

INTERVIEW WITH

Len B. Jordan

by

Maclyn P. Burg
Oral Historian

on

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for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
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This is an interview being taped with Mr. Len B. Jordan in Mr. Jordan's home in Boise, Idaho on August 18th, 1975. Present for the interview, Mr. Jordan, Mrs. Jordan and Dr. Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: Mr. Jordan, could we start by asking when and where you were born?

MR. JORDAN: I was born, May 15th, 1899, in Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

DR. BURG: Now were you educated in the state of Utah?

MR. JORDAN: No. My parents came to Oregon when I was two years old. So I haven't any memory of Utah, because I was Oregon educated and stayed in Oregon until we came to Idaho.

DR. BURG: Did your family settle near Eugene?

MR. JORDAN: No. We came from Wallowa County up in the northeast corner of the state. Enterprise--my parents are buried at Enterprise and I have a brother living there now. So that was our home base.

DR. BURG: So for you education was there, up in that--

MR. JORDAN: Yes in the high school, in the high school at Enterprise. From there to the University of Oregon after World War I. I was in World War I.



BURG: Oh, you served in that war.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: I see. In what branch, may I ask?

JORDAN: Infantry. Machine gun battalion.

BURG: Weren't you lucky, Mr. Jordan, to be in that kind of an outfit and have all of that fun? You went overseas, did you?

JORDAN: No, I didn't get overseas.



BURG: You were young enough so that you didn't go.

JORDAN: Yes, I didn't get overseas.

BURG: Well that was a fortunate thing, given the nature of that war. Now after the war was over, no veteran's benefits for you gentlemen. No educational benefits.

JORDAN: No. But, Oregon was good by standards in those days. Veterans got twenty-five dollars a month as long as they stayed in college and made their grades; so that helped.

BURG: And you started at the University of Oregon right after the war.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: In what kind of a course?

JORDAN: Business and economics.



BURG: And stayed with that then through the full four years?

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: You were not married during your educational--

JORDAN: No. We celebrated our fiftieth anniversary. We were married in 1924. I graduated from the university in '23.

BURG: What did you do when you'd finished at the university?

JORDAN: We were in Portland a couple of years. I was working there as a cost accountant, and then we came to eastern Oregon and got into ranching, got into ranching just before the Depression.

BURG: Up in that same area of the country where you'd come from.

JORDAN: Same area, yes.

BURG: And your wife, is she also from that part of the--

JORDAN: She's from Hood River.

BURG: From Hood River.

JORDAN: Her home was in Hood River.

BURG: On the Columbia River.

JORDAN: Her parents lived in Hood River.

BURG: So she was accustomed to that kind of country and that kind of life. What did the Depression do to the ranch?

JORDAN: We didn't go through the wringer like some of them did simply because we were solvent. A lot of people were in so deep the banks had to stay with them. We weren't in quite so deep. I know that the banker said to me one time, and I think it was 1929, he said, "What are you going to do with this loan this fall?"



"Well," we said, "we'll retire part of it and we'll have to get a renewal on part of it."

And he said, "I've got bad news." He said, "We just can't make any renewals even after reduction in loans." He said, "The examiners are putting the heat on us so that we have got to liquidate where we can liquidate, because we're in so deep with some people that we can't liquidate--we've got to collect where we can." So this seemed like a hardship at the time, but I'm grateful to them because we were able to sell out and pay everybody off and had a little money left.

BURG: He told you that before October of '29.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: And were you able to sell before the bottom fell out?

JORDAN: Yes, we did, and after that we couldn't have, probably.

BURG: I don't think so.

JORDAN: No.



BURG: How fortunate you were. October the 28th, I think.

JORDAN: That's when--

BURG: That she just went completely.

JORDAN: That's right.

BURG: Well, that was an unusual thing. That man, without meaning to, saved your--

JORDAN: Yes, that's right and I worked then. I worked two years as foreman for a ranch, a big operator over in eastern Oregon on the Snake River and then came a chance that a Portland bank had too much money loaned on an outfit on the Idaho side of the Snake River, and they made us a proposition that we would go in there and get them their money. They didn't require much down payment because they couldn't run a big outfit from a bank three hundred miles away. So we went in there. We spent eleven years on the Snake River and paid the bank in full.

BURG: They made that offer to you and you bought it.

JORDAN: Yes. We had a partner for the first two or three



years, an older man and he wanted to get out of it, so we were alone finally to pay it out and sell it out, because we were so remote in there on the middle Snake that we had no roads, no schools. My wife taught our children until they were ready for high school. We had a telephone line just between the ranchers and hooked to White Bird, Idaho the central office. And we had boat service out of Lewiston where we got our groceries and our mail.



BURG: Brought it up the river.

JORDAN: Yes. So we were in there until 1943. From '32 to '43 we were in there.

BURG: Running cattle.

JORDAN: No, sheep. That was sheep country because it was steep. Very steep, very steep.

BURG: Oh. Yes, yes. I was trying to visualize where up that canyon it would open up and you would be able to run cattle. I couldn't picture it.

JORDAN: Well there are cattle ranches up there, but our

was very steep range and we ran sheep.

BURG: How many head?

JORDAN: Oh, we had around 3,000 head.

BURG: And just the two of you? Or did you have--

JORDAN: Oh, we had herders. We had help, of course, we had to hire help, yes. But, show him, Grace.

MRS. JORDAN: This is the kind of range it was. (Mrs. Jordan had several pictures.)

BURG: Oh, yes.

MRS. JORDAN: Now, that's the trail up there.

BURG: Good Lord.

JORDAN: Suicide Point.

BURG: Mrs. Jordan was showing me a photograph of that canyon, rugged lava outcrops. Oh, boy. Yes, you'd need help. If nothing else a fire siren to attract their attention. Now the war was on. Was that an aid to you in selling out?



JORDAN: No, it was a hindrance in a way because it was so difficult to get able-bodied men who understood livestock. They were drafting our sheep herders, mind you. Because they were able-bodied and they were rugged, tough guys. I know I went one time to appeal to the employment service and I said, "We're desperate for help."

"Well," he said, "I think you'll have to get a one-armed sheep herder; you'll have to get a sheep herder with one leg or something." Well this is pretty rough country you know. You had to have able-bodied people.

