

**James W. Symington Oral History Interview—JFK #1, 1/18/1968**  
Administrative Information

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James W. Symington (born 1927) was a Missouri political figure who served as the Deputy Director of the Food for Peace program from 1961 to 1962 and as administrative assistant to Robert F. Kennedy from 1962 to 1963. This interview focuses on Symington's contributions to John F. Kennedy (JFK)'s 1960 campaign, his role within the Food for Peace program, and Symington's belief in JFK's New Frontier, among other issues.

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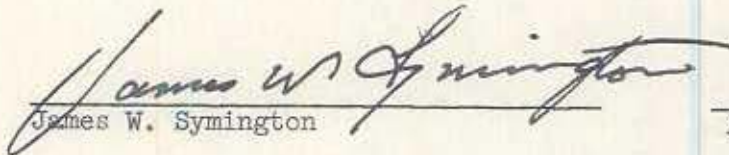
By James W. Symington

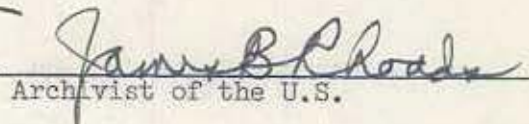
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James W. Symington—JFK #1  
Table of Contents

| <u>Page</u> | <u>Topic</u>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | Connection between John F. Kennedy (JFK) and Stuart “Stu” Symington    |
| 2           | Stu Symington’s involvement in the Joseph McCarthy hearings            |
| 3           | James Symington’s interactions with JFK during 1960 campaign           |
| 6           | Selection of Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) as JFK’s vice-president           |
| 7           | Robert F. Kennedy (RFK)’s request for Symington to join JFK’s campaign |
| 11          | Issue of JFK’s Catholicism on the campaign trail                       |
| 18          | Symington’s involvement with Food for Peace program                    |
| 23          | Decline of Food for Peace program                                      |
| 25          | Food for Peace leaders’ visits to Latin America                        |
| 28          | Symington’s passion for JFK’s New Frontier policies                    |

Oral History Interview

with

JAMES W. SYMINGTON

January 18, 1968  
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

SYMINGTON: I could go back to '52, at least in an indirect way. I was in law school from 1950 -- the fall of '50 I went into Columbia Law School, having been graduated from Yale in that June of '50. And in 1952 when my father [Stuart Symington] went home to run for the SEenate, I took a year out of law school to help him. Virtually a year, it was a little over half a year, and I had to make up the credits, so I had to put in another year later. So I graduated in '54 instead of '53. But, in that year, '52, campaigning along in Missouri, whenever we saw the papers, we'd notice another interesting campaign of a new entry into the Senate world going on in Massachusetts at the same time by the young congressman, JFK, which was equally successful as ours in upsetting the incumbent. And I remember some articles in both national magazines and local papers showing the two new senators. So they, in a way, began that level of political career together, and I think they had some consciousness of that. I think they formed a quick friendship based on having gone through the fire at that particular time together. Both of them ran against quite conservative incumbent and so on, so they had some experiences to share, in addition, I think, to a kind of "happy warrior" approach to the whole business of politics

and some pretty sound thinking and connections with the real world as distinct from, say, the abstract or intellectual world.

Then, in 1952 or '53 I was back at law school again, and I remember in the evenings I used to sing professionally down at the Sherry-Netherland Hotel, and I think -- yes, it was in January of '53 after I got back to law school and went back into the nightclub, which was helpful in many ways, financially, and also took my mind off law, which was quite a drag, I thought. But in came three rather lovely girls who were Pat [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] and Jean [Jean Kennedy Smith] and Eunice [Eunice Kennedy Shriver]. And I'm quite sure they were escorted; I can't remember who those fellows were, but I remember the girls very well. They came to take in the show, and they knew about our campaign a little bit, and we sat and talked for quite a while afterwards. That's the first time I met any members of the family; it was the three sisters, as I recall.

Then in 1954, of course, I was getting out of law school and taking my exams and wondering how I would ever get through the exams since almost every single day in May I was glued to that TV set watching the McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] hearings. That was really the first time I had a chance to see Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] in motion, you might say. I'd heard a little bit about him.

Then, in 1956, I believe the Convention was in Chicago. And I recall Dad went up there just by himself with my mother and no aides of any kind. Just on a hunch, I asked my law firm -- I was then practicing law in St. Louis -- if I could take a few days off and go up, and they said fine. I went up, looked in on my father, and there he was trying to answer five phones in his room by himself. So I spent the time there, and in that period used to meet in the corridors occasionally and have quick introductions, and met the then Senator John F. Kennedy and, of course, saw that drama and heard a lot of the things that went on about the vice presidency.

[ -2 - ]

Then, in 1960 -- in '58 I was gone for his second, I guess that was his second campaign. Well, I was in England then in the Foreign Service. I left and joined the Embassy in London for a couple of years, and from '58 to '60 just read in a most interested way the development of candidate images for the 1960 election. And I remember that Dad was the dark horse, that Kennedy was not so dark. And I remember one article, I think it was Max Freedman, on the difference between their recommendations on birth control. As far as I can recall, I think Dad's is pretty much what we've ended up with; whereas, at least at that particular time, I think Senator Kennedy felt that we shouldn't get into this matter very much.

HACKMAN: He had some changes to make on that issue.

SYMINGTON: Yes, right. And the funny thing at the time was that my old man seemed to get a lot of criticism for his position whereas everybody was fairly satisfied with the other one.

In any event, back I came when I learned that my father was running for the top job. I had to leave the Embassy; I remember I left with a couple of months to go to complete two

years, which meant I had to pay to get all my gear back. At that time the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] didn't give you a deduction for expenses for moving. I remember I called up whoever was the Commissioner at that time and said, "Can't we get that?" And later we did get that, but not in the time for me.

In any event, I came here and went in the law firm of Arnold, Fortas and Porter and went to work, but soon found myself on the hustings for my father and went into about thirty states for him and during the primary campaign met Senator, later President, Kennedy frequently. His wife, Jackie, had been really an old friend of, particularly, a cousin of mine and my brother's, all being more or less contemporaries. I remember one time Senator Kennedy regretted that she wasn't with him, you know, but pointed out that a wife could take just so much campaigning.

[ -3 - ]

Another time we were together down in New Mexico; it was around the fifth of June, I think, in 1960 at the state convention in Santa Fe. There were four speakers, three speakers: there was myself speaking for my father; and then there was Senator Kennedy speaking for himself; and Speaker Rayburn speaking for the President [then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson]. So I was in pretty distinguished, awesome company. I remember I worked pretty hard the night before on a talk -- a not too serious talk -- about my father assuming an interest in this office which thirty-five years ago he had promised to my brother, who was just born at that time, you see, and why he had suddenly decided to step in and take it from him. In any event, it was a lovely evening, and people were very kind to me, nobody more so than Senator Kennedy, who turned around to me as he was getting up to make his speech and smiled that great smile of his and said, "I hope I don't have to hear that speech again," which was very nice of him to say.

