

Herschel C. Loveless Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 05/09/1967
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Biographical Note

Herschel C. Loveless (1911 - 1989) was the Governor of Iowa from 1957 to 1960 and served as the national chairman of Farmers for Kennedy-Johnson in 1960 and as a member of the Renegotiation Board from 1961 to 1969. This interview focuses on the 1960 presidential campaign, particularly in Iowa, and Loveless' time working for the Kennedy administration, among other topics.

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Herschel C. Loveless– JFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

HERSCHEL C. LOVELESS

May 9, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: Governor Loveless, do you recall when you first met John Kennedy?

LOVELESS: Rather clearly, in fact, in the 1956 Convention when the Senator was candidate for Vice President and I opposed him quite violently. I recall some of the Eastern press coming over to my hotel to get me to go over and have a picture taken with the Senator. That was the first time I met him, of course. As I recall, the title of the picture was "East meets West" or something like this, you know. But we had an interesting conversation at that time with my reasons for not supporting him, which got me involved rather deeply in later years with him.

HACKMAN: Can you go into the nature of this discussion?

LOVELESS: Basically, of course, with full understanding that Senator Kennedy was then representing a semi-urban type of area, with a very limited knowledge of agriculture, and some of his votes weren't quite popular out in our area, so I just didn't go along with him. I found that he was not too knowledgeable about the problems out there. So as a result, in that four year period I think at no time did I come

into Washington that one of the first people to catch me down at the hotel would be the then Senator to talk about agriculture. He came to Iowa a number of times and I got a little dirt on his feet. We played Notre Dame a couple of times which kind of put a little strain on the relationship. Otherwise we got along fine.

HACKMAN: Was the attitude of the other Iowa delegates to the Convention in 1956 similar to yours, as far as attitude toward Kennedy?

LOVELESS: Yes, very much. As I recall, and I'm really calling on memory now, when I polled the delegation at that particular time I think there were two and a half votes for Senator Kennedy in what was probably a twenty-four vote delegation, if I remember correctly.

HACKMAN: Who was the Iowa delegation for that year for the Vice President?

LOVELESS: Well, of course we were kind of all over the lot, so as to speak. However, the bulk of them, of course, were [Estes] Kefauver folks.

HACKMAN: I see.

LOVELESS: I don't recall the total vote. But the vast majority I'm sure was Kefauver votes, if I remember correctly.

HACKMAN: In your contacts with Kennedy in the period after the 1956 Convention, could you see any change going on in his stance on agricultural problems?

LOVELESS: Oh, yes. He became more knowledgeable. I assume that he was talking with many people, other than myself. I recall one thing. I

used to send him copies of what speeches I might have made along on the subject as we got about the country. And, as I recall, in 1958 I believe it might have been, the then Secretary of Agriculture and I engaged in a few debates in Indiana, Illinois, and in the Midwest generally. So I many times received requests from him for information, which we tried to provide an answer for, to the best of our ability. As I say, I used to come in here frequently to make appearances before some House or Senate committee. And I'd usually have breakfast with him in the morning here, and we'd talk about what was going on in the field of agriculture. So he had become pretty knowledgeable about some of the problems of the Midwest.

HACKMAN: I wondered in your discussions with him, did you feel that his votes were a result of the fact that he represented mainly a poultry and dairy area in agriculture or were they just lack of knowledge and just a disagreement with. . . .

LOVELESS: A general lack of knowledge, plus the basic fact that most people of urban areas think of farm programs as they relate to consumer prices, so as to speak, and it makes the bacon cost more on the market when then they go down to the corner grocery to buy it. So I think he was more or less voting from the standpoint of the consumer rather than producer, with a lack of knowledge of the complexity of agriculture.

HACKMAN: How soon could you tell that Kennedy or his people were making an effort in Iowa to get support for the 1960 presidential nomination?

LOVELESS: The major push, of course, was in the late fall of '59. But even prior to this there was a definite indication of interest on the part of some of our county politicians as I'd get about the county, in conversation, in relation to them and so on. So he attracted their fancy, sort of, in '56. As I say, they weren't voting against him in '56. particularly because they were anti-Kennedy; they were

just against his agricultural policies of that period. He made a number of appearances in the state, not in the metropolitan areas of the state-if a Midwest state has metropolitan areas-but rather in some of the smaller communities of the state.

HACKMAN: Did you usually accompany him when he came out to your state?

LOVELESS: Yes, I usually did--frequently arranged them, with the thought in mind. . . .
Well, let me put this in perspective. In the late fall of '59, very early spring of '60, if you recall, we had quite a supply of candidates, possible presidential aspirants. So I made arrangements for each one of them to get a good deal of exposure in the state, setting on a schedule of a full week, if they wanted to use this amount of time, and this applied at that time to Senator [Lyndon B.] Johnson and all of them that were aspiring towards the nomination. And during this period Senator Kennedy was one of those that we spent a good deal of time with Mrs. Loveless and I, getting him around.

HACKMAN: Do you have any recollections of anything interesting that happened during his trips through the state?

LOVELESS: Well, of course I made reference a short time ago to playing Notre Dame. This might be a little amusing incident: The Senator and [Theodore C.] Ted Sorensen met Mrs. Loveless and I in Des Moines. And their airplane, of course, was too big to land down at Iowa City, so we took my little plane and Ted and the Senator flew down with us. And as we were going to the stadium--well, I had a little reception for him at the Memorial Union, which was absolutely mobbed with the kids on the campus at that time--and as we were going to the stadium then, I said, "Now, look, Jack, let me tell you, you're going to be sitting over in the Iowa press box with me. Now I don't want to hear any loud cheers for Notre Dame." His answer was, "Well, I'll cheer for Iowa and pray for Notre Dame." But following

this we loaded them up and flew up to the town of Carroll, and landed on a little grass airport up there. At that time the Carroll Chamber of Commerce had a function there, their annual meeting that he spoke to, and got a great kick out of. We took them on to Des Moines then later in the night. But many recollections of personal contacts he had with the guy feeding the beef or the fellow who was in the feed grain business and so on. He had a real curious mind, so I'm not sure they were learning so much from him right in that period, but he sure was picking their brains, so as to speak, to find out what they were thinking about. So we had many impromptu types of sessions like this that weren't really pre-arranged. I'd just run into a friend somewhere and introduce him to, and we'd go from there, you know.

HACKMAN: Could you tell that efforts on the part of Kennedy as a presidential candidate had any significant effect on the district and state conventions?

LOVELESS: Oh very definitely, yes. In 1960 there was a heavy push on the part of the ardent Kennedy supporters in the district caucuses, prior to the state convention. It got kind of rough. I don't mean physically rough. But they were pushing quite hard. And you readily determined that from the grass roots on up this had been building up for two or three months prior in the Iowa system of choosing the delegates, going from precinct caucuses on up. And the bulk of that state convention of that year were very much pro-Kennedy. It wasn't a reflection of the activities of the Democratic organization as such, but it just grew up from the ground on up. And the Democratic organization as such was trying to play it a little bit cool and not get in the middle because at no time prior to this year. . . . I'll have to qualify this, but in my period of political life, we were prone not to have instructed delegations. And of course this delegation came out as a favorite son type delegation, which seemed to be the best posture for us to take right at that moment, in political history at least.

HACKMAN: Were people coming in from outside the state at this point to work for Kennedy? Did he have members of his . . .

LOVELESS: Not other than--Ted Kennedy spent some time there prior to Convention, or at Convention time. But basically this was in the vast majority internal.

HACKMAN: How effective was--I believe there was a Kennedy for President organization under-- a fellow named [Edward A.] Ed McDermott was at least co-chairman of that if not chairman.

LOVELESS: Well, yes. Now of course this developed, this organization was put together following the Convention.

