







ASK THE MAYOR

SAMUEL YORTY

Interviewed by Hynda Rudd

Completed under the auspices
of the
Oral History Program
University of California
Los Angeles

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BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

PERSONAL HISTORY:

Born: October 1, 1909, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Education: Public schools, Lincoln, Nebraska;
Southwestern University, Los Angeles, California;
University of Southern California, Los Angeles,
California; University of California Extension, Los
Angeles, California.

Profession: Admitted to California bar, 1939; practiced
law in Southern California, 1940-42, 1946-49, 1954-61,
1973-present.

Spouses: Elizabeth Hensel, married 1938, deceased 1984;
Gloria Haig, married 1986.

OFFICIAL POSITIONS:

California State Assembly, Sixty-fourth District, 1937-
40, 1949-50.

United States House of Representatives, Fourteenth
District, 1951-52; Twenty-sixth District, 1953-54.

Mayor, Los Angeles, California, 1961-73.

BOOK:

**Los Angeles Progresses into the Seventies: A
Continuation of the Yorty Years;** Los Angeles,
California, 1971.

RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMS:

During his first term as mayor, Yorty hosted "Ask Your
Mayor," a listener call-in show on radio station KNX.
In 1967, he began hosting "Sam Yorty" on KHJ-TV and
continued that show on KCOP-TV into the mid-seventies.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Hynda Rudd, Los Angeles city archivist. B. S., History, University of Utah; M.S., History, University of Utah; M.S.L.S., University of Southern California.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Yorty's home in Studio City.

Dates: August 15, 28, September 11, 27, October 3, 1985.

Time of day, length of sessions, and total number of recording hours: Interview sessions took place in the afternoon and lasted anywhere from less than an hour to an hour and a half. A total of over five hours of conversation was recorded.

Persons present during interview: Yorty, Rudd, and Yorty's wife, Gloria Haig Yorty.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

Tapes I and II follow a chronological format, beginning with Yorty's youth and moving through his early political career. Tapes III and IV then cover Yorty's term as mayor, but are organized thematically rather than chronologically. Tape V focuses on Yorty's life since leaving city hall and returns to topics raised in previous sessions.

EDITING:

Virginia Carew, assistant editor, edited the transcript. She checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Yorty reviewed and approved the edited transcript.

Teresa Barnett, editor, prepared the table of contents, biographical summary, interview history, and index.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

AUGUST 15, 1985

RUDD: I think Mr. Yorty's going to be a very exciting person to interview because he's looked at politics from a point of view where in some of the cases, he's probably been way ahead of his time. Someone told me today about the fact that he was talking energy crises back in the sixties. I think that's quite brilliant.

This interview today is being done with Mr. Samuel William Yorty. He is the interviewee; the interviewer is Hynda Rudd. The date is August 15, 1985.

YORTY: I think that letter--

RUDD: It says July 15.

YORTY: --says you'll be out here July 15.

RUDD: Oh, that's right. Oh my god, a month behind!

Well, let us start with your youth, where you were born. And could you tell me something about where you were born, who you were born to, and when you were born?

YORTY: Well, I was born in University Place, Nebraska, which is now-- University Place was later incorporated into Lincoln, so you can say Lincoln, Nebraska, but it was University Place, a suburb, when I was born there. And of course. I was born to Frank Patrick Yorty and Anna Egan Yorty. My mother was born in Ireland, her name was Egan.

RUDD: What date were you born?

YORTY: October 1, 1909.

RUDD: Both your parents had Irish background?

YORTY: Yes. My father's name, Yorty, was from Pennsylvania Dutch, which is really German, but his mother was really born in Ireland, so just his father was Pennsylvania Dutch.

RUDD: I read in one of the books that your name--maybe it wasn't in your time, maybe your father's--was not always Yorty?

YORTY: Well, it's hard to tell, because my father said when the early settlers came to Pennsylvania, they'd go for a job, they'd say, "What's your name," and you'd say, "Yorty," and they'd spell it however it sounded to them. It could have been "Jorde," which would be German, or there's some "Yordys," same family, and ours, "Yorty." I guess that's the way somebody wrote it down.

RUDD: Was religion a part of your life experience as a young fellow?

YORTY: Well, yes. I went to church, I think, quite often. My mother was a Catholic, and my father was a, oh, religious man, but not particularly to any denomination. So my first introduction to church was to go to the Catholic church.

RUDD: From where you come, there is usually a tremendous amount of fundamentalism, and I kind of got the impression that that was geared toward politics more than religion.

YORTY: Well, I always wanted to go into politics. I told my mother when I was five years old and wanted a nickel for an ice cream cone, I said, "Someday I'm going to be a lawyer, and I'll buy you an ice cream cone"; and we had a neighbor who was a lawyer. But my political inclinations came from both my father and mother, who were both very interested in politics. My father was a friend of William Jennings Bryan, and loved him. And when Charlie [Charles Wayland] Bryan ran for governor of Nebraska, I remember he called my mother on the telephone to ask her to help him.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: He became-- Before he was governor, he was mayor of Lincoln.

RUDD: Now, was this William Jennings Bryan's brother?

YORTY: Brother, yes, Charlie Bryan.

RUDD: I see. So you had contact with the man?

YORTY: Well, indirectly, yes.

RUDD: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

YORTY: I had two sisters, one eight years older than I am, and she's still alive. And one four years older, who is not alive today.

RUDD: Did they both move to Los Angeles?

YORTY: No, just one, the younger sister.

RUDD: And what was her name?

YORTY: Her name was Enid.

RUDD: Enid. And your older sister's name?

YORTY: Kathleen.

RUDD: Kathleen. So you would say that William Jennings Bryan was a great influence?

YORTY: Well, not just William Jennings Bryan. Woodrow Wilson had a great influence. When he ran in 1916 for a second term, I went with my father to vote, and before that, some people had had a picture of Hurley [Charles Evans Hughes] in their window, and I went over and told my dad. And he went over to their house, and when he came back that picture was down. But at the polling booth, I remember wrestling a kid to see who was going to win; I was for Wilson, and I wrestled him down. So it's always been a political atmosphere.

RUDD: Wonderful. What was school like for you?

YORTY: Well, when I went to Catholic school, it wasn't good at all, about the first three grades. And I played hooky quite often because I didn't like it there. It was a question of who was the biggest fighter. A kid named Ferris was the best fighter, and he was kind of the king of the school grounds. And one day a kid named Murray slapped me on the church grounds, and I didn't hit him back then, because I respected the church, but I waited for him around the corner on the way home, and told him to put up his hands and I socked him in the eye and gave him a black

eye. It was the only fistfight I ever had in my life. And he went back to the school and tattled to the sisters, and they called us both in, but they didn't do anything about it. And from then on, I had great respect for the school.

RUDD: Now, was this your first three years, you said?

YORTY: The first three. After that I went to public school, and I loved it. And my grades soared, and everything was fine.

RUDD: You had a teacher, apparently, who influenced you.

YORTY: Well, that was Mrs. [Greta] Grubb. I had a letter from her the other day. Her husband was a doctor. But she was my teacher in ninth grade. That was quite a bit later. But she had a great influence on me because she helped a lot with English and spelling and things that weren't so good. And she asked us to write a paper about what we wanted to be, and I wrote on the paper that I wanted to be a politician, and she liked my paper, except that she struck out the word "politician" and wrote "statesman."

RUDD: I was very impressed by that.

YORTY: Yes, I was too.

RUDD: Very impressed. At that time, were women very much involved in politics?

YORTY: Not so much, except for E. Ruth Purdle, who was the administrator of the grade school I went to, [and] later became the superintendent of education for Nebraska.

RUDD: Sports were very important to you, from what I gather.

YORTY: Oh, yes. Very. Always have been, they still are.

RUDD: What kind of sport did you favor?

YORTY: Well, I favored everything. I used to stay after school and play baseball and soccer, and I played on the basketball team too, but in grade school I was too short to play very good basketball. But I was on the team anyway. But I was on the track team that won the championship in Lincoln for the grade school. I was a runner and broad jumper.

RUDD: I also noticed you enjoyed music.

YORTY: Always. My sister Kathleen, the oldest sister, played the piano.

RUDD: Uh-huh, and you?

YORTY: Well, I took violin for a while, and the teacher was-- The teacher in grade school was very good, and she said I should go on and study violin. And a fellow named Steckleberg at the University of Nebraska who charged two dollars a lesson, and I wanted to take from him; my father didn't want to pay the money, so that ended my violin career. And later I bought a banjo in a hock shop, and took it home, and started to play the banjo. I took banjo lessons from a fellow named Martin Groundhorst, who came here to Los Angeles later, and he was the Paul Martin Band bandleader. He had the band out at Twentieth Century-Fox.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: But he's the one who taught me to play the banjo.

RUDD: That's very interesting. In reading--

YORTY: Of course, you know I had an orchestra--

RUDD: Yeah, well, was that--

YORTY: Fifteen, yes.

RUDD: When you were fifteen. Tell us about it.

YORTY: Well, it was a pretty good orchestra [Sam Yorty's Melodors]. We were doing very well. We played a lot of little towns around Nebraska, and I could have either a five-piece band or seven-piece band, depending on what they wanted. And I had a piano player who was the practice piano player for the Kansas City Nighthawks, who was very good. And he was really the backbone of the band, but the others were pretty good. And we had a saxophone and a trumpet and a banjo and a violin, and I guess, then, sometimes we'd have two extra. I've forgotten what they played. But anyway, we were getting very popular at a place called Linoma Beach, between Lincoln and Omaha, it was just opening, and we were the opening orchestra, and they charged ten cents a dance. I remember we would play four choruses, and boy, they got them off the floor and on again so fast, we'd be starting again. [laughter] They didn't get to dance very long, I'll tell you. But it was a success, and then I got an invitation to apply for the Loup

County Fair in more western Nebraska. And I didn't want to pay the transportation up there for my orchestra, so I bought an automobile, and it was a tragedy. And the old Paige, gosh, the tires kept puncturing, and we had a heck of a time getting to Loup County. And we played the fair. And on the way back, this car broke down again, and I had to pay all the fellows to get home on the bus or train, I've forgotten which they took. But anyway, I ended up owing them money when I got to Lincoln. I had to sell a violin that I had--not the one that I had been playing--to get enough money to pay them off. And that ended my orchestra.

RUDD: Now, this was primarily for a dance band?

YORTY: Yes, it was a dance band.

RUDD: I see. And you were fifteen years old then?

YORTY: When I formed the band, yes.

RUDD: I bet it was a lot of fun.

YORTY: Well, it was, and I made pretty good money because I got leader money. I think I got fifteen dollars a night for the men in the band, and I got fifteen dollars a night for playing in the band, and ten dollars leader money. And I'd never seen any money like that before.

RUDD: Yeah. And how old were you, fifteen?

YORTY: Fifteen. .

RUDD: I see.

YORTY: But I was selling papers-- At that time I was delivering papers for the **Lincoln Star**. I started off with selling papers on the delivery route, and then I became the complaint messenger and also the newsstand salesman. And I'd take the papers out to the newsstand, and try to get them to take all I could, and then try to take them some more if they needed them. And then when I got through with that job, I had to go down to the newspaper, and people called in [who] didn't get their paper, and I got ten cents for each one of those I delivered on my bicycle. And sometimes a delivery boy would miss a whole block, you know. So I'd do pretty well. And I had to stay there till seven o'clock at night, on Sunday till two in the afternoon, and I had the dance band at the same time, so-- Saturdays, when the dance orchestra would finish, I'd go back to the **Lincoln Star** and sleep on the mail sacks till the press stopped; that woke me up when the press stopped. And then I'd deliver my newsstands. I had quite a life, I'll tell you.

RUDD: When you worked, did the money go to contribute to the family?

YORTY: No, I didn't have to contribute to the family. I just took care of myself, my own clothes and expenses and so forth.

RUDD: What did your father do for a living?

YORTY: Well, he did quite a few things. He had been a contractor. He could paint and paper and roof and all that. But he was painting a big hotel in Lincoln, Nebraska, and went up on the scaffold to inspect it, and the scaffold broke, and he fell on his back on a paint can for a story or two, I've forgotten what. But he was in bed a year, and doctor bills were very big for him because he didn't have any insurance. And we had to sell our nice home in Lincoln, Nebraska, and move to a neighborhood that we didn't like.

RUDD: I see.

YORTY: And after that, he had tough luck. He was painting Beatrice Creamery inside, and slipped and turned his ankle, and he had to wear a brace the rest of his life. But he was a very bright man and could do anything he set his mind to, but just had bad luck.

RUDD: Your parents separated, didn't they?

YORTY: Yes, when I was quite young.

RUDD: Was this a formal divorce?

YORTY: No, they didn't get a divorce till after I came to California. My mother didn't want to get a divorce while any of the children were at home, and I was the last one. But they were separated.

RUDD: Oh, in Lincoln?

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: Did this cause you any problems? Were you upset over this, you know?

YORTY: Well, it naturally is upsetting. And I used to have to go down to my dad to try and get the five dollars a week he was supposed to pay for me, and he'd be down at the domino place. He was a great domino player. And I'd go down, and once in a while we'd go to ball games together-- he loved baseball. I was friendly with my dad, and of course, my mother I loved; I loved both of them. But I didn't-- Of course, it's different when they don't live together, your life is all different. But we got along fine.

RUDD: How old were you when they separated?

YORTY: Oh, I don't know. I must have been about ten. I don't really know.

RUDD: I noticed that when you had moved here and you were getting involved in politics, you would write him often.

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: And did he usually respond to you?

YORTY: Oh, yes, sure. He wrote me back, and he was very happy about my progress in politics. And of course, he was a great Democrat, from William Jennings Bryan days.

RUDD: Sure. When did he pass away?

YORTY: He passed away before I became mayor. He passed away in the 1950s.

RUDD: How old a man was he, would you say?

YORTY: Oh, he must have been about seventy-eight when he died.

RUDD: I see. Did he always spend his life in Lincoln, Nebraska?

YORTY: Yes. He came from-- Originally, the family on his mother's side came from Milwaukee. That's his Irish mother. And her husband, Sam Yorty, died very young, so she was a widow and had married again.

RUDD: When did your mother move out here?

YORTY: Oh, I don't know when it was. She came about 1933 or '34.

RUDD: So you lived here about seven years before she moved here?

YORTY: Oh, yes.

RUDD: She remarried?

YORTY: After I left home, yes.

RUDD: Did she marry a man from Nebraska?

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: And what was his name?

YORTY: His name was Barrett, Richard Barrett.

RUDD: Barrett?

YORTY: Uh-huh.

RUDD: And you said, was it Enid who moved here, or Kathleen?

YORTY: Enid. Kathleen married Leslie Seacrist in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Seacrists own both newspapers there now.

They owned just the **Journal**, when I worked for the **Star**.

But Leslie was the cousin of J. C. Seacrist, who was a big shot around Lincoln. The Seacrist name is big in Lincoln.

RUDD: What were your reasons for leaving Lincoln to come here, in particular?

YORTY: Oh, I wanted to go where there was more opportunity and less consciousness of your wealth, you know, because we weren't wealthy. We didn't consider ourselves poor ever, but I guess we were by some standards. But I wanted to get out of that atmosphere, small town atmosphere.

RUDD: What work did you do before you left?

YORTY: Well, in addition to my work at the **Lincoln Star** and my dance orchestra, I was a salesman at the Leon Shirt Shop, which just sold shirts and hats and shoes. I worked under a fellow named Campbell, [E. Burton] "Humpy"

Campbell, who was a very good salesman, and he taught me a lot about salesmanship.

RUDD: When you came here, were you surprised to see a city like Los Angeles, as opposed to what you had left in Lincoln? Did you have big expectations, or had you seen photographs or something of L.A., or different things?

YORTY: No, I just came to L.A. more or less by accident. I wanted to go to some big city, Chicago or Los Angeles or

San Francisco. And a fellow came in the Leon Shirt Shop and said he was going to Los Angeles, and how would I like to go with him. And I said, "Well, I think I'd like to get out of here." I had saved \$170 to go someplace, so I went home at noon, told my mother I was going to Los Angeles. And we planned on taking the train to Salt Lake City and working there a while and then coming to Los Angeles. And we took the train to Salt Lake City.

RUDD: That's where I'm from.

YORTY: Is it? I don't remember much about Salt Lake City in those days. We just stayed in a hotel. And then I found a jitney for five dollars would drive you to Los Angeles across the desert, and so I came on to Los Angeles. And we went through Las Vegas, which was nothing then, there wasn't any air-conditioning. We just stayed in a little old hotel where you walked upstairs. Las Vegas was nothing.

RUDD: Were you impressed with our climate out here, especially in the winter?

YORTY: Well, yes, in the winter. But when I first got here I was very cold, because the sea is a different climatic phenomenon from the dry cold in Lincoln, and I thought I'd freeze to death. I stayed for a while with an

old man who was a landlord of my mother's in Lincoln, Nebraska. And he lived out on Second Place, near the Pico-- used to be the Pico Theater. I don't know whether it's still there or not. But anyway, he loved auctions, and his wife had passed away, and he kept going to auctions, and the place was so full of furniture you could hardly walk through it. And the room that I had, I was very cold in there.

RUDD: Now where was this?

YORTY: This was here, in Los Angeles, near Pico. I think it's Second Place.

RUDD: Oh, Second Place? All right. You said the size of the city didn't totally amaze you. You were the first one, then, from your family to come out here?

YORTY: Yes, the first one.

RUDD: And then when did you say your mother came out?

YORTY: Well, she didn't come out right away, for maybe ten years. My sister Enid came out sooner, but it must have been about four or five years before she came out. She came from Omaha, then; she'd been working in Omaha for the Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company.

RUDD: Really? I know that she helped you with your first election.

YORTY: Well, I never would have been elected without her and her girlfriend, because they worked the precincts, and

we were told that the people in the apartment houses weren't very good at voting, to work just the home sections. So my sister and her friend, Joy, whose last name I don't know, my sister paid Joy two dollars a day a precinct--two dollars a precinct--and my sister, of course, didn't get anything. But the precincts that they worked, I carried every one of them.

RUDD: That's what I read.

YORTY: Yeah.

RUDD: That's wonderful. When you came here, what was the first job that you had?

YORTY: Well, it's Silverwood's. I had the name of a personnel manager at Silverwood's, and I went down to see him. And he was a very nice fellow, and he told me they were having a sale in the boy's shop and he'd put me in there. And so I worked there a couple of days, and that was all the time of the sale; of course, they didn't need any help. But the manager of the department said, "Young fellow, you've done so well here, if you want a reference, you give my name, and I'll tell them you've been here six months or something, and I'll give you a good reference." So I went down to Bullock's, and the name of the personnel manager there was McArthur. And he hired me to go to work, oh, about the following Tuesday or something. I walked on down the street, and I saw a shop called Alexander and

Oviatt's. And it had such funny-looking clothes in the window, I thought. And they had a hat shop next door, and I walked in and met the hat salesman and introduced myself. He told me he'd won the prize of the best hat salesman in the United States. He said, "This is a very, very hard place to work because it's very expensive, and the customers are always not so easy to please, but he took me over to Van Louven, who was the floor manager, and said, "I want to introduce this young fellow; he'd like to work here." And so I stood there while Van Louven went and authorized checks that were given, all day long practically. At the end, he hired me, and so I went back to McArthur to tell him I'd taken a job at Alexander and Oviatt's and he said, "Young fellow, you're burning bridges behind you." I'll never forget that. But it wasn't any bridges I'd built, behind me. But Alexander and Oviatt's was an interesting place to work, and I was just to start on the stock there first, just putting away. But Van Louven went out of town, and when he came back, I'd sold more merchandise than any of the other salesmen. And he thought that was wonderful until he realized I'd waited on more customers than anybody else. [laughter] I just grabbed them when they came in the door. Then I decided-- Then they brought in another fellow, one of Oviatt's nephews, and he was going to head up the ladies'

department, which just started, and I was to teach him about the store, and I did. Then they brought in young Oviatt, and he was taking over as a buyer and everything, and I could see that this merchandise business was not for me, if they're just bringing in their relatives and put them over you. I'd almost decided to stay in the merchandise business.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: But then I went to Van Louven and told him. He said, "Well, I'd like to keep you here," but he said, "Don't worry about these relatives coming in." But I decided-- He said, "I can't let you work part time here because everything is personal customers." He wouldn't give me a reference, Van Louven, but a fellow named Smart who worked there also and was over Van Louven--he was the assistant buyer--he gave me a very fine reference. I went up to a fellow at Desmond's, Bill something, name doesn't come right now. But anyway, he put me to work part-time while I went to school, and I didn't have to come to work until about eleven, and I worked till three.

RUDD: Now where were these stores?

YORTY: Well, the store I worked in then was down on Spring Street; it was the Arcade store. And we just sold shirts, hats, shoes, suspenders, things like that, sort of a haberdashery store. And of course, I'd had good experience

at Alexander and Oviatt's, so instead of paying me fifty cents an hour, they paid me sixty cents. And the fellow there, McCarthy, who was the boss of the store, was very nice. He never complained when I didn't get there right at eleven because I didn't always get out of school. And one time when Herbert Hoover was coming to town, I wanted to meet Herbert Hoover, [and] he let me off to go down to the City Hall and shake hands with Herbert Hoover. Of course, that would be 1928, I guess. So, it was a very pleasant job.

RUDD: Now, you mentioned going to school. What were you doing at school?

YORTY: Pre-legal.

RUDD: And where was this?

YORTY: Southwestern [University]. That was down on Eleventh and Broadway, in that day. It's not there now.

RUDD: And your attempts were then to become an attorney?

YORTY: Yes, that's what I'd always intended to be anyway, an attorney and to go into politics.

RUDD: Did you go on any other campuses to school?

YORTY: Well, later, I went to USC [University of Southern California], and night school. [tape recorder off]

RUDD: Who were some of your friends that you made when you were here, when you first moved here?

YORTY: Oh, I didn't have very many friends, but this old man, J. Gould Dietz, my mother's landlord, was the first one I really knew, because he'd been in Lincoln a lot because he owned a lot of property there. Then I used to go down to dance at the Santa Monica Pier. I could drive down Pico from the house I stayed at, and I knew how to get back there, so I went dancing down there. I met some fellows, I can't remember the names now. Finally, I went to a dance hall called Wilson's, which is downtown. And I don't remember exactly what happened, but there was a girl there that somebody asked to dance, and she didn't want to dance with him. I told her I'd overheard that, would she like to dance with me? So we danced. That was Hazel Handeside, and I went with her steady for a long time.

RUDD: You mentioned you drove down. You had a car here?

YORTY: Yes, I did when I drove down. I don't remember exactly how I got the car. It was repossessed once back in school. [laughter] But I had it for a while, anyway.

RUDD: You bought it here?

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: What kind, do you remember?

YORTY: It was a Dodge roadster.

RUDD: Dodge roadster. These early years of yours in Los Angeles, the Depression was coming.

YORTY: It was here, very shortly, yes.

RUDD: What was it like for you? What was it like for the community? Do you recall any of these things?

YORTY: Well, it was very tough, because everyone was depressed, and-- I used to have my income from working at Desmond's, you know, so I got along all right. I had a little one-room place with a hot stove, and I could cook my own meals. That was out on Lucas Street or Witmer, one of the two; I had a place on both at various times. Every once in a while I'd get real broke, and I'd get a check for fifty dollars from my mother. She always seemed to sense when I was real broke. That was the only help I ever got.

RUDD: What was the climate like for most people?

YORTY: Well, the climate, if you mean weather, it was like now.

RUDD: No, I mean, the atmosphere, the environment.

YORTY: Well, it was very depressing because there was so much unemployment. And people didn't have any welfare in those days. They used to go down to the county and get a bag of beans. That was all the welfare they had. It was really very tough.

RUDD: I imagine so. In your political beginnings, you came across the philosophy of technocracy.

YORTY: Yes. I think before that there was a fellow named Charlie [Charles W.] Dempster who ran for mayor against [Joseph] Shaw. And I supported Dempster. He had to be up

in the legislature quite a bit because he was an assemblyman, so I made speeches for him in Los Angeles. And [at] one of the speeches, for the Water and Power group, I met John B. Elliot, who was an old-time Democratic power in Los Angeles. He'd managed Woodrow Wilson's election campaign for the second term. And he'd managed a lot of others, too, including Franklin Roosevelt's first campaign. But anyway, he took a liking to me, and he told me if he could ever help me he would do it, and that was my first real introduction to somebody with any power or influence in the city. But Charlie Dempster, of course, got beat, and then, oh, I got a job at the Water and Power Department. First I was surveying the water rights of the land partly between here and Boulder Dam, because the water rights affected the land's value, and we wanted right-of-way to build a power line from then Boulder Dam, it's now Hoover Dam, over to Los Angeles. So I walked up the hills and all around and checked the water. And then later I was a field agent at the same Department of Water and Power, helping to buy the right-of-way for the line from Boulder Dam.

RUDD: You mentioned you were giving speeches. Had you always-- Were you in debate, or anything like this?