BURG: And really too rugged to take on high school age kids.

JORDAN: Oh, no you couldn't.

BURG: They could only help you during the summer.

JORDAN: Yes. And it was remote. We used some Basque help. They're the most reliable because they don't mind the isolation, you know.

BURG: Yes. They seem to do well in that kind of work.



JORDAN: They're instinctively good, yes.

BURG: Was it down in California, I think, you find many of them.

JORDAN: Well, Boise is one of the big Basque centers of the United States. And you know they're very thrifty and all these banks have a Basque vice-president. You bet. You know, because they're good people. They're wealthy, the ones that have stayed. Some are big operators.



BURG: Excellent financial managers.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Well when you had sold it, what was the next move for you?

JORDAN: I went out to Grangeville because that seemed to be a good town of about 3,000--Grangeville, Idaho. Had a good high school and we wanted to get our kids into high school and build a home there. Just finished building that home when they bombed Pearl Harbor. I built it before we sold the ranch, you see. We kept the ranch two years after

I'd moved the family out. But I got a chance to sell it, and so we sold it and I bought an insurance and real estate business and a wheat and pea farm out there on the Camas Prairie and we operated there for several years until 1947. I'd been active in the chamber of commerce and in civic work and I was breaking in to a new field of work. Well a man came through one time from the governor's office and he joined a group of us who were having coffee. He was a Democrat and he says, "Where can we spend some money up here on these roads that'll get us some votes, the most votes?"

After he left, I said, "Was he joking?"

And they said, "No. He wasn't joking."

And I said, "Well that's ridiculous. Is that the way they do?" I'd come from Oregon, you know, and I said, "Is that the way they do here in Idaho?"

"Well, yes, what's wrong with that?"

I said, "Well what's right about it?"

Well they said, "You keep talking that way and we'll send you to the legislature." So I ran and I made it. I was elected out of that Democrat county as a Republican. But I had one term in the legislature and I was defeated. I was defeated for re-election.



BURG: They hadn't redistricted or anything?

JORDAN: No. Same thing, same place. We got into a quite a row there. This was a time when they were doing away with the one-room school houses and they were consolidating schools to make a better education opportunity for the youngsters. My wife's Phi Beta Kappa; I'm Phi Beta Kappa; we believe in quality education. And so I was right out in the lead trying to get rid of these one-room school houses and bring these kids in where we'd give them a better opportunity in central school, you know. But that didn't sit well with some people-- they thought they were losing something of their heritage to give up those one-room schools.



BURG: So it wasn't on the grounds of expense, but rather on local economy.

JORDAN: Local economy, and it was quite a strong Catholic county, and they had nuns teaching in public schools, and they wanted to keep that, and when they came to town into public schools, that wasn't possible. And so this entered into it. Anyway, I didn't make it back and so I talked to my wife and I said, "Well, I'd have been quite happy to have

served three or four terms in the legislature, but I can't do that, but I think I'm right, so I think I'll just take our merchandise on a little wider market." So I ran for governor and made it. In 1950 I ran for governor after being defeated for the legislature in 1948.

BURG: Well, that's easily said, Mr. Jordan, but obviously you had to put together some kind of organization.

JORDAN: In that short time, the two years I was in the legislature, I got the respect and the cooperation of the legislators themselves, and they're the ones who got me to run for governor.

BURG: Your own party friends.

JORDAN: Legislators, yes. I said, "I'm a dark horse." There were five of us in that primary. One was a Republican lieutenant governor and one was a state Republican chairman; one was a Republican secretary of state and one other and myself. And I was the low man on the totem pole. That is, I didn't have any base except the loyalty and friendship of these men I'd worked with in the legislature. And they came



from all parts of the state and they were the nucleus of my campaign. So we won handily.

BURG: Did you go out and canvass the state?

JORDAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

BURG: So you had to talk all over Idaho.

JORDAN: Oh, yes, you bet. And just had a station wagon, just went in every county, forty-four counties. You know you put about 50,000 miles on an automobile pretty fast.

BURG: There couldn't have been a great deal of money for your campaign.

JORDAN: No, we didn't have much money. I think the most we had in that campaign was \$10,000 from outside. We put in some of our own money. Because we didn't want to be beholden to anyone.

BURG: When you say \$10,000 from outside you mean--

JORDAN: From our friends in the state--

BURG: --from a certain amount of money of your own--



JORDAN: --from the state Republican organization.

BURG: --within Idaho.

JORDAN: Yes. Within Idaho.

BURG: Plus some of your own family--

JORDAN: Well what it took beyond that came from right out of our own personal funds.

BURG: Did the victory surprise you?

JORDAN: It surprised a lot of people. No, I thought I was going to win. Yes. My wife helped, she's the best, she's really a good campaigner and I think probably could have been elected in her own right, but we made it as a team and we made the rounds and--

BURG: Went out there and socked it to them.

JORDAN: Yes. People liked us.

BURG: Now who did you finally run against in the general election?



JORDAN: A Democrat named Calvin Wright. He had been state auditor and a fine man. He's one of my best friends now. He went on to be collector of internal revenue for Idaho, but we're good friends.

BURG: Now you were elected in 1950--

JORDAN: 1950.

BURG: --to a four-year term.

JORDAN: To a four-year term. At that time there was a constitutional prohibition against a governor being in office more than one term.

BURG: So you couldn't possibly succeed yourself.

JORDAN: Couldn't go on. Yes. So in 1952 the Republican national convention was in Chicago, and the governor's conference that year was in Houston, Texas. We went down to the governors' conference. I had never met General Eisenhower, but Tom Dewey and most of the Republican governors were promoting Eisenhower at the convention and I liked what I knew about General Eisenhower. I thought he had done an admirable job.



But I did know Senator Taft better. He'd been in the state since I was governor and I'd taken him around and I introduced him to an audience in Pocatello. I'd had several conversations with him, and he knew Idaho and he was a very intelligent man and a fine man. So, when the move came on down at the convention in Houston to accuse the Taft people of hanky-panky and stealing delegates--some states and like that, the Eisenhower people were wanting to get a solid bloc of Republicans behind Eisenhower and I said, "I don't subscribe to that. I think that Eisenhower's a fine man and would make a great President. But I don't think that you have to downgrade Bob Taft in order to get a hundred percent endorsement for Eisenhower." So I didn't sign the manifesto down there. I think most of the Republican governors did.

