
Interview with Hugh Branson

Interview conducted by David Welborn. Date and location are unknown

Audio cassette 38b
38b begins in mid-response to a previous question

Hb: having interviewed Baker for an academic paper. It was for a Master's degree or a Ph.D.—I think it was a Ph.D. That was how the contact was made.

Dw: Was he a legislative assistant?

Hb: He came there as a legislative assistant.

Dw: What about Pat Butler? He may be even later than that, I'm not sure.

Hb: Yes, Pat Butler was more like 1978, and he was there only for a short time.

Dw: Was he a Tennessean?

Hb: Yes, he was from Chattanooga.

Dw: A. B. Culvahouse.

Hb: A. B. replaced Lee Smith about 1970 and was legislative assistant.

Dw: David Lauver.

Hb: David Lauver came in 1971.

Dw: Again, he was a legislative assistant?

Hb: No, actually David was a writer. A very excellent writer, and he was hired primarily to do the 1972 campaign.

Dw: Cran Montgomery.

Hb: Cran Montgomery came there in 1973, I believe, and he was a legislative assistant.

Dw: And Robb Mossbacker.
HB: Mossbacker came there in 1971. I remember in the fall of 1970, like in December, I got a call one day, just a blind call, from George Bush in Houston. He had lost the 1970 campaign to Lloyd Bentsen, and he said one of the disappointments he had in losing was that he had promised a friend of his, Bob Mossbacker, that he would find employment for his son who had worked in his campaign, and he asked me if I had an opening, if there was any way I could help him. I told him there was and to send him up and I would.

DW: He stayed for quite a while.

HB: Yes.

DW: David Speer. I think that was around 1977 also.

HB: Yes, it must have been; the name is familiar, but I can't remember him.

DW: At some point—I should have checked this, but I didn't—but perhaps you'll recall. During this period Baker left the Commerce Committee, did he not?

HB: Yes.

DW: Do you remember when that was?

HB: That must have been after the 1974 election, and he went on Foreign Relations.

DW: Is there any kind of story behind his going on Foreign Relations?

HB: No, other than Foreign Relations is just a more prestigious committee. He never really paid very much attention to Commerce anyway and was not interested in that.

DW: How would you characterize the nature of his interest in foreign policy matters at the time he went on Foreign Relations. Before then, was he something of a student of foreign affairs?

HB: No; I would say no more than in the general sense. There are always issues that you have to vote on. During much of that time there was the agonizing question of the Vietnam War, there was the incidence of the _____ in the Ford administration.
DW: And the arms control negotiations that were going on at the time.

HB: Yes, that was a continual product of government life.

DW: When did he go on the Intelligence Committee?

HB: It must have been after the Watergate hearings; that was kind of a natural extension of that.

DW: As a result of Watergate, was his personal interest in intelligence matters heightened, do you think?

HB: Yes, it was, significantly, because they got into investigating all of that stuff and then dealing with intelligence organizations, institutions: CIA, DEA, and so forth. The intelligence people always create a certain tension there with legislative people, it seemed—or it seemed to Baker—which is really counterproductive on their part, because they behave in a way that makes legislative people think they are not fully disclosing or they are holding something back or they are misleading. I think most of the time it's just the nature of intelligence; there are certain things you don't say, period, and a lot of other things that you don't say unless somebody asks you. I never found that any of those people ever volunteered anything.

DW: Because of your interest in at least the communications aspect of the Commerce Committee's work, did you try to talk Baker out of leaving?

HB: Yes, I preferred that he would have stayed on the Commerce Committee, because that is where I concentrated a lot of attention. It was nice being personal friends of the chairman of the board of the three networks and Hollywood companies, movie companies and so forth, but clearly he wanted to be on the Foreign Relations Committee and that's what he did. I couldn't, in good conscience, say he shouldn't have done that.

DW: During this time, who on the staff was primarily responsible for handling the Public Works portfolio?

HB: During a portion of that time, Jim Jordan handled that, but, essentially, personal staff did not handle that. Bailey Guard, who was the director of the Public Works Committee,
worked directly with Baker, and virtually all of that was handled through the Committee and Committee staff.

DW: Did Baker have somebody on the Committee staff or on a subcommittee staff who essentially worked for him on the minority side?

