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Interview with

Bob Murphey

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Place of Interview: Nacogdoches, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. E. Dale Odom

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Oral History Collection

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Dr. Odom: This is E. Dale Odom on April 19, 1969, interviewing Mr. Bob Murphey in his office in the Stone Fort National Bank Building in Nacogdoches, Texas. Mr. Murphey, for this record I wonder if you would give us something of a biography of yourself--where you were born and grew up, your education, positions you've held, and activities and so on you've engaged in over your life up until now.

Mr. Murphey: Well, my name, of course, is Robert W. Murphey, but all my life I've been known as Bob Murphey and have never used the Robert W. except in extra official capacities. I was born July 31, 1921, here in Nacogdoches County and was reared here. My father was French Murphey. My mother was Reba Wright Murphey. My father was also a native of this county, and my mother was reared in Kimble County out in the hill country of West Texas. She migrated to East Texas to teach school and met my father, and they were married here in the piney woods.

I came along some two years after they were married. I went to local schools and grew up here in Nacogdoches. At that time it was a very small town, less than 5,000 people, and my early life

was that of almost any youngster growing up in a farming and rural area. The first job I ever had that amounted to anything was-- other than delivering circulars, working in grocery stores, and things of this nature--the first real job I ever had was a Western Union messenger boy. Of course, this was back in the days when we wore the wool britches and the leather leggings and the full uniform. Nacogdoches was a cotton marketing center. We had a cotton exchange here, and we also had a large fertilizer and feed manufacturing company, plus Stephen F. Austin State College was growing at that time. And all in all, the Western Union had a going business here. They employed two messenger boys. These jobs were at a premium. All the boys, of course, wanted to work because of the extremely high pay. We made 76¢ a day and had to furnish our own bicycles. But at any rate that was my entry into the so-called business world, and I worked for Western Union about two years.

In 1937 I think one of the outstanding events in my life occurred when I went to the first national Boy Scout Jamboree ever held, in Washington, D. C. Of course, that's a story within itself with experiences that're certainly inscribed on my mind and memory forever.

Without going into detail, I went through high school and participated in the usual activities of high school. I was president of my senior class.

Then I entered Stephen F. Austin College in 1938. Of course, as with any boy or girl, my college experience was very gratifying, quite different from today. I entered into the usual extra-curricular

activities. I was fortunate enough to be president of the sophomore class, president of the junior class. In my senior year I was president of the student body and sports editor of the college paper. During my senior year I was also sports editor of the local daily paper, the Daily Sentinel. That was another very fine job and a great raise in pay from my Western Union days because of the fact I made \$10 a week. I wrote all the stories, covered all the events, made up the sport page, and wrote a column.

Odom: Did you do any debating?

Murphey: No, not as an official member of the club. I was not on the debating team. Actually that was something that I just didn't really have time for. I was also working for the Beechnut Chewing Gum Company. I was their distributor of samples and ambassador at large up there on the college campus, and for this I made \$15 a month. I was also in charge of all the Coca Cola vending machines and all for which I picked up a little money also. Well, actually I was a little bit busy to confine myself too much to the debate team, although I took great interest in debating. I got a B. S. degree from Stephen F. in 1942 (majored in history and economics). One of my minors was public speaking which, without being braggadocio, I did extremely well in college. Then, of course, the war came along in December of '41, and I graduated from college the following May.

I had made up my mind a long time before that to try to obtain a law degree and be a lawyer. So I went down to the University of Texas in Austin and entered law school.

Odom: Was this in the fall of '41 or . . .

Murphey: No.

Odom: . . . right after you . . .

Murphey: I think it was September of '42 when I actually entered law school. Now I went down to Austin and, of course, again I was looking for work. I got several jobs down there. I was working down at the capitol as a capitol guard and also running the elevator on Sunday.

Odom: (chuckle)

Murphey: What I was trying to do, of course, was work full time and go to law school, too. Part-time work was all right, but it didn't bring in enough money. I found that living expenses away from home and in the big city of Austin were a little more than they'd been at Nacogdoches.

Odom: Did you have any trouble getting jobs like that at this time?

Murphey: No, no, no.

Odom: Sort of a demand for them.

Murphey: Well, yes, everybody was trying to work, and it was no different then than it is now. When the labor market is crowded, well, you've got to use all the ingenuity and ability and persuasion that you can to get them. I was fortunate enough to do it. At any rate the Sunday job, running the elevator, commenced at 7:30 in the morning, and it ended at 11:00 at night with no relief. The only way I could eat would be to get one of the capitol guards to bring me a sandwich from a capitol drugstore immediately behind the capitol. Any time I had to leave the

elevator for any purpose I just had to shut it down and run, and run back. But at any rate, it brought in sufficient money for me to get along. I'd bought me a Model T Ford and had plenty good transportation. Thus, I worked there at the capitol, and also I was on the staff out at memorial stadium during the football season as a ticket taker and other activities around the stadium there, which served two purposes: I didn't have to buy one of those activity tickets or things to get in the ball games. I got in the ball games free and got paid besides.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: So that worked out pretty good on Saturday afternoons. All of this time, of course, the war was progressing. And I'd had a little hard luck back when I was about eleven years old. I was visiting my grandmother on her ranch out at Junction, Texas, and we'd had a junior rodeo. I had gotten thrown from a horse and broke my arm up pretty bad and gas gangrene set in and I almost died, but to make a long story short, they finally carried me into Austin and they amputated my left arm above the elbow. I'd had this--I won't say a disability, it never did disable me too much--but at any rate from the standpoint of . . .

Odom: Military service.

Murphey: . . . military service, I had tried to get in all three, the Marines, and the Navy, and the Army; and for some reason they weren't interested in me. Since I was down there in school and all my friends had gone into the service, I was pretty

unsettled about the whole situation. So finally I heard that the merchant marine was in need of people on account of they were sinking those ships pretty frequently. One of the favorite sports on the Gulf coast was going down to the beach and watching the tankers burn at night after they'd been torpedoed. So I took off from school and went down to Port Arthur, Texas, and started trying to find out how to get in the Merchant Marines. I finally found out that I could get seaman papers as a messboy, or an oiler, or an ordinary seaman through the Coast Guard. So I went and got the papers which entitled me to go to sea, but then it was up to me to get employment with some shipping firm or to get on a ship. I finally obtained employment from the Sabine Transportation Company in Port Arthur which ran some seven or eight tankers, gasoline tankers. I never will forget that the first ship I ever boarded was a gasoline tanker which was loading at the Standard Oil Refinery at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The ship's agent took me over there to put me on it, and to be perfectly honest with you, that was the first real, big, sea-going ship I ever saw.

Odom: You didn't . . .

Murphey: And I went on it as a crewman.

Odom: You'd not only never been on one, you'd never seen a big sea-going vessel.

Murphey: That's right. That's right. And, of course, I went on there as an ordinary seaman but assigned to pursur duty. I shipped out with them for, I guess, a year or better in the Atlantic, Caribbean.

Odom: Did you make any trans-Atlantic crossings?

Murphey: I never did get plumb across. These ships that I was on--what they used to call the old Hog Islanders--were built actually during World War I . . .

Odom: World War I . . . the Hog Islanders . . .

Murphey: These ships were not--they thought--seaworthy enough to make a complete trans-Atlantic. We ran coast-wise a great deal, went to Cuba. Then we would rendezvous sometimes with Navy ships in order to transfer gasoline, especially with the Navy ships who were fueling the carrier assaults. At any rate we went into dry dock at Mobile, Alabama, in the latter part of '43 or maybe the first part of '44. That's not clear in my mind.

At that time the Coast Guard's inspectors came on to inspect the ship and also talk to the crew and so forth. They told me that it had become a rule and regulation that all pursurs had to also be pharmacists mates. That was because they didn't have any doctor or anything on these tankers. And they told me that they didn't think that I would qualify for entrance into the Maritime Training School at Sheepshead Bay, New York, where this training was given. But they asked me if I'd ever been to New York and I said, "No," and they asked me how long I'd been going to sea and I said, "A little over a year," and they said, "Well, would you like a trip to New York?" This Coast Guard officer said, "You need a little lift anyway. I'll just send you up there anyway and and if they don't take you, well, the government will pay your way back anyway." So I said that was fine with me.

They put me on a train. I went up to Sheepshead Bay, New York, and, of course, that was real fine. I'd never had a uniform. Merchant seamen didn't have any uniforms or anything. I got up there. Well, all at once I was commissioned as an ensign in the United States Maritime Service and decked out in full uniform. I went to that school for about . . . it was a three-months deal. I'd been there about a month and I never will forget. I was sitting in class one day, and one of the men came in and said that the commandant wanted to see me in his office. I went to the commandant's office, and I never will forget what he said when I walked in. I saluted him. He said, "Murphey, how in the hell did you get in this school?" (Chuckle)

Odom: (Chuckle)

Murphey: That was his greeting to me. And I said, "Well, some folks sent me up here from Mobile, Alabama." He said, "I found out that you'd lost your arm." And he said, "But I've talked to your instructors and your teachers and all, and they say you're doing the work all right." And he said, "I just want to tell you we're not going to kick you out." He said, "I just don't see how you can make it." And I said, "Well, I'd thought I was doing all right." And he said, "Well, we'll go ahead then." He said, "I just wanted to put you on notice." And I said, "All right, Sir." So I went on back. Well, to make a long story short, I went all the way through-- graduated. This was pretty thorough training which has stood me in good stead all my life. They taught us everything from delivering babies . . .

Odom: (Chuckle)

Murphey: . . . to all types of emergency first aid and actually went a little further than first aid. We were trained to be pharmacists mates . . .

Odom: Pharmacists mates . . .

Murphey: Yes.

Odom: . . . training in a cram course . . .

Murphey: That's right.

Odom: . . . is what it was.

Murphey: That's right. That's what it was. Then I had to spend a month after I graduated from pharmacist training school at New Orleans Marine Hospital to do an internship there in the hospital, working in all the wards and giving medicine--doing just what an orderly or a . . .

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: . . . some of the nurses would normally do--and ride in the ambulance, this type of thing for a month. Then after that, well, I went back and joined a ship in Galveston, Texas, for duty in the Pacific. Again, I was on gasoline tankers; I was a tanker man from the beginning to the end. This time I went all over the Pacific--Guam, Eniwetok. Of course . . .

Odom: This was in . . .

Murphey: . . . Saipan . . .

Odom: . . . the latter part of '44, I suppose, when you . . .

Murphey: The war . . . the war . . .

Odom: . . . were getting into it.

Murphey: The war was over. Oh, I guess I served on the Grand Mesa, which

which was a T-2 tanker. This was a new tanker that's been built during World War II--fine ship. We were riding on a little more than 6,000,000 gallons of high octane gasoline over there.

But at any rate, the war ended, and I came back to law school, went back to work this time as an assistant Sergeant at Arms in the House of Representatives. I graduated from law school, took the bar exam. This was in 1947.

My uncle was Coke Stevenson, war-time governor of Texas, who went into the governor's office in '41, the latter part of '41, when W. Lee O'Daniel was elected United States Senator. Governor Stevenson, of course, being lieutenant governor, went into the governor's office. He had gone out of the governor's office in January of '47.