Then came the Convention. Of course, at that time I met a lot of the fellows around him because we were all spending the night in that crazy hotel. Pierre Salinger, particularly, talked about it and kidded around and had some laughs. Parenthetically, I think Senator Kennedy and the people around him felt that our candidacy was a serious effort to forward our interests but was not in any way geared to damage anybody else's, that this was pretty clear. It wasn't a winner, but I think it preserved the respect of really all the other candidates, which may be no consolation to one who puts victory above everything, but, in retrospect, for me it is a great consolation. I can't tell you the number of people who've come up to me in my visits all around the country in various jobs since then who express pride in having known Dad and the way he handled it and that kind of stuff. And they say we were everybody's second choice, and that is not a bad thing to be, but we were actually the first choice of quite a few wonderful people, and we will never forget those days or those friends.

[ -4 - ]

At the Convention, I remember some fellow got up and sang "Anchors Aweigh" -- I think it was "Anchors Aweigh" -- for Kennedy, if I'm not mistaken. And I wondered how that happened because it was so directly related to his image, so I went up to Clarence

Cannon, the parliamentarian, and said that I had done a song to the tune of the Artillery Song, "Symington, he's the one, to get it done," you see. He allowed as what they didn't really need that as part of the program. I must confess I don't think that was discrimination, but at the time I was a little exercised about it because, I don't know whether you were there, but anyone who was knew that every candidate was trying his best to make his demonstration the big one and the best one. The most dangerous one clearly was the Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] demonstration, not that he had anything to do with it personally or could have carefully selected his people because some of them told me that he never came to their headquarters. The chief of police turned to me and said, "Here comes the long haired boys and the short haired girls." And that was part of the group that decided that that's where their hopes lay, and they came in. And then they had a huge petition wrapped up in the form of a giant ball, a sphere; it was about eight feet in diameter. And it was quite comical, I'm sure, for the television viewers to see it floating around, but if you got under that thing, it was near extinction. A lot of people were screaming and desperately pushing it away. It could have killed a lot of people. Those were aspects of the Convention which probably the health and welfare authorities ought to take a look before they have another convention.

But now I'm getting away from the.... I don't know how far I can get away, and I don't have so many personal notes to make, so perhaps I can just get to those, and then you can ask other questions, but I'm just giving you the thoughts as they pop in my mind as I trace the contact, either direct or near, that I had with President Kennedy.

After he was nominated and that curious period between his nomination and the election and announcement of the vice presidential thing during which our family was quite well prepared to accept the vice presidential nomination.... Even though all of us had felt that Dad could be more effective and happier really in the Senate as an independent movant of the things he believed in, nevertheless, there

[ -5 - ]

were those who counseled that if this is offered, it is not to be rejected. And so we were sort of psychologically getting prepared to accept it and, therefore, were left with somewhat mixed emotions when, in fact, it was just an abstraction, and it was going to Mr. Johnson.

HACKMAN: Can you remember who was giving your father this advice at the time to accept the vice presidency?

SYMINGTON: Well, I can, but I think that it'd be better to get that from him because these were really small meetings and personal and intimate moments, and if he wants to discuss them, he can and I don't see why he wouldn't, but that's really up to him. Of course, you can still get back to him if you want to get into any of this matter. In any event, I'm sure he knew what the obligations of a man in public life who had made this effort were if he were to be asked by the President to serve with him. Anything the nominee asks of any Democrat in those difficult moments is something to deliver on unless there's a very peculiar reason not to do it, and there was nothing like that. So I'm sure



he'd have done it anyway, but there were those who would have helped him make that decision.

I must say my brother and I felt it would have been a great mistake to become a candidate for the vice presidency and thereby give up the forum that he had. Of course, the character of the vice presidency had changed under Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] and become more assertive and forward looking, creative, and I think, with President Johnson continued in its growth and with Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] is an extremely important position not only ceremonial, but legislatively creative and with real leadership opportunities because there just is so much time that the President can spend on moving his own ideas among Congressmen, among the people, centers of thought, papers, industry, labor, so forth, to say nothing of overseas and the trips that Humphrey's taken, and they've had a great impact, I think. From where I sti now I know how badly some countries wanted him, the Vice President, to come just so they could get through to him, hopefully then to the President, to the American people. So perhaps I have a different view of the vice presidency

[-6-]

today than I did the, but I was always remembering Alben Barkley's attitude about it and that of some other people, and they sort of thought it was the greatest mistake they ever made.

But then, of course, I went back after the Convention to St. Louis a couple of days, and Bob Kennedy, who I've since learned never sat back to count either blessings or chickens or anything, called me up and said, "I'd like you to help with the campaign." I said I'd like to do it, and I'd like to check with my law firm. Of course, they were more than happy to have me continue campaigning. So I then went to work for the Kennedy-Johnson ticket as a kind of a roving liaison between, gosh, I guess it was Dick Donahue's [Richard K. Donahue] outfit, Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien], all under Bob, and the apparati -- if that's the plural of apparatus -- of the West and the north Middle West. So I went to places.... I went to California, met Jesse Unruh, and was briefly in Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, then up in all the Dakotas, Wisconsin, Minnesota.

I remember Wisconsin was quite comical because I think that's where this fellow, a friend of Jack's, Lem Billings [Kirk LeMoyne Billings], was the coordinator, or whatever they called them. And I never saw a guy not coordinating more thoroughly than he was, but he was very funny about it, and everybody knew him there, but no one seemed to take ole Lem terribly seriously. And there was a big split between -- oh gosh, the mayor of Madison who later came here....

HACKMAN: Nestingen?

SYMINGTON: Nestingen?

HACKMAN: Ivan Nestingen.

SYMINGTON: Ivan and Pat Lucey [Patrick J. Lucey], and Lem was hardly the catalyst that was going to bring them together somehow. I spent interesting times

with both of them. I went and saw William J. Erjue, you know, the old newspaper man.

[-7-]

HACKMAN: Right, from Milwaukee. No, he's in Madison.

SYMINGTON: Is he still alive? Great guy. And he told me a great many things about McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] that I hadn't known because he was there at the very genesis of the McCarthy thing. He said that the whole thing started when McCarthy was sitting with a couple of rather patriotic and perhaps not overly sophisticated Catholic priests and asked them, "What can I do to get an issue?" and they said, "How about Communism?" and that they had ruded the suggestion. But in any event, that was one of the most interesting states that I covered, adna the fact is that it apparently had been embarrassed by the *richesse* of buttons and posters and dough spent on the primary, but there was not a button nor a card nor a stick-pin nor an acorn to be found for the general election. Once they had taken the primary, it was abandoned to the wolves, and they were all a little bit upset by this. And I can just see now that, you know, the breaks of the game. This is a tough world, and you can't depend on everything. If I'm not mistaken... [Interruption]... under Bob. I wrote reports for him, and I have copies of them somewhere. I'd send them in to Dick Donahue and Larry O'Brien.