BURG: And some evidently regretted signing it later.

JORDAN: Some of the governors did. So when we got to Chicago Senator Taft asked me to come and see him and I went to his hotel and he said, "Why didn't you sign with the other Republican governors?"

Well I said, "I didn't think that your own case was



being articulated and I didn't have the facts, but I didn't think that your people were stealing delegates and so on."

He said, "I'd like you to second my nomination."

And I said, "Well I'll talk to my delegation." I was the chairman of the Idaho delegation.

He said, "I want one governor to second my nomination."

And I said, "I'll talk to my delegation. Personally I'd be delighted to, but I want to clear it with the delegation." And they said sure, go ahead.



BURG: As I understand it, the Idaho delegation that year was in effect honor-bound to Taft.

JORDAN: This was the instructions that the convention sent the delegates. No, we did not go under a binder, but it was the consensus of the delegate assembly that they preferred Taft. He'd been to the state but there was some strong Eisenhower support, too.

BURG: No real fight was made.

JORDAN: No. I did second Senator Taft's nomination, and of course we didn't have the votes. The Eisenhower people had the

most votes. So about three days after the convention Ike and Sherm Adams had come out to Denver. I got a call from Sherm Adams one day and he said, "We want you to come down to Denver."

And I said, "All right. What for?"

And he said, "The General wants to talk to you Taft people," and he said, "you seconded Taft's nomination; he'd like to talk to you."

And so I said, "All right. I can come down pretty soon."

He said, "Come tomorrow."

And I said, "All right."

So I went down to Denver and Ike said, "What are we going to have to do to get you Taft people with us?"

BURG: Was he talking to a group of you?

JORDAN: No, just to me.

BURG: Just to you.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: You had met him at the convention I presume.

JORDAN: Yes. Oh, yes, I'd met him at the convention, and once in Denver before the convention.

BURG: But this was really about the first, the first conversation.

JORDAN: Yes. The first private conversation, you might say, I'd had with him. But he said, you know, just very directly like he is, he said, "What are we going to have to do to get you Taft people with us?"

Well I said, "You had the votes and we want to help in your campaign any way that we can. I know I do and I think I speak for a lot of Taft people. You had the votes and we want to win and so let's get on with the job."

And he said, "Fine. Fine." He said, "When are you going back?"

And I said, "Well I was going back this evening."

He said, "Stay over and have dinner and we'll talk a little strategy, because we've got to make some plans here about how we're going to run this campaign." And they had the strategy team there--Sherm Adams, Tom Stephens and some of them around.

BURG: Fred Seaton.



JORDAN: Fred Seaton, well Frank Carlson was there--I don't remember Fred Seaton. Fred Seaton I don't think was there; Frank Carlson was there. So at dinner that night they were discussing an appearance they'd made down in the Colosseum in Los Angeles and it was very disappointing. They didn't get a crowd out. And they said, "What are we going to do to get this thing really started off in good shape?"

So it came round the circle, came my time to make a contribution. I said, "Why don't you get the western governors in here. Ten of the eleven western governors are Republicans--and the Democrats talk about a solid South--we have virtually got a solid West. We've got a solid West here, ten Republican governors out of the eleven western states. And the one seat that's held by a Democrat, Montana, Hugo Aronson is challenging him, and so you've virtually got a solid West for Ike, and we ought to capitalize on that."

Well they said, "Go on, how would you capitalize on it?"

Sherm spoke up and he said, "I guess we could get those Republican governors." He'd been a governor, of course he knew us all. He said, "I guess we get the governors in here to Denver."



And I said, "Why Denver? You got people coming here, you know, one behind another in droves and the press corps's here, but a meeting of Republican governors in Denver wouldn't make much of a ripple." I said, "Take them out of Denver. Take them to a new place. It's got kind of settled in here in Denver, there's so much traffic coming and going it doesn't make news."

"Like where?"

I said, "Well, like Boise, Idaho. Bring them to Boise."

And they laughed, you know. Someone said, "How many people can you get out in Boise, Idaho?"

And by that time my dander was up a little bit. I said, "We'd get out more than you had in Los Angeles at the Colosseum. And they'll be good people."

And so they began taking me seriously and they said, "Well, how would you do it?"

I said, "Well, get all the western governors in; get Hugo Aronson in."

And they said, "Well, one hitch to that is Earl Warren. Earl Warren left the convention in--we don't know--he wasn't very cordial when he left. And he's fishing up in the mountains in California someplace and he doesn't want to be disturbed."



They agreed, "If you can get Earl Warren to come, why we'll make a deal and come to Boise." I called Earl Warren and his secretary said, "He's in the mountains."

I said, "This is Governor Jordan and I want to talk to him. How do I get a hold of him?" She gave me a number and I got him up in a fishing camp and I said, "Earl, you're dean of the western governors," and I outlined the proposition. I said, "We want to get Ike up to Boise, Idaho and we want to get all the western governors in here, the ten Republicans and Hugo Aronson, the candidate for Montana. In seniority, you're dean of the western governors, and I'd want you to introduce the General."

He said, "Len, I think I can do that. I think I can do that."

I called up Sherm Adams and boy, he said, "That's--we got it made." Sherm told me, he said, "We didn't know what Earl was going to do."

BURG: He had left the convention before things really closed down at Chicago.

JORDAN: Yes. Because I think he was disappointed and--



BURG: Did he ever tell you that governor?

JORDAN: No, he never did, never did. And so we began making plans to set it up and then I was really behind the eight ball then. I called a meeting in my office of about twenty of the brightest young fellows in the state, and I got a special blue ribbon committee to get a crowd out, you know, for this event.

BURG: Your blue ribbon committee was all Republican, I would suppose.

JORDAN: Yes. And they got them out. They got them out and that's why Ike was so pleased when he came here and saw there were 20,000 people out there.

BURG: What kind of a population did Boise have at that time?