Odom: January of '47.

Murphey: Right. He had made up his mind to run for the United States Senate. Governor Stevenson and I had always been very close as an uncle and a nephew. I'd spent many hours, and days, and weeks on his ranch and had worked for him as a cowboy and doing whatever was necessary on the ranch during the summertime, many summers. So he contacted me and told me that he was going to run for the United States Senate. His wife had passed away. Mrs. Stevenson died in '41 soon after he became governor. He was "batching" out on his ranch. He's got a little over 14,000 acres out there and was trying to run his ranch. And he was cooking, himself; he was "batching" out there.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: Also he was trying to get things under way to make the race for the

United States Senate in '48. So he asked me if I wanted to come out there and work with him and help him with his correspondence and drive him as he went around over the state making talks preliminary to his official announcement for the United States Senate. So I did. I drove my T Model Ford which I still had . . .

Odom: You still had that Model T Ford.

Murphey: Well, as a matter of fact I've still got it.

Odom: You still have it?

Murphey: Yes. Well, at any rate I went out to Telegraph, Texas, to Governor Stevenson's ranch, and he and I "batched" out there and ran the ranch and . . .

Odom: You still weren't married then?

Murphey: No, no, I hadn't married. And so, of course, the great campaign of '48 which Mr. Stevenson ran in a field with several candidates, his number one opposition being Lyndon B. Johnson from Johnson City, Texas, who at that time was a United States Congressman representing the Austin district in Congress.

Odom: Did Mr. Stevenson ever do any flying at all on his campaign?

Murphey: None at all

Odom: Did he have something against flying or what?

Murphey: Well, he never did express it one way or the other to me except I don't think he ever felt like he was in that big a hurry.

Odom: I see. (Chuckle) Well, I thought maybe that he might have expressed . . .

Murphey: I've often said that I don't like to fly because of my back--I've got a yellow streak down it (chuckle) about six inches wide. But

that changed. I fly frequently now. But we didn't fly at all during that campaign. We wore out two cars. We wore out a Plymouth and a Ford automobile. And, of course, that campaign's another story. It's an interesting and intriguing story. It's probably the last campaign of its type that was run in Texas or ever will be run of that same nature.

Odom: Did you help him some in gathering money to . . .

Murphey: Not at all. In fact, to be perfectly honest with it, that was, perhaps, one of Mr. Stevenson's downfalls in that election. He didn't appear to be too interested in it either. Of course, he knew that he needed money and he got money. Mr. Morris Roberts who was an old friend of Governor Stevenson's and the publisher and editor of the Victoria Advocate down at Victoria, Texas, was the financial chairman of the campaign. I never knew except when Mr. Stevenson might mention when we'd go into a town or something that so-and-so was a supporter and had contributed to the campaign. I never knew who had given and who had not given, and that was not one of the areas of my responsibility.

Odom: You drove him around . . .

Murphey: Every inch of the way.

Odom: . . . all the way in that campaign?

Murphey: Every inch of the way.

Odom: What other kinds of duties did you have?

Murphey: Well, just that I was carrying wood and water for him. I'd do whatever he wanted me to do.

Odom: I see.

Murphey: Of course, my main job was to get him to the right place at the right time for any appointments or engagements that he had. And then, of course, while he was engaged maybe in conferences or something, I'd be on the streets giving out literature and talking. As I say this was one of the old-time campaigns. We'd go into these small towns. We'd say, going in, "Well, we can spend thirty or forty minutes here, and maybe an hour here." Mr. Stevenson would contact his supporters that were . . .

Odom: Where you were going?

Murphey: . . . the lead horses were in that particular town. And while he was doing that, I'd work the streets, and talk to people; and oftentimes we'd take a town, and he'd work one side of the street and I'd work the other.

Odom: You didn't make many formal speeches in these small towns, I take it from . . .

Murphey: Well, yes, he did, Mr. Odom. He made literally hundreds of speeches during that campaign to every conceivable group. And this was still the day of the speeches from the courthouse steps.

Odom: Oh, yes.

Murphey: He made many, many speeches standing in front of the post office or the courthouse; wherever the people could drum up a crowd. This was, of course, before the days of television. And, although radio was used extensively, still and all that was a campaign of personal contact as much as any ever was, I guess.

Odom: Did you make every part of the state pretty well, or did you concentrate on any area in the state?

Murphey: No. We made the whole state!

Odom: How was the strategy on that?

Murphey: Of course, this goes into the philosophy and the politics. Different people have different ideas. Mr. Stevenson was of the old school. Then here again this may have contributed to his ultimate defeat in the election. To say the very least of it, Governor Stevenson is a very homespun and practical man. He's not one given to gadgetry. He's a very colorful man, but only because he is naturally colorful and not because of some act that he was putting on or not doing something merely for publicity or doing it merely to attract attention. Of course, as I say, this perhaps hurt him somewhat because a politician has got to play all the strings. But if Mr. Stevenson had a fault in campaigning, it was that he did move fast enough, and that very oftentimes he'd go into a town and run into an old friend that he'd served in the legislature with or run into an old compadre that he'd known back in the old days or when he had a wagon-hauling freight line in West Texas. He might stand and talk to that old friend for thirty or forty minutes when he knew two things: number one, that that man was going to vote for him anyway. He didn't have to talk to him. He was a friend. And the second thing was, while he was killing that thirty or forty minutes reminiscing and talking to an old friend, he was just lost that much of the time from the campaign. We never could get him out of that. Of course, I was young, I didn't try to tell him anything. I'd just visit with him driving from place to place, you know. I'd tell him that we needed to move a little faster and maybe he ought

not spend as much time with his old compadres and friends as he was. And he would say, well, he enjoyed it and that's the way he was, and he wasn't going to change. So that was the way it was. Going back to your question of the plan of the campaign . . .

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: . . . or of this nature, of course, any candidate gets multitudinous mail and calls and everything else. "We want you to be here for this special event," either at the county fair or at the dogwood festival. All over Texas different communities have these special events, and they would like to have their candidate there to make an appearance and all. And so it was the same as cow country, in that we kind of loose-herded the campaign. We didn't have any set deal except for the major cities--Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and those. For an example: if they'd asked him to speak, say, in Amarillo, well, we would leave the ranch perhaps a couple of days early, and as we went to Amarillo, well, we would stop in all the towns that we went through of any size. Mr. Stevenson had a theory about buying gas. He never would buy over five or six gallons of gas at any one place on the theory that if you stopped and traded with a man, he would be appreciative, and more than likely he and his family would vote for you. So we made lots of gas stops. (Chuckle)

Odom: I bet you did.

Murphey: But at any rate, that campaign went on and history reflects what happened. I don't presume at this time you want me to expound on it further, for I'm sure there are more valuable sources of

information concerning the neck-and-neck race that resulted.

Mr. Stevenson had a commanding lead in the first primary.

Odom: Yes. That's what I was about to say. He ran far a way ahead of everybody else in that first primary.

Murphey: Right. Right. I think if this man Petty from Houston had not been in the race that Mr. Stevenson would have won the race in the first primary. I fully believe that.

Odom: Did you do about the same kind of campaigning for the second primary, or for the run-off, as you did for the first one or . . .

Murphey: Well, to be perfectly frank about it, I tend to think that all of us, perhaps, were a little optimistic concerning the run-off election. We did have a commanding lead. We felt like that Mr. Stevenson would probably get 80 per cent of the Petty vote and his share of the other, lesser, candidates' votes and that actually we had a downhill pull. Perhaps we did not work as hard in the run-off campaign as possibly we should have. However, by the same token, I would certainly say that we didn't quit.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: We kept up about the same steady type of campaign that we'd had previously. And, of course, in the final net result of the thing when the election ended as it did, and Mr. Stevenson was declared the winner by the Texas Election Bureau and those people who were unofficially counting the votes, that's when the intrigue of the votes that came in a week after election from down in Jim Wells County and other counties entered. A lot of people failed to understand this in reading the history of this affair. So much

emphasis is placed on Box 13 in Jim Wells County where the final margin of victory came from that they overlooked the fact that from all of the counties of Texas there was a continual change of votes. It was interesting to notice that all kinds of little counties, small counties, were sending in saying they'd found mistakes and had retabulated and had found that Mr. Johnson had picked up fifteen votes here, and five votes here, and ten votes here. Actually had it not been for this I don't think there just were enough people--if they'd have voted everybody in that country down in Duval and Jim Wells County for Lyndon--I don't think they'd have had enough people down there let alone votes. But what hurt were these other changes. Now, of course . . .

Odom: I was going to say in that connection, I was talking to someone (whom I won't identify) several months back who was pointing out that in Brownwood, for example, . . .

Murphey: Yes.

Odom: . . . in Brownwood there was a contested election in the sheriff's race in one precinct there. They threw out--I don't know--it seemed to me like a couple of hundred votes or more for Governor Stevenson. They invalidated the whole ballot of those people, you see.

Murphey: Well, this is true. And if the facts were actually known--if we could wave a magic wand and actually all the facts appeared on the wall--there were actually thousands and thousands of votes. You see we've got 254 counties in this state, and if you didn't change but 10 votes per county, you're talking about over 2,500 votes. And this was the strategy of the Johnson forces. We knew that.

We had information, and it's kind of like fighting a war there. Both sides had lines of information coming from one another. We had our people who were letting us know what they were doing, and I'm confident that they had people letting them know what we were doing. As a result, we knew what their plan was. Here is where Mr. Stevenson's more or less loose organization took a beating. Whatever you might say about Mr. Johnson, he's an organizer. He's a driver. He's a hard worker and a good politician. He had more paid people on his payroll. Mr. Stevenson did not have a paid worker working for him in that campaign.

Odom: That may be the last Senate race run on the old style.

Murphey: . . . not a paid man. Even me, I was working more or less . . . of course, he was paying my expenses and a certain amount of wages, but certainly not what I have gotten in later campaigns that I worked in.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: But Mr. Stevenson depended totally on his friends. Of course, he's been in public office for years and years as a legislator or a member of the House. As Speaker of the House, he was the first man to ever to be elected twice in the speaker's job in the House of Representatives. And then he was easily elected lieutenant governor. He's been in Texas politics for years and years, and during that time he had accumulated a great host of friends and allies, and they worked for him. They worked for him. But at this critical point of the campaign during this battle for ballots, after the election was over, Mr. Johnson's refined organization

and the lieutenants that he had who were experienced in this type of activity shot us out of the water, just to be perfectly frank about it.

Odom: Did you follow the litigation that came in the wake of this thing very closely or did you follow it . . .

Murphey: I followed it as I'm sure many people in Texas did, Mr. Odom. I followed it strictly from the sidelines. After the election was over in the weeks that followed there before all this other came about in the courts and so forth and so on, I had come back to Nacogdoches with the idea of running for sergeant-at-arms at the Texas House of Representatives. Ernest Boyett, who was the long time sergeant-at-arms of the House, had announced that he was going to retire after the '47 session, and, of course, the new legislature would be meeting in January of '49. I had decided, because I enjoyed the time I had spent at the capitol as an assistant sergeant-at-arms (I had also served one session there as a secretary to the sergeant-at-arms which ran the office which had a multitude of duties to perform) I'd made up my mind that I was going to make that race, and so I had come on home. There was nothing actually that I could do at the time. I was young, unknown, and . . .

