

Interview with Paul Johnson, former governor of Mississippi (1963-67),
March 26, 1974, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries, transcribed
by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: Change in economics did?

Johnson: It's always a factor. Oh and a great economy.

They didn't need much. But when the big industry began to move in here
they began to make a goodly--they began working at these plants. Their
wives worked on the farm. Or vice versa. They came in and worked at
the plants, too. Had two pay checks coming. 40 acres. A good garden.
They began to buy a deep freeze. A lot of the facilities of life. See
how good it was. It had an awful lot to do with the picking up of the
black race. Making them take their place in the life of the state.
They became more responsible, more ambitious when they acquired things.
And this is--I think most of it .

Walter De Vries: When did those changes really start?

Johnson: They started. . . right after the war. In the 40s.

W.D.V.: But did they accelerate at all in the last 25 years? In any
period was there more acceleration than in other years?

Johnson: Yes, I'd say there was a good bit of acceleration of the
industrial picture in Hugh White's second administration. He had an
awful lot of bond issues that were passed. Most of your industry then
was a cheap sweat type. Sweat shops and stuff like that. And it moved
out into the blue chip area about eight or ten years later. ~~Name of~~

~~a company,~~ International Paper, Gaylord, Crown Zellerbach, Scott,
Wayne
Warehouser, , Tennessee. Then you

had a lot of other industry. Big ship yard, about 18,000
workers. Then other industry became interested in this *state* .

Most of it came from. . . I guess the ground that was laid by Inter-

national Paper. It was the beginning.

J.B.: How significant in your administration do you consider the creation of the R&D Center?

Johnson: ~~[The idea]~~ *Very*

J.B.: That was the beginning in effect of the modern industrialization period?

Johnson: We introduced a bill to have Stanford Research Center make a study here in the state and write us a report telling us how it should be set up. And we gave them a background as to the manner in which it should be set up and they wrote the report in that . That's all we had to do with it. We paid for that study and as soon as the study was completed we began to get a staff together and the legislature organized the research programs. That was the beginning of it. That was the beginning of things happening in the state that were planned happenings. Before that things had just happened.

They did a good job of organizing a real staff. The Smith boy did a good job of setting up educational television. I guess that was really the main effort that took place in the state as far as industrial code was concerned. They brought it in here. And they went after the big stuff, more reputable industry. And we got rid of as much sweat shop operation as we could. I'd say that was probably the beginning of our planned program.

J.B.: If the R&D Center and its resources had not been here to call upon--

Johnson: We'd be right where we were.

J.B.: Do you think there would have been any chance at all, say, of Litton building that ship yard?

Johnson: They came up here and ~~came up here~~ and talked

with me about it, ship yard. And he wanted to send--he was sending some people from California to make a study of these ship yards that were being built in Rotterdam and, it wasn't Osaka but someplace in Japan. There were two of them in the world and he wanted to build one here. And they sent a group to each one of them to study it for about a year. Then they came back and told *me* what they had found and how they figured that we should go about it. We called all the legislature together. Got them out at the mansion and brought everybody in on the program. And they passed the thing without a dissenting vote. Bond issue. And with the state's financial strength behind that sort of dealings. . . . Terrible risk.

J.B.: How did you feel about taking that risk at the time?

Johnson: I figured it was do it or else leave it like it was. Didn't want to leave it like it was.

J.B.: Is that basically a unionized facility?

Johnson: Yeah. All of it is. Every man that works there is in a union.

J.B.: Did that create much concern among the sort of more traditional business people in your state?

Johnson: Some it did, but not enough to fight over. But I tried to counteract it by showing them that to keep the unions from taking this whole state over, the best thing to do was to isolate them in the *goula* Pascagoula area. And all this big industry would be playing down there and they would organize. We wouldn't have any problems elsewhere. And they bought that. Of course that was not true, but it made a good story. And they bought it. Since then they've had many unions that have organized. *They're doing well.* ~~It's not~~ The state's no worse off. Much better off. The workers are much better off.

