

**Clyde T. Ellis Oral History Interview, JFK #1 – 4/5/1965**  
Administrative Information

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**Interviewer:** Ronald J. Grele, Also present: William S. Roberts

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**Biographical Note**

Ellis, Clyde T. (1908-1980); Congressman and rural electrification advocate; discusses JFK's early voting record concerning conservation and public power, JFK's relation with the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), and results of the foreign aid program, among other issues.

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Clyde T. Ellis – JFK#1

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Wisconsin Primary, 1960
2	John F. Kennedy (JFK) v. Hubert Humphrey and the need for change after Dwight D. Eisenhower
3	The religious issue
4	The Humphrey-Price Bill
5	JFK's early voting record (conservation and public power, telephone bill, Hell's Canyon Bill, Tennessee Valley Authority)
8	Theodore Sorensen's influence on JFK's stance on conservation
9	Discussions with JFK on how he should vote
10	JFK's relation with the Rural Electrification Administration (REA)
11	Vermont REA Convention; JFK v. Eisenhower
17	Democratic conservation platform; 1960
19	JFK v. Nixon on conservation
24	JFK's conservation stance after the election
25	Creating the foundation for a public power program
28	Record of JFK's administration in public power
31	Stewart Udall trades off the REA
35	Role of Wayne N. Aspinall with respect to the REA
37	Important legislation to the REA, and the losing battle to get it passed
40	Guiding policies on public power set by the Kennedy administration and the Secretary's failure to meet them
44	Oahe Dam dedication trip
48	Pooling power
52	Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA) and the involvement of Senator Paul H. Douglas
55	Impetus behind the contract between the Agency for International Development (AID) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA); foreign aid in power and electricity
62	Results of the foreign aid program; obstacles to implementation in various countries
67	Commentary on AID missions
69	Recollections of visiting Latin America, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Turkey and Afghanistan to introduce the program
71	Final thoughts on AID and NRECA
75	Support of cooperatives movement from Orville Lothrop Freeman and JFK
76	Last meeting with JFK and a complaint against Joseph C. Swidler, Chairman of the Federal Power Commission
78	Final thoughts on JFK

Oral History Interview

with

CLYDE T. ELLIS

April 5, 1965  
Washington, D.C.

By Ronald J. Grele  
Also present: William S. Roberts

For the John F. Kennedy Library

GRELE: Mr. Ellis, were you in Wisconsin in 1960?

ELLIS: Yes.

GRELE: When did you first state your preference for John F. Kennedy in that primary?

ELLIS: I didn't. I did not, during the primaries.

GRELE: You didn't?

ELLIS: No.

GRELE: Various people in Wisconsin have told us that you were active in that primary.

ELLIS: Well, it is better said like this, that I

took no position with respect to any preferences between Kennedy and Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey]. They were both my personal friends and both friends of our program. Humphrey had been more active than Kennedy. We expressed, and I expressed, a feeling of friendship with both of them and a feeling of fear of what might be coming up from the other side. We had been through what to use were the terrible years of Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower]. We didn't want anymore of it. It looked to us then as if there was great danger that this might be perpetuated, might be extended another four years or beyond. Personally, at the point of the primary I was anxious that all of the strong candidates come through strongly so that one of them, who would get the nomination, then might win. In the regional meeting speeches that I made that year, I tried to leave

[-2-]

exactly that impression because it was very important to us in the rural areas.

GRELE: Would you say that the people who were connected to the REA [Rural Electrification Administration] Cooperatives more often than not tended to favor either one of the candidates?

ELLIS: Well, I think that would vary greatly by areas. I think the religious issue was prominent in the rural areas as it was everywhere else. But this seemed to be a more effective issue for the opposition to Kennedy in some areas than in others.

GRELE: Why?

ELLIS: I don't know. Maybe the ministers who had taken strong positions influenced it. Maybe the prominence influenced it. Maybe the predominance of certain churches in an area influenced it.

GRELE: When you say that Hubert Humphrey had been stronger in support of the programs you

[-3-]

personally, and the REA Cooperatives, favored, can you think of programs in specific?

ELLIS: Yes. Humphrey had sponsored one of the bills which we wanted very much to have the Congress pass, which became known as the Humphrey-Price Bill. It was one of the biggest fights we ever had, and we got it passed through Congress twice, I guess. The President vetoed it. We got it passed through and vetoed and then passed again to override the veto and almost did it. It did override in the Senate but not in the House. Humphrey was the leader in that battle in the

Senate although Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] gave us strong support. What was the year, Bill?

ROBERTS: And Kennedy voted for the Humphrey-Price Bill and for overriding the veto.

ELLIS: Overriding the veto, yes.

ROBERTS: That was April 1959.

[-4-]

GRELE: What was your personal impression of John Kennedy's record on matters of conservation and public power prior to 1960?

ELLIS: Just a few years before 1960 it was not too favorable from our viewpoint. I speak with reference to policies established in writing by resolution of our national leaders in their national annual meetings. We compile a voting record of the congressmen each year on these issues as votes occur. In Kennedy's later years in the Senate he usually supported resource development of the kind that we wanted and supported our rural electrification program. As he understood it, he supported it.

GRELE: To your mind, why did this change occur in his thinking?

ELLIS: Well, I think he was a student. We saw several instances of that. He was a good student. He didn't have to go over material many times. He remembered well. I think he had been,

[-5-]

probably in his early years, a victim of the propaganda, hadn't dug deeply, had cast some votes which he told me he regretted later. This didn't have to do with seeking my support because he had it at the time he told me.

GRELE: Do you recall what specific bills he was referring to when he said he regretted his support, or regretted his vote?

ELLIS: No, sir, I don't think I can do that at the moment. I might look at this record and recall...

ROBERTS: Do you remember whether it might have been the telephone bill which he cast a "nay" vote on, which was the first nay vote – the first favorable vote – he cast as a member of the House.



ELLIS: What about Hell's Canyon Bill?

ROBERTS: On Hell's Canyon he was right.

ELLIS: This is Mr. Roberts looking at the voting

[-6-]

record here. It is the Congressman's voting record. We just compile it with respect to these particular issues.

ROBERTS: Yes, he was favorable for both Hell's Canyon votes. The negatives were TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority]. The first TVA vote he cast when he went into the Senate and two out of three on REA Loan Funds in 1954.

ELLIS: These are probably amendments. We can check it, but these are probably amendments to raise the amount of money for the rural projects.

ROBERTS: Right, the Douglas Amendment to add \$135,000,000.

ELLIS: He voted against it?

ROBERTS: Yeah.

ELLIS: Well, this is consistent, I think. He was a more conservative man in his early years in the Senate than he was later. I believe the total record will bear that out. He was in respect to us anyway.

[-7-]

GRELE: Do you feel that Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] might have influenced him in a greater awareness of conservation policy.

