were two Georgetown meetings. They may not both have been in his home, but anyhow there'd been a couple in Washington. We had stressed two things with Jack: one, the programmatic aspect; and second, the party aspect, because we were convinced that presidents so often got into office and then took a strongly personal operation and the party withered. We felt that in the long run that was disastrous for our projecting the kind of liberal program that we felt the Democratic party then did and could continue to project. And so we wanted to use that occasion for two things: one, to sort of symbolize to Michigan Democrats, without the possibility of committing in a Convention, and without, obviously, being able to say, "This is the word of the Democrats," to show the tie, one, that the Democratic leadership was moving toward Kennedy and would undoubtedly support him, and the other was that Kennedy was accepting the Michigan Democrats for what we thought we were and what we represented.

MOSS: I believe it was at this time that you were sounding him out as to -- and this fits in with it -- the role of the [Democratic] National Committee, or the possibility of a National Democratic Advisory Council during a Democratic administration, something that we hadn't had before. Do you recall any of this?

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WILLIAMS: Well, we certainly worked on the Democratic Committee. I don't recall that we said anything about the Democratic National Advisory Council because that was a mechanism for the party who didn't hold the presidency.

MOSS: Right. Maybe this got garbled in the writing of somebody else. Now, after the endorsement, after the Mackinac meeting, you had some reaction, didn't you, from some of the Detroit area blacks particularly? They were rather unhappy about this. Do you recall the incident and the trip on the *Caroline* to Georgetown again to take them to see Senator Kennedy?

WILLIAMS: Yeah. If you want to wait just half a second...

MOSS: All right.

WILLIAMS: ... I've got a file on that, which I think is really one of the most significant meetings, not so much from the Michigan Democratic picture but as to really forming Kennedy's philosophy and understanding.

MOSS: Okay, fine. I'll hold this for a minute. [Interruption] All right, let me ask first of all for the benefit of future researchers: This file and others such as it will eventually go into your collection at the Michigan Historical Collection [University of Michigan]?

WILLIAMS: Right.

MOSS: Okay, fine. Just so that others can locate it eventually.

WILLIAMS: I have offered to the Kennedy Library, you know, the right to copy these things at the appropriate time. These files I've kept, in part for meetings such as this and for other reasons, here rather than at the Historical Collections as everything else of that date has been.

Well, first of all let me say that I think there were three main contributions that we were able to make to the Kennedy campaign: One was in the civil rights area; two was in the nationalities area; and a third was the network that my own ambitions as a presidential dark horse candidate had woven together. And that network, of course, the Kennedy people tapped from different areas. I mean in the Minnesota delegation, for example, they had their own lines, but we had lines too.

[-10-]

Well, coming specifically then to this meeting that you mention, I don't recall specifically whether there was the backlash that you mention. But I was conscious of the fact that it was important to get Kennedy on the right track with the Negro and civil rights groups in America. And what I did was, oh, some weeks prior to this meeting, which was a luncheon Monday, June 20, I brought the Negro leadership in Detroit of various colorations together to suggest that we should go down and talk to Kennedy. I said, "Let's discuss the issues." And I said, "Look, you know how we are together. We don't pull any punches. You just hit me now on every line in the civil rights thing that you have in mind, and I'll try and answer them. We will keep this as a sort of an agenda for what our ideas will be when we go to Washington." Then I did arrange with Jack to sent the *Caroline* up and to take the group down.

MOSS: Okay, let me interrupt just a moment and ask why you went that route rather than everybody, say, going commercial.

WILLIAMS: Well, I went that route because I wanted the civil rights and Negro community to feel that Jack was interested in them and that he was making a particular effort of outreach. And also, well, as part of that I felt that Jack had to win them, that.... You know, we even had Negroes at that point who were for Lyndon Johnson. Some were for Symington [Stuart Symington], not necessarily people in this group, but there were. Now just by way of a general explanation, Detroit today has a fairly fragmented Negro spectrum. We've got this Republic of New Africa, and they're not the most left group. And, of course, we have some Negro millionaires. So it's a pretty wide

spectrum, and really nobody is in complete rapport with all of them. I think that in 1960 the community was much more integrated in itself and it was possible to have a group together which would, you know, hold a good number of the opinions. Okay? Do you want to go ahead, or did you have another question?

MOSS: Well, you have more on that particular meeting?

WILLIAMS: Oh, yes.

MOSS: All right. Go ahead with that then. No, I don't have another digression, no. Go ahead.