J.B.: How is organized labor regarded as a political force now in

Mississippi in compared with 15 years ago?

Johnson: It's not regarded very highly ~~(as a / is a)~~ strong political force. They don't stick together. Like labor everywhere else, here or Indiana, everywhere you go. They don't vote as a bloc. They try to get them to.

J.B.: A state wide candidate anymore, would he be just as happy without an endorsement of organized labor?

Johnson: Yeah, I think, and would be better off to have their support but none at all have survived ? candidacy. Quietly support.

J.B.: Did the R&D Center ~~[unclear]~~ succeed?

Johnson: Yes.

J.B.: Has it done what you thought it was going to do?

Johnson: Well, it has to a great extent. But the people who followed me in office, they were good people and I think they were probably doing the best they could do, but they seemed to let the R&D Center aggravate them because they were a little jealous of it. I think this A&M board, to some extent, should have been given a much less role and most of the impact put on the R&D. Because it's brought back a hell of a lot of jealousy on part of the governors of the state in the industrial group out here. We started off paying ~~(around \$135,000)~~ and it just horrified the people in the state, at ole Miss and Southern, Mississippi State, that there would be someone drawing a larger salary than they were. And of course the governor only drew \$25,000 salary.

. They've been jealous of Kenneth White and they've hurt ~~the R & D~~ in the effort a great deal. That's my own personal opinion.

J.B.: Because of the power of the board? ~~the R&D Center.~~

Johnson: We've got a lot of cultural background out there. They're a little isolated from the rest of the state employees. They run things

as they see 'em. They [search out] projects. They work on them, they develop them, and they bring in industry. Somebody'll say in the paper about the good job they've been doing then this crowd down here gets to hollering, . ~~And that is bad~~

J.B.: But you consider the center one of the most important things of your administration?

Johnson: Yes, I think it was very important.

J.B.: Is there anything else you would cite?

Johnson: Well, I think really the vocational and technical training *program for* the state was the most important. Taught people how to do things. White and black learned to, oh, bind books. It seems like a menial task, but they became excellent welders. This fellow Carter down there at the ~~Avondale~~ ship yard would only have people who graduated out of the penitentiary. They were good. . They could go so far. But when it came to laying out an arc or an angle, then they were lost because they had no basic training. We started a basic training program out there. Reading, writing and arithmetic, stuff like that. *they took* that for a year or two. Gave them a foundation to build on. And turned out some of your finest welders in the country. Some of them are *now* working in New York and in the state, too. California. Designing portraits in iron, stuff like that. Doing excellent work. And they could come out from the penitentiary and get a good job and going to be a good citizen. In the past they'd come out of the state penitentiary and rob some place before they got home. It rehabilitated the people here an awful lot. In the penitentiary.

J.B.: Governor, you were governor during the period that Lyndon Johnson was president and his various so-called Great Society programs were passing

Vocational Education Act. Higher Facilities Act. Poverty program and a number of other programs that brought a lot of money into this state and into all the southern states and other states as well. What do you think was the impact of those programs and how do you assess them as far as development of this state was concerned?

Johnson: It would be hard to say because most of that money was not well spent. It was a give-away, a hand out program and it was given to people who didn't use it to further themselves, help themselves. Well, they did help themselves. They didn't help other people. I think a lot of it was wasted really. The program was not well planned or properly supervised. That was my objection and I don't see that it did a whole lot of good. You know, basic, strong good. This VISTA program, stuff like that is what you've got.

J.B.: Are you referring now primarily to the OEO programs, the anti-poverty programs?

Johnson: No, I think the anti-poverty programs did a lot of good things in the state. The first one, I helped organize. Didn't organize, but I helped get it ~~through~~ ^{through}. Sargent Shriver, I met him in Milwaukee and we went to see the president about opening the Star program ~~that~~ ^{with} the Catholic church.

