

**California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program**

Oral History Interview

with

RALPH C. DILLS

**California State Senator, 1967-
Los Angeles Municipal Court Judge, 1952-1966
California State Assemblyman, 1939-1949**

**October 25, 26 and December 4, 1989
Gardena, California**

**By Carlos Vásquez
Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles**

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None.

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

**Oral History Program
History Department
California State University, Fullerton**

**Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento**

**Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School**

**Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley**

**Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles**

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens and leaders.

**John F. Burns
State Archivist**

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer/Editor:

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Interview Time and Place:

October 25, 1989
Dills's office in Gardena, California
Session of five and one-half hours

October 26, 1989
Dills's office in Gardena, California
Session of two and three-quarter hours

December 4, 1989
Dills's office in Gardena, California
Session of two and one-half hours

Editing

Vásquez checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings, and with editor David Gist edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spellings, and verified proper names. Insertions by the editors are bracketed. The interviewer prepared the introductory materials.

Dills reviewed the edited transcript and returned the transcript with only minor corrections.

Papers

There exist no private papers which the interviewer was able to consult for this interview.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives at UCLA along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Ralph C. Dills was born on February 19, 1910, in Rosston, Texas. He came to Gardena, California, in 1925 with his parents and six brothers. Dills graduated from Gardena High School in 1927 and then attended Compton Community College the following year. He earned his B.A. in history from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1931 and his M.A., also in history, from the University of Southern California in 1933. He received his LL.B. from Loyola University School of Law in 1945, his LL.D. from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge College of Law, Sacramento, in 1949, and his J.D. from Van Norman University, Los Angeles, in 1961. In addition, he earned a general secondary teaching credential to meet California state requirements.

While teaching in the Enterprise Junior High School, Compton (1934 to 1944), Dills was first elected to represent the Sixty-ninth Assembly District in 1939. A Democrat, he served in the California State Assembly for five and one-half terms, several alongside his brother, Clayton A. Dills, an assemblyman from 1943 to 1966. In 1949 Ralph Dills left the assembly to practice law and serve as a justice of the peace and as a city judge in the southern part of Los Angeles County. He served as a municipal judge in the Compton Municipal Judicial District from 1952 to 1966, when he was elected to the state senate representing the Thirty-second Senate District.

While an assemblyman, Dills chaired the Committees on Education; Oil Industries; Conservation, Natural Resources, and Planning; and Manufacturing, Oil, and Mining Industries. During his tenure in the senate he has held numerous committee appointments, among them vice chairman of the Committee on Fish and Game for three terms, and chairman of the Committee on Public Utilities and Corporations for one term. From 1971 to the time of this oral history interview, he chaired the Committee on Governmental Organization.

Dills's principal interest in serving in the California State Legislature has been to protect, preserve, and expand the state's public education system. His legislation has included bills to create such institutions of higher education as El Camino Community College and California State University, Long Beach. He and other Los Angeles

County legislators also created the basis for a School of Law at the University of California, Los Angeles. In addition to sponsoring numerous bills contributing to teacher collective bargaining rights and retirement systems, he authored landmark bills addressing waste management and promoting California tourism.

Active in the Democratic party, Dills served as a Sixty-seventh Assembly District County Committeeman from 1934 to 1936 and on state and Los Angeles county committees, was a presidential elector in 1944 and 1948, and was secretary of the Democratic State Central Committee for Southern California and chairman of the Los Angeles County delegation of thirty-two legislators for four years. He is married to the former Elizabeth Lee of Colusa, California.

[Session 1, October 25, 1989]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

VASQUEZ: Senator Dills, to start this oral history, would you tell me something about your origins? Where you were born, when you came to California, your parents' background, that sort of thing.

DILLS: Thank you. I was born in Texas in 1910.

VASQUEZ: What part of Texas?

DILLS: Oh, Rosston, in Cooke County. I think that's north central, close to the Oklahoma line. We left there when I was yet a year old. Moved to Oklahoma where my dad [Jesse M. Dills] later acquired a store, and then a grain mill and a blacksmith shop. He was also a deputy sheriff. Mother [Viola Bohannon Dills] was a postmaster. Blue, Oklahoma, and it was a blue place. [Laughter]

We went to a one-room school there. All my brothers and I were in the one room. It's one of those where if you're close to the fire . . .

[Laughter]

VASQUEZ: You're warm? If you're not, you're not?

DILLS: You're too warm. If you're not, on the other side, you're cold.

VASQUEZ: How many brothers did you have?

DILLS: I had six brothers.

VASQUEZ: What are their names?

DILLS: Well, the oldest one is named Eldon [Dills].

The next one is Dudley [Dills]. And Floyd [Dills], who is known as "Curley." Paris [Dills].

VASQUEZ: How do you spell that?

DILLS: P-A-R-I-S, [like] Paris, Texas and Paris, France. And Clayton [A. Dills], and then Ralph Clinton [Dills].

VASQUEZ: Are you the baby?

DILLS: And then Earl. Earl was the baby. I was number eight. There were two sisters. The oldest boy and the youngest girl are twins. So there was a girl, the oldest child. Then came the twins, that made the youngest sister and the oldest boy twins. And then there were just the seven boys.

VASQUEZ: What are their names?

DILLS: Velma [Dills Gilbert] is the oldest sister.

Elvie [Dills Rugg], who is now ninety-one years of age and is in a convalescent home in Torrance now, she and I are the only two alive now. I am the only boy, she's the only girl.

VASQUEZ: Before we go on, your parents, where did they come from originally? Did they come from Texas? Were they born there?

DILLS: They were born in Texas, but our forebearers came from North Carolina. In fact, there's a Dillsboro, North Carolina, in the northwestern part of North Carolina. It was named after a great-uncle of mine who--as I am--he was a schoolteacher. He was a Mason. He was a member of the North Carolina legislature.

VASQUEZ: What was his name?

DILLS: Robert Dills. They named the railroad station--he was a surveyor for it, too--they named the railroad station after him. Then, of course, they named the city that grew around the railroad station. . . . It's not much of a city. It's a small town.

VASQUEZ: Why did your folks go to Texas?

DILLS: Well, my folks were born in Texas.

VASQUEZ: But I'm saying your grandparents.

DILLS: Why my grandparents went to Texas, I know not.
I know not anything . . .

VASQUEZ: You were telling me about the small country
school you were going to in Texas.

DILLS: Yes. This was in Oklahoma. See, we came to
Oklahoma when I was just a year old.

VASQUEZ: This is Blue, Oklahoma, right?

DILLS: Blue, Oklahoma. All of us were in the one small
room there. I remember my second-grade teacher
[Miss Watson] very well, because she. . . . We
learned our multiplication tables in the second
grade. She was a red-haired lady. I had kind
of a disposition to dream and look out in the
distance. Doing so, I am chewing on the corner
of a geography book. She told me to stop that,
which I didn't do very soon. Pretty soon, that
geography book came right down across my
shoulders. [Laughter] I didn't dream and look
out after that. She was an excellent teacher.
She got her way.

We left Oklahoma in 1917. Came to Phoenix,
Arizona, where I had two uncles [Preston and
Bowman Dills] living there. The war broke out
in 1917, World War I, and my dad worked in a

wholesale grocery place there until later on [when] he was able to get his own store. I was sort of raised in the store business. We moved from Phoenix, Arizona, to a desert town by the name of Postvale [Arizona] at that time, but which now is named Marana [Arizona] about twenty-five miles out of Tucson. We had the only grocery store for many, many, many miles. We went from Phoenix High School, where I spent the first semester freshman year, to Marana High School where there were fifty-five students in the whole four grades. I left Phoenix where there were, I suspect, two thousand students at the high school.

VASQUEZ: Were you a good student?

DILLS: I was a student there.

VASQUEZ: But were you a good student?

DILLS: In everything except math. I found out that I am not very good at math. I got the only "D" I ever received, in geometry, there in Marana High School.

VASQUEZ: What were your best subjects?

DILLS: Civics, history, whatever. I had good grades in everything except math, and that carried on

right on through when I went to Compton Junior College. They make you take these, you know, so much math, and I'd get an "A" in all the daily work. Then comes the final, I can't work them fast. I can do them slowly, but. . . . I didn't have money, not enough at that time to buy a slip stick.

VASQUEZ: A slide rule?

DILLS: A slide rule. So when I got into trig[onometry] and college algebra, why, I was handicapped too in working them fast. But those were different days.

I enjoyed being out in the desert there. It was a very, very wonderful experience, sleeping out under the stars [in the] night-time. It was too hot inside the little house that we rented. We never lived in a house. . . . Until we came to California in 1925, I never lived in a house that had inside plumbing, or electricity, water, or so on. In the desert, we brought our water in five-gallon cans. We would bring it to the store and to the house, but it didn't do me any harm. The only thing I. . . . My mother raising all these kids with a wood

stove. Cooking on a wood stove and no running water and that sort of thing.

VASQUEZ: Washing on a wash board?

DILLS: Yes. In 1925 we came to California.

VASQUEZ: Why did you come to California?

DILLS: Well, first of all, let me say that I caught up with my brother Clayton in the sixth grade. He and two other fellows were going to skip a grade, and so I asked him if I could go with him and go over there with him one grade. And he said, "Well, if you can pass the test." I said, "Okay, give me a try." So I went over with him and we had a spelling test the first day and, of course, I was head of the class. They let me in. I caught up with him then but. . . . I didn't catch up with him then, I moved up with him then. When we came to Arizona, they put us in the same class together. He was two years my senior, but I was taller. I was the tallest of all of the boys. They looked at us and put us in the same grade as second graders, as I recall. Yeah. I was seven years old, so second grade. So we stayed together and we graduated from [Gardena] High School in the same class.

VASQUEZ: Is that right? What year was that?

DILLS: 1927, yes. We left Arizona because our store burned. Our entire store burned one night. We were over. . . . At the railroad siding there was a traveling minister. We went over there for services in the church, in a railroad car. While we were there, why, our store burned. No water. No way to stop it out there in the desert. So then we came over here.

VASQUEZ: Did you come to Gardena directly?

DILLS: No, we came to Los Angeles, Fifty-sixth Street. Rented a place there until later that summer. This was 1925. We came over in May. My dad and my brothers, older brothers, came over earlier. Clayton and I, Mother, and Earl came over after school was out--Marana High School. My brothers came over and had gone to work, all of them, and Dad too, in a laundry, Crystal White Laundry, 676 West Slauson [Avenue], L.A. This is rather significant, because you have me here as a musician. So I will tell you this story. This is exactly the way it happened. We all went to work there. I became an operator of tumblers, the drying

machines, those big round dryers. Clayton tied bundles, and the other brothers were drivers. They had their trucks and they had routes they drove.

VASQUEZ: You all worked at the same place?

DILLS: We all worked there, including Dad, and then a sister-in-law, Dudley's wife [Alta Dills]. But Earl was young, so he didn't work there. My cousins [Jesse and Lloyd Russell] owned the Crystal White Laundry. They were musically inclined, and they knew we were. We never had any lessons, any of us, but we could all play something or other, or we thought we could.

VASQUEZ: But you . . . ?

DILLS: The brothers, our cousins who owned the laundry, said, "Look, if you guys will be agreeable, we will give you a raise, and we will all buy band instruments. We will have the Crystal White Band, and we will march in the Rose Parade," the Crystal White Laundry Band.

VASQUEZ: Did you get to march?

DILLS: What have we got to lose, you know? So we met to decide how we would select the instruments. [Laughter] So they said, "Well, we need a

trumpet. Eldon, you take a trumpet. He's the oldest one. We need a trombone. Dudley, you take the trombone. Floyd, the clarinet. We need clarinets. Oh, we need another trombone. Paris, you take a trombone. Another clarinet. Clayton, you take the clarinet. Hey, we don't have any saxophone. Ralph, you've got a saxophone."

VASQUEZ: That's the way . . . ? [Laughter]

DILLS: That's the way it happened. We bought the instruments. None of us had played any wind instruments before. We played strings, you know, banjos and guitars and ukuleles and all of those things. So we bought them, and I bought an E-flat, alto saxophone. I remember 180802 is the serial number, and I still have it. And it still plays.

We had our first meeting. There were others in the band, too. There were other drivers. "Number 20, you take this, and somebody takes that." My cousins took other instruments.

VASQUEZ: And you were being offered a raise if you would do this?

DILLS: "Yeah, we'll pay for it." Well, what have we got to lose? So we go. We have our first rehearsal. We took the instruments home, and we got these books on how to play the darn thing. We tried to study up on it and so on, but we had our first rehearsal. [Laughter] It was the first and the last.

VASQUEZ: Oh, really? [Laughter]

DILLS: The one and the only time the band ever met.

VASQUEZ: What happened?

DILLS: Well, you have never heard such squawking and caterwauling and squeaking and moaning. We just fell apart. We were laughing. We never completed one song. I think it was one march we were trying to play. We never got through with that. Our drummer was our engineer, who weighed three hundred pounds. How he's going to walk in a parade, I don't know, but he would beat on this thing. We were in a low ceiling in the laundry, and it was such a noise, such a mess. So we just all laughed, kept the instruments, and . . .

VASQUEZ: The raise?

DILLS: And the raise. Paid for the instruments. So

then, at the end of that summer, Dad bought a home here in Gardena. I think we paid ten thousand for it at that time. The other day I went by over there. I was going to buy the old house myself. It was available. There was a "for sale" sign on it. Yes, it was for sale, but they already sold it. I talked to the man. I said, "Well, if it's any of my business, how much did they have to pay for it?" He said, "Two hundred and twenty thousand dollars." Two weeks later I came by they and they'd torn the house down.

VASQUEZ: Oh, really?

DILLS: I went by there yesterday, and they're putting up some apartment houses. They bought it for the lot. I was going to buy it for the. . . . Two hundred twenty thousand, I'm afraid that's a little bit too much. Back to. . . . That's how we came to Gardena. We went to Gardena High School. Clayton and I were in the same grade, as I said. We were juniors then. We stayed and graduated in 1927.

VASQUEZ: And I noticed that they've just named and dedicated the assembly hall in your name, in

your honor.

DILLS: That's correct. That was done May of this year. And a very rewarding experience.

VASQUEZ: Was that very important to you?

DILLS: Yes. Because I had been. . . . Clayton had been president of the alumni association. Years later, I became president. Because, if you notice, there is a picture down in the other room of a painting. There is a copy of a painting that our class gave to the high school. Each graduating class would buy a painting and give it to the high school. We did this one by. . . . It's called Batatakin Ruins, by James Swinnerton. James Swinnerton used to be a cartoonist. He had a little Indian boy, I think his name was Jimmy. It was in the cartoon all the time that we used to look at--when they were sometimes funny.

VASQUEZ: Yes. They were even called the "funnies" then.

DILLS: Jim Swinnerton. . . . We looked at this picture, and it was in the Biltmore Hotel. He wanted fifteen hundred dollars for it, so we explained to him what we were doing with it. We were leaving it there, and it would be on exhibit

along with all the others. They started this back in 1923, I think, a principal by the name of John Whately. So he let us have it for five hundred dollars. Now, this last week there was an article about something, I'm going to tell you shortly, that indicated that this collection of paintings is probably worth between \$2.5 and \$3.5 million now. This one picture is appraised at about \$250,000, the one that we gave, which is the most valuable one of them all because of Jimmy Swinnerton, his name. He's dead. You know how it goes. Well, in the paper the other day was a notice that the administration is going to try to do what they tried to do back in 1946.

VASQUEZ: Which is . . . ?

DILLS: Nineteen seventy-six, I beg your pardon. Which is to move these paintings and put them into other high schools in the L.A. Unified District. So whenever we move from our old high school here to the new high school, they were going to take those pictures. So we got together and reformed our alumni association, and they elected me the president of the thing,

and we raised enough hell that we kept the pictures here. Now, the alumni association has died down and, now, when this publicity came out in the papers that we have a collection now maybe worth \$2.5 to \$3.5 million, the administration now wants to move them where? Maybe into their own offices. Who knows? So we were just talking about this before you came, and we were going to revive the alumni association.

VASQUEZ: One more time.

DILLS: One more time and try to keep those out here. They don't belong to the Los Angeles Unified District. They belong to the student body and the school from the classes that gave them.

VASQUEZ: How many of your alumni are still together? Do you think you will be able to get together in this?

DILLS: Well, I think we will probably get several hundred now that they understand.

[Interruption]

VASQUEZ: We were talking about your alumni association of Gardena High coming back together. How many do you think you'll be able to get together this

time?

DILLS: Well, I think that eventually we'll get three or four hundred people, because we will really start a drive now. A couple of the classes, I am told, are going to have reunions very shortly. So we are going to show up at those reunions and then enlist their support. Rose Sarukian of my staff and the local. . . . Tom Parks, who is the executive officer of the Gardena Chamber of Commerce and also a graduate, writes a column for the Gardena Valley News. Others are going to try to see if we can't form a nonprofit corporation and so on, of persons, and to raise money and establish a museum there. So that's one of the things we're involved in now.

VASQUEZ: What's the dream that comes out of your high school experience?

DILLS: It comes out of my high school . . .

VASQUEZ: Tell me about going to Compton Junior College, will you?

DILLS: Well, before we go to Compton College, maybe we better stick with the musician thing for just a minute.

VASQUEZ: Okay, good.

DILLS: And then we'll leave that one.

VASQUEZ: Because you went on to remain a musician.

DILLS: We kept our instruments. Clayton and I learned to play them just from the book, where the things were and all that. Neither of us. . . . None of the boys, now, can read a note. We just don't read. We play by ear. Clayton and I. . . . Clayton played his clarinet, and I played my saxophone in the Gardena High School ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] Band. We had ROTC in those days. When I went to UCLA, I was in the ROTC band there. That's better than some other things. I'd listen to what the fellow was playing, who was playing an E-flat, alto saxophone. I would put the mouthpiece up to my mouth and go through the business here, but I'm listening to him. Once he has played his notes, I'll be playing the same ones. The next time, I would play the same notes. I just picked it up. If I could hum it, I can play it. And that's how I learned. That's the way we work today.

I have a band at Sacramento. Our piano

player is Senator Henry [J.] Mello, and the former piano player was Senator James [E.] Whetmore, who has now passed away and he is out of the senate, of course. My drummer is my administrative assistant, my red-headed, do-it-everything in Sacramento, Polly Gardner. She was with the. . . . She played with the Sacramento Symphony as a drummer. My trumpet player is the past president of California State University, Sacramento. My bass player . . .

VASQUEZ: What's his name?

DILLS: The president?

VASQUEZ: The trumpet . . ?

DILLS: Let me back up.

VASQUEZ: Okay.

DILLS: I'll give you. . . . Kent Dedrick was the name of the bass player. I would have to fill that in later. If you hadn't asked me, I'd have given it to you. [Lloyd Johns] Isn't that awful? That is the way it happens.

VASQUEZ: No, that's all right. Keep going.

DILLS: So we play. . . . In fact, we're going to do a gig on November 11, if that is the Friday coming up. It's a surprise thing for Houston [I.]

Flournoy, who was former state controller, but who represents USC [University of Southern California] at the legislature. He's their legislative advocate. So we're just going to do a surprise thing for him there. And we play for fund-raisers, for other members of the legislature.

VASQUEZ: What do you call yourselves?

DILLS: We call ourselves the Dills Derby Band.

VASQUEZ: Why "derby"?

DILLS: Because there's a Derby Club there. It was formed in 1926. We meet every Tuesday and we have been meeting every Tuesday while they're in session and . . .

VASQUEZ: Derby day?

DILLS: Derby day every Tuesday noon, and we wear derbies. It was started by some guys that had been over to London, and they bought themselves some good derbies while they were over there. So they decided they would have a luncheon thing. It's the only . . .

VASQUEZ: When did this start? Before you got there?

DILLS: Yes. It was started before I got there. And then I was in, I said '26. No, that's not

right.

VASQUEZ: You got into the assembly in 1939.

DILLS: Yeah. It was nonexistent at that time, but when I went back up in the senate it was going full force.

VASQUEZ: It was already going full force.

DILLS: Then along came FPPC [Fair Political Practices Commission], the new lobby thing that Governor [Edmund G. "Jerry"] Brown [Jr.] ran for, ran against the legislature and all that. I guess it's the way a certain guy is running against the legislature now. Anyway, that's a good thing to do. If you're out, you run against the guy who is there. So you run against the legislature, and Brown did that and, among other things, was elected on that thing. That did away with all of these new meetings, night meetings, where they had clubs. We had a First Today Club and all sorts of Clam and Choral and all of those. All of them went under because no longer could you spend more than ten dollars a month, you see. But the Derby Club. . . . We said, "Hey, is this America or is this Russia? Why can't I eat with whomever I want to if I pay

my own bill? I'll buy my own drinks. I'll buy my own, and I'll sit next to him. We'll be together." We're the only one of these things that has continued until this day.

VASQUEZ: In those days, was this. . . . I guess some people were concerned that this was where the Third House, where the . . .

DILLS: Where the deals were made?

VASQUEZ: Where the deals were made.

DILLS: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: Is that where the deals were made?

DILLS: No. That's not where the deals were made. Nobody is that stupid. That's what they will not allow. They will not allow those at those We certainly don't at the Derby Club either.

VASQUEZ: But in those days, was it as . . .

DILLS: In those days. . . . The best thing about it is that you got a chance to meet with your own comrades in the legislature.

VASQUEZ: Did lobbyists get in?

DILLS: There are assemblymen who have been up there four years, and I have never shaken their hands or said hello to them. And if they hadn't been

in an assembly committee, I don't even know them. I really don't know them. They're strange faces to me. This is the way it is in Sacramento. Well, okay.

VASQUEZ: And these activities helped to bring you together?

DILLS: These activities bring you together. You get a chance to meet them and get acquainted with them and their families. One of the most persuasive ways of getting legislation passed is to make yourself known to the other guy, have an interest in him. He and you swap stories about the family and your background, where you come from, what are you doing up here. You know, getting acquainted.

VASQUEZ: Let's come back to this in more detail, but let's go on with your career.

DILLS: Okay. All right.

VASQUEZ: Let's do the musician, because you were a musician, a schoolteacher, and an attorney.

DILLS: We were. . . . We got the Dills Derby Band and you asked me about. . . . Okay. Now we want to go on to college? The education?

VASQUEZ: Yeah, let's do that. You said you continued

playing music through college. You went to

a . . .

DILLS: I first went to . . .

VASQUEZ: Compton College?

DILLS: I first went to Southern Branch, UCLA, old campus, Vermont [Avenue]. That was their first semester, 1927-1928. I took a red streetcar here, the old red General Electric cars here one block from my home, went into Sixth [Street] and Main Street, where we got the yellow streetcar, and after one change-over, we wound up on North Vermont at the Southern Branch of the University of California. I couldn't afford the transportation costs. Compton College had opened. I didn't know about it at the time. So the second semester, that would have been the '27-'28 year, I went over to Compton College.

My brother had a garage. Curley had a garage. Some fellow had brought in a Model-T Ford, and he wanted a complete overhaul. When it came time to pick it up, he didn't have the hundred dollars for the complete overhaul. So my brother gave me this Model-T Ford, which I used until I was able to get a schoolteaching

job and buy one. So I went to Compton. Graduated from there. I was one of the scholarship society members. Then [I] went to UCLA, on the new campus, the first year, 1929, Westwood, and majored in history. At that time, I found out. . . . I was going to be an econ[omics] major and be a bookkeeper, an accountant, that sort of thing.

VASQUEZ: You had that in mind at that point?

DILLS: But mathematics taught me a lesson here.

[Laughter] Stay away from those things, which I've proceeded to do ever since.

VASQUEZ: Talk about UCLA the first year.

DILLS: The first year?

VASQUEZ: What do you remember about it? What do you remember about Westwood?

DILLS: Awful big. Wow! Was I lost there.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: Awful big. We had a carpool of four buddies that went over there from Gardena. There were four of us that went over there. One of them was the buddy that had more influence than anybody on me in going to college. I was the only one of the Dills family that ever went

beyond high school.

VASQUEZ: Why is that?

DILLS: They had no will to do so.

VASQUEZ: For an education?

DILLS: They had no will to do so, I guess. Clayton was a good basketball player, he was a good musician, and he was a good baseball player. He had a scholarship at the University of Southern California, but his schoolmate love. . . . He got married right afterwards and went to work as a Safeway [Stores] manager, and that was that.

VASQUEZ: What was it about education that seemed to attract you?

DILLS: Two things. First of all, I started wearing glasses when I was in the sixth grade. That cut out a lot of sports. Besides, I am two years physically less developed and, while I am larger than Clayton, still I'm gangly and all. I graduated at seventeen, you see. Usually it is eighteen or maybe nineteen. Secondly, the glasses. . . . I didn't get into the. . . . I really wasn't a macho kind. Hunting and fishing and physical education, no thank you very much. I would rather read a book, if you don't

mind. And I did read every book that was written by that fellow that has poor boys and the poor boys turn out to be good clean boys. They worked themselves up. His name will come to me. Don't ask me. I'll give it to you shortly. [Horatio Alger, Jr.] I read every book that he published. Instead of going to a motion picture, I'd buy a twenty-five cent book.

This buddy of mine, Bob [Robert] McKinnon, lived on the same street. His family were all schoolteachers, lawyers, and so on, and he was going to go to UCLA. So he talked me into it, along with a very lovely teacher by the name of Ms. Leonard, who was the librarian at Gardena High who started a "Go to College Club" for all of us. I joined that. I wanted to go, and I did. I wanted to be a teacher, because of the old thing, "if you can't do anything else, why, you would teach." So I couldn't find anything else besides playing a saxophone that I could do at that time, although I did a lot of things. Grocery stores. [I] worked for wholesale florists over here, drove a truck, and all of those things at Eastertime and Christmastime.

The only way I could get through school was this job that [Hiro] Joe Kobata gave me.

Incidentally. . . . Well, I'll get to that later. UCLA, history major, graduated in 1931 along with [Augustus F.] "Gus" Hawkins, who you now know. And Bernard Jefferson, a black man, who later was a judge, and who was the valedictorian there. He gave a speech on "The Golden Rule versus the Rule of Gold." He was an econ major, and he really laid it on the capitalist system. [Laughter] The golden rule versus the rule of gold. The rule of gold was the capitalistic system and so on.

VASQUEZ: This is Bernard Jefferson?

DILLS: This is Bernard Jefferson, yeah, who later was an appellate court judge in California.

VASQUEZ: What was the impact of that?

DILLS: Well, it was not too bad, because this was 1931. You remember the crash was October 1929. We were beginning to feel it in California. We felt the Depression two or three years later than the east.

VASQUEZ: It was the end of the Depression.

DILLS: No, we were in the beginning of it here. It was

very, very tight. So much so that my dad. . . .

[The] only income we had in our house was my dad's and what I could work on Saturdays and Sundays.

VASQUEZ: Had your other brothers left home already?

DILLS: They all had their homes and they had their jobs. At that time, they were in the grocery business working as clerks in Safeway stores, or managers later. Well. . . . Graduated from there 1931, wanted to be a teacher. UCLA didn't give the general secondary teaching credential at that time. I had to go to a private school. USC gave it. I went over there and enrolled. Do you know what they want to charge me for tuition? Ten dollars a unit they wanted from me! Are you kidding? Ten dollars a unit? A hundred and fifty dollars a semester! Where in the world would I get a hundred and fifty dollars? I didn't have it. I worked during the summer in a dude ranch, Glenn Ranch, up in the San Bernardino Mountains and had earned sixty dollars. In other words, for the summer, and room and food, sixty dollars. Played in the orchestra nighttime, worked in the

grocery store from eight until twelve noon. Sixty bucks, all I had, but I scrounged around. I had to drop out a year and work in a laundry. After I had my bachelor's degree, I worked in a laundry in Glendale, drove from Gardena to the Blue [Diamond] Laundry out in Glendale at sixteen bucks a week, running a tumbler there. I learned that over at the Crystal White.

VASQUEZ: Was your father still working over at the Crystal White?

DILLS: No, my dad. . . . No. No. He had a little vegetable stand here in somebody else's grocery store by now. I can tell you this much: I like it now, but I got awfully tired of beef stew. It was vegetables that you couldn't sell, but they were okay. They have spots on them and So we had beef stew, beef stew, beef stew for those years. Dad said, "I can't help you, son. If you want to stay here and eat what we eat. . . ." I said, "Dad, that's all I want. I'll do it. I'll do it."