WILLIAMS: Well, let me just read into the record at this point, although I am not 100 percent sure exactly what this piece of paper means. It's headed, "List of Persons Meeting with Senator Kennedy for Lunch, Monday, June 20th." My name's at the top of the list with a check mark, which may indicate that I went. Mrs. Mildred Jeffrey, the alternate national committeewoman with no check mark, so that may mean she didn't go, and I

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don't...

MOSS: She says she did.

WILLIAMS: Well, then this includes her. Tom Quimby, our national committeeman, also with a check mark. Esther Edwards, delegate at large to the national convention and wife of a state legislator, a member of the Wayne County Jury Commission and also tied into the Motown family. Then William T. LPatrick who was the first Negro member of the Detroit Common Council, former assistant prosecutor and now president of the New Detroit [Inter-racial City Development Group] and an executive in the Michigan Bell Telephone Company. Dr. D.T. Burton who is one of the first statewide elected Negroes. He was elected as a member of the board of governors of Wayne State University. He's owner and director of the Burton Mercy Hospital. Yes, I see in my notes here he's the first Negro elected to a state-wide office since Reconstruction. Then Charles J. Wartman, Jr., who was then the editor of the *Michigan Chronicle*, a Negro weekly, and a very influential person. When I said that it was a much more integrated community, I think his leadership was considerably responsible for that. If he wasn't leading it, at least he knew where all the bodies were and that it was possible to work then in a way that I don't think you can work anymore.

Then there's Otis Smith who was Auditor General of Michigan, which was then the highest elective administrative office of any Negro in the United States, and had previously been chairman of the Michigan Public Service Commission. Subsequently he was appointed by my successor, Governor Swainson [John B. Swainson] to the supreme court. He's now, in

his defeat for reelection to the court, in the counsel's office of General Motors and is a regent by appointment of a Republican governor to the University of Michigan. Then Horace L. Sheffield, international representative of the UAW, AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations], a delegate from the Fifteenth [Congressional] District to the National Convention and a vice president of TULC, Trade Union Labor Council, which is something that the UAW put together as a kind of Negro club on the west side. Forrest Green, a business man, a member of the board of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and a leader in Negro fraternal groups.

Damon Keith, and if you haven't talked to Damon, he has a very vivid recollection of this meeting and he.... Well, at least he has often described this meeting as being of tremendous importance in the education of the president-to-be. He at that time was president of the Detroit Housing Commission and was a vice president of the

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NAACP, member of the board of supervisors and, of course, today is a federal judge. A Dan West on whom I have no description here, but he was at all of our Democratic meetings, and I'm sure a bibliography can be put together on him. Joe Coles, one of the first Negroes to help me in 1948 when I ran for governor, an influential politician in city politics here in Detroit, although he was a member of the, oh, one of the city boards or commissions and has I think recently retired. Now that's the list that I have here. I have also here for purpose of the record other potential invitees that may possibly have been there.

MOSS: I believe there were about a dozen or so people who went.

WILLIAMS: Yeah. Incidentally, one of the people that we originally had on our list was lieutenant governor of Wisconsin, Philleo Nash. I gather from the striking out that he didn't go, and I don't remember his being there. Let's see. We have two, four, six, eight, ten, thirteen on the list; so that's about it.

MOSS: Why would Philleo Nash have been included in that group?

WILLIAMS: Well, this goes back to our associations with Wisconsin and Minnesota. We had close ties with Philleo Nash in part because, if I correctly remember, he was one of my warm supporters in the presidential dark horse business and he was interested in civil rights and Indian affairs. Just how this happened in this particular incident, I don't actually recall, but I see his name on the list here. Also for the record, since this is a rather, I think, interesting and important area, I have a memorandum here that we can copy for you with the subject of Kennedy meeting of June 20 to the staff -- or not the staff, to our leadership group.

MOSS: Yes, that would be very valuable for the collection.

WILLIAMS: I might just read the part dealing with this meeting because much of it deals with other things. So, while you may want the paper, I think this might be in the oral thing.

It's a memorandum dated July 21 to several of my group, the subject already indicated, and the first point was civil rights. It reads:

This meeting was, I believe, with common consent a most successful operation. What it will do nationally in the press I do not know, however I am convinced that its effect in the community in the spread of the word through the normal grapevine will be very important indeed. The discussion was honest and hard hitting with no punches pulled

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and no quarter asked. The reactions were very favorable, I believe. The participants are making their own consensus report, and this will tell the story. Kennedy certainly was given a new insight into a very important situation. I believe he recognized its full impact and is prepared to do what is necessary about it. The meeting itself was most cordial and both Jack and Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] were natural, friendly, and hospitable; and both were interested in all that went on. Millie Jeffrey is entitled to great credit in recommending the names of the cross section and all of the individual participants were most cooperative.