HB: We did for Communications but not on—well, Bailey Guard. Baker was ranking member, and Bailey and Hal Brayham and all the people there worked for Baker. There was a very good and very strong relationship with Bailey Guard and myself, and whatever we needed to know or whatever was occurring, he always kept me abreast or informed, or Baker, or both. Bailey and I had to have some kind of relationship there because all of the constituents and all of the people who wanted to deal with Public Works and those issues came to me first, or came to the Baker office. So there had to be some kind of a transferring mechanism there, and people had to understand what was going on. Bailey and I had an extremely good relationship, and, in all of those years, not only not a single misunderstanding, not a single glitch. It was a very smooth relationship, very good.

DW: Who on the staff was involved in Foreign Relations matters?

HB: That, again, was carried out mostly with the Committee staff; in the time I was there and dealt with Foreign Relations, Seth Tillman was the director. Cran Montgomery handled some responsibilities there and later on, after I left, handled more. During my time there it was primarily through Seth Tillman. For a person of divergent political directions and views, he also worked very well with me; we worked very closely and very well and never had a problem or a glitch.

DW: Tillman was the staff director and basically worked for Fulbright.

HB: Yes.

DW: Who was the third person you named after Montgomery?

HB: I think that's the only one I named.

DW: I thought you mentioned the name of someone on the Committee staff, after you left, who—
HB: No, I said after I left Montgomery assumed a greater responsibility.

DW: What kinds of things would bring you into contact with Tillman?

HB: Again, the Senator's personal office is the door for all the people who want to deal with the issues—not the Committee; they don't know the Committee exists. So there had to be some kind of a working relationship there and a certain level of understanding of what was going on to fulfill your commitment there to people in the normal course of business.

DW: According to your recollection, between 1974 and 1977, roughly, were there any major legislative matters that Baker was especially interested in or devoted considerable time to?

HB: Yes; his biggest legislative work up until he became majority leader—and I'm going to put that in an entirely different category with a different perspective about him—but up until that point, the biggest thing he did was shepherding through with Muskie—as they say on C-Span, "Who is Muskie?", that's Edwin Muskie, the former Senator from Maine—the clean air and clean water acts, which were two major legislative undertakings. The Clean Air Act rearranged the automobile industry, rearranged the petroleum refining industry—at great cost—and it made significant contribution to reducing pollutants in the air.

DW: My recollection is that these reauthorization efforts, really amounting to rewrites of these major pieces of legislation, took several years to develop, numerous hearings, and that sort of thing. So Baker personally was deeply immersed in the particulars of both of these measures as they developed. How did he get along with Muskie?

HB: Very well; Baker and Muskie worked in great harmony there. The staff person that developed most of the work on the clean air and clean water bills was Hal Brayham, who worked for Bailey Guard.

DW: These two matters were of great importance to Baker—do any others come to mind?

HB: Before moving on to those other things, I should remark here for the record that these were major pieces of legislation, did have a major impact. Had a major impact on lives and on people; this may have been the first time that I ever came into real serious understanding of what these things can do and to understand better, when you go out to seek good works, one needs to be mindful of the displacement that you cause there. The lobbying on these things
was just intensive. There was the great lobbying between the automobile industry and the petroleum industry—who was going to give? Are you going to change the way automobiles are made, or are you going to change the way you refine petroleum? Essentially, the petroleum industry lost, and I guess that was the lesser of the—the automobile industry—both really lost. Two instances I remember, in that I always tried to make a specific effort to stay out of the way or not meddle into or become an obstacle to either staff people or the process in committees; if they were straight with me to help me do what I had to do, I never went in and said, "No, you need to do this" or "You need to do that," or "This is wrong." If they asked my opinion, I might give him my philosophical opinion, but I would leave it at that. One instance, I got a call from a lobbyist—I can't remember his name now, but it was a very high-powered lobbyist in Washington—who had nothing to do with either the automobile industry or the petroleum industry—way off from that, whatever it was—but he ran into the chief lobbyist for Chrysler Corporation and their president. It was the one before Iococca and I don't remember his name. Probably didn't remember it then! I do remember the incident; again, it was a memorable thing because he called and he said, "I just ran into so-and-so, the chairman of Chrysler. I've never seen people as depressed and as down in my life. They can't even get in to see the staff at the Public Works Committee. They understand that the members have cut them off, but they can't even get in to see the staff to give their point of view. I remember calling up Bailey and saying, "Look, you've got to see the chairman of Chrysler." He said, "It's already been decided, and it's just prolonging it." I said, "I know, Bailey, and I don't ask you to do a lot of stuff, but we are in a democracy here, the least thing you can do is talk to this guy. Make Hal Brayham and whoever else is there sit down and talk to him. Tell him you aren't going to do it—don't mislead him—but at least talk to him." He said, "Well, you're probably right." So I called the guy back; we got him down and they had their meeting. It didn't change anything, but it gives you a different perspective of the powerful committee staff. Another instance—I don't know how I acquired this fellow—but he was the chairman of the board of the Ethyl Corporation, who used to make the lead for the gasoline. Big operation in Richmond, Virginia. We were putting him out of business. I thought at that time he was elderly—he may not have been as elderly as I would think today. He was certainly senior; very, very nice, soft-spoken Southern Richmond accent with those impeccable manners.