HACKMAN: What were these? Primarily, for instance on problems that were existing between the regular organization and their coordinators?

SYMINGTON: I would report on the status of morale, generally, of what I would perceive to be public reaction to the views and personalities of the candidates, and then intra-party problems and surfacing of the new leadership or attitudes of the leadership to the way the Kennedy-Johnson campaign was going and so on. And then I would sort of try to say, you know, summarize, conclude, that this state will or will not go for the ticket. I think I concluded that Wisconsin would not, under the state of things as I found them, but I'm sure that's something that they had already calculated and programmed.

[-8-]

Looking back on it, I feel a little silly being sent in there to tell them something they already knew, but I guess they felt they had to do something they already knew, but I guess they felt they had to do something with me, and maybe they just didn't know quite what that something was. The Symington name had a lot of good will, and they knew that I could get youth groups pretty easily with my music and the approach that I had. Incidentally, the Youth for Symington under Jerry Litten of Chillicothe was acknowledged to be the really best, most motivated, effective youth group, so it was asked to serve directly under the Kennedy-Johnson banner, and it did.

HACKMAN: What about Missouri? Did you spend much time in Missouri?

SYMINGTON: That time? Yes. Quite a lot of time there.

HACKMAN: Phil Des Marais [Philip H. Des Marais], I believe, was the coordinator?

SYMINGTON: Yes, Phil Des Marais.

HACKMAN: And I believe they had a lot of problems back and forth between the regular Democrats. Can you recall any of that?

SYMINGTON: Yes, I guess this would have stemmed even back again to the '56 and '52, for that matter, the Stevenson.... Stevenson was the first man, I guess, in modern political memory who seemed somehow to smoke out a lot of amateurs and get them really exercised about politics and particularly about *his* politics. And this was a new phenomenon. At least, if it happened before, it hadn't happened for quite a while. It was relatively new in places like St. Louis and St. Louis County where the Democrats had been in control quite a while and who felt that.... I mean, the party had been in control and the old timers felt that they knew what to do, how to do it, when to do it. So I remember when Stevenson's plane came in, a lot of these professors and musicians and artists, guys like me, you know, wanted to get out there and ride in the car with him. Well, there wasn't room, and there were fights and squabbles about that, and I thought, how silly,

[-9-]

you know, my God. But the proximity to the candidate was something people were willing to go to the mat for, you know, and when you're a guy who's the chairman of the central committee or something, you don't like to share the seat with some fellow who teaches Latin and you've never seen before. This was a great problem under Stevenson and I think to some extent under Kennedy and is still with us, but I think perhaps the pros are a little bit back in the saddle now ordering events, and the other fellows have gone back to the campus and are waiting for their next move, planning and so on.

So, your question was Missouri. When Phil Des Marais came in there, he discovered this. Missouri, even the sophisticated cities like St. Louis, particularly, and Kansas City, is a provincial area and one which looks with great skepticism on the ideas and suggestions of newcomers, whether it's in politics or any other field. When my dad went out there in industry, they thought, "Who is this guy?" You know, he went out there; they had a ninety day sit-down strike at Emerson in 1938, and he said, "Well, I'm going to talk with the union." And everybody was aghast, "Talk with the union! What kind of betrayal is that? Nobody talks with unions." But the stock was worth nothing, and after he talked with them, he said, "How about, you know, union check off, dues check off, and closed shop?" And they said, "Well, that's what we want." He said, "Okay, you've got it. Now, let's have a profit sharing plan. How about that?" The union guys were dizzy; they didn't know what to make of it. The country club crowd was enraged at these socialist innovations, and in about a year the stock

was up from zero to twenty-seven, and the whole thing was humming, and then they recognized Stuart Symington. Up until then, they'd been willing to tolerate him because of Eve Symington, my mother, who came with credentials that they could recognize from the society pages and that kind of thing, you see. And in politics, here comes a guy in, and he says, "Look, I'm talking for Jack Kennedy and Johnson, and we want to clean up all this dissent and all these factions out here and work together." So both houses turned to him and said, "A plague on you, buster. We'll handle our own affairs." So I don't recall any real details about it except sitting down with Phil at one point and having him pour out his

[-10-]

heart to me about the troubles, and then hearing later from my brother and some of the people about this guy, Des Marais. "Well, he's a good guy." "Yes, he's a good guy, but he ought to stay home. He doesn't know anything about us." And he didn't know much about them, I must say. And this is always a problem for an advance man, I guess. There's a certain fraternity among professionals, and advance men probably ought to be professionals and not amateurs. By professionals I mean people at least versed in political dialogue between pros so that they can somehow get on the same frequency, and it isn't some guy that has a Masters in the social sciences coming and talking to the district chairman.

HACKMAN: Did you find that a problem everywhere?

SYMINGTON: Everywhere. Everywhere, yes. The thing, now that I think about it, about the success of the Kennedys is that they, on the one hand, could attract every dissident intellectual that had broken loose from his moorings, and at the same time they never took their eye or their hand away from the professional apparatus in a given community. In fact, the intellectuals would be buzzing like flies around him, but at that very moment they would be making the deal with the very guy who could deliver the vote and not some fellow who could make a graceful speech in somebody's basement to thirty ladies or something like that. So they really understood both aspects. On the one hand, you can't shut off this great yearning of people to feel that their deepest philosophy is somehow finding a forum in your court and your life and your speeches and in your policies. On the other hand, you can't let that distract you from doing business with the professional team.

HACKMAN: Can you remember talking to any of the candidates for state office in Missouri and what their feelings were at the time? I would imagine Kennedy on the ticket created some problems because of religion and agriculture in a number of areas.

SYMINGTON: Yes, well, Missouri then and still to a great extent is a conservative state politically with islands of liberal progress, like the big cities, on civil rights and matters like that. I used to work on civil rights restaurant ordinances when I first got out of

[-11-]

law school -- that was an issue in St. Louis -- overcame it, and now we don't have that particular problem. But in rural Missouri, why, it would still be -- although it's now national law -- a less easy adjustment for the locals to make. And people running for state office reacted to that part of the philosophy adversely. Then you do have the "Bible belt" and a great many people in rural Missouri, whose vote collectively is equal to that of the two big cities, who were just anti-Catholic, that's all you can say about it. Against that, you had very militantly martyr-like Catholic support wherever you could find a Catholic. Then you had a great many people who just weren't going to let religion influence their decision, and I think their vote was more or less split, too, so that the darn state was really split down many different middles, resulting in Kennedy carrying it by, I think, nine thousand votes.