Odom: You had finished law school . . .

Murphey: Right.

Odom: . . . before you started the campaign.

Murphey: And had passed the bar exam.

Odom: Had passed the bar exam, certainly. Well, you never had said. I presumed you had.

Murphey: Yes, I passed the bar exam in October of '47. I took the bar exam in I guess it was July, and it takes some three months or more to hear from it. And, in fact, I was notified that I had passed the bar exam after I went out to the ranch to live with Mr. Stevenson.

Going on from that point I came back to Austin, prior to the legislature. In fact, right after Christmas I went to Austin to begin my campaign for sergeant-at-arms. Now I might explain this to those who might not know. The officers of the House and the Senate were elected by the membership. They're not appointed or they're not hired as employees, but they are officers of the House and are elected by a majority vote of the members of the House. There are 150 members of the House. These jobs are usually pretty competitive except when a man gets entrenched and has been there a long number of years, and then he usually has no opposition unless he stumps his toe or makes a boo-boo, and they want to get rid of him. When I ran there were three ex-members of the House running . . .

Odom: Oh, really?

Murphey: Plus, I think, one more. There were four or five in the race.

Odom: And you went down, you say, right after Christmas to . . .

Murphey: Campaign.

Odom: . . . before . . . before the legislature met in January.

Murphey: Well, members of the House start coming into Austin a couple or three weeks before the session to find living quarters and get their families adjusted if they're bringing them with them, hire secretaries, obtain their seat, their desk in the House, and get the preliminary things done. People come from all over the state

to Austin to try to find apartments or get hotel rooms or houses, rent houses, wherever they want to live, to get ready for the session. So I was campaigning with these members as they would come in. I would . . .

Odom: How would you go about that? How did you do it?

Murphey: Well, first of all, it was a little different from most campaigns because you knew the name and background and everything about the people who could vote, and you knew that every one of them was going to vote. And so, of course, the first thing was to get the list of members of the House. Once I had the list of members of the House . . . and, of course, I had known many of these people during my working up there, and they knew me. I knew most of them by name, drunk coffee with them, gone to ball games with them, but I was young. Well, let's see. I was born in '21. This was in '49 so . . .

Odom: You must've been 27 or 28.

Murphey: . . . I was 28 years old, and the emphasis on youth had not become so apparent then as it is now.

Odom: It was no Ben Barnes then, was it?

Murphey: Back even in '49 a little premium was put on age and experience in places of responsibility. My opposition was putting that out pretty heavily--that I was too young for the responsibilities of the job, that a man ought to be 40, 50 years old to adequately hold and serve in that position. But, of course, the Speaker has a lot to do with it. He can wield a good deal of pressure for whom he would like to have as his sergeant-at-arms during time he

was speaker. And it became apparent that Durwood Manford from Smiley, Texas, down in South Texas, was the heir apparent to the speakership post. Of course, they have to run, too. They have to be elected by the House, but everybody had about conceded that Manford would be elected.

Odom: If you campaigned with him you could save a lot of time.

Murphey: That is right. I had known Mr. Manford when he served as a member of the House, of course, in prior sessions. And so, of course, I had numerous interviews with Mr. Manford. Although Mr. Manford was slow about endorsing me or coming out and saying that he would support me, after having visited with him a good deal and having talked to other people who were strong for me who assured me that Manford was going to be for me, I felt that he was and, of course, later found out that he was.

Odom: Was he a supporter of Governor Stevenson's particularly? Do you know?

Murphey: I'm going to be perfectly honest and say I don't know, Mr. Odom. I'm going to presume that he was. Mr. Manford was a conservative. He came from a part of the country who always did support Mr. Stevenson, and without being dogmatic about it or stating it as a known fact I think probably correspondence from Mr. Stevenson's file or other evidence would show that Mr. Manford was a supporter of Mr. Stevenson.

Odom: Does Mr. Stevenson still have all of his papers?

Murphey: No. Unfortunately not.

Odom: . . . his personal correspondence and so . . .

Murphey: This actually is a great loss. He had a fire and he got a stone house. And behind his house he has a cemented floor, large, stone garage. Here again, this is the kind of the loose-herding way of Mr. Stevenson doing things. He was very careful and very detailed with the state's property and the state's money and all, but he never was one to put a lot of emphasis on mementos. A lot of us hang up plaques and hang up pictures and treasure little mementos of our past and all. Mr. Stevenson just never was that kind of a man. I don't guess there's any man in Texas that ever received any more honors during the long term of years and yet to visit his office or to look around you'd think he'd never done anything. He's a very humble man . . .

Odom: . . . unpretentious man . . .

Murphey: Very unpretentious. That's the word. He stored all of these when he left the governor's office, of course. His staff there packed all of his personal files, correspondence, and official papers and all in these heavy cardboard file boxes. And he had those stacked to the ceiling out there in his garage. Well, he had a fire, and all of that stuff was destroyed by fire.

Odom: I should have known that, I guess. Probably Fred had told me . . .

Murphey: Yes.

Odom: . . . but I had forgotten.

Murphey: Not all of it. Here again I don't want to leave the impression nor would I want people to think that he was totally disorganized in his keeping of records or anything because he's not. Here's something that future historians might be most interested in.

Mr. Stevenson, from the time he was sixteen years old, has kept a day by day journal of his life.

Odom: Really? That would be very interesting.

Murphey: Well, he has written down not only what he did and his thoughts and his activities for that day, but Mr. Stevenson for all of these years can tell you every penny that he spent. If he bought a can of pipe tobacco, he would note: pipe tobacco, 15¢.

Odom: Really?

Murphey: And this journal of his life, every day he would record this. So I don't want to leave the impression that he was a haphazard type of record keeper or bookkeeper, because he's not. I never knew anybody that kept any more accurate records of his financial and business and political life than Mr. Stevenson did. But on this great mass of public papers and correspondence and stuff he never did put as much emphasis on that as, perhaps, other people do.

Odom: No one has actually written a biography of Mr. Stevenson, have they? I mean other than a few articles and things like that.

Murphey: Not in depth. A man by the name of Booth Mooney . . . and I might correct something here. A while ago when I said that Mr. Stevenson didn't have any paid people working. This was with the exception of his publicity people.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: Booth Mooney was a public relations man and was, of course, paid-- and paid well--to handle the publicity of the campaign. When I spoke of no paid workers I meant, primarily, people out in the various counties that were working at a local level for Mr. Stevenson,

or riding over the state in automobiles campaigning for him. But he did have this public relations firm that handled his publicity. Mr. Mooney, before the campaign . . . in fact, this book, which was timed to come out just a few months before the campaign actually got under way, was a short book--but a very well-written book. I don't know whether you've ever seen a copy of it.

Odom: I've never seen it. I think Fred probably has, but . . .

Murphey: It's a very well-written book, and it's accurate. Mr. Stevenson cooperated with him fully. It's a concise biographical sketch of the Governor. Of course, newspaper articles, magazine articles, have more or less traced his background and all.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: But no work in depth. It would be a splendid opportunity for . . .

Odom: Now this is on the . . .

Murphey: . . . for a scholar to delve into, because . . .

Odom: This is a man we don't have many like anymore.

Murphey: I don't think there'd be anymore like him, Mr. Odom, because . . .

Odom: No, I don't think there will.

Murphey: He was born in another century, and he grew up in as rugged a country as there is in Texas, or, I guess, anywhere else in the United States. He educated himself and, well, there's no need for me to go into all that. But he's a great man.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: A great man. If the people actually knew the man as I know him and as his close friends know him, there's no question but that he would have been in the United States Senate. But Mr. Stevenson

wasn't the best campaigner I ever saw.

Odom: No, I believe that.

Murphey: He thought well. He knew politics. In fact, he's like some of us sometimes. We know what we ought to do, but we just don't hanker to do it.

Odom: That's right. I've always made a distinction, somewhat, between a statesman and a politician, and he has the instincts of a statesman rather than a politician.

Murphey: This is true.

Odom: And he's not willing to do . . .

Murphey: This is true.

Odom: . . . the popular thing if it goes against what he wants to do or if he thinks is what should be done.

Murphey: This is certainly true. You don't have to form that opinion just off-handed by either. You can check the record in his public service and show that almost every act of any consequence that he did while in public office was not politically motivated but rather was actually with the people at heart. He was the author of the bill that obtained for Texas the auditor system that we now know. When he went to Austin as a member of the House from Kimble County, he was amazed that there was no method whatsoever in our state government to audit. What it amounted to was each department audited their own department and turned in their report.

Odom: I recall . . .

Murphey: Of course, you can see the fallacy in that. I don't think any department head or elected official or anybody else is going to

turn in a report that would indicate there was anything wrongdoing in their particular department.

Odom: I recall reading the interview in which he talked about that particular measure.

Murphey: But this was just one of many such items of legislation and all. He was very interested in the penitentiary system, and he was really the one that you might say, in my opinion, "kicked off" the reform in our penal system. He went all over the United States visiting other penal institutions. We all know that our penal institutions here in Texas were archaic and barbaric and were serving no useful purpose except to keep a man locked up.

But after that campaign--getting back to my race--I was . . .

Odom: Let me ask you one thing. I intended to ask you about the aftermath of that '48 campaign there. How did Mr. Stevenson take his final outcome of that? You said you came back, though, and so you weren't really living that close to him then. I guess you saw him, though.

Murphey: I went out there and tried to stay on top and offer my assistance, anything that I could do. And, of course, after that was over I continued to go back; I spent many weekends out there, driving over from Austin and so forth. I will say that I think Mr. Stevenson's greatest disappointment was not his personal defeat as much as it was to him a defeat of our democratic elective process. He was dismayed over the tactics, the way that the thing came about. He was dismayed to see that an election could be decided in the manner that this one was without giving all of the contestants and all their due process of law. Mr. Stevenson, of course, is a lawyer,

a constitutional lawyer; he believes very firmly in the Democratic process of law. He, I think, was bitterly disappointed that the true facts were never allowed to be brought out under oath before a court of law. If they had've been--of course, and here again, I'm sure you've got information from other sources, perhaps more accurate than mine--but there was no question if they'd ever gotten before a judge or a jury that Mr. Stevenson would've been sent to the United States Senate. There's just no question. It was apparent.

Odom: Was it his dismay and bitterness about the breakdown here of that that accounts for the fact that he never after that time has made any type of campaign, or do you think there're other factors more responsible in your judgment?

Murphey: Oh, I don't think that would be the entire factor. In fact, Mr. Stevenson was urged on numerous occasions after that to make races for public office. And let me say this. Mr. Stevenson in his whole career never was overly anxious to hold public office. If you will look at the actual happenings from the time when he was elected county judge, he did not just come out and say, "I want to be county judge. I'm going to run for county judge." There in his home county he was drafted by the people. They had problems there concerning roads, and they had a difficult problem with stock thieves, rustlers. They had a multitude of local problems, and they called on Mr. Stevenson to solve them for them, and he was just almost pulled into office. The same thing was true when he went to the legislature. He didn't particularly want to go to the

legislature. He had an excellent law practice. He was ranching. He had no political ambition. Here again there were certain items that the people of the hill country out there in his district felt they needed help on. Highways were one of them. They had no railroad through that country, and the roads were terrible. They drafted him to run for the legislature, and then when he ran for the legislature he was drafted to run for speaker. He didn't just say, "I want to be Speaker of the House," and start going out getting support and all. It was the other way around. People came to him. It was the same way for re-election. Nobody had ever been re-elected Speaker of the House. This was unheard of. It was custom only to serve one term and go on.