DW: A true Southern gentleman.

HB: Indeed. So he came in—I think he just wandered in—and this was when the vote was going to go on. I remember the incident very well; I thought, "Here's something I don't know how
to handle." The Senate in a few minutes is going to put this man out of business, for all practical purposes. Whatever they have told him, he has not reconciled himself to this fact. He is in denial; he still thinks they won't vote to do this. I felt that he was in such a fragile state, I couldn't say, "Well, nice to see you" and just leave the poor man standing, so I said, "Come into my little office and sit down, and I'll talk to you." So he came in and he sat down and he started crying. And the vote was rolling, you're putting him out of business. He wasn't uncontrolled, but tears were going down his cheeks. He said, "I just can't understand why they would do this to us. We've been in business there for 100 years," or 50 years or whatever it was, "and never any complaints." The point of the story is that when you do those things, you're doing things that have consequences. One learns about those, too. I'm not suggesting that taking lead out of gasoline was not a good idea, I wholly believe that was a good move.

DW: During this period—I'm inferring this from a statement—Baker's taste for lobbyists did not change as he continued to serve in the Senate; he still expected to be protected from them.

HB: Yes, he dealt with hardly any lobbyists at all, ever. Just a few and those that he dealt with, he dealt with them on a basis of terms than their being lobbyists. Bill Speer—he always wanted to see Bill, but they never talked about petroleum. If Bill ever had to come down and give him a message from John Swearington, the chairman of Amoco, which was always to compliment him—John was a very strong supporter of ours and everything under the sun—he did have a relationship with Bill, but it wasn't based on petroleum industry lobbying. He had a relationship with the chief lobbyist for Eastman Kodak, who was there all the time, but they talked about photography. He just liked the guy. An interesting relationship that really ought to be placed in this record was the relationship that Baker had with the textile industry. It's safe to say that when you are dealing with the textile people, you're dealing with protectionist legislation, protectionist philosophy. Baker was almost entirely and totally a conceptual free trader. He knew that was the right thing to do; he knew that's how you build economies, no doubt about that. But we had this problem with the textile industry, because here it was in our state. So what do you do? Dealing with the textile industry—it isn't something you can do a little bit, because whatever they do, there is a long line of events that have consequences to them, one develops the other. It's like getting pregnant—you're either going to get into it or you're not. He agonized over that a little bit, but not a lot. He decided if he were going to be for the textile industry, he's just going to be for them. Free trade people would have to understand that; if they didn't, so be it, but that's what he's going to do. I certainly agreed with that, it didn't give me a lot of
problems. But I don't think we were protectionists on anything else. I remember at that time Frank Jarman, early on, was chairman of the board of Genesco, a huge apparel manufacturing out that time, biggest in the world, based in Nashville. I called Frank up and asked him, "How do you form a policy on this? What should one do, representing Tennessee?" His response to me, basically, was "I suspect that you need to do whatever you think you ought to do. We belong to all of these organizations—the shoe industry, the apparel manufacturing and the textile industry—all of the trade organizations that essentially support protection measures. But none of them are worth a dime. The big issue is dumping, and I have never understood what dumping is. We spend money to support these organizations and we're opposing to dumping, but, to tell you the truth, how in the world do you think companies are going to make a product and sell it below cost? Pretty soon they are going to be out of business. That just is not a real-term thing. We support these things because our people down there believe in that, and it would cause problems if we didn't. But, to tell you the truth, it doesn't really make any difference." Then there was an absolutely wonderful person, wonderful human being, Burton Fryerson, who lived in Chattanooga and was chairman of the board of Dixie Yarns, which is big, big time in the textile industry. Burton was also Bill Brock's uncle and had a family of just absolutely wonderful people. If Baker had not decided to support the textile industry, he would have anyway after visiting with Burton, because we probably cemented one of the best relationships there, with anybody, of any constituent we had. Burton would come to Washington maybe once a month, and he would always go over and see Bill and then he would come over and see me. If Baker were free, he always wanted to see Burton or take him to lunch or whatever. He was just a very incredibly kind and considerate person. He was dispatched by the textile industry, of course, to take care of Baker. ATM, American Textile Manufacturers Institute, I believe, was the name of their industry group, and they had board meetings—Burton, I guess, must have been a permanent member of their board, along with Roger Milliken over in South Carolina and a few others. Some people from New England, from up in Connecticut and Boston were also on this. But this was the most unusual organization I'd ever seen. I don't think there is a convention hotel in the United States or Hawaii that we haven't been to, to address an industry group an or association group or some of that. But this was the most unique group I've ever seen; they were mostly people cloned after Burton Fryerson, who were just impeccable gentlemen, soft-spoken. They would have their board meetings in the winter at Palm Beach at that old hotel, The Breakers. In the summer, they would have them in New York at the Plaza. All of their wives would be there; the wives would meet separately in another room, as they used to do on the plantation. The men would meet in another room, and they would usually wear blue
blazers and have cocktails with Baker and me. They almost never talked about textile issues. It was always about the bigger picture, I guess because they knew Baker was going to vote for them anyway, but they never pressed him on any issue. Were never rude to him, never unkind, never sought to give him advice, they were just very nice. Then, when it would come time to go to dinner, they would bring the wives in and we’d sit down at dinner, ______ happen. I don't know how many of these board meetings that we would make, but Burton would call and Howard would never turn him down. Never ever turn him down. We turned down everybody else, but anytime Burton Fryerson ever called, we never turned him down. We went to anything he ever asked us to do. We went to a lot of those meetings at the Breakers and at the Plaza. Even went to one up on Connecticut one time, they held one up there. Burton was very proud of his association with Howard Baker, even being the uncle of Bill Brock, whom he also had a close association with. Baker's judgment on the textile issue was "just don't tell me what it is; it doesn't make any difference. I know how I'm going to vote." I remember one time Burton came in, he was just really depressed; he said Brock didn't support him half the time—he tried to figure out what the right vote was. Well, that's no way to handle that! Brock had voted for a measure which [limited] the amount of subsidies you could pay a single grower of cotton. Of course, the industry is all opposed to that; Burton just couldn't understand why Bill would do that. I remember Brock gouging me one day and laughing; he said, "How in the world can Howard cast all of these votes with a straight face?" I said, "Well, Bill, it's your Uncle Burton!" He said, "I know; Burton thinks Howard's more a member of the family than I am." That was always just a very good relationship we had there.