So I worked my way through college, every cotton-pickin' penny, and they were awfully hard

to get. I had to drop out at USC because I couldn't afford the tuition. I went. . . . There was a Knight Templars, that's the Masonic group. They had a loan fund. I went to the dean of men and he said, "Is there any Mason in your family?" I said, "A brother. He's in Oklahoma." He said, "Well, you'll have to get a cosigner." So I came back to Joe Kobata, the man who supplied a job for me every Christmas and every Easter and then one of the summers. So he was my cosigner. I borrowed a hundred and fifty dollars for the tuition. I made the last payment on that loan. I got it in '33, '32? No, '33. I got it then. I made the last payment on that loan out of my first mileage check, when I went up to the California [State] Assembly in 1939. That's how long. . . . That's how tight money was. So the Depression was here. You're going to ask me, you may, "Why did you want to get into politics?" Well . . .

VASQUEZ: We're going to get into that.

DILLS: Well, we'll get into that. It was the Depression and all of these things.

VASQUEZ: And what you saw around you.

DILLS: I got my master's degree at USC. I got my general secondary teaching credential. Here I am, you lucky people. I made [an] application for a teaching position. I had only one of the qualifications. They want males, they want married males, they want married males with experience. I do not have a wife: I can't afford one. I have no experience because nobody will give me a teaching job. So what do I do? I dust off my saxophone. And beer came back in. Prohibition was repealed by constitutional amendment. That was the year [President Franklin Delano] Roosevelt was elected, 1932, the first year that I could vote and did vote for Roosevelt. I adopted him. He adopted me. We went together for four terms. I was a Roosevelt/[President Harry S] Truman elector in his fourth term. Anyway, back to . . .

VASQUEZ: Were you always a Democrat?

DILLS: Yes, yes. I was a Democrat.

VASQUEZ: Why?

DILLS: My dad was a Democrat. Mother was a Democrat. We're from Texas, and nobody but a yellow dog would be a Republican.

There was a paper in Phoenix, when I was there, called the Arizona Republican. It's still there. It came out and wanted to know if I'd like to have a paper route, the Arizona Republican. So I went to Dad. I said, "Dad, these people are Republicans. Can I work for them?" [Laughter] "Well, I guess it will be all right, son."

VASQUEZ: But he had to think about it?

DILLS: He had to think about it, yeah. So. . . . What was my train of thoughts?

VASQUEZ: You were talking about . . .

DILLS: Yeah, jobs.

VASQUEZ: You dusted off your saxophone and . . .

DILLS: Yeah. Prohibition was repealed. They opened up Buckets of Blood and all sorts of honky-tonk establishments. I played all over southern California on these at nighttime, and then I would try to get a day job. Sometimes I would get a call to be a substitute teacher in the Compton system. It'd be in Lynwood or what's now Paramount, or it'd be in Compton itself or at Willowbrook. And, invariably, it was to teach. . . . To take the place of the Latin

teacher and, of course, the Latin teacher was the home ec[economics] teacher, and it was hard to get someone who would take over Latin.

VASQUEZ: Where did you learn that?

DILLS: Compton College, one full year, first and second semester. "Will you take it?" "Will I take it? Of course I'll take it." So I'd go over there. I get a call in the morning, 7:00 A.M. after playing in the orchestra until 2:00 A.M. in the morning and then catting around. I'd get a call at 7:00 in the morning and I'd report over there for substitute work. That paid off very well, because at the end of that year. . . . I played in the orchestra for the whole year, which was, in one respect, the only carefree year of my whole life.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: I learned some bad habits there. That is. . . . I'm a night owl. I never want to go to bed and then, when I do go to bed, I'd never want to get up. This was the greatest job in history that I had, except when they call me for substitution, because I would sleep in in the morning and then

I'd go to work at 9:00 P.M. and play until 2:00 A.M., and then if there was any chick around that looked interesting and would put up with me, why, we would go out and have something to eat and that sort of thing. That's how I met my first wife. She came out there and I met her.

VASQUEZ: What was her name?

DILLS: Effie [Ernestine Wymore Dills]. She and her sister [Maxine Wymore] came out with a couple of young fellows. I liked her sister better. She was a little warmer than my wife, but the sister. . . . Finally, the wife came out separately. She didn't come out with the sister, and I got her name and finally got her address. When I went to see her the first time, she wasn't there. Her mother was there.

[Laughter] Crazy thing. I took along a steak. God, how uncultured can a person be? I was raised in a family of boys. We never kissed our mother. Kiss your mother? Are you kidding? Mom wouldn't know what to do if we did. She might slap my face. "What are you up to?" Anyway, I bought a round steak to go up there. We were going to have her cook us a

dinner. Oh, crazy, crazy guy. I'm embarrassed even to tell about it. She wasn't there, but her mother was, and her mother thought I was a nice person. [Laughter] We had the steak. Crazy.

So I kept going around and kept bothering her. Finally, after I got a teaching job, we went together for a better part of a year. When I did get a job to be able to afford her, why, I popped the question. And we got married in the August after I had been a teacher . . .

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

DILLS: Finally, after substituting in the Compton schools, why, I became acquainted with the assistant superintendent that was over at the junior high schools. We had the so-called 6-4-4 plan there. The junior high school had the seventh through the tenth grades, and one of my prized students over there was Duke Snider, a baseball player who still has many records. He was just in the hall of fame this last year. Duke made it. So I taught Latin and English. And I'm so happy that I flunked subject A,

dumbbell English. I had to take it at UCLA. I took it in 1928. No, actually I took it when I was over, yeah, '28, at Vermont. It was the best course I ever had in any of the three colleges that I've attended. Dumbbell English was their very best course. It taught you some English, and that came in so well in so many things for me subsequently, because I could. . . . I learned how to write. I learned how to teach. I used those workbooks that they used and drilled and drilled and drilled until we were able to be a fairly presentable teacher of English. The Latin we got along with fairly well.

VASQUEZ: So how long did you teach?

DILLS: I taught a total of ten years during the time when I was in the legislature. When I-- Do we want to . . ? Have we finished our schools yet? I guess no, we haven't.

VASQUEZ: No, let's do that. Let's follow out school. We're going to come back to this in more of a chronological order. I just want to get through--get it all in the record.

DILLS: Okay.

VASQUEZ: You were a teacher, and then you. . . . When did you decide to become an attorney?

DILLS: Well, that's when I was in the legislature.

VASQUEZ: Oh, really? Okay.

DILLS: And that's in 1943 to 1945.

VASQUEZ: When you were in the legislature the first time, did you know [Assemblyman Julian] "Jay" Beck? He was a teacher as well, the assemblyman.

DILLS: Sure, yeah, a lawyer, too. Yeah, I knew Julian. As a matter of fact, he and I were the candidates for floor leader, and he won out by one vote. The vote was pledged to me, but the vote was [Assemblyman Everett G.] Burkhalter, who came from San Fernando Valley, Everett Burkhalter. So Burkhalter didn't show that day because he was in trouble. Jay Beck was from San Fernando, and [Burkhalter] didn't want to vote against his neighbor, so he just didn't come to the meeting, and I lost out to [Beck]. But I was assistant floor leader, no problem. We got along all right. But I could see. . . .

I was a teacher. I'm getting no money from the teaching when I'm at Sacramento because they have a substitute for me. And we were paid \$100

per month in the sessions in those days. We met in full session on the odd-numbered year, so '39, '41, '43, '45. Those were the years until we got into 1966, where they had full-time legislature. It wasn't until '48 until we had our annual budget sessions but, anyhow.

January, we would go up [and] introduce our bills. We were supposed to take a month off so that the people-- We could read the bills and the people could, but they were really not printed by that time. And we'd come back in March, and we were paid \$12 a day for the hundred days that we were there. It was \$1,200 a year. We were paid \$100 a month on the even-numbered years. So by the time the hundred days are over, you want to get out of there because you have no more money and no per diems in those days, and it's awfully hot in Sacramento. We had no air-conditioning in [those] assembly chambers, and we had these open globes. There must have been two thousand globes in the assembly ceiling up there. It was hot. No committee rooms with air-conditioning in them, no room for the legislators at all.

VASQUEZ: Did you have . . ? Who did you share offices with?

DILLS: I did not have any offices at that time. Later on, after my brother came up there, he and I and [Assemblyman Richard H.] Dick McCollister, three of us in one room. No secretaries in there. If you . . .

VASQUEZ: Where did you live when you were in Sacramento?

DILLS: Motels. Buckets of Blood. They were way out of town. You know, these transient motels? That's all I could afford.

VASQUEZ: Were you a musician while you were in legislature?

DILLS: I didn't make any money there, no. I played with [Assemblyman] Jack [B.] Tenney, who was a piano player. He was the composer of "Mexicali Rose," and he was head of the Musicians Union [Local 47] and, later, state senator, and changed from Democrat to Republican, and later was my brother-in-law. He married my wife's sister.

There was no money coming in, and I wasn't getting the substitute pay. I wasn't getting the pay--the difference between the substitute

and my pay. So I went to the superintendent and asked him: "Well, look, I'm chairman of the education committee." This was 1939, actually, my first year. I said, "Why can't I get the difference between my pay and that of the substitute?" He said, "Well, we can't do that." I said, "But I am serving the schools up here as chairman of education and doing everything, an important spot. I would think that the board ought to recognize. . . . You don't really want to make money out of my leaving, do you?" But the board wouldn't do it. He made a mistake, but this is another story. Whenever there was a change, an opportunity to change the school board, I did. I got a candidate. Each one of the four districts that were up, we wiped out the entire school board and put on one of the school boards in the Willowbrook area [Assemblyman] Carley V. Porter.

VASQUEZ: Who replaced you.

DILLS: Who replaced me, whom I supported and handled his campaign. So then I got the difference between my pay and that of a substitute. But

all the six terms I was there, ten and a half years, I received \$100 a month. Later we were able to get a per diem. This was worked out. [Speaker of the Assembly] Sam [L.] Collins was chairman of [the] Rules Committee. I was vice chairman, a Democrat, on it. Sam, who lived in the Sacramento Hotel. I lived in motels and saved my bills, and he sued in behalf of the legislature, the controller [Robert C. Kirkwood], and said we were away from our homes and, therefore as such, we were entitled to get our per diem pay, the same as other state employees and state officials who are away from their home. The controller turned us down. His lawyers told him to, I guess. We took it upstairs to the [California] Supreme Court, and they upheld us. They gave us our per diem, said, "Yes, you may do it." Then, we put it into statute and the board of control was allowing \$10 a day per diem at that time. So we were put in by the board of control. I don't know what we're getting now, \$80-something, but it was \$10 then. But that was later in the sessions.

VASQUEZ: Tell me. . . . So partway through your

legislative career or your first legislative service to government. . . .

DILLS: I looked around and I could see that the lawyers were going up. I was going to have to quit the legislature or quit teaching, one or the other. It just wasn't working out, and I was not getting enough money to really live on, because you have to keep two places. A hundred dollars a month doesn't go very far. Fortunately, while I was a teacher, we organized a credit union. I'm still a member of it. It's now in its fifty-third year, I believe.

VASQUEZ: What's it called?

DILLS: It's now called the Mid-Cities Schools Credit Union. I still have my number 9 number. [I have] borrowed money from them and have shares there now. I borrowed \$250 from them. I was the chairman of the credit committee, so that helped a little. Two hundred fifty dollars for down payment on my first home. I bought it for \$10,000, and \$250 was the down payment. I think the payments were about \$40 a month. That home was my home. I rented it out one year whenever we were up there in the full session.

I had wanted to study law. I said I had. One time in the Committee on Livestock and Dairies, I was on that--a vice chairman of it--because I represented the largest dairy area in the world at that time. All the way from Figueroa Street to east of the Orange County line, that was dairy valley. It was Paramount, it was Artesia, it was Bellflower, it was Downey. It was known as Clear-Water Hynes, [where] Paramount is now. It was Clear-Water Hynes in those days. The largest hay market in the world and the largest dairy industry in the world. One hundred and fifty thousand pounds of butterfat a month.

So in the Livestock and Dairies Committee, I said, "I always wanted to study law." There was a cattleman there who said that his son was studying law. I said, "I always wanted to study law." He said, "No, I don't think so." "What did you say?" He said, "No, I don't think so." "What makes you say that?" He said, "Well, if you wanted to study law, you'd go study law." I said, "You're right. I'm going to do it, and I'm going to do it this year," and

I did. [Laughter] I had. . . .

In those days, you could get these dollar cartwheels, you know, these silver dollars. I was saving those during those years. This is the war years, you see. This is '43 to '45.

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: I was given deferral [for] military service because I was married and in the legislature. My board thought that I ought to stay up there in the legislature, could probably do more good than I could getting into something or other in the services, because they wouldn't put me into combat in the first place. Probably put me in What do they call the lawyers? The judicial . . ?

VASQUEZ: Legal officers.

DILLS: Legal officers, yeah, probably put me in that because I was now a lawyer. Well, anyhow.

VASQUEZ: You became a lawyer in 1945?

DILLS: In 1945. So if they'd drafted me, I'd have gone to that. The war had started in 1941, as you know, 1942 [to] 1945.

VASQUEZ: You got a deferment being in the legislature?

DILLS: Yeah. So I said, "Okay. I am going to do

it." So I had these silver dollars, and I took them down. The only law school that was first-class that had night school was Loyola Law School of Loyola Marymount University. So I went to Loyola University, and Father [Joseph J.] Donovan was the dean then. I came in with . . . I don't know what the tuition was, but I had over \$100 in silver, and I brought it and laid it there. He said, "I see you've been to Reno." I said, "No, I wasn't in Reno. I wouldn't have these if I had been in Reno. I was in Sacramento. I picked them up there." I paid most of the tuition--I think it was part of it--in silver dollars. Went around the clock in order to accommodate those who were in the services. Such as now, [Assemblyman Laughlin E.] Waters.

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: Who followed his dad, [Assemblyman] Frank J. Waters, [and another son] who follows his dad, [Assemblyman Frank] Waters [Jr.]. There was Waters flowing there for several years. Have you done Laughlin Waters?

VASQUEZ: Yes, we have. As a matter of fact, I was

honored to.

DILLS: He's a great guy. His dad was not quite the same hail-fellow-well-met as the judge. He was a little bit different.

VASQUEZ: They all ran in the same district, and he, in fact, replaced his brother.

DILLS: That's right, and his brother replaced his dad.

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: Father; Frank, Jr.; and then Laughlin.

VASQUEZ: Do you know the story of how he got to Sacramento in his first term?

DILLS: I know. I know. I also know how he got to be a lawyer. You don't know.

VASQUEZ: Yes, I do. Can you confirm that for me?

DILLS: I can confirm that for you. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Well, you took the bar?

DILLS: So we passed a bill there that would permit you to go around the clock, that's to accommodate those soldiers who were coming back, the GI's who were coming back and anybody else. So I entered Loyola University's school of law in Los Angeles, went around the clock and, in two years time, completed it and got my degree and passed the bar the first time I took it. There were

only two people I know in the state of California who did that. The other one was [Senator John] Harold Swan, who was a senator from Sacramento and who went to Boalt Hall [School of Law, University of California, Berkeley] in northern California and passed the bar also in 1945 and later became the dean of the McGeorge School of Law [University of the Pacific], which now is, you know, pretty big. We have a member of the McGeorge faculty on the U.S. Supreme Court [Anthony M. Kennedy].

I was going to school, and I passed the bar. That year, there was a fight on the floor in which Laughlin Waters and I were engaged. He'd just come up to the assembly and he just got his law degree. So I made some sort of statement, and he said, "Well, you'd expect a statement like that out of a teacher who finally made it as a lawyer." When I got up to respond, I said, "Well, yes, I finally made it as a lawyer, but it wasn't by legislative act the way you got yours." Whoosh! We had passed a bill, and those who would have graduated from law school were blanketed in, because they would not

[want] to go back to college now after three or four years from [finishing] their training. It was unfair. And it was. So we blanketed them in and we permitted them. . . . We gave them legal authority, because we also set up the bar association. The legislature gave them legal . . . You're an attorney. Are you an attorney?

VASQUEZ: No.

DILLS: No. Gave them the. . . . We had the legal authority to make them members of the bar without taking the exam. So that was a little incident.

VASQUEZ: So that settled that one.

DILLS: That confirmed that. [Laughter] That stopped that, too. No more did I hear from Laugh[lin] Waters.

VASQUEZ: What was the issue? Do you remember?

DILLS: I don't know what it was all about. Probably having something to do with welfare or working people or laborers, I don't know.

VASQUEZ: Why? Was he . . ?

DILLS: They were conservatives. They were Republicans, and I represented an area that, when I was

elected in 1938, every other house was under some form of public relief or somebody was on it, CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] or WPA [Works Progress Administration] or something or another.

VASQUEZ: Why don't we do that? Why don't we . . . ?

DILLS: Yeah, let's go into that.

VASQUEZ: We'll go back. . . . We'll come back in between the legislative years to your judicial career, but let's do it in chronological order. Let's talk about your first legislative experience. Let's talk about the Sixty-ninth [Assembly] District.

DILLS: Yes, sir. The Sixty-ninth District . . .

VASQUEZ: Draw me a mental picture of the demographics.

DILLS: Do you know where Figueroa Street is? Start at Figueroa Street and go east to the Orange County line, excluding Signal Hill and Long Beach and those coast cities there, but including Bellflower, Artesia, of course Compton and Dominguez Hills. I had Dominguez in those days before it was Carson.

VASQUEZ: Am I wrong when I say Lakewood?

DILLS: Not Lakewood, not Lakewood. It was not a city

then. Neither was Bellflower, neither was Artesia, and so on. I went up to Compton and Willowbrook. Do you know where Willowbrook is? It's a county area north and west of Compton. It's "Mexican town," we used to call it.

VASQUEZ: Oh, really?

DILLS: Yeah. Mexicans there mostly. Mexicans, and then later the blacks came in, but more Mexican than black at the time.

VASQUEZ: These people probably worked in the agricultural areas around there?

DILLS: They worked everywhere, you know, labor, hard work. Going up to Lynwood, up to South Gate, go east to Downey to Norwalk on the Orange County line, Artesia, the whole thing. They have seven assemblymen there now to do my work. So all of that area. I was a teacher there. In 1934 and 1935, I went to work as a teacher in West Compton, at Enterprise Junior High School.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: Seventh grade through the tenth grade, teaching Latin and English. Two years later, I got my world history and American history and social

living [credential] and so on. The EPIC [End Poverty in California] movement started in 1934 when a man by the name of Upton Sinclair, a socialist who was a great writer, re-registered as a Democrat and threw his hat into the race for the governorship. He started the EPIC--End Poverty in California--movement. I was out of school, out of work, 1934, no teaching job. There was a principal [later, Assemblyman Lee E. Geyer] at the Gardena Adult School who was my best man at my marriage in Gardena. He was a member of our Methodist church at that time, and he said, "I am going to run for the assembly." I said, "What is the assembly? You're going to work for General Motors up here in South Gate where they have an assembly plant?" "No, no, no," he said. "That's what they call assemblyman. It's in the lower house of the California legislature." I said, "Well, that is interesting." And he said, "You better get interested." He asked, "Are you working?" I said, "No, I am not working. I'm looking for a job." He said, "You better listen, then." So he taught me a little bit about the EPIC

movement. I was a New Dealer, Roosevelt--my first vote was for him--so I liked what he did to CCC in particular. Incidentally, I mustn't forget that I got Governor Brown started; we put in a CCC in California.

VASQUEZ: Is that Pat Brown?

DILLS: No. I never served under Pat Brown. This is Edmund G. Brown, Jr. This was when I was in the senate. So I was out of work, and Lee Geyer said, "Look, you don't have a teaching job. You don't go to work until September. Why don't you manage my campaign?" I said, "I don't know anything about politics." "Well," he said, "We'll learn together." So we did.

VASQUEZ: What district did he run in?

DILLS: He ran in the Sixty-seventh [Assembly] District. This was here in Gardena and all the way up to and including Watts and Torrance and Hawthorne and Redondo Beach and so on, which was the one that my brother [Clayton Dills] later represented for twenty-four years. So he ran for that office. I managed his campaign. We organized EPIC clubs. I organized five of them.

VASQUEZ: Did you?

DILLS: End Poverty in California clubs. Then I ran for the Democratic County Central Committee in 1934. I was elected. Our EPIC ticket was elected. We had all of them, all seven, as I recall. Somebody might have squeaked in, but anyway, we had the majority. We organized the first Council of Democratic Clubs in this, the Sixty-seventh District, the first one.

VASQUEZ: What year would this be?

DILLS: That was 1935, and I was the secretary of the Council of Democratic Clubs.

VASQUEZ: Were you aware of Augustus Hawkins's campaign in 1935?

DILLS: 'Thirty-four. Yeah, sure. Lee was elected. He went up in the EPIC wave. It was Lee E. Geyer. Lee Geyer was the man who later was a congressman. Anyway, we won. In '35--[it was a] teaching year--I was a teacher. Easter vacation we had off. They were in session in Sacramento. Lee said, "Come up to Sacramento during the Easter vacation." So I got a bus and-- I ran across the ticket when I was looking for things. I ran across the ticket. I paid \$9.98 for a round-way ticket on a bus to go to

Sacramento and come back. I ran across that the other day. I was up there during Easter vacation, and I just simply became a mainline politician. It just got into my blood right there. The fights were on and they were. . . . The days of the red-baiting and the Dies Committee¹ and all of this turmoil. Things were really moving, and it just got into my blood.

VASQUEZ: What was it you liked?

DILLS: I beg your pardon?

VASQUEZ: What was it you liked? Everything? Everything about it?

DILLS: Being able to do something. Here I am, helpless, unemployed. Here's something being done. Bills put in to take care of the people in welfare and the senior citizens and that sort of thing. It just got into my blood. I guess I am a do-gooder anyway. I was born-- I'm an Aquarian. I am on the cusp, really, if those things mean anything to you and Nancy [Reagan]. [Laughter] Anyway, I'm with Abraham Lincoln,

1. Special House Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities, 1938-1944.

I'm with Washington, I'm with--pardon the expression--[Ronald W.] Reagan, but not that close to Reagan. Reagan in those days was with me. He changed over whenever he started making money. It's the Republicans that make the money, I guess.

Anyhow, in 1938, there were. . . . The EPIC man by the name of [Assemblyman Franklin A.] Glover, Frank Glover, in '34 won out, but in '36 he was defeated by a man by the name of [Assemblyman] Fred [P.] Glick, who was part owner of Glick Brothers Lumber and Paint Stores. I think they had three stores in the chain. There was a book [pamphlet] that came out called One Hundred Votes. We looked that up, and that was the bible of the EPIC people, One Hundred Votes. He made maybe four or five bad votes, a maximum of five--which is not a bad voting record--but he made the mistake of leaving a note on his desk in Sacramento. His seatmate was an EPIC guy by the name of Fred Reeves from San Pedro. They had the voting machines then too, and in the 1937 session, he bought a gold mine up in Grass Valley. Glick

left a note on his desk for Fred. He said, "Fred, please vote for me a few times. I'm going up to my mine in Grass Valley." In those days, the newspaper people, the lobbyists, your family, anybody could come in on the floor. And they could come in and sit by you.

VASQUEZ: On the floor?

DILLS: On the floor. Your secretary. . . . If you wanted a secretary, you'd have to get in line, and then the secretary pool would come down and you'd dictate on the floor. We had no room. A newspaperman by the name of Earl [C.] "Squire" Behrens--the name may come to you from your others--saw that note, picked that note up, wrote an article on how Fred Reeves was voting for Fred Glick. Somebody sent that down to me, and I used that against him, and it really hurt. That, plus a couple of other bad votes in this One Hundred book, and I got the endorsement. They organized, and I became secretary, I think, of the Council of Democratic Clubs over at that district. Maybe I wasn't an officer then because I was teaching. So at an endorsement convention I got the endorsement to

run for the office over several other people, another teacher too, [by the] name of [Wayne F.] Bowen, who later ran against me. Anyway, I ran and we won. This group, EPIC people and the Democratic Clubs and all, went for me. We spent \$300 in the campaign.

VASQUEZ: That's it?

DILLS: Yes. I got a \$100 contribution from a Republican from South Gate, a plumber. Somebody said, "He wants to see you." I went up there.

He said, "I want to give you a check."

I said, "What for and why?"

Well, he said, "Don't you want to be elected assemblyman?"

I said, "Yes. What do you want?"

He said, "I want the same thing you want. I want to beat Fred Glick. I don't like him. I want to defeat him. You want to defeat him. Do you want the check or don't you want it?"

I said, "All right. Okay. If that is what you want."

He said, "That's all I want. I will never ask you for anything," and he never did. I took the \$100 check.

VASQUEZ: What was his name? Do you remember?

DILLS: Huh?

VASQUEZ: Do you remember his name?

DILLS: God, I can't remember his name, a plumbing contractor. He didn't like Glick. He got into some deal with him over some building. The other guy was in the lumber business. I don't know the background of it.

VASQUEZ: So tell me about your campaign? What do you remember about that campaign? Do you remember the issues or the votes?

DILLS: I remember that I would speak on a half-hour or an hour basis from one club to one group, just all over the district. I taught school during the day and, when late afternoon came, I hit the road.

VASQUEZ: Did you walk precincts in those days?

DILLS: I walked as much as I could, but I had walkers. We had lots of unemployed people, and they were out there. I mean, this was a real people's thing.

VASQUEZ: Were they paid?

DILLS: No. No pay, no money. I just had three hundred bucks. We'd have coffee.

VASQUEZ: Why did they see . . . ?

DILLS: Why did they do it? Because they were persuaded that the EPIC movement. . . . The things we wanted to do, provide jobs, was . . .

VASQUEZ: In their interest?

DILLS: Was in their interest. They were on welfare and they wanted to see to it that there was enough money from the state to pay for their food since the federal government couldn't employ all of them. Some of them were unemployable. For some of them there was no jobs like they needed. The Blue Eagle [symbol of the] NRA [National Recovery Administration], remember? As a matter of fact, I went to work under the Blue Eagle at a time when I had no other job. Played my saxophone, too, at night and worked in a store in Manhattan Beach for eight hours. They would only let you work eight hours under the Blue Eagle, and you didn't have to be union then. So I worked eight hours there, came home and changed clothes in Gardena, and went down and played in a hole in the wall. It was a place on the pike in Long Beach. I almost had a full-time job. But there were plenty of workers,

plenty of people who'd walk the precincts. My name being Dills, I got out a dill pickle, a green dill pickle with the name, white, of Dills on it. I have a picture of it, and I have one of them framed in my office in Sacramento. I couldn't get enough money to buy enough of those things. They went fast--talk about the hotcakes! You put it on the windshields and the kids would put it everyplace. I was a teacher, and the kids wanted to work. They would peddle the papers, and you just buy them some Coca-Cola or something. They'd do it for you on their bicycles. I made my wife and faculty wives and friends, we started the first T-shirts. We stenciled. We bought what we used to call, oh, sugar sacks that they put the sugar in. Oh, I don't know, it was a cheap kind of . . .

VASQUEZ: Muslin?

DILLS: Muslin, yes. We made our underwear out of it in those days, out of sugar sacks. It worked all right. We stenciled "Dills For Assembly" on the back. We'd make a stencil and then [we] couldn't keep those either! You know, the kids were wearing them all over, everywhere. I

carried my school area three to one over the Democratic incumbent. The kids worked, and I had many of them. Today, they'll see my name in the paper over something and I get phone calls even now from former students.

The executive secretary of the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce was a student of mine. She retired the other day, and I sent down a resolution for her retirement. I show it to Duke Snider and all of these people, famous people, latch onto if I can. We just walked away with it. I didn't cross-file the first time, so I had a runoff with a Republican. He was a man who was a trucking executive. He had a lot of money, and he was a good candidate. He gave me a good run, but I beat him almost two to one, because this was a Democratic, EPIC, old-age pension group.

VASQUEZ: Why do you think that the EPIC movement died out and failed?