HACKMAN: I had thought that that existed before.

LOVELESS: No, it hadn't. There was no formal organization, to my knowledge at least, prior to the National Convention.

HACKMAN: Who were some of the key people in the state who came out for Kennedy that might have had a great deal of influence with the other delegates?

LOVELESS: Well, you know, uniquely enough, there was not a heavy. . . . Prior to the state convention you couldn't detect any particular leadership speaking out this way. And even at the state convention, while you had to recognize that practically this was a sort of a pro-Kennedy delegation--the majority was pro-Kennedy . . . There wasn't any really strong attempt on the part of anyone to speak out vehemently in the Senator's behalf prior to the National Convention. The state organizational people, I'm thinking now in terms of district committeemen and committeewomen, were kind of split all over the lot. There were some [Stuart]

Symington folks; there were some Johnson folks; there were some Kennedy folks.

HACKMAN: Let's see, Donald Norberg was the state chairman at that time. Were you surprised that he was so strongly in favor of Kennedy?

LOVELESS: Yes. Duke spoke out just shortly prior to the National Convention, which came as a complete surprise to about everyone. I'm not sure, it might not have to Duke. I doubt that he had given a lot of pre-thought to making that statement. The fact of the matter is I'm sure that, when I talked to him about it, I'm sure that it just occurred to him that maybe this was the thing he should do. And he did it in the course of a few hours, without too much additional deliberation.

HACKMAN: I see.

LOVELESS: His announcement came, as I recall, just about the time the delegation, or maybe a few days before--I had to go to Los Angeles a few days ahead of the delegation. And about that time his stand was published.

HACKMAN: How much of an effort did some of the other candidates make in Iowa?

LOVELESS: They were all there. I had Senator Symington booked for a number of appearances there. Senator and Mrs. Johnson spent a couple or three days with Mrs. Loveless and I at the Mansion and we had a number of appearances scheduled for them. I invited [Robert B.] Bob Meyner in. Governor Meyner, the Governor of New Jersey, he made a couple or three appearances in the state. And, as you know, Governor [Adlai E.] Stevenson was not an avowed candidate. So the fact of the matter is, as I recall, I suggested to him--I happened to be on a plane with him from Boston to Chicago one night--and I suggested to him that he come out. And he grinned that whimsical grin of his and said,

"How many times do I have to say I'm not running for something?"

HACKMAN: How did the approach of the other candidates differ from the Kennedy efforts, in their personal approach for your support?

LOVELESS: Well, actually there was not a great amount of pressure on me from any one of them to support them. Naturally you could readily determine that they were each seeking your support, which would be a natural thing. But basically I had the feeling that most of them were appreciative of the fact that I opened the state up. They weren't locked out, and I tried to get good audiences for them and give them some public exposure so the people in the state could get some idea of what they thought about the individual candidates.

HACKMAN: Did you ever have any indication that you might have difficulty--this is the year you were running for the Senate--that you might have difficulty in getting campaign funds, or, if you should win, desired committee assignments if you supported certain candidates?

LOVELESS: Oh, I heard some of this. Not coming from candidates themselves, but others. I didn't worry about it too much. I guess I was too busy during this period. As you know, I was involved in a dozen things besides my own campaign. So I guess I didn't have time to think much about this.

HACKMAN: Did lack of funds present a problem for you in your race, as far as funds from the Democratic National Senate Fund?

LOVELESS: Oh, you never have enough funds in a state like Iowa, running as a Democrat because you don't generate a lot of funds locally. I thought we had adequate funds. I don't think that you rise or fall in the political arena particularly on the standpoint of the amount of money you spend out in

those Midwestern states at least. But I suppose I fared as well as anyone from the standpoint of help from the National Senatorial Committee. I'm sure that I didn't get the funds that were probably made available to some of the folks in the East and so on, but in Iowa you sort of have to campaign for personal contact much more I think than of course it's possible for you to do a metropolitan state.

HACKMAN: Right. Do you recall the Governors' Conferences in June 1960? I believe that that year it was up at Glacier National Park. Can you recall any of your discussions with other governors, particularly favorite son candidates, and any discussion that you had that may have taken place there?

LOVELESS: Oh yes, sure. Yes, we had--I remember just because the press is always quite interested in what's going on in a presidential year in relation to the Governor's Conference and so on. So we had several favorite son candidates. One of them was [Edmund G.] Pat Brown of California, of course, at that time, Bob Meyner of New Jersey and myself. So we had breakfast a couple of mornings, mostly just to aggravate our friends of the press rather than plotting anything particularly. Of course, as you know, then Governor [Abraham A.] Ribicoff was quite active in Kennedy's behalf.

HACKMAN: Right. I had wanted to ask you about that.

LOVELESS: And of course John Bailey, as Abe's right hand power from Connecticut, was at the Governors' Conference of that period and was working quite hard in this area. Of course, on the other hand we had our little friend from Texas who was working hard for Senator Johnson at that time, now the Governor of Texas. I suppose about a third of the governors at that Conference were kind of noncommittal, kind of seeing what was going on, but kind of leaning one way or another that you could detect when we'd get in informal bull sessions.

HACKMAN: Did the attitude of other governors at the Governors' Conference change your mind in any way?

LOVELESS: No, not really. They didn't. Sitting in this position sometimes becomes kind of untenable. The favorite son postuse for the state delegation had one advantage. It did kind of keep the woovers away from your door, so as to speak, in the early days of the Convention, pre-Convention.

HACKMAN: Did you keep close contacts with these other favorite son candidates after the Governors' Conference was over?

LOVELESS: Oh yes. Particularly--George Docking, who has since passed away, was another one in Kansas. Of course George and I were close personal friends and had lots of contacts in between because Kansas and Iowa are a stone's throw or a tornado blow difference in distance there, sort of. And I had a number of visits with Pat Brown in relation to it during the early part. Sometimes you get to wondering how you get loose in these favorite son things. As you recall, a couple of boys got caught short and didn't get loose from them. The fact of the matter, I recall having breakfast with Pat Brown during the Convention out in one of those out of the way places that I'm sure I never could find again in forty years because Pat had a car come and pick me up at my hotel, and I never have known for sure where I ate breakfast with him. But he sure was escaping the public eye, at that moment at least.

HACKMAN: This was at the Convektion?

LOVELESS: At the Convention, prior to the nomination. Pat had some problems, delegation-wise, and wanted a little fatherly advice, I guess,

about how to get loose from it. But there was no real organized effort on the part of the favorite sons of that period.

HACKMAN: Let's go in then and talk about your part in this Democratic Advisory Council on Agriculture. Could you describe basically how this Council worked and when it got started?

LOVELESS: Yes. Well, it got started, of course, during the closing years of the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower Administration. Paul Butler, who was then National Chairman, and the National Committee set up a number of these advisory councils, you would call one, on science and so on economic advisors and et cetera. And there was a group of about thirty of us that comprised this National Advisory Committee on Agriculture. It was made up of a couple of former Secretaries of Agriculture and representatives of the major farm organizations in the country, plus a couple of agricultural economists and this type of thing. It was kind of a long hair crowd, an interesting group to chair because some of them were as far apart as the poles as to their ideas in relation to agriculture, and attempted to whip up some policy statements, which we did. I understand sometimes we drew the ire of some of our friends over on the Hill because we seemed to be usurping their authority. But we had been given an assignment by the National Committee, and so we tried to do the best we could with the assignment. This went on for quite some period of time prior to 1960. I can't really recall at the moment just when this committee was initially formed, but I would suppose maybe '58, somewhere along in there. We were pretty much basically able to compose the majority of the agriculture plank of the '60 Convention, and then sort of deteriorated into becoming the so-called "Farmers for Kennedy and Johnson" following that.

HACKMAN: Many of the same people involved?

