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Peter Klingman: Good morning. I'm Peter Klingman, the Mildred & Doyle Carlton Junior Curator for Special Collections Florida History Center in Politics. My guest this morning in this oral history interview is one of the most interesting gentlemen that has ever graced Florida's political scenes. In terms of power, importance, accomplishment and activity, very few men I have ever had the pleasure of either reading about or studying accomplished as much or participated as much in the state of Florida's development in the 1950s and sixties [1960s] as our guest this morning, the former lieutenant governor of Florida, Tom Adams. Good morning, Tom.

Tom Adams: Thank you Peter. It's a great pleasure to be here, and I look forward to chatting with you.

PK: Good. Let's begin with you biographically. Where were you born? Who were your parents? Things like that.

TA: I was born in Jacksonville, Florida at a little hospital that no longer exists—Riverside Hospital, a very fine institution—on March 11, 1917. And had the good fortune of growing up in a house with two very fine brothers, Hamilton and Lee. Lee was quite an artist. Hamilton spent his life in the horse business.

I had a wonderful group of friends. I grew up in West Jacksonville in Riverside and Avondale. Went to West Riverside Elementary School, John Garr Junior High School, Robert E. Lee Senior High. And those were very interesting days in Jacksonville, high school-wise. There were just two, Jackson on the east side and Robert E. Lee on the west side, and it was quite a hot rivalry.

I spent most of my teen years sailing a boat on the St. Johns River. And there were twenty-five or thirty of us that sailed on a regular basis, and the interesting thing is we still have a little reunion every year. Of course, the numbers have dwindled some, but just two weeks ago I attended the reunion of the River Rats.

PK: Is that what you were called?

TA: That's what we called ourselves, the River Rats. There were quite a group of us, and we meet each year at the Best Western Motel in Orange Park. And I guess we had fifteen or twenty of the fellows there. They come from all over Florida. Most of them are from Jacksonville still. But one fellow comes from up in North Georgia. Another one comes from out in Texas.

At any rate, I graduated from Robert E. Lee in 1935, and was fortunate enough to have a group solicited in Jacksonville, who were primarily my friends, to attend The Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. And I attended the Hill with the idea of going on to Harvard and then to Princeton, or going from Princeton into Harvard for law. But really, the East just didn't shake too well with me. You know, little Southern boy up there in the East. Wonderful friends, great people, but my father had some very dear friends with whom he was associated—all attorneys—in Detroit, Michigan, and they had been involved in some ongoing litigation together over some Florida real estate, and as a result I was sent to the University of Michigan with another one of my very good friends. And it was, I would think, one of the more interesting four years of my life.

But, as far as Mother and Dad are concerned, my mother was from an old Mississippi family up in northeast Mississippi, the Whitfields and the Sykes and the Hamiltons. And they were a very Southern group of people. One of the Whitfields had previously been governor of Mississippi. Their family included Alexander Hamilton in the family tree, and many members of the family had been very active participants on the Confederate side in the Civil War. And I remember as a youngster before there were any airplanes, Mother would make an annual trek back to Columbus, Mississippi, on the Tombigbee River, and drag us along as just little kids to visit Columbus.

My father was born in Jasper. The family originated with the Adams of Massachusetts and came down and finally settled—a large number of the Adams family settled and, I presume, initiated the settlement of Boston, Georgia. They brought Boston down with them. Boston is just north of Jasper. My grandfather was born in Boston. My father was born in Jasper. The family then moved to Terry, where my grandfather had one of the large sawmills there at Fenholloway. And my dad went through the local schools. Wound up a principal and a schoolteacher and then went to Vanderbilt, to Peabody, and then to George Washington Law School, and emerged an attorney and was quite a prominent attorney in Jacksonville, the old firm of Kay, Adams, Ragland, and Kirtz. They were division counsel for the Clyde-Mallory [shipping] line, and also division counsel for the Atlantic Coast Line [railroad company].

And I remember very vividly as a youngster those old river boats that the Clyde-Mallory line had going from Jacksonville down to Sanford, in addition to the ocean going liners they had to go from Jacksonville up to New York. About twice a year the family would board one of those riverboats and take the journey down to Sanford, and it was very, very interesting. Stop at Green Cove Springs. You'd stop at the various stops along the way. They'd load freight, unload freight. Of course, they had passengers up there. I remember old Captain Lun. I don't know whether he was captain of the *City of Jacksonville* or the *Osceola*. One was a side-wheeler. One was a sternwheeler. But those were very interesting days.