Well, let me go on then and give you my recollection of what happened.

MOSS: Yes.

WILLIAMS: We got there. It was more of a brunch than a lunch. The physical detail was that we sat momentarily in their living room as we got in. At some point Jackie appeared and said hello. And then eventually we went out and into their little terrace, sort of an L-shaped building outside, and we were seated at, I think, several tables, but all together. Often the conversation, even as the meal went on, was general throughout the whole group rather than just by the tables.

Now as I say the discussion was general, but the most significant situation... [Interruption] Well, the hard nut of the situation was that after the general discussion, the thing settled down on the problem that the Negroes were uniformly unhappy with Kennedy's position on the sit-ins in South Carolina, I guess it was. They just couldn't understand why he had to qualify his statement that he was for the Negroes by saying, "If they act peacefully." They felt that this was a sort of demeaning, condescending position, and the argument went back and forth and back and forth. The Negroes were obviously not getting their point to Jack, and they were unsatisfied with his posture.

Finally I tried to sum the situation up for Jack, and I said, "Well, as I understand my Negro friends, what they're trying to say to you is that your insisting on including this 'by

peaceful means' in your statement, although they indicate they have no intention of anything except acting peacefully -- they feel that it's as if you issued an invitation to them for dinner and said, 'Please come to dinner, but wash your hands before you sit down.' Obviously you would expect your guests to wash their hands before you sat down and you would be insulting them if you said that. And by saying this 'by peaceful means'

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you're doing the same thing." And somehow or other this reference seemed to satisfy both sides as summing up what the problem was. Jack then came up with some sort of a statement that satisfied the people generally.

Then what happened was that this group, who had come down some pro-Kennedy, some neutral, and some actually anti-Kennedy, actually drifted out to the front stoop -- and of course the press was sitting out there with all the microphones -- and one by one almost all of the Negroes present got up and made a statement of support for Kennedy.

Well, this was important, but I think the really useful thing was that the NAACP national convention was just a few weeks following and so this group of leaders in the NAACP and in the Detroit community were able to go to that meeting and to tell the story and sell the candidate. And so I think there were two things that were important. One was that I think Jack got a better insight into what the Negro problem was by the demeanor of these people and by finally getting their undrestanding of -- I mean his understanding why they thought he wasn't really taking a proper position. So that he became a more understanding civil rights person. And then second, the fact that the Negroes were sold and went on to sell in the national picture.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

MOSS: Okay, we had been talking about the trip to Senator Kennedy's home in Georgetown. Did you have anything more you felt was pertinent to that occasion that you wanted on the tape?

WILLIAMS: No, except I'll gvie you this list of persons and the possible Negro invitees which also has -- in my own handwriting, which will be difficult to decipher -- some of the sort of agenda we had in mind for it and then this memorandum we spoke of. The other data I have here on civil rights is more general campaign material, including a memo from Harris Wofford, with whom we worked in this area. Okay?

MOSS: All right. Fine. You mentioned the NAACP convention that was coming up. I understand that Sargent Shriver went out to that as the Kennedy representative. Do you recall the effort to get him to go, or anything of this sort, why he was selected?

WILLIAMS: No, I don't recall being privy to that.

MOSS: Okay, well let me move on to another conference then -- there seem to be a lot of them at this time -- the National Governors' Conference at Glacier Park. And again there's a story that gets into the literature of the period that Eliot Janeway approached you with the threat of a block of Medicare again if the Michigan delegation didn't open up a little bit in consideration of the Johnson nomination. Do you recall this at all?

WILLIAMS: No, I don't recall that, but I'm sure that we would have been contemptuous of a threat of that kind.

MOSS: The story is that it backfired because he publicized it.

WILLIAMS: No, I don't recall it.

MOSS: Let me ask about the West Virginia primary a moment, moving back in time, and the general effect of that primary on Michigan, particularly with respect to the Catholicism issue. Do you recall how strong the issue was as a Michigan issue and the effect the West Virginia primary had on it?