YORTY: No, not debate, just political speeches, just for Charlie Dempster, whom I admired; he was quite a guy.

RUDD: But it also takes, say, for lack of [a] better word, a great deal of chutzpah within yourself to be able to get up there. Had you always felt that you could get up and perform in front of people?

YORTY: I was never afraid of making speeches; I always liked to make speeches.

RUDD: How did he hear about you?

YORTY: Oh, I don't know. I guess I just volunteered to work [in] his campaign.

RUDD: I see. We'll get back, now, to the technocracy. What happened?

YORTY: Well, technocracy became quite a vogue, and I wasn't too clear about what they were trying to do, but it was mainly to bring technicians and technology into the government, and I became secretary of the technocrats here in Los Angeles. Manchester Boddy was the head of it, and he published the **Los Angeles Daily News**, a small paper in Los Angeles; it was a six-column paper, sort of a hybrid paper. But that got me acquainted with Manchester Boddy, and I met some friends there. I don't remember who it was now, but it was an interesting experience, because technocracy was very new and caught on; everybody was interested in just what it was. It really was to apply modern technology to government, that's what it really amounted to.

RUDD: Was it in relationship to, or against, say, something that happened in the Depression?

YORTY: Well, it was sort of a panacea for the situation. They thought by opening everything up to technology and all that, that it would solve some of the problems of the Depression. But of course it didn't.

RUDD: Now, Mr. Ainsworth mentioned that you also became friendly, or at least you got to know, Will Durant, the historian.

YORTY: Well, not very well, no. I was an admirer of Will Durant's, and went to hear him speak. And there was a place called the "Parliament of Man" here that had the weekly meetings of great speakers, philosophers like Will Durant. I can't think of the doctor of philosophy, I can't think of his name right now, who ran the "Parliament of Man," but it was a great institution, and I learned a lot by going there, and that's where I met Will Durant. Hazel Handeside gave me his book (she was Scotch, and they're supposed to be very tight, but she was very generous) **The Story of Philosophy**. So I read that, and then I read books by all the philosophers mentioned in **The Story of Philosophy**.

RUDD: Yes. Well, you must have been quite a young man then.

YORTY: Well, I was still very young, yes.

RUDD: And he must have been, also.

YORTY: Well, he was a lot younger, yes. I don't remember how old he was, but he had written this book, **The Story of Philosophy**.

RUDD: That must have been very interesting to meet him. One of the things that I found very interesting is your ideas of politics, like at one time you're called an ultraliberal. The next time you're called a moderate.

YORTY: Yeah. Well, I remember in Lincoln, Nebraska, when my father was building a building, I went up and watched the bricklayers. Dad said they always hired union bricklayers because they had standards and would lay so many bricks an hour and so forth. So, that impressed me, and when I got out here in Los Angeles, my stepfather, Richard Barrett, worked for the Ford Company. And he used to work till they finished the model of the year, then he was laid off, then he'd go back to apply for a job next model year. He had no seniority, no pension system or anything, and the unions were very weak. There was no union at Ford then. So I could see that the working men, the unions, were the underdog, and that's why I was very pro-union. It was just the influence of my life. And that's why they-- Los Angeles is a very open shop town, and anybody who was for the unions here was considered radical. And of course, the biggest newspaper in Los

Angeles is the **Los Angeles Times**, which has always been nonunion, and still is, and that dates back to the days of a fellow named Mooney [actually, J. B. and J. J. McNamara], who was supposed to have bombed the **Times** because they were nonunion, and he was prosecuted and sent to prison. But that made the **Times** very nonunion. In later years they had a union formed by the pressmen or something, and they didn't give up till they broke it. And they're still a nonunion newspaper. So if you were for unions, you were always a radical as far as the **Times** was concerned. And the **Times** was a great influence in Los Angeles, and still is.

RUDD: Do you feel that as you matured, your philosophies became more strict, or changed, or what, from what you first--

YORTY: Well, the situation changed, the environment. For one thing, the unions became stronger and stronger, and they no longer needed the political backing that I had given them, and some of them got so strong that they went too far. And then the communists had an effect on me because-- There's a fellow named Bob [Robert] Tasker, and John Bright, and they wrote the picture "The Big House." Bob Tasker became very friendly to me, and he was really a very nice guy. We were down at a club on North Spring Street, it was a Spanish club [Bomba Club], and he said to

me, "Sam, you've been picked by the cream of the cream to go places." And I said, "Well, that's fine, Bob." He said, "There's only one trouble." And I said, "What's that?" He said, "You're not a member of the Communist Party." And that's the first I've ever heard that. It kind of opened my eyes. And Bob Tasker was a big communist, it turned out, and so was John Bright. And Bob Tasker was killed in Mexico City later, but the communists had picked me out as a young liberal to go places; they were going to get me if they could. So I began to see things then, and I could see the maneuvering. In 1940, when I ran for United States Senate against Hiram Johnson--who had always fought the League of Nations, which I was for and my father had been for; he was an isolationist--I could see the war just as clearly as I could see my hand before me. It was so obvious to me that we were going to be in the war. England was in it alone then; France, of course, and Belgium and those countries had been overrun. But I thought we should declare war on Hitler. We weren't in the war yet, the United States. And I ran for the United States Senate, and my platform was--["Isolation has failed; stop Hitler now."]

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RUDD: Continue.

YORTY: Well, there was a young fellow who was very helpful to me in my campaign for reelection in 1938, and when I ran for the Senate I told him I would help him run for the assembly. But he said, "Steer clear of communists, people like that." And right away, I heard back from the editor of a liberal paper in Los Angeles and he asked me if I had told the fellow that, and I said yes, but I realized then that this young fellow was an infiltrator, he was a communist. So my eyes were opened a little more. But the fellow who contacted me, who was the editor of the liberal paper, also turned out to be a communist, but he was a renegade communist. When I was investigating communism, I found out his party name, which was different, and I called him by it one time, really shocked him. But he'd been called before the communist disciplinarian, a fellow by the name of Dr. Parker. He had another name, real name [Dr. Tashjian]. But anyway, he was the disciplinarian of the Communist Party [of the United States], and they would call these people in and threaten them if they didn't stay in line. This editor had been called in, I found out, and threatened. The system was to isolate, expose, and expel. They'd isolate you by telling lies about you to all

your friends, and they'd expose you as having been a communist, and expel you from the party. Isolate, expose, expel; that was the way they worked. And this fellow had been called in. But he was a delightful fellow. He later worked for the city for a long time. I think he got clear away from them. But he was editor of this little liberal paper. I was very shocked that this kid turned out to be a communist because I liked him, and he had worked very hard in my campaign, and was very bright. So, people don't realize how the communists infiltrate, and today people are blind to what's going on.

RUDD: Then you say it's still running as rampant?

YORTY: Well, they're more clever now. They're very rampant. The people don't know, and there's no use to tell them, because they don't believe you. They think you're seeing the communists under every bed. And really, practically, there are communists under every bed. [tape recorder off]

But I was a great admirer of Winston Churchill in those days, and I remember William Gibbs McAdoo was head of the U.S. President Lines, which had then been taken over by the government, and he'd been appointed. He was a son-in-law of President Woodrow Wilson, and he was a senator from California for a while [1933-39]. And I went to him for some help, and he said, "Young fellow, you have no chance

of being elected, but you're the only one telling the truth about the war."

RUDD: Really? And when was this?

YORTY: This was 1940.

RUDD: 1940s. Well, let's go back to L.A. A man named John [W.] Baumgartner--

YORTY: Baumgartner, yes. He was a city councilman [1933-39]. And I think he was a, I'm pretty sure he was a member of the Water and Power Commission board [1931-33].

RUDD: We can check that out.

YORTY: Yes, I think I'm right about that.

RUDD: Now, how did you get involved in Water and Power?

YORTY: Well, by working for them on the Boulder line transmission right-of-way.

RUDD: I mean, why did you switch from your haberdashery, you might say, to--

YORTY: Oh, well, it was during the Depression, you know, and you were glad to get any kind of a job. And I was very pleased when I got this job in the Water and Power Department. I got, I think, two hundred dollars a month, or something, which I regarded a very big wage then, and I got my expenses when I was out of town checking out this land. And we were told not to hurry because it was federal money, and we didn't want our jobs to dry up too soon, and neither did the department. So we took our time about investigating the land values.

RUDD: So who were you involved with then in Water and Power?

YORTY: Joe Gallagher's the one who got me the job.

RUDD: Joe Gallagher? And who was he?

YORTY: Well, he was an agent, a land agent. And he later formed a very successful company buying rights-of-way from big oil companies and everything. He was a very bright fellow.

RUDD: So when you were involved with the Hoover-Boulder Dam situation, did you travel between here and Las Vegas?

YORTY: Not from here to Las Vegas. I was in San Bernardino a lot. We stayed in the California Hotel there because we worked from there a lot of the time toward the line both east and west, the land values.

RUDD: Now, is this how you got to know John [Randolph] Haynes?

YORTY: Yes, I got to know John R. Haynes. When I worked at Water and Power, and I admired him because he was sort of the boss in Los Angeles on water and power issues. He was a fine man, a great doctor, and very wealthy. I've forgotten how I personally got so friendly with him just working there. But anyway, I remember going to his house one day to see him, and he was smoking a cigarette, which surprised me. And I said, "Dr. Haynes, I'm surprised to see you smoke a cigarette." And he said, "Don't ever

start." He said, "I don't inhale cigarettes at all. They say the nicotine is bad for your heart, and there's an oil in tobacco that's bad for your throat." I've never forgotten that.

RUDD: And when was this, in the thirties?

YORTY: Nineteen thirties, yes. But anyway, in those days, the Water and Power Department was not so big and powerful as it is now. I guess you're not interested in how the Power Department started, but it started because water from the Owens Valley came by gravity to Los Angeles. They used some of that gravity to start manufacturing power. And Scattergood was the first-- E. [Ezra] F. Scattergood was the first power manager. But anyway, then I got in the office there examining titles to this land that we were buying, and I'd studied some real estate law before that so I knew a little about it, and I studied a lot of titles. And when I was in the office there, that's how I got better acquainted with Scattergood and with Dr. Haynes. And finally they sent me over to a fellow named Ray Davidson, in a campaign they had to pass a bond issue, some water bonds or power bonds, and Ray Davidson was the greatest PR man in Southern California. So I worked with Ray. I was paid by Water and Power, but worked with Ray Davidson on the bond issue. I learned a lot from Ray. Ray was a Jewish fellow, and I remember one time--this is kind of

beside the point--we went to lunch together, and there was some gefilte fish on the menu. I said, "Well, I don't like gefilte fish." And he said, "You a Jewish boy, you don't like gefilte fish?" I said, "I'm not Jewish, are you, Ray?" He said yes, and he looked like Napoleon, he was dark-haired. So that was the first time I ever knew he was Jewish. He was married to an Irish girl, who taught my wife to cook.

But anyway, then somehow we were going to have another bond issue, and we were afraid the [Southern California] Edison Company would beat us, as they had sometimes, because it took a two-thirds vote to pass a bond issue in those days, because there were liens on all property in the city, and that takes two-thirds vote. Somehow, they sent me over to see Harry Joe Bauer, the president of the Edison Company and talk to him. And I went over and talked to Harry Joe Bauer and told him that we wanted him to support the bond issue. After we talked he said, "Well, you tell Scattergood that I'll support your bond issue, and I don't want a fight. But tell him if we have a fight, I fight to kill." And Harry Joe Bauer supported our bond issue. He was chairman of the bond issue, and it passed. And Harry Joe Bauer and I became good friends.

RUDD: That's interesting. And he was head of what department?

YORTY: He was head of the Edison Company.

RUDD: Edison Company?

YORTY: Southern California Edison, which was a rival of the city in those days.

RUDD: It seems like you were traveling in the circle of some very influential people.

YORTY: Yes, I was, yes.

RUDD: And what do you owe this to, your charisma?

YORTY: I don't know what, just eagerness to get ahead and do these jobs, that's all.

RUDD: That's nice. Frank Shaw was somewhere in your life, and as I recall, you campaigned for him, and he lost the first time. Is this right?

YORTY: No.

RUDD: Or did he win?

YORTY: I've forgotten now, but he's the one that appointed Joe Gallagher, who gave me the job at Water and Power, and Joe Gallagher had campaigned very hard for Shaw, so Shaw must have won that campaign. I think that was about, oh, 1932 or '33. But then when he got in office, there were some scandals developed in the police department. There was a murder committed on a policeman, and it was supposed to be some kind of an inside job. I've forgotten all the details now, but the guy was prosecuted. And Joe Shaw was Frank Shaw's brother. And Joe Shaw, they claim, was trying

to sell everything in city hall. And he got his brother, Frank Shaw, in very bad. So there came a recall on Shaw, and they were looking for candidates for the recall, and there was an outfit here headed by Clifford Clinton and Bob [Robert] Schuler, who was a minister, I forgot what they called the organization then. But anyway, they were backing the recall, and it came down to two candidates: Fletcher Bowron and Sam Yorty. And labor was for me, of course. A meeting took place down at Clifton's Cafeteria, and I was sure that I was going to be chosen. I was across the street in Loew's State Theatre, and some of the liberals in the meeting double-crossed me and went over to Bowron. One fellow who's still considered a liberal, who fought to the very end for me, was Stanley Mosk, in those days. He's a member of the [California] Supreme Court now. I can't think of his present name, but he's very well-known. Stanley Mosk, it was then. He changed his name. No, he was Maury Mosk then, he's Stanley Mosk now. That's right. [laughter] But anyway, he fought for me to the very end, then up about 120 votes for Bowron to 67 for me. And then, of course, in a recall in those days, the person being recalled could run for reelection on the same ballot. All he had to do was get more votes. So the Shaw people contacted me and offered me large sums of money if I would run. But of course I refused that. So it was Bowron against Shaw, and Bowron won.

RUDD: Bowron must have been a lot older than you then.

YORTY: Oh, yes, he was. I was pretty young then. But these people picked me out to run, so--

RUDD: Well, you must have had something.

YORTY: Well, I don't know what it was, but anyway, they backed me. I'll never forget Stanley Mosk because he stood up to the very end. He's a member of the California Supreme Court.

RUDD: Your personal political desires, what were they at that point in your life?

YORTY: Just to get elected and get ahead.

RUDD: I mean, did you have any dreams of what you would like or what you would hope for?

YORTY: No, nothing particular, just to get ahead in politics.

RUDD: That was-- Politics, you knew, was going to be your life?

YORTY: Well, it was till the senate campaign where I was so badly beaten and I knew I was right, because we did get in a war, and I was in the war. But then when I came home from the war I couldn't even find an office to practice law in, and some fellows that had just been starting out in the law business when I left for the service were very prominent. One fellow let me use his library to start practicing law. Then a fellow called me up in 1949 and

said, "Hi, assemblyman." And I said, "Well, Gene [Eugene] Blalock, what in the world did you call me assemblyman for, it's been so long?" And he said, "Haven't you heard the news?" And I said, "What news?" He said, "Assemblyman John Lyons died, and there's a vacancy, and you're the only one in the district who can go up there late in the session and know what's going on."

So I just laughed at him. I went to bed, and I was thinking over how it would be to be back after almost ten years, and I called him up in the morning and said, "I think I will run if I can get some support." So I first went over to the Teamsters union, and there was a fellow there who was a PR guy, but he was kind of the boss of Teamsters, and he said, "You file, we'll support you." So that was my first real backing.

Eleanor Chambers became my campaign manager, and I've forgotten how that came about. Of course, she became a lifelong friend, and a very brilliant woman. But anyway, then the communists, who had a fellow named [Judge William M.] Byrne, whose brother, [James T.] Byrne filed, and he was a prominent Catholic. So the communists filed a woman against me; they wanted to split the liberal vote and defeat me. Byrne went down in the Jewish district and told them I was a Catholic. And he went in the Catholic districts and told them I was a Jewish. This helped.

Anyway, I won the election. The special election's when I went up to the assembly, and of course, I served that term out, practically a term, before I went to Congress [in 1950].

RUDD: Very interesting. Let's digress a little bit. Your mother, by 1937, was living here? [tape recorder off] I was asking you, by this time, in the late thirties, your mother had come to move to Los Angeles? What brought her here, was it you and Enid?

YORTY: Yes, that's why. In the meantime, she remarried, because all the kids had left home.

RUDD: And what was her husband's name?

YORTY: Barrett. Richard Barrett.

RUDD: Did she go into business here, or was she--

YORTY: Yes, she bought an apartment house lease and--not buy the property, she bought the lease on it.

RUDD: Did her husband work, or did he--

YORTY: Well, he was a gasmaker in Lincoln, and I think he got a job out here as a gasmaker for a while. But then I think they quit making gas that way, they started using natural gas, and so he became a night watchman at the Water and Power Department.

RUDD: You must have helped him get that position.

YORTY: Well, I don't think I did. He got the most votes for Baumgartner, who was running for the council, and he got the pledge sheets. And my [stepfather] turned in the

most pledge sheets of anybody in the campaign, so he didn't need any help from me.

RUDD: How did he get involved in doing this, this political activity? Was it he, too, liked politics?

YORTY: Well, I don't remember. I probably got him to go to work for Baumgartner.

RUDD: I see.

YORTY: But he did so well, he got out and tramped the precincts and turned in a lot of carry cards.

RUDD: How long did your mother live?

YORTY: Well, she lived till I was mayor, and about a year after that, but she was in a home because she had a stroke. Sometimes she didn't know me and sometimes she did. It was very sad. I had to go there every day for the first year I was mayor.

RUDD: When did you meet your wife?

YORTY: In 1938.

RUDD: We'll get into that one next time.

YORTY: Okay.

RUDD: Before we close, I asked you this before, but I can't help but think there must be a lot more to it: in telling about your personal political desires, I mean, in your wildest dreams, did you ever think you would be the mayor of Los Angeles?

YORTY: Oh, not especially mayor of Los Angeles. I just wanted to be in politics, be a member of the legislature, the Senate, the United States Senate, of course, or governor, or something. I just wanted political office.

RUDD: By being that, by being in those kinds of situations, what were your hopes to do, to make life better, to control? What did you--

YORTY: Oh, just to do something about bringing about the things I believed in.

RUDD: Yes. Very simple, and very well stated. In what we've talked about today, is there anything else that you would like to add?

YORTY: Well, except getting back to the legislature, I was so disgusted with the communist machinations that I saw that I formed a committee, California [State Legislature Joint Fact-Finding] Committee on Un-American Activities, and they appointed one liberal on the committee with me, and three conservatives. And I wrote out all the questions I was going to ask a witness before the hearings, and I gave them to all the members so I couldn't be accused of any smear or anything, I was very careful about it. And we started exposing the communist, Dr. Tashjian. That's the one that I said called him Dr. Parker. He was the Communist Party disciplinarian.

RUDD: Tashjian?

YORTY: Tashjian. This came to me now, because I think of people I called before the committee, and he was one of them. Of course, he denied everything, you know. But in those days, if you didn't answer the question, "Are you now, or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" you could be charged with contempt. You couldn't take the Fifth Amendment.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: So, we had a lot of them that did that. And the union, then, the State, County and Municipal Workers of America was badly infiltrated, and then the few communists in the movement were influencing these young kids not to answer the question, because if they could get them not to answer, then they expose the communists. So we charged a lot of them with contempt, like nineteen; they were convicted. And then Governor [Culbert Levy] Olson pardoned them all. But it was quite a melee. And they were really taking control of relief organizations in California.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: They were opening in each little city, they'd appoint a communist, and the communist would go and form a cell, and they'd have meetings and try to get other people interested. We broke that all up, and we turned relief over to the state administration. Took it away from the state, I mean. We took it away from the state and turned it back to the counties.

RUDD: Well, let me ask you, do you think you were a precursor to the Joe McCarthy era?

YORTY: Well, long before McCarthy, but I didn't handle the things like McCarthy did. I was very, very cognizant of how Martin Dies had handled the first Un-American Activities Committee, the federal one [House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)], because Martin Dies was a demagogue. One time when I was running for reelection for the assembly in 1938 and Cumerose was running for governor, and John Gee Clark of Long Beach was running for reelection to the assembly, and Ellis [E.] Patterson was running for lieutenant governor, suddenly it came out in the **Los Angeles Times** that we'd all been denounced as communists, just a couple of days before the election. We couldn't figure out what happened. We didn't have time to answer, but we were all elected, or reelected. And it turned out a criminal named [Arthur James] Kent [alias Margolis Scott Kent, "the red burglar"] had been induced to make an affidavit that we were all communists. This affidavit was flown to Texas where Martin Dies was a congressman. He put it in the files of the committee which made it privileged, and that's where the **Times** got it. And he was promised to have his sentence commuted if he did it, and his sentence was commuted. This is one of the foulest things I've ever heard of in politics, and the **Los Angeles Times** was part of

that, and that was the foundation of much of my trouble with the **Los Angeles Times**.

RUDD: Really? That's interesting. Did you have good backing over the years with other papers, the Hearst papers, or anything?

YORTY: Well, sometimes I had the Hearst papers. There was a political editor of the [**Los Angeles**] **Examiner** (morning paper), Carl Greenberg, who was very fair. And all I remember is I think he treated my campaign fair. I don't remember if they supported me at all at that stage. Later they did. But Carl Greenberg later became political editor of the **Los Angeles Times**.

RUDD: Really? Have you had a good time doing everything you've done?

YORTY: Oh, yes, certainly. I've enjoyed it.

RUDD: Would you have done it differently?

YORTY: No, I don't think so. I shouldn't have run in 1940 for the United States Senate, but I was so determined that the United States would play a part in stopping Hitler that I just couldn't believe that people could be so blind.

RUDD: People said about you that you were years ahead of your time in a lot of different instances.

YORTY: Yes, that's been my trouble, one of my troubles.

RUDD: Isn't that a shame?

YORTY: Yes, it's a shame, really, but somebody has to start things off.

RUDD: Is there anything else you'd like to say at this time?

YORTY: No, not at this time.

RUDD: All right, fine. Thank you.

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

AUGUST 28, 1985

RUDD: Sam, I'd like to go back and ask some questions from some of the things that we had discussed last time. You remember you had mentioned Humpy Campbell?

YORTY: Yes, very well.

RUDD: What I'm wondering, you mentioned that he was a teacher of sorts. What did you learn from him?

YORTY: Well, salesmanship. I worked under him. He was a sales manager of the Leon's Shirt Shop in Lincoln, Nebraska.

RUDD: Did you feel you learned, though, something to carry on in what you did--

YORTY: Yes, he was a very good salesman.

RUDD: Very good. You also mentioned that you had gone to auctions when you first came to Los Angeles.

YORTY: No, I didn't go. J. Gould Dietz did.

RUDD: Oh.

YORTY: The man whom I went to live with for a few days.

RUDD: Oh, I see. How did you get your job at Water and Power [Department]?

YORTY: I got it through Joe Gallagher. And Joe I think I met in the Shaw campaign. I think Shaw was elected in 1932 or '33--'32 I believe. And Joe had worked for Shaw in the campaign, and Joe's the one that got me hired. Joe was a

friend of mine. I don't remember how I first met Joe.

RUDD: Okay.

YORTY: Wait a minute on those dates. I'm wrong about that. [tape recorder off] Then I went to work for the Water and Power. Joe Gallagher got me the job.

RUDD: Joe Gallagher. Were you impressed with any of your instructors at Southwestern University?

YORTY: Well, not much. There was one professor of contracts named Gallagher, who turned out to be a communist. And I used to notice that he'd make little cracks in his lecture on contracts. He was a good teacher. But then, we had a debate team and he set up for us to go down to some meeting which was very left-wing, and my position was that the United States should not disarm. And the other side was that the United States should disarm.

RUDD: Should disarm?

YORTY: Should disarm. And I took the opposite side, and everybody booed. [laughter] But the other person who impressed me very much was the debate coach. And I've forgotten his name at the moment, but it's in the book.

RUDD: So, your teacher was named Gallagher as well as your friend Joe Gallagher?

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: They were both Gallaghers?

YORTY: Yeah.

RUDD: Very good. How did you feel that technocracy would help the world?

YORTY: Well, I wasn't sure, and nobody else was. We just felt that if they applied technical knowledge to the industries that we could produce a lot more and maybe get out of the Depression.

RUDD: Can you name any of the people that you knew who were affiliated with the Communist Party? You mention it so much that I'm amazed myself.

YORTY: Well, I didn't know at that time, but later when I investigated communism, of course, I had former communists testify before the committee, as it shows in my report. And they had been people that had infiltrated the Communist Party and had left it. And some, like Marion, oh, she was part of the FBI that infiltrated the Communist Party, and she was ostracized and isolated, exposed, expelled, all that, so her neighbors wouldn't speak to her or anything, till it was finally revealed that she was a member of the FBI to infiltrate the Communist Party. And those people all testified before my committee.

RUDD: Does this still prevail? I mean--

YORTY: Does it still prevail?

RUDD: Yes.