DILLS: As a political movement, it died out because socialists didn't win. If you want to read a good book on politics, read I, Candidate, and

How I Got Licked.¹ Have you read it?

VASQUEZ: Yes.

DILLS: Upton Sinclair. It tells you how to . . .

VASQUEZ: It follows I, Candidate, and How I Got Elected.²

DILLS: Yeah. Then he wrote some other things. I have a copy of that somewhere. Maybe it wasn't burned in the fire. Anyhow, he passed away eventually. He lost the nomination, and the movement went on in Culbert [L.] Olson, who was an EPIC guy, who became governor. [Senator] Sheridan Downey was. . . . He ran for lieutenant governor. Sheridan Downey and Upton Sinclair, "Vote for Uppy and Downey," but Uppy was not elected. Downey wasn't elected lieutenant governor, but he got in with the [Francis E.] Townsend movement, which got started about two years later and really swept the country. That started in Long Beach, and we organized Townsend clubs everywhere. I'll tell you about that.

1. Upton Sinclair, I, Candidate for Governor, and How I Got Licked. Los Angeles: End Poverty League, 1935.

2. Upton Sinclair, I, Governor of California, and How I Ended Poverty; A True Story of the Future. Los Angeles: Upton Sinclair, 1933.

VASQUEZ: You organized in that also? Townsend clubs?

DILLS: I say "we," our groups did, our people did. An important thing, whenever we would get to Clayton's campaign, if we ever do . . .

VASQUEZ: We will.

DILLS: The fact that the Townsend clubs were very instrumental in this election, because four Dills brothers were playing music at each one of their meetings.

VASQUEZ: I see.

DILLS: "And Ralph Dills plays the saxophone. He is an incumbent, you know," Townsend people said. "Everybody knows we're nonpartisan and we don't endorse, but Ralph Dills has been a good friend of the senior citizens, and the fellow there playing the bass violin now is Clayton Dills, and he is the candidate in the Sixth-seventh District." You could go to four clubs a night, all over this district.

VASQUEZ: How many people did they pull in these meetings?

DILLS: Oh, full, 150, 200 people! They had their clubs and they'd meet there. They had bingo and you know . . .

VASQUEZ: Did it pull different kinds of people?

Different races? Different age groups?

DILLS: Yup, yup, but mostly the seniors. But still, they had the young people, too. It was a powerful movement. It elected Sheridan Downey to the United States Senate. Townsend was back of him. He was coming along a little later, though. He was their favorite when Townsendites were in their prime in 1942. That was when Clayton ran for the assembly here. So he and I were elected and we beat the Republican then. Subsequently, each time Clayton and I cross-filed. We could do it, and that was not repealed until after I left the legislature. We cross-filed, and I would win the Republican and Democratic nominations several times. I'd always have a third party, Peace and Freedom or Libertarian or some other party.

VASQUEZ: In your assembly did you have any serious opposition after your first term?

DILLS: Not really, no.

VASQUEZ: Who was the most difficult that you could remember?

DILLS: A Republican?

VASQUEZ: Yes. Or Democrat?

DILLS: I had a runoff with one Republican by the name of Oscar McCracken, who was then mayor of Bellflower. They became a city, and I got them their main street taken out of the state highway system. Before they were a city, it was a state highway system. Well, the state didn't clean up the streets, and they'd never sweep the streets, papers or anything like that. Here was the main street, Bellflower Boulevard, just dirty as can be. So they wanted it taken out and put in the county road. The county would take care of it, they enter into contracts. Well, I put in a bill and I got it over to the senate. I went over to take it up, and Senator [Randolph] Collier says, "The bill is dead." I said, "I'm talking about my bill." He said, "Your bill is dead." I said, "When are we going to have the hearing?" He said, "We just had it."

VASQUEZ: So that was how the procedure worked, huh?

DILLS: That is. . . . It did happen.

VASQUEZ: It didn't happen.

DILLS: I went to them and said, "What the hell is going on around here?" You know? That's the way the senate treated us in those days.

VASQUEZ: Let's talk about that.

DILLS: Those cow-county senators, they were rough men. I tell you, they were rough. If you were one of those wild-eyed EPIC people, why, forget it. They were rougher. They didn't like Culbert Olson, who was the governor for four years. They didn't like [Lieutenant Governor Ellis E.] Patterson. Ellis Patterson was the lieutenant governor, and it was he. . . . Because lieutenant governors used to have the same powers the speaker had, they appointed the committee members. However, because he was elected, the Democrats and the Republicans in the area got together and they started what we have now, the Rules Committee. They elected the Rules Committee, and the Rules Committee then appoints committees. And the president pro tem is chairman of Rules Committee. We didn't let the lieutenant governor fool around. We'd just tell him to go take a walk and we'd just run it ourselves. I've been presiding over the senate more than any other senator in history. Each of the pro tempores in the Rules Committee has said, "Well, take the job. You've been a judge,

you've been a teacher, and you keep good order and move things," and so on. Okay.

VASQUEZ: Did you enjoy it?

DILLS: Yes, I enjoyed that. It's good for your ego, I guess, but you know what is going on. You're a part of leadership. You see what is happening.

VASQUEZ: You're keeping your finger on the pulse, so to speak?

DILLS: You know what's happening, and you know when it's a good time to take up your own bills and when it's not a good time. So there's an advantage to me for that reason.

VASQUEZ: Going back to the time you won the assembly, discuss for me, if you will, the different speakers that you served under? [Speaker of the Assembly] Paul Peek and [Speaker of the Assembly] Gordon H. Garland and [Speaker of the Assembly Charles W.] Lyon and . . ?

DILLS: Sam Collins.

VASQUEZ: Compare those.

DILLS: Well, Paul Peek was the Democrat. He was not the most liberal of the Democrats, but he was the one that could put us together and did. We had a choice between Jack Tenney and Paul

Peek. Now, Jack Tenney at that time was a left-wing, wild-eyed radical. He and [Assemblyman Samuel W.] Sam Yorty were my two heroes!

VASQUEZ: Were they?

DILLS: Sure. I'd come up there from the EPIC ranks. I mean, these are guys that are for civil liberties. They're for the downtrodden, they're for the minorities, they're for people! And that's me. They're for labor, they're for taking care of our senior citizens. This is my bag. This is what I am up there for. Paul Peek, however, was my neighbor from Long Beach. There was a closeness there geographically. I really wanted Tenney, but I was a swing vote. I finally went for Peek. So I was a swing vote.

VASQUEZ: Out of what? Pragmatism?

DILLS: Hmm?

VASQUEZ: Out of what? Pragmatism?

DILLS: Pragmatism, yeah, and the probability that Jack would not be able to hold them together.
Because . . .

VASQUEZ: He was pretty contentious, wasn't he?

DILLS: Yes, he was. He was a very strong man. He was

very opinionated, very strong, courageous as hell, as you well know from the things that he did.

VASQUEZ: He'd done an oral history of over 2,000 pages with us.

DILLS: Yeah, did he do that?

VASQUEZ: Um-hmmm. [affirmative]

DILLS: Yeah. I'd like to read that.

VASQUEZ: It's two volumes.

DILLS: Yeah, because we just never could talk politics after that, because he changed to Republican.

VASQUEZ: When did he change? Why did he and Sam Yorty change?

DILLS: Well, that's another story--a long story. Sam Yorty was a . . . Oh, what's the name of a person that will jump on something? He was a bandwagon kind of a guy. He could smell . . .

VASQUEZ: An opportunist, some would call him.

DILLS: Opportunist is the word that I was looking for. And Sam Yorty was one of the better persons . . .

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

DILLS: Sam Yorty was one of the better persons at

finding issues that are coming up. They don't show themselves right away, but he can read real well, and he didn't need a poster to do it. He had some real good political instincts, and he had a way of giving a quotable quote that put him in the paper everyday. He could just hit that. . . . What do they call them now? That clip?

VASQUEZ: The bite?

DILLS: The bite. They call it the bite. He could give them the bite. I recall when he was running for United States senator. It was a CDC [California Democratic Council] meeting up there in . . .

VASQUEZ: Fresno?

DILLS: In Fresno, when he got up and said, "This convention is rigged and stacked." [Pause] I'll remember in a minute. Anyway, it was an alliterative statement. "Something and packed, rigged, and stacked." And it was. [Laughter] And it was against him. It was only by union labor, just going to the left of the union labor boys and saying, "Hey, this is the man. We can't go for the other one. So if you don't go for Yorty, why, forget labor." So he was saved

by labor.

VASQUEZ: He was saved by labor.

DILLS: "Wired and packed, rigged and stacked." He could do that. He could give them the bite. He could see, and there was. . . . The communists were very, very strong in those days. They were in a lot of things.

VASQUEZ: Did you have that . . ?

DILLS: But I knew who they were in my district. They were on my county committee. I knew them by their communist names. I couldn't see much too wrong with them. They were for Roosevelt, they were for the New Deal, they were for jobs. They were for things I was for. I didn't realize until quite a bit later the extent to which they were still under the control of Russia, and international.

VASQUEZ: Tell me something about them. Can you talk about any of them?

DILLS: Well, I don't want to talk about any of them as such, but I do want to say that they were in the campaigns, they were in our clubs, "Reds for Democrats," and on our Democratic county committee and state committees. As I said, I

couldn't find any fault with them. I didn't know what all the problem was. It sounded to me like they were just my kind of people. Upton Sinclair was a socialist, they're socialists. I guess the difference between a communist and a socialist is that one of them does it by violence and the other does it by the ballot.

VASQUEZ: Did you know these people to be violent?

DILLS: No. They were not violent. They were not violent. They were in the political process. They were not into breaking up any meetings or anything of that sort. They were in helping to organize the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations]. And they were into CIO. CIO and AFL [American Federation of Labor] had some real tough jurisdictional disputes, and I got caught in the middle on them because I was, substantially, for the CIO because it included more people. It was an industry union. The AFL was . . .

VASQUEZ: As a legislator, huh?

DILLS: Yes, but the AFL was there fastest, and they endorsed me, but they had Republicans like [Assemblyman Thomas A.] Tommy Maloney handle

their bills mostly. And they were Republicans. They were conservative, about which I will speak a little later when we get to [Governor] Earl Warren and my being kicked off of the Committee on Public Health.

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] We'll get to that.

DILLS: Yes. Back to the communists, so-called. Little Dies committee. . . . [Martin] Dies of Texas, congressman, he started the [House] Committee on Un-American Activities. There were the communists that were working in the welfare, and they organized the welfare workers into a union. They were real strong in my district. So somebody got to Sam Yorty, or he smelled it out pretty good. So he persuaded--this was after Paul Peek was dumped--persuaded Speaker Gordon Garland to set him up as the first little California "Un-American Activities Committee" to investigate the welfare.

VASQUEZ: Jack Tenney?

DILLS: No, no. Sam Yorty was the first one. Then Jack Tenney came along, and I will tell you why Jack Tenney did it. Jack Tenney was a musician. He was president of the Local 47 American

Federation of Musicians Union here, the big one in Los Angeles County, the studio unions and all. He was becoming a little bit more conservative than they wanted him to be. So one night, when it was election time, they came and they had every kind of parliamentary movement and everything, and the meetings went on and on and on. About 2:00 A.M. in the morning, they finally got to balloting. All the other guys had just given up and quit and left. They didn't know what the hell. . . . They didn't know. You know, you can take five people and you can run a whole meeting. You can take over. It is just like filibustering, and they did, and they elected one of their own people. They deselected him. He was getting \$10,000 a year as president . . .

VASQUEZ: Of that union?

DILLS: Of the union. And boy, did he do something. He really switched over the other way.

VASQUEZ: You think that's what caused it?

DILLS: I know. I know what caused it. Plus the fact that he also was upset about the communists in this, that, and the other thing. And, of

course, he was against CDC and he was against all the. . . . [He] started the state Senate [Committee on] Un-American Activities. My sister-in-law was working for him at the time. Later on, why, both of them divorced and married each other. That was his last wife, Linnie [G. Tenney].

VASQUEZ: You became relatives?

DILLS: We were relatives then, and we played in the orchestra together. In fact, in my first campaign I had him come out to my house, this wonderful house that I had bought for \$250. My district was down in Downey, and in Downey was the old-age assistance home, the "poor farm" they used to call them in my day. In Downey, there were five precincts there, five precincts, over a thousand people. All they had in this world was the right to vote. But they were ripe to vote. I went over there and I went to each one of the wards. I met a little guy by the name of [Oscar] Robinson, a little hunchback fellow who was an engineer. He'd been an engineer on some big jobs. Well, he was out of work. You'd find doctors, lawyers, people over

there down on their luck, nothing. So we organized in each one of the five wards. We organized a Dills-for-the-assembly group. I carried those five precincts. I don't think my opponent got five votes out of five precincts. It was just absolutely unbelievable. We had leaders in each of them, I think probably two in each one. So I said, "What can I do to thank you guys?" I said, "You worked for me here, and once in a while you could get away from here and go over someplace and get a beer, but you can't even buy a beer here." I said, "We'd like to have you at our house. What would you like to eat?" They said, "Please, chili beans. Something with some taste in it. Everything is so bland." Chili beans, that was the only. . . . We cooked up the biggest pots of chili beans and had beer, and Jack Tenney played the piano and I played the saxophone. This was in the primary. They went back and, of course, the Republican had no chance at all in the general.

VASQUEZ: So these were your campaign workers?

DILLS: These were my campaign workers. Over in Norwalk, they had what they call the

Metropolitan Hospital now, but that was the home for the insane, mentally retarded, and so on. There was a postmaster there by the name of [Thomas B.] White. He had two sons [Robert E. and William A.], both of them six foot seven. One of them [Robert E. White] now still is the mayor of Norwalk, has been for a long, long time. He's still around. He comes to Sacramento all the time. The postmaster, Mr. White, was a Democrat. The Democrats appointed their own members in those days. At a time when we didn't have a Democratic United States Senator, the assemblyman in the district--or if we didn't have a Democratic congressman--the assemblyman in the district could name the postmaster. So I named postmasters all over the district there. We got Democrats all the time. Postmaster White knew me, and I was working with the Democrats, so he handled the state employees who were workers there. That was really a precinct of workers, so I carried every cotton-pickin' vote because of them. Well, those were some of the things in the campaign. Where were we?

VASQUEZ: We were . . .

DILLS: We were talking about speakers.

VASQUEZ: Speakers and comparing some of the leadership.

DILLS: Okay. Paul Peek was close to Governor Olson.

He had a phone put in under his speaker's desk there. More often than he should, he would be on that phone either calling the governor or answering the governor's call, more likely the latter. So when we came into special session-- Governor Olson called a special session in 1940 when something came about, I don't know what it was--he called a special session, and the first . . . Paul Peek went up there. No, the clerk always opens up. The first motion was to elect a speaker, and Gordon Garland's name was put into nomination. Ten Democrats, [Assemblyman] Don [A.] Allen, Sr., [Assemblyman Earl D.] Desmond and, oh . . .

VASQUEZ: I've got seating charts for that session.

DILLS: Do you have for that session? Well, this is 1941, so I can pick out enough. Anyway, enough of the Democrats joined. [Assemblywoman] Jeanette [E.] Daley, she got my education chairmanship and so on. There were ten Democrats,

known as the "Dirty Democrats," or something.

VASQUEZ: This wasn't the "Dirty Dozen," was it?

DILLS: No, this was the "Dirty Ten."

VASQUEZ: The "Dirty Ten."

DILLS: Yeah, there were ten of them. "Economy Bloc
Democrats." They joined with the Republicans
and they elected Gordon Garland, a Democrat.
Garland stayed on I don't know how many terms.
Then, when the Republicans got a majority, they
didn't need the Democrats anymore, so they
elected a Republican, Charlie Lyon. Gordon,
because I stayed with Peek, Gordon dumped me as
chairman of the Education Committee.

VASQUEZ: And Jeanette Daley . . ?

DILLS: Jeanette Daley became chair. He took me off the
Committee on Revenue and Tax and he put me on, I
don't know, some other committee. I forgot.

VASQUEZ: Was Education a plum committee then?

DILLS: Well, for me! For me it was. I was a teacher.

VASQUEZ: For you it was.

DILLS: It was the committee for me, but I stayed on it
and pretty much ran it anyway. Jeanette Daley
turned out to be a good personal friend. She--
like some of the lobbyists and other people

there--liked me and my wife [Effie], because they thought my wife was my secretary, we were so close. Neither one of us went around with anybody else. Jeanette Daley and the lobbyists and all, they thought that was kind of nice, and we did, too.

VASQUEZ: Tell me about Gordon Garland's speakership.

DILLS: Gordon Garland's first act, when he was sworn in as speaker, was to go up to the podium and jerk out the telephone that Paul Peek had installed under the desk. [Laughter] Peek often spoke to Governor Olson by this phone. Garland threw it right in the middle of the aisle.

VASQUEZ: In the chambers?

DILLS: In the chambers. He went up there and he said, "There will be no more phone calls either from or to the governor from this place."

VASQUEZ: What was the response in the house?

DILLS: The guys that elected him, of course, they warwhooped and they yelled. It was very dramatic, really a very dramatic thing.

VASQUEZ: Can you see something like that happening today?

DILLS: Yes, I can. It's happened. We've done it up there, only there weren't demonstrations when

we. . . . When in the senate, some Democrats got together and elected a Republican pro tem and did away with [Senator Hugh M.] Burns, knocked Hugh Burns out of it. I stayed with Hugh Burns. Eventually, we landed okay.

VASQUEZ: You were going to talk about Gordon Garland . . .

DILLS: Gordon Garland, I got on all right with him. A little later on, I got. . . . I never did ask for Education again. Oh, I got. . . . I didn't get to be a chairman under Gordon Garland, but when Charlie Lyon came in, I got to be chairman of the Committee on Oil Industries for the reason that in the 1939 session, there was a Maurice Atkinson oil bill,¹ Atkinson oil bill. It was for a limitation of extraction of oil within the general field. It would permit a board to limit the amount of oil that could be taken up in any given field. They could limit it to twenty-five barrels, forty barrels, or a hundred barrels a day, depending upon what was the prudent thing to do in order to preserve the oil according to them. Well, that was the major

1. A.J.R. 15, 1949 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., r. ch. 50.

oil company program. You can see why. Standard Oil Company has 100 wells, and this guy has two over here, and you cut it down to twenty-five. All he is going to get is. . . . Water's going to come in where oil should be at. So he can't live.

VASQUEZ: Right. This is in the big battle between the giants, the independents and the . . .

DILLS: That's what it was. There were only two Democrats in the assembly who voted against that. I was one of them. The other was [Assemblyman] George [D.] Collins, [Jr.] of San Francisco.

VASQUEZ: George Collins and yourself?

DILLS: I was against it because it was to be a monopoly thing. It was unfair to the independents. The two independent companies I came to know are Occidental Oil [now Occidental Petroleum Company], then--Gene Starr was president with Occidental Oil at that time--and the other was Superior Oil [Company], which has become quite big now. It's now Texaco [Inc.], I guess.

Independent oil. I opposed it, and the independent people took it to referendum. Oh,

and the governor signed it. Olson signed it, although he had been elected by fighting Standard Oil.

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: And then Signal Oil [Company] down here in Huntington Beach. But he signed the bill because the heat was put on him as it was put on me. I got a personal call from the Secretary [of Interior Harold L.] Ickes, and I got a telegram from [President] Franklin D. Roosevelt. Here I am, a Democrat, you see, and they want to conserve the oil because of the so-called war, you see.

VASQUEZ: Security?

DILLS: Security purposes. Well, it sounded real great, and it was a good excuse, but the independent people took it to a referendum, took it to the people, and I wrote the argument against the bill. I wrote the argument for the repeal of it, and we beat them almost two to one. The public . . .

VASQUEZ: Okay now, this was in the administration of 1940?

DILLS: That would be in 1940, I guess.

VASQUEZ: Who were the lobbyists for the independents at that time that you worked with? Or did you work with . . . ?

DILLS: J. A. Smith was one of them. His brother [C. Arnholt Smith] was the Smith from down in San Diego. Remember, he got into some trouble.

VASQUEZ: Right, right, right.

DILLS: He was "Mr. San Diego" for a long time. J. A. Smith, Harold Morton . . .

VASQUEZ: Harold C. Morton, I believe it is.

DILLS: Harold C. Morton, exactly right, who was the brother-in-law of C. S. Smith, who had a chain of Herald American papers, all in my district. [Laughter] I can tell you this now. In 1939, [C. S. Smith] wrote an editorial on the front page, and it was about this communist school-teacher Ralph Dills, who in Sacramento is disgracing our district and blah, blah, blah, and on and on and voting for everything.

VASQUEZ: What paper was this?

DILLS: Compton Herald American paper. He wrote it himself, yeah. [Laughter] I showed it to Harold Morton and I said, "What in the hell is the matter with this guy? What in the world is

wrong with him?" "Well," he said, "I don't know, but I'll sure as hell try to find out." Then, I never. . . . He didn't get back to me, but because of my vote-- I voted against the Atkinson oil bill. I didn't know that C. S. Smith had any interest in oil. He had some oil wells that Harold Morton had gotten him into because Morton was C. S. Smith's brother-in-law. C. S. had married Harold Morton's sister. I didn't know that. After I'd voted and after I had handled the oil referendum campaign, or rather, after I had written the arguments against the Atkinson oil bill in the referendum, then he endorsed me for reelection.

VASQUEZ: The communist, right?

DILLS: The communist, yeah. "He's done a great job up there in our schools. He protected the people and the working man." [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Did you say you kept one of the two editorials?

DILLS: My God, I don't know. I probably didn't. I think I did, but I couldn't find it in that mess of things I've been trying to go through. I was put on the. . . . Through their influence with the speaker, Charlie Lyon, I was made chairman

of the Oil Industries Committee.

VASQUEZ: Oh! Who else was on that committee with you?

DILLS: Oh, Sam Collins was on it and, gosh, I can't tell you. I don't remember. Frank Dunn, I'm pretty sure. Frank was on it, and . . .

VASQUEZ: Let me have that. Can I hold onto it for a second? At that time, it was called the [Committee on] Conservation, Natural Resources Committee. That was before the Oil Industries Committee?

DILLS: That's right. Later on, we broke it down into Before it was Oil Industries, and then we broke it down into, I think, Conservation, Natural Resources, and Planning. I was chairman of the. . . . Yes, yes. I moved from here down to here. Sam Collins was there, and this is where I sat when I was on the Rules Committee. I was his seatmate when I was on the Rules Committee, and I sat there by his side.

VASQUEZ: This was in the 1943 session?

DILLS: Yeah. Well, that's interesting. We were talking about the Atkinson oil bill.

VASQUEZ: We were talking about that, and you opposed it.

DILLS: I opposed it, and then . . .

VASQUEZ: Did the independents become supporters of yours?

DILLS: Yes, they did.

VASQUEZ: Had they been?

DILLS: No, they hadn't.

VASQUEZ: They became supporters then?

DILLS: They became supporters, and they were very helpful financially. They came through with help, and I got acquainted with the two Keck brothers, Bill [William M.] Keck and the one that owned the horses [Howard B. Keck]. I knew Bill better than I did the other one. Harold Morton and J. A. Smith, and there was a guy [Gene Starr] from Occidental Oil. I can't remember his name. But it was a small operator at the time. It was not the Occidental that are . . .

VASQUEZ: He was a lobbyist?

DILLS: Yes, he was an oil man and the lobbyist for them, yeah.

VASQUEZ: Did you involve yourself at all in tidelands legislation?

DILLS: Oh yes, oh yes. I was chairman of a committee that conducted the first study of state-owned lands [Committee on Tidelands].

VASQUEZ: What year would that be, do you remember?

DILLS: Like, maybe, 1947 on tidelands. On state lands, state-owned lands.

VASQUEZ: Nineteen forty-seven.

DILLS: I know because I engaged the services of my law associate, Kee Maxwell, Jr., to be the consultant and attorney for the committee.

VASQUEZ: Was [Assemblyman] Allen Miller on that committee?

DILLS: Who?

VASQUEZ: Allen Miller? Or was he not up there yet?

DILLS: No, no. He wasn't there yet. Allen came up after Assembly Julian Beck was gone. Allen Miller was there, but later.

VASQUEZ: For a little bit?

DILLS: Yeah. I don't think Beck was on it either. Anyway, you asked me about it. We conducted this survey. We found the state lands and, particularly, the tidelands. We cataloged them and, for the first time, made a list of the ones that the state owned and went back into and checked up on the grants that granted them to the cities or to the counties or the political subdivision to determine whether they were using

them for the purposes for which they were granted. We found some of them that had leased them out or sold some of them. I wondered why it was that the railroad lobbyist was always at my meetings.

VASQUEZ: Which one of them?

DILLS: His name was Walter Little, as I recall. Yes, it was Walter Little. He was at our Phillips [Petroleum Company] oil hearing. They were at our meetings, and I didn't know why. I found out later that railroads had been poaching on state lands and weren't paying any lease or anything. Some of them, I think, placed a cloud on the title.

VASQUEZ: He was looking out for their interests.

DILLS: The railroads. They didn't want anybody to find it out, I guess.

VASQUEZ: You found out?

DILLS: I find out, why . . .

VASQUEZ: You found out?

DILLS: When I found out, local people were asked. . . . How come? Do you know? Is this part of the grant? Is this purpose allowed by the grant? You don't have any right to deed this out, or to

let a long-term lease of it or that sort of thing.

VASQUEZ: Were they leasing it to third parties?

DILLS: To railroads or anybody else, you know. The harbor commission, the city council, wherever it was. . . . I didn't follow it through all the way. But that report is a kind of a standard work. Now and before anybody starts delving into tidelands and that business, why, they go to that report of our assembly committee. It was a base.

VASQUEZ: What year was this? Nineteen-forty-seven?

DILLS: I think it was '47.

VASQUEZ: Do you remember . . . ? Tell me, was something under the name of the report? It is probably in the [Assembly] Journal. It has to be in the [Assembly] Journal.

DILLS: It is in a separate printing.

VASQUEZ: Were you chairman of the committee?

DILLS: Yes, I was chairman of the committee.

VASQUEZ: I'll find it that way.

DILLS: It was a separate committee.

VASQUEZ: It was probably a special or [interim] committee. I'll find it.

DILLS: It was a . . .

VASQUEZ: It's the Committee on Tidelands, I believe it was called.

DILLS: Yes, I think so.

VASQUEZ: Okay.

DILLS: During that time, there was a question of who owned the tidelands out to the three-mile limit? Also, I was a member of the California Commission on Interstate Cooperation.

VASQUEZ: Before we go on, tell me what you understood the charge of that commission to be. I've never been able to talk to someone that really served on that for any length of time.

DILLS: The charge of that commission was to work with the other commissions and legislators of other states on mutual problems. I mentioned it just now because one of the things that we did--or I did as a member of that and as chairman of the Federal Relations Committee of the commission --was to take to our national meeting of the legislators, who were members of the commission and who were members of the legislature. I took a resolution to them in which we called upon Congress to grant, to cede to the states the

tidelands up to the three-mile limit. Harry S Truman, at the time, was going to take over all of them and said they're federal, and therefore we're entitled to handle the oil situation and the drilling and so on. Although I was a Truman elector, I nonetheless, on this one, couldn't agree with him. So I brought the resolution to the national group of the legislature, and they passed the resolution asking Congress to pass a bill deeding the land to the states. We saved it for the states.

VASQUEZ: Who was the congressman you worked with on that?

DILLS: Oh, who was the congressman at that time? I appeared before a congressional committee, too. I don't remember the congressman's name. My own congressman at that time could have been [Congressman] Ward [W.] Johnson, a Republican. That could have been [Congressman] Clyde [G.] Doyle or Ward Johnson. Oh, wait a minute. It was [Congressman] Byron [N.] Scott. Yeah, I think it was he. So tidelands. . . . Yes, I was interested in that and carried it through in that connection. I subsequently became quite involved in fighting the [California] Coastal

Commission. But that's another story, when I was in the senate.

VASQUEZ: Were you involved when the various acts, the Cunningham-Shell [Tidelands] Act¹ came . . . ?

DILLS: No, I was not there then.

VASQUEZ: You were not in that at the time?

DILLS: No.

VASQUEZ: But when Allen Miller was involved . . . ? Because you didn't get back until 1966, right?