WILLIAMS: Well, I think Michigan was a fairly liberal state on the Catholicism issue. We always figure that as far as the Democrats were concerned, two-thirds of the party are Catholics, but we in Michigan have had no trouble in electing Catholics to high office. Frank Murphy, of course, was a Catholic governor. Well, of course, at one time we had two Catholic Senators: Phil Hart [Philip A. Hart] and Pat McNamara [Patrick V. McNamara]. So I don't really think this was too much of a barrier with us. And in Detroit we've always been blessed with great and cooperative Catholic leadership. Cardinal Mooney [Edward Mooney] was a great figure much beloved by the Michigan Protestant clergy as well as the Catholics and his successors have been of equal stature. So to us this wasn't a real issue. The civil rights issue was a much stronger problem for us.

MOSS: What about the Catholicism thing from the point of view of practical politics? Dave Lawrence [David L. Lawrence] in Pennsylvania, for instance, was balking because he thought it just wouldn't work and what they needed to do was win the presidency, irrespective of the getting over the Catholic barrier.

WILLIAMS: No, we did not have that feeling.

MOSS: Okay. Let me ask you then, what were your expectations of the outcome as you went into the Convention in Los Angeles?

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- WILLIAMS: Well, I thought we would win. Well, we were absolutely confident of it.
- MOSS: Do you recall any noticeable favoritism on the part of Paul Butler towards the Kennedy candidacy?
- WILLIAMS: Well, I thought -- yes, I thought he was favorable to it.
- MOSS: In what ways?
- WILLIAMS: Well, Paul Butler was the kind of a national chairman that the Michigan Democrats appreciated. He was programmatic and progressive on the one hand, and he was a party builder on the other. And so we felt close to him. We helped elect him. And well, until you asked the question, I'd really never thought about it, or at least I hadn't thought about it recently, but I have no impression that he wasn't with us. I must say that, but I can't come up with any specific recollections that he was.
- MOSS: But you would say that it was in a programmatic way rather than in, say, the organization of the Convention or the mechanics of the Convention?
- WILLIAMS: I might, overnight, review some of the files I have here. But I felt that we had a fair finger in the mechanics of the Convention. I mean the whole development of the programmatic part and Bowles [Chester Bowles] running this, the fact that we had the preliminary meetings and programs around the country was all orchestrated from a control which was sympathetic to us and which we had some part in developing.
- In an area that I think we ought to discuss at some point, the nationalities area, I can remember specifically that we were able to organize that into the Convention in a favorable way. This group I had been working with for years, and this group was going to go for Kennedy. So we were able to set things up. So I assume that we must have done that with Butler's cooperation.
- MOSS: You were the active chairman of the nationalities committee of the [Democratic] National Committee, weren't you?
- WILLIAMS: Yes.
- MOSS: Ted Green [Theodore F. Green] was the honorary chairman at the time?

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- WILLIAMS: I forget what the exact titles were, but I had worked with Senator Green for a number of years and he was much beloved by all of us. And while he

was still tremendously vigorous and took a great interest in us, of course he was pretty old. And so for all intents and purposes I was the chairman. Actually, at that Convention I was elected as a vice chairman of the party, in charge of the nationalities division, and so I was the effective head and had been.

MOSS: Did you have a role, say, for instance, in getting the Midwest in line in the Kennedy delegate roundup?

WILLIAMS: We did work in that area.

MOSS: What sort of things were you doing, and how did this mesh with the Kennedy operation?

WILLIAMS: I don't have a specific recollection of the details. I worked through my organization, and I would say that Quimby and Margaret Price and Neil Staebler -- of course, Margaret Price, unfortunately, is dead -- would be able to give you more of the details. In that memo that I was quoting from on the civil rights meeting I notice that we also had in it a political program that Margaret Price had drawn up that we endeavored to sell, and apparently did sell, to Kennedy, which had to do with the National Convention. So presumably we were working with Jack as of that time to try and shape up the character of the convention.

MOSS: Did the vote in the convention go about the way you expected it to?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I think it did.

MOSS: Okay. Let's move, then, to the business of the vice presidential nomination. Now were you consulted beforehand?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

MOSS: Okay. Could you...

WILLIAMS: Well, let me....

MOSS: Yeah. All right. Surely.

WILLIAMS: Yeah. Let's.... Early the morning of the day on which the convention made the nomination, there were about

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twenty of us that were called up to Jack Kennedy's bedroom, people like David Lawrence. I remember him specifically, but there were other people of that political...

MOSS: Lindsay Almond?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I think he was there, although I'm not 100 percent sure.

MOSS: This was on invitation from the candidate?