ELLIS: Yes, I think so. It was deeply ingrained in Ted's system. Ted's father, Abe Sorensen [Christian Abraham Sorensen], was a close personal friend of mine and was former Attorney General, I believe, of Nebraska. He was our statewide attorney. He was also, probably, closest to Senator Norris [George W. Norris] of any man in public life in Nebraska. We worked closely with Senator Norris. Ted never made any great studies, as far as I know, of our program, but it was in his blood. He felt it. It was just first nature with him. The few times when we conferred with Senator Kennedy, Ted was present. We worked with Ted on speeches a few times which the Senator made at our meetings or at other places with respect to resources or rural electrification.

[-8-]

GRELE: Did you have any contacts with Senator Kennedy other than the public speeches he delivered before REA meetings? Were you consulted on particular bills or issues as to how he should vote?

ELLIS: This answer, I think, would be yes. However, it usually didn't come directly. I, of course, knew Ted very well from the time that he was a child and came to know Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman]. We had many contacts with them over Kennedy's years in the Senate. We often made the approaches ourselves with respect to trying to get his vote on a particular measure. I remember once he called me up to lunch in the Senate Dining Room. We talked about the program generally. Ted Sorensen was present then, as I recall. Sometimes I ran into him in the field somewhere, at an airport. I remember Dick Dell [Richard Dell] and I ran into him at the airport in

[-9-]

Atlanta and talked with him over a bowl of soup one day. I think that was probably one of the earliest conversations we had with him. Or we would see him at maybe some Democratic gathering or around the Hill.

GRELE: At that time, what would you say his appreciation of your problems and policies was?

ELLIS: Well, I would say it was very little before he was in the Senate. I would say that it grew rather rapidly after he was in the Senate.

GRELE: At the various meetings which were addressed by John Kennedy – the regional meeting in Vermont, the other meetings of the REA – was he invited by the REA or did someone on his staff suggest it to you?

ELLIS: No, he was invited.

GRELE: He was invited. Well, was there ever any problem in getting him to speak?

[-10-]

ELLIS: I don't remember. I remember we invited him to the Vermont meeting and that he came. I don't remember any problems. May I ask Bill Roberts to refresh my mind, if he remembers anything?

GRELE: Sure.

ROBERTS: He arrived late, I remember.

ELLIS: Yes, quite late. He got fogged in in Boston, he said. He was so late that I had to leave the airport to get on down and try to hold the crowd.

ROBERTS: The people of New England, our people – our Vermont members, and Maine members, and of course, New York members – were much more cognizant of Senator Kennedy's presence and potential. They, of course, were enthusiastic about having him on the program. I don't recall that there was any problem on either side.

ELLIS: No, a number of them had come to know him

[-11-]

personally, Walter Cook for instance. But you see this is consistent with what I told you about Wisconsin. We had urged our people to give our friends, whoever they were, who were looming up, whatever exposure they could. So that was an invitation that came from the area, you see. Now at our national meeting here where Kennedy followed Eisenhower, Humphrey was also billed. We had both of them on the program. Humphrey wired in that he was snowbound in Chicago. He didn't get there. I called Lyndon Johnson and told him that he would just have to substitute for Hubert Humphrey. So, he laughed about it. When he started speaking, he told the crowd that he was a substitute for Hubert Humphrey at my request. But we were giving Ike exposure too. We were giving him a chance to reverse himself with respect to

[-12-]

interest rates. He had been giving us some trouble in that area. He not only didn't reverse himself, he made some statements which I think he regretted before the campaign was over and maybe before the meeting was over.

GRELE: Did John Kennedy comment to you or anyone at that time about the comments that President Eisenhower made?

ELLIS: Oh yes, we were in contact with his office. He remained in his office revising his speech until time to come down which was....What? An hour or so after the President spoke, Bill?

ROBERTS: Just barely an hour.

ELLIS: We had a little management forum discussion in between. Kennedy knew our program by that time very well. We didn't have to tell him anything. Most of his reply to Eisenhower was extemporaneous – nearly all of it.

[-13-]

GRELE: Did he comment to you privately on President Eisenhower's stand?

ELLIS: At what point? Yes, the answer is yes.

GRELE: His assessment. What did John Kennedy think of Eisenhower's performance that night?

ELLIS: It was an afternoon.

GRELE: That afternoon.

ELLIS: Well, he thought it was very bad, and he felt it was a great break for him. It gave him a chance to answer Eisenhower in an area that he knew better than Eisenhower with people whom he knew better than Eisenhower knew them. So, whereas Ike got one applause when he went in – I walked in with him – and one when he was introduced, one applause during his speech when he waved the flag a bit – Bill, you remember – and one at the end when he left, a courtesy applause, I think it was eighteen applauds Kennedy got in his address,

[-14-]

besides at his introduction. I can't remember although the transcript would probably show.

GRELE: Prior to the Convention, when it looked as if the nomination would go to either John Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson, what were your sympathies?

ELLIS: Well, I was torn again as in the Wisconsin primary. The main thing we wanted was to get a friend in the White House. I personally didn't feel that the Republicans would nominate anybody, certainly no one was looming up, who would be friendly. I continued to be anxious to give Johnson and Kennedy both every exposure to strengthen them. I liked both of them. I knew Johnson much better having served in the House with him. I felt that he was much better grounded in our program than Kennedy, but I don't think I can honestly say that I had any

[-15-]

sympathies as such. I wanted a strong man elected president who was our friend.

GRELE: Was there any conflict on the local level, say, between the Southern REA's and the Midwestern REA's in terms of their support for a particular candidate?

ELLIS: No, sir, I don't think so. I think this feeling was pretty general. We had been through a lot of whipping by that time.

GRELE: Were there any REA pressures, direct or indirect, from the state organizations to support a candidate one way or other?

ELLIS: No, I don't think so. I went out and testified at the Convention before the subcommittee that heard testimony and had with me our legislative representative, Dick Dell, who knew both Johnson and Kennedy. If I had had a role to play and had any business there, I would have stayed on for the Convention. I didn't stay. There may

[-16-]

have been some impelling reason for me to get back. Congress may have been in session still at that point for a few days after that. I don't know.

Generally, we tended to be so concerned about platform that I don't think we have ever stayed until....Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater] was the first time that we had a candidate that was so clearly unfriendly that I can remember that we had a strong feeling about candidates as against platform.

GRELE: What were your impressions of the Democratic platform in 1960 in terms of its conservation policies?

ELLIS: It was too conservative, too conservative.

GRELE: Why do you feel it was too conservative?

ELLIS: On conservation policies. Well, I don't remember it specifically at this time, but I know we had that general feeling about it. It didn't come out swinging on resource

[-17-]

development. No Democratic platform has in recent years.

GRELE: Was Benton Stong responsible for that plank in the platform?

ELLIS: That I don't know, but if any particular person was responsible for the plank that got in, I would think that he was responsible for getting whatever he could get. Benton Stong was knowledgeable about our needs and resource development needs. If he were the man, my guess is he tried for a better plank than he got. I don't know.

GRELE: Were you at all involved in the campaign?

ELLIS: Our regional meetings – there were ten of them covering all the states – were in progress that fall as they are each fall. I spoke out in ways that our people understood.

GRELE: When you say you spoke out in ways that your people would know, exactly what ways are these?