And I am confident that my father's incessant and continuing speech-making and work and effort and quarrel-patching all throughout the State can certainly be credited with that many votes, the margin of victory. There may have been other elements, too, but I think without his influence -- and, of course, he was greatly admired and respected and a lot of people would feel, I'm sure, "Well, if Stu Symington thinks this is the way to go, we're going to go." So I think he gets a lot of credit for carrying the state for Kennedy. You know, he was just campaigning for the ticket at that point.

Well, that was the campaign. Did you want me to comment on any other aspect of the campaign?

HACKMAN: I was just wondering on any of the other states, in the reports you sent in of this type of friction, if they did anything to compensate for it? Could you see that they took any action, or did they more or less let things run this way...

SYMINGTON: They let things run, I think. I remember I gave a speech to a men's group in Oklahoma, and for some reason I let myself get impassioned about the need to evaluate a man's political contribution on the basis of his political beliefs and not his religious beliefs. I remember really for the first time in my life -- because I'd made quite a few talks around ever since I got out

[-12-]

of school, talking, singing, fooling, just generally trying to project ideas to people -- this was the first time I saw that a veil had come down between me and the audience, and they just weren't listening. I was "blowing in the wind," as they say nowadays. And yet they were so inured to hearing this kind of a pitch that they weren't particularly embarrassed by it; they just had a way of turning off their antenna, and I just felt that my message was just glancing off, just going up into the sky. And it was a very uncomfortable feeling because when you reach that point in a dialogue, your urge is to change gears and to start lecturing, saying, "Now look here." But, of course, you couldn't do that; it would have been a very foolish

thing to do. So I just sort of faded away like we hope the Viet Cong will do, you know -- and I didn't just make an issue out of it -- and left there knowing full well that they all just sort of shrugged and thought, "Well, we've been through another one of those evangelistic experiences, and we've come out intact. We're still going to oppose this guy."

HACKMAN: I wanted to skip back a little bit to your father's plans in '60. What can you remember about the way this worked out in the spring? At the time you came back from London, had most of the decisions been made about whether they were still going to consider going into a primary, or was this absolutely...

SYMINGTON: I don't know when the decisions were made to avoid all the primaries. I do know some of the thinking that went into that. He announced in March sometime, I think. Of course, I wasn't privy to any of his conferences with his advisors. His closest advisors were in those days were Clark Clifford -- I mean nationally known ones -- Frank McKinney. He may have had some others nationally known; he had a lot of good friends all over the country. Remember, he had really taken on McCarthy, for example. Now this hurt him a lot in many quarters; lots of people had it in for him. But it helped him a lot.

[-13-]

When I was up at Columbia, for example, in law school, all you could hear was the hearings coming out of every radio and every television set, and the whole city was hushed as if it was waiting for an air raid or something. It was mesmerized by this drama with everyone feeling that somehow their fate hung on the outcome. There's been nothing like it before or since in my lifetime. And I used to take my clothes into the tailor, you know, and the guy would say, "Are you any relation to the Senator?" And, you know, I'd say, "Well, yes, he's my father." "Good boy. He's a great man. I'd be for anything he wants." And if you just heard that once, you could discount it, but I heard it everywhere I went. Of course most of these people, I'm sure, were Jewish merchants. I remember, it was the grocer; it was the tailor; it was the shoe man. And they weren't all Jewish either. So he had a tremendous lot of good will among little people.

When he was with the Committee and they had this lady, Annie Lee Moss, who was a colored lady, someone had found a *Communist Daily Worker* on her doorstep or something.... As far as I can tell, Annie Lee Moss had never been through grammar school. Perhaps she made a living, not even in a clerical way but in some kind of domestic service way. And for some reason she got picked out, and old Joe went after her. And Dad turned to her one time in the hearing, and he just said, "I believe in you. I believe you're telling the truth, and if you have any difficulty getting a job when this is over, you come and see me, and I'll get you a job." And John Crosby, who used to write for television, said history turned a very small, but important, corner when that was said.

In the hearings themselves, you know, taking on this apparatus without really knowing what the outcome would be and being perfectly able to avoid the kind of involvement that he got into, he could have played the game like some of his colleagues and

gotten entirely lost behind mush-mouthed words and waited to see if something else might happen to Joe. No, he went in there and said, "You've got the sloppiest files I ever saw. You ought to see a psychiatrist" -- all of these things, all of which brought him obscene phone calls at night that my mother had to take and all this kind of thing but which added tremendously to the overall impact and disgust that the public finally had of Joe. So he had plenty of people around the country who were prepared

[-14-]

to support him, advise him, and help him from the point of view of being the kind of guy who would stand up and defend individual sensitivity and liberties, from the point of view of his defense record -- he had had a difficult time with the Russians and Sputnik and so forth -- and from the point of view of some good service in the Senate. Agriculture he had learned a lot about because he'd been on that committee.

So he really was across the board pretty solid with industry and with labor, an unusual guy that had the support of both because he happened to be a businessman who could make a living and at the same time meet a payroll. So there must have been a whole bunch of fellows in relevant private sectors who would have been advising him. The two political names that come to mind, Clifford and McKinney, they said, "You just sit back and wait for the dust to clear, and it'll be you. They won't take Adlai again, and the other guys will be on the ropes." And he took this advice against his own better judgment because when he ran in Missouri, he knew, as he said, twelve people out of St. Louis, so, "I had to go and meet the people and run and get their votes." And the people in Maryland -- where he wasn't born but moved to when he was one and where his whole family had lived a hundred years or so -- they, I'm sure, would have given him a good vote in that primary; Indiana, I think, would have given him a good vote; and maybe West Virginia -- we could have gone in there with a guitar and all that kind of thing, and we could have really given them a tussle.

But, none of that happened because, I take it, there was a campaign strategy which had at least three legs, one of which was -- and it was very important to him, I know -- "I don't want to be the Protestants' candidate for the Democratic nomination for President." And a great deal of his mail and of the obvious indirect interest of a lot of people was, you know, to put him forward in that light. He didn't want to be anything like that, and this was a kind of personal thing with him which I think affected his decision to accept the advice to stay out of primaries. Another was -- and I'm sure, in a way, of equal importance but, knowing him, not quite of equal importance -- the money. It was a lot cheaper to stay out of primaries. The third leg is that he must have come to believe, or at least to accept the judgment of others, that it was not necessary to go into

[-15-]

these primaries and that primaries do not really affect the choice of a candidate; they are merely an interesting circus that goes on for a while and, in this particular case, would give two or three guys a chance to knock themselves out so that the party would come to him.