YORTY: Well, it still prevails, but not as well known now

because they hide much better than they used to. They used to carry books, and I had a Communist Party passbook given to me by one of the former members. I've still got it. And they had certain things in there that they had to believe in and swear to, the Communist Party, and to obey, and all that sort of thing. Then they abolished the passbook, and then they made a rule that if you're ever asked if you're a member of the Communist Party, you are immediately expelled so you can say you weren't a member. They had a lot of tricks like that. But now they're more clever, and the propaganda in the United States is much more subtle than it used to be.

RUDD: Okay. Were you ever considered a "fellow traveler"?

YORTY: No. I was never considered a fellow traveler, except maybe by some people who didn't understand. But that was because I was pro-labor and pro-liberal in many ways. For instance, like the old-age pensions. There was no old-age pension when I went to the legislature. And in 1936 I voted for the old-age pension, and I think I was a co-author of the bill. So things like that. A lot of people who were extremely right-wing would look upon you as a fellow traveler because they didn't even know what the Communist Party was. But I never was one of them.

RUDD: Okay. What is your definition of communism?

YORTY: Well, communism is a closed dictatorship from

Russia that believes in Marxist-Leninism, and they believe in dominating the whole world. And they haven't given up that idea yet; they're still trying to do it.

RUDD: Does it differ, today, than from what you thought about it in your younger days when you were first involved?

YORTY: No, it's no different today, but people don't understand it as well. And they're still trying to dominate the world. But it was, it looked like it was just one country then, the Russians, but now they've split off from China and Yugoslavia, and it's kind of split up now. It's been a failure every place, you know. The capitalist system has proved to be much more productive. We were supposed to go downhill, according to the communists, and then they'd take over easily, but we haven't done that. And we're still strong, and still strong militarily, so I think in the long run we're going to win, because for instance, in Russia, they had to build a wall around it, and you can't get out. And eventually there's going to be a lot of--there is trouble there now, but we don't know as much about it, because they don't allow the free press there. So we don't know about the troubles they have. They know about all our troubles, and they exacerbate them if they can. But we don't know about their troubles.

RUDD: Communist control of relief activities, was it local or at a state level?

YORTY: That was state. That was a state level, and they were gradually getting control. Now, this is a bit complicated because when Olson was elected governor in 1938, I went up there with him before he took office. And I remember he walked down the hall with me in the state capitol, and I said to the governor, "I'll do what I can for you." And he said, "Well, I would like to ask you to do me a favor. I want to make [H.] Dewey Anderson director of relief, and I want to make Phil [Sheridan] Gibson director of finance." He said, "Suddenly they've started a big smear campaign against Phil Gibson. They're saying he was a big corporation attorney, and a lot of things that I never heard them say before." He said, "Suddenly this [has] come about, and I wish you'd talk Dewey into being director of relief so that I can make Phil Gibson director of finance." And I said, "Well, sure, I'll do it."

So, I got Dewey Anderson up in my room at the Sacramento Hotel, and I told him he ought to be a team player and not insist on being director of finance, that the governor wanted to make him director of relief. And I finally talked him into it. And that made Phil Gibson director of finance. And Phil later became chief justice of the California Supreme Court. But it turned out that the next guy in line for director of relief if Dewey didn't take it was Bill [William J.] Plunkert, and Bill Plunkert

was a communist. So when Dewey Anderson became director of relief, Bill Plunkert was his second in command, in charge of personnel. He began hiring communists like Rose Segure and others around the state as the state leaders in the state relief administration. They were setting up cells in the various towns like Stockton, and other places, and having meetings, not saying they were communists, of course, just setting up cells to have liberal meetings. And so it turned out that they had infiltrated so badly, that when I got through with my committee investigation and published my report, we abolished the state relief administration and turned relief back to the counties.

RUDD: Very good. Thank you. One last thing, did you support Fletcher Bowron as the recall--

YORTY: Yes, very much so, because it was between Fletcher and me to be the candidate on the recall. And when a group really double-crossed me, in a way, but they went over to Fletcher Bowron, and he won by a rather small majority. And then the Shaw people, of course, tried to get me to run, because if I had run, that would have split the vote, and Shaw would have been reelected, because then you ran on the recall, but you also could run for election at the same time. So I really supported Fletcher Bowron.

RUDD: Very good. All right, let's go on to the questions for today. In 1936 you went into the state assembly, you

were elected. It was the Sixty-fourth District. What was your affiliation at that point?

YORTY: I was a Democrat.

RUDD: Democrat?

YORTY: I had been a lifelong Democrat, so had my mother and father.

RUDD: Family support, I remember you mentioned, and I've read that Enid and her friend went out and helped you.

YORTY: Work the precincts. My sister put up most of the money, too. I think we had \$1,100 for the campaign.

RUDD: And you ran against Harry Lyons?

YORTY: Harry Lyons was a Republican nominee, but my big problem was to get the Democratic nomination. And I got that, and then ran against Harry Lyons. Harry Lyons had been the assemblyman from the district.

RUDD: One of the interesting things that I read was that after Enid would go from house to house, or apartment to apartment, she'd come back and convey things to you. I think you had her write down addresses of people and you wrote these people--

YORTY: Well, they made pledge cards, and they had the people that would sign a pledge card to me, that would vote for me, and then when they brought them in at night, we would use a mimeograph machine, and send a mimeographed letter to all the persons who had pledged to vote for me,

and asked them to remember to vote, and ask their friends to.

RUDD: When you won the election, which you did do, you were identified as a "crusading liberal." How do you feel about that?

YORTY: Well, I really didn't have any identification when I was elected, because not very many people knew me. I'd only been in California about nine years, and I was listed on the ballot, I think, as a manufacturer, because we had a cosmetic business then. So there wasn't anything particularly liberal about the election or about the stands I took, but I got known as a liberal because I was pro-labor, and because I saw the plight of the old people--particularly my father-in-law, who used to lose his job every year and then get hired back again for the new model work at Ford. They had no seniority. And I saw the treachery, the desperate position of the old people during the Depression, and I'd been through it, too. That's enough to make anybody liberal.

RUDD: Okay.

YORTY: And incidentally, I was a friend of Dr. Francis Townsend and went to his annual meetings for years after I was elected. Dr. Francis Townsend was really the author of the Social Security Act, because he believed in giving \$200 a month to everyone, I think it was over sixty, or sixty-

five, I think it was sixty, because he said we didn't need their production, but we needed their consumption.

Roosevelt had to do something about it, because the Townsend movement became so powerful that it became a threat to any politician. So Roosevelt started the Social Security system as an offset to the Townsend Plan.

RUDD: I would like to backtrack for just a second. You mentioned your family was in a cosmetic business.

YORTY: Yes, well, we had, my sister, her husband and I had a little business called "Laline" for L.A. line, and we made some cosmetics, some shampoo, and things. It started off pretty well, but it wasn't very successful.

RUDD: Now this is Enid?

YORTY: That's Enid, yes.

RUDD: Okay. And what was her husband's name?

YORTY: Early.

RUDD: His last name was Early?

YORTY: His last name was Early, Ellis Early.

RUDD: Very good. Did this business last long?

YORTY: Well, no, because I ran for the legislature. I was running the business.

RUDD: In '36 you were also known as a writer of legislation.

YORTY: Well, that would be later, because I was elected in '36, but I didn't take office till '37, the '37 session.

RUDD: All right. And you were for pro-union, labor?

YORTY: Yes, very much so.

RUDD: Was this a general concept of people, or were you always an iconoclast that seemed to touch things before other people noticed they should even be aware of things?

YORTY: Well, that's what the people have always said, that I was ahead of my time. I wanted to declare war on Hitler before the American people wanted to even think about going to war, so I think that's true. And I had seen the plight of the old people. Of course, Roosevelt was president then, and I was very inspired by his address from Chicago when he went there, the first president to go to the convention and accept the nomination. Before that they used to nominate you, and then they'd notify you at your home port. But he went right to Chicago to accept the nomination, and [later] made the [inaugural] speech, "nothing to fear but fear itself." And that inspired me, and I was very much for Roosevelt. And of course, in 1936 I was on the ticket with Roosevelt. That's how I got elected.

RUDD: I see. So Roosevelt was someone, a model, to look up to.

YORTY: Well, he was someone that I appreciated very much. I didn't vote for him for a third term, because I didn't believe in a third term. And besides that, when he

was running for a third term, I was saying, "Let's declare war on Hitler," and he was saying, "Our boys will never again fight on foreign soil," and I didn't believe he thought that. I'm pretty sure he knew we were going to fight.

RUDD: Let me ask you, we've talked about your confrontation with the Communist Party. What about your confrontation with the Ku Klux Klan, did you have that experience?

YORTY: Well, I had always been against them because my father in Lincoln, Nebraska, was very much against them, and they were very strong in Lincoln at one time. He said it was just an organization to reelect Coolidge, in his opinion. But another kid named Grady and I, very young kids, maybe nine or ten years old, we sneaked up through the bushes to a Ku Klux Klan meeting where they were burning a fiery cross, and we were scared, but we got down again without them seeing us. So I was always very much against the Ku Klux Klan.

RUDD: You were reelected in 1938, and that, you said, was when Roosevelt-- No, Roosevelt came in--

YORTY: '40. He ran for a third term in 1940.

RUDD: You wanted a unicameral legislature.

YORTY: Well, they had a unicameral in Nebraska, and George William Norris, who was one of my heroes, a senator from

Nebraska, had sponsored the unicameral legislature. I went back there and made a speech to them, and I admired the operation. Actually, when you look back on the foundation of our government, you know, the Senate of the United States was formed after the House of Lords, and the House of Representatives after the House of Commons. But when the Constitution was adopted, the senators were not elected by the people, they were chosen by the governors. They're supposed to be statesmen, just like in the House of Lords. So I couldn't see any sense, and I still don't see any sense, in having a Senate and a House of Representatives both elected by the people, because they're just politicians elected by the people. And so in the state of California, they had a system that they called the "federal system": the state senators were elected by the counties, and the assembly was elected by the people. Now, some senators didn't represent any people at all, really, because the counties were not very populous. But I thought it best to abolish the state senate--it was a waste of money--and just have the state assembly be the main body. I still think that would be right.

RUDD: We've talked about unemployment compensation, protection of civil rights. What was your feeling of capital punishment?

YORTY: Well, I was very ambivalent about that. I was against it at one time on religious grounds, but I believe in it now.

RUDD: Fine. We've talked about the communists and the KKK. What was your feeling of the Japanese at that time?

YORTY: Well, I had no feeling about the Japanese, but the United States Navy sent an intelligence officer to me and told me that they thought the alien Japanese fishermen were a danger to our security because they could map the waters where they were fishing off our coasts. And so I introduced the bill on behalf of the navy, but they didn't openly, not that time, they were secretly telling me that. So, I introduced a bill to abolish the fishing in our California waters by the alien Japanese fishermen. I ran into a lot of trouble, particularly by the fishing industry. So I told the navy, "If you want to pass this bill, you're going to have to admit it's your bill." So I called Commodore Gannon of the Eleventh [Naval] District in San Diego, and he sent an intelligence officer [Captain Zacharias] to Sacramento, who appeared before the committee and said the navy wanted to eliminate the Japanese who are not obligated to this country--because they were alien, they were Japanese--wanted to eliminate them from fishing in California waters. And the fellow-- They sent this captain in the navy, and he later became an admiral and

broadcast in Japanese to the Japanese islands from Hawaii.

RUDD: All right. In reference to the Japanese, how did you feel about the incarceration of them?

YORTY: Well, I still think that it was necessary for their own protection, because the people of this state were so incensed after Pearl Harbor, that it wouldn't be safe to be a Japanese out on the street. So they had to be incarcerated for their own protection.

RUDD: Thank you. While you were young and you were in the assembly, did you alienate many legislators?

YORTY: Well, some, yes, but I don't think so very many. I remained personally friendly with all of them. But there's a lot of jealousy up there, and some were just jealous. When I wanted to form the un-American activities committee, they put one liberal on with me and three conservatives. But I liked that, because I had nothing to hide about what I wanted to do. I used to write out all the questions I was going to ask the witnesses, with the witnesses' names, before they were subpoenaed, and I asked those questions, and then let everybody else ask a question if they wanted to.

RUDD: Were you one of the younger, or youngest--

YORTY: One of the younger, yes.

RUDD: How old were you then, about twenty-eight?

YORTY: Twenty-nine, I think.

RUDD: Twenty-nine. Let's talk about in '38 you met your wife. What is her name, or what was her name?

YORTY: Her name was Elizabeth Hensel, and she was from Chicago, and had come out here with her mother and brother for a Notre Dame football game on a special train, then had gone to Palm Springs to have a little vacation before they returned to La Grange, Illinois.

RUDD: How did you meet her?

YORTY: I met her in the post office in Palm Springs. She was there sending a bunch of postcards and stamping them, and I asked her if she'd like some help. I've forgotten what she said, but anyway, I stamped a few of the postcards with her. And then she went outside, and I followed her a little ways, I've forgotten what, but somehow I got to talking to her, and she introduced herself, and I introduced myself. And she asked me if I'd like to come meet her mother and brother, and I said yes. That's how it started.

RUDD: How much longer did it take for you to get married?

YORTY: About two weeks. [laughter] It was only about three days before I decided I'd like to marry her, but I had to come back to Los Angeles to make arrangements for the wedding, because I was a member of the legislature, and I couldn't just do it right off, you know. I had to tell

people, and-- And so we had a rather large wedding in Los Angeles. Beside that, she was a Catholic, and I wasn't then, and I had to go to a priest who was a good friend of mine and take instructions and be married in a church at a side altar.

RUDD: Where were you married?

YORTY: In the Catholic church down on Occidental Street in Los Angeles.

RUDD: Do you remember the name of the church?

YORTY: [Church of the Precious Blood]. It's still there. I remember the name of the priest that married us, Father O'Halloran, who later became Monsignor O'Halloran. He was a good friend of my mother's.

RUDD: Then did you two go up to Sacramento?

YORTY: Well, first we went back to Palm Springs, then to Sacramento.

RUDD: Where did you live in Sacramento?

YORTY: Well, I don't remember the street, but we had a big, old, cheap apartment. A lot of space, but it was very cheap. But it was all I could afford then. And so she went up there with me when I went up ahead of time with [Governor] Olson before I took office.

RUDD: How often did you return to L.A. from Sacramento when you were an assemblyman?

YORTY: Oh, I used to return about every weekend, usually.

RUDD: And they have a recess, too?

YORTY: Oh, yes. But I had a De Soto, and I used to drive down here and drive back.

RUDD: While you were in the assembly in 1939, you decided you wanted to run for city council.

YORTY: Well, some people decided they wanted to run me. And it was a very interesting situation. I don't remember exactly what caused me to decide to run. But anyway, they insisted that I be a candidate. So I remember running, yes.

RUDD: Who were some of those people that wanted you to do that?

YORTY: Oh, I don't remember now, from the district mainly.

RUDD: Now is that the Sixty-fourth District?

YORTY: Yeah, it was the same district, yes.

RUDD: Okay.

YORTY: That was, I think, the twelfth councilmanic district.

RUDD: Okay. You lost to the incumbent, [John W.] Baumgartner?

YORTY: Yes. I got the nomination against him. There were three candidates, and the same old gang that had eliminated me for the mayor's race ran a candidate, and I beat him, and I got beat by Baumgartner. Baumgartner had a real machine in the district.

RUDD: Was he a Democrat or a Republican?

YORTY: Well, it was a nonpartisan race, but he was a Democrat. He was quite a nice fellow, too.

RUDD: Thank you. In 1940, you ran for the seat in the state senate.

YORTY: No, United States Senate.

RUDD: Oh, United States, OK.

YORTY: That was why, when I said isolation has failed to stop Hitler now, I knew just as well as the hand before my face we were going to be in the war. I knew that if we didn't go in, Hitler was going to conquer the world. It was up to us to stop him.

RUDD: You lost to Hiram Johnson. Was it a difficult battle?

YORTY: No, it wasn't because I didn't have much money, and he had a big name. He'd been a good governor, but a terrible senator, because he's one of those four men that Woodrow Wilson accused of being, oh, four headstrong men that fought the League of Nations and caused it to be defeated in the United States Senate.

RUDD: That's interesting. Upon this loss, you withdrew from public life. The year before you had taken the bar [examination]. This was here in California, and you went into private practice. What was it like being an attorney?

YORTY: Well, I liked it at first. I was quite successful, and I enjoyed it. I had some reputation for having been in

the assembly, and some people came to me and I represented them, a lot of different kinds of cases.

RUDD: Was there any particular kind of law that you were interested in?

YORTY: Not at that time. I just did anything that people wanted to get done, you know.

RUDD: Were you in with a group of lawyers?

YORTY: No, by myself.

RUDD: And where was your first office?

YORTY: It was at 215 South Seventh Street, a building down there that-- I think it's still there.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: But I shared offices with another fellow, but we weren't together in the practice.

RUDD: Did you miss politics at that point, do you remember?

YORTY: Oh, I think so. I don't remember too well, but I was real busy with the law and kind of excited about being a new lawyer.

RUDD: In 1942, you won the Democratic nomination for the assembly seat, but you withdrew to join the army.

YORTY: That's right, yeah, joined the air force.

RUDD: The air force. Where did you go to officer's training school?

YORTY: In Miami Beach, Florida.

RUDD: And I understand you came out with honors.

YORTY: Well, I was a valedictorian of the class, yes.

RUDD: Where did you serve once you graduated?

YORTY: Well, I kept calling the fellow who was going to make assignments to tell him I didn't want to be assigned to the United States, and he said, "Well, don't worry, lieutenant, you're going to go overseas." So when I got my orders, they sent me to Hawaii, to Hickam Field. I didn't consider that a war zone, so I complained about that and asked to be transferred. So I finally succeeded in getting transferred to the Fifth Air Force down in Australia. I was [in] the army airwaves communication service then, working on the codes and ciphers, and various secret things. They used to lock you in a room, and you didn't dare tell anybody what you were doing. Anyway, I didn't like it just being in Australia, I wanted to be in the war. So I went over to a colonel on MacArthur's staff and explained my situation to him, and he said, "Well, son, you're way out of channels," But he said, "We need somebody with your background for intelligence work. And we don't want to take the Amgot [Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory] people, because MacArthur doesn't like the way they're trained. He wants to train his own people." So he said, "I'll have you transferred." And he said, "Your major over there who's in charge of army

airwaves won't have anything to do with it because it'll be an order from General MacArthur." So I was transferred to the Fifth Army Air Force. It was just the army air force then. And I was sent to New Guinea, Port Moresby.

RUDD: How long were you there?

YORTY: Oh, about two years. When I first went up there, they said white men could stand it for only six months. And after six months they said you could stay a year, after a year they said eighteen months, and after eighteen months they said as long as your health held out.

RUDD: Were you impressed, if one can use the word, with this kind of a situation? Did you feel like you had really done something worthwhile for your country?

YORTY: Well, I did, sure, because it was worthwhile. We were fighting the enemy. And toward the end, they decided to have some Philippines civil affairs units to help the Philippine people in the liberated area of the Philippines. And I was the first officer borrowed for that training and sent down to Brisbane for six weeks to study the Philippines. And then after that, I was assigned to a Philippines civil affairs unit that we had set up of mostly Filipinos, to go into the Philippines with MacArthur. And they sent me up to Hollandia [now Djajapura] and the Sixth Army was at Hollandia then, but they were on the beach, and they didn't want us to be seen because we had the Filipinos

in our Philippines Civil Affairs unit, and they would be tipped off where we were going, so they put us up in the hills with no tents, nor anything else and left us up there till we got on the landing ship tanks [LSTs] to go to the Philippines.

RUDD: Was your health all right while you were there?

YORTY: Yes. I was getting very tired, though. Very tired.

RUDD: Tired of the army, or just tired of the--

YORTY: No, just tired, just tired from the strain. I only weighed 136 pounds and, you know, you perspired constantly in New Guinea, night and day. When they finally would be in a place for a while, and be able to set up some towers for water and take a shower, you'd take a shower and come out and you're all wet again anyway.

RUDD: Yeah.

YORTY: And we had tents there with the water rushing under them. You know, we'd have to hang our clothes up on a pole in the middle of the tent because the water rushed along the ground under your cot. And when we'd be in a place long enough to have floors, we'd put floors in the men's tents first so the officers didn't look like they were taking advantage of the situation. There were a lot of mosquitoes, of course. We had to sleep under mosquito bars. Finally we went to a place called Tsili Tsili, and

there I was intelligence officer of a squadron. I had a big bulletin board, and my family used to clip all the newspapers and send them to me, and I'd put these clippings up on the board so that I could keep the fellows in the squadron kind of in touch with the United States, what was going on. And I formed what they called my "spit and argue club," where I'd pick certain officers to debate, and I'd help both of them with both sides of the question. There was a write-up about that in the paper. I've got it someplace here. But anyway, one night about three o'clock they awakened me to ask me to come down to the tent, the squadron office down at the tent, and I went down there and my files had been ransacked. And so I wasn't just sure what had happened. We tried to find out. Well, as it turned out, the task force intelligence officer had lost his mind, went crazy, and was down there ransacking all the files. Well, the colonel, who they called "Photo Hutch," in charge of this second air task force, then picked me out to be the intelligence officer for the whole task force, and that meant that people came in to work there who ranked me. They told them if they didn't want to take orders from me, they'd just be transferred out. So I was doing a colonel's job as a captain in the second air task force, which was the biggest air task force in the world.

RUDD: How many people were beneath you?

YORTY: Well, I don't know, but we had several squadrons of fighters and squadrons of bombers. And I had just been with fighter squadrons before that, but the task force included reconnaissance and fighters and bombers and everything else. But old Photo Hutch wasn't there too long because he had a bad case of malaria and had to be evacuated. They called him Photo Hutch because Fighter Hutch was the commander of the first squadron that I was assistant intelligence officer for.

RUDD: Did you fly very much?

YORTY: No, they prohibited intelligence officers from flying, because if they caught you, the Japanese, they'd grind your teeth and do a lot of things, if they found out you were an intelligence officer, so we were prohibited from flying.

RUDD: That's interesting. [tape recorder off]

YORTY: No, the intelligence work that I had to do in the task force was mainly at night when the pilots had come back and claim they'd shot down [an] airplane, and I'd have to pick out the one that I thought had the best proof that he did it. But I had to work in a tent with a light above, an open bulb, and the bugs were so thick that they would black out the light and I'd have to shoot them with a bug equalizer, it was, and they'd come flying down.

RUDD: Really? So how long were you there?

YORTY: Well, I was there altogether about two years.

RUDD: Two years. And you came back as a captain.

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: Was the war over then?

YORTY: No, it wasn't over. We went to Leyte Island, and I was supposed to land at Dulag, but we landed at Tacloban by mistake, and everybody else was at Tacloban. And the Filipino people were so glad to see us. I had studied a little Tagalog (the official language in the Philippines) on the ship, and when we got there they all spoke English. [laughter] And those who didn't speak English spoke Visayan, and they spoke East Visayan, which is another kind of Visayan, so I didn't get to use my Tagalog, which was very hard anyway, didn't know much.

When we first got there, the major who was in charge of our Philippines civil affairs unit disappeared. Because the Filipinos were so glad to see us, they were getting out beer, and some were selling it, and some were giving it away to-- But he disappeared, and we were stuck on this fighter strip at Tacloban, and I was sure the Japanese were going to come in and bomb us. I wanted to get my squad [away]. So I took charge of the squadron, and took them off in a bunch of weeds, and set up camp for the night, and boy, that was the most mosquito-infested place I've ever seen in my life. But anyway, he came back, I think he'd

been drunk. He wasn't a good commander of the unit. And I remember then we set up a little camp, and he went and got some chickens, and we were frying them, and these poor Filipinos could smell the chicken. And they were hungry because they'd been on the short rations by the Japanese, and I got kind of mad at him for doing that. And then he got out by one of the cars that we had there, a little jeep, and took out his private parts and started to urinate with a [Catholic] sister standing there watching him. And I said, "Damn you, major, if you don't cut that out, if you do that again, I'm going to report you." And he said, "You can't do anything to me, I'm a West Pointer." And I couldn't, either, because he was a West Pointer.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: They stuck together. But General [Bonner Frank] Fellers was commander of the whole Philippines civil affairs unit, and he was also MacArthur's, they called him, military secretary. I never heard of that before, but he was right with MacArthur all the time. So he sent me to a place called Tanawan to reestablish the government. And I went down there. And I saw a clipping about that the other day, where I spent three hours telling the leaders of the community to get busy and set up committees: set up a committee on schools, a committee on this and that, and reestablish the government. And I had a desk there with a

sign on it, "advisor." Then I appointed a mayor who was not from the community, but had been a school teacher in Cebu, but I could see was an able guy. And Kangliong, who had been the guerrilla commander on Leyte Island, wanted to appoint one of his guerrillas to be mayor. And I didn't think this fellow had the ability to be an administrator, so I insisted on the school teacher in Cebu. About that time MacArthur came down to look over the rest of Leyte Island with Kangliong. I went with MacArthur and I told MacArthur the problem I had about appointing the mayor, and he sided with me immediately, and this fellow was appointed mayor. Then I found a building where they could have a room in the basement, and I got some marines who could teach school, and we found some of the schoolteachers who had been there, and we started the first schools in the liberated area. And then I suddenly was recalled back to Tacloban. A guy who'd been sent out there who later became head of the Americans for Democratic Action, I can't think of his name right now [Joseph Rauh], but he reported that I was taxing the Filipinos and taking the money myself. Well, I had inaugurated a tax system, a 10 percent payroll tax, because I told them they couldn't rely on the United States forever for their expenses and they should tax. So they were taxing. General Fellers called me back to Tacloban, and when he heard the story, he was so disgusted,

he said, "Well, you stay here and help me plan for Manila." And General Fellers and I became very good friends. And he took me over in MacArthur's office, headquarters building, and showed me a report of MacArthur's meeting with Roosevelt in Hawaii, and said, "Don't let anybody see what you're seeing." And I got to see that report. And then we had a celebration returning the liberated area--

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RUDD: We were just speaking about this--

YORTY: Who, Kangliong?