DILLS: They took away from Long Beach certain oil revenues.

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: And so on, and they pushed us around and took our oil moneys, or a great part of it. But I wasn't there. I was on the bench then.

VASQUEZ: What other . . . ?

DILLS: Incidentally, [Assemblyman Joseph C.] Joe Shell, who later was . . .

VASQUEZ: Ran for governor?

DILLS: He ran for governor, he was the son-in-law of Harold C. Morton.

VASQUEZ: Right.

1. A.B. 3402, 1955 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1724.

DILLS: He is still up there, and, in fact, the governor [George Deukmejian] put on our desks a nomination for him as a member of the labor commission, a state labor. . . . Whatever the commission is.

VASQUEZ: The [Agricultural Labor Relations Board] labor board?

DILLS: Yes, the labor board that was set up under Edmund Brown, Jr.

VASQUEZ: Is he still as conservative as he was?

DILLS: Yeah, I think he is. I think he's still as conservative, but I would. . . . I think he'll make it. I think he'll make it. Conservative, but he's always right there where he is. He never changed. He hasn't flip-flopped anywhere.

VASQUEZ: He's consistent?

DILLS: Consistently conservative, yeah.

VASQUEZ: What other issues were you . . . ? Well, you were involved in education during the time you were . . .

DILLS: Well, we were mentioning tidelands. Yes, of course I was.

VASQUEZ: We are not through with that. Let's finish with tidelands.

DILLS: Well, other than the fact we brought to the

attention of the legislature and everybody that there were some things that needed to be done, we gave over to the California State Lands Commission pretty much the authority to control the state tidelands and so on. So they became a very powerful group, which is one of the reasons why a lot of the people, including [United States Senator Alan M.] Cranston and others, wanted to be controller. The controller, the treasurer, and the director of finance are the members of State Lands Commission. They were in charge of the state lands, tidelands, and so on.

VASQUEZ: So you were an early participant in all of this? Let's get to another area. I noticed you passed some bills having to do with credit unions, the defining of and incorporation of credit unions.¹ Was this part of what you were telling me about the teachers credit union?

DILLS: Yes. Because. . . . The credit union movement was a part of the EPIC movement. They encouraged credit unions, encouraged people to

1. A.B. 1720, 1721, 1722, 1949 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 67, 68, 69.

get together and to have their own credit unions, to have their own cooperatives. The EPIC movement would work through cooperatives.

VASQUEZ: Uh-huh. [affirmative] Right.

DILLS: Cooperative farmers and so on. That was the kind of thing that EPIC was selling. Among the things that we card-carrying liberals were doing in those days was organizing credit unions and cooperatives. My dad joined, and they had a cooperative there working in the fields at the same time that he had a grocery store and so on. We planned it after the Rochdale Cooperative movements of England. Workers get together, and now you have a credit union. I think the Lockheed Credit Union is the largest one in the United States.

VASQUEZ: And that's the way it started?

DILLS: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: Isn't that ironic?

DILLS: We started. . . . I think we had no more than twenty-two members, about twenty-two members, of which Carley Porter's wife [Marie Porter] was one. She was a teacher in Willowbrook school. So we started a cooperative, now the Mid-Cities

Schools Credit Union. I handled the credit committee. I am still number 9 after over fifty years. Because I was active in the credit union here, finally the credit unions, both federal and state credit unions, got together and had an advocate at Sacramento. Of course, they brought the bills to me because I knew what it was all about. At one time, I darn near became their advocate. I thought of leaving the legislature. This was in 1946, and I was looking around, and there was the probability that I was going to leave the legislature and not run again because . . .

VASQUEZ: Why?

DILLS: Well, the pay was one thing, and I really didn't like the law practice.

VASQUEZ: Didn't you? What kind of law did you practice?

DILLS: Whatever walked in off the street.

VASQUEZ: Why didn't you like law practice?

DILLS: I would rather. . . . You know, you take whatever comes in. You can have the guiltiest old SOB in the world, but you've got to just do what you can with a Zsa Zsa or somebody like

that.¹ So that was not very pleasing to me. I like to deal with people that are respectable. So I handled some civil cases and divorces. Divorces for a beginning lawyer, that's your bread and butter.

VASQUEZ: Bread and butter?

DILLS: That's it. And with those walking in off the street.

VASQUEZ: Were you making a good living at it?

DILLS: No, no. No, I didn't.

VASQUEZ: You were still married?

DILLS: I was married. What I did right away was to get an associate, let him do the work. I was the political lawyer, and he was the other. So we made it that way. I had three different associates at different times.

VASQUEZ: Did you bring in clients as a result of being on the legislature?

DILLS: Yes. Yeah, they would come to see me, and I would turn them over to the guy if I couldn't do

1. Zsa Zsa Gabor, convicted September 29, 1989, of battery on a police officer, driving without a valid license, and having an open container of alcohol in her car. She was sentenced October 24 to three days in jail, 120 hours of community service, and nearly \$13,000 in fines.

it right away.

VASQUEZ: Were you afraid of conflict of interests?

DILLS: No, it wasn't that. I just didn't like it. I particularly didn't like detail. I hate detail, the figures again. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: So you think you'll be a lobbyist instead?

DILLS: Yeah, that is a whole lot better, you see. That was my world. I understand that. So I thought I would go back up there, but you mentioned education a while ago. Are we getting away from something that I should be on?

VASQUEZ: No, no, no. Okay. Just looking at something, and you were still relatively young. You were only thirty-seven years old.

DILLS: I was twenty-eight when I went up to Sacramento.

VASQUEZ: But I am saying, in 1947, when you were thinking of leaving the legislature and becoming a lobbyist, you were only thirty-seven years old.

DILLS: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: You had done all these things?

DILLS: I was looking at this job as a lobbyist for the credit union people, but it was not all that stable. They weren't big enough to really do much. I think it was in 1946, I authored the

basic teacher retirement measure.¹ At the end of that year, the California Teachers Association asked me if I would like to become a field secretary.

VASQUEZ: The 1947 session, would that be it?

DILLS: Yes.

VASQUEZ: This was A.B. 1625?

DILLS: Was that '47?

VASQUEZ: Yes. A.B. 1625.

DILLS: Okay.

VASQUEZ: You were going to say?

DILLS: Yes, that's when I went back up to the assembly, you see. Anyway, I did accept, and when the session was over, for a six-month period of time, I was there. Are you sure it's '47?

VASQUEZ: Well, that is. . . . This is the 1947 session, and I have you. . . . I would have to read the actual language on it. It is retirement of teachers and other persons connected with the state educational system.

DILLS: It was. . . . A.B. 1625 was it.

1. A.B. 1625, 57th Leg., Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 803 (1947).

VASQUEZ: Just one minute. So it was an earlier session, this bill that you. . . . Here's the '43 session.

DILLS: The basic teacher retirement bill was my bill. There was a bill there for retired teachers¹ handled by a little lady [Ethel Percy Andrus], who founded AARP [American Association of Retired Persons]. She parlayed this retired teachers association and melded it into AARP, of which I am a life member.

VASQUEZ: Is she still there?

DILLS: No, she passed on. She was a lovely. . . .

Anyhow, there were. . . . The retired teachers were in awful shape. I am a retired teacher now. Just from ten years of service, I get a magnificent sum of \$147 a month. Well, that's better than you know. As my brother would say, "drinking money." It's okay, but some of these teachers were trying to live on that, \$190 a month. So I put in a bill that provided for annual COLAs [cost-of-living

1. A.B. 1328, 53d Leg., Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 130 (1939); A.B. 1625, 57th Leg., Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 803 (1947).

adjustments] for all retired teachers. I think it has been stuck at that 2 percent rate every damned [year] since. We add something to it each year, or try. We are still doing that in the senate now, as I am doing something with the old-age assistance people. Let us get on that one, because that is a beauty.

In the field of education, of course, I handled lots of bills that had to do with more money, ADA [average daily attendance] money, more so when I was in the senate than in the assembly, because the Republicans were in control for too long a period of time then. When Earl Warren came along, why, he was pretty good for public schools, but . . .

VASQUEZ: [Governor Goodwin J.] Goodie Knight?

DILLS: Goodie Knight was [governor] after I left there. He was lieutenant governor at that time. So in the field of education, yes, I was there. I was Mr. Educator there then. I was the only teacher in the assembly at the time. Then Jay Beck came up, and someone else came up a little later on. I did more for public schoolteachers than anybody. They said, "Dills,

we didn't know that there was a teacher who had a drink or would carouse around at night and play saxophone and do things like that, act like a human being." I was accepted as one of the boys. It made it easier for other teachers coming up. That really was the case. I didn't know how else to act. That's the way I acted forever. So I might as well be with them, and they liked it.

VASQUEZ: Tell me, the carousing, was there a lot of that?

DILLS: Oh, yes.

VASQUEZ: In the period that you were there in the . . . ?

DILLS: There surely was, and lobbyists were very, very generous with their meals and taking you places. Hell, we used to get them. . . . They'd have a train and run us over to Reno, and [we'd] go over there and gamble, and we would come back the same night or stay over there if we wanted to.

VASQUEZ: Did you ever get to know [Arthur H.] Artie Samish?

DILLS: Sure, I knew him. As a matter of fact, one of the \$300--I didn't mention a this a while ago, it wasn't intentional--when I first ran, one of

the \$300 came from Artie Samish.

VASQUEZ: Your first campaign.

DILLS: A guy by the name of Sam Yorty came out and he said, "Ralph, I've got a check for you."

I said, "Yeah, from whom?"

He said, "It doesn't matter."

I said, "It matters to me."

"Well," he said, "he won't mind that."

I asked, "Who are you talking about? I won't take it. So come on, come clean."

He said, "Artie Samish."

"Artie Samish!" I said. We just had the Philbrick Report,¹ and we had a record of all of those "good," "good" things. This was before he wrote that silly article in the Collier's magazine, in which he had the legislature sitting there as a puppet deal.² So, yes, I knew him.

VASQUEZ: Talking about Artie Samish . . . ?

DILLS: Sam Yorty said, "Ralph, you will never . . ."

1. H. R. Philbrick, Legislative Investigative Report, 52d Leg., First Ex. Sess., December 28, 1938.

2. Lester Velie, "The Secret Boss of California," Collier's, August 13, 1949, pp. 12-13, 71-73.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

DILLS: I am a schoolteacher. He represents liquor:
beer, wines, whiskey . . .

VASQUEZ: Horse racing?

DILLS: Horse racing, gambling and all of those things. What's a schoolteacher . . ? What good can I do him? I can't go for all of those things unless. . . . I am not a prohibitionist, but I'm not going to be handling any bills. He said, "He'll never ask you for a vote," and he never did.

VASQUEZ: He never did?

DILLS: He never did, he never did.

VASQUEZ: Even with Gardena opening a lot of nightclubs?
Were you in office when gambling came in?

DILLS: Oh, sure. No, I wasn't in office then, but I know when the card clubs came in and took over one of the theaters over there at Vermont Avenue in Gardena. First card club here, yeah.

VASQUEZ: You never had any dealing with Sam?

DILLS: No.

VASQUEZ: Or any of the . . ?

DILLS: I didn't have any problem with it as such, but

[because of] my image as a teacher, I am not supposed to be playing around with them.

VASQUEZ: It's bad enough you're playing the saxophone, is that it? [Laughter]

DILLS: Yeah. You know, you don't smoke if you're a teacher. I had to live in Compton. I had to rent a crappy little room over there, and I'd come over here and eat with the folks and stay over here, but I still had to rent a room over there. That was superintendent's rule. You know, you've got to be able to vote here. So I did it then, but after I got a steady job there and got married, why, I bought a home in Compton.

VASQUEZ: What other lobbyists do you remember during your first experience in the legislature? When you were in the assembly?

DILLS: Well, I remember, of course, him. He was the person that had the reputation of being the bad guy lobbyist. Then there were teachers. There was Roy Cloud from CTA [California Teachers Association], and then there was. . . . Oh, what the hell was it? Van de somebody [Edward D. Vandedleur] represented AFL. He was a

Republican. Then there was a schoolteacher represented from Los Angeles Unified, Ray Eberhard. Ray Eberhard had two daughters, one of whom became a judge [Hazel J. Younger], and another one ran for the state senate [Mildred Younger] against Jack Tenney and beat Jack Tenney--who had changed over to Republican--beat him and knocked him out. Jack Tenney supported Richard Richards, a Democrat, because the Republicans had gone after Jack Tenney because he was too far right for them. Ray Eberhard, her father, represented the ATOLA, Affiliated Teachers of Los Angeles, as it was known then.

And there were people who represented the California Grange. That's a small farmer group, and that was a group that I belonged to, California Grange, because I was raised in farming country, and I believed in the little farmers as distinguished from the corporation, the big farmers. I was on the side of the migrant workers, and I am a Seventh degree member, the degree of Ceres. I am a Seventh degree member of the National Grange, which you can't get unless you go to a national convention

of that organization. I must be about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years in the Grange. I still have my membership out here in San Bernardino County. There were representatives there of doctors, Ben [H.] Reed and Allen, who is still up there now. Ben Reed was the big man for that time.

VASQUEZ: Which Allen are we talking about here?

DILLS: He's with the group called A&K [Associates], I don't know. There were two brothers and Allen there. I forget his first name, but he's still around there representing quite a number of groups.

VASQUEZ: What groups?

DILLS: God, they got a list this long. I think they're known as A&K Associates. There were two brothers, one whose name starts with K and Allen. Oh, also I remember a wonderful, sweet little guy who represents Southern California Edison Company. Oh, Lordy. Last name went out that way. [Will Fischer]

VASQUEZ: Today?

DILLS: Then. Old-timers. There was a doctor of chiropractic, Robert Henry, who was from my

district. [He] came up there because among the bills that I put in that I forgot to mention was the first act, which was of benefit to, or affected doctors of chiropractic.¹ In 1945, I put in a measure that would permit a person who was on workers compensation to have a chiropractor on the panel of three doctors to select from. The original chiropractic act was an initiative act. They never got anything through the legislature before. This was the first. It was a landmark bill, the first one that the doctors of chiropractic had some benefit from. It was signed by Earl Warren. Each of the chiropractic colleges now teach about the Dills bill, what it was, and what it has done for their profession, because it really has kept them alive.

VASQUEZ: Has it been helpful to you?

DILLS: Very helpful in one respect, and in the other respect it made a lifelong enemy of the California Medical Association [CMA] and the

1. A.B. 1610, 56th Leg., Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 632 (1945).

nurses and all of the professional medical schools, you know. So much so that--I must tell you about it after I was elected to the senate--after several years as senator I had to finally say, "Hey, Mr. California Medical Association, you have sent me my voting record in the senate, and I have looked at it. I am up here near the top, at 76 percent with the California Medical Association. I look down here below me and here is [Senator Ken] Maddy and here is [Senator William] Campbell and here are the guys that you've been feeding big campaign contributions. What do you go on when you make campaign contributions? You go on a 1945 bill? Is there any way at all that you can get that assembly bill of 1945 out of your craw?" I said, "I can be helpful to doctors of chiropractic, and if you doctors of medicine have a good bill, I vote for it. I am not voting for it because you're sponsoring it. I'll vote for it because I think it's a good bill." Well, that one bill, plus the fact of another bill, explains how I lost my membership on the assembly Public Health Committee. Maybe

we better talk about that later instead of jumping back from our discussion of lobbyists to it. Lobbyists figured in this, too.

VASQUEZ: Who were the lobbyists before we go on? Who were the lobbyists in the CMA that figured in this?

DILLS: Ben Reed.

VASQUEZ: Ben Reed?

DILLS: Ben Reed and Allen, yeah.

VASQUEZ: And going back to the . . .

DILLS: The assembly and lobbyists and a bill, which was called "socialized medicine". . . . I don't know, 1945, whatever the year was. Forget the year. Maybe it was a little later, '47, I don't know, a bill which was sponsored by the AFL principally, and by Earl Warren.

VASQUEZ: I was going to ask you that. Earl Warren . . .

DILLS: It had to be '47, because he was getting bugged. He was getting the fever, president-fever, about that time, and he was moving over to the center and picking up AFL support if he could. They were the ones who sponsored the bill. The CIO was dragging its feet and never did do anything for the bill.

VASQUEZ: Didn't Earl Warren, on his own, because of his own childhood experiences, have an affinity or sympathy for medical insurance?

DILLS: Yes, I think he did. I think so. He was a musician, you know?

VASQUEZ: Yes. His father worked for the railroad, and he saw the poor treatment that a lot of people got.

DILLS: And he saw some of the benefits that the brotherhoods had brought to them. So this was simply to say that a group of people like the railroad brotherhoods or teachers can form themselves into a group and get group life insurance--oh, no, not life insurance--medical insurance. What a furor it caused. This was "socialized medicine." "Bring in England on us! Bring in the world on us. Socialized medicine!" The bill came through and I voted for it. My brother Clayton was in the assembly at that time. I was on the Public Health Committee. The next session, we elected Sam Collins as Speaker. I looked down at the committees. I went up to him and said, "Sam, did you make a mistake? I see I used to be on the Public Health Committee. My name is

Ralph." He said, "It doesn't say Ralph in here." He said, "You son-of-a-bitch. You know why you're not there. You voted for that damned Warren, socialized medicine bill," and he kicked me off and he put my brother Clayton on. He voted against it.

VASQUEZ: Your brother?

DILLS: Yeah. I never tried to tell him how to vote. I couldn't tell him anyway. He's his own man, an independent little guy. He voted his district. I think that his district was more conservative than mine, but anyway.

VASQUEZ: Let's talk about the Sixty-seventh?

DILLS: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: The Sixty-seventh District that your brother ran in. First of all, let's talk about how your brother got involved in politics.

DILLS: He got involved in politics because there was a guy by the name of Lee E. Geyer, whom I supported, and he was elected to the assembly, and then was subsequently elected to Congress. His successor was [Congressman] Cecil [R.] King in assembly. Cecil King was the co-author in Congress of the health bill, the first King-

something health bill, hospitals and so on.

Anyhow, King ran for Lee Geyer's spot, and there was a vacancy. So I went to Clayton--this is in 1942--I went to Clayton and I said. . . . He had a service station over here right by the, then, Gardena High School on Normandie [Avenue]. I said, "How'd you like to run for the assembly?" He said, "You know I don't know anything about politics." I said, "You don't?" He said, "What do I know?" I said, "Who was president of our senior class in Gardena High School, 1927?" "Well," he said, "I was." I said, "Same thing. You just get people to vote for you. That's all you have to do." So he said, "I'll talk it over with Dorothy [Dills]." So a few days later he said, "Well, yeah, she thinks I ought to. We have a couple of kids, and she said maybe it was a good thing for [me] to do."

So I went to the Third House people and said, "My brother is going to run down here. If you could give him any help, why, I would appreciate it."

VASQUEZ: Who did you talk to?

DILLS: Every one of them that would listen. I don't know what people, but I guess the independent oil [company] people. . . . I'm sure they must have done something. I don't think the medical doctors did, but maybe the chiropractors would, even though I hadn't done their thing for them yet.

VASQUEZ: Liquor?

DILLS: Yeah, I think so. I think the liquor people would. [Arthur H.] Artie Samish probably helped him. And labor, on my word, went along. So But more important than anything else was the Townsend movement. By that time, the Townsend movement was real hot. I told you a while ago, about 1942 they came in. That is when the Dills brothers went to these various meetings. Did I tell you this story?

VASQUEZ: Well, you alluded to it, but you left it out.

DILLS: Well, I was the assemblyman. I was with the Townsend people. While they didn't endorse, why, they still liked their friends. I was the guy that was working on the repealing of the

responsible relatives clause,¹ about which we will talk in a minute. So we went to these clubs, and you could go to four or five of them a night in this district. They were just everywhere, just everywhere. So we'd go there and we'd play them some music and then go onto the next place. The leaders, the presidents, they knew me, and they said, "Our good friend, Assemblyman Dills here. . . . Oh, incidentally, the fellow who was playing the bass viol there is running for the assembly in this district, and any help. . . . Friends will be friends. We'll stick with our friends." So they make the pitch for him, and we'd play and we'd leave and we'd go to another one. That group, more than any organized group, although Clayton did get labor support, they did it. Then we also. . . . Since I was running for reelection, instead of saying "Reelect Assemblyman Dills," we just said, "Elect Dills, Assemblyman." Now, we put out our quarter-cards everywhere from the ocean

1. A.B. 986, 56th Leg., Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1319 (1945).

to the Orange County line. We just had that line, "Elect Dills, Assemblyman."

VASQUEZ: They knew both of you?

DILLS: They knew both of us. We both ran, and so we carried our message through the area there that way.

VASQUEZ: You were the first brothers to serve concurrently in the assembly in the state of California?

DILLS: Yes. Later, [Senator Robert I. and Senator John F.] McCarthy served in the senate. Yes. Charlie Lyon was in one house and his brother [Henry H. Lyon] was in another house, but they never served in the same house together. I helped Clayton, as I knew the people over here in the Sixty-seventh District that were in the EPIC movement. You see, 1942 was only a few years later than the EPIC campaign.

VASQUEZ: There was an overlap wasn't there?

DILLS: There was the overlap there. In fact, the guy that I told Clayton he was going to have to beat was a fellow by the name of Oliver De Hoog. Oliver O. Hoog. He was very active in our EPIC movement. I said, "He's the guy you've got to

beat." Clayton said, "No, no, no. There is a Dr. [Charles W.] McQuarrie, who is one of the members of the Gardena Valley Democratic Club, 1933." They formed it in 1933, but later, whenever I formed EPIC clubs, I turned them into Democratic clubs in this district. I was here [in the] Sixty-seventh and I was the president in 1935 of the Gardena Valley Democratic Club, before which this last Sunday, along with Leo What's our . . . ?

VASQUEZ: [Lieutenant Governor Leo T.] McCarthy?

DILLS: Leo McCarthy, this fellow Bill Press, who's running for insurance [commissioner], and [Assemblyman Richard] Dick Floyd and I were there. I announced last Sunday that I was going to run for re-election. This was before the club of which I was president in 1935, and it's been going on all these years. So Clayton, with the help of EPIC people that I knew, and schoolteachers and so on, he made it. It was De Hoog that he had to beat. McQuarrie ran either third or fourth. Well, I got off on that tangent there.

VASQUEZ: Well, it's not a tangent.

DILLS: We were talking about lobbyists.

VASQUEZ: Since your brother is no longer with us, maybe you can tell me some experiences you might have had while both of you were serving in the same house?

DILLS: Well, that one about his taking my position on the Public Health Committee was one. Another one that I found amusing. . . . It was a. . . . I represented, as I told you, the largest dairy area in the world. From Figueroa Street to the Orange County line, all of that. The dairymen were opposed to letting people color--or having the companies that manufacture NUCOA margarine, NUCOA and so on--color it before they sell it. The dairymen were opposed to that. Their argument was--and I used it on the floor-- "It is all right to color it. Color it green, color it pink, color it blue. Don't color it for the original, the thing that it is not. You're trying to push off an inferior product." Of course, cholesterol, you know, nobody listened to cholesterol then, and I am not too damned sure if it's a good thing to listen to today. It's all right, but they've pushed it all out of

shape, yeah. I am supposed to. . . . Well, it's on the record. It's okay. I don't give a damn. I was raised on milk and . . .

VASQUEZ: Cheese?

DILLS: Cheese. Without milk products, I'm dead. I have to have cheese someplace, see, I ordered some today. Milk and cheese and eggs and pork chops and fat and. . . . We killed our own hogs. We butchered. We had our own eggs, everything. I was raised [in] a farming area. I never had my cholesterol tested until last year when I went in; it was 202. About six months later, it was 189. Now, I didn't do a damned thing about it, except maybe I did not eat quite so much butter or so much sugar or something or another. In those days, however, the women, when they bought NUCOA--it was cheaper--it had a little yellow pad in it, and then you mixed it yourself at home. They got tired of that, so the women [were] up in arms. They wanted to let the manufacturers color it.

VASQUEZ: Yellow margarine?

DILLS: So there was a bill that would let them color

it. So I got up and I hit the floor: "What are they trying to do? Make a no-good product into a good product by copying this color?" And I really went on and on and on and on. So Clayton got up and he said, "But this is a good consumer bill. Why should mama have to squish that around in there." [Laughter] We had a battle on the floor there, and if you want to ask a question you would ask the speaker, "Would Assemblyman Dills yield to a question?" So the speaker would say, "Assemblyman Dills, would you yield to Assemblyman Dills?" This went back and forth, as much banter as we could get away with. [Laughter]

On another occasion, I said, "You want to let dairymen take manufacturing milk, which is produced out here in the fields, where the dirt is all over the cows tits, where nobody's paying much attention to the things that are in the milk buckets and so on, and you want to use that kind of milk to make into cream?" The law was that you have to use grade A milk, not manufacture milk, to produce cream. So these fights went on, and Clayton would take the side

of the non-dairy people. So he said, "Well, look at us. Look at you. Look at me. I am in pretty good health, but look at you. You drank the milk and you had the butter and all that from the cows out in the fields?" I said, "Yes. Would the Assemblyman Dills yield?" It went back over [to him] and he said, "I yield." I said, "Yes, look at us. Here I am, six foot two and a half, maybe three if I stood up. Look at you. You are five nine," and he was about five nine, five ten. I said, "That's what happens. You were drinking all that milk. I was drinking the good stuff," crazy things like that.

VASQUEZ: Brought down the house.

DILLS: Yeah. He was also a part of our band too, when he got up there. We had a quartet. We had a vocal quartet. In the end of the session, the night of the session, the senate would come over, the governor, all the constitutional officers, everybody would come over to the assembly chambers. Our quartet consisted of Ralph Dills, Clayton Dills, [Assemblyman William B.] Byron Rumford, and [Assemblyman John W.]

Johnny Evans. John Evans was the lead, and Clayton sang tenor, I sang baritone, and Rumford was our bass man. We sang, "Gonna take a sentimental journey. Gonna set my heart at ease." We sang that for everybody. Boy, I tell you, it was quiet as a mouse. You know, they'd just, everybody just. . . . You know, they'd go over their memories. This is graduation day, you see. It was really very touching. We'd do that every year. It was looked forward to. People . . .

VASQUEZ: When did you start doing that?

DILLS: Shortly after Clayton came up there. That was '43, you see. It was his first session. Johnny Evans was up there. Byron wasn't there. I don't think he was there the first time. I don't know when he came up, but he was our basso.

VASQUEZ: When did you stop doing it?

DILLS: Oh, whenever I left, '49.

VASQUEZ: 'Forty-nine?

DILLS: And Byron was gone then. Johnny Evans was beaten by [Assemblyman Jesse M.] Unruh. Johnny changed his registration from Democrat to

Republican, and he got himself . . .

VASQUEZ: Thrown out at the ballot box?

DILLS: Yup. Speaking of lobbyists, Johnny Evans had a lot of friends in the lobbyists. They took good care of him. So there was a bill up for us. I think it could have been the one bill that I got in trouble on, that labor didn't like. My vote . . . It was a so-called. . . . I'll remember it in a minute. The secondary boycott, the secondary boycott.

VASQUEZ: This would have been in the sixties?

DILLS: No, this was . . .

VASQUEZ: Earlier?

DILLS: Yes. It was in the forties when I was in the assembly, and Johnny Evans. . . . It may not have been this particular bill. Anyway, some lobbyist came up to him and said, "We're going to spend five thousand dollars to defeat you for voting for that bill." Johnny Evans said, "Listen"--Johnny gave a look this way--he said, "Listen. You give me the five thousand dollars, and I won't run." [Laughter] Which was a pretty good sum of money in those days, because we were getting only twelve hundred a year.

That was good for five years almost.

VASQUEZ: What other remembrances or what other experiences do you remember that you think are crucial of your tenure in the assembly? Because I want to ask you some questions about that period.

DILLS: The one I made mention of, the secondary boycott situation, there was a measure in to outlaw the secondary boycott. I am a labor man. I had labor support, both the AFL and later the CIO-- but I had this large dairy area too. There was a jurisdictional dispute between the AFL and the CIO. The CIO were getting ahead in organizing the milkers. The [International Brotherhood of] Teamsters union was part of the AFL at that time. So because they wanted to put the heat on the CIO and get the dairymen to deal with them, and get the milkers to join AFL Teamsters union and so on, why, they put a secondary boycott on. This was a bill to outlaw the secondary boycott.