Odom: I know it.

Murphey: Here again he didn't want to try to break the precedent for his own honor or glory, anything, but he was pulled into it. The only race where I think he actually made up his mind that he wanted to serve the people was when he ran for lieutenant governor. Now, of course, I don't mean to say he didn't have a lot of support, people wanting him to run and all, but as I recall it and remember it--and I was close to him--he decided he did want to be lieutenant governor, to preside over the Senate. Then, of course, he fell into the governor's office. I don't know whether Mr. Stevenson would've ever run for governor or not. I'd hesitate to say that he would or would not, but, of course, after he fell into it the war came on, and he felt that the state needed him, and he was in office. He didn't feel up to a big campaign, but he thought that just to back out and throw

it open for grabs with a war going on would be a disservice to the people. And so he stayed in, of course; he overwhelmingly was elected each time he ran for governor.

Odom: And then in the Senate race, did . . .

Murphey: I know this--that he had serious reservations about running for the Senate. He had had the highest honor that the people of Texas can give any man--that of electing him governor. His wife had passed away. His ranch had run down. The fences were in bad repair. Even back then it was difficult to hire anybody to look after your property and run a business as well as you could do it. This was one of his regrets while he was governor--that his ranch was going down. I firmly believe that when he left Austin to go back to that ranch he intended that that was the end of his public service. Now I think after he got back out to that ranch and the loneliness of living fourteen miles from town--no wife, no family, by himself in a big two story house--I think the people kept writing him and saying, "Governor, you want to run for the Senate." After giving it serious thought, I think he said, "Well, I might as well." It was a very lonely life out there for him by himself.

Odom: He'd have been unhappy in Washington, wouldn't he? Maybe?

Murphey: Yes, but I shall always regret that his calmness and deliberation were never put to use in Washington. You know, the old term "Calculating" Coke that they gave him was well deserved. Mr. Stevenson was a conservative and yet not a reactionary by any means.

Odom: No.

Murphey: Yet I think Washington right at that period of time could have used

his knowledge of government and his deliberative manner of action, especially in financial areas. This is when, of course, we kept on this barreling tax, tax, tax and spend, spend, spend, which now looks like it is uncontrollable. I think that he in his way, in his persuasive way, might have--and here again this is conjecture --but it's just possible that he may have played an important role in turning the run away of the way that our federal government was going. At least I know that he would not have been there long without becoming a very powerful man in the Senate. He would have done so by ability and his persuasiveness and leadership qualities rather than by any politics or back stabbing or what the usual manner of achieving power. He would have done it by his own character.

All during his life he's been a leader, and people have recognized his ability and his sternness and judgment and have flocked around him simply because they had confidence in him. I think the same thing. I don't think the people from the other states--those men who come to Washington to serve their people--I think they would've found the same qualities that the people in Texas found in him.

Odom: I don't doubt that. I think Mr. Stevenson personally would not've been particularly happy in Washington while he was there.

Murphey: No. I will say this, Dr. Odom. I think as far as Mr. Stevenson, personally, the best thing that ever happened to him was being defeated, and I think he realizes this now. Had he gone to Washington and been caught up in the long hours and the stress and

the tensions and the strain of service in Washington, I think, one thing, it would've shortened his life, and the other thing, I think he would've been very unhappy in the concrete jungle of Washington. Mr. Stevenson never was particularly a social creature. He never was anti-social, and he was very congenial. Whenever he went to a party, well, he was always the center of conversation and so forth. But nevertheless I can truthfully say that he never did enjoy social life.

Odom: Of course, he didn't have a family.

Murphey: That is correct.

Odom: That's one thing that perhaps made it easier for him to consider running.

Murphey: Oh, I think this is one of the controlling things. I think if his wife had lived and he could've gone back to that ranch and settled down with her, I don't think he would've even considered running for the Senate.

Odom: I think I'd agree with you on what I know about him.

Murphey: But I was elected sergeant-at-arms.

Odom: Well, that's right. I was about to say we'd go back to that sergeant-at-arms race then.

Murphey: I was . . .

Odom: Was it a close race, as you recall?

Murphey: Actually it was not. As I remember, I did not get enough votes to win in the first vote. It's a secret vote, and each member writes whom he wants on a ballot, and it's collected and counted. I was in a run-off with a gentleman by the name of Woodrow Bean from

El Paso.

Odom: Woodrow Bean. Yes. I know Judge Bean.

Murphey: Woodrow had been a member of the House.

Odom: Who else were the members of the House who you recall who were running in that? I mean, you may not recall this last. It's not particularly important. I just thought you might remember.

Murphey: I don't remember whether it was this election or the next, but a gentleman from up at Marshall, Texas, Bill . . . well, I'm sorry, Dr. Odom. It's slipped my mind.

Odom: Well, it's a long time to recall things like that.

Murphey: Well, it's not been too long. I should remember. A former member by the name of Jim Pace from up at Gainesville.

Odom: I know the Paces there. I know the family.

Murphey: Did you know old man Jim?

Odom: No. I didn't know him personally.

Murphey: A fine old man.

Odom: I just know the family.

Murphey: I could tell you a thousand stories about old man Jim. In fact, after I was elected I appointed him . . . one of my duties was to handle the door keepers and pages and porters and janitors, guards, parking guards out on the grounds and all of these employees who are under the sergeant-at-arms office. I gave Mr. Jim a job on the front door of the House.

Odom: You had a great deal of patronage? Well, we'll get into that in a minute when we start talking about that.

Murphey: In the next session, two years from then, Mr. Jim came to me one

time and said, "Bob, they're coming to me, and they want me to run against you, son." Said, "You give me a job, and I just hate to run against you. But then there's such a ground swell of support for me, I'm just going to have to run." I said, "Well, Mr. Jim" . . . he was up in his seventies at that time. I said, "Mr. Jim, that's what you ought to do. You ought to do what your friends want you to." So he ran again, and I beat him again, and I give him his job back again (chuckle).

Odom: (Chuckle).

Murphey: I liked the old man. Hydrick was that man, Bill Hydrick . . .

Odom: Hydrick. I believe I've heard that name. Hydrick.

Murphey: . . . from Marshall was a candidate and two or three others. I just can't recall them. Anyway, I was in the run-off with Woodrow and defeated Woodrow, I think, by some fifteen or twenty votes perhaps. Woodrow was very popular, a fine young man, hard worker. He's a campaigner. So I went in as sergeant-at-arms of the House in January of '49.

Odom: What kind of salary did this job pay?

Murphey: I drew the same pay as a member.

Odom: A member . . . you drew a member's salary?

Murphey: At that time it was \$10 a day.

Odom: I see.

Murphey: The exception being that after the first 120 days of the session at that time the members' pay dropped to \$5, but mine didn't.

Odom: Yours didn't.

Murphey: So I was on a straight \$10 a day.

Odom: What could you say made you want this job, decided you to run for it? What interest did you feel . . .

Murphey: Oh, Dr. Odom, if you have ever spent any time at all around the legislature in Austin you wouldn't have to ask that question.

Odom: I have a little.

Murphey: It's intriguing. It's interesting. There's an atmosphere. I don't know how to describe it exactly except anybody that has ever spent any time at all around the legislature gets caught up in it. And . . .

Odom: Well, you say that the attraction and the legislature sort of got in your blood. Did you think it was impossible to run as a member of the legislature, run for a position as a member of the legislature in your own district or what?

Murphey: Well . . .

Odom: Wouldn't this be the easiest and the best way to get there?

Murphey: To be perfectly frank about it, I never even considered coming home and running for the legislature. And to be perfectly frank about it, at that time in my life I was still unmarried, and I had rather have been sergeant-at-arms of the House than a member of the House. Let me put it this way. The sergeant-at-arms has all the benefits of membership. He gets the free passes to the ball games and to the theater circuit. He gets invited to all the parties. He's on all the same mailing lists. He gets the same gratuities and gifts. When people come up and give out grapefruit from the Rio Grande Valley or this, well, the sergeant-at-arms gets it just like a member.

Odom: I see.

Murphey: In other words I had all the benefits of a member, and I had none of the responsibilities. I didn't have to vote on anything.

Odom: Right.

Murphey: I didn't have to sit up there till midnight at a committee meeting. I had none of the heavy responsibilities that I feel members of the legislature have, and yet I was enjoying all of the benefits of being there.

Odom: And you were aware of all these things then.

Murphey: Oh, you bet, you bet. And the sergeant-at-arms job is . . . I don't know what it is now. I don't know whether things have changed. I haven't spent enough time around the legislature to realize it. I know that one of my assistants is presently sergeant-at-arms, a real fine person who worked for me in both sessions that I was sergeant-at-arms, and I see him from time to time when I'm in Austin. But I don't know what the setup is now. Perhaps it has changed a whole lot because the legislature has changed a whole lot.

Odom: Yes. Tell us some more about what the duties of the sergeant-at-arms are?

Murphey: Well, the duties of the sergeant-at-arms are laid out in the rules of the House. His method of election is set forth, and then there follows an enumeration of his duties. And as with many offices and jobs the specified duties are only a small part of the practical, actual duties. Under the rules of the House, of course, the sergeant-at-arms, subject to the instructions of the speaker, is to enforce decorum and order on the floor of the House. He's in

charge of all the committee rooms and also for enforcing order and decorum in all of the committee meetings. He's the sheriff of the House. That's the simplest way to put it. He's their law enforcement officer. But in addition to keeping order and all of this, there's a great array of other duties. For example, of all these people whom I was responsible for, the pages are always a thorny subject. You get some real fine high-class kids who come up there to be pages, but they're just what I said--they're kids. And you have to be a psychologist and a tyrant and a father and everything combined to get the work out of these kids because it is an important job. The kids are the legs of the members actually. And not only do they deliver messages and take telegrams and go after refreshments, they're errand boys. They go to all the other state offices when a member calls the state office and said, "I want a report on so and so. And do you have the papers on so and so?" And said, "Yes, sir, I'll send a page after them." These pages are running all over Austin sometimes to the various agencies and bureaus, buildings. We hired somewhere around thirty pages.

Odom: That's what you had at that time.

Murphey: At that time. Right. And, of course, I had a page assigned to the governor's office, and I had a page assigned to the chief clerk's office and a page assigned to the speaker's office. We had special pages which paid about \$1.50 more salary, and these were . . . of course, here again you had a lot of pressure from the members and everybody else to "put my friend on as a special page."

Then I had to hire all the assistant sergeants-at-arms, and at that time we had, oh, some ten or twelve assistant sergeants-at-arms. I had to work out their working hours with them--whether they would work at night during the committee meetings or be there during the day--and what their positions would be on the floor of the House and what I expected them to do.