And if you recall, there were a number of soundings taken among Democratic committee chairmen all over the country, I think. He was the guy they all chose. Why did they choose him? Because they were exercising the same kind of judgment, absolutely divorced from and bled of the personality factor that Kennedy brought into this thing and this go-get-'em fire that he injected into the primaries. These things were not considered by the professionals when they decided primaries weren't necessary. So, once the primaries were over, it seemed only a matter of time before it would be all locked up for Kennedy to the point where Mr. Truman [Harry S. Truman] didn't even come out to the thing. I remember I nearly called him up myself, I felt so badly about it, because he had endorsed Dad and I thought, "What we need to counteract this charisma and this kind of sense of inevitability is another charisma and another inevitability. And that's President Truman coming here and saying, 'Now look, this is it.'" But apparently he had already been talked out of it. And other factors like, oh, gosh, Ohio (we went into the Ohio delegation out there at the Convention) gave him a tremendous ovation, but I think they had just been committed for Kennedy -- you know, the DiSalle [Michael V. DiSalle] thing. And part of this ovation may have been a feeling that they really liked this guy: "The least we can do is cheer him if we can't be for him."

Well, the moment of decision, going back to your question of whether to go into primaries, this must have come pretty much before the first one. It must have come about the time he announced. They must have had.... I think he announced in mid-March or something.

HACKMAN: Right. I believe it was the tenth or the twelfth.

SYMINGTON: So, when is New Hampshire? That, of course, is....

[-16-]

HACKMAN: I had heard that the one most seriously considered was the one you had mentioned, and that was Indiana.

SYMINGTON: Yes.

HACKMAN: At one time. It was a state supposedly very similar to Missouri.

SYMINGTON: Sure. They're next door -- one of them that's next door. That was the closest. And Frank McKinney was the guy who said, "Don't come." I understand he denies that now -- having said that. He certainly knows better than I do whether he said it or not, but I was told at the time that he didn't think it was advisable or necessary. But I had this growing feeling of apprehension everywhere I went -- to a dinner or some great function where Symington, Kennedy, Johnson, or Humphrey would appear -- because there was something about this young guy, this "lion killer" coming in to the dinner, you know, who was actually a gladiator, actually going out and fighting for what he wanted that captured people's imagination. And this tended to snowball in press accounts,



in public attitudes, and it was a little difficult to make yourself look like a gladiator when, in fact, your gloves are still hanging on the wall.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

SYMINGTON: Anyway, "X" for the campaign for the time being. And right after the campaign.... Oh, I spent a lot of time with George McGovern up in South Dakota and saw.... I think President Kennedy got up to -- he was either in North or South Dakota. I went to one meeting with him when he said that he was real glad to be in the wrong state. I forget, he got it wrong.

HACKMAN: I believe it was.... I know it was Mitchell.... Mitchell, South Dakota. I believe that he spoke at that Corn Palace...

[-17-]

SYMINGTON: Yes, yes, that was it. Well, you know, Stevenson used to do that, and it can happen to anybody. In fact, I think the brighter you are, the more your mind is racing, the more likely this kind of thing is to happen. But in any event we all got a laugh out of that, and we also learned very quickly that it wasn't so much of a political liability either to make that kind of a mistake if you handle it; he was graceful about it. Of course, I suppose he lost those states, but not for that reason. And, of course, George McGovern dropped -- he just couldn't carry Kennedy. Kennedy sure didn't carry him, so that was the end of him from there.

But it was that contact that I had with George pursuant to Bob's sending me up there, which I must really thank Bob for. George is a good friend; I'm not entirely in agreement with all of his policies now, but he offered me the opportunity; he said he would like to recommend me to the President to come in with him on his new Food for Peace program, and I agreed I would like to do it and did it. And this was a terrific experience for me involving learning a great deal about the difference between line authority and staff. And we were sure staff and not line. And what happens is for about six months you have this euphoric sense of power when you get on the phone and you say, "The White House is calling." And then somebody finally says, "Who in the White House is calling?" And then your little card house collapses, and you slowly begin to retrench after that. But that was the Food for Peace office in the EOB [Executive Office Building]. Those were great days in which we saw the President frequently.

My wife and I went to our first party in the White House shortly after the Inauguration. I remember Jackie asked me to play the guitar. It was a huge party going on in all these different rooms -- the Red Room, the Green Room, the East Room and the whole thing -- and she said, "Why don't you play your guitar?" And it would have been sort of like playing the guitar in Grand Central Station, you know, between trains or something, so I remember saying, as I've never said to any other chief of state and/or wife, "I don't think it's a propitious time to do it." And she said, "You're chicken." She was right; I was.

HACKMAN: That's a legitimate reason.

SYMINGTON: Yes, that's right. And then later I did do it once for the President because he was having the anniversary for the President because he was having the anniversary of the Alliance for Progress and I had gone down to Punta del Este in August of '61 to that Charter Conference and wrote a song called "Alianza para Progreso" and sang it down there for all the Argentines and Uruguayans who were around and sang it with my leg over the balcony of the San Raphael Hotel with about ten bearded Cubans looking in amazement up from the floor and also all the other delegates. I did it at the urging of Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] and Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin], and I must say that at least

[-18-]

they didn't stone me out of the place, and they thought it was a fairly unique contribution to the proceedings down there, which were pretty screwed up anyway.

When Guevara [Ernesto "Che" Guevara] got up to speak for Cuba, he spent about half an hour laughing and joking about the only contribution America makes to life in other countries is plumbing. He went at it from five or six different points of view. And I remember I wrote a note to Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon], which I don't think ever got past Goodwin or someone, saying what he could say when he gets up. Guevara got a great laugh, a nervous laugh at first because everybody was eyeing the colossus to the north and its spokesmen but then pretty soon just plain laughing because he was pretty funny, not particularly substantive. And I thought, "Well, if the little guy can laugh, should the big guy get up and sort of hike his collar another inch up to his ears, or can he have some fun, too?" And then if he does, what does that leave of the little guy? So I wrote that he could say something like it's very clear why the representative of the so-called Republic of Cuba objects to the installation of sanitary facilities in his country, because then people would know exactly what to do with the decrees of Fidel Castro, you see. And I tried this out on some of my Latin friends later on, and they thought that might have done the trick. But, of course, Dillon really probably wouldn't have thought that would have made a contribution to the American statement.

Anyway, nothing like that happened. He got up and very dryly reviewed the hopes and aspirations, Department facts and figures, community development, so forth, and when it was all over, everybody realized we were back in the real world again and we lost that little moment. And when Guevara left that hall, he was followed by delegates, people, all swarming around him waiting for his next gag, you know. And sometimes I think we ought to pay a little more attention to the opportunities of a moment because we're not going to change this whole hemisphere in a generation, but what we could do is to pile, one on top of the other, real sense of what kind of people we really are, that we don't take ourselves all that seriously or everybody else, and we're not always trying to make the moral point, but that we can have some fun, too. And goodness knows, the Latin looks in us for this. They get a little tired of our pronouncements, I think, especially financial statistics and that kind of thing, even though it's very important to them. It is a kind of double standard of attitude, but you've got to play it and not just go blundering ahead without being conscious of it.