And then of course, as I say, when I got to the University of Michigan, after having a year at the Hill, and really learned how to study, repeating my senior year in high school, I did great as a freshman. And since I was taking pre-law, I don't really remember buying any books after my freshman year. It was primarily all the large courses where the professors—what do you call those big courses?

PK: Well, I don't know what they call them in Michigan, but like comprehensive or general education.

TA: Well, yeah, but you know, you'd break up in smaller groups but then—

PK: Study groups.

TA: —but then you have a—

PK: Lecture.

TA: —have a lot of lecture courses. And of course, political science and English and writing and stuff like that just came as automatic. But I got involved in everything a student could get involved in at the University of Michigan. I was in the Sophomore Honor Society, the Junior Honor Society, and was president of my fraternity, and was president of the Student Senate, which we started in those days to try to keep a little equilibrium, cause that's when the Communist influence was very pervasive on the campuses. And I was also (inaudible), which was the Senior Honor Society, and went out for track but wasn't strong enough for the Big Ten, so I switched over and wound up as varsity track manager my senior year.

So I was into everything somebody could get into—even Mimes, the student opera. I enjoyed that very much. So, I was sort of a—

PK: Wait a minute. You were involved in opera?

TA: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. We had—I remember one play, I was a maid—was a black maid in the one presentation I remember. And, oh, yeah, it's—I just gobbled it up. It was great. And then I was married my senior year to my childhood sweetheart, and we came back home. I didn't continue law school at the University of Michigan.

Came back home, and had had just a tremendous yen to get into the dairy business. And Paul Reinhold, who, at that time, had taken over Foremost Dairy [Foremost Dairies, Inc.] for JC Penney [J. C. Penney Company, Inc.]. And Mr. Penney was a client of my father's, and I went to work for Foremost. Started off in the lab, moved up to the milk room and was superintendent of the milk room, and did very well. I used to go to all the dairies and get milk when we were short on the weekend. There were big trucks.

And then I was sent down to Daytona. The war came along, and of course, being in the food producing business, I tried to volunteer for the Navy, but they wouldn't let me, cause I was involved with food. And Foremost sent me down to Daytona. I was plant superintendent there, and I know Daytona in those days—that's where all the WACs [Women's Army Corps] were; the WACs were training. And in Daytona I bought, on my own, a little small little dairy at a place called Avondale down south of Daytona, and my wife Helen—Helen Brown—whom I had married and by then had one daughter, Carolyn, and she now lives in Deland.

I was doing well, milking cows at the little dairy, and I wasn't selling it to Foremost, but was selling to Bassett in those days, not to a competitor of Foremost. At any rate, one day Mr. Reinhold came down

and had lunch with us at the house, because we all going to school together, his girls and my wife and myself; we were all part of the same group there in Riverside and he wanted to have lunch.

After lunch, we sat on the front porch and he called me Tommy. And he said, "Tommy, you have a decision to make."

And I said "Fine, what is that, Mr. Reinhold?"

"Well," he said, "you can't work for you and me too. You've got to decide whether you want to work for me and Foremost, or whether you want to work for yourself. There's no hurry. You don't have to decide today, but just let me know. Because," he said, "you can't serve two masters."

"Well," I said, "I understand that. That makes good sense, and I don't want to be short about anything, but I don't need to wait. I appreciate the opportunities you've given me. It's been a wonderful experience, and I've tried to do what you wanted me to do in a very productive way, but I think I'd better work for Tom."

So I terminated with Foremost, and with that little dairy I then bought another dairy and we moved up to Ormond. And I wanted to get back to Jacksonville and get back home. With the war going on, the Skinner Dairy in South Jacksonville was then vacant, and having known the Skinners very well in earlier years, I leased the vacant Skinner Dairy and moved my combined dairy up there.

And then the Skinner boys were coming back from the war, and they wanted to use that, and Mr. Gladwell—a gentlemen named Gladwell had a large dairy over on Blinding Road. The dairy was at the intersection of Blinding Road and [Interstate] 295, which is the bypass around the south side of Jacksonville. And Mr. Gladwell was getting older and all he had was several daughters. He didn't have any sons, and so he invited me to join him as a partner. So I moved my cows from the Skinner Dairy over to the Gladwell Dairy, which was right there where that big shopping center is now, and combined, we had, at one time, the largest dairy in the state of Florida.