And, in addition to that, I kept a file of all the printed bills, when a bill is reported out of committee and ordered printed. In other words from the printer the bills are delivered to the sergeant-at-arms' office. That's the way the printer brings it. The sergeant-at-arms then has to stamp on the file copies of that bill with a time and date stamp, the time and the date because as you well know, some of the rules of the House require a bill to lay on the member's desk so many hours before it can be considered, and so sometimes this time deal was of essence. I kept a permanent file on the time and the date in a bound book of when each of the printed bills were delivered to the sergeant-at-arms' office. Then I had to see that each member received a copy of each of the printed bills. Of course, sometimes we'd get as many as fifteen to twenty bills one day up there, and this became a pretty big job as well as an important one.

In addition to that, I had to allot the parking spaces to the members on the capitol grounds, and this was always a thorny thing, too. All of them wanted to park at the front door, you know. I finally started doing it by lots except for those who were cripple or had some illness--heart trouble or something. I would give them

special places. But other than those for the run-of-the-mill membership we numbered the spaces, and we put the numbers in a hat, and right at the first of the session we'd draw for parking spaces.

Odom: Well, that's the way to do it.

Murphey: Well, that got to be a problem also, though, for here's what would happen. The legislature House usually convened at 9:00 or 9:30, sometimes 10:00, depending on the day, but a member'd come running up there in his car five minutes before they'd go into session, and somebody's in his parking place. Then he'd come directly to the sergeant-at-arms and raise all manner of cain about somebody who had usurped his parking place. That's the reason I had to hire about eight or ten outside men whose only job was to stand around and try to regulate the parking. This became a very difficult situation because these men that you hired for the pay you could pay them and all, you got elderly gentlemen usually or either real young boys, and they did not have the temperament or the public relations ability to do their job. I got a lot of complaints from state employees, people working in other departments and all, that one of my guards had insulted them down there while parking. It takes a pretty good diplomat to be sergeant-at-arms of the House, to keep everything moving.

Odom: You would have quite a few secretaries or office workers . . .

Murphey: I had only one male secretary.

Odom: One male secretary.

Murphey: Now, I had the use of the secretarial pool. At that time each of the members had a secretary, and then they also had a secretarial

pool where if a member got up tight and needed additional help, and I could call on these people at any time.

Odom: About how many employees or how many people altogether were you supervising then at this time?

Murphey: Oh, I also had the janitors and the custodians of the House to keep the chamber clean and the restrooms and the hallways and all of that, and there must've been some fifteen at least of them or more. Altogether I'd say well over probably 100 or 150 people.

Odom: At that time? That's a pretty good size administrative task.

Murphey: Yes. Yes. Yes, you better believe it.

Odom: You earned your money, I would guess.

Murphey: Yes, but it was most enjoyable. Of course, also one of the duties of the sergeant-at-arms' office was to see that the voting machine on the desk of each member was functioning properly. They did then, and I'm sure they still do have trouble with the buttons. There're three buttons and one switch on each of those voting machines. They can either vote "yes," which is a green light that shows up on the board up in front, or they can vote "no," which is a red light, or they can vote "present and not voting," which is a white light. Then they also have a switch on their desk which calls a page. The pages sit on each side of the House under a board, and the numbers on the board will, when they pull that switch, will show that desk number so and so wants a page. The member, nine times out of ten, never did use the switch, but he'd clap his hands. That was the signal for wanting a page. He'd stand up at his desk and clap his hands a couple of loud claps, and the page would go

to him. But these voting machines had a tendency sometimes to stick. In other words, they'd mash the button when the vote was recorded, and the release was given at the voting booth up on the second level of the House. They had the voting machine operator. When he'd release them, their machine would not release, and so I had to keep a sharp eye on whose machines were not releasing and get over there. I finally found out the best way to do was to take my pocket knife and tap the button real hard on the top, and it'd pop back up.

Odom: I see.

Murphey: I still carry the same pocket knife, and it has scars all over it where I beat on those voting machines.

Odom: Well, then, you pretty well had to be present all the time the House was in session.

Murphey: Oh, absolutely.

Odom: You had . . .

Murphey: Absolutely.

Odom: Is that an absolute requirement or just a requirement of the duties that you have?

Murphey: Well, to execute your duties it was absolutely necessary. During the inauguration the sergeant-at-arms of the House had the responsibility of cooperating with the general chairman of the inaugural ceremonies to see that the proper members had proper seating places, to see that . . . oh, just all the little details --what door would they march out of and who would lead them down there. Of course, whenever the governor addressed the House it

was the duty of the sergeant-at-arms to meet him at the door of the House and to come down to the microphone and say, "Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Beauford Jester, Governor of the State of Texas, at the bar of the House." The speaker would then call for order and say, "Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the Governor and his party to the speaker's rostrum." I would then return and lead the Governor and his party around to be seated for his address. This applied to all visitors.

Odom: All special visitors.

Murphey: General MacArthur came and spoke, and he is one that I certainly remember. Other dignitaries who came to address the House, and it was my duty to act as their . . .

Odom: Escort.

Murphey: . . . elite guard, so to speak, to see that they got up there without being stopped or interfered with in any way or anything. I can just go on and on the little details that . . . and one of the main things was being the confidant and the ear to the members on all of their little individual whims and desires.

Odom: About their physical surroundings, you mean?

Murphey: Not only their physical but little things like a member would come and tell me say, "My mayor of one of my towns and his councilmen and all are going to be visiting up here tomorrow, and I'm not going to have time to do a lot. Would you make a reservation for them to eat somewhere and see to it that someone shows them around the capitol?" Of course, I'd say, "Yes, sir. We'll take care of that." And so I'd set that up to help the member out. Then during the

off session when the legislature was not in session, I stayed there year round.

Odom: I see.

Murphey: My office became the clearing house. I'd get all kinds of . . . my mail each morning would contain, oh, at least ten or twelve requests from members of the House back in their local district-- "Would you please check with the Game and Fish Department to see why so and so is happening?" and "Would you please?" . . .

Odom: I see.

Murphey: And it kept me running these errands all the time.

Odom: Well, then the size of your staff, though, would go down immensely.

Murphey: It diminished. It diminished. In fact, I had no staff during the interim.

Odom: You didn't? Not at all?

Murphey: I did my own . . . now a very charming and nice lady there who officed in the sergeant-at-arms office, clerk of the Contingent Expense Committee, assisted a great deal in that with me typing and all. Yet, I typed most of my correspondence myself . . .

Odom: I see.

Murphey: . . . because there was no secretarial pool, and, in fact, I was it. Here again, I had to see to it that the House was kept open for visitors. It's a big tourist attraction, you know. And I would have to get up there and unlock the House and get the lights on and get everything so that the visitors could come in.

Odom: Well, what happens to all those secretaries who're there while the legislature's in session? And then when it goes out, where do they

all go to? How do you have those available, a pool of people like this to work?

Murphey: That is a most interesting question, Dr. Odom, and I would put those girls and women that work around the House and the Senate during the legislative session in the same category with the whooping crane. Who knows where they go. I mean, they show up every session, and they disappear when it's over.

Odom: I've often wondered, you know, this is not the first time I've wondered about that. Where do these people come from and where do they go?

Murphey: Well, here again, Dr. Odom, it's a most unusual situation. This atmosphere and this spell that comes over everybody that's ever around the legislature, it catches these people up in it, too.

Odom: I guess so.

Murphey: I have known girls that had high paying secretarial jobs there in Austin who would quit a good job to come and work that three or four months in the legislature with no hope or knowledge that they'd get their job back when the legislature was over. They would take a pay cut. They would lose seniority. They would do anything to come up and work during that legislature.

Odom: The excitement of it, I suppose.

Murphey: I would say that this is it. And, you see, some of the ladies up there, to my certain knowledge, some of them have worked up there thirty and forty years, actually thirty or forty years.

Odom: Yes. I just thought maybe you might have some idea there. I've wondered about this before.

Murphey: You say that it might develop into a problem of getting it. Our problem was that we had too many applicants for the number of jobs that we had. The members were very selective in choosing a capable, qualified secretary. I would say that for every job there were five or six applicants.

Odom: Were they mostly Austin people or . . .

Murphey: In the main.

Odom: In the main.

Murphey: In the main they're Austin people. There're exceptions, but there was no great influx of people coming in from over the state to work down there. I'd say 99 per cent were Austin people.

Odom: From your experience, does the sergenat-at-arms do much to influence legislation?

Murphey: Absolutely not.

Odom: Is it that he doesn't have time? Is it just not traditional or what do you think?

Murphey: Well, it's two things, Mr. Odom. First of all, the rules of the House absolutely forbid his activity in that direction at all, and you can see the reason for that. If the sergeant-at-arms were found to be lobbying for or against a bill or using his office in any way to advocate legislation or to attempt to defeat legislation, he would be subject to immediate dismissal.

Odom: Really?

Murphey: This applies to all of the officers and employees of the House. Now I have seen times when there was violation.

Odom: I was about to ask you that.

Murphey: Right. I've seen times when even a secretary or a committee clerk would in some way try to influence some legislation, and I have seen people fired by reason of it. But I was very personally . . . I can say for my own self that I was most cautious along that line. First of all, because I not only felt the justness and the reason for the rule, but secondly, I had a high degree of, I'll say, integrity toward my job. I wanted the respect and confidence of all the membership, and I bent over backwards just in little things not to do any act or take any action or say anything that might even remotely be interpreted as a comment on legislation.

Of course, one of the other things that we do . . . you take the lobbyists in Austin. They, from time to time, have a great array of printed material that they want to get to the members. A lot of times it's pamphlets and circulars and things which they're actually lobbying for or against and they would like to have it placed on the member's desk for their information. Well, now, to do that we had a rule that at least two members of the legislature had to approve the distribution of any material that appeared on the desk of a member.

Odom: If they approved it, then they would put it onto all the desks.

Murphey: And that was my job to see that they got on all of the desks. I kept a file of the approved matters. In other words, if you came in there with a pamphlet for a raise for the teachers, for instance, you would come and contact me and say, "I would like to have these placed on the desks of the members." I would say, "Well, fine. We'll be happy to cooperate with you. The rules of the House provide

that you must get the approval of two members of the House. If you will have them sign on the pamphlets their approval, then we'll be happy to cooperate with you." And so they would go and usually with no difficulty get two members to approve it. Then they would bring that back to me. I would place it in my files so I could show any member that raised a hand, and this frequently happened. And somebody on the other side'd come say, "Who put this stuff out?" And I'd say, "Right here it is. Here's who okayed it."

Odom: (Chuckle) I see. I suppose the lobbyists all know, those that have any experience anyway, all know and respect this position of the Texas legislature.