[-19-]

I told President Kennedy this when I got back, this story, and he laughed and sort of shook his head. It was as I was leaving the anniversary party -- no, he welcomed us all, I think, when we got back right away from the August business, and it was as we were going out I told him that story and he sort of laughed and shook his head. I can't say that he indicated that he would have supported that approach.

But the party that he gave at the White House -- not party, scratch that, but the reception that he gave a year from March in '61, which would have been March '62, in honor of the declaration of the Alliance was one to which he invited all the Senators involved, and the Vice President was there, OAS [Organization of American States] Ambassadors were there, Latin Ambassadors were there, Angie Duke [Angier Biddle Duke] was there. I was working in the EOB; the phone rings, it's Arthur Schlesinger saying, "The President thinks this is going to be a real dull reception. He remembers that you had a song. Would you come and sing it?" And I said I'd be happy to do it. I had a cab to go and get my guitar from home, brought it down, took it over, and Schlesinger had said, "Now, don't worry, because they're going to have the ceremony, and then afterward the President's going to ask you to do it." So I was standing there, somewhat breathless, with the guitar, having just made it, and Angie Duke was already motioning me. Change of plan -- he wanted me to go on right away. So I walked out in front of all the klieg lights and the Senators and the OAS Ambassadors, and there was the President and the Vice President. And under this huge portrait of Lincoln -- there's a wonderful picture of this thing -- and a huge emblem of the Alianza para Progreso in front of the microphone.... I don't use a strap or anything, so I had to put my foot up on something. The President noticed this, immediately reached behind him and pulled out and placed very carefully in front of me a chair that Jackie had just covered, I understand, with a piece of yellow damask cloth. That's where the foot went. Furtively looking around to see if there were any of the ladies, I sang the song, luckily got through it without disaster. He was very nice about that. He was always great to me. During my

[-20-]

work in the Food for Peace, he invited me in one time to bring D.R. Sen, the head of FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations], and I had my one and only office visit with the President then.

HACKMAN: That's when Richard Gardner and Gerald Tickenor...

SYMINGTON: Dick Gardner, yes. And he sat in his rocker and talked about the world food problem and America's role. When he went to Vienna to see

Khrushchev [Nikita S. Khrushchev], I wrote a memorandum to McGovern to give to him, first, which I had kind of dreamed up, based on the fact that he would undoubtedly have many tense matters to discuss with Khrushchev and very few opportunities to find common cooperative ground, and I thought, borrowing from the experience in Austria where there'd

been a four power political occupation and a resolution and a treaty and withdrawal on a basis accepted by the participating powers, why couldn't we think of a two, three or four power economic development effort in Laos based on economic development teams working together with local government in Laos.

As a kind of background to this, I pulled together the Herbert Hoover American Relief Commission record of assistance to the Soviet Union in food right after Maxim Gorki, I think in 1921, was permitted by the Soviet government to ask for help, because it wouldn't ask for itself but permitted him to do it. And he did, and seven days later, I think, a U.S. ship landed at Riga and discussions went on, culminating in large shipments of food and clothing from the United States to the Soviet Union before recognition -- long before. I had been to Russia in 1958 and met some old people in Kiev and Moscow who remembered this and who said that they knew some people who had been helped by this, so that it was a legacy which had living roots in Russia and that while it wouldn't be mentioned in a patronizing way, that Kennedy could say that we have worked together before, solving the problems of the hungry in Europe and your country and I wonder if we couldn't think of a way to do it in a land that neither of us wants to develop into a battlefield; therefore, let's make it into farms and fertile fields for human progress.

[-21-]

Whatever became of that, I don't know, because I don't think Kennedy ever saw it. I think it was considered a little bit wishful thinking and soft at the edges for him even to see, but I don't know. Mac Bundy [McGeorge Bundy], Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman]; maybe it didn't even get beyond some guy I didn't even know. You never know. You see, when you start feeding these things in, after a while you realize that the chance of surfacing are slim unless you have the moxie and the influence to get to see the man yourself and say, "This is what I want you to do, and knowing me and having confidence in me, you will do it," because those things were far from true.

By that time, of course, AID [Agency for International Development] and Agriculture had pretty well put Food for Peace way in the back of the bus as an entity worthy of the President's notice, as an office. As an idea, he always thought that we were in business and that we were working with Freeman [Orville L. Freeman] and with Hamilton [Fowler Hamilton] or whoever was running AID, but in fact, anyone who knows what happens in a confrontation between a small staff office and an entire bureaucracy knows what happens to a little fellow fighting a big one.

HACKMAN: Was there anything you people could do about this, or were there attempts made to get the President's attention on this through his other staff members or something?

SYMINGTON: On this particular suggestion?

HACKMAN: No, I mean on the relationship with Agriculture and AID.

SYMINGTON: Oh, all the time. They bothered the President quite a bit about it, but, you see, this is an area that McGovern can explain a lot better. Freeman will have his point of view. Fellows like Hamilton would be able to give you...

HACKMAN: Labouisse [Henry R. Labouisse]?

SYMINGTON: Well, Labouisse was gone by then. Hamilton and Bell [David E. Bell]. But see, it's almost an untenable arrangement for the President to have a

[-22-]

whole department whose function is to analyze and marshall American aid potential, including food, and then to ask a friend of his to think of bright ideas along those lines and to see that they're implemented because that friend of his shouldn't be any better friend than the Cabinet director of the agency involved, the secretary of the Cabinet, and he sure doesn't have the troops that guy has. So what the President is, in effect, saying is, "Why don't you help him think of his problems and what he should do with his agency and his money and his people and his resources." And if that conversation were overheard by Secretary Freeman or something, he'd be in there saying, "Well, I don't need George McGovern, thanks very much." But since what Presidents do is they want to honor guys in ways that they hope are meaningful, and I think they tend now and then to create Special Assistant, non-job slots.

I wouldn't call the Food for Peace office that for the first six months of its existence because it was a hell of a gadfly in those days, but after this it just atrophied and finally did atrophy. For awhile it was dead and didn't know it, and then finally it was carted away. When he [McGovern] left and Dick Reuter [Richard W. Reuter] came in, remember, that was really the effective end of the thing. But for a while there, gosh, I could get a hearing with people in Agriculture or people in AID on the experiences that I'd had in Latin America and the attitude of people, and maybe now and then I would change the decision of a bureaucrat on whether or not to really pay attention to a certain expressed interest or need in a school lunch program in a barriada of Lima or in Bogatà or on the altiplano or in Brazil. You could constantly get a guy's ear and help someone else who even knew the story better than you did tell the story into it -- for a while.