LOVELESS: Yes, almost all of them. There was some difference. A few of these people didn't want to get openly involved in the political

campaign that were involved in this Committee. But the majority of them were involved and helped to give me a nucleus to affect what organization we were able to develop in that short span of time all over the country in agriculture.

HACKMAN: About how often did this group meet through, say, '59 and early '60?

LOVELESS: We met quite a number of times. And not always in Washington. I recall one session we had in Chicago, for example. We tried to get about the country a little bit in order to give some of the local crop interests an opportunity to sound off to us and conducted sort of a hearing type of thing a couple of three times during this period to try to get some grass roots opinions and ideas. It's always a difficult thing to use a loose knit type of organization as this was because everybody was picking up his own tab. There wasn't anyone financing us, so as to speak. If we were meeting in Washington, why, the National Committee provides us with a meeting place.

HACKMAN: And that was it.

LOVELESS: And that was it. If we were outside of Washington we'd usually have one or two staff people make the necessary records and we would try to put everything on tape that we would do outside of Washington so it could be edited down and put in a usable form. But I thought it was amazing during that period that these thirty people would dig down in their own pocket, because each time we got together it meant transportation and costs were--the average individual would spend two or three hundred dollars.

HACKMAN: Who were some of the most active and influential members of this group as far as the actual writing of the platform or the ideas?

LOVELESS: Of course we had, as I say, Claude Wickard, for example, was one of the former Secretaries of Agriculture, who, by the way, just passed away--I understand he was killed in an automobile accident a short time back. We had Willard, the economic advisor for the Department of Agriculture after 1960, Willard. . . .

HACKMAN: Willard Cochrane.

LOVELESS: Willard Cochrane, back up at the University of Minnesota, I believe, now. And some folks there of the dairy interest; [Robert G.] Bob Lewis who is now over in the Department of Agriculture in a capacity over there representing the Wisconsin dairy interests. Not necessarily Wisconsin, but dairy interests generally. He happened to be from Wisconsin. And the Farmers Union [National Farmers Union] had a representative there. Sometimes the individual would vary as to where we happened to be meeting. And the Farm Bureau [American Farm Bureau Federation] had a representative as I recall. As all things go, when you finally get down to finalizing thoughts, two or three have to put in work to draft the form and language, and this is what happened here. I guess probably I took a whack at the final draft before it was presented to the Platform Committee. But you start out with something forty pages long and you start whittling on it. And you can't do this on a thirty man committee.

So Willard Cochrane, as I recall, was one of these. . . . My staff assistant, a fellow by the name of [Arthur T.] Art Thompson who is now head of the feed grain section over in the Department of Agriculture was one of the authors. He and Willard and, I think probably, Bob Lewis actually put the final draft together which I in turn then edited down to a length that was acceptable for a party platform.

HACKMAN: Were you in contact with Chester Bowles or William Welsh or these people who were going to put the whole platform together when you were writing the plank?

LOVELESS: Basically, yes. My staff people were. As you may recall, at the same time I was chairing the Rules Committee of the National Convention, so we had--our staff people were there putting the final touches on this. And, as I recall, the Platform Committee finally gave me some special dispensation to present the plank to them out of context as they had the program because of the difficulties I had in scheduling. But, as you may recall, the pre-Convention hearings went on for quite a period of time out there, on the Platform Committee. They were, Chester Bowles and those folks--by the way, I had Chet out in our state for a few appearances prior to the Convention, too. So they were aware of the facts that we were putting it together. So it worked out all right.

HACKMAN: You were talking a while ago about some of the members of the group being pretty far apart on various matters. Could you go into any of the substance of this as to who. . . .

LOVELESS: Well, I doubt that this tape we're going on here would be long enough to hold all the diverse opinions that developed here. But, as you well remember, there was a tendency from the Farm Bureau, leadership-wise out there, thoughts and ideas in the area of so-called acreage reserve program, wherein the active crop support program type of thing, commodity support, were more in the line of the way of the Farmer's Union, say, some of the commodity interests. And you walked kind of a narrow line trying to keep the problem in context and to arrive at a determination that in your judgment would provide some sort of stabilized income for the producers and yet not upset things as it related to international trade and cost of commodities in the marketplace. And you couldn't go completely one way or another and arrive at this sort of determination, or I thought you couldn't. I think it's later proven out to be true, but. . . . So the question--the biggest argument always was the question of subsidy. The problem revolved around semantics more than anything else because anytime you use tax money to

supplement income, whether it's in price structure or whether it's direct subsidy. I'm not sure of the difference. But it seems to have a lot of difference of meaning to different individuals. So this was the biggest source of argument internally, within the committee. Those that were advocating a direct cash type of subsidy rather than this crop loan price support type of program.

HACKMAN: Well, other than the Farm Bureau, were the other farm organizations fairly close-knit on their ideas and their proposals, like the NFA [National Farm Association] and NFU [National Farmers Union]?

LOVELESS: Yes, they were more closely knit. The only time that they'd part company sort of when commodity interests got involved. Peanuts versus cane sugar: this type of thing. But as a general principle type thing, they were more closely together. Once you got into the commodity interests, man, you were in trouble because there just wasn't any blueprints you could draw that would fit the needs of the cotton people and so on.

HACKMAN: You talked awhile ago, too, about some pressure from people on the Hill or some resentment of people on the Hill. How did the Southern congressmen react to the way this plank was shaping up? And also particularly Senator [Clinton P.] Anderson, who'd usually been around on the other side of the thing?

LOVELESS: Well, Senator Anderson was a great buddy, sort of, of mine. So I used to talk a lot with him, and we'd discuss this. We didn't always have any meeting of mind or even a general meeting of mind. However, as I recall, thinking back, I believe that Senator Anderson was a member of the Platform Committee. And, as I recall, generally our

plank was pretty much acceptable to him. I think probably I or some of my staff people visited with him about it before we presented it and probably did some editing to conform. We did this a good bit out there because we were trying to avoid a donnybrook at the last moment on this thing. So we were trying to still have something that was worthwhile at least, that wouldn't be too controversial. We had plenty items of controversy going on without getting this kicked into the Convention.

HACKMAN: Can you recall any changes in the plank to stem resentment on the part of Southerners?

LOVELESS: No, not too much revision--you have to remember that when you're starting to pull something like this down to the number of words that's acceptable for a platform you get out a broad brush. And the only problem you had then was with the individual types of crop interests and geographic interest, was that it wasn't more explicit as it related to their particular interests. But once you started spelling out the detail of the individual crop interest, you had something that was going to be ten times as long as the whole platform. So we didn't have much problem in this area actually. We worked with a lot of these fellows. As you know, many of the older congressmen holding responsible committee assignments over on the Hill are from the South. It's silly for you to try to drive something that hasn't got a Chinaman's chance of seeing light of day if it were to become part of legislation.

HACKMAN: We talked a bit about Senator Anderson. It's been said that in Kennedy's early days in the Senate that he frequently turned to Senator Anderson for advice on agricultural matters. Do you know that this was so?

LOVELESS: I don't know. I don't know. I really don't. I've heard the same, too. I never asked either one of them about it, really.

HACKMAN: Were you in contact with the various candidates on the writing of this plank?

LOVELESS: Yes, I did. I talked with them a number of times. Senator Symington, for example, was a neighbor from the state of Missouri and a good friend and knowledgeable in this area pretty much. I visited with him. As you know, Missouri has an active farm organization. And they were involved in the Committee and also in the writing of the plank. They were a pretty liberal crowd, as I remember. So you had to sort of walk the middle of the road and tone it down a little bit.

HACKMAN: Other than trying to write this plank so that it would be fairly acceptable to all parts of the party, how did you or members of this group go about making sure that the plank would be accepted by the Platform Committee?