RUDD: Um-hm.

YORTY: Well, he went with us on the trip around Leyte Island. He was the commander of the guerrillas for that area so naturally he went along.

RUDD: You mentioned a president who was part Japanese?

YORTY: He was a mestizo, which is a Chinese-Filipino, and his name was Sergio Osmena. And we turned the liberated area of the Philippines, the first liberated area, back to him in this celebration. And I'd been working out there, and I stood right behind MacArthur, right by him, not at the same level, but right behind him, that's the picture I've got in there. I was worried at the time, because MacArthur's right hand was shaking a little bit, and I didn't know that MacArthur had palsy then, but I thought maybe he was kind of nervous, although I can't imagine him being afraid of anybody. But there were some snipers out there yet, and there were kamikaze airplanes that came down right out of the harbor there, trying to hit one of our warships, but they shot him down before he could get near it. The navy gunners were very good about that. So anyway, then I was walking down the street in Tacloban, and

a warrant officer said to me, "Well, captain, did you see your picture with MacArthur?" And I said no. And he said, "Well, I took the picture. Would you like to have it?" I said, "I certainly would." And so he gave me the picture, and he said, "Why don't you apply for a rest and relaxation? You have so many more points than these other people here with the Sixth Army because they were down in Australia when you were in New Guinea, and if you'd apply you could go immediately." I said, "Thank you." So I applied, and my points were added up, and they sent me home for rest and relaxation. Guess where I went before I came home? The place I'd hoped never to see again, back to New Guinea.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: To take the ship home.

RUDD: A ship home. They didn't fly you home?

YORTY: No, we took a ship home, and the staterooms were all used by wounded soldiers, and we were down in the hold. They put a big canvas up to bring air down to us so we could stand it down there in the heat. And I didn't care. I was glad to be headed home, I'll tell you.

RUDD: How long altogether were you in the army, or in the air force?

YORTY: Three years.

RUDD: Three years. When you returned--

YORTY: There's another interesting sidelight to that. When I was in New Guinea, the intelligence officer-- The ships used to come in that were manned not by the navy, but by, not the coast guard either, but by merchant seamen. And they got \$125 each and every time the air raid [warning] went off while they were in port. Of course, they had one navy gunner on each ship, and I used to go out at noon to give them instructions in case of an air raid, mainly just to turn off all the lights and just lie low. And usually I'd get a meal out of that, a decent meal, because we didn't have any decent meals in New Guinea. But they had eggs, they had a lot of things, so that's why I'd go at noon. But this one officer on the back of one of the ships was named Pat [Edmund G., Sr.] Brown, and he said, "You know my brother, don't you, Pat Brown?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Well, he was just elected district attorney of San Francisco." That's the first time I ever heard of Pat Brown. And he had a hard time to arrange for me even to get a meal. He had a bad captain on the ship. But I've always been interested in that because I'd never heard of Pat Brown, and he started going ahead in politics while the rest of us were going in the army.

RUDD: Was he older? Was he older than you?

YORTY: I don't think much older.

RUDD: Did he ever serve?

YORTY: Yes, he is older, he's five years older.

RUDD: Five years older?

YORTY: No, he never served.

RUDD: I see. In 1945 you ran for mayor, and you were sixth out of fifteen candidates.

YORTY: Yeah, I don't remember all this, I [don't] remember the campaign too well because I'd just gotten home.

RUDD: Was John Anson Ford in this? Do you remember?

YORTY: I don't remember whether John Anson Ford ran or not. I remember him as a supervisor, but I don't think John Anson Ford ran for mayor because Bowron would be running then.

RUDD: In '45?

YORTY: And he was part of the Bowron crowd.

RUDD: Well, let me veer, because this man, in some of the things I've read, he's in your life for a long time, Jack [B.] Tenney.

YORTY: Yes, Jack Tenney was president of the Musicians Union, Local 44, AF of L [American Federation of Labor]. He was very liberal, and he'd been elected mainly because the fellow who ran against him was a dry. And Arthur Samish was the lobbyist for the liquor industry, found this out and sent for Tenney, and put up some money for him, and he got elected. Well, of course, he was a good labor man, president of the Musicians Union. So when I had the

committee appointed on un-American activities, the only one I asked to be on there was Jack Tenney, because I didn't want the committee to be accused of being against labor. Because the State, County and Municipal Workers, a union, was badly infiltrated, and I knew I was going to have to take them on, so I wanted a union guy on the committee. I asked for Jack Tenney to be on it, and he was. And later-- Jack was a real liberal guy, and he was a good friend of mine. He composed "Mexicali Rose" when he was a musician and sold it very cheap to get some money, but it was still a popular piece. He wrote both the words and the music, but he gave credit for the words to a prostitute who put up the money to get the song published. Anyway, something happened to Jack at the union, I don't know what, but he changed completely. He became very anti-Semitic. And the union, you know, the Musicians Union has many Jews, and they elected him, and they were good friends. Most of his friends were Jews. But suddenly, I don't know what happened to him. This happened, of course, to him while I was gone in the service. Because he stayed in the legislature, was elected to the state senate.

RUDD: When did you first meet him, what time period?

YORTY: Well, about 1937, I guess. But then when I left office, he formed the same committee in the [state] senate, and it became the [California State] Senate Committee on

Un-American Activities, but he didn't handle it like I did. He went after the communists, but I think he saw some Jews in the Communist Party, and from that he got the idea, I guess, that all Jews were kind of communists. I don't know what happened to him. But it's very bad, he really lost his mind.

RUDD: Well, I remember reading something about the two of you, you were discussing something, whether you should change sides or not, because I guess you saw yourself as somewhat like a Democrat and somewhat like a Republican. But you decided to stay Democrat, and he decided to become a Republican.

YORTY: Well, I believe that's true. I think he did become a Republican. I was gone so much at that time that I'm not very clear on just what happened, and maybe I'd know more about what happened to Jack if I'd been here and been in touch with him, but I wasn't.

RUDD: Is he still alive?

YORTY: No, he died. He took pictures of my wedding. He was a camera enthusiast, and he took pictures on sixteen millimeter film, and he edited the film, and all that. He had beautiful color pictures of the wedding. Of course, there were a lot of prominent people there, and he knew them all, because he was in the legislature, too. And he wouldn't give me the copy. He gave me a black and white

copy which I still have, but the interesting copy was a color copy, because it had Monsignor [O'Halloran] with his bright robes, and everything, and I understand it got burned in a garage fire that he had, that happened to him.

RUDD: Oh, my.

YORTY: But he really went crazy. He divorced his wife and married one of his secretaries.

RUDD: When you didn't make the mayor's race, you went into private practice again, and for the first year you were in criminal law?

YORTY: Well, I was partly in criminal law. But I took a course in psychiatry at UCLA at night, and I took the bibliography and read all the books, so I was more knowledgeable than most lawyers about psychiatry. Oh, boy! They started sending clients to me from the jail. One would tell the other, and I got several off, then. I made up my mind I'd never take any more cases like that.

RUDD: After that you decided to become a corporate lawyer, either with corporations or with oil companies.

YORTY: Well, both. I was West Coast counsel for the U.S. Hoffman Machinery Company, which made cleaning and dyeing equipment. And I was special counsel for Signal Oil. They had the staff counsel, and they also had O'Melveny and Myers. But they assigned certain cases to me that they didn't want the others to handle. And I moved into their

offices with them, because Harry March, who was vice-president, became a very good friend of mine and was godfather of my child.

RUDD: Is this when you got to know Armand Hammer, at this point?

YORTY: No. I don't remember exactly how I met Armand Hammer, but I think I was mayor and I heard about the Occidental Petroleum Company. They had some problem that he came to me about. And he wasn't very well known in Los Angeles, although he'd made a million dollars and had a big history of Russia, and whatnot, and was a great entrepreneur. But he wasn't known and I got him to join the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. They didn't know him. But I liked him and liked his wife, and we became good friends.

RUDD: Good. In 1949, there was a special off-year election, and you regained your seat in the assembly.

YORTY: Well, that was one of the things that's interesting about life, is the timing and the luck. Because in 1949 I was very enveloped in the law; I didn't want any more politics. And a fellow named Gene Blalock, Eugene Blalock, who was a former deputy district attorney, but now he was attorney for Forest Lawn Cemetery, he called me up and said, "Assemblyman, how are you doing?" And I laughed, "What do you mean, 'assemblyman'? It's been a long nine

years since I was assemblyman." He said, "Haven't you heard the news?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Well, John Lyons died, and it's the middle of the session, and you're the only one that can go up there and know what was going on. So we think-- We've been meeting and think you ought to run." And I said, "Well, I'm not interested."

So I went to bed that night and got to thinking it over, about [how] it would be kind of interesting to go back to the legislature. Some of the fellows I'd served with before were still there. And so I went over to the Teamsters union, and they had a public relations man [Ray Lahney] who kind of bossed their politics, and I told him that these people wanted me to run, and could he get me some support, and he said, "We'll support you. You run and we'll support you." So they did, and Eleanor Chambers managed that campaign. And the communist [James T.] Byrne ran, and he was, I think, a Republican. But the communists ran a woman against me, they wanted to split the vote, make sure I didn't get in. But we won the special election. I went back to the legislature.

RUDD: How did your wife feel about picking up and moving back there?

YORTY: Back where, to Sacramento?

RUDD: Um-hm.

YORTY: She didn't go back there with me. She stayed here, we had a son then.

RUDD: When was your son born?

YORTY: Nineteen forty-six.

RUDD: Nineteen forty-six. And his name?

YORTY: William. William Egan.

RUDD: In 1950 and 1952 you were elected and reelected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

YORTY: That's right. And there's an interesting sidelight to that, because in 1950-- In 1952 I represented the Watts area and a lot of that's the black district. They gerrymandered me after my first term and gave me all the Democrats so they could set up little Republican districts because they controlled the legislature then. I think they did, anyway. I had a big district. They used to say it looked like a kangaroo playing a piano, outline thing. [laughter] But anyway, I represented that district, and was very strong there. So Gus [Augustus F.] Hawkins also wanted to run for Congress. And Gus Hawkins had been elected on the Sheridan Downey sweep in 1934 to the legislature. And so we left up to labor to say which one of us should run, and they decided it wasn't a black person's opportunity yet, and so Gus Hawkins withdrew, or didn't run.

RUDD: He was a black man?

YORTY: Yes. And he's still in the Congress.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: He later got elected. And he's the only person I know now who has held office before I was elected, because he was elected in 1934 with Sheridan Downey; that was a big movement in California. And then they set up this [congressional] district down in the Watts area, and he was elected there [1962], and he's been automatically reelected ever since.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: He's chairman, I think, of the labor committee of the House of Representatives. He's a very good friend of mine.

RUDD: Okay. This was from the Fourteenth Congressional District?

YORTY: Well, that was the Twenty-sixth then. I represented the Fourteenth the first term and the Twenty-sixth the second term.

RUDD: Same place, though?

YORTY: Well, they gerrymandered it.

RUDD: I see.

YORTY: A lot of the same, but they left my home in the Fourteenth.

RUDD: Some of the issues that you took to Congress were a claim on the tideland oils?

YORTY: Yes, because the Tidelands decision, the Supreme Court had ruled that the federal government owned everything from the high tide mark on out, and we contended that the states owned the three mile limit. And I worked very hard to get the quitclaim deed to the states, because I wanted it back for California, naturally.

RUDD: And then there was the Colorado River water rights?

YORTY: Yes. I fought very hard for that.

RUDD: And what did that entail?

YORTY: Well, it's rather complicated, because California was entitled to basically 4.4 million cubic feet of water a year from the Colorado River. That was the basic allotment. And then there was Allotment A and B that amounted to some couple million more acre-feet. And the upper Colorado wasn't using their water, so we got that. And in Arizona they weren't using theirs so we got that. But they wanted to develop the upper Colorado, and they wanted to grow wheat and things that were already under price supports from the federal government, so I didn't see any sense in that, take our water away to grow more price-support crops. So I fought for California on that, and then the Arizona Project came up, and that was a big project. We had to battle it on the [House] Interior Committee, of which I was a member.

RUDD: What is that Arizona Project?

YORTY: Well, it's being constructed now. It's about ready. It'll supply a lot of water for the city of Phoenix and make more growth possible in Arizona, because without water, they can't do anything, you know. [Barry] Goldwater was a powerful senator who was for it, trying to put it through, but we blocked it for a long time. Eventually Goldwater won and it was enacted, but that was to take a long time in the future. It's still not completely constructed, but it has deprived California of this A and B water, this supplemental water. We still get our original 4.4 million acre-feet of water a year.

RUDD: Also, you were known to champion the military, in particular the air force, while you were in--

YORTY: Well, yes. Well, when Eisenhower was elected, he wanted to cut the air force back from 140 wings to 120, I think. And I wrote the air force and asked them what that would do to the air force. Well, they had several congressmen [who] had written to them, but they picked me out to give me the information, and so I really led the fight against the cuts in the air force that Eisenhower wanted to make. He really was making devastating cuts in the air force, not just the fighter planes, but in the planes the quartermaster needed to haul supplies, and all that, he was really cutting it back. But I fought him, and [General] Hoyt Vandenberg was a member of the Joint Chiefs

of Staff for the air force--and by that time it was air force, not army air force; they'd been separated. He became a good friend of mine, Hoyt Vandenberg, and I worked with him. He was dying of cancer, but we didn't know it when he testified before the Senate committee. I was back there, and I remember he put his head down on the table when they had a little recess, and **Time** took a picture of him; and that was a big picture, this four-star [general] showing his head down. We didn't know he had cancer so bad. He died during the fight.

And then the next fellow who took over, they called us over to the Pentagon to say they'd resolved the difficulty, and the air force chief of staff winked at me, then unveiled these things, said they'd gone to 128 wings instead of 140, but they'd gotten a lot back. It was just a compromise, it was all on our side, just a saving face for the Eisenhower administration. But that was a big fight, yeah, that was a big one. That's where I got--well, one of the ways, I got so well acquainted with Sam Rayburn, whom I adored. I've got a big picture of him in there. He was my best friend back there. Of course, he was for quitclaiming the oil lands on the coast, too, because Texas had a lot of them, and he appreciated my work in that fight. I remember when I went to speak upon the air force, I said, "Well, Sam, I shouldn't make this speech because

I'm so new here. George [H.] Mahon is the chairman of the committee handling it, and George is a swell fellow." He said, "No, you're prepared, and you make the speech." So I did, and George Mahon had to allow the time for me, because the chairman of the committee allows the time.

And then, of course, before that, Truman was the president when I was there. I got the idea that we should draw the boundary of the United States of America by Congress. And that would have automatically returned the tidelands to the states, because the tidelands, three miles out, were the boundaries of the state, state jurisdiction, federal government. So if we could draw the boundaries of the United States of America, the state lines would be used. Anyway, I went in to see Truman, and said I had an important matter to take up with him. A guy in Los Angeles had prepared a book of children's rhymes. He was a Catholic, and he had made it so these rhymes were parallel with the Catholic religion. For instance, he had like, "There was an old woman who lived in a shoe, who had so many children because she wanted to," and that's the way he went through the book. Well, he had a special book for Truman, very well autographed and everything. He was well known and he gave it to me and he said, "Next time you see the president, I want you to give this to him." So I went in to see the president about this drawing the boundary of

the United States, and I showed him this book and told him the name of the fellow--I can't think of his name right now, either--and he was delighted. He said, "Oh, I love poetry. I've got Tennyson back here, and I keep a Tennyson set in the airplane when I travel, and I read it." I said, "Well, the only poem that I know is on page eighty-seven," I think it was, and he turned to that, and I said, "The old woman who lived in a shoe, had so many children because she wanted to," and he liked that, then he started reading some of the other poems. I said, "Well, Mr. President, my fifteen minutes is up, and I haven't had a chance to talk to you about my business." He said, "It's all right, son, I'll give you more time."

So then I told him about drawing these boundaries, and that would return the tidelands to the states. I don't think I told him that, but he was smart enough to know that. So I said to him, "Well, Mr. President, what do you think of my resolution?" He said, "Well, son, I don't think much about it. I'm thinking of Missouri now."
[laughter]

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: Yes. Truman and I became good friends. When we had a tax bill in the Congress, I voted against it, and several of us who were sort of on the liberal side, labor side, all voted against the tax bill, and I felt so bad

about it when I went home that night I couldn't sleep. I called the White House at seven o'clock in the morning and asked if I could talk to the president. I told them who I was, of course, and he came to the phone, and said, "Hi, Congressman. I know what you called about, about that tax bill." He said, "It's a bad bill. I don't blame you for voting against it, but tell my friends to vote for it because we need the money." So I went back to the House and I told our group to vote for it. And, god, **Time** magazine was after me, they'd heard what I did. And they took pictures of me outside the Capitol, in the Capitol hall, and every place else. And I was sure I was on the cover of **Time** when it came out, about an inch high.

[laughter] But Truman and I became good friends, and when he fired MacArthur-- Of course I loved MacArthur and I had served under him, but I thought MacArthur should not defy the president. So I think I made the first speech (the **Congressional Record** would show whether it was first or not), defending the President and saying that MacArthur was a great general, but he should not defy the president. So later MacArthur came back and made that speech about "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away," and tears were coming down my eyes--I was a congressman then. And so later I saw the president after he had left office; I said to him, "Mr. President, you know, I wonder why you fired

MacArthur, because I loved my general, and I defended you for firing him." I said, "Why did you fire him?" He said to me, "He lied to me. He lied to me. He told me the Chinese wouldn't come in, and they did. So he lied to me. So I fired him."

So later, General [Edward Leon] Rowny, who is now our United Nations representative, was on my TV show, and he told me that MacArthur did tell Truman that the Chinese would not come in, because he was there, and heard it. He was assistant CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] director then. So--

RUDD: So what did MacArthur say? What did this man say that MacArthur said?

YORTY: That the Chinese would not come in if we went to the Yalu [River]. And the Chinese had said if we went to the Yalu, they'd come in. We had taken practically all of North Korea, you know. We were up [at] Pyongyang, in the capital, and just went on to the Yalu, and they flooded across there. And we didn't have the kind of bombs we have now, and our fellows would fly down the Yalu River, they couldn't hit the bridge, so they'd fly across and go over it, across the Yalu. They could hit the bridge because they could bomb along it, but they couldn't hit it going down. They came to me, as they knew I'd been air force, and told me. And so the Chinese flooded in and drove us

clear down to a little beachhead on Pusan before we got enough strength to drive them back. And we settled at the forty-fourth parallel.

RUDD: It must have been a very exciting time of your life to have participated in the army, or in the air force, and--

YORTY: Well, I'm always getting into things, you know.

RUDD: Oh, I know. Do you remember Charles Wilson? He was the secretary of defense?

YORTY: Yes, secretary of defense, yeah. He was one I had to help fight. He wanted to cut the air force. He was the one who said, "What's good for General Motors is good for the country," or something like that.

RUDD: At that point, maybe all through, I keep getting the feeling that you never were concerned about how other people thought of your opinions. You just had your opinion, and you were willing to speak it.

YORTY: Oh, certainly.

RUDD: And many times the elder statesmen weren't too pleased?

YORTY: Well, I don't remember any instance like that, except Eisenhower wasn't pleased on my opposing his cuts in the air force. But I never talked to Eisenhower about it. Eisenhower was very different from Truman. Of course, I was a Democrat then, and I could always see Truman. If

I'd call over there, I'd see him almost immediately. But Eisenhower, I couldn't see him that way. And of course, FDR was "Our boys will never again fight on foreign soil." I was certainly differing from him in those days. I've always admired the prime minister of Britain, Sir Winston Churchill, and he was saying other things at that time, too.

RUDD: Had you come in contact with him as well?

YORTY: No, I didn't, except when I was in the Congress, I just met him at a reception. I'd always admired him, and when I was valedictorian of my officers class, I quoted Winston Churchill in the contest they had for valedictorian.

RUDD: And this was from the air force?

YORTY: Army air force, then.

RUDD: Army air force. How did you keep your constituents back home aware of what you were doing in Washington?

YORTY: Oh, I kept sending them information, but I had two people here in my office. I had Eleanor Chambers and Ethel Bryant, who was a black girl, and they used to send out the releases from Los Angeles. I'd send them the information, and they'd draw up the releases. And I don't know, we kept people well-informed on what was going on. And I was in the newspapers a lot.

RUDD: This Eleanor Chambers, she was quite a woman, wasn't she?

YORTY: She was a remarkable woman.

RUDD: And when did you first come and talk--

YORTY: Really a political genius. I can't remember the first time I met Eleanor, but she managed my campaign in 1949 to go back to the legislature. And then she managed both my campaigns for Congress, and also my campaign for the [U.S.] Senate, which I should have won; it wasn't her fault I lost. But then I decided-- I kind of thought about running for mayor again in 1960. I couldn't make up my mind. I thought, you know, I didn't want her to get involved in another campaign, because she used to get paid by PR people to help them in political campaigns. So I wrote her a note and said, "Don't take on any other campaign, because I may need you." And that's all I wrote to her. She's up at Cambria. She had a home in Cambria then, and had retired. And so then I went down to the courthouse on a case and ran into Everette Porter, who was a black attorney, another friend of mine. And he said, "Well, Sam, why don't you run for mayor? I'm attorney for the Baptist League," and he said, "We'll all support you if you run." And I said, "Well, I don't know, but I don't think so, Everette."

Then when I decided to run, I went down and filed for office, and the picture I have with the five people who were the only ones who were for me for mayor, Dr. [Keith] Kenyon, and oh, another fellow, Bill [William] Brown, and oh, a few of them [Edith Cetto, Betts Yorty, Tom Murray, Jade Synder] and the secretary of the law office. I have a photograph of it; it's in the office in there, just a few of them. But anyway, that was announced in the paper, and I went home about five o'clock--and that was in the [San Fernando] Valley, here--and there was Eleanor Chambers with a suitcase. She had heard the news on the radio, immediately got in her car, drove to Los Angeles, and never went back to Cambria until I was elected.

RUDD: How wonderful.

YORTY: She was a wonderful woman. And I made her the first woman deputy mayor in the history of the city of Los Angeles.

RUDD: What kind of political background did she have?

YORTY: Well, her husband was a historian who taught over at USC [University of Southern California], and I don't know, she got into politics some way, because I know they used to hire her to campaign. And of course, I never did hire her, she just campaigned for me. But she was the first woman deputy mayor. And the councilmen loved her. Any mayor who is worth a darn in the city of Los Angeles is

going to have trouble with the city council, because they all represent their little districts, and none of them represent the whole city as the mayor should do. Now we have a weak-mayor, strong-council form of government, unfortunately, and the council has all the power. So the only way the mayor can be strong is to battle the council on things that he thinks should be-- Like the lobbyist registration act. I had to fight the city council on that, because they didn't want the lobbyists to register. And the act as I finally got it passed had so many holes in it, I'm kind of ashamed of it. But anyway, it was a job to get it through. And that's where I got in trouble with the council, is on things like that. But the council all loved Eleanor Chambers. They called her "Mother."

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: So she kept good relations with them. And I had good personal relations with many of them, but politically, I had to fight them. When I got the county to take over the health services, the city was paying millions of dollars a year for health services, and there was a law on the books that it could be turned over to the county if the city so voted. And so I wanted to turn it over to the county and save all that money, and get the building, the health building, back for the city, which is a good building. It's now sitting on First Street, City Hall

South. But I had a big fight with them over that. I remember one councilman said, "Well then, I can't, when they want to complain about a restaurant in my district, I can't do anything about it." That's the way many of them think, you know. It was a big battle, but I finally won that, too.

RUDD: Good. Well, let's just go back a little bit before that. In 1954 you abandoned the seat in the House and ran for the Senate.

YORTY: That's right.

RUDD: Against Kuchel?