DW: Beyond textiles, were there other Tennessee "interests" that were of major importance?

HB: Yes, yes. You will remember our predecessor, one generation removed, was Kenneth D. McKellar, who must occupy the throne in heaven someplace for the originator of big-time pork. As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he brought us the Tennessee Valley Authority; the Arnold Engineering Development Works in Tullahoma; at one time, Camp Forest over in Murfreesboro; and, even at the time we were here, the Air Force base which was at Smyrna, Tennessee. The money that was generated out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, is mostly on Tennessee side there in Crossville, which is the support for it. The arsenal at Milan, Tennessee. And, of all things, a naval air station in Memphis. Oh yes, we had a big constituency there to look after. Howard Baker didn't make a lot of mistakes; he did make some that were consequential mistakes, but not very many. Dealing with TVA was always a problem and frankly was a lot bigger problem than Baker ever really fully
understood, in my judgment. There was always that carry-over sentiment that you oppose TVA and they could provide the voter impact to get you defeated, or that TVA was in some kind of a special category by itself. Republicans remembered when Carroll Reece lost an election to an independent Republican in 1932 or 1934, whatever it was, 1934 I guess, when he opposed, voted against the founding of TVA. I don't know why Carroll lost that close election; he came back and won his seat again the next year. That somehow was a specter in the memory of people, who said, "My God, you can't oppose TVA." So Baker's philosophy was to just support TVA and keep it arm's length and hope they don't bother you and maybe it'll go away. There was also the popular belief, widely held, that Barry Goldwater didn't carry Tennessee in 1964 because of his speech he made in Memphis about selling TVA. I don't think that had anything to do with Barry Goldwater not carrying Tennessee; the statistics show that Barry Goldwater didn't carry Tennessee because there was an incredible turnout of black voters who voted for Lyndon Johnson. Nevertheless, we always came in and supported TVA. This ought to be known for the record and I don't think is anywhere: the question came up of Tellico Dam. Howard Baker had no more idea about what the value of Tellico Dam was, whether to support it or not support it; he believes in conservation and good practices and all of that, but that's almost a theory. He doesn't fish or hunt or do any of that stuff; he doesn't know what it is. I remember one day he said, "What do I do about Tellico Dam?" I said, "I don't really know." And I didn't. He said, "Go down there and go to Blount County and"—the other county there—Blount and—

DW: Loudon?