Murphey: Oh, yes. Right. Let me say this about the lobby corps, so to speak, in Austin. My experience with the lobby was, of course, very close. They haunted the halls; they haunted the gallery. They would be on the floor before the legislature convened and after it adjourned lobbying with the various members. At this time you will recall that the members of the House had no private offices. Their desk was their office. If they had any work to do, well, they did it at their desk. And, of course, ten minutes before the legislature went in session every morning, it was my job to go to the front of the House and to announce that "all persons not entitled to the privilege of the floor under the rules of the House would please leave at once." This was to get all visitors, lobbyists, everybody off the floor, and sometimes this in itself was a pretty good job --people wanting to linger and talk. You had to be a diplomat. I always kept a smile on my face, and the good Lord gave me a gift

of humor, and I usually could joke and kid my way through most any situation. Certainly I was not physically able, by reason of my size and all, to manhandle anybody, and fortunately I never did have to grab anybody but one time. And we've had fights on the floor of the House. Members have entered into actual physical combat, and I always had at least one sergeant-at-arms assistant that I hired who was physically capable of taking up for me. In fact, I had the welterweight boxing champion of Texas on my payroll one time as an assistant sergeant-at-arms, and he was quite a good influence when we would approach where trouble was brewing. But all in all, it was an interesting part of my background. I enjoyed it.

Odom: What do you think about the . . . most of the lobbyists who were down there then? You started to say something, but . . .

Murphey: Oh, yes. I interrupted my chain of thought. My experience with the lobbyists in the main--and, of course, to any rule there're exceptions or it wouldn't be a rule--but in the main the men and women who lobby for reputable businesses and professional occupations, labor unions . . . all of the professional lobbyists, as I would say, as opposed to the amateur lobbyists that come down maybe on just one bill at one time . . . but professional lobbyists, who do it for a livelihood and who came to the legislature, were all honorable men and men of integrity. I think probably one of the most misunderstood segments of the practical political arena is the lobby. The average citizen fails to comprehend, first of all, the purpose of the lobbyist; the way they act; the way they carry on their trade, so to speak; the methods they use. You talk about a

lobbyist to the average man on the street, and he thinks about somebody slinking around corners handing out \$1,000 bills and buying whiskey for wild parties to throw for the legislature or something. This is completely outside of reality. A lobbyist actually serves a real excellent purpose in the legislature for many reasons, and the main one being simply this: the average member of the legislature has a job or a profession, occupation, that he works at, makes his living at. And I don't care how good an education he might've had or how varied a background he might've had, it's totally impossible for any individual member of the legislature to know all there is to know about everything. You take when 1100 or 1200 bills of legislation hit the legislature covering every segment of our activity in society, most of it or some of it highly technical, it's utterly impossible for the legislator to have access or to garner the information necessary for him to cast an intelligent vote. For this reason the lobbyists . . . and understand this, on almost any bill you're going to have some lobbyists for it and some lobbyists against it. As a result, the lobbyists can, in a very short time in trying to sway the legislator's vote, give him all of the argument and reason and facts on his side of the fence. On the other hand, those that are opposing it'll do likewise on . . . well, as a result of this pruning and pushing and trying to sway his vote, he gets a pretty well built up argument on both sides of the fence and can make up his mind as to what's best for his people or what he thinks is best for the state of Texas. And also this, these facts and the arguments that these lobbyists give to

these legislators 9 1/2 times out of 10 are very accurate and very correct for this reason: if a lobbyist ever lies to a member of the legislature or deliberately misleads him or gives him false information, then he might as well pack his suitcase and go back home because he is through as an effective lobbyist.

Odom: That's what I've heard.

Murphey: You can see this, and for this reason the lobbyists keep their shirts real clean. Now they use every persuasion known to man, and they're smooth, and they're smart people, and they use every trick of the trade, so to speak. But they never deliberately mislead or lie or misrepresent anything to a member of the House just to get his vote because they know that when that member finds it out, not only will he never respect him anymore, but he will get the word to the other membership and nobody will ever believe that . . .

Odom: A legislator's got to be fairly shrewd and intelligent and calculating to get the information he really needs out of the lobbyist all the time, doesn't he?

Murphey: Oh, this is true, and members will use the lobby, and the lobby knows they're using them and don't mind because they're getting good pay for it. A member will say, "Well, if you can show me such and such and such and such and get the figures on such and such and such and such, I might be for that bill." Well, the lobbyist'll have a staff of fifty people if necessary getting that information where he can have it on that member's desk the next morning.

Odom: In other words, we're still financing a function of government

there . . . I mean, letting private interests finance the function of government to which there are some people, you know, I'm sure, who are opposed. They would like to have some professional research service perform this function that would be made by the state or paid by government to do it.

Murphey: Oh, this is true, and we have come a long way in that direction. We now have the Legislative Budget Board and the Legislative Council and the Legislative Reference Library, and we have come a long way down that trail. But these people who have that idea must always look at the practical aspect of it. You're never going to do away with the lobby.

Odom: No.

Murphey: And as long as they're going to be there and as long as they're going to try to influence legislation, you'd be amazed at the information that you can get from a man whose bread and butter or his business or industry is dependent perhaps on this piece of legislation. You'd be amazed at how thorough and good job that the lobbyist will do where it would be almost financially impossible for the state to finance and employ a staff large enough to assemble all of this information on these actual thousands of bills that come through.

Odom: And they couldn't do it in the time that would be required because . . .

Murphey: Not all.

Odom: . . . these people are working from a background of knowledge that researchers would have to take maybe--well, depending on the complexity of the thing--two or three weeks or maybe even longer

just to get to the point of where they could find out what the legislator wanted to know.

Murphey: This is true. It would be almost prohibitive. This same thing is done in Congress of the United States. This is not incidental just in the state legislature; it's also done in Congress. It's done with the President. We don't call them lobbyists or anything, but you can bet when the President has a decision to make, he's got people on his staff who feel one way and people who feel another, and they use every persuasion in the world to make the President make the decision as they think it should be made.

Odom: I hope a president will always keep it that way . . .

Murphey: Certainly.

Odom: . . . rather than get rid of all those who feel . . .

Murphey: Well, just as an example now, when we speak of lobbyists, we think of oil and gas lobbyists, the insurance lobby, this type of big business--chemical, railroads, bus and truck lines--these type of lobbies who do keep fulltime lobbyists in Austin. But you and I are lobbyists actually. I don't know whether you've ever personally yourself been interested in a piece of legislation or not, but I have. And I have written letters and gone down there and talked with various members of the House and Senate and all. And this is, here again, is a Democratic process. I know when I was . . .

Odom: As long as you've got representative government.

Murphey: Right. When I was district attorney over here in East Texas, I had Angelina County and Lufkin, county seat, and Cherokee County, Rusk county seat, and Nacogdoches County. I know that the District and

County Attorneys Association was always very interested in all those practicable to the enforcement of law, and here again is why sometime the people who are actually out in the field who have a practical knowledge of the way this bill will affect their segment of society. Actually, the person working with the tool can give the legislator better advice than some staff up in a closeted ivory tower could do from the standpoint of theory or of this type of thing. I know that the District and County Attorneys Association, in many instances, attempted to influence legislation which would strengthen law enforcement, and they're still trying to do it. This is a never-ending battle. I think that we did go down there and visit with members of the House and Senate to tell them just exactly what our problems were in the courthouse, trying these cases, trying to enforce the law, what this bill would do for us or how it would hurt us. We were directly interested in that one little thing, criminal law enforcement. Well, where we were interested in that, we had a multitude of organizations and associations and trade associations and industries that were interested in their little segment. They didn't care a whole lot about anything else. Well, where this is true and you have a specified and specialized group working on that one problem. You can see that they can garner and get together more information, oh, than a staff sitting somewhere that's not only working on this but 400 other subjects at the same time.

Odom: I might say where one of our special emphases on this thing is to interview people who've had a long career as a lobbyist . . .

Murphey: Good.

Odom: . . . or been involved in it.

Murphey: Good.

Odom: One of them including man I'm sure you know, Claud Gilmer.

Murphey: Oh, yes. Claud's a good friend of mine. Had a lot of spring to him.

Odom: I thought he was. Had a lot of spring to him. Actually, we haven't got around to talking much about his career in lobbying yet, but he's certainly been doing it for a long time.

Murphey: Right. And Claud Gilmer's very honorable and a man of high integrity and as much of those as any man I ever knew.

Odom: Let's see now. You served as sergeant-at-arms then in the '49 session . . .

Murphey: And the '51 session.

Odom: . . . and the '51 session.

Murphey: Right. I was re-elected in January of '51.

Odom: Mr. Manford was speaker of ~~that~~ first session. And who was the speaker . . .

Murphey: Reuben Senterfitt from San Saba was the speaker in the '51 session.

Odom: Reuben Senterfitt from San Saba. Did you have much of a problem getting re-elected for that second session or term?

Murphey: Well, yes. I had another race (chuckle). I had, I believe, three running against me the second time also. It's a pretty coveted position. I suffered a little handicap and, of course, a great personal loss. My father died about three days before the legislature was going in session in January of '51. In fact, I was down there

working and out at my apartment there in Austin. A couple of my friends came out, and they'd called down at the sergeant-at-arms office and had given me the death message. So I had to, of course, leave, and I was not even present in Austin the day of the election. But I was re-elected and continued to serve as sergeant-at-arms until 1953.

Odom: Did you do much campaigning that second time? Was it about the same kind of race?

Murphey: Well, no. It wasn't the same kind of campaign. It's like anybody running for re-election. It's not a question of getting known. They all knew me. Now, of course, I had to meet some of the newly elected people, but they were in a minority. I mean, I don't remember that particular session how many new ones we had, but I would say probably not over maybe thirty or forty if that many.

Odom: You had good relations with Mr. Senterfitt.

Murphey: Right. It was really no problem. I mean, it worked out all right.

Odom: What kind of relationship did you have with the men who were . . . well, let's ask first, with the Senate and lieutenant governor? I mean, do you have very much contact with people in the other house?

Murphey: Actually, very little. It's amazing that you would. They've got their job to do, and we've got ours. The sergeant-at-arms in the Senate and I were, of course, very good friends and drank coffee together and visited and talked over mutual problems. The problem of the Senate sergeant-at-arms is entirely different from the problem of the House sergeant-at-arms. Number one, you've got a much smaller, more manageable group to work with; you've got 31

senators as opposed to 150 House members. Back in those days you not only had the 150 House members, you had 150 secretaries; you had about six sergeant-at-arms assistants on the floor; you had 30 pages on the floor. You had the committee clerks, and I don't know if you were ever at the House back in those days when they were in session, but it was a madhouse--an absolute madhouse. And the Senate sergeant-at-arms had a much less problem. They had private offices in those days, and the secretaries did not come on the floor of the Senate.

Odom: What about your relationship with governors in those days--
Mr. Jester, I guess, first and then Mr. Shivers?

Murphey: Very fine. As I say, I appointed a page for the governor and saw him frequently from time to time, both when he would visit the House and around the capitol there, grounds, leaving.

Odom: And just pass the time of day with him, I suppose.

Murphey: Right. I had supported both Mr. Jester and again Mr. Shivers in their campaign, and they knew that. I from time to time could do little things for the governor. In other words, to be very frank about it, I had several visits with the governor when he would be interested in the climate and the cloak room talk around the House. He knew nobody that knew anymore about what was going on around there than I did.

Odom: I was wondering about the . . .

Murphey: Let me emphasize that I never was nor never would I have been a so-called stooly for the governor because I would never have divulged any confidential information that any House member gave me or that

I heard in a confidential way. But mainly what they were interested in was . . .

Odom: The way things were shaping up.