JORDAN: Oh, around 50,000 in the area.

BURG: In the area. But you pulled people from all parts of Idaho.

JORDAN: From all over. Yes. And after the governors were here, as you can see by the picture, we had them all here,



and oh, Hugo Aronson, he told me after the election, he said, "You know I wasn't doing very well, but you treated me like a governor. You got me down there and we got pictures all over Montana, here I am hobnobbing with the General and the governors are all treating me like a governor and," he said, "I came back up and I won by 2,000 votes."

BURG: Holy cow! In his challenge. In the challenged election up there.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Good heavens!

JORDAN: So he said, "That made it." He said, "That Boise meeting made it because they began to look seriously at Hugo Aronson as a candidate, when I'd been treated so royally down there."

BURG: Now J. Bracken Lee was at that meeting here in Boise.

JORDAN: Yes, Brack Lee was there. Yes.

[Interruption]



BURG: The kind of impression that Eisenhower made on you the first time you met him.

JORDAN: Well of course when he looks at you with that direct look that he had and that warm smile and he said, "What are we going to have to do to get you Taft people with us?" --you know, with a smile on his face. Well you know he had me right there. I liked him and I had a reason then to go all out for him. I'd taken care of my commitment, such as it was,--

BURG: To Mr. Taft.

JORDAN: Yes, and I still think Taft--I've got a high regard for Senator Taft. He had an unfortunate, a too early death after that, you know. But he was a very able senator. But no, Ike was real personality and dynamism. He just radiates energy and enthusiasm. A novice in politics, though.

BURG: The very thing I was going to say. One of the criticisms one often hears is that lack of political savvy, and I was going to ask you, did you find that to be true in any of the dealings with him that you had?



JORDAN: Well, no, because I was, well I was a novice in politics myself. I came from the bottom of the pile, you see. I was not a politician; I was a rancher and maybe some of the direct action that I could see in him was something that I tried to achieve in my own effort. So I liked him very much.

BURG: He was plenty enough politician as far as you were concerned.

JORDAN: Oh, yes. I didn't care. I didn't care for--well, I still don't--I don't go for the people who make politics the end and aim of all successful accomplishment. I think you get people in there who act naturally and play down the politics and you'll be just as well off.

BURG: Can you give me an example, governor, of someone who comes to mind who is a politician in the sense that you do not care for?

JORDAN: No, because I wouldn't say anything in derogation of anyone, but Eisenhower exemplified, as Taft did, the direct approach. There was nothing devious, nothing about



either Taft or Eisenhower that you could ever question for a minute, you know, their sincerity or their competence. They just radiated--

BURG: --the kind of ability that they had.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: After the Boise meeting, what part did you play in the campaign itself?

JORDAN: Well, we had a number of rallies around the state, and we carried Idaho for Eisenhower, about the second high state I think for Eisenhower of any state in the nation.

BURG: In the percentage of votes.

JORDAN: Yes. We really worked the state for him, and that was my responsibility. I didn't have any responsibility other than the state of Idaho, but we really turned it on here.

BURG: Well I was going to ask you, was there a Citizens for Eisenhower group in the state?



JORDAN: Yes. Yes. Yes there was. A young--

BURG: Do you remember who that was?

JORDAN: Bill Eberle. Bill Eberle was the chairman of the Eisenhower for President group and he went on to be, well, he was in the Nixon administration as ambassador for trade relations.

BURG: Has he returned to Idaho?

JORDAN: No.

[Interruption]

JORDAN: Eberle was with Boise Cascade Corporation for a while, and then he went back to be president of American Standard, and then he came to Washington as a Nixon appointee when I was in the Senate and since has left that and is now working in Detroit for the automotive people.

BURG: One of the things I'd like to do at some time--

JORDAN: Get hold of Bill.



BURG: --we'd like to chase down any of the surviving records of the various state Citizens for Eisenhower.

JORDAN: He would have it.

BURG: We've got it for the state of Washington and I think we've got it for the state of Montana. Somebody wrote in to us from there; so it would be worthwhile checking with Mr. Eberle and see what we can come up with.

JORDAN: Bill was sitting here on one side of Ike on this ride in from the--

BURG: Oh, yes. Yes, I saw that photograph too. I don't know what's happened to it, it's in here somewhere.

JORDAN: Yes, well--

BURG: Bet we've hidden it.

JORDAN: Yes. I'll show it to you later.

BURG: I saw it, too. I saw it. Now who was the state chairman in 1952?



JORDAN: Milt Horsley. Milt Horsley. I played golf with him this morning. Horsley was succeeded by William S. Campbell who had chaired the blue ribbon committee for Ike's Boise appearance. At twenty nine he was the youngest Republican state chairman in the nation.

BURG: Oh, really? From what part of the state?

JORDAN: Horsley was from Soda Springs, down in the southeast.

BURG: I see. A man about your age.

JORDAN: Yes, he's a little older than I am.

BURG: And who was your national committeeman in '52?

JORDAN: Umm, Ezra Whitla from Coeur D'Alene. He's an old timer and he's passed on.

BURG: Those people, had they been Taft supporters?

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: And then moved over and helped in the campaign here.

JORDAN: Oh, yes. Yes.

BURG: So Idaho escaped any bitterness.

JORDAN: Oh, yes.

BURG: Any divisiveness in the Republican party because of the Taft-Eisenhower split.

JORDAN: No, no. If there was any feeling it healed rapidly because we had a good organization. We had a Republican legislature, Republican state house. And Bill Campbell is a genius in conducting a winning campaign.

BURG: That helps.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Now, once the election was over, what was the next move for you? Now you're still governor at this time.

JORDAN: Yes. Ike said to me one time back at a governors' conference--he was President then--and he'd always remember Boise. He said, "Governor, I'll never forget Boise and the warm welcome that we had out there in August of 1952." He said, "That really got us going; I shall never forget that." He said, "We weren't supposed to kick off our campaign until Labor Day and I'd promised Governor [John S.]

Fine that I'd come to Pennsylvania to kick off the campaign in Pennsylvania, but," he said, "that really was the kick-off there in Boise."

BURG: Oh, that's the way he viewed it.