YORTY: Yes, Kuchel, yeah.

RUDD: Thomas Kuchel? Do you think you lost the race because of the Republican landslide?

YORTY: Well, mainly because of a **Times** smear, and because of the Republican landslide, because Goody [Goodwin] Knight was very popular. And Goody Knight was running for governor, and Goody Knight was for me for the Senate, and I was for Goodwin Knight, but we were on opposite parties, we couldn't do anything for each other. And he barely pulled Kuchel in. But I had this unknown, Richard Graves, for governor, heading the Democratic ticket, of course.

RUDD: What was the smear that the **Times** was--

YORTY: Well, I put out a franking piece to the Democrats, or, not the Democrats, but everybody in the state, telling

about the Democratic Party, not mentioning the Senate, or anything. But I franked it and put it out, and it was widely distributed, and the **Times** put out an article claiming my cost was \$40 million, or some outlandish thing. And they put that out just before the election. [laughter] And I lost in Los Angeles County. I carried the Bay Area and much of the state.

RUDD: In 1956 you ran again for the Senate, but the Democratic party chose Richard Richards?

YORTY: Well, they chose Richard Richards after I told them they were wired, stacked, rigged, and packed. The California Democratic Council, they didn't want to support me in 1954, but a woman who was the boss of the AFL, she went to, oh, [Alan] Cranston, who was starting up his California Democratic Council, and told him if they didn't nominate me, labor would walk out of their convention. So they had some calls they could make, and they had the whole thing wired, and they changed their mind very quickly and nominated me. But there was a professor [Peter Odegard] from UC [University of California] that the liberals wanted to put up then, and he started like he'd like the nomination, but all these kids got around him. He said to me, "When I saw all those communists wanting me to run, I didn't want to do it." But later when I quoted him, he denied that he'd said it, but he did say it. But Cranston

and that gang didn't want me, except that this Thelma Thomas of the AFL told Cranston, "Either you're going to nominate Yorty or labor is leaving this convention."

RUDD: You said somebody was from the UC system?

YORTY: Yes, a professor over there.

RUDD: Where, UCLA?

YORTY: No, UC Berkeley.

RUDD: Okay. You returned to your law practice again after Richards--

YORTY: Well, next convention they had-- See, I had seen them operate when I got the nomination, how they could wire around. And Richard Richards was a left-winger, and he was going to run, and I was pretty sure that he could get the nomination with their support. I was so disgusted. I got up and withdrew my name, and said, "You're wired, stacked, rigged, and packed," and went. And they yelled and hollered, but then Cranston and that gang wouldn't let me withdraw. They wanted to vote on it anyway to give Richards the vote. So they nominated him, of course, and he got the Democratic nomination. But I had led the ticket in 1954, and I was certainly entitled to run again, but you can't deal with those people.

RUDD: In 1960, it said you endorsed Richard Nixon over JFK [John Fitzgerald Kennedy] for president.

YORTY: That's right.

RUDD: And even though you're a Democrat you didn't go for JFK. Why?

YORTY: No. Well, I knew JFK. I'd served in Congress with him, and he was just kind of a pretty boy around there. I remember him coming down when I was sitting with Sam Rayburn one time, and he started to tell Sam Rayburn something about it, and Sam Rayburn knew so much more than he did that we just laughed when he went back. But anyway, then his father decided to buy the nomination for him. Now, the one his father wanted to make president was Joe, who was killed in the Second [World] War. The next one was JFK, who was a nice guy, but the father bought the newspapers, and bought, just bought everything. And I have one friend, whose name I won't mention, who went on his payroll, who went around with [Lyndon Baines] Johnson, but he was on the payroll of JFK's father. And the old man had told him, "Money doesn't mean anything. Spend anything you want." And so he used to spy on Johnson and take the messages back there, what they were doing. But he's still alive or I'd mention his name. But anyway, I didn't like this idea of buying the presidency. And besides that, I felt Johnson was the solid one. He was a senator and had worked very well as a bipartisan when Eisenhower was president, he worked very well with him. And I thought Johnson had a lot more stature and experience. So I was

originally for Johnson and helped Johnson's campaign. I was in the Biltmore Hotel when Johnson called a little group of his people in. I was sitting on the floor, there wasn't any room in there. And he said, "Well, I've decided to take the nomination for vice-president." And he said, "I wanted you to know before the press gets it." I was wishing he wouldn't take it, but he did take it. And of course he became vice-president, and was a very good friend of mine. When he became president, he had a luncheon for me in Washington, D.C., with all those senators, everybody there.

RUDD: Really? What about Richard Nixon, was he a likable man, an intelligent man?

YORTY: Well, to me he was very intelligent, and he was always very likable. He was kind of aloof, and sort of hard to know at first, personally. But he was always likable, and he was also a good--

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 11, 1985

RUDD: Sam, what did you have to say before our third interview?

YORTY: Well, I want to talk about the last interview we had, the second one, when I talked about being sent to Tanawan on Leyte Island in the Philippines to reestablish the government. Somebody from up above sent word when I put on a tax that I told the people forming the government that they couldn't depend on the United States forever for their finance, that they ought to put on a 10 percent payroll tax to pay the expense of government. And whoever told this story about me from above said that I was keeping the money. Well, General Bonner [Frank] Fellers who was head of the whole operation found out it wasn't true, but he told me that the person who made that statement was Colonel Joe [Joseph] Rauh. And he said that Colonel Rauh had been commissioned a colonel and sent to MacArthur against his will by the administration in Washington, and Joe Rauh was a big leader of the Americans for Democratic Action, which was a liberal organization, and he caused me that trouble. And General Fellers was so disgusted he told me just to come back to the main headquarters and start planning for Manila.

RUDD: Did you have a lot of flak from it?

YORTY: No, that was the end of it, because it was all up to General Fellers, and he found out it wasn't true at all, that the tax was to support the government, not for me. It was a ridiculous charge, but typical of the kind of charges that a fellow like Joe Rauh would make because of his liberalism and the fact that I'd fought the communists so hard.

RUDD: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to say about the last interview?

YORTY: No, that's all. I couldn't remember his name last time, and I remembered later [tape recorder off].

RUDD: When we left on the last tape, we were talking about 1960 and John Kennedy's attempt to become president of the United States, and you had written a paper, "I Cannot Take Kennedy." Do you still feel the same way about Jack Kennedy today, or the Kennedy family?

YORTY: Well, there was no difference. I was not against Jack personally, because I knew him and I liked him, but I was against his father trying to buy the presidency. And I was for Lyndon Johnson, whom I thought was much more experienced and much more able than Jack Kennedy.

RUDD: In your article religion played a part. What I would like to know is, say, if a Jewish person or a black person were to run for mayor--or for governor, pardon me--

YORTY: Or for president.

RUDD: Yes.

YORTY: Wouldn't make any difference, I never paid any attention to race or creed or anything like that. It was just I didn't believe-- Because I was for Al Smith in 1928, who was a Catholic, so that has nothing to do with it. But I just resented old Joe Kennedy spending so much money to buy the presidency for his son.

RUDD: I'd also read in other things that you also accepted the same--well, maybe not exactly the same attitudes or ideas, but Eleanor Roosevelt and Harry Truman also had the same feelings that maybe he wasn't mature enough?

YORTY: Yes, I sort of remember that, not very well, but I do remember that some of the mature Democrats thought that he wasn't ready.

RUDD: Do you think this caused any problems for you in the future?

YORTY: Oh, I don't think it caused any problem comparable to the fact that I fought the communists so hard. There are so many liberals who gain their status by attacking those who attack communism, and they ingratiate themselves with the extreme left wing that way. Because they don't want to say anything for the communists, but they just attack people who fought communism, and they get established that way.

RUDD: Richard Nixon ran against Kennedy in 1960. I know you backed him. Did you really feel he could have handled the job at that time?

YORTY: Oh, certainly. Nixon was a very capable fellow, and he's proved that now, of course. But he had more experience than Kennedy, and he didn't have the kind of backing that Kennedy had through his father. And of course, I was very disappointed that Johnson was not the nominee, although he was the nominee for vice-president.

RUDD: I also read that Hubert Humphrey was in that contest also, probably in the earlier times, during the primaries.

YORTY: Well, I don't remember whether Hubert Humphrey was in it or not. He certainly was not in it in a major way, because it turned out to be between Lyndon Johnson and Jack Kennedy. And I was very much for Johnson.

RUDD: In 1961 you became mayor of the city of Los Angeles. Do you consider this, since you had already been in Congress in Washington, D.C., did you consider this a step up or a step down by becoming the mayor of Los Angeles?

YORTY: Well, it was neither; it was just a different kind of job, because being a legislator and being the executive are two different branches of government, and it was a chance for me to do something for the city and to get in the executive branch.

RUDD: When you decided to go into the '61 election, did you have a feeling that this was your time and you were going to do it?

YORTY: Well, of course you always feel that way, that it's your time. But I was just thinking about running because I thought [Norris] Poulson was not a good mayor. He was just a stooge for the **Los Angeles Times**. I thought about running, but I was down at the court one day and ran into a black lawyer [Everette Porter] who was a friend of mine, and he said to me, "Sam, why don't you run for mayor and we'll all support you?" And that was a big event in my decision.

RUDD: Well, we'll pick it up from there then. Do you feel that you had the Democratic backing?

YORTY: No, I didn't have Democratic backing. I was a Democrat, but it wasn't a partisan election. I advertised that I was a Democrat, of course, but I don't think that played much of a part in the election.

RUDD: Where did your money support come from?

YORTY: Well, I practically didn't have any. I don't remember now who contributed, but I didn't have any money to speak of. I worked very hard and I had the support of some community newspapers, but all the major newspapers, of course, were against me because they always go along with the downtown crowd, and the downtown crowd was naturally

all for Poulson. But I had a public relations fellow, Irv Edelstein, that represented a homeowners' group, and they were very much against something that Poulson had done. I went in to see Irv Edelstein about getting his support, and he asked me who was managing my campaign. I said, "Well, nobody," and he said, "Well, I'll help you." I said, "Well, Irv, I don't have any money," and he said, "I won't charge anything; I don't want any money."

So he more or less helped in the campaign, and of course, the campaign manager was Eleanor Chambers. But he handled the public relations.

RUDD: And from what newspaper was he?

YORTY: He wasn't any newspaper, he just was a freelance fellow who represented some homeowners' group.

RUDD: I see. I had also read where Norris Poulson originally had said he wouldn't run again because his health had been bad, and then he was convinced to run and then got a terrible case of laryngitis.

YORTY: Yeah, Norrie had a bad case of laryngitis. And Norrie and I were friends before this time. When he ran for mayor the first time, when the **Times** ran him, he came to me and asked me if I'd like to run, and I told him no. I didn't want to run that time because I was new in Congress. But we didn't have any personal trouble. We were on the same committee in Congress, and we traveled to

Alaska together as part of the committee. I liked Norrie. He did have a bad case of laryngitis. And one time when I was at City Hall to challenge him on something for a debate or something like that, I put out my hand to shake hands with him, and he wouldn't shake hands with me. The papers all took pictures of that, and I think that hurt Norrie. I asked him later why he did that and he said he did it on the advice of his attorney.

RUDD: That's interesting. I also read that you were very good on television and radio, and this really enhanced your chances.

YORTY: Well, that was in the finals, but getting a nomination was the first problem. And they had another opponent in there named McGee, and I was afraid of him splitting the vote and getting it for Poulson.

RUDD: That was Patrick McGee, the councilman, right?

YORTY: Yeah. But I beat him. And then after that then I did get some money, but I've forgotten where it came from. But there were some interests here who were against Poulson and willing to support me. I did get on television, which they said I used very effectively.

But one thing about that television: Irv Edelstein, who I told you was handling my PR work, told me to get on television, and he took half hour broadcasts. He said just [to] go ahead without a script, because I don't like to

work from a script. So I stacked all the files and just talked extemporaneously for half an hour on my broadcasts. I found out that half an hour went very fast--because really it's only twenty-eight minutes or so--and I wouldn't get to the bottom of the files. But people did tell me that it was very effective.

RUDD: Did you know many of the people on the city council at this time?

YORTY: No, I didn't know them. I didn't have any friends in there who were real personal friends. Art [Arthur K.] Snyder helped me a lot in the finals, and a fellow named Harold Henry, and I think [Karl L.] Rundberg, and maybe some others, I don't remember, but they were the ones who were kind of on the out with Poulson, and the **Times**, and so they were supporting me.

RUDD: I also read that you won the support of the homemakers, especially discussing rubbish.

YORTY: Well, that was a big issue, and it was a very effective issue, because up to that time the homeowners were forced to separate their cans from the other rubbish and put them in a separate container, and they were only picked up once a month by a private company that didn't pay them anything for saving them and giving them to them. And if they missed the one month, they had to save them for two months. It was really a nuisance. And so I was against that and said I'd abolish it, and that had a big effect.

RUDD: Wonderful. Now, somewhere else I read, it had quoted you as saying you had been in the rubbish business at one point in your life?

YORTY: No, I wasn't in the rubbish business. I owned a piece of property that turned out to be a good place for a dump, and I turned it into a dump. It wasn't a very profitable one, but anyway it paid for the property. That was the **Times'** propaganda, that I was in the rubbish business. But actually, what the **Times** never said, and what I've never told anybody to this day: There was a piece of property, Lopez Canyon, out in the Valley that was surrounded by federal property. And I filed on the federal property to keep it from getting into the private hands, because I could see that this big canyon would make a fine dump. It was surrounded by federal property, and I filed on the federal property, and I had an option to buy this big canyon property, because I could see it was a great place for a dump. So when I got elected mayor, I never told anybody about it, but my filing on the federal property kept some other private owners from getting it, and then I just let the city take it and didn't pay them anything. And the fellow who had the dump, I let him sell it to the city without exercising my option. So the city gained a tremendous amount of money by my action.

RUDD: Oh, that's interesting. Also, I understand that you had great support from the Valley people. You didn't want everything to be down in the city, or big city operations. Are you familiar with what I'm trying to say?

YORTY: Oh yes, I know. I appealed to the outside communities on the fact that downtown was running everything. It ran the newspapers and the little group of landowners down there. And so I did appeal a lot to the Valley, and of course, I was the first mayor elected from the Valley. I hadn't lived out there very long, but I did live in the Valley.

RUDD: Also, you gained minority support?

YORTY: Oh, I had tremendous minority support because I had represented the Watts area, the South Central Los Angeles, or the black area, in Congress, and I'd treated them very well and represented them well. They knew me and they liked me and they supported me, and I think the Mexican-Americans voted for me, too.

RUDD: Can you tell us about this: it was originally a \$2.2 million lawsuit, I guess, against Poulson, and then it grew to \$4 million? Comments about the fact that you smeared Poulson and you were acting like a big city politician, like [Richard] Daley. And you'd been accused of having Las Vegas connections.

YORTY: Oh, I don't remember that lawsuit. Was it actually filed, or-- I don't remember anything like that. The only thing was, it came out in the paper that I had been offered a job as a mediator in Las Vegas at a salary of \$50,000 a year, which was a big salary in those days, to handle the dispute between the entertainers and the hotel owners, because the hotel owners claimed that they were really just operating the hotels to pay for these entertainers who got so much money for entertaining at Vegas compared to what they got other places. They offered me a job over there to mediate that dispute and handle it, but I didn't want to go to Las Vegas. That's where that story started.

RUDD: Was there animosity between you and Poulson?

YORTY: No, not before the campaign. And there was no animosity on my part during the campaign or after, but he took it a little personally.

RUDD: I see. After the election there's changes like there always would be. How did you change your staff from what was there with Poulson? Did you keep any of his people or did you bring in all your own?

YORTY: Well, I brought in all my own except on the police commission. I kept all but one of his police commissioners. He had appointed a doctor to the police commission, and I appointed another doctor who was a Mexican-American. Dr. Bravo it was, Francisco Bravo I

appointed. And he was not particularly friendly to Police Chief [William] Parker at the time I appointed him, but after he was on the commission a while, he wanted to have a statue made for Parker when Parker left the police force, he was so fond of him, saw what a good job Parker was doing.

RUDD: Well, what I'm talking about is your immediate staff in your offices. Were there any holdovers from Poulson that stayed around, or did you just bring in absolutely everybody new?

YORTY: No, there might have been some civil service employees that stayed, but I, of course, appointed my own staff. I appointed two deputy mayors, [Joseph M.] Quinn and Eleanor Chambers--there was authority for deputy mayors before that, but they'd never been appointed. And then I had my own staff. Dorothy Moore was my secretary. She was a girl who helped in the campaign that was a secretary to a congressman in Washington when I was there. And of course, Eleanor Chambers selected much of the staff, and Joe Quinn. But I appointed a lot of commissioners and had the names all ready to go before I took office.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: I had a meeting, a press meeting about every week and introduced the names of the new commissioners that I intended to appoint. So it was a great change.

RUDD: Were these people you had always known? How did you go about finding these people?

YORTY: Well, I got some names from the universities. I said when I was running for mayor that I would give the universities some chance to help in the government. I did that, and some people I knew and some I just had recommended to me.

RUDD: How many commissioners were there at that time, do you have any idea?

YORTY: Oh, a hundred and some. There were about five on each commission.

RUDD: And you said Parker. Did Parker have anything to say about the commissioners that were picked for the police department?

YORTY: No, because I only appointed one police commissioner originally. And I appointed this black that asked me to run for mayor, I appointed him to the police commission. There wasn't a black on there. I've forgotten who he replaced, and how I happened to have a vacancy so I could appoint him. But it took a lot of courage for a black to serve on the police commission then because there was a lot of agitation there about the police. There always is that, you run into that. But he did a very good job and I was very proud. His name was Everette Porter.

RUDD: Everette Porter. He's the black man that--

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: --asked you to run?

YORTY: Yes, and he later became a municipal judge.

RUDD: Okay.

YORTY: And of course, Gilbert [W.] Lindsay, who is now a city councilman, supported me in the black area, and so did his brother. Well, I guess his brother wasn't so active then, but Gilbert Lindsay supported me. He managed the black area for me.

RUDD: Really? How interesting. Did you get support from Pat [Edmund G., Sr.] Brown, who was governor?

YORTY: Oh, no, I never had any support from Pat Brown.

RUDD: You're both Democrats, right?

YORTY: Yes, we were both Democrats, but a different kind of Democrat.

RUDD: I see. What about council? I know that we have a weak-mayor, strong-council kind of a--from the city charter.

YORTY: Well, the only support I had in the council were some councilmen who didn't get along too well with the **Los Angeles Times** and Poulson.

RUDD: I mean, when you wanted something passed that you really wanted, did you have to struggle to get council--

YORTY: Oh, yes, I had to put a lot of pressure on the council because I was quite popular in the city then, the

new mayor, and quite a change from Poulson with his laryngitis and his passive attitude. So I had to bring this pressure to bear from the mayor's office through publicity and whatnot. I had to do it. Any mayor who's any good in Los Angeles is going to have some trouble with the council, because they just represent districts and the mayor represents the whole city, and he's got to look out for the whole city and not just the various districts.

RUDD: Now, I'm going to ask you something that is very subjective, and maybe you can't answer it, but maybe others have said something to you and you'd know: was there a difference of the feeling with you in city hall as opposed to Poulson?

YORTY: Well, I think it was a complete change, because when Poulson was in there everybody knew that the **Los Angeles Times** ran him, and I was very independent.

RUDD: What about Roz [Rosalind] Wiener Wyman?

YORTY: Well, Roz Wiener Wyman had been a friend of mine, and Eleanor Chambers, my deputy mayor, went to Roz and told her that we wanted to run her for the city council. That was when I was a congressman. And so we were good friends and she got elected to the city council. But she'd been very close to Poulson and the **Times**, so she started to oppose me when she was in the city council. I had a news conference every week, and she started having a news

conference right after that to oppose me. And so I, politically, had to be against her. Then when the election came up where she was running for election she was badly defeated.

RUDD: Was she a strong person in council in her day?

YORTY: Well, pretty strong. She was young and Jewish, and so she had some big support on the religious basis. And also she was young and intelligent and quite a-- She fought very hard to get the Dodgers to Los Angeles, that was the biggest thing she did. But of course, Kenneth Hahn was very active then, too. But anyway, she just opposed me on general principles because she was for Poulson and the **Times**.

RUDD: I've read that you had hoped to bring a black into, or you would have liked to have seen a black come into the Tenth Council District.

YORTY: Yes, I heard that there was an ex-policeman out there named [Thomas] Bradley, and I thought that it would be a good idea to have a black on the city council. So I started to work for him, and Chief Parker came to me and said, "Mayor, you're making a mistake." And I'll never forget this. He said, "He was no good as a policeman, and he'll be no good as a councilman." So I laid off then and didn't support him any more.

RUDD: How was it coming in new and working with the department heads that had been around for a long time? Were there any problems?

YORTY: Well, I didn't have any problems with them, but I called a meeting, I think once a week, of all the department heads and talked to them about my policies and listened to theirs. And I got along fine with them.

RUDD: Are you responsible for bringing Cal [Calvin] Hamilton?

YORTY: Yes, he was planning commissioner, I think it was in Indianapolis, I'm not sure, but he took a civil service examination and passed first, and I appointed him.

RUDD: Do you think Cal has gotten a beating, you might say? Do you think he's been put--

YORTY: Well, he's had some unfair criticism, but anybody who's planning commissioner of this city is going to have some trouble because you can't please everyone. And Cal did a good job, particularly with the downtown, where it was just beginning to go ahead and build bigger buildings, and he allowed for space around them which is now there. He had a good idea, he was a good planning director, and I was pleased with him. One time I said he was too much of a dreamer, but he replied back that sometimes you need a dreamer.

RUDD: We mentioned a little bit Chief Parker, and he was outspoken about race, and I don't know about religion, but I read somewhere where you asked him to kind of cool it.

YORTY: Well, I might have, I don't remember. He was very outspoken and there had been a lot of propaganda against him in the black district. Maybe he was a little prejudiced, I don't remember, but I might have told him to cool it. But we were very good friends before he left office.

RUDD: Was anyone else around city hall that outspoken?

YORTY: Oh, I don't remember that, no.

RUDD: OK, this is before affirmative action and equal employment?

YORTY: Oh, yes, long before all of that started.

RUDD: And did you find, did you see that the blacks or the Mexican-Americans were not moving in as much as they are today?

YORTY: Well, I moved a lot of them in for the first time in the history of the city of Los Angeles. I appointed one to the police commission, one to the fire commission, civil service commission, and to the commissions that I thought were important to them. And I integrated the city fire department. I went over to a fire station where I'd heard there was one black member and I said, "Where's the Negro member?" That's what we called them then, Negroes.

They said, "He's in the boiler room drinking his coffee."
I said, "Why doesn't he drink his coffee out here?" They
said, "Well, we don't eat together in the mess." So I went
back to city hall and issued an order that they'd all eat
together or I was abolishing the mess. And the chief of
the fire department, Chief [William] Miller, came to me and
said, "Well, Mayor, you've got to give us some time." I
said, "Chief Miller, your time's up." That put an end to
that.

RUDD: We talked about Dodger Stadium, and I guess, from
what I gather, the biggest thing that Norris Poulson ever
did was bring the Dodgers to Los Angeles.

YORTY: Yes, that was I think the biggest accomplishment in
his administration. They had a vote on it, you know, and
the people voted for it; a small margin of victory, but
they did vote to let them into Elysian Park.

RUDD: Did L.A. have a sense of boosterism about this,
where they really felt proud to have the Dodgers here?

YORTY: Well, the people who liked major [league] baseball
were glad to have them here, as I was, but there were a lot
of people against the way they got the property at Elysian
Park. There was a lot of opposition, and they had to oust
some Mexican-Americans who lived down in Elysian Park, and
there was quite a fight over it. But I was for the
Dodgers; I thought it was a good thing for L.A.

RUDD: Did you ever have any problems with the owners or anything?

YORTY: Oh, no, they were very good friends; they still are. The son is, and old Walter O'Malley was a good friend of mine. He became a good friend after I was mayor.

RUDD: Were there problems in getting the Music Center [of Los Angeles County] into Los Angeles?

YORTY: Yes, they had a big fight over that. Mrs. Dorothy [Norman] "Buffy" Chandler was heading up the group and raising money to build the Music Center, and Phill Silver, an attorney here, had filed a lawsuit trying to block it. And Phill was a good friend and supporter of mine. So when I got elected mayor I got Phill to agree to drop the lawsuit and went over to the court with him to make sure he did it. I thought maybe he'd change his mind after he got over there he was so much against it. But anyway, I got him to drop it, and Mrs. Chandler was very grateful for that.

RUDD: Did you find that Los Angeles was kind of behind the times culturally?

YORTY: Well, it was behind culturally and economically and from the standpoint of status; it was a very big city, but not as well-known as San Francisco. I decided to give it an international reputation, so I formed the sister cities program. That was a program recommended by President

Eisenhower, and I formed many additional sister cities and visited them, and brought their people here, and tried to give the city an international reputation.