I think the program, by and large, was a good program. Good for the state. It put a lot of people to work. A lot of them were trained. They did an awful lot for the manpower program. Most of them, though, are not good programs because they were not well planned. The money was wasted, thrown away. That's my only objection to it.

J.B.: Do you expect that the two Democratic parties in Mississippi will get together before 1976?

Johnson: I doubt if they will. I really doubt it. I wish they would, but I doubt if they'll get together.

W.D.V.: Why is that?

Johnson: Well because the people that they have running the regular group, they don't know how to work out a program to get together. They're up there, land-locked I guess you'd call it, and they want to stay where they are. And they're going to stay where they are as long as they can. That's something that's going to take some unselfishness, for your regulars and for your other group as well. It can be worked out.

W.D.V.: ~~[Unclear.]~~ *How will it be worked out?*

Johnson: Well, there are several people who can work it out if they would. But most of them don't want to have anything to do with it. Just want to leave it alone. Go ahead and attend to their business.

J.B.: How do you account for the failure of the Mississippi Republican party to elect, say, more legislators? Do you think this is something that will be coming in the future or not, in view of the fact that they run very well in presidential elections?

Johnson: I think they could, but people in this state, the ordinary man *is independent.* . Politics is nonpartisan in Mississippi. They just pick out what they think is the best man. The fact that he's a Muslim doesn't mean a thing in the world to them. ~~[static]~~

J.B.: The last book that was written on southern politics, by V. O. Key, covers the period ^{up until} ~~from~~ 1948. And he said that if you wanted to understand the politics of Mississippi you had to understand the politics of race. Is that still true?

Johnson: *No.*

J.B.: What happened?

Johnson: ~~[First part unclear.]~~

I don't think race is an issue

that will get you any votes. It doesn't amount to anything.

J.B.: You mean now.

Johnson: Well, yes, I would say now.

J.B.: But since 1948, weren't there elections where it was the critical issue, the underlying issue?

Johnson: No, I don't think so, really. I really don't. ~~[Conversation at next table drowns out rest of answer.]~~

J.B.: Is it important today?

Johnson: Yes, I think it is. I think it's important today as it's always been. ~~(S)~~ It's just been made important by national bureaucrats in Washington. ~~(Static.)~~ They're the group that makes the decisions in Washington. I know a lot of people think the Senators and a few people in Congress do, but that's not true. ~~(The bureaucrats do.)~~

Isn't he kind of touchy?

W.D.V.: I'm interviewing you, governor. [Laughter.] We found that in HEW--

Johnson: And I think that they're overdoing it, because they are doing so much more for your black race than they are for the white race. And they're causing a great deal of resentment with the white race.

W.D.V.: Do you see that resentment building?

Johnson: I sure do.

W.D.V.: You don't see it abating?

Johnson: I see it building everyday.

W.D.V.: Well, if you see it building that would suggest that race is going to be more important in the future.

Johnson: Well, that's not race as such.

W.D.V.: Is it a class thing? Economic class?

Johnson: That's right. It's something that if left alone, it's something that can be good. But if you pit one against the other, then you're beginning to make it bad. But I see that building everyday.

W.D.V.: You mean the black lower economic class receiving more benefits than the white lower economic class?

Johnson: Yes.

W.D.V.: Right, and that's going to build the sense of *resentment* ?

Johnson: I see it all the time. And one reason I feel that way about it is because, why I'm so hedgy about it, sensitive, it was my duty to put down the Ku Klux Klan. See they came about during the administration. That's what my biggest *fight?* *It* was the ~~Kl~~ Klan. And the hard part about it was that 100 years ago governor Stone had the same trouble with the same people in the same counties. Just ~~like~~ *that* ~~which~~ showed me that in those particular counties we hadn't made too much progress.

W.D.V.: You mean history had repeated itself after 100 years?

Johnson: Governor Stone was governor right after the Civil War.

J.B.: Do you see the potential of the Klan rebuilding?

Johnson: Yes. And this is the kind of thing that can give it that *[push]*. I think they are laying low now. ~~[Rest unclear.]~~

J.B.: What is the sort of thing that tends to build this frustration?