JORDAN: Yes. "That got us started," he said, "that got us started with the solid Republican West." you know, that appealed to him.

BURG: In the campaign staff, did you have much to do with the people who were running his campaign?

JORDAN: No. Not directly, not directly. They were working through the hierarchy of the Republican--in this state they were working through the regular Republican organization--state chairman Bill Campbell.

BURG: And I presume people like Tom Stephens, Frank Carlson, Fred Seaton, men who knew their way around, were helping them to touch all the bases.

JORDAN: Oh, yes. That's right. And of course my contact was with Sherm Adams because we'd been governors together.



BURG: Speaking now of that friendship, not about the White House period, was Mr. Adams always as brusque? Sharp?

JORDAN: Yes, he was always that way. His state of New Hampshire and my state of Idaho were about the same, had about the same population and a lot of common problems. We'd been at governors' conferences and we saw eye-to-eye on a good many issues and had a commonality of interest by reason of the very close population comparison between our states. And I liked Sherm.

BURG: So your relationship with him was always a good one and a friendly one.

JORDAN: Oh, yes. Yes.

BURG: He never managed to get your back up.

JORDAN: Oh, no, because he never spoke sharply to me. It was always kind of a, you know, a bantering kind of thing, one governor to another.

BURG: Yes. That carried over then when he was in the White House--



JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Now Governor, did you have any occasion to go to Washington other than the governors' conferences either on behalf of the state of Idaho or perhaps because they called you out there?

JORDAN: No, I went back to testify as governors do on legislation before the committees, you know. And one time at the White House, the President said (he knew that I couldn't run to succeed myself) and he said, "When you get through out there, I want you to come back here." Just like that.

BURG: You had stopped to call on him at the White House?

JORDAN: I'd been there to dinner in small groups and larger groups and when governors were there and so on. But he appreciated what we did for him out here in Idaho.

BURG: So somewhere toward the end of your term he made the remark that he wanted you to come back there.



JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Do you remember how you responded at the time?

JORDAN: I said, "I'll be open; I'll be open because I'm prohibited from running for governor again and both Senate seats are held by Republicans, so I'll be available."

BURG: Did he take it any farther? Did he say what he had in mind?

JORDAN: No, but it wasn't long--at that time there was a vacancy showed up in the International Joint Commission, U.S. and Canada, you know. And Stanley, Senator [Augustus O.] Stanley of Kentucky had been chairman, and they wanted to move him. So that opening came up and they asked me if I'd be interested in that and I said, "Yes, I probably would." I was interested for several reasons, because of the Columbia Treaty aspect of it; I'd worked on that some from out here as governor. Also I was interested in Canadian relations; I thought that would be a pretty good slot. And it was because at that time we were negotiating some of the differences that arose over the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project



and we were initiating studies on the Columbia Treaty and a lot of other border problems. We had pollution abatement problems in the Great Lakes, you know, so on.

BURG: This would have been about 1954?

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: And the minute your term expired here--

JORDAN: I went right back.

BURG: --Mr. Eisenhower had you appointed.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: And then you and your wife then moved out to Washington?

JORDAN: Yes, we moved right to Washington.

BURG: How big was the commission at that time? It had both American and Canadians.

JORDAN: It had three Americans and three Canadians. General McNaughton, A.G.L. McNaughton, he was chairman of the Canadian section; I was chairman of the U. S. section.



BURG: And who were the other four individuals? I may have it in another interview, but--

JORDAN: Eugene Weber and Roger McWhorter.

MRS. JORDAN: W-h-o-r-t-e-r.

JORDAN: W-h-o-r-t-e-r. Roger McWhorter. He'd been with the Federal Power Commission. On the Canadian side were George Spence and Lucien Dansereau and General McNaughton.

BURG: Dansereau sounds like he's got to have come out of the province of Quebec.

JORDAN: Quebec, yes. He was a publisher up there, very intelligent man.

BURG: A publisher, and yet picked for that kind of duty by the Canadians.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: I presume very much interested in the lakes and the St. Lawrence--



JORDAN: Very much interested in the lakes and he's a man of some prestige with his publishing background and he was wealthy and French, you see. It's very important up there on any three-man commission; you have McNaughton the Scot and Spence from the prairie out in Saskatchewan, you see.

BURG: Probably English background with that name.

JORDAN: And then the French, Lucien Doncerau.

BURG: Now let me ask, for my own benefit, did the joint commission sit on a daily basis or a weekly basis? How frequent were the meetings?

JORDAN: The two U.S. members, the other two, had duties; Gene at the Corps of Engineers, and Roger at the Federal Power Commission for a while, and then Roger was able to give full time. We had a secretary, a man, who was kind of an office manager and of course then we had secretarial help. But we were authorized to draw on any of the departments, including the Corps of Engineers, Federal Power Commission, or the Department of Interior, or Agriculture, or Health or wherever we needed technicians for a specific



job. We'd reach out and get these people and get them assigned, you see.

BURG: Detailed to your group--

JORDAN: Detailed for a particular job. That way we could pick the best talent out of the government agencies for a particular job, and, when we were through, they'd go back to their agencies without having to have a group of professional people and technicians who were spread over all of the varied interests to which the commission had to direct itself.

BURG: So you were able to keep the commission's permanent staff rather small.

JORDAN: Very small.

BURG: Whose idea was that? It's a very good idea.

JORDAN: Well, it was in the original enabling legislation that set it up, gave authority to do that. And I wondered why others don't do that, too, because you get the help of specialists. When we had pollution problems on the Great Lakes, well, we



got the best sanitation engineers that the Department of Health had.

BURG: You might ask a man then to work for three months on this problem or six months. Was it difficult, governor, to get the cooperation of the secretary of interior or--

JORDAN: No, no, because this was in the, as I say, in the enabling act, and the White House backed you up. Ike was-- this was one thing that he wanted; he wanted good relations with the Canadians. One time I was down there at dinner in a small group and I was sitting next to the President, and he said, "Governor, how are you getting along with the Canadians?"

And I said, "Well, sometimes I wonder." I said, "This General McNaughton is pretty tough. What do I do when he gets red in the face and pounds on the table?"

And he just laughed, you know. "Well," he said, "I know Andy McNaughton." He said, "He wanted to run the invasion."