RUDD: This was a benchmark year. I think you really, for yourself, this is when you became known throughout the world, starting with '61. What I was going to ask before is, did you feel a satisfaction, not just for yourself, but that you were taking hold?

YORTY: Yes, I knew I was taking hold and I was changing the city, and I think making it better. And of course, I did get the zoo built. The city didn't have a zoo, you know.

RUDD: No kidding?

YORTY: And they had a bond issue for \$7 million to build a zoo, but they'd never built one, and the **Times** wanted to put it down in Elysian Park where the Dodger Stadium was, and it would have taken almost all the \$7 million to get the land ready down there for it. So I got Charles Luckman, an architect, appointed to look for a place to build a zoo, and Luckman found a place out in Griffith Park. There was a good, suitable place. So he was the architect on the zoo, and he developed a very clever system of building blocks, but putting them together in different shapes, so the buildings were all built by the same blocks, but they looked different. He built the zoo for the \$7

million plus, and got it open on time, and that was the first zoo the city had had. And of course, I built the convention center downtown; the city had no convention center. It had no art center, and I built the art center up in Barnsdall Park. And I built the children's art center also up there. And we had plans for an equestrian center which has now been built, but we didn't get it built, we ran into money trouble. But we picked the site that we're building on it. And I wanted to build a tennis center out in the Sepulveda Basin. And we raised quite a bit of money for that, but not enough, and we didn't get that built.

Also, wanted to do something about the Venice area. The Venice area has some old canals, and they were filled with rubbish and everything, and old houses. And I was arranging new plans for that. We had a hundred contracts with different people to take over their property. We were going to make the lots fifty-foot lots instead of twenty-five. We were going to widen the canals and give them an entrance to the ocean; instead it was blocked. And we had great plans there, and we got sued by Howard Hughes over that, too, because he had some property down there he thought would be affected. I never will forget Howard Chappell of the Public Works Department, president of the [Public Works] Commission, came to me one day and said,

"Mayor, we've got a hundred contracts expiring, and we just can't renegotiate all those hundred contracts." So we had to give up on that Venice thing. We were opposed there by the councilwoman who was down there wading around in a stream and claiming that if we carried out our plans for the park it would affect the mussels, or something, in that stream. It was all ridiculous, but that's what she did. There were a lot of people down there on dope and whatnot, and there were coffee shops that were really communist-operated, and they all fought us, and so we just didn't get-- That's one thing that should have been done in this city and still should be done, but now nobody has shown much interest in doing it.

RUDD: This is Venice?

YORTY: Venice is one of the most beautiful beaches in the world if it were properly used and properly built up.

RUDD: Okay.

YORTY: And of course, I revised the plans for Pershing Square. They used to have a lot of benches along the sidewalk there, and a girl couldn't walk along the sidewalk without being followed and remarks made to her. We revised the plans for it and put those benches around the fountains in the middle. We made slightly slanting sidewalks so it was uncomfortable for people to go stand. And made it possible for people to use Pershing Square, to walk through

it and everything. I remember a girl in the checkroom at the Biltmore Hotel one day said to me, "Oh, thank you, Mayor, we appreciate that." But there were a lot of women in Los Angeles who appreciated that because we got all those bum characters to either not go to Pershing Square or sit around the fountain. But the board of supervisors-- I've forgotten what supervisor said it to me--"Well, what did you do that for? Now they're coming down to the board of supervisors' meeting." [laughter]

RUDD: Had you other political aspirations?

YORTY: Oh, you always have political aspirations, yes. I wanted to be something more than mayor, you know.

RUDD: I mean, did you try for the Senate, or consider it, or anything like that?

YORTY: Well, I always wanted to serve in the Senate, but I tried for it, oh, I've forgotten when, now. Well, I was the Democratic nominee for the United States Senate in 1954. And I think I told you that before, I lost to Kuchel in a close vote because Goodwin Knight was a popular Republican governor who pulled Kuchel in with him, although Goody Knight was for me and I was for Goody, but we couldn't come out for each other. But that was the closest I ever came to being elected to the United States Senate. And that I should have won, but the **Times** ran a big smear about the millions of dollars I'd cost the nation by a

franking privilege, which is greatly exaggerated, but it was a big smear put on at the last minute.

RUDD: During your first term, or your first year, you were in the hospital; you had eye surgery?

YORTY: Well, I'd barely taken office. Poulson had a little dark office down in City Hall. And he had a big chair in there that he could sleep on, because he'd go down to the City Hall often and be there for breakfast, and then he'd go in and sleep. But anyway, I went in and tried to see in that office, and I couldn't see. So I went to an optometrist and he examined my eyes, and gave me some glasses, but he said, "Mayor, that left eye doesn't respond very well. I think you better watch it." So I went to a ophthalmologist and after a couple weeks he called me in his room and said, "I'm sorry to tell you you've got a detached retina," and he said, "If you don't do something about it, you'll go blind in that eye." And he said, "I'll have to put you in bed for six weeks with your head in one position." And I said, "Well, I can't do that now, I'll have to go blind, because I just got elected mayor, and I can't spend six weeks in the hospital." And he said, "Well, I had a classmate at USC [University of Southern California] who is now at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, and I've heard that he has a new system that he can drain the water from behind the retina and then operate

on it without the six weeks." So he called the doctor at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear on the phone, and he said yes, that he could do it. So I went back to Massachusetts Eye and Ear, and had it operated on, and was back home in about four or five days. The name of the doctor who operated was Dr. Taylor Smith.

RUDD: Taylor Smith?

YORTY: Taylor Smith. He's deceased now, but they told me that he used a Schepens technique, and the nurses told me that he was better at the Schepens technique than Dr. Schepens. My protocol officer I had appointed wrote me this letter which you can have, but the paragraph that is very funny is-- Well, I'll read this one paragraph from her.

RUDD: Very good, all right.

YORTY: And she said, "They tore the hell out of Sam's office, excuse me, because"-- This is not in the letter, but I had arranged to get this office made larger and lighter so I could see when I got home. So she wrote me this letter and said, "They tore the hell out of Sam's office, excuse me--"

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE TWO

SEPTEMBER 11, 1985

YORTY: [Continuing to read from letter] "This is one time that we scooped the reporters. It happened so fast that, when these reporters came in, their mouths fell onto the floor. Not one of them was ahead of the other.

Wheelbarrows were going down the hall, people were running around harum-scarum. Tape measures were going from ceiling to floor, and the reporters were all standing by just looking up at the ceiling. Wish I had a picture to show you. Eleanor and I were hysterical." That's the end of the paragraph.

RUDD: Who is the letter from?

YORTY: It's from Helen Mackey Hedges, who was the first protocol officer of the city, who served without pay.

RUDD: Did your office look much like it does today?

YORTY: Well, today is the way I had it remodeled, yes.

RUDD: It is?

YORTY: It's very nice, it's larger and we had a bath put in there, and now you can see. It was just a little dark office, just a little cubbyhole back there when I took office.

RUDD: Really? That's interesting. At the end of 1961, you had three headaches that had not been solved: finances, transportation, and the rubbish collection. What

do you recall of any of these? What was going wrong with the rubbish collection?

YORTY: Well, the rubbish collection was always just a matter of getting it changed so they could put the cans and everything in one container. And I had to fight with the city council, but I finally got that through because the people were with me on that. And finances are always a problem, but I solved the financial problem. I don't remember it was so acute, but it always seems to be a problem. And what was the other problem?

RUDD: Transportation.

YORTY: Well, transportation has been a problem in this city for a long time, and I worked on trying to solve it, but I never did get a new transportation system built, and they still don't have one.

RUDD: Well, when people talk about transportation, do they usually mean the highways, or do they mean, you know, traffic?

YORTY: Well, the freeways are run by the state.

RUDD: Okay.

YORTY: And I called the state engineer in, I think his name was Deaver, and told him that I thought we ought to leave room down the center of the freeways for a public transportation system, and he said, "Oh, we don't want to do that, we'll just double-deck the freeways." And that

was the end of that. But transportation has now been turned over to a separate body, that's separate from the city, and the mayor just appoints some of the commissioners to it. But I tried to improve the system, and I always wanted to build it, but I never did. That's one thing I could not solve and it's not solved yet.

RUDD: Would you have wanted a metrorail, or one of these, what do they call them in England, the tube? Or in San Francisco, BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit]?

YORTY: Well, I never thought of that because for one thing it's so costly, and it would take a huge system, many miles to cover the city. The one they propose now, they're talking about this four miles which wouldn't do anything but send a tunnel out to Alvarado Street, and what would you do when you go clear to Alvarado, where would you park your car? They had a tunnel that started at Glendale Boulevard and went into the city, to the subway terminal building. That would be about as good as the one they're talking about building now for four miles. But after the four miles, they plan on extending it to the Valley, which would be another twenty miles or so, and be so costly, and it won't help the whole city, it will just help the people on the corridor. So I just can't see this present system. But the present mayor, Mr. Bradley, when he ran against me, he said, "Give me eighteen months and a shovel

and I'll solve the transportation problem." Well, he's now been there twelve years and they still haven't solved it.

RUDD: Do you see, since you were mayor, a great change because of added freeways and things? Has this brought the community closer together?

YORTY: Well, there hasn't been a great change. The freeways haven't been so prominent in the construction that's gone on, they were mostly here. The Hollywood Freeway had to be widened, there was a bad bottleneck. And some of the others, more outside the city, had to be developed, but there isn't much change except that the ones outside the city have made it easier to get into the city and to get through the city. It's important that you get through the city without going through the downtown area, and to some extent, that's been accomplished, but otherwise, there isn't anything much that's changed.

RUDD: Well, I read somewhere, and I'm not sure who the author was, but it was something like, "It's the freeway system that brought fourteen small communities together to become one large Los Angeles." Do you believe that?

YORTY: Well, it never has become one large Los Angeles. There's only one center and the central city has to be the hub. But otherwise, this city is different from others. It's a lot of communities, [they] used to say a lot of communities looking for a city, but it's still a lot of

independent communities, and where people work and shop and live in a community, many of them never go downtown at all. And the downtown area has changed completely, you know. It used to be people went down there mainly to shop, but all these shopping centers in outlying areas have changed that now.

RUDD: Okay. On this rubbish collection, what was your ultimate goal, what were you hoping to get for these people so they didn't have to separate their garbage?

YORTY: Well, I was hoping that eventually, to conserve, like aluminum, we could separate it at the dump. And there have been several people [who] have tried to do that; it's never been done successfully. I did develop for a while a separate voluntary collection, called the Saturday collection, where people could take the tin cans and bottles to certain areas of the city if they wanted to volunteer to do that, and I had the city service open to receive them. We collected them for a while but it didn't really pay off because the people weren't that interested.

RUDD: Did you increase dumps and things like this?

YORTY: Oh, yes, we bought this big dump that I had an option on. I never did exercise the option, even tell anybody that I had it. But he sold that to the city and that's been the main dump in the Valley there for a long time now, but it's filling up.

RUDD: Okay. After your first year, your first term, were there any really highlights that you look back at?

YORTY: Well, I don't remember what happened the first term as against the second so well. But I was proud of the city moving ahead internationally and getting better known and building the big buildings we were building downtown. That was partly my fault, but mainly it was private enterprise because in the 1950s they had removed the height limit of thirteen stories because they were always afraid of earthquake, and they developed these earthquake-proof buildings. I remember one big building when we had an earthquake and they had a seismograph on each floor to record the movement, and the architect [Albert C. Martin and Associates] came over to me and showed me by the seismograph that he had predicted exactly the amount of movement that would take place. So these big buildings sway a lot during the earthquake, but it would take a very big earthquake to damage them. The City Hall was damaged in that earthquake, but the architect came to me about it, had a lot of plastering and a lot of other things to do, but we repaired it.

RUDD: While you were there in the first term, I guess if you want to say during all the terms, was City Hall South built during that period?

YORTY: Well, I don't remember whether it was that period. I planned City Hall South along with, of course, the planning department, the other departments because we were so crowded in City Hall. But I also got City Hall East turned over to us when I consolidated the health services because it was a health building, and now I think it's the civil service personnel building.

RUDD: Oh, City Hall South?

YORTY: No, that's City Hall--

RUDD: No, City Hall South was the health building and now--

YORTY: Oh, yes, City Hall East is the one that I built from scratch.

RUDD: I see, oh.

YORTY: And we built the causeway across the second or third story over to it and built new offices in there for the city administrative officer. And we also built the fire department communication system. They used to have various communications offices out in the various areas and we consolidated that down three or four stories in City Hall South. We built it down below so it couldn't be disrupted in any kind of a turmoil or earthquake, and it worked very well. And we also planned the consolidated communication system for the police department.

RUDD: I see. When you were in City Hall, when was Parker Center built?

YORTY: Oh, that was built before I became mayor. I think it was--I don't remember having much to do with Parker Center.

RUDD: And it was named for Chief Parker. Was this the one that was with you?

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: It was named for him while he was there?

YORTY: No, I think after he was dead. Now, Chief Parker was chief of police as long as he lived, and one night he went to a meeting of the United States Marines and they were standing up applauding him and he dropped dead.

RUDD: Oh, my.

YORTY: Well, if you have to die, that was a wonderful way for Chief Parker, who was a wonderful patriot, to die. He was a great chief, and he really made the Los Angeles Police Department into the best police department in the world. And he made it corruption-proof and very efficient; he was a great administrator.

RUDD: Who followed him, [Ed] Davis?

YORTY: No, Tom Reddin.

RUDD: Reddin?

YORTY: Yeah, Reddin.

RUDD: Okay.

YORTY: I appointed Chief [Thad] Brown to take Parker's place because Brown agreed not to take the civil service

examination for chief, because I didn't want anybody to have that advantage. So the civil service examination was given and Chief Reddin was appointed.

RUDD: I see. He couldn't have been there too long.

YORTY: No, he wasn't there very long because he took a job on TV and I told him, I said, "You know, you ought to have a long, unbreakable contract if you leave here."

And he said, "Well, I've got it."

So he left and he went over to KTLA as a newscaster, but it didn't turn out very well.

RUDD: Before we close is there anything else that comes to mind about your life as mayor in the early years?

YORTY: Well, nothing except that the **Times** was so happy with me as mayor after the editorial about "There's Nothing Left But Hope" which ran in the **Times** the day after I was elected. And I've got a copy of the editorial in a permaplaque. But they were so pleased with me they supported me for a second term.

RUDD: That's very good.

YORTY: I don't know whether it was so pleased with me or so displeased with Jimmy [James] Roosevelt who ran against me, but anyway, they supported me.

RUDD: Oh, he ran against you for the second term?

YORTY: Uh-huh.

RUDD: What was he doing?

YORTY: Oh, nothing. I don't remember what he did. He was in the loan business or the insurance business. But the reporters asked him where Hansen Dam was. He named some wrong place; he didn't know, he didn't have any idea where it was. [laughter]

RUDD: You had a reputation that some people called you "Traveling Sam." When did you decide that you wanted to invest time in other places?

YORTY: Well, I wanted to give the city an international status, and I had been very well traveled before I ever became mayor. But I didn't travel as much as the **Times** made out; the **Times** would make me out as a traveler if I went to Beverly Hills. [laughter] But they don't do that with the present mayor who travels much more than I did. I did develop the sister city program, and I visited most of the sister cities and they responded by visiting here.

RUDD: Which ones are they?

YORTY: Well, the only sister city when I became mayor, the only one that was active at all was Nagoya in Japan. And Eilat in Israel had been made a sister city, but just made a sister city in name. But I visited, and appointed a committee, and activated the city, and visited Eilat, and had the mayor of Eilat visit here. And I had a sister city of Salvador in Brazil, and I went down there and they came here. That has never been a very active sister city

program. But I made Berlin a sister city program and visited Berlin. They had a Los Angeles week in Berlin where we took a group back there and had a style show and all that, show off our products. And that's still very active, the committee is still active. I made a sister city in India, a very large city [Bombay] in India, and that was successful. And I was going to make the first sister city back of the Iron Curtain in Romania, but I don't know, I didn't want to present it to the city council because there's so much demagoguery down there it might have made out I was trying to make a communist city a sister city so I just didn't go ahead with that, although they passed a motion in the sister city in Romania accepting Los Angeles as their sister city.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: That was kind of too bad because it would have been interesting. But anyway, let's see, I made some other sisters, I don't remember them all right offhand, but quite a few sister cities, and we got a lot of publicity about it.

RUDD: Do these communities help develop us with commerce and things like that?

YORTY: Oh, yes, it's good to have sister cities, it's good for tourism, too. We got a lot of publicity in those countries when we became a sister city and made them more

friendly to us, you know, more friendly to the United States and to the city of Los Angeles. It was a very good program and the present mayor has said he wasn't going to do anything about it, but he's tried to carry it on and revive it a little bit.

RUDD: Did you travel to Washington, D.C., very often?

YORTY: Well, not very often, but I went there whenever there was any business that affected the city. And President Johnson, of course, had a big luncheon there for me when I was elected. He had [Everett] Dirksen who was a big Republican, and members of the Senate and House there, and they gave me a big ovation and that sort of thing, but it was very nice of him to do that because he knew that I had always been his friend. I visited with him several times.

RUDD: And you were mayor of the third-largest city in America!

YORTY: That's right.

RUDD: And **Time** wrote about you.

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: Were you proud to be the mayor of Los Angeles?

YORTY: Well, I think anyone would be proud to be mayor of Los Angeles because it's a great city and there haven't been that many who've been in the office of mayor here, only about forty, I guess. So I was proud to be mayor, yes.

RUDD: Good. Is there anything else you'd like to say before we close?

YORTY: Is this the last interview?

RUDD: No, oh, no!

YORTY: No, there isn't anything else I want to say today. [tape recorder off]

Pusan in Korea was made a sister city, and that was very successful. Also Mexico City.

RUDD: Did you have many chiefs of state come to L.A., I mean beyond that?

YORTY: Quite a few, yes, quite a few. We had the prime minister of Japan here and the president of [South] Korea, and we had the president of Mexico, as a matter of fact two presidents of Mexico. The [United States] State Department liked my protocol office, and the job that Eddie [Edward A.] Martinez was doing as protocol officer; they complimented me on his work, and they used to always route important visitors through Los Angeles if they visited any city other than Washington, D.C.

RUDD: Has there always been an office of protocol?

YORTY: No, I formed the first protocol office.

RUDD: Do you know how it was handled before you?

YORTY: Oh, they just didn't handle it. Los Angeles wasn't very well known in spite of its size.

RUDD: Do you suppose it had, pardon the expression, a "hick" way of looking? It was not particularly grown, or mature, or sophisticated?

YORTY: It was unsophisticated from the standpoint of world politics, from the standpoint of the mayors. They had always been rather limited individuals.

RUDD: Are you saying they only looked at what they had here and they never looked beyond?

YORTY: Well, I don't know what you mean by that, but they didn't have a world point of view and they were very limited in what they could see the city could become.

RUDD: Anything else?

YORTY: No, I think that's all.

RUDD: All right. [tape recorder off] You said there are still others that you had--

YORTY: Well, the mayor of London, not the head of a government, he's an honorary person. And I had two mayors visit here from London. They only hold office a [^]year. The first one came with his whole retinue, and the second one just came in a civilian suit without anybody being in accompaniment. I asked him why that was and he said, "Well, we can't officially call on you twice till you return the visit." They had invited me to return the visit to London, to be honored there, but they wanted to make it in December and I thought it would be very cold there, so I

didn't want to go. But we had, as I say, important visitors all the time.

RUDD: Now, was a red carpet kind of a thing given to these people?

YORTY: Oh, yes, I usually had a dinner for them and had the sister cities, if we had a sister city in the country, they would always have a luncheon or a dinner and make a big fuss over them, give them a chance to make a speech.

RUDD: The council must have been proud of these times also.

YORTY: Well, I don't know as they were ever so proud of it, but they did take part in it. Some were very active like [Karl L.] Rundberg with Nagoya in Japan, he loved it. He was very active in that.

RUDD: Very good.

YORTY: Well, Princess Margaret [of England] visited here, but she was just a princess, not the head of any government. Of course I had the fellow who is now king of Spain visit here, and I had Nehru, the prime minister of India visited. But Nehru just wanted to go down and see Disneyland, so I told him I thought he came here not to visit us, but to see Disneyland; he just laughed. But there were a lot of visitors of that caliber.

RUDD: When Khrushchev came to town--

YORTY: Well, I wasn't mayor then. Mayor Poulson was in office when he came to town.

RUDD: That's right, it was in the fifties.

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: That's right. Anything else?

YORTY: No, that's enough for now.

RUDD: That does it. [laughter]

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 27, 1985

RUDD: Sam, the 1960s was a turbulent era. I'd like to focus in on the national scene first and to see how Los Angeles fit into things that were happening on the national scene. First of all, on the civil rights movement, was there anything here that reflected problems one way or the other?

YORTY: Well, I don't think so. You know I integrated the fire department and brought a lot of blacks in the city government. I brought Mexican-Americans, or anyway, Latinos in the government, and of course, I had many more Jews, too, on the city council, and strangely enough there hadn't been many before, although [they are] some of the ablest people in Los Angeles. And I got people recommended by the universities and gave a broad outline to the government of the city. I think it was later affected in the national scene; I think we were more or less among the first here.

RUDD: Really? Now, affirmative action falls under this, doesn't it?

YORTY: Well, that came much later.

RUDD: It did?

YORTY: Affirmative action, yes, I was out of office when that started.

RUDD: Another thing, many things that happened in the sixties were some deaths of some very important people. John Kennedy was killed in the early sixties. What kind of an effect did it have here in Los Angeles?

YORTY: Well, it didn't have very much of an effect, naturally, because the national administration didn't affect the city that much. But the people here were shocked and saddened, of course, by John Kennedy's assassination, which I don't think has ever been explained properly to the satisfaction of the people. Of course, that didn't provide for very much change nationally because Lyndon Johnson became president then and Lyndon Johnson was a good friend of mine whom I had supported for president.

RUDD: Martin Luther King [Jr.] was also killed in that era. Had he been here to Los Angeles?

YORTY: Well, he came here once right after the riots.

RUDD: The Watts riots?

YORTY: Yes, the Watts riots.

RUDD: I see.

YORTY: And I had a conference with him, had Chief [William] Parker in with me, and Chief Parker and one of Martin Luther King's assistants got in kind of an argument, but Martin Luther King and I got along fine. But he promised me he wouldn't blame the police department for the rioting, and he went out to my news conference, which I had

already scheduled, and he blamed the police for the rioting. And I had to sit right down after him and say it wasn't the police that caused the rioting.

RUDD: That's interesting. Robert Kennedy was also killed in the sixties and he was killed here in Los Angeles. What kind of police protection did he have here?

YORTY: Well, we offered him police protection, and we would have gladly given him police protection and he should have accepted, but he didn't want the police around at all. In Fresno he had ordered the police away from the airport where they came out to protect him because he didn't want to be associated with the police department. So we had an extra car around the Ambassador Hotel where he was killed, but that's all. If our detectives had been with Bob Kennedy when he was shot, he wouldn't have been shot because he would have kept his schedule. Instead of that, he changed the direction, I understand, and started to go out through a kitchen or something, and that's where he was shot. If he had consented to our protecting him, I don't think he would ever have been shot.

RUDD: Did you have any problems with him here on a personal level? I know you didn't get along with his brother, John Kennedy.

YORTY: Well, I got along fine with his brother, I just didn't support him for president, but we were good

friends. Bob Kennedy's staff went downtown in Los Angeles and they stopped at every green light and went through the red ones, and we piled up the tickets on them. But when Bob Kennedy was shot, of course, we dropped all that, but I think they were deliberately trying to cause some kind of ruckus in Los Angeles.

RUDD: There was another death in the sixties that was interesting and I'd like to know your feelings about it. Marilyn Monroe also died and there's always been rumor that she had an affiliation with the Kennedy brothers. Do you--

YORTY: Well, I don't think that's a rumor, it's more or less been established now. You know she sang John Kennedy's birthday song at his birthday party and all that, and there's no doubt that she had a close liaison with the Kennedys. But the night she died Chief Parker told me that Bob Kennedy was seen at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, and that's all he said. I sent to the police department for the record of what happened, their records, after Chief Parker died, but they said they didn't have any records. And lately it's come out that they did have them. But they say now that it was in the personal possession of Chief Thad Brown, whom I appointed after Chief Parker died. They claim not to have anything now, but they say that some things they destroyed ten years ago because the city council had ordered all these things destroyed, so I don't

know what ever happened. But it's been a mystery and I'm not sure that it would ever really be put to rest, but anyway, for now, as far as we know, her telephone was off the hook to Peter Lawford's home--he was a brother-in-law of the Kennedys--and she died of an overdose of pills. But there's one thing that I think ought to be explained, and that is why her personal maid was sent to Europe right afterward, after her death, by the Kennedys with all expenses paid. God knows how much more money they may have given her, but she's never talked.