And then you leave, when you leave, you leave a changed bureaucracy -- a little bit changed by the effect of your sincerity and of your point of view. It doesn't hurt really for an old civil servant to be exposed to the enthusiasm and imagination of young, ignorant people. It might even help them a little bit, and it may help the whole system move with a little more sensitivity to the current needs of the world that it's intended to meet. It's a hard balance to draw because when you're an amateur in this business, you can make awful, stupid statements and decisions; if you were given the decision-making power,

[-23-]

you might throw the whole thing away in a week and not know where it went. But what we need is a constant dialogue between the fellow who hopes and wants more than he can deliver on and the guy who has to really handle the resources to be delivered.

I'm not being very articulate now after an hour, but that's why I think infusions of non-professionals now and then properly motivated -- by proper, I just mean motivated, and they want to see changes in the world, and they want to see people helped that aren't being helped, and they want to marshal the resources of government that they deem to exist to this end. And then the other kind of guy is the guy who has had the job for ten years to do just that because ten years before some President told him to do just that and he's been sort of trying to do it, but running into all kinds of unbelievable snags that he'll forget more of than the other guy will ever learn about and yet he needs to be reminded now and then, if only to be re-motivated himself, to hitch up his trousers and say, "All right, damn it, we'll try again." And that's the contribution that an office like ours could make.

HACKMAN: Could you get any help from somebody like Feldman, who was involved with Agriculture, in getting a decision made or getting a decision out of AID if they were slow on taking action?

SYMINGTON: Yes, but everybody who is exposed to a particular problem area for a while, who has a responsibility for it, begins to form his own attitudes, and they're fine; it's easy to get his help if he agrees with you. But supposing he doesn't? Now he would be a fellow who would be fielding a lot of Secretary Freeman's requests, and of course a bureaucracy knows how to handle a Special Assistant to the President. They can impress him with all kinds of facts and figures and experts and this kind of thing, whereas another Special Assistant to the President, another member of the President's staff, has a harder time bringing into focus information in a clear, coherent, persuasive way than the whole Department of Agriculture could do or AID. And so much of our information was sort of first hand observation, things we saw,

[-24-]

reports we got, and people we interviewed who would never be able to get even into the Department of Agriculture to see a third clerk but who could see us because our door was open to ideas and to people of goodwill that were trying to think of things to do to help in the world and also to folks from overseas. We had a lot of ministers of government come in and teachers and private citizens from countries all around the world telling us about their problem.

And we took trips and went to see some of the things, and we would write reports, and we would come back and say, "Let's do this." And when we would go overseas, we would be working with agricultural attachés and this kind of thing, and they would use our enthusiasm to forward their own ends. But if it was something that we wanted to do, it was difficult to get their support for it unless it was something they wanted, too.

HACKMAN: Were the ambassadors on some of the trips you made, for instance that

first one to Latin America, were they enthusiastic at all, or did they give you much help, or could they give you much help?

SYMINGTON: The ambassadors what?

HACKMAN: To the Latin American countries. Our ambassadors to the Latin American countries.

SYMINGTON: They were a big help. Most of them were a pretty big help. Of course, by that time you had ambassadors with the Kennedy motivation of let's get to know all sectors of this people, this country. Let's not close our minds to new points of view. Therefore, we could talk with anyone we wanted by the time we'd get there -- labor people, students and so forth. The ambassadors were well disposed to helping us do that. Some of them seemed a little nervous about it. Some of them were carry-overs, too, you know.

HACKMAN: Especially that first time around.

SYMINGTON: Especially the first time around which was my first trip was in... I led the first technical mission to go anywhere, I think. It

[-25-]

was about a week after the... [Interruption]... the first mission sent overseas after the Inauguration. I think that I left in February.

HACKMAN: Let's see, Schlesinger had gone down with McGovern, and then your mission left just a couple of days after that.

SYMINGTON: That's right, just a couple days after. They went to cover Argentina and Brazil, the biggest producer and the biggest consumer, to reassure them respectively that the Food for Peace program was not intended to hurt but to help. And that was really the net of their trip, in addition to seeing first hand some of the problems in the northeast of Brazil. My trip was to go to all the other countries in South America and talk with the presidents, the ministers of agriculture and health and/or other relevant ministries, private producers and charitable (if any) private institutions about ways in which our food abundance could be used to assist them in economic development, not compete with their own markets and producers, but actually to supplement what they were doing. And the school lunch program was considered to be the most effective and least competitive form of U.S. food aid because at this point the kids weren't buying any food, and if we gave them something to eat it would, maybe, create the habit. We used to think that they might like to buy some later on. This worked pretty well, but I must say, it was pretty head company for me to be in because I did see the presidents of every single country except Bolivia. I didn't get to Bolivia. I sent Steve Rausenbush up there.

And Ecuador, Venezuela I spent with Betancourt [Romulo Betancourt], you know, and I had lunch with him in his garden. I remember I'd been with a Venezuelan businessman right before in his hacienda -- a big party and all kinds of.... This is about the third day out of Washington, and lights were dancing in the trees and the girls were swinging around in their dresses and the guitars were playing. And he said, "What are you doing here?" You know, and I said, "Well, working for the government of the United States in a program known as Food for Peace program. And he said, "What's that?" And I

[-26-]

said, "Well, that's an effort that we're making to see if we can help any countries with our food excess, because we produce more than we can eat or sell in regular markets." "Why've you come here?" I said, "Well, one of the President's principal concerns is the life and progress in the sister republics' hemisphere, and I'm just making a swing around the whole continent seeing how people view this idea and whether or not they'd like to avail themselves of it." He said, "Well, we certainly don't need it here. We're a successful, rich country, and we certainly don't need any of your food here."

So at that every moment, we could see some lights glimmering way off in a distance, and it was on a hill that I'd been on that morning. I'd been up there. I remember the man's name was Garnica. He was the head of the *Comederos Populares*, which is sort of the working man's restaurant -- popular kitchen -- where they were giving away meals for tickets up in the outskirts of Caracas and where little boys, you know, used to carry the water up on their shoulders, and it was polluted anyway because they'd get it out of a lousy well. There's no running water. There are open sewers, and there's the urine streaming down; all these little rivulets go down the hill and scrawny dogs and chickens running around and kids with open sores walking in this stuff, you know. And just a hell of a zoo is really what it was. The best house was made of old magazines pressed together, tin cans, and junk piled up in some way so it would cover a man, you know. So I said, "See those lights? I was up there this morning, and we were talking around the whole thing, about the food and everything, and they said they'd like some. They'd like a little food."