LOVELESS: Well, this depended upon a little effort on the part of the individual members of the committee. I may not have stated it earlier, but they were from every part of the country. We intentionally got them this way because we wanted to have not only crop interests; we wanted geographic interests in there. So they were the missionaries, so as to speak, back in their home areas to talk with not only their state organizational people, but their elected representatives. You know, their congressmen or senators serving, to visit with them about it, to see that we were on fairly logical ground. As I recall, because we couldn't meet all the time, there was a flow of correspondence with suggestions that they'd pick up in their local geographic areas. The fact of the matter some of the names escape me now--it's been a few years back--of some of the people who were serving on that. They weren't in an official type of capacity, just knowledgeable folks, though some of them naive politically. So this helped acquaint them with some political facts of life, too, when they went back home.

HACKMAN: Did the Midwestern delegates as such get together and ever take a Midwestern stand? It seems to me I recall some mention of Midwestern delegates organizing at the Convention.

LOVELESS: There was some of this. But it was on a, as I recall, it was sort of promoted by some of the agricultural organizations. And they didn't form themselves as much into a pressure type of thing as they did into a get together for a general understanding type of thing of what it was all about. They did have some sessions out there, since you bring up the subject, I do recall now, that I wasn't able to attend. But some of my staff people did.

HACKMAN: Is this the same group that was headed by, I believe, Leonard Hoffman and Ellsworth Hays, who were delegates from Iowa--this is the one we're talking about?

LOVELESS: Yes.

HACKMAN: Well, let's go on then and talk about your activities as chairman of the Rules Committee. Were there any pre-Convention preparations that you had to make?

LOVELESS: Not really too much, other than just making sure that we had an organizational set up for a Rules Committee meeting. And, as you may recall, we had a former national chairman as my legal counsel, [Stephen A.] Steve Mitchell, and who was a lot of help to me. And really we had some--a rather lengthy session or two, mostly, as I recall, because some of the vice presidential aspirants wanted equal time for demonstration with presidential aspirants. I couldn't quite convince them that very possibly the presidential nominee might pick his own Vice President and maybe we wouldn't have an open Convention on vice presidential nominees. So we spent a few hours on this and some other procedural type

things that was an attempt to speed up a little bit some of the Convention procedure. But outside of attempts to change some of the procedure, it's a rather simple act to adopt the rules of the . . .

HACKMAN: Right. There was no controversy as far as what rules to adopt?

LOVELESS: No, really. Not other than some attempts to limit times in relation to nominations.

HACKMAN: What about this issue of switching on the first ballot? I believe this came up . . .

LOVELESS: Yes, it did. And it related to me, of course, because at this time Governor Stevenson's supporters were working quite hard and a number of the Iowa delegation was getting a little starry eyed, as I'm sure that many were, a sentimental attachment to Governor Stevenson. So there was an attempt on the part of some of those folks to force me to remain in the favorite son posture beyond the first ballot. My response to the, and I had the Chairman of the Rules Committee backing, which happened to be I, to make this to come through, that no man had to run for President of the United States that they knew of and had the inherent right to withdraw at any moment. And so it was quite a session back of the striped curtain in relation to this. Some of the senators that were working in that field were trying to impress me with their knowledge of Roberts' Rules procedures and so on.

Another thing that happened about the same time, of course, was another--we had a man from Minnesota, as you recall, make one of the nominations, Governor [Orville L.] Freeman. And then there was an attempt to cut Senator McCarthy out from making the nomination for Governor Stevenson because some of the folks in authority seemed to think that only one nomination should come from a state. I recall I happened to rule on this, that any delegate on the floor had the right

to make a nomination. So Senator [Eugene J.] McCarthy could nominate Governor Stevenson.

HACKMAN: In this matter of switches on the first ballot, were other candidates other than Stevenson or his backers active in getting . . .

LOVELESS: Oh, yes. The pressure was on to hold all pledged delegations. And this was coming from a number of the candidates, not only the Stevenson supporters because, as you know so frequently how conventions go, if the second ballot can show a sort of a trend away from a leader, suddenly it opens up for somebody else. So there was a natural hope on the part of all the other candidates' supporters that they could get by a first ballot and possibly Senator Kennedy would not get the nomination, if they could do this.

HACKMAN: Do you recall any specific people that contacted you on this?

LOVELESS: Oh, it wasn't done directly by any of the candidates but by some of their avid supporters. But pressure that I received came from the Stevenson folks. Also this carried on into the Convention. At the time of the vice presidential nomination there appeared to be a possibility of a petition for opening the nomination up to the floor, a nomination which could have been done by a petition from eight states. I might say that I verbally sort of discouraged it to the point that they didn't get the petition because had we reviewed a formal petition I would guess that the Rules Committee would have had to accept it and the chairman of the Convention would have had to accept the nominations from the floor.

HACKMAN: What groups were pushing for this, do you remember? I had never heard anything about this.

LOVELESS: Well, some of the people that were, had been interested in somebody else other than Senator Johnson as the vice presidential nominee.

HACKMAN: Do you recall anything about a controversy before the Rules Committee concerning the casting of ballots by national committeemen and committeewomen, where they each had a half ballot and there was some . . .

LOVELESS: Yes, there was some hassle about that. The detail of it I can't recall at the moment. But, as I recall, we rapidly disposed of it. But there was a challenge on that by some of the members of the group, the Rules Committee.

HACKMAN: I believe the rule was changed so that the votes of these people became subject to the approval of the state delegation. But they couldn't cast them for any candidate they wanted, if the delegation disagreed.

LOVELESS: Yes, this I think was the point that was brought into the Rules Committee. I can't remember the outcome of it now, without referring back to the proceedings of that time. But I think they were turned loose, weren't they, to cast their ballot as. . . .

HACKMAN: I had thought that they were loose when they came in and that it was reversed.

LOVELESS: You could be right.

HACKMAN: I believe the Democratic National Committee, when they set it up, had set it up so that they would be loose.

LOVELESS: You're right.

HACKMAN: And then some people objected to these people having power in conflict with the state delegations.

LOVELESS: Yes, I guess maybe you're right. I recall we had some period of time of debate in relation to this, within the Committee.

HACKMAN: Well, let's go on then and talk about the Iowa delegation and your role in this. When did you decide to allow the Iowa votes to go to Kennedy on the first ballot, and what made you make up your mind?

LOVELESS: In the course of the day of the nominations, naturally I was in contact with so many of the delegation leaders, not from the standpoint of attempting to influence them, but just from the standpoint of the position I was in in the Convention, more or less. It appeared to me that it was going to be an awfully close vote on that first ballot. And it also appeared to me that, if my survey of the thing was right, that we might well be in the posture of the train going by and we'd be behind the caboose, as a couple of states were. I didn't want to get in that posture again because I can recall in the 1956 Convention in relation to this Vice presidential nomination, which we're talking about, when we practically threw the Iowa banner to Speaker Sam [Rayburn] at that time, trying to get some attention in order to change the Iowa vote. As you recall, there was always a big question in everyone's mind whether John Kennedy actually had the nomination before the big switches came. I didn't want to be in that posture again. As it happened that time I did have one of the, a master sergeant at arms from my state who was kind of a broad shouldered guy, and he got up there on the platform and demanded that Speaker Sam take a look at us, and we gradually did get in. But so often you can't. So I didn't want the Iowa delegation to be

in this posture again, missing the boat. This was one of the things that. . . . And if it was their desire, in the majority, to vote for any one of the candidates, I wanted to be in a position to cast the ballots that way. And another thing, I had seconded Kennedy's nomination which appeared to me put me in an incongruous sort of a posture: running for President and seconding the nomination of another man. So I felt that I had to get out of that position. And it worked out very well because I said to the general chairman, "Look, will you recognize me, if I want to get up here to the podium?" Which he did. So right or wrong, rule or no rule, this is the way it was done.