VASQUEZ: Who carried it?

DILLS: I can't remember. Sorry.

VASQUEZ: Well, I'll find it.

DILLS: Because of this scrap between the jurisdiction of unions themselves, they were. . . . [The] Teamsters would get the milk, then they would dump it. They wouldn't take it on in. They called upon everybody to boycott the milk and so on and so on. Anyway, that issue was real hot in my district because there were multi-bucks over there. The dairymen supported me, too, and their workers and I voted for it. A Teamster guy came in, his name was [George] Leonard. He was heavyweight champion in the navy. He's a big guy, red-headed, real tough guy. He said, "Dills, we'll get you for that." I said, "Well, I don't think that you're going to take my life. I don't think you mean that physically." Little did I know that we had [James R.] Hoffa in the future. [Laughter] However, I said, "Well, I guess we'll just have to fight it at the ballot box, because this affects my district in a way. I can't vote any other way. This is a fight between two unions now. I can't pick and choose between you guys. The public out there and my dairy interests and the people want milk and the

schools and so on, I just have to go with it," and I did. Boy, they said, "Okay, we'll go after you," and they did. They did.

It went over to the senate, and the senate, being the cow-country lords that they were, they passed it overwhelmingly. I told you about wanting to get Bellflower Boulevard out of the state [jurisdiction].

VASQUEZ: You did.

DILLS: And I went into the senate committee there and found out that the bill was already dead. Next year I had the bill in the senate. I went in there and Chairman Randolph Collier said, "Your bill is passed." Why? They looked to see how I voted on that . . .

VASQUEZ: Labor bill?

DILLS: Labor bill. That's how it got through. I didn't even have to show it to any damned committee. It was done that way in those days. Subsequently, [Senator] Peter [H.] Behr, a Republican--you remember?--Peter Behr was the author of certain bills that called for a different set of procedures and actions, protocol and so on, in committee work. It was

good. I was glad he came, because I didn't like that kind of thing. Even when I became chairman of the "Killer Committee," as it was known . . .

VASQUEZ: What committee was that?

DILLS: That's the Governmental Organization, they call it now. It used to be GE and E, [Committee on Government Efficiency and Economy]. That was the "Killer Committee."

VASQUEZ: Why was it called that?

DILLS: Well, because we killed most of the assembly bills--because they deserved to be killed. Later on, the assembly would just pass any old thing. They knew the senate would kill it anyway. So they would put in a bill, and back home it's a good bill, and then the dirty old senate would kill it. They knew it was going to get killed, but they'd put it in because . . .

VASQUEZ: For political . . .

DILLS: Each year, there is a wave. One year it's drugs, one year it's pornography, one year it's whatever it is. It's abortion . . .

VASQUEZ: Reform?

DILLS: Whatever. There's always a little reform in there. But there's a wave after some scandal or

somebody got killed or something or another, and everybody jumps on top of it. Environment was a wave. And solid waste is a big wave right now, and AIDS and all of these things. Everybody has to have a bill on it. I quit doing it a long time ago. Let some of the younger guys who want to go out and make speeches. There'll be plenty of bills on the subject.

I don't have a single bill this year on drugs. But my brother Clayton put in the first, the first really stiff penalties for drug pushers. Because the Elks Lodge in California, the Elks members, had a petition asking us to have stricter and tougher punishment. Clayton put the bill in. It was known as the "Dills Bill." There's [George] Putnam--who is still around--and he had the Dills Bill, the Dills Bill, the Dills Bill, every night on his program, even when I ran for the senate in 1966. A lot of people said, "Oh Dills, yes. I like you. I thank you for putting in the bill." I'll take it. It's my brother's bill.

VASQUEZ: Did you and your brother discuss, strategize on any particular legislation?

DILLS: None except one that became known as the "Dills Swill Bill."¹ [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Tell me about the "Dills Swill Bill."

DILLS: Okay, that was Clayton's. There is a . . .

VASQUEZ: About when would this be?

DILLS: You said, "Did we cooperate on it?" I am giving you the cooperation. I am about to give it to you now, and something that doesn't sound like it belongs, but it does. There is a disease known as trichinosis. It is these little trichinae--I don't know what you call them--little worms, little parasites. You get it from . . .

VASQUEZ: Uncooked pork.

DILLS: Uncooked pork and fish. Some people are eating a lot of sushi around here, and they are going to learn one of these days that's not so good. So I put in the bill first to require hog raisers to cook garbage before feeding it to the animals. It was a bill given to me by a woman. We called her Trichi, Trixie, Trichinos. . . . We finally called her "Trixie."

1. S.B. 1176, 1955 Reg. Sess., Cal Stat., ch. 682.

VASQUEZ: Do you remember her name?

DILLS: No, I can't remember. I couldn't get anywhere with the bill. I'd go to the Public Health Department and they'd just laugh me out of town. So I couldn't get it through before I left on July 1, 1949. I don't know what year it was that Clayton succeeded, but it was early in the fifties, '52, '54, something like that. Clayton put the bill in and he just got his brains beat out. It was called the "Dills Swill Bill" by Earl Behrens, the reporter that hadn't done me any good either on my bill. Isn't that funny? It was supposed to be a cinch bill. Do you know what a cinch bill is? A "juice bill"? It is put in with the hope that the guys that are adversely affected will come up and help you take it out. Some figured that Clayton put it in in order to get money out of the garbage people.

VASQUEZ: Garbage disposal people?

DILLS: Yeah. Clayton apparently didn't look back to find out where it started or why it started, but he believed in it as did I. Then farmers came

up to Sacramento and supported his bill because there was an epidemic of something called--I don't know if I have this correct--vesicular exanthema. Vesicular exanthema is the best I can spell it now. It was a disease like the so-called hoof-and-mouth disease that cattle had. But the swine raisers and the ones that were feeding garbage without cooking it first [to stock], like they were doing in Artesia and Bellflower in my district, were persuaded that this vesicular exanthema, as well as trichinosis, was caused from the feeding of raw garbage, and their hogs were getting this "hoof-and-mouth" disease. They called it hoof for the cattle. The hogs, like the cattle, couldn't eat, their mouths were so sore and all, and then their feet all crumbled up, were affected or whatever. Anyway, that bill went through at another time, a subsequent time after I left.

VASQUEZ: After your brother had gone?

DILLS: No, after my brother got really stomped on it. The hog farmers later came up and supported him, and then came the National Grange magazine

article. I have a copy of that one, in which the paper said the most important bill for agriculture that year was the Dills bill on cooking raw garbage. Clayton got up on the floor and, according to this report I just read, he said, with his voice breaking, "I would like for 'Squire' Earl Behrens to hear what the farmers say about this bill. He has accused me of being in the business of shaking down some people." He laid it on Behrens. Later, Squire Behrens wrote him a letter of apology and put it in the paper.

VASQUEZ: Did he?

DILLS: Yeah. But I had a hand in that in that I was there first. Clayton may have joined me on that first bill, but he picked it up after I went on the bench and carried it on through and carried it to fruition.

VASQUEZ: Were there other bills like that? That you remember that you lost and then you saw implemented or passed by someone else and might even be considered a pioneer for it?

DILLS: Well, not in the assembly.

VASQUEZ: Tell me about . . .

DILLS: In the senate, there was one when [Governor Jerry] Brown was elected. You know, he ran against us. I may have mentioned that a while ago. He sponsored the Fair Political Practices Commission Act and so on and, of course, we didn't get along very well. Legislators don't like being used as the scapegoats for his reforms and everything, building himself up and running us down. He came in to see me about the first week that he was governor. Came up to my office, never asked for an appointment, just came up. He sat down and he said, "Well, Ralph, you and I didn't get along too well in the campaign, but we're both elected." I said, "Well, that's right." He said, "Are there any suggestions you can give me?" I said, "One of the things that I think you ought to do--or we ought to do--is to start a CCC camp patterned after the old Conservation Corps, the federal one, for reforestation and fighting forest fires and that sort of thing." And he said, "That is a good idea." I didn't put the bill in because

I thought he would come back to me. But he didn't do anything that first year or so.

Later, here I see it popped up by a senator by the name of [Senator Jerome A.] Smith, who was later appointed judge by Governor Brown; he was the author of it. But at a meeting where we were paying tribute to the first year of the CCC and young [Congressman James] Roosevelt's son, Jimmy Roosevelt's son was there, then Governor Jerry Brown gave me the credit for having persuaded him.

VASQUEZ: Did he?

DILLS: So that was nice.

VASQUEZ: Let me ask you about another bill that you were involved with, and that was with the foundation and formation of California State University, Long Beach.

DILLS: Oh, yeah. Now, that is my baby. Before we get to that one, we have to talk about when I was in the assembly and whenever. . . . We thought there ought to be a study made of the need for higher education, colleges and universities in California. So Assemblyman [Earl D.] Desmond

and I went forward with a bill¹ to have a commission established, a joint commission,² and to hire an expert to come out here and conduct a survey. That survey was done by a professor of education, an outstanding educator from Columbia University [Teachers College] by the name of [George C.] Strayer. We conducted hearings up and down the state. This was in 1948 that this was implemented. In 1948, we started the hearings up and down the state to determine what potential student population there was in a given area. Did they have enough community colleges? Were there enough state colleges? Were there enough university branches and so on, and extensions? And this Strayer Report, when we wound it all up, it came down to the need for [more] state colleges. Both Desmond and I proved. . . . We didn't do the surveying, but the surveys proved that we needed a state

1. A.B. 2273, 57th Leg., Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 57 (1947).

2. Legislative Interim Committee on the Survey of Higher Education.

college in Sacramento and one more in the Los Angeles area, in the southern California area where there is only one. So I wrote the specifications into the Strayer Report that the new one in southern California would be outside the city limits of the city of Los Angeles, in the southeastern part of Los Angeles and Orange County. Orange County got in there because one of the assemblymen that was on the assembly floor, a very good friend of mine, a Republican, said, "Oh, c'mon Dills, put Orange County in, too. Give us a chance to go for it."

VASQUEZ: Who was that?

DILLS: Gosh, I'll remember. [Laughter] [Assemblyman Earl W. Stanley] Anyhow. . . . Then, I wanted to put the bill in in the 1948 session. Nineteen forty-eight was the first annual budget session.

VASQUEZ: Budget session, right.

DILLS: The first one. However, there was a bill that had been put in in 1947, and passed, that set up one state college in L.A. city.

VASQUEZ: In Los Angeles.

DILLS: I didn't want them to have two within the city

limits. That site was down here at the old UCLA Southern Branch, Vermont Avenue campus, but they were in a big fight as to whether or not that college was going to stay there.

VASQUEZ: Is that Eugene Debs's bill?

DILLS: Not Eugene Debs.

VASQUEZ: [Assemblyman Ernest E.] Ernest Debs.

DILLS: Ernie Debs. Eugene was the socialist who ran for president, and he was a pretty good man. That was the Debs bill. So they got theirs in L.A. city, but they got a big fight on as to where it was to be located. Of course, the faculty of the community college on Vermont Avenue didn't know where it was to be located, but they wanted that new one there. Maybe have two different boards. It was all screwed up anyway. So they were fighting about it. They said, "Dills, we'll put the money in the budget." So we put in two million dollars into the 1948 budget. They said then, "We'll take care of it next year, but don't put in your implementation bill." So A.B. 8, 1949, was put in by me, signed by Governor Earl Warren, and delineated the exact area in which it was to go,

and that's how come the Long Beach State
students are known as 'Forty-niners.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

VASQUEZ: Governor [Edmund G. "Pat"] Brown [Sr.] was out of town when the Watts riots broke out in 1965. But Lieutenant Governor Glenn [M.] Anderson has been criticized in the past for not being resolute in taking action, or waiting too long. What are your assessments?

DILLS: Well, I think Glenn, out of loyalty to Pat Brown, didn't want to make a decision like that. And I guess Pat Brown didn't realize how really important it was. It's one of those things that we can hash over and over and over, and it's a question of timing. There are those who say that [President George H.] Bush isn't doing enough for [Hurricane] Hugo, and so it made him and young [Vice President J. Danforth] Quayle come running out here after the Bay Area earthquake to get some TV publicity and promise to do some things, which they won't do. They won't do it anymore than they were going to put He's going to be the education

president? Bah! Hey, he's going to put the voucher plan in. That's going to do it. That's going to be the last bit of a public school. You give them a [educational] voucher plan and they'll take all the white kids and they'll take all the smart ones and they'll move them over there and they'll leave you with the troublemakers, so-called. They'll leave you with the minorities, they'll leave you with the culturally disadvantaged. They'll leave you with the people that need the education more than the others, the people that don't have the family support or the cultural background or any economic base. . . . Long Beach . . .

[Interruption]

. . . State College. See, you have graduate schools there, too. And this was the graduate school. These were all B.A.'s, and many of them are city managers and hospital managers and people in the administration, CEO's [corporate executive officer] and so on. I spoke to them at their commencement, the Center for Public Administration and. . . . [California State University, Long Beach] Center for Public Policy

and Administration.

* [In 1989 President Curtis McCray visited me in Sacramento. This was the first visit I had received from any California State University, Long Beach president since it was established by my Assembly Bill 8 in January 1949.] Then President McCray said, "We're going to have our fortieth anniversary celebration shortly, and we'd like to have you come." I said, "I would be very happy to be there." He said, "We are going to have one of our more famous graduates, Steve Martin." I said, "I would think so." "He's going to be there. We're going to give him an honorary degree." They gave him a doctorate of literature or some such degree.

VASQUEZ: The governor was there?

DILLS: What?

VASQUEZ: The governor was there?

DILLS: The governor was there. I presented the president with a resolution, which pointed out

* Dills added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

that I was the author of the bill. They then awarded me the first Distinguished Californian Award. Somebody had given them some money, a foundation or something, and they selected me as the first Distinguished Californian who made significant contributions and so on. I taught down there in 1950. You see, I left the senate in 1949.

VASQUEZ: Senate?

DILLS: Left the senate in 1949.

VASQUEZ: The assembly?

DILLS: I beg your pardon, of course, the assembly. And went on the bench. Then I could teach in the state college because I was no longer in the state budget as an assemblyman. Now, as a senator I can't teach in a state college or university, but I could now at a community college because they have their own board. But as a judge, I wasn't on their state payroll, so I taught there at California State University, Long Beach a course in political science, Poli Sci 101, I believe, in 1950, in the apartment houses that we took over. Developers were building some apartment houses next to the

college site. So we took those apartment houses over. That was the first campus before 1953, when we had the groundbreaking. Nineteen fifty-three was the last time I was on campus until 1989.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: Because there was a president there who was a rock-ribbed, right-wing Republican by the name of [Stephen] Horn, for the purpose of the record. I don't care. He didn't care for me at all, and he had a PR man for the university who was as bad as he was in that connection, and who didn't like me politically. So they just never let me in on anything.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: Never did they even admit that I was the author of the bill. There were co-authors on it, including my brother Clayton, [Assemblyman Carl] Fletcher, and [Assemblyman William S.] Bill Grant. Bill Grant was from Long Beach. So they gave Bill Grant an honorary degree after he left the assembly.

VASQUEZ: You never got one?

DILLS: I didn't even get an invitation to anything. I

mean, nothing but nothing.

VASQUEZ: For thirty-six years?

DILLS: Exactly, from 1953 until then. So you can see how deeply I felt about this. I told this very same story to Mr. McCray, President McCray. He said, "You'll be invited to our functions now." And I was. So the alumni association, in a letter just recently, assured me that they're going to make me a life member of the alumni, although I am not an alumnus. Nevertheless, I will be one.

We got an additional million and a half dollars in the budget in 1959 for buildings and so on. So we had two million plus another one-five million. However, we didn't have to use the money to buy a site. Long Beach had some upland oil money, money from oil above the tidelands. There are two families that pretty much run Long Beach, or used to, Buffum and Bixby. Now, Mrs. [Dorothy] Buffum [Chandler] was a Chandler of the L.A. Times Chandlers, and the Bixbys, they owned a big farm, oil on it and everything. There's the old Bixby Ranch. That's where Long Beach State University is

located, the old Bixby Ranch. They had. . . .

The ranch was condemned by the city, and when your land is condemned by eminent domain, why, if you didn't sell it, it was taken over.

Therefore, you don't have to pay capital gains taxes on it. Sweet, nice. It's a good way to get a campus. They deeded it over to the state of California for a hundred dollars or something or another. So that's how we got the land. We didn't have to use the two million plus.

VASQUEZ: Did you have anything to do with that condemnation?

DILLS: No, I had nothing to do with that. I would like to claim credit, but I didn't. Maybe they worked with Grant, because he was there in the assembly. Maybe he had quite a bit to do with it, because I think he was once on the city council, too. So I am not taking anything from him. All I could say is that, you know, there were. . . . I was the principal author of the bill. I was the one who recommended it, and I was the one who wrote the specs [specifications] on where it was to go. Now, it could have gone in Downey. It could have gone into a lot of

places. It could have gone in Fullerton, or a lot of other places. But they came up with the best deal. Nobody could match it, so it went there. I'm happy about it because it's a beautiful campus.

VASQUEZ: Yes, it is. I'll be lecturing there this year.

DILLS: Will you then?

VASQUEZ: In the history department, as a matter of fact.

DILLS: History? Oh, good.

VASQUEZ: California history.

DILLS: I wish I knew more about California history.

VASQUEZ: Okay, let's see where we are here.

DILLS: Say, how did we get off on that? Well, you wanted me to talk about . . .

VASQUEZ: I wanted you to talk about that. I wanted to see what your reading was on that, how you came about that. I find fascinating those people that are in a position to be able to create centers of learning. I think that's pretty . . .

DILLS: Well, El Camino [Community] College. . . . We were with Glenn Anderson and my brother Clayton and all. We put in the legislation.¹ Glenn

1. A.B. 586, 57th Leg., Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1082 (1947).

Anderson was the lead man on El Camino College, and I was on it, too. So I can claim, along with Grant, for Long Beach State. I can claim it as Clayton and Anderson can claim Long Beach. But I was the lead author there, and Glenn Anderson the leader of El Camino.

Also, in this survey report we recommended two things: that [University of California] Davis be considered a full-partner member of the university system, and that the Citrus Station at Riverside become a part of the university system. That's in our higher-education survey report. So I have a finger on that, too. Also, back when I was in the assembly, Santa Barbara was a state college. There was an [Assemblyman] Alfred W. Robertson who was from Santa Barbara, and he wanted to make it a part of the university system. I have been royally treated, but never in the years I've been in the legislature have I been so royally treated as at that weekend--about three days there. They took the whole legislature down to Santa Barbara. We were put up in the finest hotels. We were taken to the horse ranch up there, right next to the president's,

had all these beautiful horses and. . . . We were wined, dined, and entertained, and he got his bill through. [Laughter] That was lobbying.

The best lobbying job I ever saw done was the dentists of the state of California. I told you before that the lobbyists could come on the floor. On the day we had a bill in affecting the dentists, every man's dentist was sitting by his side on the floor.

VASQUEZ: Is that right? [Laughter]

DILLS: Who's going to vote against his own dentist? He could have all of his teeth pulled out the next trip! [Laughter] That was lobbying, baby.

VASQUEZ: What year? What bill was that?

DILLS: Oh, God, I can't remember.

VASQUEZ: That's a good story. Everybody's dentist went, huh?

DILLS: Yes, yes. Also at the same time. . . . We were talking about the floor in the legislature, as I said, the newspapermen could come in and wander around and look at anything, sit there during the debate, and needle you. Yeah. It was a free-for-all. A lobbyist could come in and sit there right by you. If you did it wrong, some

guy might be pushing and pulling the guy's
shirttail, "No, you're on the wrong side of
this!"

[Assemblyman William B.] Bill Hornblower
. . . . I wasn't there then, but I was told that
Bill Hornblower got up and was making a big
speech for something, and he really roared. And
the lobbyist was pulling on his coattail.

Finally, when he got him stopped he said, "Bill,
you're on the wrong side. We're on the other
side of that." So he got right up and said,
"And that's the weak argument the other side is
using." [Laughter] And he turned it around.
So the lobbyist was there to turn him around.

VASQUEZ: So that was the power of the Third House?

DILLS: The power of the Third House. The women were
seated inside the rail. They had seats inside
the rail, where nobody sits anymore.

VASQUEZ: When you say women, you mean wives and . . . ?

DILLS: The wives were there, and the newspaper people
could wander around, and they could sit anywhere
they wanted to, too. So Sam Collins and I--I
was on Rules Committee--decided that they were
too noisy. They were back there gabbing and

all, and yakking. There was enough noise in the assembly without that. So we offered a rule to the guys to move women back of the rail. It was put to an oral vote. [Laughter] Everybody orally voted aye for the resolution that put the women in back of the rail. And those women, they were so damned mad at us. One of them, Mrs. [John B.] Cooke. . . . Oh, Commander Cooke, he was a navy commander. His wife, to vent her anger, she wouldn't prepare meals for days. He said, "I can't go home! She is so mad at me." Oh, man.

VASQUEZ: This was all in the assembly?

DILLS: All in the assembly, yeah. When you're under a call of the house, baby, you were under a call of the house. On the Atkinson oil bill, I think we were in there for thirty-nine hours.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: We couldn't leave. We were sleeping on the floor, sleeping all over the joint. [You] couldn't leave, couldn't change clothes, couldn't shave, you know, the whole thing. One of the. . . . Was it Robertson or Johnny Evans? One of them passed out. They had to

take him out on a stretcher, just from sheer exhaustion. We were under a stopped clock. So [Assemblyman] Gardiner Johnson, who is a very big man in Republican circles even today, Gardiner Johnson wrote himself a postcard and mailed it. It was stamped on the day that we were started into the call and wouldn't do any other business but that. There were some people from out of state, but they brought them back in. But there were some who wouldn't change their votes. I was one of them. I wouldn't change.

VASQUEZ: The issue, again, was . . . ?

DILLS: I think this was the Atkinson oil bill.

VASQUEZ: Yes.

DILLS: Yeah. We were locked in, and it was at least thirty-nine hours, my recollection is. Gardiner Johnson sent himself a postcard. Let's say it was the twenty-first day. It was postmarked the twenty-first, and we went over into, maybe, two days from that. Here he put this in the [Assembly] Journal. I've got to find the journal, because it's in the journal. He put this postcard into the journal, showing when it

was mailed. Then the journal itself says it was of a previous day. He got this. . . . When it was received, and it was two days later that he got the postcard, and yet it occurs. . . . The photograph of it occurs in the journal of the day when we first put the call on. That's in. . . . He was going to use it in a lawsuit showing that we had violated the law, and that it was illegal to do that. Therefore, the bill was not effective because . . .

VASQUEZ: He had thought about this ahead of time?

DILLS: Oh yes, oh yes.

VASQUEZ: Did it work?

DILLS: The independent oil people gave him the idea, I suspect. It didn't work. It didn't work, because the supreme court ruled--and at that time I think it had been pretty well loaded with Democrats--they ruled that the legislature was the sole judge of the minutes of the meeting, and the minutes of the meeting said, "It occurred on this date." We stopped the clock, you see, working under a stopped clock. We stopped the clock in the senate on last September 18. This time I presided from 9:00 in

the morning until 4:00 the next morning. I kept needling them and kept needling them, and keeping them going. A lot of them got mad at me and said I was a madman and so on. [Laughter] Listen, I didn't want to. . . . So I predicted about 8:00 that day that we'll be here until 4:00 A.M. if we didn't move any faster. So this was picked up by the papers later, when at 4:00 A.M. we did get out of there. Anyway, this lock-up did happen on the assembly floor, a very exciting memorable thing. I think it was the Atkinson oil bill.

When Governor Olson signed it, and I was one who didn't vote for it. . . . He called me in before he signed it, before it was passed out of there. He was trying to change my vote. I said, "No, Governor, it's wrong. I don't know why you don't see it, because you got elected." You know, I started in on him. He said, "You're out of the Democratic party. I don't want anymore to do with you. I don't want to see you anymore. You're out of the Democratic party." I said, "Thank you very much. I was there before you, but it's all

right with me." We didn't get along from then on.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: Never again?

DILLS: No. I don't think he ever signed any of my bills. Oh, some of them, school bills he'd have to. He never vetoed any, so . . .

VASQUEZ: Tell me about the relationship between the legislature and Governor Olson that you observed.

DILLS: Olson?

VASQUEZ: Uh-huh. [affirmative]

DILLS: Olson was not popular with anybody.

VASQUEZ: That's true.

DILLS: He was . . .

VASQUEZ: Why was that?

DILLS: He was too stubborn, pig-headed, a stubborn Swede, although he looked more like a governor than any governor we've ever had or ever will have. He's the most handsome, governor-looking man. See his picture? Beautiful gray hair there. He was well-built, you'll notice. He was a beautiful--if you could call a man

beautiful--he was a beautiful man, but a stubborn Swede. And he'd make up his mind and you couldn't move him at all. He was just absolutely impenetrable. You can't make any sense of it.

VASQUEZ: No sense of compromise?

DILLS: No way. He can't compromise. It's this way and no way. Right away, we found that out. He considered that since he was now the governor, why, he was the leader of the party and all that sort of thing. We were supposed to snap to [attention]. So he was going to run us all, and he wanted to run all of the ten Democrats out, the "Economy Democrats" that voted for Garland, because Garland was a bitter enemy and all. So he called them in one by one and. . . . He was an EPIC guy, but he was switching, as he did on the oil thing. Also, he was making his peace and all. He was headed for the presidency, too, you see. California was pretty big. He knew about Earl Warren also. So these nine Democrats and Gordon Garland didn't get along with him, and he kept on pushing the EPIC people and those of us who were not with the Garland crowd around

to the point where we used to tell him to take a walk. He was just stubborn.

VASQUEZ: Tell me about the "Economy Bloc." Do you remember them?

DILLS: Yes. That was the Ten.

VASQUEZ: That was the Ten?

DILLS: Yes. They called them the "Economy Bloc."

VASQUEZ: From there on, they gave the governor a pretty hard time?

DILLS: A very hard time, yeah. They, with the Republicans, could stop the bill from passing. Of course, the senate would anyway. Remember, they already had taken away Lieutenant Governor Patterson's appointment of committees and set up the Rules Committee. So he was just up there. Finally, he just left and went out and did his thing, ran for Congress or something later, and so on. Well, incidentally, Patterson was the first person to win a write-in campaign in the assembly. He was a Republican when he was elected, and then, when the EPIC thing came along, he changed over to Democrat and they defeated him. So he ran. . . . The next time he ran as a write-in, and he won it as a write-

in. I won a Republican nomination as a write-in about, oh, three elections ago. I forget which one it was.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: The Republicans didn't put in anyone. So I bought me about ten thousand little pens that said "Write-in Dills," and I sent each of them an instruction on how to do it, mark the ballot, and so on. And I put out some nail files and matches and all of those things, "Write-in Dills." I got I think about 2,295 write-in votes, and won the Republican nomination.

VASQUEZ: So you got a Republican write-in?

DILLS: Yeah. But cross-file and the others. . . . Won all of those but the McCracken one.

VASQUEZ: Which is your. . . . Was cross-filing or ending the cross-filing a mistake?

DILLS: I voted to end cross-filing when I was there. I thought it was the best thing that we run in our own party, although it was to my advantage to do it. But it didn't pass when I was there, but it passed subsequently under Pat Brown. I never served under him.

VASQUEZ: Tell me, it's been said that in the years that

you were serving, 1939-1949, in the assembly,
that there was less partisanship in the assembly
than you would see today? Do you feel that?

DILLS: Exactly right.

VASQUEZ: Why?