HB: No; it joins Loudon and McMinn and Blount. What is it?

DW: I don't know.

HB: I'll remember it in a minute. So I did that; I came down and I talked to the county judge. The county judge then was the executive officer of the counties here. I believe in Blount County it was Judge Shields, I think that was his name. Monroe County. Gosh, I can't remember the name of the guy in Monroe County, but I talked with these guys; they all said they wanted the dam. It would be an industrial development thing. So then I go down to TVA and I spend almost a day with the then general manager of TVA, whose name was Seaver, Len Seaver. Len's father was Judge Seaver out in Anderson County and was one of the Republican dynamos of his generation, a big supporter of Howard Baker's father. I don't know how Len ever got into an organization like TVA. Nevertheless, I spent a long time
with him, and he went over all the plans and everything. So I came back to Washington and I told him that I had talked with the judge in Monroe County and the judge in Blount County and with Len Seaver, and they had laid out a cogent plan. I said the folks in Monroe County and in Blount County want the dam. I asked them, "What do the folks out here think?" and they both told me, "The population out here wants it, by and large." So, I said, "That's the way it is." We had been contacted by the White House on what to do; this was in the Nixon administration. The staff person in the White House who was handling that was named Jack—I'll remember his last name in a minute, too—same as the ABC sports announcer—Whittaker, Jack Whittaker. I'd known Jack Whittaker since 1966 when he joined Pat Buchanan with Nixon for that tour that they did for Republican candidates. Jack was the scheduler. He was really a geologist; after the election, he went into a position at the White House that utilized his discipline. He said, "What do you guys want to do? We'll go either way. The president says do whatever Baker wants to do." I said, "Well, Jack, I've gone down there and I've talked to the folks and they want the dam." He said, "You're sure?" I said, "Yes." I think they would rather not have done it. Nevertheless, we cut the deal right there for the Tellico Dam, and there was never any question about what was going to happen after that time. That went through a long and bitter controversy in the area. Baker always supported it and supported the authorization through Public Works for this and never got associated with it. Talk about pure teflon—that was it.

DW: All the way up to the point, in the end, of amending the Endangered Species Act. Well, supporting that; I think Duncan was out in front.

HB: By the time it got to the Endangered Species Act, the people who were against it had so overplayed their hand. I never told anybody that we cut the deal with the White House to do that, but he never got bothered with that. Then there was the case with the dam down at Columbia, Tennessee, on the Duck River. Clyde York was opposed to that.

DW: Who was Clyde York?

HB: Clyde York was the president of the Tennessee Farm Bureau—our wonderful supporter. We supported that, too; I don't know if they have completed that dam even yet or not.

DW: I don't think so.
HB:  Anyway, we got through all that with TVA.  Then it came time:  what was Nixon going to do about appointing a new member to the board of directors of TVA and the chairman.  Aubrey Wagner had been appointed by Kennedy, and his time was up.  Baker came to the almost instant strategy of reappointing Red Wagner again as a sure way of keeping him out of the election and just not having that as a burden to deal with.  I strongly opposed—

DW:  What would have been the burden?

HB:  The burden was the over-perceived notion that the chairman of TVA was a political factor—they weren't.  Nevertheless, I lost that argument with Baker, and he convinced Nixon that he ought to reappoint Wagner as chairman.

DW:  He wanted to keep the TVA chairmanship out of the 1972 campaign, or wanted to keep that issue out.

HB:  Yes.  I don't know if Baker would agree with my assessment or not, but I think it was the biggest mistake he ever made.  Consequently, that gave the signal back to TVA—there is no oversight on TVA of any consequence.  Baker really had all the oversight that there was on TVA with his position on the Public Works Committee, and he chose to let them do whatever they wanted to do.  When they wanted the money, he would get it for them and so on.  They had embarked on this huge nuclear program.  The fact, as history has revealed and disclosed—without any doubt—they in no way on earth were competent to even start the program.  They weren't competent to build one plant, much less the program that they undertook.  And they undertook it with almost total arrogance, and we developed the biggest industrial mess in America with it, ultimately.  I'm convinced that had the bureaucrats not been minding the asylum that they would not have gotten into that big a problem.  Somebody, surely, would have had more judgment than that.  That was a big problem.  To show you the gratefulness of TVA and Aubrey Wagner, we were in a big battle with the Atomic Energy Commission over the designation of the kind of advanced, big nuclear plant to build.  Oak Ridge had one vision, as I mentioned earlier, the AEC had another.  So we lost that.  When it came down to the point of building the site, I said to Baker, "Well, we lose that, we don't have any control.  We've got control over the site; the president can decide where this goes."  It was a multibillion-dollar deal.