HACKMAN: When had you been contacted about making the seconding speech, or had you wanted to do this on your own?

LOVELESS: No. I had been asked to, and I had been reticent to because of the posture I was in. And finally after a couple or three calls from Ted Sorensen, I finally agreed to. But really only, as I recall, a rather short time before the nominations actually got on the way.

HACKMAN: Do you have any observations on the Kennedy organization at the Convention and how it worked, how effective it was compared to others, or ineffective or . . .

LOVELESS: They had a good organization on the floor. Their communications were good, which sort of amazed me as I watched them operate, that they could be this good technically. I'm talking about communications now. They had that floor well covered and knew what was going on from moment to moment down there, it seemed to me. I was spending the majority of my time back of the striped curtain during this period, but in so doing there was a constant flow of people in and out, and from an observation standpoint, I was where I could watch these folks get around out on the floor.

HACKMAN: How effective were they, particularly with the Iowa delegation? You had said that there was some sympathy there at one time for Stevenson. Were the Kennedys effective in combating this, or . . .

LOVELESS: No, they really weren't. Just prior to--I got my delegation down under the stage in one of those construction rooms, I guess you might call it; they were rather crude for caucus rooms--and told them what I was going to do prior to my doing it and polled them immediately and determined that I was going to go to bed with two or three delegate votes that were bound they were going to stay with me. And Stevenson, Governor Stevenson had, as I recall, two, two and a half delegate votes and so on, with the bulk of them, some twenty-one, as I recall, votes for President Kennedy. Just prior to voting the delegation I checked them again to make sure that there wasn't somebody going to demand a poll on the floor, that this was still the sentiment. So there wasn't any attempt to--at that time I told each one to vote, to tell me who he was supporting--other than the fact that I was going to vote for Senator Kennedy. This might have influenced some of them. I don't know. I didn't try to browbeat them. While there were some news stories that one of the delegates left in tears--a lady--because she was supporting Governor Stevenson and she left in tears, she did this mostly I guess because she didn't want to offend me. But I hadn't mentioned it to her.

HACKMAN: Who, of the Kennedy people, worked specifically with the Iowa delegation? Do you recall?

LOVELESS: Mostly Ted.

HACKMAN: Ted Sorensen or [Edward M.] Ted Kennedy?

LOVELESS: Ted Kennedy.

HACKMAN: How effective was he in working with
Midwesterners?

LOVELESS: Well, this has been quite a few years
ago, and Ted was sort of fresh to the
political arena. So they all liked him,
a likeable young guy. I think maybe he was more
effective than somebody who would have pushed them a
little bit because they might have pushed back.

HACKMAN: You were mentioned frequently throughout,
I guess, late '59 and up to the Con-
vention time as a possible vice presi-
dential candidate. What indication did you have that
you were considered as a vice presidential possi-
bility? Did you ever have any indication from any of
the candidates personally?

LOVELESS: No. And the fact of the matter is I
guess this conversation probably
developed because I was taking sort of
an active part in this agricultural area, and you
know the general consensus, "Well if you get somebody
from the far East or far West, you've got to have
somebody from the Midwest to balance out the ticket,"
sort of approach. So I would doubt that any of the
candidates themselves were even thinking along this
line, other than maybe lumping me in a package with a
dozen others that they were thinking about. I'm sure
this is true of the Kennedy group. And of course if
you would think in terms of Senator Symington, why
geographically I'd have been completely out of place.
So as for the press stories, they had to have some
news, and so if there isn't anything available they
kind of print dope stories in a political year. Just
something to write about, I guess.

HACKMAN: Were any individuals making efforts on
your behalf to . . .

LOVELESS: I discovered that there were, in the Convention, coming from unique places about the country, friends that I had made through appearances and so on around over the country in Michigan and elsewhere.

HACKMAN: Who did you personally favor at the Convention for the Vice President?

LOVELESS: Well of course, being from the Midwest, I thought that Senator Symington would have geographically made and would have made a competent Vice President. He's a capable guy, knowledgeable in so many fields. This had a lot of Midwest implication in it. I suppose this was a thing that tended to swing you towards one man or another. There was a dozen mentioned, of course. And, in and out of the nominee's suite the following morning, you heard of the dozen or more that were under consideration. But the vice presidential nominee never has, to me at least, appeared quite as important as a lot of politicians rate it as it relates to geographic areas. So I made very little attempt to influence the nominee as to who he might choose. And it looked for some period of time that maybe Senator Symington was the man that would be asked, prior to Senator Johnson's acceptance of the post, of course.

HACKMAN: We're about to run out of tape. I think we're going to have to flip this over.

BEGIN SIDE TWO TAPE I

HACKMAN: We were talking, Governor Loveless, about the vice presidential nomination. What was your own reaction to the selection of Senator Johnson as vice presidential candidate?

LOVELESS: Well, I could see the judgment, in a few moments of it. It came as a surprise to me at that time, as it did to many people, because the assumption was he probably wouldn't take it.

And, as you know, many of his advisors tried to convince him that he was in a much better position as Majority Leader over on the Hill than he would be as Vice President. I was not in opposition to him. In the course of that evening I managed to quell some opposition, suggesting to some of these people that they not create any incidents at all. If they were opposed to stand up and yell "No," which some of them did.

HACKMAN: These were people within the Iowa delegation?

LOVELESS: No, other delegations. There was no opposition particularly in the Iowa delegation to Senator Johnson at all, as I recall. Maybe disgruntlement on the part of two or three, but not very vocal and mostly just because they were hoping that their favorite would have the nomination. So we didn't have any opposition within the Iowa delegation. As you know, in some of the more liberal types of states there was some, and these were the people I'm talking about that talked to me in the course of the late afternoon, early evening. And, as you may recall, at the time of the vote, voice vote, it was kind of loud. And as conventions go, you never know for sure--'yea' and 'nay' on the end sound about alike. So you get--those, some of them that were in opposition were noisy; the opposition. But that's normal for a convention.

HACKMAN: Do you recall specifically any of the people you talked to who were reluctant?

LOVELESS: Well, I think I won't mention them, basically because a few of them are reasonably high in the current Administration. So it's just as well to let sleeping dogs lie. Maybe they were talking out of emotion, at that moment a little bit irrational, a little bit tired. It was hot in Los Angeles, as you will remember, smoggy, and the Convention Hall was umpteen, a country dozen miles away from the hotel.

HACKMAN: Well, let's go on then from the Convention to the campaign and your chairmanship of the Farmers for Kennedy-Johnson organization. How did you go about getting this movement organized, and how had you been chosen as chairman of this group?

LOVELESS: Of course immediately after the nomination I got a telephone call from the nominee asking me if I'd come to Hyannis Port for a couple or three days. Mrs. Loveless and I flew up there and met the nominee for breakfast the following morning. He then asked me if I would take this on. After some hour or so of discussion of what they were thinking in terms of organization-wise and so on, why I agreed to. And, as I say, I used some of the nucleus of my Democratic Advisory Council then for an organizational formation, which was quickly available to be put together and which I did, before I left Hyannis Port. In fact, I had some of them up there. We went from there in reaching out into the individual states to get state chairmen and from there on down into the districts. It worked out awfully fast. In fact, amazingly fast, because if you want to get something done you have to delegate it and this is what I did. If you spread thirty people out over the nation, they can get around pretty rapidly. The only hitch you had, you had to have folks serving in this capacity that were generally acceptable to the state organizations within the individual states. So the biggest delay would be clearing these people out, you know, to make sure that you didn't have somebody that was not compatible with the state organization. And I might well have got in the posture of having one or two of these. I'm not sure. But at least I didn't get any real kickback. The best thing that an organization like this does, of course, is to try to accrue a little bit of publicity in relation to the area of interest you're working in. We had an agricultural conference, as you may recall, out in Des Moines. There's a picture hanging over on my office wall there where some old farmer's supposed to be leaning

on the fence looking at a wagonload of Democrats that included about half the members of the Senate and all the former presidential aspirants and so on and many House members--he was saying to his son he'd never seen so many Democrats in his life; maybe they'd eat up the surplus while they were in Des Moines. But we had a couple of days' session there and moved from hearings into a recap with both President Kennedy and President Johnson in attendance the final day. Most of the agricultural writers about the nation came flooding in there, too. So it gives you a forum to develop some worthwhile publicity in relation to this facet of the campaign. And out of this, of course, there was some other area types of similar functions about the nation.