WILLIAMS: Yes, from the candidate. And this was one of these bedroom-bathroom deals where there was some general conversation with the group and then the candidate spoke individually to each person in the group in the seclusion of the bathroom. I can't remember all of the details, but there was a general discussion of different candidates, and I left the meeting with no impression as to who the candidate was going to be, but with a definite impression that Lyndon Johnson was not going to be the candidate.

MOSS: Now, what gave you this impression?

WILLIAMS: Well, a specific statement from Kennedy. He may not have said that "under no circumstances will Lyndon Johnson be the candidate." Politicians don't generally speak in such categorical terms as things develop. But I had reason to believe from what I said and what he said that this was not to be, and I so reported to the Michigan delegation.

MOSS: Do you recall when you first heard that he had chosen Lyndon Johnson?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I recall very clearly.

MOSS: Could you describe it?

WILLIAMS: The time I can't describe in terms of the clock, but in terms of what was going on I can. I was in my rooms at the hotel and it was just about time for us to go to the convention hall. As a matter of fact, most of the Michigan delegation had already left to go out to the hall for the convention proceedings toward the nomination. And I just had one or two of my people with me when Bobby Kennedy came in. Bobby looked sort of forlorn, and it was his sad mission to tell me that Lyndon Johnson was to be the nominee.

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MOSS: You say he looked forlorn. In what terms did he put it to you?

WILLIAMS: Well, I can't put the words in his mouth, but I had the very strong impression that he, as I, didn't feel very happy about the choice. I had a

feeling that he was in favor of somebody else -- I don't know who -- but that he was not in favor of Lyndon Johnson. And of course, I'm sure, there was no question in his mind that the news he was bringing me was not going to be well received.

MOSS: All right. Let me ask you, first of all, had you any indication that you might be getting it?

WILLIAMS: No, no, I... Well, as a matter of fact, I think that I told Kennedy that morning that I hadn't... He may have asked me, you know, not anymore than in courtesy. But I think, as you mention it, he did ask me and that I said no, I had no interest in that.

MOSS: Who else were you interested in as a vice presidential candidate?

WILLIAMS: Well, we actually had no specific preference that I can recall. Well, I mean I can recall that we had no specific preference. Some people were for Symington, and I forget what the gamut was. But the only thing we were pretty solidly united on was that we were not for... Well, we just thought Lyndon would be out of this world.

MOSS: Okay. What was the temper of your delegation when you got back to it?

WILLIAMS: Well, first of all let me develop this chronologically. We were dismayed because, as I already pointed out to you, most of my delegation had already left for the Convention and there were only two or three people around, who were equally dismayed at the news. We were sort of at wit's end as to what we do because we had no means of communication with our delegation at the convention. So we got out to the convention as quickly as we could -- and, as you recall, it was about twenty or thirty minute drive out to the auditorium.

Well, I think there's a lot of history as to what happened. That convention was in a hall. It was very poorly equipped to caucus. We obviously couldn't caucus on the floor, and we couldn't find any

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place to caucus. I think we ended up caucusing in a room which was, well, maybe twice the size of this room here which is -- what? -- about fifteen by twenty or thereabouts, which was a very small room to hold the Michigan delegation. I think we'd gone down to half votes, or quarter votes if we could, and all the alternates and so... It was a hot room, there were doors all over the place, and it was a very low ceiling because I know when I tried to stand up so I could be heard, when I talked my head was on the ceiling and there were pipes running around. Well, to have a secret caucus was almost impossible, or was impossible, because all eyes were on us; and the press were all over, you know, the outside walls of this place tapping the thing. Our delegation when I told them what had happened were furious. And,

well, I can't describe the thing blow by blow, but there was no difficulty in reaching a consensus that our position was to oppose it.

Although we had given our life's blood to get Kennedy in and felt a strong tie with him, this was something that, despite the tradition of supporting the President, we just weren't able to take lying down. We registered the decision not to support it and to fight it in every way that we could. We went back to the floor and sent our runners out to the various delegations to tell what our position was and to seek allies.

Well, Joe Rauh [Joseph L. Rauh, Jr.] and the District of Columbia was, which reminds me. At the convention I had gone around to many delegations to speak for Kennedy and I just get a flashback of going to the District of Columbia caucus because they and the Negro members.... I can remember some woman there. I have no idea what her name was. I practically swore up and down that it would not be Lyndon Johnson because we had assurances of the Kennedy position. Well, they were equally enraged. Maybe not equally. We seemed to have gotten all of the publicity as being the ones who were really out of our minds. I think though we talked to some of our other allies: Minnesota and so on; I think some of the California delegation, although I haven't thought of this for some time and I'm vague. But anyway, most of them reluctantly pulled back and went along, and I think that the District and Michigan, and really only Michigan, were the ones in violent opposition.