BURG: He did, huh?



JORDAN: Yes. He thought he ought to be in charge of the invasion.

BURG: McNaughton was a very talented--

JORDAN: He was indeed. He was, yes, he was the pride of Canada. And a very smart man, and crotchety. But Ike went on to say, the President (I shouldn't say Ike because I never did call him Ike, of course) went on to say, "Well, governor, go fifty-one percent of the way." He said, "When you're trading with those Canadians, be so fair that you could move on their side of the table and feel comfortable in your bargaining."

BURG: That's the way he put it.

JORDAN: And he said, "Go fifty-one percent of the way. But you don't have to sell your country down the river," he said. You see. "You don't have to sell your country down the river. But go just a little bit more than half way. So, in the bargaining, you could move on the other side of the table and be comfortable."



BURG: Did McNaughton seem to react well to that kind of treatment?

JORDAN: Not at first because he thought that the thing to do was to take the hide off of the Yankees. He thought that--

BURG: All across the border, that is the Seaway, the Columbia River Treaty, pollution--

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: --anywhere our interests met on that border--

JORDAN: You traded, you bargained for the last ounce that you could get.

BURG: How about his two companions?

JORDAN: They were not so tough. They were more inclined to go along the middle road with us.

BURG: So they acted as a bit of a leash--

JORDAN: It helped, it helped.

BURG: --on McNaughton.



JORDAN: He was the one, but he dominated the commission. He was a hard trader.

BURG: Did you ever find him offensive, governor?

JORDAN: No, no, because I wouldn't take offense.

BURG: You say with a sweet smile of a politician. You just let it ride. Did he ever feel he had gone too far?

JORDAN: I don't know that he did. People have different ways of making their points and he, but Ike laughed you know. "Well," he said, "I know Andy McNaughton."

BURG: Even his Canadian colleagues, not at the level that you and I are talking about, but his lesser Canadian friends, they took very much the same view that you did. Now a number of them, when they talked with me about him have laughed and said, "Oh, that Andy," or "McNaughton, oh boy." But they seem to have a great deal of respect for him.

JORDAN: Oh, yes.

BURG: The interesting thing is that I believe without--I hesitate to say now because it's been a year or more since



I've done my Canadian interviewing--I don't think there's been an exception to it. They all felt that by and large they had been treated very fairly.

JORDAN: Oh, yes.

BURG: And I don't think that any of them thought that McNaughton had choked it out of you. I think they recognized that, while McNaughton may have shot off his mouth and pounded the table, that he was facing a reasonable man, in fact three reasonable Americans and--

JORDAN: Yes. Well we did all right, and yet they did all right too. I think it worked well for both countries.

BURG: On all these matters.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: For example we talk about the Columbia River Treaty and--

JORDAN: And the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project.

BURG: --St. Lawrence Seaway.



JORDAN: Yes. There have been so many benefits to split and the split has been fair enough that, when you're doing a really constructive job, the bonus is big enough to make it worthwhile.

BURG: So we don't have here, at least so far as you're concerned, evidently so far as Mr. Eisenhower was concerned, we don't have a big country trying to fleece a small one--

JORDAN: No.

BURG: --of everything they can get from it and with no return.

JORDAN: No, no. This was the very thing that the President didn't want. He said, "Just go a little bit more than half way. Just a little bit more, not enough more that you sell your country down the river, but just so that you could move on to the other side of the table and--"

BURG: It would still look good to you.

JORDAN: Yes.



BURG: Did you have an opportunity to introduce any of the Canadians to the President? Did he ever meet them, talk with them?

JORDAN: Oh, of course he knew McNaughton long before I did. No, we never went to the White House with, this was kind of--I don't know why not, come to think of it. It was state department protocol, I guess, that the heads of state didn't mix into it.

BURG: My recollection is, though, that there were some meetings on the American side of the line with American senators and representatives and that there were some meetings on the Canadian side where the members of the joint commission, if I remember correctly, did have a chance to meet with some of the Canadian members of parliament and with some of the American--

JORDAN: That could have been after I left. I was there two years and eight months and it looked like we were at a stalemate. We had pretty well cleaned up what had to be done on the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project. It was going smoothly. And the Columbia Treaty, the Canadians



hadn't finished some in-house studies that they wanted to make strictly in their own country about benefits and they had a little rhubarb going between Premier Bennett and--

BURG: A little rhubarb is putting it very mildly.

JORDAN: --and so it looked like it was several months of wheel spinning there and I've never been able to do that successfully so I told Sherm Adams that I thought a lull had come into this thing and I better get back out home.

BURG: So it was basically that the Columbia River Treaty bogging down--



JORDAN: Yes, because the Canadians hadn't finished some of their own, as between the province and federal Canada and so on.

BURG: It was some of the federal studies, particularly, that hadn't been done and then Bennett, of course, threw as the Canadians say, a very large spanner in the works at about that time.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Now let me ask you--it's asking you to look back a long time, but let's just look at that St. Lawrence Seaway --what were the major issues at stake with that as you saw them at the time?

JORDAN: Well it was, it had been pretty well worked out before I came aboard except for the details, the implementation of the agreement. For instance, we had to build the Eisenhower Locks on our side and they had to build locks on the Canadian side, and the agreement was that as that each country would pay for the improvements on their side of the international boundary. But then when it came to the building of the power dam at Barnhardt Island, this was a joint venture between the Canadian entity and the Power Authority of the State of New York, Ontario Hydro, I think was the Canadian entity. And each country built half of it, but the water backed up, you see. That backed the water up in Lake Ontario, somewhat. Well we had to go into a long study of stream flow records to know what we were doing there, and we found that the flow of the St. Lawrence River had fluctuated between 242 and 250 feet above sea level; that is the level of Lake Ontario had fluctuated that much in the state of nature,



eight feet between the high water and the low water, you see.

BURG: Over a long period of time, governor, or--?

JORDAN: Over a long period of time. The extreme low was 242 feet for Lake Ontario and the extreme high was 250 feet.

BURG: And that was measurable physical evidence on the shores of the lake.