DILLS: Well, because of two things: We had two
Democratic parties to start with, you see. You
had one Republican party. They didn't need to
be organized because they were organized. The
Democrats, with ten of them going over and
joining with the Republicans to elect another
Democrat. . . . You had your "Economy Bloc,"
your conservative people, the middle-of-the-
roaders, or right-wingers, whatever you want to
call them. There just was no organization. You
just couldn't get them together. A little later
on, however, Julian Beck and some of the rest of
us decided that it would be a thing to do.
Rather than to let these people be the
spokespersons for the Democrats, at least we
would try to elect a Democratic floor leader and
a Democratic caucus. That was for. . . . And
also the Senate Rules Committee thing taking
away the speaker's power. So I think we were

going in that direction pretty much. Then Unruh came along, and he started to put in the congressional system. That was a part of the Proposition 1 in 1966.¹ That was an idea in back of that, that we will now have an organization similar to what they have in Congress, where they have the caucuses, they have the majority leader, the minority, and all that business. And then along with it: some offices, some help, some consultants, and some committee rooms that are decent. Expand the legislative council bureau to the extent that we now have between, I don't know, between maybe eighty and a hundred lawyers there that draw up our bills for us. We don't usually draw them up ourselves unless there were some lawyers there that drew up their own bills.

VASQUEZ: Did you used to in the early days?

DILLS: No, I didn't. We had the legislative counsel, but we didn't have as many of them.

VASQUEZ: There wasn't as much legislation.

DILLS: We didn't have the legislative analyst either.

1. Proposition 1a (November 1966).

We only had one guy up there on that side. We decided that, well, here the governor has all of these department heads and all of the people he wants and an unlimited amount of money, so we ought to have somebody that can analyze his budget and can help us in the legislature. We set up the legislative analyst office, and they do an excellent job. They are our people whenever we get in the budget fight and whenever we need them on our Appropriations Committee. It used to be only on the Budget Committee. However, we split finance matters into two committees in the senate. The opinion of the legislative analyst deputy is sought by both committees now. Committee chairs ask for [Department of] Finance first, then they ask the legislative analyst, "What's your opinion?" So they often come up with different figures, come up with different ideas, and so on. They're helpful to all parties.

VASQUEZ: What is your assessment of the reforms that Jesse Unruh was able to make in the assembly?

DILLS: Well, I don't think I like his reforms, but I have to say they worked.

VASQUEZ: Why don't you think you like them?

DILLS: Because he gave too much power to the select few, Unruh in particular, as speaker. It was not until. . . . Oh well, of course the Garland thing. . . . The Republicans didn't elect Republicans with Democrats. Next time, there were some Democrats who voted for Republican Speaker Charlie Lyon, but the point is that was not the same thing as two parties getting together the way they later did in order to dump Hugh M. Burns. I didn't like the reforms because the legislature became too political, too partisan.

VASQUEZ: Political in what sense? Partisan political or . . . ?

DILLS: Yeah. Because in the assembly, they were binding their people to vote the caucus position. This was one of the reasons that my brother Clayton Dills didn't get along with Jesse Unruh. He told Jesse, "By God, you're not going to tell me how to vote. The caucus is not going to tell me how to vote. I'm going to vote the way I want to vote. My district sends me up here, and this is the way they like me. They

keep sending me up, and I am going to vote my district. I am not going to be bound." And he and Jesse didn't get along.

Jesse organized an ADA, Assembly Democratic Associates or some such, to counter the CDC [California Democratic Council]. It was the more conservative group, as you may remember. He came down into Clayton's district here and he started to organize his clubs. Clayton went up to him, and he's a little guy, and when he's mad he's like the little poodle dog that runs the big dane out of his front yard. He makes it stick. He makes a believer. He went up to Jesse Unruh and said, "Listen, you go ahead and do all you want to in all the other districts, but you stay the hell out of the Sixty-seventh District or you and I are never going to get along. You stay the hell out of the Sixty-seventh District." And Jesse did. He pulled his people out, and they never came back in there. Clayton made it stick.

Well, that's another thing about Unruh I didn't like, but I didn't serve under him. When Clayton said, "I'm through," in 1966, we tried

to get him to run for it. "I'm through. I won't. I'm buying a farm in Kansas. I'm leaving. I don't care if you pay me twice as much as that damned Proposition 1 will do. I'm through. I'm done. I'm over." And he bought his farm, and he went to Kansas. I went back there about a year [later] and talked him into selling it, coming back up to Sacramento and play a little gin rummy with the boys. I said, "You can get enough money from gin rummy, a little drinking money, than you can working out here on this farm." I said, "How much do you make out here?" He said, "Oh, maybe about six thousand, seven thousand dollars." I said, "You work from about six o'clock in the morning until dark." He had cattle, and hogs, and milking cows, and growing grain there and all. I said, "You can make that much money playing gin rummy with Assemblyman [John F.] Foran or somebody." So he came back.

VASQUEZ: Tell me something, were you close to CDC?

DILLS: Yes. At first.

VASQUEZ: Then what happened?

DILLS: Well, they began to get too. . . . They got a

little bit too far to the left.

VASQUEZ: Jobs?

DILLS: Huh?

VASQUEZ: Give me an example.

DILLS: Well, let me see. A lot of resolutions having to do with Russia and overseas. The CDC was a very useful instrumentality.

VASQUEZ: In what way?

DILLS: Well, in getting people out in the field. For instance, in 1956 I was to be a candidate for controller. We met at Fresno, and that was when Sam Yorty was running for United States Senate and he gave his "wired, stacked, rigged, and packed" speech. We were to have the endorsements for the controller and the secretary of state on Saturday afternoon, the speeches and the endorsements. Just at noontime, when we were going to go out to lunch, on noon on Saturday, somebody got up when Cranston was presiding, and mumbled something, and Cranston said, "All in favor of the motion say aye." Bang! It wasn't until late that day, when I was getting all ready to make my speech, that somebody said, "Hey, they're not having it

today." They put it over until Sunday afternoon. Well, there were no planes, there's no train. There is no way you could get out of Fresno on a Sunday afternoon except the way you came, which is in your automobile. My people in southern California were there for me. Assemblyman George Collins was the other candidate, and his people from northern California were there, and they stayed and he won. My people had to come south. You know, that's a long drive from Fresno in those one-lane [roads], and trucks get in front of you and so on. So yes, I was with CDC. I helped them in the clubs and so on and so on. They wasted away a little bit and got into some leadership. . . . Oh, [Senator] Nate Holden and some of them. They were just a little bit too, too. . . . They just got into too many things. It is difficult enough to get people to stay with the Democratic party, you know. If you get too far out there, why. . . . My thoughts may have well been there, but I'm talking politics. If you want to win every once in a while, you've got to be somewhere toward left of center, but nevertheless not too far.

VASQUEZ: When you say you are talking politics, what does that mean?

DILLS: I mean by that . . .

VASQUEZ: You're talking winning?

DILLS: I'm talking winning. That's right, yeah. Because we could not have won with [Jesse L.] Jackson in 1988, although he was the logical guy. He was the only guy that was really talking democracy, the only guy that would say it like it was. I'm the greatest supporter of Hubert Humphrey in history, but Hubert Humphrey couldn't make it because of the damned war: "Dump the Hump," and Unruh took a walk on him here. The [United States Senator Robert F.] Bobby Kennedy people, which was Unruh and his crowd, they took a walk. They sat on their damned hands, yet we almost pulled it out. If we'd two more weeks, we would have won it. We lost United States by one-half a vote per precinct in that race.

VASQUEZ: You're talking about the 1988 presidential race?

DILLS: Yes, yes. Well, Jackson was the only guy outside of my good little friend that I'd committed to first, our senator with the bow

tie and the glasses from Illinois [United States Senator Paul Simon]. I liked him because he had my kind of philosophy. He was for labor, he was for the old people, he was. . . . So now I'm talking about winning. I would have stayed with him as long as he stayed in there, but he dropped out after getting about 119 votes or something like that. He finally dropped out. Jackson, they wouldn't have bought him because he's black. If anybody has any doubt about it, let me mention Willie Horton by name.¹ That's all. Just Willie Horton and the flag salute and gun control. And [Governor Michael] Dukakis stood there [when asked], "What would you do if your wife were raped? What would you do to the person? Would you give him the death sentence for that?" Remember the black man that asked that question?

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: Dukakis stood there a while and he said, "Well, I don't believe that the death penalty is a

1. Willie Horton, a Massachusetts paroled felon who went on to commit another crime, was used by the George Bush campaign to allege that Governor Dukakis was "soft" on crime.

deterrent." And he started to make a speech again. What he should have said was, "I would kill the son of a bitch myself." If he had said that, he would have been elected president. I do believe that, in spite of the Willie Horton thing.

VASQUEZ: That's how close the presidential election . . .

DILLS: That's how close it could have been, because you see, hell, Dukakis was out seventeen points ahead of Bush after the Democratic convention. Then he hid the fact that he was a liberal. He didn't do it until finally the last . . .

VASQUEZ: The last days?

DILLS: They smoked him out, and then they had to try to explain, and that was too damned late.

VASQUEZ: Because it was a positive response to that one?

DILLS: Right. We were there. We were there ready to go. We had gone for. . . . I didn't go for Jackson. I went for, I told you . . .

VASQUEZ: For Paul Simon?

DILLS: For Paul Simon. But Jackson couldn't have won. I would have liked to have seen [Senator Albert] Gore on there. In some ways, I think Gore is a comer, he and Bentley? What is the

basketball player, Senator Bent . . ? It starts with a "B."

VASQUEZ: I'm sorry, it is just not clear to me.

DILLS: Well, I will think of it in a minute. [United States Senator William Bradley] Well, we better get back here. I got off on a tangent on CDC.

VASQUEZ: These discussions are not so much of a tangent as you might believe.

DILLS: Yeah. They're really not when you consider my philosophy, because it is there.

VASQUEZ: Let's talk a little bit about your judicial career before we go on into the senate. Can we do that?

DILLS: Okay. Why did I leave the legislature?

VASQUEZ: Exactly.

DILLS: I stepped down from a statewide position of influence. I had seniority there in the assembly and so on. I had whatever committee assignments I wanted, chair and subcommittees and all that. Well, first place, \$100 month. The JP [justice of the peace], a judge of the justice court, South Los Angeles township, which was composed of the largest. . . . It was the largest in terms of population of any justice

court in the state. It had more felonies than any place in the world, in what I call "felony row," between Alameda [Street] and Central Avenue, from Slauson [Avenue] down to Rosecrans [Avenue]. That's county territory. Probation and parole officers won't even go in there. They stay the hell out of there. Don't let you come in, young man. I'm talking about a tough place. Don't go in there yourself between Alameda, Central Avenue, Rosecrans, and Slauson. Stay the hell out of there. That's not the city. That's the county. The sheriff's office, they don't have enough deputies for there. All the way down the district picks up the city of Lynwood, my JP district now, get this, all that area up to Slauson Avenue. Actually, it was beyond that. It went up to Nadeau [Street], no, Slauson, Slauson, okay. [It] came down to that county area, picked up Lynwood, picked up Paramount, picked up the Willowbrook area on the county, 120th Street south, that's Willowbrook. Watts starts at 120th north, that's the city of L.A. It picked up the Dominguez, Carson area, and part of north

Long Beach. The heaviest load of any JP court in the state for a one-man judge. But it paid \$7,500, and I could practice law in both the superior court and municipal court and still be a justice court judge, too. It paid \$7,500, which is 6,300 good reasons, all dollars, by way of a paycheck raise. I could open a law office and practice law or, if I couldn't, my associate could, which is why I used associates. I just didn't practice law very much because I was too busy in the court.

Also, I had to run for election in 1950, so they. . . . The AFL Teamsters, good to their word, put a guy in against me.

VASQUEZ: [Laughter] The CIO or the Teamsters?

DILLS: This time, the Teamsters, because of my dairymen "hot cargo" vote in the assembly. They put a man on the ballot.

VASQUEZ: Do you remember who he was?

DILLS: A lawyer from Lynwood, Arthur Watwood. He professed that he had studied law, although he didn't pass the bar in California, but he started a law school later. As a matter of fact, he had me as a commencement speaker there

and gave me a doctorate degree. [Laughter] So if I can't lick 'em, I join em.

VASQUEZ: What law school was this?

DILLS: Oh, gosh. It was called. . . . I'll remember in a minute. In addition to the fact that I could and did open a law office and got some income, I took in a fellow by the name of [James] Butler at that time. Later on [there was] a fellow, whose father was a teacher, by the name of George Wilde. I took him in. Later, George Wilde wanted some corporation experience, so he left me and went to downtown L.A. Then I got Kee Maxwell, Jr., whose parents had the Paramount Journal and who himself was the first city attorney of Paramount. Kee was later the consultant on that tidelands, that State Lands Commission.

VASQUEZ: Let me stop this here.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

DILLS: We'll pick it up when we get to the senate. I am talking about the relative responsibility law.

VASQUEZ: You were talking about that.

DILLS: I want to be sure to get that in.

The judgeship was an interesting one because the Compton court had everything. We had everything there. We would have murder after murder after murder. It never once got into the papers. You kill a black man, you kill a Mexican, who cares? Nobody. It's not news. What the hell? It's just not there. I think there were almost as many as a dozen people killed in the last two or three months of the time that I was running for the senate in 1966. Nothing in the local paper at all about them.

Before I get into the Watts riots here, my South L.A. justice court took in all of this territory except the city of Compton. Right in the center of it was the Compton Municipal Court, which was founded by a bill passed by me. Whenever there is a city or an area outside the city where there is a population of 40,000 or more, the board of supervisors can set it up as a municipal court. Then the legislature must confirm that within that area a municipal court can be established. So the justice court was

not abolished. It was kept. But within the city limits of Compton, there was the Compton Municipal Judicial District, at that time only with the jurisdiction of the city of Compton. I had all of the rest of the area in my JP court. There was a city judge in the city of Lynwood. The people passed a court reorganization plan in 1950, effective in 1952.¹

VASQUEZ: Was it a proposition?

DILLS: Yes. This abolished all of the minor courts, so to speak, except two. The municipal court [operated] in areas of 40,000 population or more and the justice courts in areas of under 40,000. So we have a justice court in Avalon, okay, and we used to have one in Malibu, and maybe still have one in the Malibu area over there. We had several around in L.A., but after the passage of that, there were three courts in one area. There was my JP court, there was the city of Lynwood's, and there was a municipal court with two judges on the municipal court. So we were merged into one under that initiative

1. Proposition 3 (November 1950).

in '52, but there were three people--I mean four people that had to run for three jobs. So the city judge of the city of Lynwood was persuaded by the city council of the city of Lynwood, who had appointed him, to become their city attorney. They then appointed me Lynwood city judge.

I held my sessions above a firehouse at first and then later at the general offices of the school building. No, it was always over the firehouse. That's when I said I had two wigs. I wore. . . . On Saturdays, I had the Lynwood city court, and the JP, the justice court, from Monday through Friday. It was the heaviest court in the state.

So when we merged, I was the third municipal judge. The old JP court building became a municipal court building. There were two buildings. So for me as the third judge, I held court in the American Legion hall, where they put a little platform on the floor. During the daytime I held court there as the third judge and handled whatever they gave me. Then we built a new court building in Compton. But

before I left the legislature, I put in a bill that called for a branch of the superior court in Compton. Now I think they must have nine or ten or eleven superior judges there.

VASQUEZ: Did you get to serve at the new building before you went back to the senate?

DILLS: No.

VASQUEZ: Firehouse all the way, huh?

DILLS: Yeah. No, no, no. We had another building over there, the old municipal court. I don't know what they've done with that.

VASQUEZ: And you were in that?

DILLS: I was in that, and I was presiding judge, I think, for five different years.

VASQUEZ: Why did you decide to go back to the legislature? Before I ask you that . . .

DILLS: Okay. How did I like it? Well, I. . . . It was a very valuable experience. It taught me a lot of things, among them that, in my opinion, although I voted for the death penalty, there is only one reason I can give for it. It's that if the guy is dead, he cannot kill another inmate or one of the guards or one of the visitors. For if he does kill them, what are you going to

do? Put him in jail? He's there. What kind of a . . . It makes no difference to him then. But that assumes that the punishment should be severe to be a deterrent. In my opinion, more important than the severity of the punishment is the certainty of the punishment. That the guy is going to get it will make more difference to the same person, the non-criminal mind, than if it's going to be the death penalty. If the person is at all reasonable, and if that is going to be a deterrent, then the guy isn't going to kill.

VASQUEZ: Certainty, not severity?

DILLS: Because he's going to beat it. They are going to get him a lawyer, or a public defender, or somebody, and he will beat it. The criminal mind doesn't ever think he is going to get caught. He is going to outsmart the enforcers. "Yeah, he's a dumb cop, flat-foot," you know. So I was confirmed in my belief; I had [it] before that, but I think it is "certainty" to be sure.

You come before that damned Dills, "Ninety-day Dills" I was known as. "Don't take me

before Dills!" If you have done it, and you've done wrong, you're going to get it. I'm not going to fool around with you, buster. I don't care who you are, how much money you've got or whatever. You're going to get the same punishment, Mrs. Zsa Zsa, as the next person would get who did a thing like you did. I don't care who you are.

VASQUEZ: Do you agree with the stand that the judge has taken in the Zsa Zsa Gabor case?

DILLS: I think he ought to put her in the pokey a long time more than that, because she was as arrogant a bitch as you ever heard. She did insult the American people and the whole justice system. She tried to make a showcase out of the court case so she can get a little publicity and get on some of these shows, talk shows or squares, "Hollywood Squares" or something like that. I have no time for people like that. They think they can buy their way in.

VASQUEZ: Have you ever had a similar case come before you?

DILLS: Yes, sir. Yes, I did. I had several.

VASQUEZ: Do you want to talk about any of them?

DILLS: Well, I would rather not pinpoint anybody, but I had one case where there was a very famous movie actress. She was involved with a man who was in the pornography business. They were knocked off with trunks of pornographic literature, everything, kids and the whole bit. They wouldn't plead to anything. They're going to fight it out, because she's a big. . . . I can't remember her name, I don't want to. They got one of the big lawyers, either [Max] Solomon or Gladys Towles Root, you know, some of those persons, and came out. They went to a jury trial, and they were found guilty. I gave them what I would give anybody else under the circumstances. I don't remember what it was.

I had another fellow in there with a group, a young. . . . They were having an all-boy party, you know, "sleeping parties." He's a young actor. He's still around today. I didn't hit him any harder than I hit the rest of them. They all got whatever it was the others got. Some of the funny cases that I had. . . . Well, let me finish before I get into some of the amusing ones. It was a grand experience in

that it taught me some self-control--discipline --that I needed. Because [when] a child molester or some three or four guys that rape an eighty-year-old woman out here in the oil fields, I don't care for that kind of conduct and I am meaner than a. . . . I'm awfully mean. I wanted to get off the bench and just kick the hell out of them myself, but I had to restrain myself. For the first year or two, it was awfully hard to go home, because I had all of these crimes to remember. I had everything in the book. You name it, I had it. I had it.

This was the most colorful court. Everybody said so. Into it, I sprinkled some laughter. I'd lighten the process. I could see that people didn't want to be there, a lot of them. Particularly the traffic cases, the sort of thing where there are witnesses and so on. I would keep it a little lighthearted. I never had them all stand, "Rise, here comes the judge." None of that business. I kept it kind of like a small court, small claims court. Just people, [a] people court. I disciplined

myself. I learned from people. You can pretty soon tell the phonies, except that a good liar will beat you every time.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: A good liar will beat you every time. He'll beat the polygraph machine. He'll beat it all, yeah.

VASQUEZ: Did your experience in your ten years in the state assembly prepare you for being a judge?

DILLS: No, I didn't find anything there that prepared me for being a judge. No. I think my being a teacher taught me more about being a judge than anything else. Teaching.

VASQUEZ: How?

DILLS: Well, two things. First of all, there is in the American people a real genuine fairness. Deep down, people are fair. It is. . . . When you get a group of people, generally speaking, you've got enough common sense to be fair. I appreciated that. Lee Geyer was a teacher. He said, "There are two things you don't do when you are a teacher: Settle your own discipline problems. Don't send any kids to the principal or to the disciplinarian. Do it yourself. If

you don't do it yourself, they'll say, 'Well, Dills can't handle discipline. I guess we better scout around and get some other Latin teacher, somebody who can.' Second thing is, if the class is turning against you, all of them or most of them are turning against you, you're wrong. Back off. Back away." As a teacher, you know that those were . . .

VASQUEZ: You can't be right and them all wrong?

DILLS: That's right. You're out of step, so you better back off and pull back and say, "Well, we better reconsider that thing." Those two tips, plus the fact that I do believe that the majority of people are good people. There are a few stinkers, like we have in the legislature, of whom I'm ashamed. I am sorry that they're there, but they are there, and they get the rest of us in a hell of a lot of trouble. We're all. . . . "We're a swamp up there," said one of the candidates for governor. He's going to clean the swamp out. Well, that didn't do him any good, and he is going to be sorry he made that statement, but he's running against the legislature. So that's it. That's the way they

say it's done.

VASQUEZ: Who is it?

DILLS: The attorney general.

VASQUEZ: Mr. John Van de Kamp.

DILLS: Yeah, I pledged to him. I pledged to him over a year ago. I don't like that. He had no business doing that. He didn't need to do that. Nobody asked me, but he has got this guy Richie [Ross] that they let go in the assembly. He, Rich, looked to see how Reagan got in--by fighting with the "in" crowd, "get government off your back." Look how [James E.] Carter got in, by fighting the establishment there, even in Congress and so on. Just fight the guys that are there. They don't need you if you are going to be the same. They'll vote for the incumbent or vote for somebody else. So Richie persuaded Van de Kamp that's the way to go, and that's the way he is going. I think he is gone. I hope not, because I have served under enough Republicans. I've been under Deukmejian, I've been under Reagan, I've been under Warren, and I've been under two Democrats, Olson and Jerry Brown. Sometimes when I'm mad

at him, I call him "Buster Brown."

VASQUEZ: Buster Brown? [Laughter]

DILLS: But we're friends, and I supported him for state chairman, Democratic party.

VASQUEZ: Did you?

DILLS: My constituency out here are poor people.

There're working people, they're people that have to drive to work. They have a lot of clunkers. They can't afford a good car, and if something happens, their fender gets off or a light, they can't find a part for it. They couldn't afford it if they could. So they get a ticket, and they don't show on the ticket because there's no use coming in if you haven't fixed it. So it goes to a warrant, and that's a hundred and something extra dollars. Every Monday morning they would bring in the people on warrants. My jury box plus other areas were filled with people that had just that kind of a problem. Most of them I dismissed. If they told me the truth, I'd dismiss it. "You'd better get another car, do something, do the best you can."

There's no cross-town transportation worthy of the name. People who work in El Segundo or work over here in Gardena, any place. . . . Compton is a bedroom town. We have very little industry there. Paramount is about the same, although they have more industry in that direction. But my people. . . . I've 38 percent Hispanics, 20 percent black, 10 percent Asian-Pacific, 1 percent Native American. That is 69 percent. I have 69 percent Democrats.

[Laughter]

My people are working people, and those people in the court are working people. Sure, they've got traffic problems, their cars screw up, the brakes don't work. They can't help it, damn it. They'd have better cars. They'd have Lincolns and Cads and--what do you call those things?--BMW's and all the rest of them, if they could. They just can't. So I took that into consideration as a judge.

VASQUEZ: Do you think you are more effective taking that approach?

DILLS: I certainly do. Well, I am rendering justice as I see it. Charging her, Zsa Zsa, what? Twelve

thousand dollars or something. Hell, they shafted her a really good one. Of course, I would have been overdoing it, and everybody would yell about that. I wouldn't have done it either, but she would have got more days than three, I'll guarantee you that. She was pushing herself into court and showing off and costing the public over \$30,000 and so on.

Well, being a judge was a very rewarding experience. I'm glad I had it. I'm proud of myself that I was a good judge. I was a firm but fair one. Whenever they would say, "Don't take me before Dills," why, that's because they we're going to get what they're entitled to, and they don't want that. They want better than that. They don't want justice, they want mercy.

I've had many, many guys come to me and say, "Dills, you did right by me. You sent me to the drunk farm for ninety days. You saved my life. If you hadn't done that, I'd be dead today because I couldn't stop and I wouldn't stop. You stopped it for me." I never sent them. . . . The only alcoholic I ever sent to AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] was a black doctor,

M.D. I said, "I'm breaking my rules, because I know the AA people." I work with them. I go to AA meetings, and I have friends and relatives that are in AA. I know that alcoholism is a disease, and I know that one can be helped. But I know that it has to be done by the guy himself. He's got to recognize what he is. And AA doesn't charge him any money. They're not interested in his social position or a damned thing, other than to remain sober for twenty-four hours each day.

I considered a senate race in 1966 when it looked as though Proposition 1 was going to pass, and the legislature could be a full-time job; it would pay me at least something like a decent salary. . . . It was then paying \$6,000. I would be leaving a \$23,500 municipal court job to run for this. I know that the judges are going to be taken care of each year. The superior court judges will see to that. The board of supervisors will see to it that the superior court judges get more, because the L.A. County Board of Supervisors salary is tied to that of the superior court judges. So

they're going to see to it also that these municipal judges are helped. So I know how it works. Furthermore, legislators were getting a per diem. I think at that time they were, maybe, getting forty bucks a day or so. This was back in 1966, which, when you add that up, plus the car, plus telephone and a few things like that, it's not too shabby. It's not too shabby.

Another reason I decided to return to the legislature was I just sort of burned out in the judge's spot. I'll give you two prepositions. The difference between "to" and "for." As a judge, I had to do too many things to people. When you send a drunk away, or somebody who's beat up the "old lady" or stolen a car, whatever, you have to do something to not only that person, but you do it to the family too. Especially if you take the breadwinner. As an assemblyman or senator, you can do something for people. You can, as I did, get a repeal of the old-age responsible relatives clause. You can, as I did, establish a Long Beach State University. You can pass a teacher's retirement

[bill]. You can author the Ralph C. Dills bill for collective bargaining for state employees.¹ You can do something for people. You can help the people that are on welfare. You can get some money for AIDS victims. You can do some things that affect people's lives, their very daily lives.

We worry and concern [ourselves], and I do, about the homeless, made so by the earthquake in the [San Francisco] Marina.² But those people are just now experiencing it for maybe two weeks or a few days, a thing that millions of people out there are experiencing, that have no homes at all, sleeping on the streets, paper wrapped over them or whatever they can get. People in the lines for two meals or three meals or one meal a day; hundreds, thousands all over this country, within one mile of the White House.

VASQUEZ: Or a city hall.

DILLS: I'm for those people near our city hall. I am

1. S.B. 275, 1975-1976 Reg. Sess. (1976).

2. Refers to people left homeless in the Marina district of San Francisco as a result of the October, 1989 earthquake.

for taking care of those people. My bills show it, my votes show it. I'm going to continue to do that. As a legislator, I can do things for people more and better than I can do to them as a judge.

VASQUEZ: Why did you pick the district you're in? For obvious reasons?

DILLS: For the reason that it included Clayton's district, part of my judicial district, it had Dominguez, and it had . . .

VASQUEZ: A lot of the old assembly districts?

DILLS: A lot of the old assembly districts. I was well known in Clayton's district. And Clayton's name, Dills, was known for twenty-four sessions, or twenty-four years. Torrance was in my district, the new district. I had good support from there. I had a lot of friends in labor, shipworkers and. . . . They made me a life[time], honorary member of the [International] Longshoremen's [and Warehousemen's] Union, Local 13.

But more particularly because Clayton's district was in it, and there was nobody else that talked about going, and I wanted Clayton to

run for the senate. I said, "Go for the senate, you dummy. Get away from Unruh. Go over there and you won't be under Unruh." His reply: "Nope, I'm through. I've had enough." I said, "Go for that. Look, I'll go for your spot. Will that help you?" He said, "I don't care what you go for. I'm not going to go for it anymore."

VASQUEZ: He didn't want any part of it, huh?

DILLS: He said period, and he meant period. So Rose and I and Dick Floyd sat up with him.

VASQUEZ: Rose Sarukian?

DILLS: Yeah. Rose and I and Dick, we sat up with him and talked with him and tried to get him drunk. We prayed with him, for him, and did everything else. He was adamant. So when he decided he wouldn't run, then I said, "Okay, I'm going to run for your spot unless that damned [Vincent] Vince Thomas makes up his mind." He was waiting and waiting and waiting. I said, "Vince, are you going to run for the senate office? It's a good one for you." I said, "You've got all of your district down there, and you know Clayton's people. They all know you.

You're the dean of the legislature," and so on.