And he was astounded at my naiveté. I could tell, he said, you know, "Th-hose people. Ah! You mean those people! Look, my son," he said, "they have lived this way for centuries. They know no other thing. Now, they don't want anything new. Don't go up there making talk and trouble for them." He said, "They are a simple, happy people, and they don't need this. And also, it's just making them restless if you go up there and talk with them."

[-27-]

And I was in this man's house. He was my host, you know. So I said, "Well, they looked a little restless already to me." And I just sort of let it drop, you know. And that attitude was not uncommon then, and I guess even not now, among some of the folks that have it versus those that don't in that part of the world -- perhaps any part of the world.

But I had lunch with Betancourt, and I tried to tell him the story in Spanish at lunch the next day. And I got so involved that tears started coming to my eyes as I was describing



what this guy had said. And I was all fired up with this "New Frontier" zeal to change the face of the earth. And this was in front of all his ministers and Ambassadors Sparks [Edward J. Sparks] was there and a few other guys. Betancourt saw this happening to me, put his arm on my shoulder and said, "My son, you don't have to explain this. I know what you're trying to say. I, too, have this problem."

So that was my first stop on this whole trip, and we had many more adventures after this, some of which were happy and some of which were not so much so. One thing was that my Spanish improved greatly because when I got off the plane in Caracas, although I'd had a lot of Spanish at Yale, I was a little shy to use it, and I would say things like, "Buenos dias, senores. Yo debo hablar en inglis." "I'd better speak in English," you know, and then I would get into that for the discussion of the program, and they would all be very happy that at least I'd made a greeting in Spanish. So then I'd get on a plane, you see, to go to Bogota, let's say -- Bogota was the next one anyway. There everything I said in English about the program was all faithfully translated in the most beautiful Spanish by the reporters. So I simply studied the Food for Peace story, you might say, from the reports in Spanish of my explanation in English. So by the time I hit Ecuador I was able pretty well to recite this in terms of desarrollo instead of development, and that kind of thing. That was just a sidelight that the columnists helped me with my Spanish.

Then in Peru we did start a school lunch program. Beltran [Pedro Beltran] came up later to make a big one out of it, but we started a little one with the Great Plains Wheat Association in the barriadas outside Lima -- one called Leticia. And I went up there, and I met the Communist leader, and he said, "What are you doing?" And I said, "We've got some food." And he said, "Well, that's not a bad idea." He just sort of walked away. And then all

[-28-]

the mothers and fathers came down to see that we had the food, and they said, "This is a lousy, dirty school for kids that can eat. We're going to build a new one." So I said, "Okay, fine." They said, "We need bricks and cement." I said, "Okay, you'll have to get it." "Where will we get it?" Well, I didn't know. I don't deal in cement. And so they asked around, and they found out.

Of course, the fellow that had the cement was Prodo -- the Prodo family anyway, and it cost quite a lot, but they weren't going to fight the system. They were going to pay for it. And they agreed to tax themselves, every family twenty soles a week, carrying out a very sophisticated tax program -- which the government had yet, then, to do, and maybe still now, for all I know, on a national basis -- and raised the money, bought the cement, and then the fathers came down and gave their time, their Sundays, religious holidays, built the new school and refectory, and the mothers learned about hygiene, how to cook it and so forth. Then they said, "We want to get married, and we want you to be the padrino," kind of like a godfather. So I said, "Fine. I'm very honored to do that. I thought you were married." "Oh, no. We're not married. What's the point of getting married? It costs five bucks, and if your child's going to die before he's six or seven years old, why bother? But now that our children can perhaps live, we feel that they should also have dignidad."

So I was for that, so we met on this hill, and the old padre came up from the foot of the hill and brought with him his little silver wand and started shaking water around and dropping pennies in people's palms, and these old couples were kneeling down in front of him, you know. And about three hundred kids looking on, the children of these some twenty or thirty couples. And he blessed them and married them. He said, "You know, I've been trying to marry these good people for years." He said, "And you, gringo Protestant come up and do it in one week." And I said, "Well, you padres ought to live right, that's all." But these were great moments for me. I got to be good friends with some of those, you know, the mothers and fathers of these kids in a way that friendship really mattered, and we just sat and talked about things that were common to the human condition. And I've never forgotten them. They wrote me a marvelous letter and filled it with signatures and stamps and seals, thanking the great United States and so forth.

[-29-]

But I had the feeling that in some way the American people, through this program, really related to these people. This wasn't something that they just heard about in the distance. And I always used to hope that somehow all Alliance for Progress programs would have this kind of contact what was passed through many generations. The children would feel it; the parents and the grandparents would feel it; friends of the family would see it and feel it and that, therefore, we were part of a cooperative effort working together on things. Perhaps the character of some of the great programs doesn't lend itself to this kind of communication. I don't know because I never....

I was an Alliance buff for years and still am. I used to constantly send letters to people like Moscoso [Teodoro Moscoso]; then he left. Rogers [William D. Rogers]; then he left. There have been a couple of other guys in there, and they left -- ideas that I had that they've never, as far as I can tell, done anything about. Just all kinds of thoughts: the fact that people like these village leaders, if there had been some way of honoring them for their participation in this program with something they could wear, with something they could show, perhaps with a trip to not necessarily the U.S. but another capital with some other people like them that had worked on local programs so that there develops a kind of esprit, a sense of mission that continues and an emblem that's passed on and so forth and that really stands as a symbol of a different idea than some of the kind that Che and his boys can move. Nothing like that's ever done. You can never quite figure out why because I'm not in that anymore. I would have wanted to have done that kind of thing. Maybe it was impossible.

I took the Health Minister of Peru up this hill. He had to sort of pick his way through the refuse and filth to get to the top, just as we had done, day after day after day. I used to leave my shoes outside the Embassy to be washed because I could never wear them inside the house after having been up there, and then I'd pick them up in the morning again and go off again. It was really rough. This guy gets up there, and he really has a hard time. When he finally gets to the top, he made a great speech about how the government of Peru was pleased to have made this program available. Of course, we couldn't have done it without their help, but with all due respect, it wasn't exactly the government of Peru. He had never been on this hill before, and it

[-30-]

was about a mile from his ministry. And yet it was one of the most depressing needs in his whole country, this kind of assistance. What happens is that people leave the land; they can't get a living off it; they come to the big city; and they get just to the outskirts, and there they hang picking its crumbs up, you know, sending their kids in to beg or steal at night, occasionally hurting them a little bit before they go so that they can cry and be more appealing.

And sometimes when I see our problems in this country and the amount of heat that they can generate in terms of indignation, jeepers, I think, there's indignation and indignation, and the level that you can reach in Latin America and I'm sure a place like India has got to be greater than you get here. Here we're talking about open housing, and there they're talking about death at five years old.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-31-]