DW:  You're talking about the Breeder?
HB: Yes, the Clinch River Breeder. So the issue there is are you going to go with molten salt breeder or were you going to go with the fast breeder? Oak Ridge was molten salt, the rest of the industry was fast breeder. So Oak Ridge lost the technology; we would get the hardware. There were a lot of bruised feelings over that. Nixon was in California then at San Clemente; I said, "Let's get an appointment with the president and go down and just cut the deal."

DW: In regard to the siting.

HB: Yes. We immediately got an appointment, or he does, and he goes out to San Clemente and sees the president. Of course, what does the president do? He says, "OK." The president had given Baker whatever he asked for: no agonizing details or I'll have to think about it or check it out with so-and-so; he made the commitment right there, right then; probably took three minutes. Then we got the Clinch River project, which was supposed to have been—this was the biggest engineering project ever designed, and TVA had a piece of it. This all culminated right before our primary election, just a day or two days before the primary election.

DW: What year would that be?

HB: That would have been in 1972. You can imagine how hard Baker worked on this—how hard I had worked on manipulating this stuff around and had a huge announcement prepared by Baker to announce this. I believe to be announced on the Friday before the Tuesday primary, something like that. I'm in Knoxville; I pick up the News-Sentinel and here, splattered all across the top of the fold, is the announcement of the breeder, announced by Congressman Joe Evans and TVA—Baker's name is not even mentioned. I was furious! I mean, I was furious! To show the kind of lack of gratitude, surely—I could not describe how upset I was by that. I get Wagner on the phone. I remember very well the words I used: I called him an ungrateful son of a bitch—after what we had done for them and to leak the story out ahead of us and not even mention Baker's name. His response was, "You don't have a hard primary anyway, do you?" Can you imagine?

DW: Real political sensitivity there.

HB: Yes. Anyway, that was a big thing we did for the state. Keeping Oak Ridge's funding up was a major undertaking and occupied a major amount of Baker's time. And we kept it up.
Then there were always problems at Tullahoma. Tullahoma, the wind tunnel, they had a constant going problem with the Department of Labor on "racial discrimination." This was really an exercise in almost brutal bureaucratic arrogance. The problem is that Arnold Engineering Development operation was an Air Force installation that hires primarily engineers and scientists that conduct laboratory experiments at the wind tunnel. They do other research there, too. It's a research organization of high-level people that's located in Tullahoma; it's located down in Tullahoma because Senator McKellar willed that it be located there. It later had more relevance in that the Space Center at Huntsville, Alabama, was put there, I guess, by Lister Hill, because he willed it to go there, and they are reasonably close together. Tullahoma is a small country town—7,000 or 8,000 population or something like that—in rural south middle Tennessee. There's a fair black population there; I don't know what the black population is, but it wouldn't be more than 10 percent, I don't guess.

DW: Ten percent of—what's the population of Tullahoma—20,000, 25,000, somewhere around there?