ELLIS: They would know how I felt about which

[-18-]

candidates offered us the best hope. Here is an example. We have been for years a major organization participant in the Western States Water and Power Conference which that year was held in Billings, Montana. I was on the Board of Directors, a small board. We invited, again trying to be fair and give them the exposure and hope to get our story over to them, both Kennedy and Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] to speak at the meeting. Nixon declined; Kennedy accepted. He made there what I regard as the best resources speech extant, the best paper on resources, still that I know of anywhere.

He did a rather remarkable thing, I think, in presenting it. He was very tired. His plane was late. I went to several meetings that year where he spoke, and I think he always was late. He had asked that I sit with him in a room that had been

[-19-]

set apart for him to meditate in for ten minutes after he got there, prior to his going on – it turned out to be nearer three minutes – at which time he pulled out some notes. He pulled a little manuscript out of his pocket in large type, glanced over it, put it back in his pocket, and said, “Well, I guess we had better go. We’re late.”

So in we went. We sat down together. He said to me, “Now, give me the names again of the committee.” Maybe he said, “board.” It may have been a committee constituted, but it was the board that was on the committee largely, anyhow. I gave him a list of, I think, about ten names. He wrote them down on a piece of paper in green ink. On second thought, I believe it would have been seven names. When he stepped up to the platform, he acknowledged

[-20-]

by name all of those names without glancing at any paper. He got them right except for the chairman’s name. Ken Holum [Kenneth Holum], who is now Assistant Secretary of Interior for Power, was chairman. I have forgotten what he called Mr. Holum. Bill, were you there?

ROBERTS: No, I wasn’t.

ELLIS: Maybe he called him Holdon. It was close enough that everybody knew whom he referred to. Then he went on: Mr. Greyhouse [Leo C. Graybill], Mr. Radin [Alex Radin], Mr. Ellis.

GRELE: Why didn't Nixon appear?

ELLIS: Though he cast a few votes the way we wanted him to, he had never been really friendly with our program. We had never been able to see him when we had tried to see him.

GRELE: Do you feel that this was something personal with Mr. Nixon, or it was a bias that was institutionalized in the Republican party?

[-21-]

ELLIS: I just don't know. I wish I knew. Our program is not strong in California. That would be one possible answer for a little while, but we had none in Massachusetts. I think that Nixon simply wasn't as good a student of American desires as Kennedy. Maybe he was not as free to go in the way that he might think the people would want as Kennedy because of Party restrictions. The Republican Party in late years has not supported our program well although individuals who are leaders in the Congress have, and who are or have been governors. Senators Aiken [George D. Aiken], Young [Milton R. Young], Cooper [John S. Cooper] have supported the program very well, Kuchel [Thomas H. Kuchel], fairly well, and several House members – but not Nixon.

GRELE: How actively did you campaign for the Democratic ticket in 1960?

ELLIS: I did not as such, but I made speeches rather

[-22-]

constantly through the country that fall, most of them at our own meetings – meetings of local electric cooperatives where usually a few thousand people would be present, or at our regional meetings which were meetings of the leaders, or at statewide meetings of the leaders, and our publications. I note Mr. Roberts has some of them in front of him. Our publications, I think, would indicate very strongly how we here felt about what we might expect from the two candidates depending on which one was elected.

ROBERTS: Largely, the way we did it that year, as we have done it almost every year, is to simply let the candidates' voting records, their party's platforms, and their statements speak for themselves and, largely, putting them side by side and allowing the members to see or hear for themselves what the

candidates said or did as regards federal

[-23-]

power programs, rural electric co-ops, and other issues with which they are concerned. Mr. Ellis, in one column here which came out in August 1960, which was right after the nominating conventions, had a section on parties, platforms, and candidates. The gist of it is that the members, if they are concerned about the future of their electric co-ops, will examine the records, the platforms of the parties and the candidates.

GRELE: After the election, were you at all concerned that John Kennedy might be guided by the platform which you thought was fairly conservative?

ELLIS: Well, we were anxious that he be more liberal than the platform.

ROBERTS: Wasn't this the reason that you placed a good deal of importance on the Billings speech?

ELLIS: Yes. On the way back to the airport that night after the Billings speech, I asked him if we might come see him after the election,

[-24-]

if he were elected, and bring him our ideas for a more abundant supply of electric power in America at lower cost and our ideas for resources development. He said, "Yes." Before we left the car, he said, "Now don't wait till the election. We are going to win, I think, but it will be too late to do all that ought to be done. Go ahead and get your program ready, and then come see me after the election."

So Alex Radin, who is general manager of the American Public Power Association which is largely the organization of municipally owned electric systems in the country, and I called a meeting of the principal power leaders in America whom we thought might be generally favorable to the kind of program we felt ought to be advanced – and some others. We didn't confine it altogether to power people. The meeting was well attended. I think everybody we invited came.

[-25-]

We spent several days pounding out the principles of a program which were later refined, sent around, and agreed to. Then we asked for a meeting with Mr. Kennedy which took place in his house in Georgetown. I don't remember the date. We could get it if it is important. (December 6, 1960.) I know there was snow on the ground.

GRELE: Did any of the recommendations that you drew up become a part of his special message to Congress on natural resources which he delivered in February of 1961? Do you recall?



ELLIS: No, sir, I do not know. I do not remember. I remember that we submitted to people who were drafting some of his messages our suggestions. I am sure that some of the ideas were used although they might have been used if we hadn't sent them, you see. I am sure they were or we would have

[-26-]

had strong feelings about it which I would remember though I don't remember the specifics.

GRELE: In your book, A Giant Step, you say there was some discussion about a possible appointment to the Cabinet as Secretary of Interior for yourself. Were you ever in contact with President-elect Kennedy or any member of his staff in regards to such an appointment?

ELLIS: No, not before the fact of the appointment. After the appointment was made, I was in contact with him about....This meeting in Georgetown took place after the appointment was announced, and I indicated to him something about it, and I indicated to him something about it, and indicated that I might be interested in this Under Secretary position. That was the only time it was ever discussed between us.

GRELE: What did he say when you told him you were interested in the Under Secretary position?

[-27-]

ELLIS: Something to the effect that he would have to rely heavily upon the person who was appointed to the top job for whom he wanted for the second position. Without referring to my notes, that is all I recall at the moment.

GRELE: What was your opinion of Stewart Udall as Secretary of Interior, of the appointment...

ELLIS: I thought and said publicly that it was a good appointment. Udall's voting record had been 100 per cent measured by our policies. Something that just didn't occur to us at the time was that he had never been engaged in one of the battles, and there were many over the years when he was in the House. Though he had never been really in one of the fights, he voted to suit us. I was pleased with the appointment, disappointed that it didn't come my way, but pleased that a man of, certainly, his voting

[-28-]

record would be appointed. I thought it was a good sign.

GRELE: What was your opinion of the appointment of Mr. Clapp [Norman M. Clapp]?

ELLIS: I was disappointed that Mr. Kennedy had not, either directly himself or through somebody, asked me in advance or someone of our organization what we would think of such an appointment. We had hoped that the appointment might be made from among some of our own leaders, and I sent the President a list of suggestions. I was disappointed that he didn't do that, though I shortly came to feel that Clapp was a good man. I felt he was a good man all along, but hadn't had the experience. He developed the experience pretty fast. He has been a good administrator.