Murphey: That's right and the general attitude and "What are they talking about? What are they more interested in than anything else?" In other words, as the session goes on and time gets short, the governor's interested in his program. Any bills that he's particularly interested in, maybe they're not coming out, not coming up, has passed. He doesn't know whether he's got the votes or not. He thinks he does, but he's not sure. And he just likes to know . . .

Odom: Wants your estimate.

Murphey: Yes. He just likes to know the general atmosphere and all. And I had several nice visits . . . I say several, many visits with the governor about this type thing, not only with him but with his assistants. In fact, I would be with his assistants probably more than with the governor himself.

Odom: Is it ever a practice or much possibility or likelihood that the governor might swing some weight in the election of the sergeant-at-arms? Anything like this?

Murphey: Well, of course, this is certainly possible. To be perfectly frank about it, I don't know of any instance where he probably did. I don't think that the governor actually is that interested or it makes that much difference to him one way or the other. I think this. I think that if some person had gone out and bitterly fought the election of a governor and had been vehement in his attacks upon the governor and all, I don't think he'd ever be

elected sergeant-at-arms of the House.

Odom: That's what I was . . . I sort of concluded that that might preclude your election.

Murphey: I think that the governor would, in a private conversation with the speaker, have told the speaker that "this man running for sergeant-at-arms of the House is a political enemy of mine, and I don't want him elected."

Odom: And like nature, a man has been, say, a former member or a man who had some experience in politics that had been an opponent of the man who was elected speaker probably wouldn't be elected sergeant-at-arms.

Murphey: Oh, no. I'll say this. I don't think any man could be elected sergeant-at-arms unless it met with the approval of the speaker and unless it met with the approval of the governor. I think this is certainly true. In other words, I think if the governor said, "He's personally obnoxious to me," or the speaker let it be known to the members of the House, "Now this man running for sergeant-at-arms is personally obnoxious to me," they're not going to vote for him.

Odom: So you served in the '51 session. What did you decide to do then? What were you doing in the mean . . . well, you were there all the time, though, that time. What made you decide to give it up? Of course, you served on through the interim, I suppose, until the end.

Murphey: Well, not entirely.

Odom: Not entirely?

Murphey: No. A great tragedy hit me. I fell in love (chuckle). I had met a young lady who at first had been a secretary there in the House

and later went to work in the Legislative Reference Library. And so I decided I was going to try to marry her, and I didn't feel that on the salary of the sergeant-at-arms that I'd be prepared to set up housekeeping. In addition to that, I had made up my mind that I did not want to live in Austin. Austin's a great city, and I like it, but it's a little big--was then and it sure is now. I had made up my mind that, of course, I had spent my time and made the effort and all to become an attorney, and this sergeant-at-arms thing was a real happy interlude in experiencing life. But I had reached both the age and the time that I had to decide what I was, you know, going to settle down and do in life. And so I had made up my mind to come back to Nacogdoches and run for county attorney. and back then, of course, the elections were in July and August. So I left . . . I resigned, gave the speaker my resignation and came on back home about, I guess, May of '53, somewhere along there.

Odom: May of . . . oh, you mean '52.

Murphey: I mean . . . no, excuse me. No. This would be of . . . right, '52.

Odom: During the big Eisenhower campaign.

Murphey: Right. That is right.

Odom: Incidentally, did you get active in the presidential race or any of the presidential races at any time?

Murphey: Well, I, of course, was vitally interested in it, but I had a race of my own.

Odom: So you weren't really working much for that.

Murphey: (Chuckle) A fellow asked me during that campaign, said, "How do you stand on the presidential race?" And I said, "Well, I'll answer

that if you'll tell me how the presidential candidates stand in the county attorney's race?" (Laughter)

Odom: (Laughter) Well, I was wondering. What is the . . . I mean, a fellow has to be careful in a campaign like that doesn't he? I mean, you've got your own race.

Murphey: Oh, you bet. One of the worst mistakes in the world a politician can make is when he's got a race and gets involved in somebody else's.

Odom: Well, that's what I wondered there. You lose about as much as you gain in that, I imagine.

Murphey: Oh, more so.

Odom: Even more so.

Murphey: You've got to run your own race and leave everybody else's alone.

Odom: And you don't even tell people then how you stand on those things.

Murphey: Oh, no. The standard answer'd be . . . somebody come up and say, "How do you stand on the governor's race?" You turn around and look at them and say, "Who's running?" (Laughter)

Odom: (laughter) Okay. Well, go ahead with your story there. I'm sorry I interrupted you on that point.

Murphey: Well, I came back and made the race for county attorney and was successful, was elected county attorney. And I went in the county attorney's office here in Nacogdoches County in January of '53. And . . .

Odom: Were you married? You weren't married yet?

Murphey: No, no. I had to lay by a little money and get housekeeping ready and all. I guess I had different idea on marriage than these kids. I felt like a man ought to know where he stands before he puts a

ring on a girl's finger. I had saved up some money as sergeant-at-arms. I never have been a spendthrift myself. But I had laid by and made plans. I'd been going with this girl for . . . well, since '49. First met her in the '49 session, and we'd been going together. So I married her in January. Oh, excuse me, she'd shoot me. I married her June 27, 1953. Then I continued in the county attorney's office.

Odom: Did you have any long-range political ambitions or plans at that time or . . .

Murphey: No. No, I really didn't. To be perfectly frank about it, the reason I ran for county attorney was that as a young attorney . . . and by now I'm not young under the terms of age, I guess, but as an attorney I was young. I knew coming back to a small town with experienced, settled lawyers here who had most of the business that I would find it extremely hard financially for the first few years to get established.

Odom: This is a very common practice, isn't it?

Murphey: Oh, very common, very common. So I figured that by obtaining the salary of the county attorney plus what I could start building up my own practice that this would give me a good toe hold. So I started as county attorney. At the '53 session the legislature created another court for this area, created the 145th Judicial District Court. At that time the district attorney for this district was James Moore down at Lufkin, who now is on the Court of Civil Appeals up at Tyler. But he was district attorney and was appointed district judge for the new court. Well, some of my friends and

myself, all of us, contacted the governor to see about me getting appointed district attorney. Allan Shivers was governor at that time, and I was appointed district attorney in '54. And then I ran for re-election twice after that. I served as district attorney from '54 to January of '60.

Odom: I see. You like this kind of practice?

Murphey: Prosecuting?

Odom: Prosecuting.

Murphey: Well, I'll be very frank about it. I enjoyed it. Here again was a very intriguing and interesting undertaking. You work in close cooperation with all your law enforcement agencies from the constable to the sheriff to the police department to the rangers to the FBI, treasury agents. You saw a little of all of them in the years that you're in office. Some of the cases are routine, and yet you run into some interesting cases and, more or less, sensational cases for your part of the country.

Odom: More exciting than the ordinary practice of law.

Murphey: Oh, no question about that. I don't think any . . . there's no question about the excitement and the combat in court. As county attorney and district attorney, of course, I tried many, many, many cases, got invaluable courtroom experience that had and will stand in good stead from now on, I'm sure.

As district attorney I had a record that I was and am proud of. I never lost a capital case, one in which the penalty could've been death, and yet I never sent anybody to the electric chair. I had only two cases, actually, where it would've been indicated,

but the jury gave them life instead of the electric chair. But I never lost any capital cases in those years of prosecuting and only lost two regular felony cases. One of them was a drunk driving second offense case where it came up in the trial after we'd already started it that the first offense the county judge in this county'd come down and taken his plea of guilty on a Sunday morning so he could get out of jail. And, of course, any judgment entered on Sunday is invalid in Texas and so I didn't have the foundation for the second offense. I really don't feel like I lost that one. I feel like that county judge took that Sunday guilty plea back there lost that one.

Odom: You ever have any fear or any incidents of vengeance or retribution in being a public prosecutor?

Murphey: Oh, yes. Yes, this is part of the job.

Odom: You learn to live with that.

Murphey: Yes. And let me say, it was not an every day occurrence. Don't misunderstand me.

Odom: No, I don't.

Murphey: I didn't feel in fear of my life every day, but there were at least three or four cases within that span where threats against my life were made. In fact, the police department furnished me . . . my home protection on these instances. But that's water under the bridge, and some of those people who threatened to kill me are now . . . I won't say my best friends, but we get along all right.

Odom: (Chuckle) Get along.

Murphey: Yes, it was the heat of the occasion and the family involved and

their son. One of them had a son involved. One of them had a brother involved. I don't mind saying I was a hard prosecutor. I had my job to do, and I did it the very best that I could.

Odom: Must've been for that kind of record.

Murphey: Well, I prosecuted real hard and did have success at it. You make enemies. This showed up later on down the road when I ran for state Senate here about two or three years ago.

Odom: I was about to say then that 1960 was the last . . . you served as district attorney. That was the last year.

Murphey: Right.

Odom: Then what was your next move?

Murphey: Well, my next move was to try to get established in the full time practice of law with my own law office. I didn't have the inclination to go into any partnership or anything. I wanted to practice by myself where I wouldn't have to answer to anybody for what I did or anything else. So I opened up this office right here we're sitting in and have been here ever since. Been very interested in politics down through the years, have taken part in numerous campaigns and ill-fatedly made up my mind to run for the state Senate when Martin Dies, Jr., who was our state senator, decided to run against Congressman John Dowdy for the Congress spot.

Odom: I remember that.

Murphey: This has been about three years ago. I made that race and actually I made a pretty poor race, not vote-wise. There was only about, I think, 4,000 votes difference, a two-man race.

Odom: It was a two-man race. I was about to ask you.

Murphey: A young man from down in Angelina County who was state representative --Wilson was his name--was my opponent. Of course, it's a tremendous, large district--the Senate district is. Goes all the way from Corsicana to the north of us clear down to Beaumont to the south of us, and this re-districting thing in the rural areas and smaller towns has given us . . . is getting an ever enlarging territory to have to run in. I was not well acquainted in many of the counties. I'd never run in them or anything. Money was a little handicap to me. I had no great benefactors. I got some real fine contributions from my local people and from friends that I'd had in Austin, but none of them were of any great magnitude. A hundred dollars looked awfully big to me. As a result, I really didn't have the finances for my campaign that I should've had, and I just took an old-fashioned beating. There ain't no excuses for it. The boy just beat me.

Odom: You think you'll run again?

Murphey: No.

Odom: You don't?

Murphey: No, unless there's something in the future that I can't foresee now, and I don't say this because I lost because I've been around this game a long time, and I know you win some and you lose some. I've just been lucky that I haven't lost any. I really said a long time ago that there's two kind of politicians--them that's been beat and them that's going to get beat. And this is true.

Odom: (Chuckle) But at least as you foresee . . .

Murphey: I came out of the race with absolutely no bitterness or . . . a lot

of people run for office and get beat and think everybody's against them and get a feeling of persecution and all. This is silly for anybody to feel this way. And I came out of it with no regrets whatsoever. However, I would've liked to have won.

Odom: Do you consider yourself in the general use of those terms--you may quarrel with the terms--a liberal or a conservative, Mr. Murphey?

Murphey: Oh, without trying to define them or take them what the average person defines them as, I'm a conservative. Make no bones about it.