We obviously knew that this was not a cause that we could win or even make a suitable showing and that from normal political procedures we weren't winning ourselves a place in the affections of the administration. But we felt so terribly strongly on this that we registered a very vociferous protest.

MOSS: Let me ask you in what specific terms was the Michigan opposition to Johnson, for the record?

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WILLIAMS: The opposition was that.... Well, almost exclusively on civil rights. The Michigan labor people were unfriendly to him maybe for other reasons as well. But I'm thinking now not of their convention position, but their position earlier in the year. Well, we were furious about it. We were unhappy at the way we'd been treated on it because we were convinced that in the morning we'd been advised that it would not be Johnson. And while we had been given the courtesy of the President's brother coming to tell us this, it came too late for us to do anything effectively one way or the other. And so we were just emotionally upset about the whole thing.

Well, that night after dinner I got the delegation together. We had a caucus in which the general purport of the whole thing was to bring the Michigan delegation around to accepting the situation. And you know, we did go away having made up our minds that this was over and this was the way it was going to be. And fortunately for our peace of mind, within, oh, a relatively few days Johnson did make statements on civil rights that satisfied us, and subsequently he did other things so that we felt that the situation was acceptable. But as of the time, we certainly did no.

MOSS: Looking back on it, do you think that the Democrats would have won the election if Johnson had not been the vice president?

WILLIAMS: I know our feeling at the time was that we didn't agree with the assessment that Johnson was critical to victory. We felt that a liberal candidate would have helped carry some of the big states and that in the southern states we would have had some defections, but that by and large we would have come through.

MOSS: Looking back, thinking back over the interview thus far, I'm appalled that we haven't mentioned Adlai Stevenson, his candidacy for the nomination. Do you recall your feelings about that, the feelings of your delegation?

WILLIAMS: Well, yes. We were pretty well organized both politically and spiritually in our own minds. We thought we were supporting a man that we'd tested on the kind of program that we wanted. He had helped us put through that kind of a program in the platform of the Convention. And so our feeling about Adlai was, oh, one of sorry rather than anything else. We just... Well, you know, he was a good friend, and we thought his vacillation was somewhat tragic and his final position unfortunate. Although I can't say categorically, I would feel that this would be the general reaction of almost everybody in the delegation, although we were very

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fond of him.

MOSS: Let me ask you this: What kept him or what made him lose out to John Kennedy in your earlier calculations, before his vacillation?

WILLIAMS: Well, I think the honest answer is he never entered into them. We'd supported him in '52 and '56 but we just didn't think that he was a winner and wasn't in contention.

MOSS: Do you recall the feeling on the floor when he came onto the floor? What was your reaction to his appearance?

WILLIAMS: Well, I can't give you an honest answer on this because I can't put myself back there. The only, you know, real feeling I have about the whole thing is one of annoyance with the kind of untoward demonstrations that occurred at the time, the kind of, oh, you know, packing the galleries, one kid going in with a ticket and then gathering all the tickets and taking them out and getting everybody else up in the galleries. It was, we felt, a kind of artificial, really undemocratic operation. And so that's the only real recollection I have. You know, we were sympathetic to the young people who were demonstrating outside and doing what they thought was right, but we felt that the

attempt to take over the convention hall by sort of illegal means was undemocratic and really not either typical of the candidate or worthy of him. So unfortunately, that's the impression that I took away; maybe it was because I was so partisan for Kennedy. And so the actual nominating speeches and all of this weren't very impressive to me.

MOSS: Okay. Do you think there's anything more on the convention itself that you'd like to set down, anything that I have left out?

WILLIAMS: Well, the only thing I would say is that we made a very definite effort to capture as many young people as we could, and we had a party for the young people at the convention which I think was fairly successful. I didn't have time to really run it down, but before going to the convention we were in touch with every part of the country. I was up in Mackinac Island for a while, and I remember telephoning all over the country trying to put together the kind of coalition which eventually was put together and which we felt we had a part in doing. That's why, when we got there, we felt that, you know, we had the votes and that we were going to win.

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MOSS: What about your recollections of some of the dark horses in a way, like yourself or the people who were nominated without any real chance of getting it: Meyner [Robert B. Meyner], Ross Barnett, this sort of thing, Symington?