Well, he thought and he thought and he thought. Finally, one last day there, I went to him, and Brown was down. . . . Governor Brown was down at a meeting in Long Beach. I said, "Vince, today is the last day that I'm going to ask you. If you do not tell me today you're running for that, I am going down and filing." He said, "Ralph, I think I'll just stay up there." And then [Howard] Jarvis came along with Proposition 13¹ and beat him, in spite of the fact that he had supported Jarvis and supported 13. That's what you get, huh?

So I then tossed my sombrero in the race. Clayton said he wouldn't go. Vince Thomas said he wouldn't go. I knew enough people in my judicial district, in Clayton's district, Vince Thomas's people, and so on. There I am. I got my start over here in this area anyway.

VASQUEZ: Do you want to take a break for a second?

DILLS: Sure.

[Interruption]

1. Proposition 13 (June 1978).

VASQUEZ: Let me adjust the sound here. Tell me about the primary when you decided to run for the senate in '66.

DILLS: Well, I made the decision, as I told you, because this was a district in which my brother had served for twenty-four years. Also, I'd cut my political teeth in the Sixty-seventh Assembly District, was elected to a Democratic county central committee one year, was president of a club here, went to high school here and president of the Gardena High School alumni association here and so on. I believed that, with incumbent Assemblyman Thomas running for his job, my chances of making it might be pretty good. The Dills name was fairly well known from the fact that I had been in the assembly and was a judge, and also my brother. So name recognition is very important, they tell me, in politics. Usually a fellow will go out and run a poll to see how well his name is known in any given district. I didn't run the poll because I already knew.

VASQUEZ: Tell me something before we go on. Was there something you felt you had to finish doing up in

Sacramento that drew you back?

DILLS: Yes, there were several things that I wanted to get back into. I felt that, among other things, our public schools were not being taken care of.

VASQUEZ: Education was one?

DILLS: Education.

VASQUEZ: What was another?

DILLS: Education.

VASQUEZ: We'll come back to these in more detail, but what were the . . . ?

DILLS: Okay, education is to me the most important issue before our legislature at any time. Now, I know there are those that come and go, but education. . . . Public school education, the availability of that to every one of our young people and older people, to me is the basic foundation of the democratic system of government. Without public education we will drift into some form of elitism, aristocracy of the rich, or something or the other. So without public schools and the right of people to attend them, and to be available there, why, we will have lost the last best hope of democracy. That was a primary reason for going. There were

others.

As a judge, you have to be here in the middle. You're not in the fight. You are a referee. I like to be in the fight.

VASQUEZ: You like to take sides?

DILLS: I'm an activist in that connection. I'm not an activist in football or basketball or the physical sports, but I am an activist in government. As I pointed out to you a little earlier, when I went up to the assembly to visit with Assemblyman Geyer in Easter week back in 1935, why, I got hooked. I am a mainliner. I got hooked on politics and on government. I could see things being done, and I wanted to go back and participate in doing some more things. The drug thing was nothing new to me. As I told you, my brother Clayton had the first bill that had really stiff punishments for drug pushers. That was signed by Pat Brown at the time. Pat Brown came to my brother and said, "Would you mind if Senator [Edwin J.] Regan," who is chairman of the judiciary. . . . R-E-G-A-N, I think.

VASQUEZ: Edwin Regan.

DILLS: Ed Regan is still around there. He is a member

of our Derby Club. He is there every Tuesday.

Retired.

"Would you mind if he was. . . . If we use your bill?" Clayton said, "Well, I don't really care that much about who is the author of the bill. I want to get it done." Well, he said, "That's fine. We'll go with the Regan bill then if it's okay with you." So they passed the Dills bill, but Regan was the author, and sent it over to the assembly. When it came over there, those assemblymen were so damned mad. They turned that bill down, and they sent word back over to the senate: "You will pass the Dills bill or you will get no bill at all." Clayton, if you don't step on his toes, if you treat him nice, okay, he won't fight you. When you try to do something like that, he wasn't going to fight. But the guys over there said, "No, we're not going to put up with this. You got a million signatures from the Elks Club up and down the state. It is known as the Dills Bill. It isn't known as the Regan Bill. Why should this guy, when you're carrying the load, why should he be given the credit for it?"

"Well, I want to see it . . ." "Yeah, but that's not the way we do business around here, and you know that, Clayton. This guy, Pat Brown, had no right to do that." Pat Brown was rubbing this guy Regan because he needed his support. Regan was never for Pat Brown.

VASQUEZ: No, he wasn't.

DILLS: He was not for him.

VASQUEZ: What do you think Pat Brown wanted?

DILLS: He just wanted his support on his judicial appointments and things in the courts. He wanted to pick up as many Democrats as he could. So the drug thing that's now a hot issue. . . . Somebody has located it and found it. Now it is an issue. It is. It is the one thing that will ruin us. We won't need an evil empire. We don't need somebody from the outside to ruin us. We'll ruin ourselves. That will do it. That will ruin us.

VASQUEZ: So you had. . . . How . . . ?

DILLS: But we had drug people in my court all along, and I could see what was happening. We had these glue sniffers, remember, before that, and the Mary Jaweenie--as I call it--marijuana, "Qué

fumando no tiene. . . . La cucaracha, la cucaracha." I know that one. So I'm just mentioning that as one of the things that urged me. I've been through the Watts riots, 1965. I was a judge. I handled over two hundred of the cases myself.

VASQUEZ: Tell me about that experience.

DILLS: Well, it was the greatest crime wave in the history of the world. That's what it was. It had everything, and lots of it. We had arson, we had murder, we had rape, we had. . . . You name it, we had it.

VASQUEZ: That was part of the riots?

DILLS: Everything. You had everything. And my opinion is this. I went in there in an unmarked car with the sheriffs when the National Guardsmen were still there, and when there was still sniping around. I saw what I saw. I saw that there were five different kinds of storefronts that were burned and looted. If it was a chain of almost anything. . . . If it was not people back home, the chain drugstore. . . . You'd get a lot of things in a drugstore, maybe, automobile tires for that matter. You can get

drugs, you can get jewelry, you can get liquor. You can get just almost anything in a drugstore, especially if it's a chain. It doesn't belong to you in Watts. It is somebody's in Beverly Hills someplace. Somebody else owns it. Chains of furniture. . . . You can get TVs, radios--they have a lot of things in a furniture store that are good. In a pawn shop, you can find all sorts of interesting things in a pawnshop. You can find a lot of interesting things in a chain grocery store. And there was one other chain. For the moment, it slips my mind. Drugstores did I mention?

VASQUEZ: Yes.

DILLS: Okay, there are five of them. I've mentioned, I guess, four. But groceries, furniture, and so on. Those that were for out-of-town people, they burned. If there was a sign on your store, in your storefront, be it big or small, that said, "soul brother," and you were a bona fide, and you employed local people and they were part of it, you stand. You're not busted. But they overturned cars. They'd start fires, they wouldn't let the firemen come in. They would

keep them out. They shot at policemen and they shot at firemen. And who did it? The gangs. The man that started this whole thing was a person who was a drunk driver.

VASQUEZ: [Marquette] Frye?

DILLS: I've forgotten what his name was.

VASQUEZ: Frye?

DILLS: That's the name. They pulled. . . . The highway patrolman chased him to his home and started to arrest him. His mother came out and got into a beef with him, and so they tried and did, I think, arrest her. I had the guy. . . . That was on a Saturday or Sunday. It was a court holiday. I had him in my court the next Monday on traffic tickets, warrants, he hadn't shown up on.

VASQUEZ: As a result of being arrested that day?

DILLS: Yeah, until they filed the drunk driving charges against him. Then the thing got into more than just the drunk driving. I think it got into assault and battery and a lot of things. I'm not sure what they did to him. But anyhow, there was no looting.

This was a hot August summer, and it was a

bad summer. There was a lot of unemployment, a lot of dissatisfaction. People were on edge. Let me tell you something. I was afraid this last summer we would have the same damned thing. But for the drug traffic thing, we would have. But by Wednesday night. . . . And there was no burning, no killings, that sort of thing yet. By Wednesday night were the first fires. The Chicano gangs and the black gangs decided that they would quit fighting each other. They would join together and they would score, and, baby, they did. They started to burn, and they started to loot in real style then.

VASQUEZ: Do you have something to base that on? That these gangs got hooked together on this?

DILLS: From my own experiences and what people told me, and what the sheriffs and the firefighters. . . . I'm a member of the Masonic Lodge. The master of our lodge was a firefighter. He was in there for, I don't know, twenty hours or more. Just never was able to rest. About three weeks afterwards he had a heart attack from too much exposure, you know. He died. He was a young guy, too. Well, anyway . . .

VASQUEZ: Do you think that it was a social condition that . . . ?

DILLS: The social condition was basically it. It started out that way. Unemployment and no jobs and. . . . It was the same basic reason why people go into drugs. We can put all the people in the prisons--we've got some more things coming on the ballot this coming November, November next year. We've got more money. I think we've got two different jail things on there. We have spent eight times as much, percentage-wise, on jails, new jails, and prisons and prison care, than we have for education programs, public schools.

VASQUEZ: Is that the solution, do you think?

DILLS: Huh?

VASQUEZ: Do you think that's the solution?

DILLS: No, I don't think that it is.

VASQUEZ: Incarceration?

DILLS: No, I don't think it is the solution. It's just simply a temporary palliative to keep them off of the streets, but it doesn't cure a damned thing. It doesn't cure anything. Maybe while they're in there, they're off of it--those that

are in there because they're users--but that is still not the right way to go. This guy. . . . Well, I'll get off on [William J.] Bennett here, and I shouldn't. But they had the most to do with that in Washington, D.C., to build more prisons and put more policemen out there. "All right, we could use some more policemen." But this is not that kind of a crime that we're used to. We are into an international thing, and we simply are going to have to take care of our people, make available jobs, some homes, some decent family opportunities. Make it available to our people. Otherwise, they are going to go into this, and I don't know how the hell you are going to stop them. We are going to have to start young, with the kids. You know how they are starting out today. I despise that "Just say no" Nancy [Reagan] bullshit. It was all right for kids, but they're starting today the red ribbon thing. That is, opening in the schools and everywhere, and everybody is supposed to wear a red ribbon for the next two weeks or so. It's okay. All the education you can do is fine, especially with the young

people. We're going to have to do it that way. Okay, I'm not a sociologist. I'm just a guy that if I was here looking at human beings and knowing that if you don't have food, if you don't have some shelter, if you don't have some clothes, if you don't have a little bit of the goodies of life, just a smidgen of the life-style of the rich and famous, baby, if you can't get it legally, you're going to get it some other way.

VASQUEZ: Let me ask you a question. In interviewing Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins, he contends that there were hearings here in Los Angeles, specifically in the Watts area a couple of weeks before the riots, in which it became very evident to him and to his committee that there was a growing displeasure and discontent in the black community. That it was like a boiling cauldron, and that he approached the mayor, Mayor Yorty at the time, to do something about the funds that had been sent from the federal government to the local government. But that he [Yorty] insisted on playing politics and deciding on his own what would and would not

receive moneys. He blames a lot of what took place on that foot dragging. What is your assessment of that?

DILLS: I agree. I agree with him. That's just a part of it. We're just not meeting those needs. We're not doing it now.

VASQUEZ: Did we learn anything from Watts do you think?

DILLS: Not a damned thing.

VASQUEZ: Is Watts any better today than it was in 1964?

DILLS: Not a hell of a lot. It's a little better. We've got 103d Street, "Blood Alley," you know, and we've got it over in Willowbrook. We've got a new center and that sort of thing, and they're trying to go, but they're not getting any outside money. They're not going in there. They can't afford the insurance, among other things. They can't afford the insurance.

VASQUEZ: Businesses you mean?

DILLS: Businesses, yeah. There is . . .

VASQUEZ: How do you think the governor handled the Watts riots?

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

VASQUEZ: Governor Brown was out of the state when the

Watts riots took place, and Lieutenant Governor Glenn Anderson has been criticized by some for not taking resolute action. What is your assessment of that?

DILLS: I think that Glenn Anderson was concerned about the opinion of Pat Brown. I'm not sure that Pat Brown understood how serious it was. We Democrats don't like a police state. We don't like the calling out of the army or the National Guard or anybody to handle what are, more or less, civil problems rather than wartime problems. Glenn Anderson, I'm sure, was reluctant to call out the National Guard for that, among other reasons. And the fact that he was just a lieutenant governor, not the governor. It would. . . . We haven't had a very good history of nice treatment by police forces of minorities and people that are not particularly wealthy or have some power financially and so on. We used to have people stopping us Okies and Texans at the border, [Los Angeles] Chief Police [James E.] Davis and all, stopping people from coming in. So there is bitterness among the liberal people, those that

don't like police power in the sense of using force upon people who are civilians. There's a distrust of too many of our law enforcement officers. These things were, I'm sure, in Glenn's mind at the time. But more particularly, I think, he just didn't want to go out on a limb and do this and try to show up Brown or to injure him.

VASQUEZ: Let's go back to where we were, and that was your first session, your first. . . . In fact, your first campaign for senator in 1966. Your Republican opponent in the general election was V. Lane Knight. Tell me about him?

DILLS: Yes. V. Lane Knight was a lawyer. I think there were other opponents too, I'm not sure. There may have been one or two more. Did you find any . . . ?

VASQUEZ: Well, you know . . .

DILLS: He got the nomination, I know.

VASQUEZ: The Statement of the Vote just gives you a scattering of 109 votes, where they couldn't have been very serious.

DILLS: No.

VASQUEZ: In the . . .

DILLS: Of other people, huh?

VASQUEZ: Yes.

DILLS: Yeah. Well, he was practically an unknown as a lawyer in the community. He just came in from someplace. I'm not sure where he came from, but I had eight Democratic opponents, maybe nine, and it was a real hot race. We had some very fine opponents. All of them were people of stature. Thank goodness there were, I think, three, maybe four. . . . There was Harry Root, an attorney, and then there was an insurance man. Then there was a [Los Angeles] harbor commissioner and maybe one more. There were four people from San Pedro and Wilmington area, which is a community in and of itself there: lots of Yugoslavs, lots of Italians, a lot of people that are in the shipping business, longshoremen and so on and so on. Fishing.

VASQUEZ: Fishing?

DILLS: So they split up that vote pretty well, those four people. There was Dudley Gray, who is now a multimillionaire attorney whom I knew while he was studying law. He was washing dishes over in Compton. Dudley made a lot of money. He ran

against me, and he teamed up with a black person who was running for the assembly. This black person persuaded him that he knew Watts well enough, and that he could win his battle in Watts. So he spent a lot of money, I mean big bucks there. He would have turkeys. All you would have to do to get a turkey or something or another was to show that you voted or signed up for him and that sort of thing. Of course, the folks took his money.

He attempted the most damaging thing. He said, "Dills is a racist. He gives these people maximum sentences in the Watts riots," and I did. If they had committed these things, they got the maximum sentence with five days probation so that they couldn't waltz out. They were on probation for a year, and I gave them what I could give them. That was regardless of whether they were Hispanics or blacks or whatever they were. They all got it if the proof was there.

VASQUEZ: What you consider justice?

DILLS: That's right. Also, in the felony. . . . Those that committed felonies, arson, and all of those

things, grand theft, why, I wouldn't. . . . And some of them that have some kind of records. . . . I was the only judge, I guess I may have been the only one at all, maybe not, but anyway, I wouldn't let them out on bail so long as this thing was going on there, because they'd go right back in there. I wouldn't fix any bail for them. They said, "You can't do that." I said, "Well, I did it." Finally, I found a case where it had been done, but I didn't know about the case ahead of time. So I was tough for damned good reasons.

Okay. Gray said, "Dills was a racist because he gave tough sentences," and so on. When the election was over, I got twice as many votes as my eight opponents combined got out of Watts. They said that's the kind of judge we want: somebody to protect our property, somebody that protects our lives. These are voters, these are stable people, these are people with homes that they don't want burned down. They don't want their jobs lost. They're stable people. They want a guy that whenever they are breaking a law--whether they are black,

brown, or whatever--that he gets the right punishment. I just swept through that community there. So it taught me a real good lesson, because I wasn't sure that that was going to sell. But, boy, they said it, and they said it loudly and clearly by that ballot.

Whenever I would send down into the district a questionnaire polling them on stiffer sentences, the Watts people--the people in that area, Willowbrook, the blacks--they were stronger than any of the Deukmejian's or any of those guys could be. "Yes, because we are the victims." I showed that around to all the Republicans and all these guys that were figuring out that it was all wrong, that the blacks didn't want it. Look and see, baby.

VASQUEZ: Tell me, in the general election, V. Lane Knight received 52,000 votes to your 72,000.

DILLS: How much did he get?

VASQUEZ: Fifty-two thousand to your 72,000. For an unknown Republican, why did he do that well?

DILLS: Oh, that good? That was because he was a Republican, and the Republicans backed him.

VASQUEZ: They put a lot of money into the race?

DILLS: No, it wasn't that. He didn't have a lot of money, but. . . . This is a Reagan year, don't you see? This is Reagan and Brown. They were voting for Reagan. They were tired of Brown. They were voting Republican. The shipowners and businessmen and people down there and workers, they're conservative. They're conservative, mostly Catholics, that sort of thing had a. . . . The same sort of thing had a. . . .

VASQUEZ: Pat Brown was a Catholic.

DILLS: Beg your pardon?

VASQUEZ: Pat Brown was a Catholic.

DILLS: I understand that, but . . .

VASQUEZ: Had he been in office too long, do you think?

DILLS: Yeah.

VASQUEZ: You said they were tired of him.

DILLS: They got tired of him, and here was this glamorous guy. . . . Time for a change, time for a change.

VASQUEZ: How much of the 1966 vote, where the Democrats got hurt, was an anti-Rumford Fair Housing Act¹ vote?

1. A.B. 1240, 1963 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1853.

DILLS: A lot.

VASQUEZ: Tell me about that in your district, in your area, in your part of the county here.

DILLS: In my county, in my district, why, we carried it. We carried it. I wasn't in the legislature then.

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: But Carley Porter, my successor. . . . When the Rumford bill came before them in the legislature, he sat it out. Shortly thereafter, Clyde Doyle, a congressman, died. Carley Porter ran for that spot. He lost, a Democratic district, over two-to-one Democratic. A Republican mayor of Compton, Del [Clawson], beat him out for two reasons. Number one, they for the first time brought in this firm, Spencer-[Roberts Associates]. They brought in the Republican big shot campaign people, and they put on mailing in the district. They put on the absentee-ballot thing, the first time. They really worked that absentee-ballot situation. And this is a final election. One vote is all you need, just one vote more. There were a couple of other Democrats in the race. One vote

more is all you need, and the Republicans kept everybody out. But Del was a very personable leader in the Mormon church. The Mormons really work at it, as you probably know.

VASQUEZ: Um-hmm. [affirmative]

DILLS: He was a saxophone player and a mayor and a good guy, a pretty decent guy. Carley Porter sat out the Byron Rumford thing. I have a clipping that I ran across in which the Los Angeles Sentinel--the black paper up here in Watts, a Washington paper--had endorsed me and supported me, and had supported Porter on the basis of my recommendation for the assembly. But they said, "He sat out on us, we sat out on him," over the Rumford thing. He lost by. . . . The black vote didn't go for him.

VASQUEZ: So it cut both ways, didn't it?

DILLS: It cut both ways, yeah.

VASQUEZ: Now, in your first term, where did you draw your greatest support from? Did you go back to the people that had supported you in the assembly, some of the . . ?

DILLS: Oh, you mean. . . . Are you talking about lobbyists?

VASQUEZ: Lobbyists, what interests . . . ?

DILLS: Yes, some of those and some that. . . . Now, Clayton is returning the favor. Some of them that Clayton put me in touch with are new there. The others are gone and they have taken over their places. Yeah, he helped me get some money. He's returning the favor. Of course, I'd never really lost touch with them because I was the legislative chairman of the Los Angeles County Judges Association. I was secretary and treasurer and vice president and chairman, or president, of the Los Angeles Municipal Judges Association, and their legislative chairman. So I was up there during the sessions from time to time. I never really lost the touch.

VASQUEZ: You kept in touch with people?

DILLS: Yes. And I never lost . . .

VASQUEZ: Were you engaged in partisan politics while you were a judge?

DILLS: Partisan politics? Sure, sure, yeah.

VASQUEZ: Did the Hatch Act¹ or anything like that [impede] you . . . ?

1. 18 U.S.C. § 594 (1982).

DILLS: Well, the bar association and the judges association sent me a letter of reprimand, but to hell with them. They didn't elect me. The Democrats elected me. [Laughter]

VASQUEZ: Now, your first session in the senate. . . . It was a different senate than it had been just the term before because of the reapportionment, right? Los Angeles picked up, what, fourteen senators . . . ?

DILLS: Fourteen senators and the half they shared with Orange County.

VASQUEZ: Did you feel that there was a sweep? Did you feel that there was a momentum that you could now take advantage of to accomplish some of the things that you had maybe not been able to before?

DILLS: Not all that much, because [there were] not that many changes, really. There were a lot of changes, to be sure, but the senate was still pretty conservative compared to the assembly.

Before we leave V. Lane Knight, he brought an action in superior court in Long Beach claiming that I was not a proper resident for the required one year. And it was true. I

moved from Compton over to a place here on Alondra Boulevard just to the east of Figueroa Street. [I was] still in my judicial district, but I was not in this senatorial district, the newly-carved senatorial district before I moved. He took it to the superior court, and they ruled on the basis of In re McGee. Pat [Patrick D.] McGee was an assemblyman there who was born in Canada and came down here and ran when he hadn't been a resident for a year. The court came down in that case, In re McGee, that the legislature is the sole judge of the qualifications of its members. Therefore, if they seat me, I'm in.

VASQUEZ: When did he bring that action? After or before the election?

DILLS: He brought it after the election, because he thought that he might beat me. He did all right for a Republican, I'll say that. Okay, he loses there. He appeals it to the appellate court. He loses there. He appeals it to the state supreme court. He loses there. He appeals it to the [United States] Supreme Court. He loses it there! But he is not dead yet. He appeals

it to the state senate, and requests that the Rules Committee not seat me, and hold off my seating until they can have a hearing and so on and so on.

Hugh Burns was president pro tem in the Rules Committee. I knew all but one of them, I guess. But anyway, I'm not sure. Maybe I knew them all, but I served with Hugh Burns in the assembly, and the others were around there. Well, they took it under advisement, but they swore me in about, maybe, six weeks before the end of the session. Almost six months had gone by, and I went to Hugh and I said, "You knew there was a challenge that's before the Rules Committee to me. I don't know whether I am a member of your senate or not." He said, "We forgot that. We better take care of that." So in a day or two, down came the decision: "We checked into the evidence, and we find there is no ground for the claim." And that was it.

VASQUEZ: You were a member?

DILLS: I was a member. I was already a member sworn in anyway. So that's what happened there.

VASQUEZ: Okay. First session, you were chairman of Fish

and. . . . No, no, you didn't have a chairmanship.

DILLS: No.

VASQUEZ: You were vice chairman of Fish and Game Committee. You were on the Legislative Representation Committee, Natural Resources, Public Utilities, and Transportation.

DILLS: Yup.

VASQUEZ: Is that a good committee combination for your first term?

DILLS: Public Utilities and Transportation are top committees. Transportation is big. I was on it with Senator Collier, the old granddaddy of the freeways and all, Randy Collier. He ran that one pretty much the way he ran it whenever I was in the assembly, but by that time he had mellowed. And when I got to the senate, he wanted me to be his seatmate.

VASQUEZ: Oh, is that right?

DILLS: Yeah, through the Derby Club and Clayton and so on. He and Clayton got along fine. So I had a lot of good things going for me with Clayton, because Clayton was well respected in the senate. He never bothered them. They never got

into any big fights with him there. He submitted to Senator Ed Regan on the Dills Bill on that one deal there. He'll fight if somebody really crosses him and he thinks he's being given the finger and all, but anyway . . .

VASQUEZ: What was different? What did you find most different about being in the senate as opposed to being in the assembly, having been in the assembly before?

DILLS: Several things. It was less. . . . Oh, it was more mature, I'll put it that way. We have in the assembly people such as I who were going to change the world. We come up there knowing exactly what to do and how to do it. We're going to accuse everybody of being on the pay of somebody else if they don't go along with us. Whatever. And dastardly people, and called names and that sort of thing. When I went up there, boy, I was wild as the next one. Whenever you picked Tenney and Yorty in those days as your hero, why, you're good enough. But people weren't all like me.

I've got to thank you for asking that question, because you gave me an opportunity for

something that I'd forgotten. I told you that the communists had worked with the popular front, and they continued to do that until Hitler invaded Russia. Up until that time they said, "No second front." The People's World said there was no second front. They were going about that, "Bread not bullets." They were opposed to lend-lease, and I am listening because I am opposed to war as much as I can be. I was a member of the one that. . . . Fellowship of Reconciliation I think it's called. Alan Cranston was the national president of it at that time. I'd enough. I'd seen enough of war in history, and you had too. I just. . . . I didn't want us to get involved, but I was pretty certain we were going to be. Then when Pearl Harbor came and. . . . We knew. We had broken the code, and we knew that it was coming. These things we know now.

VASQUEZ: Right.

DILLS: But they went ahead and let it happen because otherwise they couldn't persuade the American people to get hurt.

VASQUEZ: Exactly.

DILLS: And you could have persuaded me . . .

VASQUEZ: We just covered that in my class last night.

DILLS: No kidding?

VASQUEZ: In my American history class.

DILLS: I'll be damned.

VASQUEZ: Which leads me to a question that I do want to ask you . . .

DILLS: I want to finish this.

VASQUEZ: Go ahead.

DILLS: When Hitler invaded Russia, the headlines the next day changed. The day before in the People's World, I read "No second front." The next day. . . . I know I saved those papers. I can't find them. The next day, "Open the second front," and I just backed off and said, "Hey wait a minute here. These guys are with the popular, you know. . . . They're with the people's front here and the popular front and so on. But why all of a sudden do we get into the war if they are not being motivated by their concern, not for us, but for Russia and the Communist party?" And that my friend is when I became awake.

The next session I put in a bill. I knew

it was unconstitutional, but I put it in anyway, a bill to outlaw the Communist party in the state of California. I came back home, and these Democratic clubs that I had helped organize, they wouldn't even let me speak. No way. They still had their control and their influence. They kept that control all the time. So for about. . . . Well, that was. . . . Whenever that happened, 42? No, '42--was it possible?

VASQUEZ: 'Forty-one was the . . .

DILLS: 'Forty-one was Pearl Harbor.

VASQUEZ: 'Forty-two?

DILLS: But we didn't declare war on. . . . Did we declare war on Germany at the same time?

VASQUEZ: Soon after, I think.

DILLS: Soon after. Well, maybe it was before Pearl. It was before Pearl Harbor that Hitler, of course, invaded Russia. See, they'd had their compromise. They'd had their get-together, okay. Well, I wanted to clear that up, because if the record were there that I played footsie with the communists all along, was duped by them, or was one of them, why then, there it is.

VASQUEZ: That's where the break came.

DILLS: But this is when the break came when I became alert, because I had met some of these guys, big hotshots over here in Hollywood. They tried to recruit me into the party. Oh yes, but I said no. I just was not persuaded that that is the thing to do. Although they were for the things I was for, in terms of the EPIC movement and the New Deal and helping people and using government to help people, not to, well, get the government off our back. Bush wants to get the government off the savings and loan's back and a lot of the others. I can talk about that, you know.

[Laughter] Okay.

VASQUEZ: Let me ask you something that may be totally out of order here, but I'm afraid I'll forget, and that has to do with Japanese internment. This morning in today's paper, of course, there's an article about some of these people that were attending Los Angeles High School. They are going to finally get their diplomas.

DILLS: Yes, their diplomas.

VASQUEZ: After all these years. What was your posture over Japanese internment?