JORDAN: Yes. Above sea level, in the state of nature. Well we put in this man-made dam, and the engineers told us the storage behind the dam would enable us to compress that range of stage, an eight-foot difference between minimum and maximum levels in a state of nature to four feet under the proposed development.

[Interruption]

BURG: -- compress that, that stage.

JORDAN: Yes. What our engineers said we could do, and proved it to us, that by managing flows of the St. Lawrence River we could take two feet off of the top of that flood flow and put two feet in the bottom for navigation. In other words, we compressed that to a range of stage 244 to 248 instead of 242



to 250, you see, through man-made regulation.

BURG: And they proved to you that--

JORDAN: They proved that we could do that. But to try to prove to an audience of Canadians and an audience of shore property owners on both sides--we had hearings on both sides, on the Canadian side, General McNaughton was chairman; on the United States side I was chairman. We had these hearings, and they were pretty heated. Owners of shoreline property wanted to know, if they were flooded out, their property was flooded out, when do you sue? And I said, "On the U.S. side aggrieved riparian owners could go to any federal court of jurisdiction in the area." And on the Canadian side it was different, that's where I learned the difference. I remember the general counsel for Canada, and I can't remember his name, informed us that the Canadians didn't have that kind of recourse because he said, "The Queen does not wish to be sued." Sovereign immunity, you see. They didn't have any recourse up there. You couldn't sue the Queen because she didn't wish to be sued. That was the difference.

BURG: You couldn't sue the federal courts in our country.



JORDAN: You couldn't go to the federal courts in Canada, but you could in our country.

BURG: Yes, but not a Canadian.

JORDAN: Not a Canadian. He had--

BURG: A Canadian flooded out couldn't sue us.

JORDAN: No. He had to seek recourse in his own country and the Queen didn't wish to be sued. So that's the difference between our two systems.

BURG: How was it resolved?

JORDAN: Well, finally we just wore them down. Finally they became convinced that there was merit to the statement of our experts that we were going to improve that flow both against flooding on the high side and against drought on the low side, you see. And we finally--but it took a long time.

BURG: Let me ask you Mr. Jordan, has it actually worked out?

JORDAN: Yes, it's worked out.



BURG: So the experts were correct in their analysis.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Something else. Again it's asking quite a bit of you. If you were in our circumstances and you wanted to talk to people on both sides of the border with respect to the planning that went into the St. Lawrence Seaway, you wanted to talk to key people, both sides, what names come to your mind?

JORDAN: Well they're probably all gone. Of course, General McNaughton--McNaughton's gone, Lucien Dansereau's [?] gone, and George Spence is gone. The rest of them were career people. But I'd be reluctant to even tell you now who to go to.



BURG: Do you know who among the American legislators were particular friends of the St. Lawrence Seaway project?

JORDAN: Well, Congressman [Kenneth] Keating, who was later senator and then ambassador to India, and now just died recently. That was his district up there.

BURG: So he had a great--

JORDAN: He had a great--he met with us several times. And we used to work with Mike Mansfield on Libby Dam. Mike was tremendously interested in Libby Dam on the Columbia.

BURG: As far as the control of the Columbia was concerned.

JORDAN: Yes. And the Washington senators.

BURG: [Henry] Jackson and [Warren] Magnuson.

JORDAN: Jackson and Magnuson, they were all good to work with.

BURG: So it is safe for us to assume that men who were then senators of states that potentially benefited from the St. Lawrence Seaway, these are men who probably did a great deal to push matters through Congress?

JORDAN: George Aiken would be a good man for you to talk to, retired senator from Vermont.

BURG: Right.

JORDAN: Because George has been on the border there and in the Senate all during those years and he knows all about it.



BURG: That's a good suggestion. The technical people, including the ones who worked on--

JORDAN: Em [Gen. Emerson C.] Itschner. Em Itschner was active in that--

BURG: I thought I would ask him. Now do you suppose, governor, that he would be a darned good man to say, "Well, now here are some of the people who did planning studies; here are the people who worked with the Canadians on some of the engineering problems," and this kind of thing?

JORDAN: Yes, he'd be a good source. Gene [Eugene] Weber. Gene Weber, retired now, a civilian employee of the Corps of Engineers in Washington. He was third man on the commission.



BURG: Where would we find him, governor?

JORDAN: He'd be in the directory in Washington.

BURG: He's still back in Washington.

JORDAN: I think so. They lived out in Maryland.

BURG: And because of the position he held, it shouldn't be--

JORDAN: Oh, the Corps of Engineers, they'd tell you, yes.

BURG: Right. Run him down that way. All right now, when you left the commission, you returned here to Idaho.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: To take up what kind of work?

JORDAN: Ranching.

BURG: In this area?

JORDAN: No, back up on the Salmon River country.

BURG: Grangeville.

JORDAN: No, New Meadows. We bought into Circle C Ranch, a big cattle ranch up there at New Meadows. And we had cattle on feed down in the valley along the river down here, and that's what we were doing when Senator [Henry C.] Dworshak died in July.

BURG: And what was the year that he died?

JORDAN: 1962, July. I know that night I was making a speech



over at Caldwell at a Republican picnic out in the park and there was a kind of a whispering behind me, you know, on the platform, and I went ahead and finished my talk and I was afraid maybe someone had become ill or something. There was a shuffling and whispering back behind me; it was a little annoying but I went ahead and finished, and then they came up and said they just had a wire that Senator Dworshak had died, that word just had come. He had died at home with a heart attack, and so that put a damper on the whole picnic. And immediately there was concern--(Bob Smylie was governor then) --who was going to be the man to take Henry's place? Of course the election was in November. Henry Dworshak had been elected in 1960, so he was about one year and seven months into a six-year term, when he died. But it was only just a little over three months till November and election. So someone had to be appointed in the interim period, and someone had to run in the election. And so people came to me and I said, "Well, why don't we find a younger man? I'm sixty-three, let's find a younger man. There are a lot of good men around here."



And they said, "Who? Who? Who have we got that we can win with in ninety days? You're already warmed up. You've been governor and you've been on the Eisenhower staff as chairman of the International Joint Commission and you have --" this was their argument to me--"you have stature in that we can win with you and we don't know of anyone else we can win with." This was the argument that my friends put up to me.