GRELE: In general, how would you assess the role or the record of the Kennedy Administration in the field of public power?

[-29-]

ELLIS: Well, it has to be relative. In general, it cannot be compared with the Truman [Harry S. Truman] Administration or the Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt] Administration as being as favorable, in my opinion. But as compared with the Eisenhower Administration, it was generally good.

GRELE: Why did you say it was not as favorable as the Truman-Roosevelt Administration?

ELLIS: Well, the Truman-Roosevelt Administrations battled right down the line for river basin developments and for the rural electrification program beyond anything that has happened since in any administration.

GRELE: Were the measures that you were interested in promoting handled by the House Interior Committee?

ELLIS: Oh, some of them, but some of them never got to the committee. Somebody has to raise the issue with the committee, you know, through a bill or particularly an administration bill. The right bills never were sent up to the

[-30-]

Hill, in my opinion, in the Kennedy Administration. But the worst thing that happened was something that you mentioned reading in the book. I guess you read where I said also that we were disappointed in Secretary Udall's trading us off, as we saw it, in the Colorado River Basin transmission fight.

GRELE: What do you mean by trading you off?

ELLIS: After we had won that battle with some help, I would say, from him and were ready to starting building the lines, he then made a deal with some of the power companies to not build the lines though Congress had appropriated for the lines. Now this can't be left dangling just like that because there was some language in a House or Senate Committee report which indicated that the Secretary should explore this possibility. The Secretary announced his acceptance of power company offers just before our national meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey. We

[-31-]

did not know at that time what the offers were. The Secretary said that he would accept their offers to wheel the power and deliver power from the dams of the Colorado system instead of building the lines. But these lines were being built to serve eighty-four, I believe, municipally owned systems and rural electric co-operatives and power districts.

None of us were consulted about this so-called offer. The Secretary, in closed session with the power companies, had come to terms with the power companies and accepted their so-called offer. When we demanded to see the offer, we finally got copies of some of the letters which the power companies had written the Secretary. We then said that they were only letters of intent, at best, and spelled out none of the particulars, and that he would certainly get rooked when he

[-32-]

tried to nail them down to even carry out those principles. He came on to our meeting in Atlantic City and assured our people that this would not be the case, but it turned out to be the case. Even today we have never gotten the benefits that the Secretary said to our people in Atlantic City, and said in public statements here, would come as a result of the deal that he had made.

GRELE: Why do you think that kind of deal was made?

ELLIS: Well, I don't know. Udall is an intelligent man, but I think he was naïve. He had not been up against these rough, tough individuals, brilliant men, who run the commercial power industry.

GRELE: Did you ever speak to the President directly about this conflict?

ELLIS: Yes, sir, two or three times.

GRELE: What was his opinion?

ELLIS: Well, as it had to be, of course, he could

[-33-]

not agree with me about Udall without firing him. So he didn't agree, but neither did he argue with me.

GRELE: Were you asking for Udall's resignation?

ELLIS: No, sir, we never did that.

GRELE: Who did you work with in the White House?

ELLIS: Most closely with Lee White, but some with Ted Sorensen and Mike Feldman.

GRELE: As an old TVA man, was there ever a conflict between Secretary Udall and Mr. White over this kind of a policy in respect to the Colorado River Basin?

ELLIS: I don't know. We complained to Lee White numerous times about Udall's actions and policies. I don't mean to give the impression that we disagreed always with Mr. Udall. I think he did some fine things as Secretary. But on most of the major things that we were concerned with in terms of resource development in the West, he was

[-34-]

certainly not a Harold Ickes. He didn't battle through and stick when the going got really tough. You see, when he was in the Congress the heat won on us, or the heat was on the congressmen, but after the Congress had acted, the heat was on him, and he didn't hold.

GRELE: Much has been said about the role of Congressman Aspinall [Wayne N. Aspinall] in issues of this sort. Is he as powerful as, say, Drew Pearson makes him to be?

ELLIS: Well, any chairman of a committee is, as you know, powerful to a great extent if he assumes unto himself a powerful role. Aspinall has done that. I think he has been – I would not want to say a dictator of the Committee, but he has been a pretty powerful ruler of the Committee, yes. I don't know what Mr. Pearson says. I mean, I have not read lately anything he said about Aspinall,

[-35-]

but he is a very powerful man on that Committee.

GRELE: In general was he favorable to the policies that you favored or was he opposed to REA?

ELLIS: In general Mr. Aspinall was, in principle, favorable, but we just never could get our bills and resource development projects through his Committee. Whether it was his fault, I don't know. It wasn't easy to work with him on timing or maneuvering as we sometimes tried to do.

GRELE: That is why I asked the question. You had said earlier that a lot of times your bills just didn't come before the Congress.

ELLIS: Well, Administration bills didn't. Sometimes we had bills of our own – bills which we supported which were introduced by members of Congress – which would get before the committees. But without Administration support, it is very difficult to get a bill.

[-36-]

GRELE: Do you recall any specific pieces of legislation upon which you desired administrative support and it did not come through?

ELLIS: Well, the pipeline was empty when Kennedy became President. Usually it takes long studies, money that has to be appropriated for engineering studies. There wasn't much that Kennedy could have sent up in the way of, let's say, dams or transmission lines immediately. But we asked Kennedy to ask for planning monies for the development of various dams in the West and transmission lines connecting various projects in the West for the pooling of power. That didn't come either, usually. Finally the West Coast Inter-line tie did come as a battle in Congress – mostly, I think, as a result of pressure from us.

GRELE: Was Lee White in charge of formulating policies in the White House in regards to public power?

[-37-]

ELLIS: Mr. Kennedy asked that Mr. White be our contact with respect to matters in which we were generally interested. That, as it turned out, was the case with respect to both rural electrification as such and power, particularly in the river basin development projects.

GRELE: Was he in favor of administrative legislation?

ELLIS: I would think so. I think so. I think he was generally in favor of the projects which we were supporting. I cannot say how he feels about such projects today. The whole frame of reference changes from time to time,

you know, for a particular project. One year it may be needed badly, the next year it might not be needed so badly because of what's been done elsewhere.

GRELE: What were the relations like between the White House and the White House staff and Congressman Aspinall or others on the

[-38-]

Hill who were interested in public power or who had control over it on this kind of legislation?

ELLIS: "Well, you know Aspinall. You know how hard it is to get anything through his committee and how hard it is to work with him." This is the kind of thing we heard. Bill, what do you think? Should I ask that this kind of thing not be exposed at this time?

ROBERTS: No.

ELLIS: Okay. It is true. Let it stand. We heard this from Mr. Kennedy. We heard it from others of his staff.

ROBERTS: You are simply saying what you heard, what you heard others say.

GRELE: Did you believe that it was that difficult?

ELLIS: The White House is powerful. Sometimes we worked with the White House on matters which they very much wanted to get moving on the Hill. I, personally, felt and still feel

[-39-]

that if the President had really pushed some of these developments he could have gotten them, but he might have had to sacrifice something else in time or attention in order to get them. I would be in no position to say which, even in my opinion, he should have done.