DILLS: Let me jump ahead then. When I was teaching at Enterprise [Junior High School] over here in Compton, it included these hills out here, where [California State University] Dominguez Hills is now, and all of those hills. A fifth of our student body in Enterprise was Japanese. I was the faculty adviser on the Scholarship Society. Out of the twenty-one, in the last time that the Japanese were there, out of twenty-one there were eighteen members who were Japanese in the Scholarship Society, eighteen out of twenty-one. They were good students. Some of the white kids asked, "Are they smarter than we are?" I said, "No. You're just damned lazy. You're just lazy. You won't work. They work. They work here at school. They study here at school. They discipline themselves here in school. Then they go. . . . Some of them go to Japanese language school and others work." I said, "They work. You're just lazy. You're as smart as they are, only you just won't apply yourselves."

When Pearl Harbor came, I was. . . . That was on a Sunday morning. On Monday, we had

school. I went back, and here were the little sheepish Japanese kids coming in, you know, sneaking in kind of. I want to tell you, it's damned hard to be a history teacher and a civil libertarian and a liberal and have to say to kids, "I can't explain. I cannot explain to you why American citizens are treated the way you are going to be treated." And particularly before they were sent away to the concentration camps. You heard me mention Joe Kobata. Joe Kobata was the guy that made it possible for me to stay in school.

VASQUEZ: Japanese?

DILLS: Japanese, right over here in Gardena, 139th Street. I took him, his wife, who was a nurse, and their three children. [I] drove them out to Santa Anita Racetrack, where they were stationed there in the horse barns. About a week later, Joe called me up and said, "My wife, as you know, is a nurse, and they need her in Colorado. They promised her good pay if she'll go up there." She got nineteen dollars a month. There was a doctor from Gardena, a very good doctor, my mother's doctor as a matter of

fact. Same thing with him: nineteen bucks to go to Colorado. Joe called and said, "They're sending us to Colorado. I don't have anything but dress shoes that I wore when you brought me out here and a dress suit." They wouldn't let them take a lot of stuff, you know? So I bought him some work shoes for cold weather, some clothing, and some Kleenex and a few--toilet paper and things that they don't have over there, just the little amenities of life.

It took me three hours to get out of that damned place. They weren't going to let me out. I went inside. They had the soldiers there and the whole thing in the Santa Anita Racetrack fenced off. If I hadn't been in the assembly, hell, I may still have been there, although I don't look much "Japanesey" either. Somebody at the racetrack there who had rented these premises to them recognized me from having been up to the legislature on some bill or another. And so he vouched for me, and I got out of there after three hours.

The redress thing. . . . I've been with them and for it all along.

VASQUEZ: Before we go on to the redress, wasn't there a series of liberal and pretty quite liberal people in the state legislature? Was there any attempt made to slow down the order to . . . ?

DILLS: Oh, to try and stop that? No. They. . . . No, they didn't. As a matter of fact, it was the whole . . .

VASQUEZ: Did they approach you as an assemblyman?

DILLS: It was the other way around. Instead of our trying to slow it down, we were trying to stop what they were doing. Some of them we did stop, others we didn't. But there were resolutions passed there that would cause them, let's see That was, yeah. . . . That had to do with those that had so-called dual citizenship.¹ The Italians, I think, and the Japanese. . . . I don't think Germany had dual citizenship, but the Italians and the Japanese had dual citizenship, or could have. Their countries would permit it. So this resolution demanded that everyone of those who were eligible for dual citizenship, and who were citizens of the

1. S.J.R. 2 and 3, 55th Leg., Reg. Sess. (1943).

United States--like Joe Kobata, who was born here in Gardena--that they renounce their allegiance to Japan or Italy. That bill came before me, and I didn't vote on it. I didn't vote for it. I didn't vote against it.

VASQUEZ: Why?

DILLS: Well, because I didn't like it, and a no vote is better than voting for it. I mean, a no vote And not voting is just as good as a no vote. So they called me on the carpet, me and a couple of other people. They had a big to-do about it. They were going to. . . . Garland was going to force me and [Assemblyman] Jack Massion to vote. So they asked me why I didn't vote on it. I was outside at the time the resolution came up. It just came up like that, on the floor.

VASQUEZ: Do you know who raised it?

DILLS: I don't know. Whether it was Garland himself, I don't know who it was. No, it was a guy by the name of [James H.] Phillips. I think his picture is here, something Phillips. So they wanted to know why I didn't vote. I said, "Well, in the first place, I wasn't in here at

the time it was read. So I don't want to vote on something that I don't. . . ." They had a lot of beautiful "whereases," you know, but the real kicker was down there on the renunciation or denunciation, whichever. So I didn't vote for it. They tried to make me vote. I didn't. There was a lot of. . . . They were going to kick me out of the assembly or something or another. Then finally, wiser heads I guess prevailed, so they didn't. There was one. . . . What the hell was that other resolution? I'll try to remember it. But, yes, there were strict rules. They . . .

VASQUEZ: No one . . .

DILLS: The Alien Land Law bills, you know, they were put in before that and kept them in. They ordered commissions to go out and check on the land. A lot of them lost all of their land. Joe Kobata lost. . . . Well, he had two houses over here. He put in a stucco house he rented He was able to rent it out. The other house he put all of his furniture in it, and it wasn't two months before it was all gone. He had about five more acres of hothouses, and they

were all broken into and "Jap!" [written on walls] and the whole thing. These are good people, clean, no. . . . There was never one single act of sabotage, even in Hawaii. Did you know that?

VASQUEZ: Um-hmm. [affirmative]

DILLS: Not one single act of sabotage.

VASQUEZ: Why did no one stick up for them? What happened to the liberals and the civil libertarians?

DILLS: The war hysteria. The hysteria, and the fact that they. . . . Well, the very things that the commission that had examined it said, "What is happening, happened"--the commission's¹ recommendations and the basis upon which they went, that there was no military threat. It wasn't there. If you could read that, get a copy of that thing, that's one of the reasons why I was the most adamant one and spoke the longest on the floor whenever they sent [Congressman Dan] Lungren in for treasurer. He was on that commission, and he voted against the

1. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

bill while he was on the commission. He voted to strike out the money, and he and [United States Senator] Jesse [A.] Helms got together and tried to put in a lot of other amendments.

I spoke over fifteen minutes on it.

[Senator David A.] Roberti was trying to stop me, and I said. . . . When we started out, I was presiding. I said, "I think there's going to be more debate today than the three minutes and the five minutes that we usually give people"--five minutes to open on their thing and three minutes for others, one minute to close if you're the author of it. So I said, "I think there's going to be more debate. I think, out of the interest of hearing everybody who wants to talk on this, that we will suspend the rules if there is no objection by unanimous consent." Okay, I got it done. So I presided, where everybody talked until my name came up on the list. I was down about eight or ten, and I spoke for almost fifteen minutes on it.

I went through this, just what I told you: what a travesty it was upon these people who had harmed nobody except that they just happened to

be born of a different color. They didn't do it to the Germans. They didn't do it to the Italians, but they did it to the Japanese because they could see them, their color. We didn't confirm Mr. Lungren. That was a hell of a fight, but we made it stick.

VASQUEZ: So it is still with us, isn't it?

DILLS: Yes, it's still with us. Yup, the bitterness of the whole thing is still with us. And in Gardena, there's some woman who's always writing to the. . . . In the Gardena paper this week she's written another article here which claimed it was all fraud, and there wasn't any concentration camp, and so on and so on and so on. She ought to go out to Manzanar and see what was out there. Read the book Return to Manzanar,¹ or something. It's not a bad book to read.

VASQUEZ: Well, I've got a third-generation Japanese-American student in my class that wants to drive up to the [San Joaquin] Valley over the weekend

1. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, Farewell to Manzanar. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1973.

to interview his grandfather.

DILLS: To Manzanar?

VASQUEZ: Meet his grandfather. He knew nothing about it. They have been very careful not to talk about it in his family.

DILLS: They wouldn't tell him?

VASQUEZ: Now he wants to know about it. He's twenty-two, something like that.

DILLS: I have in my staff a Japanese woman, who at the time she went in. . . . Dorothy Matsumoto. She had just finished high school or maybe she hadn't finished it, but anyway, she had taken shorthand and typing. They didn't have any shorthand and typing teachers in their schools. So she was the teacher of shorthand and typing in high school. Well, you can do that if you just learned it, and it isn't anything but rote, you see. You have to learn the keys and things. So she could teach that and did. Her mother is now ninety-one years of age and keeps asking, "When are they going to give me the \$20,000? It won't be until 1991.

VASQUEZ: Nineteen ninety-one.

DILLS: They're dying at, what, almost four hundred a

month. [Interruption]

VASQUEZ: Let's get back to the senate.

DILLS: Go, man.

VASQUEZ: And let's talk about the president pro tem of the senate when you got there, Hugh M. Burns. You've mentioned him before. It seems as if you had developed a pretty good relationship then.

DILLS: We were in the assembly together. That's when I first met him. He was a hell-raiser over there. I had the. . . . Well, I guess it's a privilege to be the spokesperson at his funeral.

VASQUEZ: Only recently?

DILLS: Last year, yeah. He was one of the conservative Democrats, so much conservative that the Republicans on that side elected him pro tem.

VASQUEZ: Tell me something about his leadership style?

DILLS: It was laid-back and let everybody live so long as they didn't get too smart and try to, you know, run the world and change everything. In a way. . . . I better not use this one. I'll cut this off. It's a good little story to tell. He was laid-back. He was a strong person, strong opinions. He can be a hard-knuckle man if it's necessary, but he had a way of getting people to

be a little more reasonable than they normally would be. If you get some hotshots there that are going to take over, well, after a while they'll find that they're not making too much progress for some reason or another. They're just not getting as many bills heard.

VASQUEZ: Might some of these hotshots have been some of the people who came up from the assembly as a result of the reapportionment?

DILLS: Exactly, exactly.

VASQUEZ: People like, say, [Senator Thomas M.] Tom Rees?

DILLS: Well, Tom had a time getting cooled off, I think.

VASQUEZ: Oh? He loved the senate.

DILLS: Yeah, but I think he was a little bit. . . . He was going to accomplish a little bit more. But whenever he found out, you know, that you can do a hell of a lot more with honey than the other, and don't step on too many people's toes. That is the way he [Burns] was. He didn't want to hurt anybody, but he didn't want anybody to hurt themselves or somebody else either. So he was a pretty good leader all the way around.

VASQUEZ: What negative characteristics would you

attribute to him?

DILLS: Huh?

VASQUEZ: What negative characteristics would you attribute to him? Any at all?

DILLS: Well, if it was anything, it would be in political philosophy. He didn't care for the communists. He didn't care for too many left-wingers. He didn't care for me too much for that reason, although personally in the assembly we were good friends. He came up as a Democrat, and he was head of the Young Democrats down there, and he was pretty liberal. He introduced a lot of bills and got them vetoed. He came back home, and people were jumping all over him. And they said, "Why did you do that?" He said, "Well, everybody thought it was the thing to do." "Well, you saw what it did." He said later, "I didn't introduce more bills and I made no more enemies." [Laughter] He was an undertaker among other things.

VASQUEZ: A mortician?

DILLS: A mortician, yeah. He had a cool, cool way about him, but he can get his point over without making you mad, and he wouldn't embarrass you.

He just had that way of doing it. A good leader.

VASQUEZ: Was he president pro tem too long?

DILLS: No, I don't think so. I didn't vote to kick him out, but we had some of our [Senator Anthony C.] Beilenson liberals, and who's the other guy that later became congressman, too? He later became a judge.

VASQUEZ: [Senator] Alan Sieroty?

DILLS: No, not Alan. I don't think Alan was there at the time. Beilenson was there. Alan took Beilenson's place, I think. No, it was. . . . Oh, God. I can't remember him. He was an assemblyman, too. He came over. George something or another. [George E. Danielson] But there's several of the Democrats that didn't like his style. He was too close to Reagan to suit them, Burns was. When he was acting governor there for one week, he had adjourned the legislature. An acting governor can adjourn the legislature. Unruh was just fit to be tied, because they were locked up. They weren't getting any place. Reagan was not there. So he just rapped the gavel and said, "The legislature

is in adjournment." He adjourned them.

[Laughter] After that, we put in a bill to permit the legislature to call itself back into special session. He was, according to them, too close. He was too conservative for most of them. Most of those Democrats went with the Republicans, but they got a Republican who was more moderate.

VASQUEZ: [President Pro Tempore of the Senate] Howard Way?

DILLS: Howard Way.

VASQUEZ: Tell me about him as a leader.

DILLS: Well, Howard was not a strong man. He was not a He was too parochial in my opinion, a very competent and a very able person. A very nice person, but he wouldn't have been my candidate for pro tem.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

DILLS: . . . voted for him, bettered themselves in their positions and so on. I didn't, but I never really got hurt, because I'd made no enemies that I know of there. And maybe I haven't made any enemies yet, in spite of the

fact that one of the fellows was upset because I was really grinding away at it and keeping them going and moving and moving and moving. They were horsing around back there and talking and not sitting in their seat. I was treating them a little like I was running a court or, as I said before, a schoolhouse is the best training ground that I know of for anything. If you can handle kids from the ages of thirteen to seventeen or so, baby, you can handle anybody, and you knew it.

VASQUEZ: That's true. How about [President Pro Tempore of the Senate] Jack Schrade? He wasn't there long.

DILLS: Jack Schrade wasn't there long. We had what we called the "pro tem of the week" around there for a while. Jack was a friend of mine. I could. . . . He was personable. He would give you whatever he could give you, but he wouldn't be pushed around. He lasted a little while.

VASQUEZ: Why?

DILLS: Well, there were just some other people that put together another. . . . Who succeeded him?

VASQUEZ: [President Pro Tempore of the Senate] James [R.]

Mills.

DILLS: Jim Mills, okay. That's it. That's the answer. James Mills got the Democrats together. When Schrade. . . . I think Schrade was defeated for reelection. Yes, he was. I think he was defeated by [Senator] Bob Wilson. He wasn't back up there, so the question of who is going to succeed. . . . Mills put it together, and it came to me and it came to [Senator Alfred E.] Al Alquist. We were the swing votes.

VASQUEZ: Were you? What did you get from that?

DILLS: What did I get for it?

VASQUEZ: Yes. This was your second term wasn't it?

DILLS: I think I already had the chairmanship of Public Utilities and Corporation. I'm not quite sure. But eventually, maybe, I got the GO committee [Committee on Governmental Organization].

VASQUEZ: You became chairman in 1970 of the Public Utilities and Corporations. Let me, let me just look it up quick here and see.

DILLS: Okay.

VASQUEZ: Right, because in 1969, you weren't. In 1970,

you got the chairmanship of . . .

DILLS: Utilities and Corporations.

VASQUEZ: Of Utilities and Corporations. You were on Health and Welfare, Industrial Relations, Natural Resources and Wildlife, and Transportation. Now that was . . .

DILLS: That was all right. I got good committee appointments. He carried on the practice of my presiding over the senate. I guess I even was presiding when Burns was there from time to time. In fact, I presided over it on the day that Senator George Deukmejian took up their billion-dollar tax bill that both Deukmejian and Reagan would like to forget that they had. I was presiding that day. The debate went on for about two hours, and finally it was up for Duke, who was the author of the bill, to close. So I called upon him to close. He said, "Mr. President, we've been debating this so long, I've almost forgotten what it's about." I said, "Maybe I can help you. It's about a billion dollar tax." He said, "Well, you didn't have to say that." [Laughter]

He asked me to preside, and then also

[Senator] Lou Cusanovich, the Republican. So Lou and I presided over the senate for all the time that we were in the annex--while we were working over the capitol, the new one. Then, when we came back to the renovated senate, why, something happened there that had to do with Mills and me and Senator David Roberti. Roberti was. . . . Roberti, I think, he was the floor leader, or [Barry] Keene. I think he was. He was the Democratic floor leader. Keene was one of his men. I was vice chairman of the caucus, had been from the beginning [of the] Democratic caucus.

VASQUEZ: Who was the chairman at the time?

DILLS: Who was chairman? We had several. We had [Senator Nicholas C.] Petris for a while, we had [Lieutenant Governor Mervyn M.] Dymally for a while, we had the Korean . . .

VASQUEZ: [Senator Alfred H.] Song?

DILLS: Song. Song for a while. When [Senator George] Moscone was floor leader. . . . I'm not sure who was caucus chairman then. It could have been. . . . I don't think it was [Senator Paul B.] Carpenter yet. No, it wasn't. Anyway, they had provided

over in the assembly side for an assistant speaker pro tem. They had a speaker pro tem, and an assistant pro tem. They gave it to Mrs. [Assemblywoman Pauline L.] Davis, created that office for her. She, Assemblywoman Davis, was about the senior member in the assembly at the time. So I thought, "Well, since I'm presiding over here most of the time, maybe we want an assistant president pro tem here appointed by the Rules Committee, whose duty is to preside over the senate and to do whatever other things that the Rules Committee wanted him to do to keep the operation going and so on." So Mills said, "That's not a bad idea." So he drew up a resolution, got it passed in the Rules Committee, and went ahead without talking to Roberti about it. Mills brought it in the floor and took it up without reference to committee, or at least [to] file, and Roberti hit the ceiling and asked for a recess and a caucus, and ooh-wee! "What's the big idea of giving Dills an official position when he has the chairmanship of a committee? Whenever we go onto the Rules Committee, why, you have to give

up the chairmanship. Whenever you get into leadership, you have to give up a chairmanship. What's the idea of giving him a leadership position without asking us in the caucus?" Oh, he just raised hell. He didn't like Mills, you see. He was looking for Mills's job. He wanted to find something, and he did find something there that got a few of them talking and clucking.

VASQUEZ: What was that? Favoritism? Is that what it was called?

DILLS: That they were going to appoint me assistant president pro tem. I didn't have the remotest idea that anybody would be all that concerned. So in caucus I said, "I'd like to have a moment to speak on this." I said, "First of all, I want to ask Senator Mills to withdraw my name for this position. I want to ask him to withdraw the resolution, and I want to say to David Roberti, David, I never in my whole life intended, and I don't know how come you got the idea that I am trying, to take your spot. I didn't know I had enough juice around here to move anything and to take over your position or

stand in your way. David, forget it. I am not interested in it. I don't want on the Rules Committee. I don't want leadership. I don't want any of these things other than in the caucus here, just so that I can be vice chairman of the caucus to remind everybody that I'm not going to be bound by a caucus position. That's why I want to continue the vice chairman job." I asked Mills to withdraw the resolution, and he did. When we moved over to the restored capitol, he. . . . I walked to Roberti. I said, "Get yourself another man."

So he got Senator Foran. And Foran presided over it most of the time. When Senator Foran decided he wasn't going to run, again Roberti kept trying to get me to go back. I wouldn't go back up there. Oh, once in a while I would, but most of the time I let Foran do it. So when. . . . Well, we'll get over this in a hurry here. Roberti said, "Ralph, I'd like for you to take over for Foran. I said, "Now, are you sure?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Well, okay. But you don't consider this as being a part of the leadership, do you?" "No." I said,

"I'll take over, but I want something for it."

No! This wasn't this one. There is another one. I wanted to be on the [California] Tourism Commission, because I'd handled the bill that set up the statewide Tourism Commission. Hey, that's another one I've forgotten. The first Tourism Commission of the state of California, I set it up as lead author.

VASQUEZ: Tourism what?

DILLS: Tourism Commission. We appropriated \$5 million and got that. We've got a good Tourism Commission. They really. . . . They're bringing in seven dollars for every dollar we put up.

VASQUEZ: Is that right?

DILLS: Yeah. Because of the tourists. Okay.

VASQUEZ: What session was this in?

DILLS: This was four years ago, I think.

VASQUEZ: Okay, 1985.

DILLS: Yeah, yeah.

VASQUEZ: Okay, we'll come back to that.

DILLS: So they tried to cut it out last year. Well, that's another story.

VASQUEZ: We're in the first session . . .

DILLS: No, we're over.

VASQUEZ: The second, I guess?

DILLS: We are over in the second. We're over into Mills. So we got Mills. . . . Mills just didn't run again, and he just left. So Roberti came to us, and I don't know who is running for it besides him. He had Petris's support. He wanted Al Alquist and me, because we would be going against Mills. Mills was still there. He wasn't defeated yet. He was still there. So Al and I talked about it. Roberti had the votes with our two. They were disenchanted with Mills because Democratic senators lost [Senator Alfred S.] Rodda and they lost another race. They lost Rodda and someone else. But particularly Rodda, because he either wouldn't pay any attention to warnings and didn't campaign, or the Democrats didn't furnish him enough money or couldn't persuade him to use it. Al lost it himself. He just didn't work. It caused me to say at election times, "I'll never be an Al Rodda."

People say, "Why do you work so hard?" Rose [Sarukian] said that to me. Or Dick Floyd [pointed it out] when he was working for me: "You know you're going to beat that guy." This

was in 1970. I said, "Listen, if I don't work, I can't ask you to. I can't ask Dick to on your time off. I can't ask anybody to work for me if I won't work for myself. Now, what do you think about that? Don't you like your job?" "Well, yeah." "Well, if you say that one more time, you don't have a job. Now, forget it. I'm working to win this race. And I never won a race, I never was elected, until they counted the ballots. That's the way it is now, and that's the way it is going to be. Now, let's go to work." That solved that problem.

VASQUEZ: And it shows in your . . .

DILLS: I'm going to go all out. That's the only way. I surely had to to beat old [Robert] "Buzz" Pauley.

VASQUEZ: That's exactly right. Exactly what I was coming to.

DILLS: Yes.

VASQUEZ: Buzz Pauley.

DILLS: Buzz Pauley, son of [Edwin W.] Pauley. Ed Pauley had the Pauley Petroleum Company. Ed Pauley was used by the major oil companies to front their Atkinson oil bill, the bill that I

opposed. He, even though independent, went with them. They took good care of him. And in the war they got him appointed, Harry Truman appointed him in charge of all civilian commerce, trade in the Pacific Ocean. [Douglas] MacArthur had the military; Ed Pauley had the civilian. And he, Ed Pauley, made something of that. He made a lot out of it, but they had pushed him into it, you see. Ickes was with them. That's how they all got in together, you see. Here I am in 1939 voting against all these good things, for conservation and so on.

Buzz Pauley was his son. He lived in Bel-Air. He moved out here. He bought him a little home up here in Hawthorne. I had just been reapportioned. You got me down here [in the] Twenty-eighth [Senatorial] District, but that was my first term, and then they reapportioned us, in 19--? What is it?

VASQUEZ: Nineteen seventy-two?

DILLS: 'Seventy-two? Pauley ran against me? No, I don't think so.

VASQUEZ: It was the '73 reapportionment.

DILLS: 'Seventy-three reapportionment. They changed

the number to 32.

VASQUEZ: Right, the Thirty-second Senatorial District.

DILLS: They took away Long Beach--Long Beach Harbor--San Pedro, Wilmington, took it away from me. They took away the Carson area and gave me Lawndale, Hawthorne, and Lomita, and put me back into my. . . . Gardena was the only community, I think, that carried over. They gave me, what? Compton, Lynwood, Willowbrook, Bellflower, Paramount--where I had been elected assemblyman six times, where I had been a judge four times--and they didn't do their homework.

VASQUEZ: You say "they"?

DILLS: I am talking about. . . . The court did it. Because we sent two bills to the governor.

VASQUEZ: That's right.

DILLS: He vetoed both of them. The court did it, but they went out, and Merv Dymally. . . . This I better say is off the record. Buzz Pauley, son of Ed Pauley--after whom Pauley Pavilion is named at UCLA and so on--who was a very active man in national politics, moved out here and declared that he was going to run here, and sent some people to see me, and wanted to know what

they could do for me. It was sort of a, "Can we take care of your law business?" Something. . . . There were a lot of hints to other people, never to me. Whenever that didn't sell very well, why, they really went after me in every possible way, including the false statement that I was then eighty-five years of age, which was a little while ago. The residence thing came up again and the whole thing. Everything that they could dig up, they did and tried. I was a stooge of the lobbyists, just a pawn of the lobbyists.

VASQUEZ: Which lobbyists? Did they mention any?

DILLS: Huh?

VASQUEZ: Did they mention any lobbyists in particular?

DILLS: Oh, no. All of the lobbyists.

VASQUEZ: All of the lobbyists.

DILLS: Dills was just a stooge. Dills was for the special interests, and Pauley made himself a good guy and "Dills was a bad man," and so on and so on. "Against children" and everything. Pauley took all the things that I was and turned them into a negative, you see, which is the way to go when you have few political assets of your

own. He also persuaded a black city councilman [Ross Miller]--a physician and a surgeon over in Compton--a city councilman, to run, believing, and rightly so, that I did have a lot of black support there.

He put Compton Mayor [Doris] Davis, a woman, put the mayor on the payroll over there, and she handled his campaign. She had his name and picture in every paper--full-page ads. He had billboards out before he could even file for office--lit billboards, the ones with lights, twenty-four hours this billboard is his. Changed it every two weeks, changed the copy on it every two weeks, moved it all around, get new ones. Nobody knew how many there were but, boy, it was a show. He really put on a campaign.

VASQUEZ: Why? Why was there so much energy being put into this race?

DILLS: Because he wasn't doing very well in anything, and he had the political bug. He had run for school board up here and spent a fortune. I think he spent \$75,000 to be elected on the school board, because you see what Jerry Brown and these other guys were doing from the school

board base. Well, he didn't make it there. And, you know, he's got a few bob himself, lots of money.

All right, Moscone and Dymally had put in a bill where you had to show your economic interests, your economic reports, show what stocks you had, what properties you had, what your income was, you know, the thing we had to file.

VASQUEZ: This was before Fair Political Practices Commission was established?

DILLS: That's right. Yes. Before FPPC, and before they put it into their initiative act, too. But Jerry Brown did that conflict-of-interest thing after the legislature had done it. They took the same law and then they wrote it in as an initiative so we couldn't change it. But the law was there first, and Pauley had to show, which he did show, that he had stocks in over sixty corporations. Big corporations! I mean, not big. . . . They're blue chips, not punk things, all over the nation. Sixty corporations. The report was this thick. So I did what I had to do. I carried that around in

my briefcase. Wherever anybody would listen I'd say, "Well, if I am the tool of the lobbyists, then he's my boss, because he owns the lobbyists. He owns sixty corporations. He tells the lobbyists what to do, and he gives them the money to do so." See, I gave him the credit for all of them. He had PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric Company], Southern California Edison Company, AT&T [American Telephone and Telegraph], this trucking U-Haul, and just on and on and on. Sears Roebuck. He had sixty blue-chip kinds of stocks. Well, that didn't help him very much there at all. Then I had coffees, and I never let him know where the coffees were going to be. I would send out two thousand letters, just spotted them all over, telling them I would be there, gave them two days notice.

VASQUEZ: Coffee klatches?

DILLS: No more [than] two days notice. I don't know if I have to tell all the world about this, but he didn't know where they were going to be. I'd go there, and I would have my big briefcase with all the records of his stocks and bonds. And then I'd tell the folks what had happened in the

legislature. Those that didn't come, I wrote a letter and said, "I was here, and I discussed these things. Here's what we discussed there. Sorry you couldn't be there. Like to have seen you." That, plus the fact that the people got pretty mad around here because of the way he was running the campaign and how much money he spent. That was the first, big-spending campaign in California. I know he says he spent around \$200,000, but I know he spent much more than that because he never reported any newspaper ads and he bought whole papers. He never reported any of the billboards or anything. Oh, he said this: "My people that handled my campaign, they reported it." But they didn't. They didn't.

VASQUEZ: Was this the toughest challenge that you had in the senate?

DILLS: Well, I thought he was going to be, but he didn't turn out to be. He ran third. He ran behind the black man. Ed Pauley said to . . .

VASQUEZ: And the black man was supposed to siphon votes away from you, right?

DILLS: Yes. Judge [James D.] Garibaldi. . . . Ed

Pauley said to Garibaldi, "I never saw a two-man race in which the second man came in third before." He was talking about his son.

[Laughter] Pat Brown endorsed him and helped all over. Pat Brown was running for him. Well, he was out in the end. Pat endorsed him. Years later when I saw Pat, he said, "How are you doing, Ralph?" I said, "Fine, except I don't appreciate. . . ." This is four years later maybe. "I don't appreciate ever what you did down at. . . ." He said, "Oh, Ed Pauley was dying and he asked me to do it." I said, "Dying hell! He is still alive, stronger than you are." Anyway, these are things, I guess, [that] may not get into a book, but they'll be on the record now.

[End Tape 4, Side B]