HB: I don't believe it's that big. But whatever it is, they hired a disproportionate number of blacks there—for laboring jobs, but those were the positions open. Wherever they had a position and a black applied, they hired a black. The problem is they could not get black Ph.Ds in engineering and in aeronautical science to move to Tullahoma. This was operated by a company in St. Louis, and the manager there was driven almost to a nervous breakdown. They kept saying, "You've got to do this." I remember going to a meeting down there one time, and this guy from the Labor Department spoke for an hour about this. They had the union people down—this was at this level—and they had Cecil Branstetter, who was a firebrand labor lawyer from Nashville. The theme of the Labor Department's speech was something like "you are all guilty of original sin, and because none of you have personally discriminated doesn't mean you are not responsible for discrimination." The union representative challenged him and said, "You find us these people. The union is not excluding anybody." Management said, "You find us these people, we'll hire them. We've made an effort; they're not here. We can't do what isn't here." As I said, it really was bureaucratic brutality. This went on for years. Finally, I got a call from the—this would have to have been in the Ford administration, I guess, by this time, maybe late in the Ford administration—I got a call from the guy down there. His name was Bob somebody, I can't remember his last name now. He was almost in tears and he said, "I just cannot take any more of this. They're insisting we cannot get the contract unless we have more blacks. I
cannot hire any more. They do not exist for me to hire. I can't handle any more of this." So I said, "Come to Washington." I remember we were at a hearing—I don't remember what the hearing was—Baker was at a hearing that afternoon. The guy came up and I said, "You come with me," and I took him around to that back room of the hearing. It must have been a Foreign Relations Committee hearing, because it was in the Dirksen—it could have been Public Works—or whatever. Anyway, I went out and took Baker off of the hearing room and brought him back and I said, "You know what the story is down at Tullahoma. I went down, and the Department of Labor accuses these guys of original sin. They've tried; they will hire any black anybody can give them. They go down there, they recruit, they advertise, they do everything. You can't get these people to go to Tullahoma. They won't approve the contract. Bob is about to the point of a nervous breakdown." So he said, "Who is in charge of Labor?" The Assistant Secretary of Labor under the Ford administration for this was a black guy from Washington state, who was an acquaintance of mine in Republican politics, Art Fletcher. I said, "Art Fletcher is in charge of this." Baker said, "Get Fletcher over here right now. We'll resolve this now and forever." I called up and found Fletcher and gave him the command performance to come over to the Senate hearing room, Baker wants to see him immediately. And he does, he comes right in, maybe in a half an hour. We sat down—of course, Fletcher had never heard this story. We explained that to him, and he said, "That's the most incredible thing I've ever heard! I can't believe that that's right." He picked up the telephone and called; whoever was on the other end of the phone confirmed that to him. I don't remember his specific words, but he commanded them there directly to undo that, cease and desist that forever more and approve the contract. That was something that had gone on for years. There's another wonderful story—sometimes I think the anecdotes are the best way—you get a better feel from this than you do from other _____, which I missed but a lot of people reading this would understand and appreciate this from Mildred Doyle. You remember that Mildred Doyle was longtime superintendent of Knox County Schools, and a wonderful superintendent of schools. She ran things. She would also keep me straight, and she would keep Howard Baker straight.

DW: She would let you know if some of your behavior was getting a little suspect?

HB: Oh, if you were going to screw up, she would let you know. One thing I didn't want to ever ever be guilty of was displeasing Mildred, and I can assure you that Howard Baker never wanted to displease Mildred! She called me up one day—this was early, this was back in the Johnson administration, and we hadn't been here long. She said, "Hugh, honey, I've got a problem, and Howard Baker's got to fix it for me." I said, "What is it?" She said, "It's
Head Start. Those sons of bitches in Washington have cut off all my money for Head Start, and I've got these children who have to go to that here in May. We're going to have that Head Start program. I won't have it!" I said, "What do you want to do?" She said, "I want to come to Washington and get my money."

Mildred cursed like a sailor. I said, "Come on up." I told Baker that Mildred had called and he had to be there for the meeting. He said, "What's the problem?" "Well, the problem is that the Department of HEW," which is what is was then, "has cut off her money for Head Start. She wants to come to Washington, and she wants to get her money. She doesn't want to fool with any of it, and she's going to open that Head Start in May." This is another time we had a command performance, one of the few times, ever. Mildred said, "There's a little son of a bitch over in the Department of HEW named Dr. Jules Sugarman." Everybody in education knows Jules Sugarman. Mildred said, "That little son of a bitch is the one who cut my money off." I called Dr. Sugarman and we laid another command performance to be there, Baker wants him there. Mildred came up and she tells me what this is. We had the meeting scheduled; it was early, like 8:30 in the morning. We held it in Baker's office; he sat behind the desk, and there were two chairs in front and the couch. I sat in one of the chairs, and Mildred sat in one of the other chairs and Sugarman sat over on the couch, closest to Baker. There was a telephone on a table that was down on the other end of the couch. We started off that meeting by Baker saying, "Dr. Sugarman, I'm pleased that you're here. The reason I asked you to come over is because Miss Mildred tells me that she has a problem. I don't know exactly what her problem is, but if she has a problem, I have a problem that's just as big. Whatever she says about it, I'm going to tell you is absolutely correct. There is no variation. We've got to get her problem resolved. Now, Miss Mildred, you start telling what your problem is."

Mildred had a wonderful way of expressing herself. Something that really endeared me to her about herself, when she talked about education she always explained it in terms of children. She said, "I've got these little fellows down here that I've got to look after. They're going to be ready to go, and we've got to have the program for them."