Johnson: Well, I think paying them pretty high salaries, compared to what they have to do. Drive a bunch of kids to school. Bring their kids back home. They pay them \$4- or \$500 a month, which is a good salary and they don't have to work the rest of the day. I think the food stamps. They're worth maybe \$60 a week. 240 worth of stamps. Go in there and buy the best things in the store. A lot of them do. And these are the kinds of things that cause people to gripe and raise hell about it. I may be all wrong, but I tell you what I see. And the

Klu Klux. . . . And I had to fight a lot of my own support.

I did through J. Edgar Hoover's help. ~~[He helped me train his people?]~~

J.B.: Would you have done that differently now?

Johnson: I would have had to.

J.B.: How would it differ?

Johnson: Hoover's gone. But he gave me seven men at the FBI school. And I trained the investigators in the state to get them active in infiltrating all these klaverns. Have people at the meetings, get all their names, their backgrounds, their friends. And in doing so, break them up.

W.D.V.: Would you have handled the Ku Klux Klan or the general racial relations any differently than you did during that period?

Johnson: I don't know. I don't think I would. It was just one of these mailed ~~at~~ fist type operations. They were hard people. They were dangerous people. A lot of them were ignorant people. And when they ~~run out~~ of something ~~]~~ don't know anything to do but start fighting. That type of person. But you have more of them here in the state and they killed several people.

J.B.: Did you handle it differently than, say, Ross Barnett would have or John Bell Williams?

Johnson: ~~[Answer unclear.]~~

J.B.: Governor, those people, same people are still in the state. Have their attitudes changed?

Johnson: Some of them have. Most of them have not. They still don't have the education that they ought to have, the knowledge of things that would help it change.

J.B.: How about their children? Their children are now going to, if

they're not going to private schools, they're going to integrated schools I believe almost anywhere in Mississippi. Is that changing their attitudes?

Johnson: Well, yes, among the children it has. It's changed. But among the members themselves it hasn't changed. But in Natchez, ~~Alb~~ ~~----- county~~, Franklin county, ~~----- county~~, Jones county, Greenville county *and the* county down below Greenville, they have some klaverns. Pike county, Lawrence county. Yazoo county. Well, not Yazoo. They got their straight. But those are the counties where they had trouble, in the state. And they're the same ones that Stone had trouble with.

J.B.: Are those counties getting much in the way of new industry?

Johnson: Yes they have. The odd thing about it is that your Klan really started gaining interest at Adams county. They had the big International Paper plant there. What started the fuss in Adams ~~(?)~~ county was the call for a break down of the seniority system. In other words, they put a lot of Negroes in responsible jobs.

~~But~~ *a* fellow that's working against a Negro is going to take a different attitude and he's going to get mad because of a Negro over him. And that brought about a lot of feeling down there.

This caused a lot of frustration in the plant. They vented the feeling that they had by getting out and killing several people.

[static]

that seniority system, merging that system, black and white

[static]

That was the first we heard of it. Then I called in all these other plants and told the heads of them what was going on *at* the other plant, and about the seniority system and that they should do it in a

different way. ~~But~~ But they weren't able to do it. The last big strike I think we had was at Masonite. And the Klu Klux Klan got in with the labor union ~~and~~ . As a matter of fact a lot of the labor union men were klansmen. And they just kept the ~~thing~~ thing going all the time. Didn't simplify. ~~Didn't~~ Didn't settle the strike anyway. Things really got hairy down there.

J.B.: Did you receive threats on yourself frequently?

Johnson: Yeah, everyday.

J.B.: How did you feel about it?

Johnson: Every night.

J.B.: How did you feel about it?

Johnson: I didn't worry too much. It's always been my experience that the fellow that does all this talking you don't have to worry about. ~~[It's the dude in glasses sitting over]~~ there in the corner ~~[that you have to worry about.]~~

J.B.: What do you think would have to happen for the Democrats to carry Mississippi again in a presidential election?