GRELE: In his February 1961 message, John Kennedy listed four guiding principles of power policy for this administration; the preference in power sales for public agencies and co-operatives; the priority for domestic and rural consumers in disposal; the lowest rates possible consistent with sound business principles; and the disposal to encourage use and discourage monopoly. How well did he live up to these guidelines?

ELLIS: I don't believe that the Department of the Interior paid much attention to them in the instances of the Colorado transmission battle

[-40-]

and the aftermath of it when Udall traded the lines off, and I don't feel that the Secretary lived up to these principles, or in his demands that the Congress accept a package deal on the West Coast Inter-line tie, which we vigorously opposed. Well, I should not have said that because that came in the Johnson Administration.

ROBERTS: Same Secretary of Interior.

ELLIS: Same Secretary of Interior.

ROBERTS: Same principles.

ELLIS: Priorities for domestic and rural consumers in disposal was probably followed fairly well except in those cases where deals were made with the commercial companies which gave them great advantages, we felt – like so many kilowatt hours for delivering one kilowatt hour out to us somewhere. There just weren't many transmission lines built during the Kennedy Administration. It

[-41-]

usually takes transmission lines to carry out these policies.

GRELE: And the last point of disposal to encourage use and discourage monopoly, do you feel that this was carried out?

ELLIS: In the Colorado transmission deal it was not, in my opinion. In some of the Missouri Valley arrangements – this was Ken Holum's home country where he knew the situation well – they did better. But for the rest of the country, not much. We wanted Kennedy's help in New England, or in the East generally, to develop some low cost power and get it delivered out to the load centers, and we never got anything moving. Senator Muskie [Edmund S. Muskie] tried very hard to get something moving for Maine, as did he. And something finally did move, but the results of it came after Kennedy. Now there are projects recommended in Maine, and I must say that Mr. Udall came

[-42-]

through very well on that, I think, but years late.

Kennedy told us, too, that he just didn't feel that he had a mandate in this area. He said, in the first place, he didn't feel that he had one generally. His margin was too little. When we walked in to see him at the Georgetown house, about the first thing he said was, "Well, I didn't do very well in the public power areas, did I?" He often referred to the Rural Electric Co-ops as public power. Actually, he did well in several states where the rural electrics are strong, including Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, Arkansas, South Carolina, and

Georgia. Where usually our people were, our leaders did organize to support him in the election.

GRELE: Were you involved in any way in the 1963 Conservation Tour? Was your advice asked

[-43-]

where to go or what to say?

ROBERTS: The last meeting held with Mr. Kennedy was just before he left. The last meeting you ever had with JFK. I have got a picture of it someplace. It was in September, September 23, I believe.

ELLIS: Yes, there is, I think, a picture.

ROBERTS: As I recall, there was a discussion of it.

ELLIS: Yes, we had discussions with people who were going to be on the tour, I guess. We were not invited to participate in the tour. Refresh my mind on something. Was this not the Oahe Dam dedication trip?

GRELE: No. There were two trips. One, in 1962, went out to the South Dakota, Colorado and California. The other is the second, in 1963, to the Northwest.

ELLIS: Yes, we submitted suggestions for his speech at Oahe Dam. I can't remember whether we were invited to or not. Sometimes we were

[-44-]

invited and sometimes we did it anyway. Our president, Mr. Al Houffe [Albert C. Houffe], talked with him on our own platform at Oahe at the dedication. Mr. Houffe was a South Dakotan. I was with the President a little in Arkansas. I talked with him some about resources department at the dedication of the Greers Ferry dam. I have forgotten the date, but it was last year. It was in the late summer as I recall.

GRELE: Was that the day when Governor Faubus [Orval E. Faubus] let loose?

ELLIS: Right, I was sitting about ten feet behind Mr. Kennedy when that happened.

GRELE: We really don't have an eyewitness account of that, except from Governor Faubus. Do you recall exactly what happened?



ELLIS: Well, I remember the expression on his face changing, but he did not take on an expression of anger. He was sitting there with his usual smile. I was sitting to his right

[-45-]

and in back of him. He looked at Mr. Faubus for a minute; then he glanced down at his notes and began fumbling with his notes; then he began making some notes, writing something. That is the most that I recall. I recall wondering if he would respond with some anger, but felt that he wouldn't being the statesman that I thought he was and the good politician. He principally just ignored it and mixed a little humor with his speech following and soon had the crowd tremendously with him. This is the impression. He felt that, too, as he indicated to me in the big tent when he went in to lunch.

GRELE: Did he comment to you about this?

ELLIS: Yes.

GRELE: What did he say?

ELLIS: He said, "Don't you think the crowd was with me?" I said, "What do you think?" And said, "Yes." My, he had trouble getting

[-46-]

into the tents to eat after the speech; they all wanted to shake hands with him. He knew they were with him, and he was pleased with it, for the next election was looming up, you see.

END TAPE I SIDE I

BEGIN TAPE I SIDE 2

GRELE: Did John Kennedy ever give you any indication that after the 1964 election his policies on such issues as public resource development or public power would, perhaps, change?

ELLIS: No, he did not. However, we had hoped they might if he could see what we thought he didn't see in the '60 campaign – that these issues are good issues with the rural people particularly, that the stand we had taken is generally a popular stand in the areas involved with both rural and urban people, such as the development of the dams in the Northwest and the transmission lines

[-47-]

to pool the power and get it to the load centers.

GRELE: Before we move on the next question, which is a question concerning the relationship or the contract between AID [Agency for International Development] and the REA Co-operative Association, can you think of anything that we might have overlooked in terms of domestic policies?

ELLIS: From time to time we talked to Mr. Kennedy about the need for pooling power throughout the North American continent, and I think he had begun to get a glimpse of its potential. That night, to and from the airport at Billings, we talked about it some. Mr. Radin and I were telling him about what we had seen on a trip to Russia with the Joint Senate Committee in '59. He said, yes, he had read our report. It became a Senate document. There were four Senators on the

[-48-]

trip. Let's see, there was Moss [Frank E. Moss], Gruening [Ernest Gruening], Muskie -- I guess three Senators. We told him there we felt the Russians were far ahead of us in major transmission building and in the pooling of power. They were pooling the power of all Russia. This was not being done in the United States by anybody. I don't remember specifically what he said, but I know that his response generally grew more favorably on this idea during the time he was in office. I used to mention it at every opportunity. Bill Roberts, can you think of anything else, any areas that we have omitted here?

ROBERTS: We worked closely with the Kennedy Administration on the various poverty programs, as closely as they would let us work.

GRELE: What kind of involvement would you have in the poverty program?

[-49-]

ELLIS: Well, we submitted to him our ideas of how Appalachia ought to be approached with giant coal-burning generators producing power at low cost and selling it to power companies and to us. He always seemed to respond favorably to the idea, but he didn't appoint the right committee and put the right people in charge, and it always got buried. I think the important thing is he talked about it at Oahe, he talked about it at other places, the importance of rural area development, and at least issued the directives that resulted in an effort, the start of the RAD [Rural Areas Development] effort.