WILLIAMS: Well, of course, I knew them all as part of the Governors' Club. Well, I honestly don't have any very distinct impressions of it except as, you know, being a part of the normal campaign operation in a convention where people who are in politics in some position use it as a means of pushing their own political fortunes.

MOSS: What did Meyner have to gain?

WILLIAMS: Just, I think, a mistaken effort to gain prestige is all.

MOSS: What about as the Convention closed? Of course, there was a choice of Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] to replace Butler as the national chairman. How did this strike you? Did you have any role in that choice?

WILLIAMS: No, and I don't.... I would be deducing my reaction rather than relating it. I think there are a couple things that I can mention that come to mind that I might mention. There was a tremendous gathering someplace of Negroes and civil rights groups. I don't know whether I spoke for Kennedy as the principal speaker, but I did appear there for him, and there were people that appeared for the other candidates. I remember the man who appeared for Johnson just -- it was a miserable thing because of....

I'm trying to remember who it was. I think it was a friend of mine actually, whose name escapes me at the moment, the former Secretary of the Interior, who I think came from Colorado, is now a lawyer.

MOSS: Chapman [Oscar L. Chapman]?

WILLIAMS: Yeah, Oscan Chapman, Oscar. It was either he or somebody of equal stature. And he was just murdered. While obviously I wasn't for Johnson, I just felt so sorry for the fellow appearing before this group. And, you know, by that time this group received the Kennedy pitch, from whoever put it on, very well. We did have that meeting that I mentioned in which we invited all of the candidates to appear before our nationality groups, and we had spent some time in the various delegations trying to promote candidacy of the nationality group personalities. They had been successful, and other nationality people came to the convention. We had a fairly sizable group to receive the several candidates. Kennedy

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did a good job with them, and I think they did a good job for Kennedy.

MOSS: What kind of approach did he use with them?

WILLIAMS: I really can't recall the specifics, but we had coached him, and I'm sure that in my files someplace we can discover more or less what the approach was. I mean I can't remember what he said, but it was a friendly approach as he was able to do so well. I think that we had a meeting on August fifth and sixth with the senator, but this was after the...

MOSS: Yes, there was one up at Hyannis Port about that time. Gung-Shing Wang of Chicago was up there, I believe, at that particular meeting.

WILLIAMS: Well, I don't know whether I've got the list of everybody who was there or not, but Cieplinsky [Michel Cieplinsky] and I organized that.

MOSS: One footnote again is these little bits of resorts that were popularized at the time that need sort of nailing down. I suppose I should really ask Mrs. Williams this. There's a report that upon the announcement of the nomination of Johnson she threatened to turn in her JFK button.

WILLIAMS: Yes, she did.

MOSS: She did?

WILLIAMS: She was wild. We didn't publicize that particularly, but people who

wanted to destroy us with Kennedy did. Yeah, this was a very hard blow to us. There is no question about it. Yeah, I have here copies of statements which I am sure are in the Kennedy files, the press statements, and yet I'm looking at the August sixth meeting.

MOSS: Yes, there's a copy of that. All right. Okay. We're through the convention now. I'd like to shift gears a little bit and talk about Michigan and what was going on in the state. You had decided not to run for governor again, so this left that post open. John Swainson and Jim Hare [James M. Hare] were jockeying for this.

WILLIAMS: Right.

MOSS: Did you throw your weight in any direction on this, or were you keeping out of it deliberately?

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WILLIAMS: Well, we had a meeting -- and I can't give you the date -- of all of my cabinet, as it were, and discussed the whole situation with Hare and Swainson present; and it was sort of the consensus of that group. I don't think that I had any, you know, particular feeling of going one way or the other, either out of personal preference or out of leadership of the party, but I felt that we ought to sit down and try and figure out if there was a consensus and go ahead. That group came out in favor of Hare, and it looked, you know, that was the way it was going to go. But sometime later Swainson came back and said that he was going to run and he had support, and he eventually did win. But I did not involve myself in the primary.

MOSS: What do you think...

WILLIAMS: As a matter of fact, I never involved myself in contests, with two exceptions. One, when George Fitzgerald, I think it was, ran against Phil Hart for lieutenant governor, I did support Hart as strongly as I could. And in one other case there was a state senator who had been very close to the Communists, and I opposed him. But outside of that I never took sides.

MOSS: Now what do you think led to the Swainson victory? What were the factors in that that gave him the edge over Hare, who was in a strong position?

WILLIAMS: Yes, he was the great vote-getter of the party and, of course, stayed in his office, is still there, and probably would win again if he could run again,

but his health is bad. Well, I think that Swainson had the support of labor, and I think in the party primary this gave him a big edge to begin with. What other groups he had in his coalition I don't recall.