HACKMAN: Right, there was one in Oklahoma City and one in California, I believe.

LOVELESS: Right.

HACKMAN: Who was working closely with you on this, other than... . I think I ran across the name of Robert Lewis.

LOVELESS: Bob Lewis was one, of course. And there was a fellow by the name of Ralph Bradley who was out in the Midwest, the Illinois, Indiana area. We had a man out of the citrus fruit areas of California that was most active in that area, and they had some cotton-peanut folks from down in the South. You had to depend upon, a good bit, upon some of the commodity associations and organizations of the areas to help you along some with this because like all campaign organizations, everybody was taking it out of their own pocket. There wasn't any kitty involved in the--they weren't any funds involved for expenditure.

HACKMAN: Who were some of the people that you had up to Hyannis Port when you were there talking with the President to get this thing going?

LOVELESS: As I recall, Ralph Bradley was one that we called in there; a couple of my staff assistants, of course, one of the agricultural organization representatives from Massachusetts, who happened to be handy that you could get in quickly. We tried not to bring anybody clear from the far West clear out to the East Coast because there was too much travel time involved. But I can't remember who all right now. There were about six, as I recall, there, that would sit down and kind of basically put names together to look out for. And then I made contacts with these people out in their areas to get them to go out organizing the individual states.

HACKMAN: How was this whole movement tied into the overall Kennedy organization throughout the campaign, or was it? Did you handle it completely on your own or by delegating things?

LOVELESS: Yes.

HACKMAN: There was no contact between the organization and the . . .

LOVELESS: None other than programming, scheduling. We had a gentleman I used in relation to this general meeting in Des Moines, Charlie Tyroler from Washington here to come out and help tie the thing together because my staff was involved in trying to--we were still operating the state government. So we had to have someone that was footloose enough to get around and make arrangements for hotel rooms and all the multitude of things you do when you're trying to get several thousand people together.

HACKMAN: There was never any speechwriting or anything like this done by the central Kennedy organization that came out for these people?

LOVELESS: No, there was not. If anything, it was kind of a reverse type of thing. We were constantly feeding stuff in. And maybe a paragraph of this got involved in one of the then to be President's appearances somewhere, which always we were perfectly happy with. There was no pride of authorship; it was just a matter of feeding them what appeared to be current from the agricultural standpoint so if the occasion presented itself they could use it.

HACKMAN: Did you feel they usually took your advice when you did make a suggestion during the campaign?

LOVELESS: Generally, as it related to agriculture, that's right. And this is the only field I interjected myself in.

HACKMAN: How did this Farmers for Kennedy-Johnson group tie in on the state level with state Kennedy-Johnson organizations, or did it conflict sometimes?

LOVELESS: They didn't really. They didn't conflict really because the attempts of much of the Citizens for Kennedy and Johnson was a getting-out-the-vote type of thing and so on, which was right in line with what we wanted to do. And the attempt of our people as agricultural representatives, so as to speak, was principally with the agricultural organizations and so on.

HACKMAN: Well, would your group have considered speaking out on other problems within agricultural areas? For instance, religion in the Midwest or the South?

LOVELESS: Oh yes. This becomes, as you well know, out in the Midwest a real problem, in particularly the closing month of the

campaign. So you had to give your people some answers. So this was our major attempt. We had a plank that was written. It was firm. You had to go with that. But these other incidental things--well, religion was not very incidental in this campaign, but you had to provide your folks with some answers to this type of thing. And I suppose this is what I spent a third of my time doing.

HACKMAN: Had you ever talked with the candidate about this, as far as what approach they wanted to adopt on this question?

LOVELESS: Only in a very brief sort of way because I could readily see there wasn't a single overall answer. It almost had to be geographic in nature, as the attacks were. We had to answer what was happening in the local areas an awfully lot. It got to the point in the closing two weeks of the campaign. . . . Of course the religious type of opposition was too underground. There wasn't any tack or approach you could make to it because it was taking place in peoples' minds and not too much vocally.

HACKMAN: Who, other than yourself, that you know of, was advising Kennedy on agriculture during the campaign--maybe writing speeches or just serving as a close advisor?

LOVELESS: Well, to the best of my knowledge Ted Sorensen was doing most of this. At least he was the man that was in contact with me the most on it as it related to some particular area. I'm sure there were others. Colleagues over in the Senate probably, and so on.

HACKMAN: Do you know if either Willard Cochrane or John (break in tape) . . . was mentioned, I believe at the Convention he was supposedly working on some legislation for Senator Kennedy.

LOVELESS: And, as you probably know, Willard Cochrane was directly involved in the Kennedy campaign organization and their headquarters organization. But I think Willard probably was in any number of economic type of assignments during that period, not exclusively agriculture.

HACKMAN: You said that you worked mostly with Sorensen. Were there any other people on his staff that you had frequent contact with?

LOVELESS: Oh, frequently Cochrane. The man I mentioned, Art Thompson, who was one of my staff people, was in constant contact with them--Lewis and Cochrane and this crowd. Because Art of course for a period of years was editor of Wallaces' Farmer and had a real good background in this thing, agriculture.

HACKMAN: What was the function of the National Policy Committee on Agricultural Progress which you headed? Do you recall what that was designed to do?

LOVELESS: Not a great deal, other than to delve into the general field of economics, sort of a statistical type of thing to bring the procedure of agricultural programs up to date and the results of this type of program and that. And it was really only a technical off-shoot of the general over-all committee.

HACKMAN: Did you ever talk to the candidate concerning agricultural legislation in the special session of Congress in August and September?

LOVELESS: Yes, at the same time, as I recall, I did make some appearances before Representative [W.R.] Poage's committee.

HACKMAN: Right, right, that's the time that the Poage Bill went before Congress.

LOVELESS: So I guess probably I was sort of putting in a word before the House committee some of the policy of the nominee at that time.

HACKMAN: Did you feel that there was any possibility at all of getting any new legislation passed then?

LOVELESS: No. I tried to make the effort because the session was there.

HACKMAN: Do you have any overall comments on the effectiveness of Kennedy's campaign as far as the agriculture issue goes?

LOVELESS: Well, it was fairly effective, I think. As much as you ever can be in the agricultural areas of the individual states. Some of the crop interests were not happy. I don't know who could ever devise an agricultural program that could actually be tailor-made to fit all the individual crop interests. So you get far flung in these legislative interests. Somebody usually suffers because--some segment of agriculture--because it's a very competitive type of thing as you think in terms of diversified crop interests. The grain sorghum people versus the feed grain people. Just never the twain shall meet, because when one of them's up the other one's going to have to be down a little bit. This may not be true twenty years from now, but it has been true up to now. As you divert acres from particular crops, there's a tendency always on the part of the man that's out on the farm is to, if it's possible, to get some usage out of this acreage elsewhere, why, he's going to do it because he's got a living to make and he's going to make the best living he can. So, overall, I don't know how you measure the

effectiveness of a volunteer type of group like this, other than the more people you can have talking and working, they're bound to influence somebody, even if it's only their own relatives, to the point that you have some impact.