Whatever it was, the first thing, she would introduce the subject by talking about children, little people that were depending on her. So she started it out that way, and she went for about five minutes, didn't stop, didn't miss a beat. I watched Sugarman; he was terribly uncomfortable, and he started easing down the couch. He finally eased all the way down the couch, and he just reached over and grabbed the phone up and started dialing without ever saying a word! He mumbles a few things into the phone, hangs it up, jumps up and says, "It's all fixed; you'll get your money!" and runs out the door. I remember, Mildred reared back and slapped her knee and said, "Lord Goddamn Almighty!" This was years later, but, as you can imagine, whatever Mildred wanted us to do, we did. We didn't
question whether it was right or wrong—she wouldn't have asked if it weren't valid. This ties into another thing: what do you do for people down there? One of the things we did was give out a lot of very expensive educations to military academies. How do you do that? Well, by law, a Congressman or a Senator literally can command a military academy to take a person on direct appointment, whether they are qualified or not. The policy that we set for that was—the first consideration is, you're not doing a kid any good by placing them in a situation where they can't perform. The military academies had other plans there, too; you had a kind of multiple choice here. If you helped them really find good students to go to the academy, you could multiply the number you placed in the academies by four, five, six, eight, or ten. Which means that you get the good ones out there and get them on a list that they could reach; sometimes we could get all of the people we selected into academy, lots of them. I had an absolutely wonderful person who did this for me; her name was Henriette Stagmeier. Henriette came from an academic background; she had a Master's in something, her father was the head of romance language, I believe, at the University of Illinois at Champagne. She knew the process and spent a lot of time trying to find good kids to put into this program. There's a kind of hierarchy of things that you do for these kids in the way to make these selections. SATs and GPAs, grade point averages, are important, they're essential; that's where you start with it. Then there's another level of recommendations. Another thing is that if they had applied to a Congressman or another Senator, we dropped them, because we had our own system that put them in and doubling up wasn't quite fair. If they had good grade points and they had good SATs and they got good recommendations from their school and the Republican county chairman also sent a letter, they were in good shape. You didn't let the Republican chairman's letter take precedence over the other stuff because, again, making it on that basis does nobody any good. Sometimes they would have that, sometimes they wouldn't, but she culled out really good people. She knew what the threshold was, had a wonderful association also with the services. We put a bunch of kids in. She came in one day with one, and she said, "This is a very troubling application. This kid has everything going for him except he just has miserable SATs. He has a good grade point average, he was captain of the basketball team, he was president of the Re-elect Howard Baker club at Doyle High School. He has all of these letters from all of these people down there that you know. They attest to what a good guy he is. He's an orphan who is being raised by an old-maid aunt, and he's absolutely devoted to her." Just on and on. "But I'll never get it by the Air Force." Also, one of the letters was from Mildred Doyle, which was a flag. I said, "We'll really be better off cutting our loss now, even though it will be a great disappointment to him and all those people, than by encouraging him up to some place and then having to drop out." It was hardly any time
after she sent that letter until I get this call from Mildred. I knew what it was when I picked up the phone; she said, "Hugh, what in the hell are you doing up there?" I said, "What do you mean?" She got into this case about this kid at Doyle High School; she said, "That is the best kid I've ever seen. I don't know why he didn't make a good grade on the SAT. But, hell, he's got an A average. The kid is absolutely a perfect person for this. He doesn't have money to go to college, he's an orphan. An old-maid aunt has raised him. He is the nicest, most considerate, loving person to his aunt that you've ever seen in your life. It isn't right! I want you to give him that appointment!" I said, "It'll be done." You didn't argue with her. I told Henriette to go ahead and process it and send the letter out. The way this worked was when you got it all together, you would have a meeting with Baker. Everything would be laid out and whatever there was that he needed to know about, you told him. I don't think there was ever a case he didn't approve, without question, what we did. But if there were any stories there, we told him what they were. And we told him about this one. We said, "Here's one that's suspect." We had never brought any up suspect, because we had never had one turned down. He said, "What will they do when we send it over there?" He was going to sign it anyway. We decided then to call the Air Force liaison in. We called the colonel in and I really put it to him; I said, "We've recruited football players for you. We've never had an application from our office that was ever turned down. We give you really good, first-class people; there's never been anybody we've ever sent to you that ever flunked out. Here, we've got a problem. I'm going to ask you to take this kid; if he doesn't make it, he won't make it. But we've got a problem." He said, "All right," so they took him. The story was, of course, he made the dean's list and was an excellent student—he's probably an Air Force general somewhere by now.

DW: Hugh, it's 12:00, and we're at the end of the tape. This is a good place to stop for today.