Odom: I would presume so from what you've said.

Murphey: Yes, based upon the average person's interpretation of the terms, I would be a conservative.

Odom: Do you consider yourself a progressive in some respects that the average person views it?

Murphey: Oh, I'm like a girl that came into my office one time, wanted to file a rape charge against a boy. I told her, I said, "Now that's a pretty serious offense." I said, "Let me tell you before you get into it that you better have a knowledge of the fact that your character will be an issue, too." This was a grown woman. I said, "It's a good defense to this charge if you're of unchaste character yourself." I said, "They'll pry into your background. If they can find any spots in your background, well, it'll be useless to file this complaint." I said, "Now I want to ask you a question, are you a virtuous woman?" Her answer was, "Of course, I'm virtuous, but I ain't no fanatic about it." (Laughter)

Odom: (Laughter)

Murphey: Well, while I'm about this politics, conservative and liberal and

all this, these definitions and terms, I'm the way that old gal was. I'm a conservative, but I'm not any fanatic about it. I don't think anybody has ever cornered all the goodness and truth and justice on any one side of the corral. I think that there's something to be said on all these points of view and where I might possibly be considered ultra conservative on one issue, there are some conservatives who might say I was terribly liberal on others. I'm not trying to straddle the fence because I'm not running for nothing and don't intend to, but I'm just stating that as I follow the political parade, so to speak, there are certain instances where I feel like that the so-called conservative leadership is wrong. And I'm going to say so.

Odom: _____.

Murphey: Right. And on other issues and fact situations, of course, I think the liberal element, so to speak, is wrong. And so there ain't anybody got a corner on the morality and truth and so forth.

Odom: Let's see. There was a question I wanted to ask you. Oh, yes. I understand you had something of a career lately or maybe it goes back some time as a humorist or after dinner speaker. Give us this aspect of your career!

Murphey: You bet. This started out when I was in politics. You know these civic clubs--the Lions and the Rotarians and the Kiwanis and the Jaycees and the PTA's and the professional women's clubs--and we're engulfed with organizations as you well know. They've all got to have a program. In this area of these small towns they run out of programs. They have the junior high choir come sing, and they have

all the preachers come, and then they have a few of the school administrators speak and fire chiefs and police chiefs speak, and then that's about it, you know. So they start in on politicians and have the county judge and county attorney and all come and make talks. So I, of course, got more than my share of invitations to speak. And I've always tried to treat an audience as I would like to be treated if I were in that audience, and I never wanted to bore or tire anybody with my great knowledge of the world situation or my opinion on what we ought to do. So I went in more or less to try to entertain them and make them laugh and by the same token throw in a few bits of wisdom where they'd swallow it without knowing it. And this can be done . . . you can get a message across a lot better by anecdote or illustration or story than you can with just coming out and saying it. So I guess I got pretty well known around three or four counties here from these little old talks. Then I'd make a talk somewhere, and there'd be a visitor from another town. And come his time to be program chairman, he'd be desperate for a program, and he'd call me to come to his town. And it was just like dropping a pebble in the lake. The ripples went out. While doing all of this sometimes they'd give me \$5, you know, for my gasoline expense if I drove 100 miles, and I'd feel lucky to get it. I never did know that they paid anybody to make a speech, had no idea. Oh, I knew, you know, some of these lecturers and . . . but I never did think of myself as a professional speaker.

But I got a call one time that kind of broke the ice from a gentleman who invited me to talk to an industrial banquet, and I

told him I would. He asked me, said, "Well, what is your fee?" Of course, he hit me cold because I didn't have a fee, but I've had the give and the take of the courtroom enough to see an opening here. I didn't want to set it too high and get turned down nor did I want to set it less than I could possibly get. So I inquired about the size of the banquet, the number of people, and how far I would have to travel in my car to get there and return and was kind of pulling it out while my mind was trying to arrive at some figure to hit him with, and so he came right out and he said, "Well, Murphey, we're talking on my money long distance and we paid our speaker last year \$150. Will that be all right with you?" I said, "That'll just be fine."

Odom: (Chuckle)

Murphey: And if he's have said \$50, that would have been fine, too, you know (chuckle). But that was my first real . . .

Odom: How long ago was that, do you remember?

Murphey: Oh, this was back about '58, I think, while I was still in the district attorney's office. Then from that point on, well, it's been amazing how thing thing has multiplied itself. When I got out of the district attorney's office, of course, I was my own boss. My time was not reserved by anybody.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: So I went into it a little more. I have never sent out a brochure advertising my ability or solicited any speeches. I've never done any type of solicitation at all. Yet I've spoken in 28 states.

Odom: . . . 28 states!

Murphey: I've done financially well as well as . . . in the number of the speeches that I have made.

Odom: Do you give the same speech or do you tailor them to various kinds of approaches? I suppose you have to, depending on whom you're speaking to.

Murphey: Oh, naturally, naturally. I have never made the same speech twice in my life even when they requested the same speech.

Odom: (Chuckle)

Murphey: I don't talk from notes--oh, I might jot down just three or four words to remind me not to leave out something, but all of mine is off the cuff, so to speak, except I have it in my mind.

Odom: Yes.

Murphey: But I just mean I don't write it down.

Odom: You have quite a stock you've built up of old anecdotes and stories and . . .

Murphey: Oh, yes. You can just call out a subject and I can tell you half a dozen stories about it.

Odom: (Chuckle)

Murphey: I more or less don't really know what I'm going to feed them people until I get to their lot.

Odom: Just play it by ear.

Murphey: That's right. Usually you'll get there, if it's a convention, you'll get there maybe the night before if it's a noon speech, or if it's a night speech you'll get in there during the daytime sometime, and you mix and mingle among the exhibits and talk to the conventioners. They don't know who you are and you can kind

of get the feel of these people, and then, depending on what association it is or what business it is, if it's an insurance association or a manufacturing company's convention or . . . goodness knows there's enough associations and conventions going on to gag an elephant, but . . . then, really, you get to the banquet or the dinner and you sit there and they have the preliminary activity-- maybe give out some awards or introduce the new officers or this type of thing--and all this time I'm getting my speech in order about what these people. I look at them and see the number of women present and the average age of the audience. I tell you this business of being a professional after-dinner speaker is a very technical one if you do it good.

Odom: Yes. I was going to ask you: how did you study to develop your fund of speeches and anecdotes or did you . . .

Murphey: Not at all.

Odom: . . . sort of accumulate them over the years without any study?

Murphey: This is it. This is it. Whenever a man is invited to make a talk, he says, "Well, now, I ought to tell a joke to start off with." In a lot of speeches you don't say that I'll start off with a joke. And so they run to the library, or pull out some back issues of the Reader's Digest (chuckle), or start looking for a joke to tell. Actually this is a big mistake that an amateur speaker makes.

Odom: Yes, I've always thought about that.

Murphey: You don't just tell a joke to be telling a joke. In fact, I've heard speakers say, "I want to tell you a little joke now." (Chuckle)

Odom: (Chuckle) That would be pretty bad.

Murphey: Well, this is just part of the trade. I've always liked humor and to tell stories. I did it from my junior high . . . I guess grammar school days. I always had a story for everybody, and this carried on through my college days, and I was on all the college fun nights and this. I was either emceeing it or playing a big role and . . . local clown so to speak. And the minstrels and right on into everything. And this just came naturally to me.

Odom: A talent.

Murphey: That's right. This a God-given talent. I don't think you can develop it. I've never seen anybody that did. And it goes right back to your job as a professor and teacher or to anybody else's job. You better be yourself.

Odom: I've always maintained that . . .

Murphey: If you can be yourself and accomplish the objective, well, this is fine. But if you try to accomplish an objective in life by not being yourself, you're not only going to be a mighty unhappy person, but you are going to always be a person on guard because you're afraid that you'll drop your pretense or that you won't react as the character you're trying to imitate would react. You better be yourself.

Odom: One of the things that's wrong with this world now is there's too many people that way.

Murphey: This is true, and this is understandable.

Odom: That's the reason I'm pointing that out.

Murphey: This is understandable. I can see where a person has perhaps sat in the class of some great attorney or law teacher and said, "Well,

I'd like to be like him. I'd like to be like him." We try to mold ourselves like that person, and we can't do it, and we're not going to succeed. A lot of people come a pretty good piece. Now you can fool people awhile, but while you're doing it you're the most unhappy and worried person in the world because you're afraid somebody'll see through the veneer. So my stock-in-trade in this talking has been just . . . I talk about like you and I have been sitting here talking. I just put them . . . I usually'll tell them . . . I spoke last night till yesterday at noon up in Dallas to the Texas Oil Jobbers Association. They had about 1,200 people up there and I told them, "I just want you to sit back and relax." I said, "I'm not here to talk your business with you. I don't know anything about your business. I don't know anything about any subject anymore than ya'll do." I said, "I don't know anymore about selling oil and gasoline than ya'll do." That tickled them, you know. I talked to a school teachers' group up in Tyler here the other day, and I thought they were going to fall out of their chairs. I told them, I said, "Now I'm not going to talk to you about teaching school." I said, "I don't know anything about teaching school." I said, "I don't know anything about administration in the school. I don't know anything about administration." I said, "I don't know anything about curriculum." I said, "I don't know anything about the physical properties of a school plan." I said, "In fact, I've kind of thought it strange I ain't been elected to the school board." (Laughter)

Odom: (Laughter)

Murphey: Well, they enjoyed that, which is pretty typical.

Odom: I suppose at this point just about gotten to the very end of questions or comments I wanted or listed. If you have anything of significance you think ought to be added, I'll give you a chance to.

Murphey: For my final argument.

Odom: (Chuckle) Yes, for your final argument. I know there are many things that I have missed asking questions about. We could talk all day probably.

Murphey: We could talk all this year.

Odom: That's true.

Murphey: As I told you when you first contacted me about this thing, I don't feel that as far as the future history of the great state of Texas that I would have a whole lot to add to it although it's been my privilege, I would say, to have been pretty close to some history down through the years, and I hope it's not over. I hope I continue to be. But I think the main thing that history misses is the old saying--I know you went through it in school, and I did, too--is that we were more interested in chronicling what had actually happened and the dates it occurred on and the causes and results of the particular incident than we were the people involved and the motivation within the individual person that's usually participated in the particular event. To me, of course, it's been said before and you know it being a history teacher, that history is nothing in the world but a biography of people. It's people that make history. And I've always thought that somewhere in the assembling of a peoples' history that a little more emphasis ought

to be put maybe on the commonplace than on the little things that occurred along the way not at the expense of the major thing which, of course, is the most important but that we might dwell a little bit more on the little incidents that happened, although insignificant perhaps in themselves yet fit into the overall picture to magnify the event.

Odom: Tell you something about the overall picture.

Murphey: That's right. And, of course, this is . . . there've been people . . . old Frank X. Tolbert of the Dallas News up there has attempted to do this with his Informal History of Texas to go into different personalities and little anecdotes and stories and witticisms and so forth that have occurred. This is difficult to do just to sit down and say, "Tell me something."

Odom: (Chuckle) I know. If you don't have anything in particular to comment on, I'll just turn it off, and we'll talk just a little bit longer here if you want to.

Murphey: All right.