HACKMAN: How did all your efforts in working for Senator Kennedy for President tie in with your own efforts in Iowa? Did this mean you were out of the state a good deal of time?

LOVELESS: It hurt me a good bit basically in Iowa because I wasn't able to make every county fair as I had before. And we have ninety-nine of them, a hundred in fact. I wasn't able to be at every county dinner, Democratic dinner, that was held during the span of this. There just wasn't enough hours of the day and night. I did feel an obligation, because I had taken on this other job, to make appearances elsewhere as it related to agriculture in the nation. And I did make some fifty maybe, or so, which meant you killed a day each time. Sometimes I could take my own plane and be on three or four college campuses in the course of one day if they could be scheduled that way. I recall one day leaving Rapid City, South Dakota at six o'clock in the morning in my plane, having appeared there the night before; flying to the University of Indiana and landing in a high gusty, wind--they about had to shoot us down--landing over in the college strip over there, making an appearance before a convocation there that morning; going on down to Rockford, Illinois, from there to another campus and making a third appearance on a campus down close to the tri-cities; and then ending up in Nebraska that evening. So you could get around a lot, but it did affect you in your own local campaign.

HACKMAN: Did you feel that Kennedy gave sufficient attention to Iowa as a state?

LOVELESS: Yes, I think so. I think he made as many appearances there, or more, than the average presidential aspirant did in the campaign. Of necessity they were quickies, in and out, just a matter of a few hours. But I thought he gave Iowa all the attention he possibly could. In retrospect, of course, with the religious thing becoming so very prevalent, maybe this is bad as well as good.

HACKMAN: I see. How effective were the people acting on his behalf from outside of Iowa and working with the people in Iowa? Or were you in close enough contact with the state organization to tell? Were there any problems that came up in this area?

LOVELESS: Oh, anytime you have a citizens' type of group working, pretty soon they and the organization people get at logger heads. And I doubt if there's a state in the union that didn't experience this. Some of this happened. I was spending some time pouring oil on troubled waters and, you know, trying to get everybody on the even keel with the idea that everybody's working to the same end so let's not cut each other's throats doing it. It's not too important who does it, just as long as it gets done, sort of approach. So I had to interfere a number of times.

HACKMAN: Was there any great resistance on the part of Democrats in Iowa to work for Kennedy in this campaign? Was it more difficult getting them to work for him than it would have been other Democratic candidates?

LOVELESS: No, I think because this religious challenge reared its head they might have worked harder than they would have otherwise because they had something to overcome.

HACKMAN: I thought maybe this same issue would have frightened off some Iowa Democrats.

LOVELESS: I guess it did, yes. I think you'd have to say that it did. I think there was organizational people that sat on their hands because of this.

HACKMAN: You've been commenting about the religious issue. Would you want to go into this in a little more depth, for what the effect of the religious issue was in Iowa, both in the presidential race and in your own race for the Senate?

LOVELESS: Well, as you know, I ran some hundred thousand votes plus ahead of President Kennedy in Iowa, I still lost the state.

HACKMAN: Right.

LOVELESS: And the best comparison I can use, you recall I was elected Governor in Iowa when President Eisenhower as a Republican candidate for President was carrying the state by a quarter of a million votes, in excess of a quarter of a million. It had a decided impact. My name and the presidential candidates's name at that moment were synonymous in a lot of people's minds, mainly, I guess, because heading up this farmer group and so on I was just closely associated with him. So this rubbed off on me. Mrs. Loveless and I could tell this in the closing two weeks of the campaign to the point that--we probably were the only Democrats in the state believed this, but I told many of my campaign associates that we'd lost the election. I knew it then because people were saying to me, "Well, you've been a good Governor," period. So this wasn't saying, "We're going to vote for you for the United States Senate."

HACKMAN: You could tell.

LOVELESS: You could tell. We noticed this so much as we went about in the closing two weeks of the campaign, to the point that we would have been the most surprised individuals in the world had we won at the close of the election.

HACKMAN: I see. How did you go about trying to handle the religious issue, or did you bring this into your own campaign?

LOVELESS: Oh, I had to. I had to face up to it head-on because I was well aware that it was in the background every place you went. There was only one approach that I could make to it. I'm a Methodist. I was supporting a Catholic. And, as I told the National Convention, it wasn't very important to me where a man went to church on Sunday, it's how he performed on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday that was a little more important. But you have to remember in the Midwest, in Iowa particularly, we've got lots of people, and at that time we had a heavy percentage of our population was beyond the age of fifty-five, and religious intolerance was kind of basic to the older generation. When they didn't talk about it was when it was frightening because you knew that they were thinking about it, and you didn't want to bring it up unless somebody else did. So it was an awfully hard thing to handle because it was an emotional type of thing with these folks, fear, I guess partly. They had the feeling that somebody else from Rome was going to come over here and run the country. So they weren't opening their minds up to anything else. When people get scared of something, they're scared.

HACKMAN: I know in addition to the presidential candidate, Iowa Democrats that year seemed to run a large number of Catholics all the way down the line. I wonder how that affected the whole thing.

LOVELESS: It hurt very much. It hurt very much because it suddenly looked, outside of myself, it looked like they had a solid parochial ticket. There were other Protestants on the ticket of course--for Congress and so on. But predominantly it was this way. And basically, as in a lot of places, the Democrats--let me put it in reverse, the Catholics were more prone to be Democrats in Iowa.

So it was happenstance; it wasn't by design; but it did have a decided impact.

HACKMAN: Switching then from the religious issue, what effect did Senator Johnson as the vice presidential nominee have on the Democratic ticket in Iowa?

LOVELESS: As far as Iowa was concerned at that time, he was sort of a neutral type thing. They recognized him as being from what to them was a cattle state more than. . . . So they weren't sure on the question of agriculture just where he was. So they weren't opposed to him; they weren't waving the hats about him, either.

HACKMAN: Did other members of the Kennedy family other than Senator Kennedy come into the state to campaign?

LOVELESS: Oh, of course we saw a lot of [R. Sargent] Sarge Shriver. That's about the only direct member of the family.

HACKMAN: I thought maybe some of his sisters had come in.

LOVELESS: No. I ran across them in other states. But they didn't--as I recall one of them did come in briefly for a few hours, but not in any concentrated effort.

HACKMAN: What was the role of the major farm organizations in Iowa? Which ones were strongly for Kennedy and which ones. . . .

LOVELESS: The leadership, of course, of the Farmers Union were strong for Kennedy. The leadership of the Farm Bureau was strong anti-Kennedy. The NFO [National Farmers Organization] was a small organization at that time, kind of all over the lot politically. The Democratic Farm program, as such, was acceptable to the NFO; it didn't go far enough.

HACKMAN: Do you recall anything about the role of the press in the 1960 Iowa campaign, either the general press, the agricultural press, or the religious press, as far as effect on the campaign?

LOVELESS: Well, the general press would be the only one that I could speak of with any great knowledge. Agricultural press, of course, is represented in Iowa by some of the weekly papers plus the national farm type of magazine. But the press generally, they weren't taking it from a religious standpoint as much as they are predominantly Republican and they support the Republican candidate, which is not abnormal.

HACKMAN: No, it's certainly not.

LOVELESS: Sort of a normal thing out there. So I'm not sure that they had too much effect on that particular election.

HACKMAN: Other than the religious issue, what other issues do you think were important to Kennedy's poor showing in Iowa and in the Midwest and also to your own defeat in Iowa?

LOVELESS: Beyond that there wasn't anything that you could put your finger on.

HACKMAN: That's the major factor.

LOVELESS: It was the basic. . . .