Johnson: Well I think that an ~~acceptable~~ candidate would be the first thing to get. That would be the only opportunity, would be to get somebody that's acceptable.

J.B.: Who would be acceptable?

Johnson: I don't know. Of the group that's thinking about it now, I'd say Jackson would be acceptable. He's a pretty strong man. ~~[Rest drowned out by lawnmower.]~~ I don't know any others. But I think Jackson would have the opportunity to carry the state. ~~[Unclear.]~~

J.B.: Is Wallace still the key in '76? Whatever he decides to do.

Johnson: I don't know. They always said that he was. But I've never seen it. ~~[unclear.]~~

J.B.: If he went for the nomination of the Democrats in this state would you go with him?

~~Johnson: [Unclear.]~~

J.B.: ~~If he goes as an American independent.~~

~~Johnson: [Unclear.]~~

~~J.B.:~~ He carried the state in '68 as a third party candidate. If he were to run again as a third party candidate in '76 would he carry Mississippi again?

Johnson: It would depend on who's running. ~~If you give people a chance to somebody [static]~~

A lot of people like him.

I don't see that they have that much confidence in him.

J.B.: Do you think the '68 vote here was basically a protest vote?

Johnson: I think a lot of it was. That's just my opinion, but that's what I think.

J.B.: If he were to campaign actively for the Democratic ticket in '76 but were not on the ticket himself would that be a decisive factor, in your opinion?

Johnson: Decisive in what way?

J.B.: Decisive in carrying the state of Mississippi for the Democrats. You think it would depend upon who's on the ticket?

Johnson: ~~[Unclear.]~~ Yes

W.D.V.: That's the common view.

Johnson: That's right.

W.D.V.: Where does it come from? That somehow whatever he does turns the key here.

~~Johnson: [Unclear.]~~

~~W.D.V.:~~ Well when you talk to Democratic politicians they tell you the

same thing. They tell you that whatever Wallace decides to do in '76 will have a real impact on ~~Mississippi~~.

Johnson: Right, but they don't know.

W.D.V.: But that's what they tell you. ~~[There is a steady buzz, loud, in the background.]~~

Johnson: They just don't know.

W.D.V.: You mean they're all talking to each other?

Johnson: I don't know where they get their information.

J.B.: Does Sen Eastland still remain as the dominant force in Mississippi politics?

Johnson: Well, he is a strong force in the state, yeah. Very strong.

J.B.: We've been told that he still have a lot of influence in working through county supervisors, for example.

Johnson: That's right.

J.B.: How does that work? Is he just considered by the supervisors as someone they turn to for leadership and does he look out for their interests in Washington so to speak and vice versa? If you were running again for governor and you could get the support of a single group in the state, who would it be? In terms of political effectiveness?

W.D.V.: You mean today?

J.B.: Right, today.

Johnson: I don't know. Have no idea.

J.B.: Would the supervisors, say, be an effective political force state wide?

Johnson: ~~[Unclear.]~~ They're effective, but only in an off year election. They're looking after themselves the year that they run.

~~J.B.: Do they serve four year terms?~~

~~Johnson: [Unclear.]~~

J.B.: And they run. . . they don't run at the same time as the governor.

Johnson: Yes.

J.B.: Oh, they do.

W.D.V.: *Along with the* state legislature and all . . .

Johnson: That's the reason there's a strong senatorial campaign, which is an off year election--

J.B.: I see.

W.D.V.: Not in a gubernatorial.

J.B.: Where do you see the Republican party heading in Mississippi?

Johnson: Where do I think it's headed?

J.B.: Yes sir.

Johnson: I think they made *progress* . I think it's real slow . I don't think they'll be too strong a force. ~~[Rest of answer is unclear.]~~

J.B.: So you don't think Watergate has particularly hurt Nixon in Mississippi?