GRELE: In urging this...

ELLIS: I think he got a lot of awfully poor advice on some of these things. He appointed his first committee on rural area development. I have forgotten what it was called. He put on it a couple of power company men in

[-50-]

Pennsylvania and West Virginia, as I recall. He didn't put any of us on it at all.

ROBERTS: You mentioned a point, I think, that is important, that most of us have forgotten now what a tight squeaker that 1960 election was; how narrow the margin was. As I recall, the Kennedy Administration in all areas – not just in the areas that we were interested in – was trying to prove that it was going to not make a violent switch from previous policies during the first year. And then I should think that it started moving on its own after that time. But it was less than three years that he held office. When it comes to matters like transmission lines and development of new federal dams, this is just time enough to get the planning done.

ELLIS: We got appointed to plenty of other committees. I was named, for instance, to the Agriculture Advisory Committee and the Commerce Department's

[-51-]

-we knew it generally as the ARA [Area Redevelopment Administration] Committee, to advise on area redevelopment. But we were not on any of these programming committees which submitted proposals to him for Appalachian development or any other kind of development.

GRELE: The Brookings Institute study of the ARA program calls it an administrative mess. Was it one?

ELLIS: I don't know.

GRELE: Your committee didn't deal with this at all?

ELLIS: I personally felt the program moved fairly well, but it never had a chance. It never had enough money; it never had sufficient support from within the Administration, from other agencies; it never had a field staff of its own - that is, not a sufficient one.

GRELE: I have been told that they relied heavily on the Small Business Administration for field studies.

[-52-]

ELLIS: That's right, and on the Department of Agriculture and on the others. They didn't have much choice.

GRELE: How effective was Batt [William L. Batt] as administrator?

ELLIS: Well, I felt that Bill Batt was a devoted man, determined to do the right thing, but without enough stature within the administrative web-work to pull the right strings at the right time to get his programs over. I think he never really had a chance.

GRELE: Did you work at all with Senator Douglas [Paul H. Douglas] on this?

ELLIS: Yes.

GRELE: What was the Senator's opinion of the progress of the ARA?

ELLIS: Well, I don't think I can answer that. I know that the Senator felt the program wasn't moving as it should. He was disappointed that it didn't get a field staff of its own to deal directly in the field.

[-53-]

GRELE: Were you at all involved in the initial legislation that set up the ARA?

ELLIS: Yes, we were on the ad hoc voluntary committee that worked on the drafting of two or three bills that Douglas sponsored.

GRELE: What was your position in regards to the issue of how many areas should be put under the jurisdiction of the Administration?

ELLIS: Well, I felt that it could not win in the long run just tied down to a few of the areas that a set of figures would indicate were the most critical. I still feel that. It didn't have enough base of support. It didn't have enough political support that way.

GRELE: Meaning the more areas, the more support?

ELLIS: Meaning the wider base, the more support. I think congressmen from the areas that got benefits tended to support it. It certainly would be a natural thing, I think.

[-54-]

GRELE: Is this program doing any better as the Economic Development Administration?

ELLIS: I don't have an opinion on that. As you probably know, I suffered a heart attack last September 23 and a stroke the same day, and I have been either in the hospital or in therapy ever since. So I have not been close enough to the program. I was asked to serve and accepted the invitation to serve on the new advisory committee that was set up, but I have not attended a meeting.

GRELE: Can we move on now to the AID relationship? What was the initiation behind the contract between AID and the NRECA [National Rural Electric Cooperative Association] to aid in the electrification of underdeveloped countries?

ELLIS: I don't know, but at various times we talked with Mr. Kennedy, as we did other leaders,

[-55-]

while he was a Senator about why not help the people to help themselves along the same general lines that we have used in this country where so many rural people have done so much through rural electric cooperatives and other organizations, particularly the nonprofit organizations, to help themselves. Nobody as yet has ever quarreled with that idea, but when it came to spelling it out, how to get it done, nobody moved either for a long time. I remember writing Mr. Kennedy a letter to this effect, too, urging that he move in this direction before he was inaugurated. I am sure we could dig it up.

He was thinking strongly of it, and so were some of his advisors, then Senator Humphrey and Bill Thatcher [M. William Thatcher] went to see him. Bill Thatcher is head of a grain terminal cooperative in Minneapolis-St. Paul. There was a play in

[-56-]

the papers about it, that the President was going to adopt, or consider adopting, recommendations which he had that day from Mr. Thatcher and Mr. Humphrey along this line. Mr. Humphrey carried to him, I think, materials which we had submitted to Senator Humphrey urging him to move in this area, in this direction. I know that the President felt rather strongly that this was a desirable approach for part of the program of assistance to developing countries. But then there was the Punta del Este Conference at which various organizations, not government, were represented and participated, as I recall. This is very vague now, but I remember we were disappointed that we weren't asked to either submit ideas or materials or to go to the Conference in Uruguay. But we kept pressing, and I think that this finally resulted in the first

[-57-]

study that was made with the idea of coming up with specific suggestions. I was asked to go with a group to visit a number of Latin American countries, to visit with the people themselves, with our own representatives in those countries, and with officials of those

countries and to come back and report to the President. There were five of us in that trip.

GRELE: Who else was there?

ELLIS: Mr. Howard Cowden of Kansas City, Harry....what's his name with Nationwide?

ROBERTS: Nationwide, Harry Culbreth....Harry Culbreth.

GRELE: We can probably get the names.

ELLIS: A fellow, whose name I don't recall, from CUNA, Credit Union National Association. [Olaf Spetland]. How many have I named?

GRELE: Four.

ELLIS: And Charles Lyon of the National Association

[-58-]

of Mutual Savings Bank. And Senator Humphrey was with us on part of the tour. We first attended a meeting in Bogota, Colombia, advertised as a meeting of cooperatives of the Americas partly to consider such a program, partly to consider setting up an international cooperative organization to sponsor such movement. Senator Humphrey spoke at the meeting. We made a report, and I made an individual report which I gave the President along with a bottle of wine which I carried back for him from Peru, which was sent to him and autographed by one of the leaders down there. It took a good while for this idea to filter through the Congress and the State Department – or through enough of the Congress and the State Department for somebody to feel it was worth trying.

GRELE: Who did you work with in the Congress? Do

[-59-]

you recall, other than Senator Humphrey?

ELLIS: Mainly Humphrey, but from time to time we talked with Senator Bill Fulbright [J. William Fulbright], Senator Douglas, Senator Morse [Wayne L. Morse].

GRELE: Were they favorable to this kind of approach?

ELLIS: I would say that the answer is generally, yes, to the extent that they were favorable toward foreign aid at all in those particular countries. They felt there ought to be more of the monies filtering through to help the masses,

to help people help themselves.

GRELE: Whom did you work with in the State Department?

ELLIS: Well, I talked with the Secretary [Dean Rusk] once, various assistant secretaries, with Chester Bowles when he was there, and with the two predecessors of Dave Bell [David E. Bell], and we worked with Dave Bell himself and, I would say, a hundred or so of his staff. It would seem that. We spent a year

[-60-]

negotiating that contract.