HACKMAN: Shall we go on then, and talk about the period after the election? Did you have any contacts with the candidates or any of his staff after the election and before the Inauguration?

LOVELESS: The morning after the election the nominee called me and talked for the better part of an hour, I guess, on the telephone to

discuss then some possibilities related to his Administration to which I was sort of non-committal in relation to. We were scheduled to leave, quite a flotilla as I recall, about two-thirds of the nation's governors in about a week's time for a Latin American jaunt. So we finally closed this conversation with, "Well, look, Mr. President, I'll talk with you when I get back." But I really didn't talk with him at all, as I recall, until sometime in mid-December. And then I received a call from some of his staff people. As I say, this went on for up through the twentieth of January actually, before I had made any commitment to enter into any activity in relation to the national Administration.

HACKMAN: Could you comment on any other positions that were discussed other than the one here at the Renegotiation Board?

LOVELESS: No. There was discussion in relation to some other things that I felt that I was not particularly competent in the field. Then I suppose for some period of a couple of weeks he talked to me about this two or three times. I suppose, as it might be true with all individuals, at that particular time and place my main intention at the moment was to swing back into the local political arena. And I was rather reticent about getting this far removed because public memories become rather short, and what has happened I did sort of predict at that time. I've still got lots of friends in Iowa, but there's 25 percent or 20 per cent of the voters out there were school kids then. I'm speaking of today. So I was a little reticent, mainly because I didn't particularly want to sacrifice my Iowa base. One of the things that hurt me probably more than anything else, to harken back for a moment to press reaction during that period, the Iowa press was real busy appointing me Secretary of Agriculture, the implication being, "Well, you don't want to vote for this fellow for Senator. He isn't going to serve in the Senate anyway." As I used to

kiddingly say, "Why, I don't think President Kennedy's so mad at me that he'd appoint me Secretary of Agriculture." But this hurt me also as far as the Iowa vote was concerned.

HACKMAN: I remember reading that. Can you comment then on your appointment to the Renegotiation Board and the problem that arose at that time out of Donald Ross's reluctance to leave the Board?

LOVELESS: Yes. This became almost a fiasco. Somebody convinced Mr. Ross that these appointments were for life, I guess. Evidently in the early days of this Board being an independent agency they had not written into the law the normal phraseology "serves at the pleasure of the President." And so it finally revolved around the Attorney General's opinion that these were at the pleasure of the President and were not in perpetuity. And so after the President appointed me I guess it was a couple of months before there was an actual vacancy. It got to be sort of almost humorous in that I seemed to have a post that wasn't in existence. But that finally got ironed out. I guess the announcement of the appointment came a few days following the Inaugural and it was March 17th when I took the office, so it was a couple of months.

HACKMAN: Do you have any memories of your swearing in ceremony at the White House that might be . . .

LOVELESS: Yes, I do very definitely because Mrs. Loveless and my daughter, who was with us then, were with me. And as you know, the President had a good sense of humor so that the kidding that went on between us that particular time was--it's a real good thing there wasn't a public record of it. My daughter was quite impressed with the ceremony, as was Mrs. Loveless, of course. We enjoyed the opportunity of having it done in the White House. This wasn't unique because it was a pattern the President set up when he was elected. -But even so it's a worthwhile

memory, as lots of political memories are.

HACKMAN: Did you have any contacts with the President or his staff after you came over here to the Renegotiation Board?

LOVELESS: Oh yes, an awfully lot. President Kennedy was one that--I needed only to call Evelyn Lincoln and I never waited more than ten or fifteen minutes for a return call from the President. And his staff people were in constant contact with me, frequently involving their consideration of somebody for some post to check out with me my knowledge of him or the individual involved and so on. I used to go over to lunch frequently with some of the staff people, maybe on the average a couple of times a month, and I had a rather close relationship with them.

HACKMAN: Did you ever work on any agricultural legislation at all after you came over here?

LOVELESS: No, not at all. I've had them visit with me in the early days of my being here as I've had some of the members of the Senate, in fact. But you quickly become rusty in this type of thing because legislation agricultural activities change so very rapidly that without going into quite a period of review you're not up enough to be very knowledgeable. In this activity you're so far removed from it; it's an entirely different realm, it's a different world. This thing of analyzing business and its functioning and its profits and so on to the point that it's a full time job.

HACKMAN: Do you have any comments on the Renegotiation Board after you came over here? Did it undergo any fundamental change in the Kennedy period would you say?

LOVELESS: Yes, we effected quite a reorganization here, which I was instrumental in, of course. I had no desire to come over here and serve as a chairman of this particular board. The function of this Board is different than any other board in federal government because we operate as a board but we individually operate as it relates to individual cases. And the functioning of the chairman here is an administrative function entirely and you lose the contact with the glamour of defense and space business and it relates to the individual plants and what they're doing out in the field and the missile bases, etcetera. So we consolidated a good deal of the functions, eliminated about sixty per cent of the employees and got kind of a streamlined organization going here.

I kiddingly told the President a short time after I had come over here that he had appointed me to the old part of the New Frontier because most of the personnel here are left over from World War II when the individual procurement agencies had their own renegotiation processes. I'm not a young man, but I was relatively young as it related to the overall age of the people working here. But time takes its toll, and we do have new faces around now.

HACKMAN: What were the major forces behind this reorganization over as far as people . . .

LOVELESS: Oh, like a lot of government agencies there was a lot of make-work going on that I couldn't see any necessity for and eliminated it; stopped badgering people that were losing money; and streamlined our whole reporting process; and just got rid of a lot of red tape.

HACKMAN: Did you have the cooperation of the other Board members, or was this something that could have been taken care of just with the cooperation of the chairmen as administrator?

LOVELESS: No, you had to have the cooperation because administratively the chairman has no authority here other than what's passed through him by the Board. So it takes a cooperative effort of the Board and all. A number of members came in of course. So we've had no problem on this score. As you know, any type of activity like this had to be coordinated with the Bureau of the Budget, anything changing operating procedures and so on. So you don't go flying off in the dark. You have to have a pretty good organizational idea of where you're going when you start making some changes. It's worked out well.

HACKMAN: Did you have any problems in working with the Bureau of the Budget?

LOVELESS: Actually no, most cooperative. We're kind of a hybrid outfit from the standpoint of not too great a knowledge on the part of the other agencies of government as to what really goes on over here. As you know, we all hold all of our information close to our chest; we could have an awful impact on the stock market, the big board, if it was known that we were looking at Corporate X for a few million dollar refund or something. So we're a kind of quiet crowd.

HACKMAN: Was there ever any problem in getting the necessary appropriations from Congress during this Kennedy period?

LOVELESS: No. Of course you have no problems with Congress when you're wheeling your own appropriations downward each year.

HACKMAN: Right, that's true. I remember your doing that, too. Do you have any other conclusions about the Kennedy period as a whole or your role in it or Kennedy's impact on agriculture or anything?

LOVELESS: No, I think that. . . . I have the hopes that Kennedy era brought some end to religious intolerance. I think it did. I think--I doubt that it will ever be a major issue ever in a major national campaign at least. And it brought sort of a new exuberance into government to cut off of its old staid category and made a little glamorous for a lot of folks, I think, younger people particularly. It certainly had an impact internationally.

Maybe it would not have had this sort of an impact had not the tragic end of Kennedy's life made such an imprint upon people throughout the world. It was kind of tragic that things had to happen this way, but probably his thoughts and ideas might not have become such a big page in history had his Administration continued. None of us know, but on the other hand I think that it's apparent to me. So I think he was a good thing for the world in the time he was here and served in this capacity. And goodness knows he'll be remembered for an awfully long time in all areas of government throughout the world. So I think he was a good thing for his time and era. I have no regrets about my meager sort of assistance.

HACKMAN: Okay, if that's all we'll close.

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