Johnson: Yes, I think ~~[End of side of tape.]~~

I don't think. . . . Lord knows there's always room for change. And change is good if it's not for just change. But I think education is the answer to a lot of the ills this state has. I'd like to see the educational programs changed in the state. ~~[Static for about 30 seconds of the tape.]~~ My father saw that in 1940 when they passed this free school book law. And these old people, they can't read or write but their children, who receive the benefits out of that law . . .

among the niggers, poor whites, the people of that sort. They had what they call a school book trust back in those days. One set of school books cost a bale of cotton. That was kind of expensive, . I know the

year after we passed that bill there were 31,000 new children in school.

W.D.V.: ~~That was after Huey Long~~ .

Johnson: ~~[Unclear.]~~

W.D.V.: ~~[Something about that being the same thing Long did.]~~

J.B.: Was that all grades?

Johnson: Yeah, one through twelve.

J.B.: Do you think the general public in Mississippi has basically accepted school desegregation?

Johnson: Well, I think so. ~~[Static.]~~

J.B.: I didn't hear the last thing you said.

Johnson: ~~[In a sense they accepted.]~~

J.B.: Did that come as a surprise to you?

Johnson: What?

J.B.: That level of acceptance. Considering the resistance, what it was.

Johnson: No, it hasn't been a surprise because of the programs [these give away programs seem like a fine thing.] It hasn't bothered me at all. I've been to school with them. I've never found them any different from anybody else. It's been accepted in Mississippi I know more than it has anywhere else in the country. And the programs have been adhered to much better than anywhere else. That's the reason I know it is accepted. If it wasn't accepted there would be a big racket about it.

J.B.: How do you explain that acceptance in view of the fact that, in a sense, there appeared to be more opposition in Mississippi than any place else?

Johnson: Well, that was at the beginning. The people just took the idea that if the federal government could tell the people what they had to do and get by with it in the school program--which always had belonged

to the people, people don't feel that it's their school program anymore. And that if ~~it~~ took a federal judge and overturn everything that he said, that they wouldn't have much chance.

. And that's what they did. That helped more to cause the people, well, to accept it, oh, partially, more than anything else.

J.B.: There are some people who think that if the federal pressure were eased back enough that things in Mississippi would sort of revert back to what they were. How do you feel about that?

Johnson: They might to a certain extent, but I don't think it would altogether. Sure don't.

J.B.: What has been the effect of the Voting Rights Act in Mississippi? I mean, besides registering a lot of blacks, but what has been the effect of that?

Johnson: There hasn't been too much effect. You've got a few people on the local level that have been voted into office, like mayor, justice of the peace, supervisor, or maybe a member of the legislature. But you haven't had any real show of force on the part of the black voter. They voted for the white man all the time. And, well, it's kind of like Martin King said, you just can't organize the Mississippi nigger ~~[Negra?]~~. He's about right. But they just will not vote for a Negra because he's Negro. He's got to have a lot of ability. He's got to have a lot of honesty about him. He's got to show sincerity and concern for his fellow man. The Negro is much smarter than people are giving him credit for being for a long time. Long time before they ever heard of civil rights or anything else, he's always been able to outsmart the white man. Lots of our people, particularly the politicians, haven't seen that. Haven't seen that at all. They look at a Negro like he's some strange creature. Half of them are scared of him. That's particularly true in the larger

cities. You had several of them *involved* in gangland slayings, stuff like that. But the days of the old speakeasies era. Lots of them were hit [X] But you don't have that kind of trouble anymore in this area. But your Voters Right haven't made all that much difference sofaras electing anybody to office. It has made a difference in helping to build the Negro race, a sense of pride, sense of accomplishment, sense of superiority to a certain extent. All that has been pushed by the Voters Rights Bill. We found that. For a long time it will stay. That has been the effect of it.

J.B.: Has it had any effect on the style of campaigning? For whites, politicians.

Johnson: Yes it has. It has changed the manner in which they take, they had many ~~haven't any?~~ appeal to prejudice. That sort of thing. That's the only change that I've seen.