So they had a state convention and there were, oh, two or three people nominated, and I had about seventy percent of the votes on the first ballot and they made it unanimous. The rest of them withdrew and made it unanimous. So then Governor Smylie appointed me for the ninety-days--he called me in and asked if I would like the appointment and I said, "Well, I have mixed feelings about it because I don't know whether being an incumbent senator would help, that there would be pluses on that score, but at the same time to be a senator, I'd have to put in some time back there that I might otherwise be campaigning in the state so I could go either way on it." But by the convention's vote, I was to be the Republican nominee on the ballot that fall. So when



he offered it to me, the ninety day appointment, well I took it. That was the hardest ninety days I ever put in because I shuttled back and forth every weekend, you know. Fly back, Fly back. I did get out about thirty days before the election, but had a good organization and we won quite handily.

BURG: Oh, you did?

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: That would have been tough.

JORDAN: Yes, it was.

BURG: To try to carry on business back there--

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Let me ask you--did you inherit your predecessor's office staff when you went back in August?

JORDAN: Yes, I kept them all. I kept them all. I just moved right in and kept them and I began putting in key people for myself. I never dismissed anyone from the Dworshak staff, but there was a natural attrition set in,



and I'd bring in my own people and that's the way we worked that out, very amicably with the Dworshak people. I needed their help, too. I needed everyone's help.

BURG: And you found no distinct unpleasant differences on that staff--

JORDAN: Oh, no, no.

BURG: --so it could be worked that way.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: My recollection is that you did not seek another term.

JORDAN: Yes.

BURG: Did you?

JORDAN: Yes I did. You see, I was--

BURG: I'm sorry. I thought you had not.

JORDAN: --I was elected in November of 1962 for the remainder, four years, of Henry's, and in '66 I was re-elected by a bigger margin and then I retired in '72. I was in the Senate ten years and five months.



BURG: I see. Well something has misled me then, because I'd only remembered one, and what's more I remembered it as a full six years which it was not.

JORDAN: No, it was four years and five months of Dworshak's term, you see, and then a full six-year term myself.

BURG: Now let me ask you governor, among the major jobs that you did: you had the experience as governor here; you had this experience on the joint commission; you had the senatorship. Of the three, which gave you the greatest satisfaction?

JORDAN: Oh, each one, as you're doing it. When I was governor I gave it everything I had and liked it. But I knew that it was a four-year job when I took it. It's since been changed. Then I got interested in the International Joint Commission, and there was a challenge there until the thing kind of hit a dead end, until the Canadians said, "Well, now, it's going to be six months or a year before we're ready to talk anymore about this thing."

BURG: It was something you could do nothing about personally.



JORDAN: No. No. And I said, "I can't," I told the White House, "I don't want to stick around and spin my wheels." Well they began trying to think up jobs for me around there, you know, and this and that. I remember Sherm Adams said one time, "How'd you like to take on this foreign aid, this international development thing?" No, I didn't want any-- I'd seen some of that--I didn't want to do that. And they kept--I've got a letter here where I wrote to Doug McKay and told him that I appreciated his thoughtfulness, but I didn't want to be considered for an assistant secretaryship in Interior; I'd rather stay where I was in working on water. They were using me around the White House. One time I spent a six weeks in Afghanistan on a special assignment, on loan.



And I was out at Camp David when Ike, first cabinet meeting he came to after his heart attack, and I was called out there as an adviser on water resources, that cabinet meeting. And I remember how pleased we were to see Ike looking ruddy, you know, and fit. Matter of fact Mrs. Jordan and I had gone downtown and stood across there on LaFayette Square to watch him come in, we were so awfully delighted to see him come in with that big smile, you know, and waving his, waving. So I

was invited to that first meeting, and he was out at Camp David so we flew in helicopters out to Camp David for that first cabinet meeting. And I remember that as if, just tell you how that President was. Up at Camp David, you know, it's rustic and a great big stone fireplace and they've got the big oval table and a lot of tables pushed together, there for the cabinet to sit around. And we greeted the President; he came in and he looked so good, you know, and Max Rabb was secretary of the cabinet. He said, "Well, Max, what's the first item on the agenda here?"

John Foster Dulles said, "Well, hold on Mr. President. Aren't we forgetting something here?" He said, "If there ever was a time that we had to be thankful, it's here and now to have you back with us in good health."



"Oh," the President said, "I've been gone so long, Foster," he said, "I forgot the format around here." He said, "Ezra, open this meeting with prayer." That's Ezra Taft Benson. That just comes to mind, you know. Tells you something about the President; just bubbling over--he wanted to get to work. But John Foster Dulles--

BURG: He wasn't showing any of the strain of what he'd gone through. He looked good to you.

JORDAN: Yes, he looked good. He looked good. That's the reason they held the meeting at Camp David because they had good security there and he didn't want to face the press and take that kind of a, you know, he wanted to find out what was going on and break into it easy. He'd come up from Gettysburg there; he'd been out at the ranch convalescing.

BURG: Yes. And all of you went up in 'copters for that.

JORDAN: Yes. Yes, we flew in helicopters off of a pad right there in front of the Pentagon, didn't take but a few minutes.



BURG: Then you decided after your last term in the Senate to come back here and retire--

JORDAN: Yes. I was seventy-three. I would have been in my eightieth year at the end of my next term. I had eight grandchildren that I haven't had time to get acquainted with very much and three good children that we've, they're scattered all over the world; they were at that time. And so I'd been

over fifty years almost without a vacation. So we decided we'd slow down a little bit.

BURG: You're not like General [Jacob] Devers, are you, who slowed down, I think he's eighty-eight now and he goes out and plays golf four days a week? He would play five days a week, but the fifth day is Ladies Day at his club--he won't go near the place.

JORDAN: Oh, yes. Well, we, you know, we walk around this park every morning, it's two miles and a half around there and we get out about, oh, now about daylight and we walk around there early in the morning and pick up the beer cans and put them in the GI cans and that stooping over is good for us, you know. I've lost twenty pounds since I came home and could get my regular exercise. I've always been active, you know.

BURG: All that walking is good for you. Well governor, thank you so much for this time that you've given our institution. We really appreciate it.