RUDD: That's interesting. Something else that happened in the sixties was the youth rebellion, the hippies, and I guess looking at life from a different point of view than it had in previous years. Sex and drugs were a large part of this rebellion, if you want to call it that. Did you have hippie movements down here?

YORTY: Well, we had a lot of kids demonstrating on the Sunset Strip, which is really in the county, but it affected Los Angeles, and I went out there to see what they were doing and they said, "Well, we like you, Mayor, but we don't like somebody else," and I just talked with them. I've got a picture of myself with this gang, but I didn't see that they were anything unusual. They didn't seem full of drugs to me, and of course, sex wasn't involved. But they just, I don't know, they just wanted to raise Cain.

They did, on the Sunset Strip, and they wrecked the values on the Sunset Strip for years. It's taken till about now for the Sunset Strip to recover its former prestigious attitude.

RUDD: Are you saying that the sixties and the youth are the ones that helped Sunset Strip deteriorate?

YORTY: Oh, yes, they did. It went right down for a long time, but I think it's come back.

RUDD: Now, I had been in San Francisco and seen the hippie movement up there, Haight-Ashbury and that, was it this way down here as much?

YORTY: Well, no, not nearly as much. No, Haight-Ashbury was supposed to be a bunch of homosexuals and lesbians, and we didn't have that here at the time.

RUDD: What about Vietnam?

YORTY: Well, Vietnam was a big factor in everything and it was not very well understood and not accurately reported here. And unfortunately, the press never did tell the whole story, that we were not in that war to win it. Old [Robert] McNamara had a lot of phony ideas; he was the secretary of defense. He wanted to build a fence across the seventeenth parallel and a lot of things like that. But he's admitted now that he never did think that we could win the war, and he had no business telling people that he thought we were winning and all that.

As a matter of fact, of course, I went to Vietnam several times, and a good friend of mine, Johnny Van of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]--who wasn't known as CIA, but he was CIA--and he took me all around Vietnam. John had a lot of exposure there for ten years and was really very well known in Vietnam and everybody from Vietnam in the higher echelon knew him. But anyway, Johnny Van read in the newspaper that--at that time Johnny Van was a battalion commander down in the delta area of Vietnam--and he read in the paper that McNamara said we were winning the war. He resigned his commission as a colonel, combat colonel, and came back to the United States and made 150 speeches in which he tried to point out to people that we were not winning the war and we couldn't win it under McNamara's rules. So then he went back to Vietnam, hired back there by the CIA. Of course, I went all around there with him, but I knew the truth about Vietnam and I knew the rules they were fighting under--like they had an area around Haiphong there, around Hanoi, that we couldn't bomb. It was a ridiculous way to fight a war. When we get in a war, we should fight it to win, and they weren't fighting to win this war. As a matter of fact, the American troops were never defeated in a battle there; we won every battle that we fought, and the Tet offensive was played up here as a big success, and it was a big

failure. But they kept talking about things like My Lai where some innocent Vietnamese were killed, but they didn't talk about what happened up in the former capital in northern South Vietnam when the communists took over there. They slaughtered a lot of people and just buried them in mass graves. That was, I can't think of the name of the former capital [Hue] there at the moment, but it was above Da Nang. But anyway, those things were not reported and the press did not handle the Vietnam War properly.

RUDD: How did Lyndon Johnson's Great Society affect us here? Did it at all?

YORTY: Well, it had a big effect. One thing, it aroused a lot of hopes because he said we're going to abolish poverty and all that. But Sargent Shriver was in charge of the program and he did such a poor job that a group of mayors, and I was among them, had a meeting with the vice-president, Hubert Humphrey, to complain about Sargent Shriver. And Hubert Humphrey agreed with us that it wasn't being handled right.

RUDD: Now, did Johnson ever travel out here?

YORTY: Oh, yes, he was out here mainly when he was campaigning, and of course I campaigned with him here.

RUDD: Now let's move on to the local scene.

YORTY: As a matter of fact there is one interesting thing that happened: I had lunch with former President

Eisenhower down in Palm Springs and he said to me, "Well, you can tell your friend Johnson if he wants to talk to me about foreign policy, I'll be glad to consult with him, but not to mention domestic policy because we're 180 degrees apart." And I conveyed that to Johnson, and he did stop in Palm Springs on his way, I think it was on his way out to the Pacific, and consulted with Eisenhower about Vietnam.

RUDD: That's interesting. On the local scene, one of the largest things, I imagine, that happened in the sixties was the Watts riots, and can you give us some background?

YORTY: Well, I think I did that before, didn't I?

RUDD: Well, I don't remember if we went into it.

YORTY: I think we did.

RUDD: Well, I would like to ask you some other questions about it.

YORTY: Okay. Well, you know how it happened. The Highway Patrol followed the suspect into the city and he was accused of drunk driving. They didn't take the suspect and get out of the area like our black police officer [Ronald Farwell] told them to when he arrived there. He said, "Get your suspect and get out of here." But they fooled around and they finally arrested the suspect's brother and his mother and put them in the car. They were taking them off to jail. And then when the Highway Patrol started to leave, a motorcycle officer was spit on, and he got out and

grabbed a girl there who had on a white outfit from a beauty shop, but she looked pregnant. By that time they had the mob pretty stirred up. And if they had taken the suspect and gotten out of the area as our police officer told them to, it wouldn't have happened. But it was just a spark that set it off. There's no doubt there were conditions there, particularly the unemployment and all that sort of thing, and agitators, that were going on. A supervisor called a meeting down there in the afternoon and he wanted to settle the whole thing, but instead of that a young black boy got up and said "We're going to burn Beverly Hills, we're going to burn Glendale, burn baby burn," and that started the whole thing off. It skyrocketed after that, but the rioting-- And of course, they started looting and breaking windows and all that, and so it just got out of hand. We wanted the National Guard to come in because we didn't have enough police officers to handle it, and Chief Parker called the governor's office for the National Guard, but the governor was in Greece. If he'd have been here we would have gotten the National Guard immediately. That was Pat Brown, but [Glenn M.] Anderson was lieutenant governor and he said he wanted to confer with the black ministers before he called out the National Guard. And so Chief Parker said, "We don't want a conference, we want the National Guard." Anyway, we didn't

get the National Guard that day and the next day it got worse. It was a strange riot; it was stop-and-go because they'd all get real tired about two or three o'clock in the morning and they'd go home and sleep till two o'clock in the afternoon and then they'd come out and start rioting again. But finally we got the National Guard and that put it down.

RUDD: Do you think these people got overheated because of the lack of employment, the bad housing, and--

YORTY: Well, there's always unemployment in the Watts area and there's more unemployment among the blacks than there is among the whites, but because you're out of a job doesn't mean you have to riot. And so it's been, it was a factor, yes. And housing, I don't think the housing in Watts is so bad; not nearly as bad as other places I've seen in the world.

RUDD: Where were you when all this happened, when the riots began?

YORTY: Well, I was right here in Los Angeles, and I had a speech scheduled in San Diego and I came back from there, and then I had a speech scheduled at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco for the next day and I decided I'd better go up there because it looked like we were panicking here. So I went up there and made the speech and conferred with Mayor John Shelley and got on a plane and came right

back. So I was practically here all the time, and the propaganda that I wasn't here is propaganda put out by the **Los Angeles Times**.

RUDD: What was the McCone Report?

YORTY: Well, the McCone commission [Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots] was appointed by the governor to look into the rioting and they made a long report and pointed out the factors that caused it, like unemployment and so forth, and that's all. And they just recommended that we try to handle it, which we certainly did.

RUDD: Did you know this John McCone?

YORTY: I hadn't met John McCone, I didn't know him very well.

RUDD: At one time I heard he was head of the CIA.

YORTY: CIA, yes. And he was a fine man, incidentally.

RUDD: Now, when did Martin Luther King [Jr.] come? After the riots were over?

YORTY: Right after the rioting, yes.

RUDD: Was there a lot of black religious upheaval over this, I mean, a lot of people very upset because of this?

YORTY: Well, not religious upset, but we were all upset because we didn't like the spectre of having the rioting in Los Angeles. Since we were the first city, they started to blame us for it, but for a while there was rioting in all the big cities and they found out it wasn't the fault of Los Angeles that this started.

RUDD: Somewhere the following year there was a subcommittee report in **Time** magazine of September 1966, where you and other mayors of large cities were called to Washington, D.C.

YORTY: Well, I think I was certainly called, and I think that the time they had the committee set up to investigate, they thought it was just Los Angeles that had rioting and they were going to try and blame me, and it was a Bob Kennedy deal. And when I went back there, a young reporter, I think his name was [Carl] Rowan, a black reporter, was covering it in Washington because the Associated Press couldn't send a reporter from here back there. But Rowan reported very fairly, and as a matter of fact he started his article with the fact that Bobby Kennedy said to me, "Oh, Mayor, I hope these black men will have the same opportunity you and I have had."

I said, "Well, Senator Kennedy, I hope they have the same opportunity I had, but there's no chance they'll ever have the same opportunity you had." And he started his story with that remark.

RUDD: Abraham Ribicoff was also on that committee.

YORTY: Yes, I don't remember his part in it, but he was very critical and he was a Kennedy person and so he sort of resented me. I don't remember. I knew Abe Ribicoff, I served in Congress with him, but I don't remember that episode with him.

RUDD: Do you think Bobby Kennedy was giving you a hard time more so because of the fact that you didn't go along with his brother?

YORTY: That's right, yes, no doubt he was antagonistic. But I saw him later in the office back there, and that was after Marilyn Monroe's death. Chief Parker and I went back and Chief Parker got in right away, and Bobby Kennedy was very nice to him, and he was nice to me then.

RUDD: That's interesting. Now we're going to backtrack a bit. In 1964 you ran for mayor again and James Roosevelt was your opponent.

YORTY: Yes, he was.

RUDD: How and why did he, I mean, who was he a cover person for?

YORTY: Oh, I don't think he was a cover for anybody. Jimmy's always been kind of ambitious about politics, and he just ran because he wanted to be mayor of Los Angeles as a stepping stone. But Jimmy's a good guy and in the campaign I knew I was going to beat him. One time some reporter asked him where Hansen Dam was and he named it in the wrong place. He made a joke about that last time I talked to him.

RUDD: Is he still alive?

YORTY: Oh, I think so, yes. He was a fine fellow, he was a marine during the war.

RUDD: Now, he was FDR's son?

YORTY: Yes, FDR's oldest son.

RUDD: The oldest, okay. In that campaign, was it relatively easy for you to--

YORTY: Well, it was relatively easy because even the **Los Angeles Times** supported me against Jimmy Roosevelt, so we had a kind of a quiet period where we got along for a while. That was just for a little while.

RUDD: You and the **Times**?

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: Property tax must have been a big issue in your second term?

YORTY: Well, it always was a big issue, and the property taxes were too high. I tried to find other forms of taxation to take the load off the property owners, and I reduced the percentage of property taxes from about 25 percent--see, we get our property tax back from the county which collects it, and the city of Los Angeles got about 25 percent when I became mayor--and I had it down to about 20 percent when I left, but I was trying to get out of the property tax business, and I kept saying that and trying to get the council to go along with other forms of taxation to reduce the taxes on property because I could see this revolt coming. It finally did, of course, when Proposition 13 was passed. [tape recorder off]

RUDD: Do you think that, were you in any way a precursor to the Howard Jarvis Proposition 13?

YORTY: Well, yes, I kept talking about getting Los Angeles city out of the property tax business because I wanted to eliminate the property tax in the city if I could do it, because property taxes were too high and they kept getting higher. I passed the tax on the utilities at 5 percent, but [Thomas] Bradley's increased that to 10 percent. But I would have gone for a tax to pick up the rubbish, that was my next step. But they've never done that, and if they had done that, they wouldn't have had to reduce their police department like they have now.

RUDD: That's interesting. I understand in some of my research that Councilman [Ernani] Bernardi was also interested in this. On the city-county health merger, that's where Bernardi was involved in trying to help put this program together. Did it offset a lot of money by letting the county take care of the health program?

YORTY: Oh, yes, that was one of the things I did to get the burden shifted to the county from the city because it was ridiculous for the city to have its own health system and the county to have one too, and the state law provided that we could shift it to the county any time we wanted to if we passed a law. So I had a big fight with the city council because some of the councilmen said they wouldn't

have any influence with the restaurants if they got in trouble and they couldn't come to the councilmen to get out of it and get help. But anyway, I fought the city council over it, but I finally got it through and that reduced the taxes some more in the city and also got us back the big building of City Hall South, we call it now. That whole building was the city health department building.

RUDD: What other services besides restaurant surveillance?

YORTY: Well, just general health, like the health department does now.

RUDD: Now, did we have a doctor, you know--

YORTY: Certainly, doctors and nurses. Had a whole big payroll.

RUDD: I see. So when did this end?

YORTY: Oh, I don't know when I ended that, as soon as I got it through the city council. I think that was during my first term.

RUDD: Okay. And this is where I had read that Councilman Bernardi had been a big help in trying to get this through to the council.

YORTY: Well, Councilman Bernardi helped with anything where he could save money; he was very good about that.

RUDD: Okay. During your time in office, City Hall expanded. You had City Hall South and then you were also responsible for City Hall East?

YORTY: Yes, we built City Hall East.

RUDD: I've read where--and I could be wrong--\$14 million went into building this?

YORTY: Oh, I don't remember the exact cost, but anyway it was a good building and I think came within the estimates. So we got it built and then we got a helistop that we could use up on top of that. I used to land on the wing of City Hall, which they considered rather unsafe, but it saved me a lot of time.

RUDD: Well, in building City Hall East it alleviated a lot of pressure from space in City Hall?

YORTY: Oh yes. We could automate a lot of city services there, too, like the fire department and the police department. The police department was perfected later, but the fire department while I was still in office. And we had a computer service, too, down in City Hall East.

RUDD: I was going to ask you about this program Data Services Bureau [now Information Services Bureau].

YORTY: Yes, we put that in, put it down in City Hall East.

RUDD: Do you remember when was this, in your first, well, it would have to be in your second term, wouldn't it?

YORTY: Well, I think so, I'm not just clear on whether the first or second term, but somewhere along in there.

RUDD: Did you have intentions in the beginning for it to just work for accounting and taxes and things like this, or

did you see it going to be spread throughout the entire city?

YORTY: Well, I could see that computers were the coming instruments for administration, so we put in the data services.

RUDD: It must have been costly.

YORTY: Well, it was costly, but in the long run you save lots of money. For instance, these dump trucks we have, these Packard trucks, when I became mayor we didn't have any Packard trucks. It cost a lot more to pick up the rubbish than it did, so we phased the Packard trucks in, the new ones, over a three-year period.

RUDD: Did you build the City Mall?

YORTY: No, but City Mall was planned under me. It was a project that the planning department, and particularly Calvin Hamilton, wanted and I wanted it, too, and I approved it, of course. The plans were made under my administration; it was completed later.

RUDD: Let me ask you, what was situated where City Hall East is today? What was there before that?

YORTY: Well, I think there was a little bank, one story bank, Security Bank, and some other little restaurant, just really, no large buildings or anything that amounted to very much.

RUDD: You had to purchase the property?

YORTY: Oh, yes, we condemned it.

RUDD: Was there a lot of oil exploration while you were mayor?

YORTY: Not very much. We leased some property at the harbor for oil, but they dug dry holes.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: Yes. Instead of taking money for the lease, we provided a large percentage for the city, and if it had turned out we would have had a lot of money, but it turned out they didn't get anything.

RUDD: I don't know if I'm wrong or not, did you at one time have hopes of making Long Beach and San Pedro harbors--

YORTY: Well, they should be made one harbor; it's ridiculous to compete with each other, but Long Beach has that oil. The mayor of Long Beach [Edwin W. Wade] agreed with me. He agreed with me and we both recommended it, but the Long Beach Harbor Commission wouldn't listen to it, and we just didn't get anyplace with our argument for that.

RUDD: Now, they belong to the county, L.A. County, right, Long Beach?

YORTY: Well, Long Beach is a city, and it's the second-largest city in the county. The harbors still should be combined, but all the drive for doing that has been dissipated now, and nobody talks about that anymore.

RUDD: How is it that two cities, I mean, would the county be the one to help you merge if this were--

YORTY: No, the two cities would have to do it, and just merge the harbors, that's all, not merge the cities. But it should be one harbor and operated with one administrative staff and one planning staff. It's ridiculous to compete with each other when they're right next door, but of course Long Beach had that oil revenue and we didn't have that, so they were really unfair competition.

RUDD: Are you responsible for the convention center?

YORTY: Yes, I certainly am. I wanted to build the convention center because this city didn't have one, and I appointed a committee to plan it. Charles Luckman was the architect, and he gave us an estimate of the cost and drew the plans. I remember Neil Petrie, who was chairman of the committee, called me one day and said, "Well, Mayor, we've got bad news. They want 5.8 percent on the bonds, and we planned on 4.8 percent. What are we going to do?"

I said, "We'll take it." And we did take it and we built the convention center.

RUDD: How much money did something like that cost?

YORTY: I've forgotten the exact cost. I think it was about \$40 million. It would cost \$150 or \$250 million now.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: Oh, yes. And plans are already underway to expand it.

RUDD: Today?

YORTY: Yes, today. Some people want to discredit me so they called it a white elephant and all that sort of thing, but now they're expanding it.

RUDD: Yeah, it's in a peculiar place, isn't it? I mean, can it really expand?

YORTY: Yes, it can expand. We bought more property than we needed because we bought some expensive property on Figueroa Street. We planned on leasing one corner for a hotel and another for a world trade center, but we couldn't get the estimates, couldn't get anybody interested in building either one. But that property's very valuable now.

RUDD: Don't we have a World Trade Center now?

YORTY: We have a World Trade Center, and they were very nice. I got them to hold off till I determined if we could build one down by the convention center. We gave ourselves a certain amount of time and they agreed. When we couldn't get it built, why, they built the Trade Center.

RUDD: I see. And who is "they"?

YORTY: Well, they were the entrepreneurs who wanted to build a trade center. I don't remember their names, but they were very nice fellows.

RUDD: Private industry?

YORTY: Oh, yes, private industry, sure. Well, private industry was all we were interested in. We didn't want to build a trade center with city money. We wanted one built with private money. And a hotel with private money. I think eventually they may build a hotel down there, but the whole city is moving that way west and more west than south, but the convention center did a lot to help that area and to build up a little bit south; it was kind of running down then.

RUDD: What do you think of the downtown area? When you moved here from Lincoln, Nebraska, the City Hall was the tallest building.

YORTY: Yes, they had a thirteen-story limitation then which was taken off in 1959. They were afraid of earthquakes and now they have developed what they consider earthquake-proof buildings, and I must say that after one earthquake here in Los Angeles, Mr. [Albert Carey] Martin [Jr.], the architect, brought me over the motion pictures showing me--because they had a seismograph on each floor--that the building had acted exactly as he had predicted during the earthquake. Nevertheless, I wouldn't want to be in a fifty-story building if there were another bad earthquake; it'd sway but I don't think it'd fall, though I don't want to be there.

RUDD: Do you like the skyline of Los Angeles?

YORTY: Well, I think it was necessary to build it up, but it may be a little bit overdone now; however, it's moving west all the time, and Spring Street began to decay. We were trying to make some plans to revive it; we wanted to move a new library down there and things like that. But that didn't come about either.

RUDD: I believe there's new plans for-- [tape recorder off] I understand that while you were mayor, there was hopes for a new charter. Had you been looking towards this?

YORTY: Oh, yes, the city needs a new charter. The present charter is very old, and it gives the council too much power and deprives the mayor of the power he needs to run the city properly. Any mayor who's any good is going to have to fight with city council to get a program through, as I had a fight with them over the rubbish collection and over the health department and over the registration for city's lobbyists and everything. I'd run into trouble with the city council. And I should have had more authority.

RUDD: I saw that in 1970, Ed[mund] Edelman--he had a Board of Freeholders group and they redesigned the charter, but it didn't pass?

YORTY: Well, I don't remember what Eddie did, but there have been several attempts to amend the charter, but it

really should be amended to give the mayor authority to run the city. The powers are too divided now.

RUDD: You mentioned something a second ago, and I'd like to talk about it, too. You had a lot of, I can't say problems, but issues over this lobbyist program?

YORTY: Oh, I had a hard fight with the city council, naturally; they are under the control of the lobbyists most of the time, most of them are. They didn't want the lobbyists to have to register. I insisted on the lobbyist registration ordinance; the people were back of me on it, so I finally got it through. But they watered it down so that I didn't know whether I wanted to sign it or not.

RUDD: Are you confronted a lot by lobbyists? Were you for them, for the most part?

YORTY: Well, no. [laughing] I was against them because they were against me all the time.

RUDD: Friends of the council, then?

YORTY: Yes, they worked with the city council, they still do. But they work with the mayor now and they more or less control the city and are not having the fights with it, like I did.

RUDD: Was there a uniform building code under your regime?

YORTY: Well, yes. I've forgotten exactly how much progress we've made with that, but I wanted to combine it with a national or state uniform building code, so we

didn't have all these different ordinances in the city, because it's very hard for an architect from out of the state to come in here and work with all these various city ordinances. I think it was the state building code that I tried to get, yes.

RUDD: Now, would this have been part of the municipal code?

YORTY: Well, it would have taken the place of the municipal code in most things. There would be some things that are naturally very indigenous to Los Angeles and purely local in character, so you have to control them. But it would have been a uniform state code, which would be much better.

RUDD: Were the Santa Monica Mountains an issue?

YORTY: Oh, never much of an issue during my term, no.

RUDD: I don't understand; I hear people in the city talking about the Santa Monica Mountains, but Santa Monica isn't part of the city of Los Angeles.

YORTY: Well, the mountain area is, some of it. They wanted to build a big park there which they've spent some money on already, but I didn't want to build a great big park. I wanted a lot of little parks that people could get to, because we've got Griffith Park, for instance, and I don't think we need any more great big parks. But we ought to have a lot more park land that's accessible to the people of Los Angeles.

RUDD: Like Westlake Park, or MacArthur Park, whatever?

YORTY: Well, MacArthur Park was ruined by the developers of Wilshire Boulevard who filled that lake, which never should have been done, and I opposed that at the time; I wasn't in the city government then, but I opposed it. But that's the kind of park that we need. We need lots more small parks. And this Watts Labor Community Action Committee started building some small parks down in South Central Los Angeles, where people could look out the window and see their kids playing and keep track of where they were. But I don't know what's happened to those parks; I don't know whether they'd been kept up or not.

RUDD: Were you familiar with the Hoover Project around USC [University of Southern California]?

YORTY: Oh, yes; I was instrumental in that.

RUDD: Can you tell me anything about it?

YORTY: Well, it was very difficult because it meant moving some black people out of the area, and we didn't want to be accused of doing it because of being anti-black. So we had the cooperation of Councilman Billy Mills, who cooperated with us very much, and we expanded the area for USC, which was very necessary because it was too crowded.

RUDD: Billy Mills was the councilman from the Tenth District at that time?

YORTY: No, I don't think it's the Tenth.

RUDD: Oh, the Eighth District.

YORTY: Eighth yes, but he was very cooperative and a very fine councilman and he's now a superior court judge, and they tell me that he's doing an excellent job as a judge.

RUDD: Now, let me ask you--I didn't think of this--during the Watts riots, were there any black councilmen there, at that time?

YORTY: Well, there were none there; I don't think there were any black councilmen then, except Bradley, and he was in Spain on a junket; then he heard about the rioting, but he didn't come back to help us; he stayed in Spain.

RUDD: Was Gilbert Lindsay in at that time?

YORTY: I don't remember whether Gilbert was in the council then or not.

RUDD: Now, were you involved in any Bunker Hill projects?

YORTY: Oh, yes; everybody was in Bunker Hill because it's one of the big projects in Los Angeles, and we moved ahead pretty rapidly.

RUDD: Were you involved--was Angel's Flight there or had it been part of--

YORTY: No, Angel's Flight was moved out as part of the Bunker Hill project but it was supposed to be returned. I don't think it ever has been, but Angel's Flight was a real historic landmark, and I wanted to see it returned. And we preserved it so we could return it, but I don't know what's happened to it now.

RUDD: Tom Bradley in--is it 1969?--became your opponent for mayor. What do you think was the driving force behind him getting that much clout to run against you?

YORTY: Well, he had a lot of rich radicals for him who put up a lot of money and the radical element was always against me. You have to understand that there are a lot of anti-anticommunists. Now, by that I mean, you could be against communists, as I am, and a lot of people get along with the communists by being against anybody who's against the communists. And so all those people were still mad at me for investigating communism in 1939 and '40. And they thought they had an opportunity to elect him and they put up a lot of money for him.

RUDD: Was he a formidable candidate or opponent?