W.D.V.: How would you compare your administration against the two that came after you and the three or four before you. Was there anything different, distinctive to you about your administration? You mentioned the R&D and vocational education, but was there anything else?

Johnson: Oh, there were a lot of things.

W.D.V.: Lot of things.

Johnson: The main thing was legalizing whiskey in this state. That was a big change in this state. - - a big change. Big change toward the law, respect for it. *It cut out a lot of graft,* corruption, disregard for the law, things of that kind. That was a big--and this brought about \$24 million into education. That was a big change. The state penitentiary was a tremendous change. We had no trouble at all there.

W.D.V.: Did you change the trustee system? What did you change about the penitentiary?

Johnson: Well, we changed the manner of treatment of the prisoners. They didn't have a lot of degrading activity toward the prisoners. We had ~~added~~ a trustee system that. . . work release programs that helped. We changed their style of dress. Did away with all these old stripes and stuff like that. Gave them a little confidence people that they were dealing with. Gave them a little vocational and technical training. We had new crops, ~~crops~~. We did away with all this manual labor on crops. Bought machines, picking machines, things like that that are labor saving devices. The people were happy. Their diets was changed, lot of the starch. That sort of stuff.

We gave them more protein, more beef, milk.

All that kind of diet. That had a lot to do with it. We didn't walk them to the fields. Put them on trucks. Stuff like that. Saves about an hour and we had better ~~[static] 1,800~~ ^{than 1,800} ~~10,000~~ workers so it saves about 2,000 hours a day. They'd been walking with chains to the fields.

~~[Unclear.]~~

W.D.V.: Anything you would have done differently?

Johnson: No, not that I know of. We changed everything we could think of to change.

J.B.: What was the biggest obstacle you had to overcome in legalizing liquor?

Johnson: The hypocrisy of people.

J.B.: How did you overcome it?

Johnson: By just taking the bull by the horns. Telling them about what we had been doing. Shaming them. That sort of thing.

J.B.: I think there was a raid at a country club when you were present. . .

Johnson: That had nothing to do with it.

J.B.: That's frequently cited as a

Johnson: But they were going to pass it ~~and a lot of your whigs~~ ~~[?]~~

~~around Jackson thought that raiding the country club would [unclear]~~

. That wasn't the real reason.

J.B.: You already had the votes, in effect.

Johnson: Yeah.

J.B.: Was the immediate thing in convincing the legislature to go along a revenue measure?

Johnson: Ahh, no, I don't think it was that. I think they were just tired of us being right and 48 other states wrong. You know.

J.B.: Governor, I'm sure you know that in a lot of other southern states there's always been a lot of this "Thank god for Mississippi" syndrome.

Do you think that is still true and how do Mississippians take it?

Take offense at that in the past?

Johnson: No, they haven't taken offense at it. I don't think it's very true. I don't think you find very many people even pay any attention to it.

J.B.: Has there been a change in the feeling of people about this state? Is there more pride and less defensiveness?

Johnson: Yeah, I think there is. I think there is. More pride. And lots of the defense — — — was really ^{an} offense.

[laughter.]

~~welfare of the people.~~ I think that the people, really, by and large, want less industrial growth. They are proud of what they have. The clean streams and the forest and animals and all that sort of thing. And they're beginning to see that some of these ecologists, they've got something. At least I. . . from what I hear from them, ~~that's what I~~

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W.D.V.: Do you do a lot of traveling around the state?

Johnson: I do. [~~Unclear~~]

W.D.V.: How are you received?

Johnson: [~~Unclear.~~] *Very well.*

W.D.V.: Are you received better and better the longer you're out of--

J.B.: At the end of the interview Governor Johnson said he ran for governor all his life and after he finally . . . and now he wonders why the hell he ran so hard for it. That his regrets, his one regret about being governor is he felt he lost his children. Their companionship, being with them, doing things for them. Governor Johnson said that from the time he was 14 he campaigned with his father, who was governor, and made speeches all over the state.

[End of interview.]