GRELE: Was this a part of the Alliance for Progress, broadly conceived?

ELLIS: I think so. I think Kennedy considered it so. I think it was in that light that he invited us to come down and sign it on his desk. He made a statement for the press and to be used in connection with it, which had been prepared for him or which he had prepared. He read it. He was pretty full of this program by that time. Then he took off on his own, just extemporaneously, and made another speech.

GRELE: Did you work at all with Fowler Hamilton?

ELLIS: Yes, we did.

GRELE: How effective was he to work with?

ELLIS: Fowler Hamilton understood exactly what we were working for and, I think, was generally sympathetic. It was under Fowler Hamilton that the program got started. He had a

[-61-]

Missouri background. He knew what it was to be without electricity. He knew what electric cooperatives – what people – could do locally. How much he knew about other kinds of cooperatives, I don't know. I think we felt that he was effective and a dedicated man.

GRELE: How did the program turn out?

ELLIS: We think it is going very well.

GRELE: Are there electric cooperatives in Latin America now?

ELLIS: Yes.

GRELE: Any particular countries where it has proven to work out easier than other countries?

ELLIS: Oh yes, it varies greatly. It takes a long time for an idea as different as this to get through anywhere, and I think more particularly in countries where the people who are in control don't have much confidence in the masses being able to do anything for themselves.

[-62-]

GRELE: My next question was whether or not those nations that had a revolutionary tradition, such as Mexico, were easier to work with than those countries which had a history of closed political structures, such as Paraguay?

ELLIS: We haven't been able to get very far in Mexico.

GRELE: Haven't you?

ELLIS: No.

GRELE: Why?

ELLIS: Just don't know.

GRELE: It seems that it should be just the other way around.

ELLIS: Yes, they don't seem to know what we are talking about, the people we have talked to. Some of them, anyway.

GRELE: What countries has it proven to be fairly easy to work with?

ELLIS: Well, let's say we have done better, I think, or they have done better in Nicaragua, in Ecuador – Ecuador, perhaps, is the best – in Venezuela, in Brazil, in Chile, and to

[-63-]

some extent in Colombia. The program has been stalled for several months now in Colombia for some reason.

GRELE: In negotiations over this contract was there ever any opposition from private power companies?



ELLIS: No, no, and where we have had contacts with them in these other countries, where we've had contacts with representatives of power companies of the United States, we got along very well generally. There have been exceptions, but I think generally that is true. Usually our kind of people are working in nearly all these countries.

GRELE: The system is institutionalized in Latin America; is it the same as the functioning of, say, the REA in the United States?

ELLIS: No.

GRELE: How does it differ?

ELLIS: Well, in the first place, the REA in the United States had the money and had the

[-64-]

promotion responsibility. There is nothing comparable to it anywhere, that I know of, in any country outside the United States.

GRELE: In Latin America they are private cooperatives?

ELLIS: Well, in Latin America there is no government agency anywhere that has the money that's needed and the freedom or authority to go out and promote these cooperatives. This is needed because they have to be built on a large scale to be efficient, get the cost of power low.

GRELE: Does the money come through the AID program?

ELLIS: Not for the promotion. This is one of the difficulties. In other words, we don't go in and promote among the people ourselves, and we can't pass money on to anybody else to do it. I don't think AID can either. Sometimes it gets done by some of the local citizens who get the idea and go on to work. But usually the area is too small, and it

[-65-]

needs an overall government support. It's had more of that in Ecuador than it has in most of the other countries – and in Chile. In Chile there is a government agency which deals in power wholesale, which has helped in the promotion of the program countrywide. This is not generally true.

GRELE: Did you ever talk to the President about the program once it was passed?

ELLIS: Oh yes, several times.

GRELE: What were his opinions on how it was working out?

ELLIS: Well, there was a long period in which little was done. I expressed my disappointment to him of the slowness with which the State Department was coming through. It seemed to us that faster than we could sell this idea to people in the State Department, some new man would show up at a critical crossroad whom we couldn't sell or not in time to keep the program moving.

[-66-]

ROBERTS: Do you want to comment about the AID missions that you found there?

ELLIS: Yes, the AID missions abroad went through many changes, too, and were often headed or staffed in major positions with people who were so biased against cooperatives or already biased against rural electric cooperatives that they just didn't want much to do with it.

GRELE: Was this particularly true with the businessmen who were brought into AID in a program of sending American enterprises south of the border?

ELLIS: I don't think you could say it was 100 per cent true of any mission, as far as I know, or of any particular group. I think that we got the impression that some of our worst opposition was from US businessmen who held those positions. But there were others who opposed us, or who didn't really cooperate or push the program

[-67-]

even when their bosses told them to, who were career people. So I doubt if it can be said that the businessmen as a group were any more difficult than the career people.

GRELE: Do you recall anyone in particular who you found it difficult to deal with?

ELLIS: Yes, but I am not sure that I ought to start naming names at this point. If I did this, I would want to go over the list with our people who work this area. I could give you a list as long as your arm of people we think we work with well, we think want to do something in this area, and of those who either don't want to or can't for some reason.

GRELE: I won't ask for it now, but someday you should make it part of the public record available to someone some place; put it in the Library; donate it.

[-68-]

ELLIS: Well, if we decided later that we would like to give you this, may we do it and let you incorporate it?

GRELE: Certainly.

ELLIS: I think we just might do that. We had some weird experiences. You see, I went myself to most of the countries in Latin America to introduce the program to our own embassy people and AID people and to the government officials and to local organization people. We didn't see many individuals as such. We didn't have time, but we would usually see some. The farm groups, college groups, other groups we often met with. I did this in most of the countries of Latin America and then Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Turkey, Afghanistan – I guess that's it. Usually we were met at the airport by some AID official. Often a program had already been blocked out for us; where we were to

[-69-]

go for the time we had in that country, whom we would see. I think generally these were pretty well done, but sometimes, even though the program was pretty well worked out in advance, one individual through whom we had to go would wreck any hope of progress. He just didn't believe it. Sometimes some individual would not work with us in the beginning, but he would get enthused about it later. Then, by that time, he would probably have his opposition developed.

GRELE: Was the Mekong River Delta Project a part of this general program? You said you were in Vietnam.

ELLIS: We submitted to the President and to the State Department ideas for the Mekong Development. I think if you would ask the President...

GRELE: This is President Kennedy or President Johnson?

[-70-]

ELLIS: President Johnson. Are you interested in this?

GRELE: Yes.

ELLIS: He would tell you that some of the ideas and some of the material came from the letter which I wrote to him a few days before his Johns Hopkins speech in Baltimore. This was based on our contract – our nonprofit contract, very much nonprofit – and on the work we were doing. I was in Vietnam just a year ago now. Well, a year ago, let's see, March....I guess I was back here, but barely back here, a year ago now. I was in the embassy, I think, just five days before it was bombed in

Saigon.

GRELE: Can you think of anything that we might have missed concerning the contract between AID and NRECA over the development of cooperatives?