YORTY: Well, he was formidable, yes, because of the amount of money and the propaganda. He hired a propagandist from New York, big name, I've forgotten his name now. [David Garth] He made up his commercials for him, and they didn't care what they said, didn't care how they lied, and they told a lot of untruths and they got a pretty big vote. But he didn't carry the [San Fernando] Valley.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE TWO

SEPTEMBER 27, 1985

YORTY: He had retired from the police department and got his police department pension, which he still gets, but he didn't emphasize the fact that he'd been a police officer because he was afraid he'd alienate the black vote if he did. But in the next election, he played up the police department connection real big in the white area and, of course, he carried the black area because he was black. They wanted a black mayor. I don't blame them. That's all right, if they wanted a black mayor. But there were a lot of blacks who were not for him and who have been disappointed now in his term in office. But he's really campaigning in the black area today for the governorship, because he didn't campaign there very hard when he ran for governor the first time, and he didn't get the votes in the black area that he thought he was entitled to.

RUDD: Did he have a lot of political savvy when he ran the first time?

YORTY: No. 'Course, he'd been in the city council, so he knew about some of the city problems. I don't remember what his campaign was about; they'd say anything to make him look good, you know? The New Yorker [Garth] came out here and made up his TV commercials and he didn't know anything about Los Angeles.

RUDD: What are your feelings and attitudes about your being mayor at the end of that decade?

YORTY: Well, I think most people would agree that it was a wonderful era because we built a lot of things and paid for them with a balanced budget. Of course, always; but you have to have a balanced budget in Los Angeles by law.

Bradley in his recent campaigns has tried to emphasize that he'd had a balanced budget every year, but we've always had a balanced budget because it's required by law. So that was one of the things they did. They'd say he had a balanced budget to imply that maybe I hadn't had. I always had a balanced budget because I had to by law.

RUDD: Was it hard to get things that you had wanted on the budget that possibly the council wouldn't go for?

YORTY: Well, they didn't accept my budget; they made up their own, too. The city administrative officer has more to do with formulating the budget than anybody, and [C. Erwin] Piper that I appointed administrative officer was very careful about the budget, worked with me very closely in formulating it.

RUDD: Well, let me ask you something about Erwin Piper. How come Piper Technical Center is named after him?

YORTY: Well, because that's one of the projects that was planned in my administration, and we condemned the land that it's built on, for that purpose, and had quite a fight

over that but we finally got it. We planned the whole thing and we made the plans and all while I was mayor. But it was completed after I was mayor, and of course, they wouldn't want to name it after me, so they named it after Piper. But he arranged for the financing later; the scheme, they made a lease-financing arrangement for it.

RUDD: He was with the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], wasn't he?

YORTY: He was retired from the FBI when I appointed him to the public works commission, because I'd heard that if there was any graft going on in the city, it would be in the public works department. So I appointed the former FBI operator public works president, and [he] did such a good job that when the city administrative officer that I had in temporarily didn't please me--he didn't do a good job--I called Piper in and told him that I'd like to appoint him city administrative officer, but I said I want a shake-hands agreement that if you're not a success, you'll resign. But I never had to call him on that because he was city administrative officer longer than anybody in the history of the city.

RUDD: Even longer than Sam [Samuel] Leask [Jr.]?

YORTY: Yes, longer than Leask.

RUDD: That's interesting. Why did he retire?

YORTY: Well, he just got tired of the job. After all, he's had a few years now, and he was there a long time, all under me, and then under Bradley for several years, but he retired.

RUDD: In looking back in the sixties, were there any really large departmental changes that you made?

YORTY: Well, we had to change the planning department. I think the planning officer died or something; I don't remember what happened to him. But we had a civil service exam and Calvin Hamilton passed first and his qualifications were very good, so we appointed him.

RUDD: Wasn't he from back east?

YORTY: I think he was from Indianapolis. I think he was planning director of Indianapolis; I'm not sure it was Indianapolis, but I think so.

RUDD: Were any new departments added, besides data processing?

YORTY: Data service--that was added. And I don't think there were any departments. We had a human relations bureau and that was expanding, but Bradley abolished that when he came into office. So I don't remember any actual departments being formed.

RUDD: Is there anything else you'd like to say about your time in the sixties as the mayor?

YORTY: Well, nothing except I think it was a very successful era. As I say, we built the zoo and it's ridiculous to think of this city without a zoo and without a convention center. And we built the art center--the children's art center--and we wanted to rehabilitate the Venice area, which we almost did, but has never been done now and it badly needs rejuvenation, and if they want to talk about urban renewal, they ought to do something about Venice.

RUDD: Would you like to see it go back to be like the Abbott Kinney's Venice, with the canals and everything?

YORTY: Well, I was going to widen the canals and give them an outlet to the ocean; and the people would have their own docks. We were going to widen the lots; the twenty-five foot lots, we were going to make fifty feet. We had big plans for it, but we had some resistance in the city council. I remember one city councilman, one woman city councilman, who went [laughter] down along a creek down there and waded around with some of those people from that area and said that the clams would be destroyed if Venice was rejuvenated. [laughter] Sounds funny now but it's true; it happened. Because there are a lot of people down in the Venice area where they're supposed to rent to one family in those houses, and they get four in there, four families, and there are a lot of dope people down there and

that kind of people were there. And they raised hell. And so they blocked it. It's too bad that they blocked it. It ought to be done and I hope someday it will be done when they get a mayor with some vision and the city council will go along.

And do you know this spilling of the sewage in the Santa Monica Bay? Well, I had a project down there to treat that sewage. I had a fellow down there--Dixon Collins--who showed one machine, and he took some of that water and drank some of it afterwards, with his machine to purify it. But we were right on that project, which has been abandoned until they started fighting Los Angeles now. And of course, the Tillman Project out in the Valley was to take some of the pressure off the sewage being dumped into the bay. And that project was started under my administration and the cost was to be about \$22 million, and they delayed and delayed and fooled around about it, till the last time when I talked to [Donald C.] Tillman when he was city engineer, he said the project was up to \$75 million. I don't know what it cost, but it just opened the other day.

RUDD: Oh, really?

YORTY: Yeah. It just opened. These things take a long time to plan, you know. By the time you get the plans drawn and all the studies and everything, it takes quite a

while. It's like the Olympic Games--Bradley gets credit for bringing the Olympic Games here, and he had practically nothing to do with it. Just happened to be mayor when they came.

RUDD: That's interesting. What communities have grown or started? Were there any things in the [San Fernando] Valley that--

YORTY: Oh, the Valley's been a growing area for a long time, and it was then too, yes. And we had the Hoover Project and a lot of projects in the city, I think there were--well, I don't remember how many--but different areas that need to be rehabilitated, and we got low-interest loans with federal money to build them up. We had a lot of that going on.

RUDD: Is there anything else you'd like to say about your first ten years as mayor?

YORTY: Well, no, nothing more, except I had the greatest police department in the world and it's smaller now than when I finished my term as mayor. And the anti-police police commission has wrecked the morale; the police department is still a good department because they have a fine chief, but he's been under terrible pressure from the mayor.

RUDD: Anything else?

YORTY: No, that's enough.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE ONE

OCTOBER 3, 1985

RUDD: Sam, you'd mentioned that something had happened between you and Edward G. Robinson, the actor?

YORTY: Well, yes, that was when I was in Congress. He called me from Tennessee where he was playing in **Darkness at Noon**, which is a very anticommunist show, and said he'd like to see me privately in Washington. So I met him over at the Statler Hotel and he told me that his wife was in Paris and he couldn't get a passport because of his communist connections. He said, "I'm not a communist and they've just used me. They pretended to be my friends, and I didn't realize that they were not real friends, they were just using me."

So I said, "Well, will you [testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities]?"

He said, "I certainly will." So we called a special committee, Tad [Francis E.] Walter of Pennsylvania, chairman, called a special committee of the Committee on Un-American Activities for the following day. Eddie Robinson appeared and told his story about how they'd used him and denied they were communists, but they really were, as he found out. He said he'd just let them use his house and everything else, and his feelings were really hurt. So Tad Walters said to him, "Mr. Robinson, you've been a prize

sucker," and I knew that was going to be the headline. And it certainly was. But Edward G. Robinson told the whole story about how these communists had fooled him, denied that they were communists, pretended to be his friends, and they weren't really his friends, and so we got him the passport through Miss [Frances] Knight, who was the head of the passport bureau.

RUDD: What was the year here, approximately?

YORTY: Oh, that was about 1952, I think.

RUDD: Nineteen fifty-two.

YORTY: Now, Hynda, there's one other thing from the last interview; we talked about the community renewal agency [Community Redevelopment Agency].

RUDD: Community renewal agency?

YORTY: Yeah, and this is quite an interesting incident. I wanted to appoint a new head of the community renewal agency, and I wanted to take it out of politics. So I asked Mrs. Buffum Chandler who she would suggest to head the agency, and she said a fellow named Z. Wayne Griffin had headed the Hollywood Bowl committee and done such a good job that she would recommend him. I appointed him head of the community renewal agency, and he did a very good job.

RUDD: This was Dorothy Chandler?

YORTY: Yes, Dorothy Buffum Chandler. And that will be a kind of surprise to people because-- [tape recorder off]

RUDD: Tell me, who is George Putnam?

YORTY: Well, George Putnam is a famous TV and radio commentator. And of course, not only a commentator, but a newsman, you know.

RUDD: How were you involved with him? Or were you involved with him?

YORTY: Well, I don't remember how I first got involved with him, but he was the highest paid newsman on TV in the United States at the time. He changed from channel 5 to channel 11 because he got a bigger contract for money over there. I went to see him, and we sort of hit it off. The **Los Angeles Times** owned channel 11 at the time. But George Putnam kept putting me on the news every time I'd go down there and this was very helpful to me. So he was very glad when I got elected and we're still very good friends.

RUDD: Now, when did this happen?

YORTY: Well, this was when I first was elected mayor in 1961.

RUDD: What was the radio show "Ask Your Mayor"?

YORTY: Oh, that was on CRS, KNX, the people could call in, and I tried to be there an hour a week, and they'd just call and ask me questions.

RUDD: Was this while you were mayor?

YORTY: Oh, yes, that was when I was mayor, yeah.

RUDD: I see. Was this anything like "fireside chats" like FDR used--

YORTY: No, it was just a question and answer. People just called in; anything they wanted to ask, I'd answer it.

RUDD: And was this through the entire term?

YORTY: No, no, it didn't last too long, because it was too hard for me to set aside a certain hour, I just couldn't do it, I had too much to do.

RUDD: What about your TV show ["Sam Yorty"], when was that?

YORTY: Well, my first TV show was about 1965 [1967], and that was on channel 9. That was a different show, that was-- Jack Rourke was the producer. He's still a producer. But he produced the show, and he used to have a lot of motion picture and entertainment people on with me, like, we had Bob Hope and others. Then we had politicians, like the mayor of New York and a mixed group of guests. But I always started that show with a commentary where I had a big map of Vietnam and the area, and I used to tell people what was happening there, to give them the right stuff, what was going on, the right truth. So the show lasted a year and we were pretty successful.

RUDD: Where did you get this "right truth" about Vietnam?

YORTY: Well, by being there.

RUDD: I see. I understand in 1970 you considered running for governor.

YORTY: Oh, I probably did. I don't remember exactly whether it was 1970 or not.

RUDD: Was this against [Ronald] Reagan?

YORTY: I think so. If I hadn't run, the other Democrat would have gotten more votes in the primary than Reagan did. But by running against him I caused the Democrats to split because the fellow running against him was more of a liberal Democrat when I was a conservative Democrat. So that really helped Reagan that I ran against him.

RUDD: At one point, and I'm not sure where, there was political support from the conservative Republicans for you.

YORTY: Well, I always had their support after my first term as mayor. They always supported me for mayor. They didn't openly do it, but the conservatives voted for me, because it was a nonpartisan race, you know. I think some clubs did openly endorse me, Republican clubs, I mean.

RUDD: Judge Stephen Reinhardt was quite an individual. I don't know if he was judge then, but he was head of the California Democratic Party.

YORTY: Yeah, well, he's always been an extreme liberal as far as I'm concerned. He always fought me, and he was appointed to the police commission by [Thomas] Bradley, and

he did a terrible job there. And then he was appointed governor by [Edmund G.] Brown [Jr.], I mean, not governor, but appointed to the bench where he's now sitting.

RUDD: I see. What was this paper he wrote, "I Can't Take Yorty." Did you ever see it?

YORTY: No, I never saw it, not to this day.

RUDD: In 1972 you ran for president.

YORTY: Yes.

RUDD: Was that a difficult experience?

YORTY: Well, no, it wasn't a difficult experience because the only statewide newspaper in New Hampshire was for me, and that was the first primary vote. All the other candidates were criticizing Vietnam, for our being there, and I was justifying our being there, but not the way we were fighting the war. So I was the only one doing that, and that's really why I ran, to try and draw the issue. But, oh, McGovern! And also I was against Muskie, who was a member of the organization called "Members of Congress for Peace Through Law." They didn't believe in a big defense, they believed in the United Nations or somebody backing us up, and that would be nothing. So I wanted to defeat Muskie, and I did that, but I helped nominate McGovern, I guess, and he was more left than Muskie, but he had no chance of being elected against Nixon.

RUDD: How was it when you went to Nebraska?

YORTY: Well, it was very good. Naturally, I was received there very well and received the endorsement of a couple of newspapers. But we didn't have any money by then because we weren't raising a lot of money. I conducted a few debates in Nebraska, and it was very pleasant.

RUDD: Did they look at you as a favorite son?

YORTY: No, I'd been a Californian too long for that.

RUDD: I see. Now, McGovern was against Nixon at that point, wasn't he?

YORTY: Oh, yes, he was the main candidate. When we got to California, I withdrew in favor of Hubert Humphrey, who was a good friend of mine and a different kind of a liberal because he was anticommunist. But when I met with Hubert Humphrey to tell him I was going to withdraw in his favor, I said to him, "Hubert, there's only one thing I don't like about your candidacy, and that is you've been a little critical of Vietnam, and you didn't used to be."

And he said, "Well, Sam, it's been a loser for you, and it would be a loser for me." I'll never forget that.

RUDD: Now, Johnson was still alive at that point, wasn't he?

YORTY: Johnson was president.

RUDD: Oh, that's right. What was the **Yorty Report Newsletter**?

YORTY: Oh, that was after I left the mayor's office. I published the newsletter for quite a while. It went out once a month.

RUDD: Was it political?

YORTY: Oh, political, but factual I think.

RUDD: Where did you get funding for something like this?

YORTY: Well, we charged people for it.

RUDD: Oh, I see. In your 1973 campaign for mayor, was it a different ball of wax this time against Bradley, as opposed to the one in '69?

YORTY: Well, it was somewhat different, because he kept emphasizing in the white areas that he was a former policeman, and I think he was afraid to do that in 1969, because he must have been afraid that he would lose the black vote if he did that. He found out that by advertising himself as a former policeman, that appealed to a lot of the moderates and the whites and others in the [San Fernando] Valley, and it was very successful. And of course, he had so much money put up from some of the liberals, because as I say, there's so many anti-anticommunists. And because I was anticommunist, they were against me, and they could ingratiate themselves with the real left by being against me without being communist or even saying they were communist. But the anti-anticommunists really fought me, and of course Bradley had

the support of the Communist Party. This fellow [Gus Hall] who was national head of the Communist Party [of the United States] actually came out for him.

RUDD: Speaking of communists, would you say that party infiltration is different today than it was during the early years of your being a political person?

YORTY: Well, it's certainly more subtle now, and a lot of liberals are following a Communist Party line, like on defense, but they're not communists. They don't even know why they're doing it. But they are infiltrated.

You see, the Communist Party is not a simple party. You can join the Communist Party because you think it's good, and people tell you what's good and everything, and you're not really an inner member of the Communist Party until they test you out and you become what they call a "professional revolutionary." Then you know what they're trying to do to overthrow the United States and other democracies. But up until that time, all you can see around is good people wanting good things, and they'll take on the struggle. Even a tree that's going to be moved, they'll take on the struggle to preserve the tree, and that way they meet people and get acquainted with them, and they think they're just people wanting to stop the tree removal. Well, in that way they gradually figure out the ones that are possible to join in the Communist Party.

Then they can ask them to join, and they don't tell them the real truth for a long time, until they've really tested them out.

RUDD: Well, do you think the party's become more sophisticated?

YORTY: Oh, certainly it has. I have one of the Communist Party books here, and I understand they don't even carry them anymore.

RUDD: Really? After the campaign, after you lost the '73 election, you joined a law firm. Was this the same law firm you had been with in your earlier years?

YORTY: No, I didn't join any law firm, I just opened offices out on Wilshire Boulevard with some other people. I never did join a firm.

RUDD: I see. What did you specialize in?

YORTY: Oh, just general law.

RUDD: Was there still the bug in you to get involved in politics, or did you need to heal?

YORTY: Well, I became very busy then and got my TV show, the second TV show, and I was very busy with that and I didn't think very much about politics.

RUDD: You switched to become a Republican?

YORTY: Yes, after they nominated McGovern, that was too much for me. I say I didn't leave the Democratic Party, the Democratic Party left me.

RUDD: Do you still consider yourself a Republican?

YORTY: Oh, yes, I am now.

RUDD: What was your three-hour talk show?

YORTY: I don't remember any three-hour talk show. I had a three-hour radio show where people could call in. That was before I had the TV show.

RUDD: Was this the first one we were talking about, the first radio show?

YORTY: No, it was the second one. This is after 1973.

RUDD: Oh, I see. In 1974 there was a council subpoena over the city land swap with the Occidental Petroleum.

YORTY: Well, that was just an attempt of some of the city council members that I opposed and had a fight with, to get even with me. It was a lot of baloney, and it all turned out to be nothing. But it was a dirty trick and I really resented it, and I still do.

RUDD: Was this involved with Armand Hammer?

YORTY: Yes, it was over the lease at Pacific Palisades, which I favored. Bradley used that against me and made out the big environmental reasons why he was against the drilling down there. But then lately he approved it.

RUDD: In 1977 you opposed Bradley, is this right?

YORTY: Oh, yes. There was no one running against him that amounted to anything, and I put my name on the ballot, just my name, Sam Yorty, not former mayor, not attorney, just

name. And just for the name on the ballot, and not spending any money, I got a lot of votes against him.

RUDD: Really?

YORTY: More votes than [John] Ferraro got after he spent a lot of money.

RUDD: Ferraro ran at the same time?

YORTY: No, no. Ferraro ran this last time.

RUDD: Oh, this last time. In 1980 you were GOP nomination for the [United States] Senate?

YORTY: No, in 1954 I was a Democratic nominee for the [United States] Senate.

RUDD: OK, but in 1980 you weren't a GOP?

YORTY: No. Oh, yes, I'm mixed up. Yes, I ran, and that one I should have won. This guy, oh, I can't recall his name [Paul Gann] at the moment, but he's always putting measures on the ballot. He didn't know a thing about foreign policy, but he got a lot of money from Justin Dart and some people like that who didn't really know what they were doing by supporting him. I don't know whether they supported him because they wanted him to beat me and elect [Alan] Cranston or not, because Justin Dart openly gave money to Cranston when he ran the time before. And Justin Dart was a big Republican, so I don't know but what maybe he was still for Cranston and didn't want me nominated because I might have given Cranston a real race. But the guy he supported was just a walkover for Cranston.

RUDD: What do you feel about Cranston as a senator?

YORTY: Well, he's very good about tending to his administration, as far as the people writing to him and all that, but he's an extreme left-winger, and he shows it all the time by his votes on defense.

RUDD: In 1981 you again entered the race for mayor.

YORTY: Well, that's the only time I was in it, just-- In 1980 you had asked me about then; it wasn't 1980, it was 1981.

RUDD: Let's see, 1980 was the GOP nomination for Senate. In 1977 you ran against Bradley, and then in 1981 you ran again.

YORTY: No. There's something wrong there because 1977 maybe, but not 1981.

RUDD: Okay. In 1982, who was the Dragon Lady [Tran Le Xuan, usually known as Mme. Nhu], or who is the Dragon Lady?

YORTY: Well, that was the wife of the brother of [Ngo Dinh] Diem in Vietnam, and she was the widow of the brother [Ngo Dinh Nhu] of President Diem.

RUDD: Sister-in-law to--

YORTY: To President Diem. And he'd been a partner of Diem in the administration in Vietnam, and he really caused trouble for the president there. I think he was sincere, but he was trying to do a little bit too much too fast. But of course, the United States connived to get rid of

Diem, but in conniving to get rid of him they got him murdered and really upset the administration in Vietnam. It took a long time to straighten it out.

RUDD: Well, was she responsible for anything going wrong?

YORTY: No, she wasn't. Except she had a big women's organization in Vietnam, and I guess it was pretty powerful. And she was a pretty strong woman, and she came here to California later. She was about to have a breakdown, nervous breakdown.

RUDD: How old a woman was she at that time, would you say?

YORTY: I don't know, I'd guess about forty-five or fifty but I'm not sure. You couldn't tell her age by her looks; she was a rather nice looking Oriental. She had a daughter about seventeen who was a lovely little girl, spoke good English, and went with her mother, helped her. The daughter was later killed in Paris.

RUDD: Oh, what a tragedy!

YORTY: It really was, yes.

RUDD: Nineteen eighty-four was a difficult year for you with your family.

YORTY: Well, yes it was. I lost my son first with cancer, and then a few months later I lost my wife.

RUDD: Yes, it would be very difficult. You're a very strong man.

YORTY: Well, you're saying that. I'm not.

RUDD: Well, you're a survivor.

YORTY: Well, I'm a survivor, yes.

RUDD: What about retirement? What are you doing? People are interested in knowing what you do.

YORTY: Well, I'm mainly working on this autobiography right now. I'm not doing much in the law business. But I'm going to use these interviews, when you get them written up, as a foundation for the local part of my autobiography, but I think I'm going to start dictating on the international part very soon.

RUDD: Oh, who are you going to work with?

YORTY: Oh, one writer that I have in mind. Now I'm not sure I want to work with him, but I'll work with a good writer.

RUDD: Very good. Do you think you'll ever run for office again?

YORTY: No, no more.

RUDD: No more, why?

YORTY: Well, for one thing, I'm seventy-six years old, and that doesn't appeal to the voters too much.

RUDD: Do you feel young enough to run?

YORTY: Oh, I feel young enough if I wanted to do it, but I don't want to now.

RUDD: As Sam Yorty, what do you think you gave to the city of Los Angeles?

YORTY: Well, I gave the city an international reputation, and I built the city up in a lot of ways, you know, all the things I built here. Nothing's been done much since. But I gave it a good police force, I increased the police force, increased the fire department, gave both those departments high morale. And wherever I had managers to appoint, I appointed them nonpolitical, on their ability and their records.

RUDD: Okay. One of the last things is what did the city of Los Angeles give to you?

YORTY: Well, it gave me an opportunity to help the city and to serve in the executive branch. I'd always been a legislator before that, but this gave me a chance as an executive to carry out some things. And if we had the strong-mayor type of government, I'd have gotten a lot more done. But the city council was always an obstacle.

RUDD: Do you have any regrets other than, say, the charter not being what it should be?

YORTY: No, I don't have any regrets because I accomplished a great deal in spite of the charter and in spite of the obstacles and the opposition of some of the city councilmen. But if you'll look at the record you can see that I accomplished a great deal.

RUDD: Before closing, is there anything else you'd like to say?

YORTY: No, there isn't anything else except I'd like you to look at that **Los Angeles Times** editorial which ran the morning after I was elected. The title was on the front page, "There's Nothing Left But Hope." I have that preserved. It's a very funny editorial considering the **Times** supported me four years later for mayor again. But I want it understood that I always got along with Dorothy Buffum Chandler and she's considered "the" **Times**. I got along well with her, but it was her son Otis who took over as publisher of the **Times** that caused me the most trouble.

RUDD: In reflecting back, are there any people that you remember that worked with you in city government that really stand out?

YORTY: Well, of course, Eleanor Chambers, the first deputy mayor who was a woman in the history of Los Angeles, and she was an outstanding administrator and a great politician, so I said she runs the politics and I run the city.

RUDD: Anyone else?

YORTY: Well, Ethel Bryant, the first black woman in that high position was her deputy city mayor, and she did a fine job.

RUDD: What about Joe [Joseph M.] Quinn?

YORTY: Well, he was one of my partners down there. Joe Quinn was a fine deputy mayor and took a lot of load off

me. I could give him an assignment, and he'd see that it was carried out. And of course, the first protocol officer of the city of Los Angeles, Edward [A.] Martinez--not the first one, the first paid one--did a great job, and I kept getting compliments from the State Department for the work he was doing. The State Department sent all the important visitors to Los Angeles. That was partly because we handled them so well. Of course, when the Chinese came here from the People's Republic of China, I had an Asian affairs officer, and she could speak Chinese and went out with Joe Quinn and welcomed the ping pong team to Los Angeles, and that started them off on a good note.

RUDD: Wonderful. Are there any other, any anecdotes, anything that--

YORTY: Oh, no, there's so much happened that I wouldn't get started on that because it would take all day.

RUDD: Fine. Thank you very much.

YORTY: You're certainly welcome.

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