PK: How many head is that, Tom?

TA: What's that?

PK: How many head of cattle was that?

TA: Well, we were probably milking about fifteen hundred head of cows around the clock using these old surge milkers [Surge Bucket Milker] that you had to hang onto the cow. It wasn't a mechanized operation like it is now. And we had moved from the east side of the river over in the Orange Park area where the family lived at that time, over at Orange Park where Helen's family lived, and the dairy was just up the road over on Blinding Road. Of course, that whole area has changed greatly now.

And then—the dairy business I enjoyed tremendously and still do, but it is a very confining sort of thing and I know that many times—by then we had three daughters. Augusta had come along. She now lives in Monticello; Augusta Byrd. And Fran had come along. She now lives in Raleigh-Durham. But I'd leave home early in the morning before they'd get up, go to the dairy and then get back home late at

night, and I might go a week without seeing the kids at all. While I enjoyed it greatly, it just wasn't a very family-oriented activity at that time.

So I had an opportunity to divest myself of the dairy, which I did, and about that time Hudson Pulp and Paper Company was getting started down at Palatka, and we had a good bit of timber in West Jacksonville, property that my father had accumulated through the years as a result of the old Baldwin drainage district that existed out there west of Jacksonville. And we had purchased the timber rights, which the Nussbaums had reserved on all that Jacksonville Heights property out there. So I proceeded to cut that timber and take it to Palatka. And, as a result, became one of the three major contractors to log the Palatka Mill when it first started and was Hudson Pulp & Paper. It now, of course, is Georgia-Pacific.

And, in addition to cutting the timber in West Jacksonville, we began to cut timber down in Flagler County at a little timber location that Hudson had acquired at Relay, which is south of Bunnell. And then I was sent out to Cross City to log [at] the old Perpetual Forest out there that Hudson had acquired to make sure that mill stayed with plenty of timber. And I wound up cutting timber at Perry and at Lake City.

So I would start out on a Monday morning to get everyone going and go down to Bunnell. Go by the mill. Then go to Cross City where I had a manager working for me, a very fine young fellow that graduated forestry at University of Florida, and then go on out to Perry. By then, we had leased a farm at Greenville, which my brother ran. Spend the night at the farm at Greenville and come back by Lake City and get on back home. So, a pretty intense activity still and then, at the end of the week, I'd get enough money for the payroll and make the rounds again, paying everybody off. I had a little colored boy that rode with me on these trips—his name was Spank—just to keep me company.

And it was—those were very interesting times and interesting days. We started a little dairy at the farm in Greenville, and we grew cotton, tobacco, corn—just a general crop. It was about a two thousand acre farm, and it's still there on the south side of US 90 just east of Greenville, between Greenville and Madison. Of course, I made a lot of friends out there. Got to know a lot of people. But I guess agriculture has just always been in my blood, and I've enjoyed it.

And then—I'll stop this dissertation in a minute, but I need to get you to where we need to be. Living in Orange Park, I had become very active locally. They wanted me to serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission. Of course, Orange Park then was just a little crossroads, and now it's wall-to-wall people. But we had a rotating Senate district. All this time, while I've been involved in everything political at the University of Michigan, I just had a gnawing feeling to get involved in politics back home. But the opportunity never presented itself until, with a rotating Senate district between Clay and Baker Counties. Ed Fraser, who for many years was active in the Senate at that time—he had been senator from Baker County, and of course, Ed later became secretary to the Senate. And, I think, at one time Ed even ran for comptroller, something like that.

But it was Clay County's turn to put up the candidates, and the incumbent was a gentleman by the name of Slater Smith. And Slater had served one or two terms in the Senate on rotation, and his father before him had been in the Senate. The Senate seat from Clay County had been in that family for—oh, gosh, since the early twenties [1920s]. And the sheriff in Clay County was a gentleman named John Hall.

And Sheriff Hall was a very prominent individual. He owned a bank. He owned a lot of property and was in the turpentine business, and the sheriff and the Senate are pretty well (inaudible).