ELLIS: Well, we've missed my feeling that unless

[-71-]

they go this route more, they just about might as well quit in a lot of these countries. Wherever this program is set in motion, and other programs using the same general ideas, the people are enthusiastic, and you are not going to turn those people into the communist ways, in my opinion. It doesn't necessarily mean, even though they become enthusiastic about an electric cooperative, that they will be noncommunist, but the carry-over is easy. They seem to get the idea very quickly that they like the fact that we have got this nonprofit contract, that we are a people's organization, you see, in this country. And they would have just banqueted us to death if we let them. They would meet us at the airports with bands and with great signs, "Welcome Yankees," and then they would have other signs with our names on them.

[-72-]

GRELE: Did you ever tell President Kennedy about your reception?

ELLIS: Yes, I showed him a picture, too, of himself, which they had in one of the meetings. But that was only a very short while – that would have been, I guess, the last time I saw, which was September 23. Is that it Bill? He would just go wild over these programs. A year ago last December the REA Administrator, Norman Clapp, Leon Evans, who is in charge of our program in Latin America on our staff here, and I were at a meeting of the members of the Cooperative de los Colorados at Santo Domingo, Ecuador. We wouldn't get in the building – it was a big theater building – because the people had come early and filled it up; and the huge square outside was full of people. Many of them demanded to get in because they were members of the cooperative, already had electricity under it. They wanted

[-73-]

to get in and participate in the meeting. They knew that a lot of the people inside were not members. So the police had to take over and took everybody out of the building and then checked back in only the members. The meeting was supposed to start, I think, at 1:30 pm. I don't remember when it did start, but they never knew when to quit. It was a people's meeting, and it was still going strong long past dinner time. I stayed. I don't remember when it finally adjourned, but it was toward midnight. Then they had a reception and dance affair in honor of the visiting Yankees after that to which we were obliged to go. I wanted to go to the hotel and go to bed, but they said no, we must go to this because they had looked

forward to it. It was the crowning event of the day. So we went.

GRELE: Did you attend the welcoming ceremony to

[-74-]

members of the National Conference on Cooperatives and the Future in April of 1963? Do you recall?

ELLIS: Yes.

GRELE: Do you recall the President's remarks at that meeting in terms of his support of cooperatives?

ELLIS: Well, I recall that they were generally favorable.

GRELE: How committed do you feel that he and Secretary Freeman [Orville Lothrop Freeman] were to the ideals of the cooperatives movement?

ELLIS: Freeman, fully committed, yes.

GRELE: And President Kennedy?

ELLIS: Well, to the extent that he understood them, and I think he was understanding them very well. He was beginning to understand them and becoming more enthusiastic about them.

GRELE: Would you ascribe this difference to their origins?

[-75-]

ELLIS: Yes, Mr. Freeman had lived among them in Minnesota where they are strong. Mr. Kennedy had not had such exposure.

GRELE: Do you recall the last meeting that you had with the President?

ELLIS: Yes.

GRELE: What was discussed?

ELLIS: Our own program, resource development, and my complaint to him that the Chairman of his Federal Power Commission was about to do us in.

GRELE: Who was this and why – and how?

ELLIS: Joe Swidler [Joseph C. Swidler], who was then Chairman of the Commission, because he was trying to put the electric cooperatives under jurisdiction of the Commission, had issued orders to that effect which we thought would wreck our programs in many areas because of the additional barriers it would set up to the program.

[-76-]

GRELE: Why did he want to do this?

ELLIS: This we never knew.

GRELE: In general, do you feel that there is a certain kind of distrust between the REA and the Federal Power Commission?

ELLIS: No. You see, decisions of FPC are appealable to the courts. Any effort that we make usually to generate our own power or to move it on transmission lines is opposed by some commercial power company. If this all has to be passed on by FPC and if those decisions of FPC are appealable to the courts, the companies can come in and cause extended hearings, as they often do on dam licenses, before FPC or before the state commissions where we are under the jurisdiction, and then appeal those cases to the courts later if the decisions don't go to suit them.

GRELE: What was President Kennedy's reaction to your complaint against Chairman Swidler?

[-77-]

ELLIS: I don't think he knew about it before even though we had tried to communicate with him before.

GRELE: Can you think of anything we missed?

ELLIS: No.

GRELE: In that case, do you have any final comments you would like to make?

ELLIS: I just think John Kennedy was one of the truly great men I ever knew, an intellect that was not to be compared with most. It was generally a pleasure to work with him, but he had to take advice from somebody. He was not sufficiently aware of so many of the problems that we had that he had to rely on somebody. And I think he got some bad advice or lack of any, maybe, many times in dealing with us. I think he would have been a better president for us in a second term than he was in the first. Now this, you understand, is speaking only in reference to our program

[-78-]

because so many things he did that all people know about and applaud him for. So do we. His leadership in world affairs, for instance, was developing rapidly, I think. He seemed to have great respect everywhere I have been in many countries. Bill, can you think of anything else?

ROBERTS:       No.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-79-]

Clyde T. Ellis Oral History Transcript – JFK #1  
Name List

**A**

Aiken, George D. 22  
Aspinall, Wayne N. 35,36,38,39

**B**

Batt, William L. 53  
Bell, David E. 60  
Bowles, Chester B. 60

**C**

Clapp, Norman M. 29,73  
Cook, Walter 12  
Cooper, John S. 22  
Cowden, Howard 58  
Culbreth, Harry 58

**D**

Dell, Richard 9,16  
Douglas, Paul H. 53,60

**E**

Eisenhower, Dwight D. 2,12-14,30  
Evans, Leon 73

**F**

Faubus, Orval E. 45,46  
Feldman, Myer 9,34  
Freeman, Orville Lothrop 75,76  
Fulbright, J. William 60

**G**

Goldwater, Barry M. 17  
Graybill, Leo C. 21  
Gruening, Ernest 49

**H**

Hamilton, Fowler 61  
Holum, Kenneth 21,42  
Houffe, Albert C. 45  
Humphrey, Hubert H. 2-4,12,56,57,59,60

**I**

Ickes, Harold LeClair 35

**J**

Johnson, Lyndon B. 4,12,15,16,41,70,71

**K**

Kennedy, John F. 1,3-5,8-16,19,22,24,26,27,29,  
31,37-45,47-49,51,55,56,61,70,73,75-78  
Kuchel, Thomas H. 22

**L**

Lyon, Charles 58

**M**

Morse, Wayne L. 60  
Moss, Frank E. 49  
Muskie, Edmund S. 42,49

**N**

Nixon, Richard M. 19,21,22  
Norris, George W. 8

**P**

Pearson, Drew 35

**R**

Radin, Alex 21,25,48  
Roosevelt, Franklin D. 30  
Rusk, Dean 60

**S**

Sorensen, Christian Abraham 8  
Sorensen, Theodore C. 8,9,34  
Spetland, Olaf 58  
Stong, Benton 18  
Swidler, Joseph C. 76,77



## **T**

Thatcher, M. William 56,57  
Truman, Harry S. 30

## **U**

Udall, Stewart L. 28,31,33,34,41,42

## **W**

White, Lee C. 34,37,38

## **Y**

Young, Milton R. 22