MOSS: Well, let me ask you about the relationship between what we might call the labor wing of the Democratic Party and the citizens wing of the Democratic Party in Michigan.

WILLIAMS: I hope you don't say that labor isn't citizens?

MOSS: No. No, I understand this, but I'm trying to make a little distinction between the labor and non-labor portions of the Democratic Party. Is there any contesting for initiative amongst these groups, or are these...

WILLIAMS: You mean now?

MOSS: At that time, or is this a valid distinction?

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WILLIAMS: Well, the labor group or particularly the UAW, which is a dominant force in this state, is a pretty well articulated and disciplined group. And so they move with a considerable clout. There always are people who are opposed to labor groups, and there are some in the Democratic Party; but, by and large, during the years there was a general agreement on our objectives so that, you know, there weren't labor objectives and other objectives. And so, by and large, we lived together pretty peacefully and cooperatively. In the early days the UAW would go to convention and they'd have a sort of labor caucus and talk, which was sometimes somewhat upsetting, but we gradually ironed most of those things out.

MOSS: Well, one reason I brought this up was that there's a point in his book where Teddy White [Theodore H. White] talks about Neil Staebler's citizens politics organization as being the best in the Midwest and that when it came time to go for the national campaign for the presidency, he didn't want the JFK people coming in and telling him what to do. Do you recall how this was ironed out, or if this is a valid statement?

WILLIAMS: Well, first of all, are you connecting this with the labor thing?

MOSS: No, I'm in a way explaining the reference to citizen politics. You said that...

WILLIAMS: Well, I mean we felt that the labor people are part of the citizens politics.

MOSS: Right. Okay. Yes, I got this earlier.

WILLIAMS: When you're talking about Staebler's citizens politics, this included the labor people.

MOSS: Okay. So I guess we're moving on to a new thing really.

WILLIAMS: Yeah. Well, as I said earlier, Bobby Kennedy had not made too good an impression on Michigan people, and at least for a considerable period of the first part of the campaign we just told him to stay the hell out of here, to put it in impolite language. It wasn't so much we didn't care to see him as that he would do his brother no good by being here. There was just a feeling of antagonism, not because of his being the messenger at the convention. This was just something that was a carryover from '56. But there was just a feeling he had been the hatchet man, or something anyhow. I speak without fear of successful contradiction that at

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that time he was a very unpopular person with the party here.

Now, going to your question. We had a feeling that we knew how to win this state for Kennedy a lot better than any of their people did. And of course, this is true with any presidential group. The advance man that come in are worse than the Secret Service. They come in and tell you exactly what to do and how to do it, and half the time we were confident they didn't know what they were talking about. So, it took a little while to get the two sides in a tolerable working arrangement.

MOSS: Do you recall any particular boners pulled by the Kennedy people, Jerry Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno], for instance, or John Carver as coordinator?

WILLIAMS: Not at this time I can't recall. You know, they didn't know the people, and I think there were.... Well, you know, when it came to head table arrangements and things like that they wouldn't have a fair representation of people. I mean Jerry Bruno, you know, we became quite fond of him after a while, but it wasn't until we'd worked off our rough edges and he'd worked off his as to what to do.

MOSS: Well, of course, the opening of the campaign, Labor Day and so on, was pretty well an AFL-CIO-UAW show, wasn't it, that first day?

WILLIAMS: Yeah, well this was a tradition going back at least as far as Harry Truman. I don't know what the situation was in the Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt] days. And the labor people, of course, this was their day. We had always worked with them, but it was their show and we didn't mean to try to take it away from them. But, you know, we didn't feel any particular problems because we were used to each other and had worked together on it.

MOSS: Okay. Would it be fair to say that the Kennedy people left the running of the campaign in Michigan pretty well up to you and your forces?

WILLIAMS: I think they did eventually, although, as I say, as time went on we found we could work with the Kennedy people more and more and so we did cooperate and were glad of their help. And, of course, whenever the candidate came to town, obviously they had a big part to do with it.

MOSS: Okay. What were the things that you were hitting hardest? Where were the gut issues in this for Michigan?

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WILLIAMS: Well, maybe after lunch I can refer to the files because I think I can give you that specifically.

MOSS: Well, I think after lunch I have an appointment with Leonard Woodcock at 2:00 so I think we're going to have to forego the afternoon thing.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

MOSS: Shall we break this now since we have a rather convenient stopping place?

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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