Well, it looked like there wasn't anybody running. We used to listen to Ed Fraser. By that time they had a little bust up with the sheriff and with the power structure in Clay County, and Ed was avidly pursuant of candidates other than Slater Smith, Junior. So, several people took a look at it and decided no, and it got down to the point looked like the guy was going to get elected by acclamation, which is not very much—not very good. So I figured, you know, everything to gain and nothing to lose.

So I threw my hat in the ring to run for the state senate. My only experience locally in politics was a member of the Orange Park Planning and Zoning Board. Now, in retrospect—I don't know whether you want any more family business or not, but my mother and father were both wonderful people. My father was one of those folks that wanted you to do things on your own. He did not coddle any of us. The family had orange groves in Lake County. We had considerable property. Fifteen, twenty thousand acres he'd accumulated out in west Duval County. We used to go back and forth to the orange groves quite regularly. He had quite a green thumb.

The family—we lived on Riverside Avenue between Willow Branch and McDuff when I was born and as a youngster, and then moved down to the foot of Edgewood Avenue out in Avondale. I had a little rowboat and used to row my boat from the foot of Edgewood over to Ortega Point and back every morning before I went to school. And then when I went off to college, the family moved to Orange Park—I mean, to Mandarin. We owned about—the family was able to purchase and acquired a beautiful location on Mandarin Point, about twenty acres.

My father was very active in legal circles in Florida, civic circles in Florida. We had a place at the beach. We used to spend the summer at the beach every summer, and we lived up at the north end of Jacksonville Beach before you get to Atlantic Beach and didn't get much service from Jacksonville Beach. So he and a group got together and incorporated Neptune Beach, which is between Jacksonville Beach and Atlantic Beach. And he was the first mayor and a member of the council.

And in those days, had a little railroad train that ran from the beach to Jacksonville—well, it went from Mayport. And had a two-lane brick road going from the beach to Jacksonville, and you had to cross the river on a ferry. We always—we had a pony—I had a pony. His name was Doctor. And we'd take old Doctor down, put him on the ferry and go across the river on the ferry, and Mr. Ploof of Ploof Transfer had a stable on the south side. We'd spend the night there and then ride Doctor down to the beach the next day. And I had a real good friend, Bruce Tyler. His father was head of—they were the Schlitz distributors and one of the large food distributors in Jacksonville. So we had our ponies at the beach. Had wonderful summers. So it was a very active youth, and then on through prep school, college and back home and up to politics.

PK: Got it. Let me ask you two questions before we leave the background stuff. Did you or your dad in the dairy business, and you were apparently creating a fairly large amount of land, in both dairy and timber, the agricultural stuff. The Graham family was also at the same period of time doing dairy management and growth in South Florida. Was there already in the forties [1940s] and the fifties [1950s] farm organizations by which you folks who were becoming the big farmers and ranchers in the state of Florida were connecting with each other?

TA: No. And, it was one of the really unfortunate things, Peter. In those days, the processing plants literally ran the business. Now, Captain Graham, Bob's—Bob and Bill Graham's daddy, excuse me—

PK: Ernest Graham.

TA: Ernest Graham. They live out at a little place called (inaudible), I think, out west of Miami. And of course, Ernest Graham had quite an operation. I think they processed some milk and distributed some of their own themselves. In those days there were a number of processors—producers, distributors.

But in my day there around Jacksonville, I recall that we sold at one time to Foremost. We then switched over and sold to Sealtest, which was Southern Dairy [Southern Dairies, a division of Sealtest]. And we in those days had the old Florida Milk Commission. And the milk commission was appointed by the governor, and they purportedly did a great deal of accounting and auditing to determine what a fair price for milk was. But the milk commission was dominated by the plants. And it was sort of hand to mouth in those days in spite of some pretty large production. About all a dairy farmer could do was own his land.

It was a profitable operation, but as a result of this—it relates later to government because when it came my turn to be chairman of the Agricultural Services Commission, it reorganized the Department of Agriculture and I did my very best to get the state to institute a market order for milk. The federal government had done that in a number of places. Now, that didn't take. Nobody wanted to touch the dairy business with a ten-foot pole.

PK: Sure.

TA: But later on there was a federal order, and there was created in Florida two coops [cooperatives]: the Florida Dairy Farmers and the Tampa Independent Dairymen. But they now have combined. But with the federal order—the two federal orders in Florida stabilizing the price of milk—at least the producers of milk could anticipate what their market was, what the price was. It didn't automatically give a big profit to anybody, but it did stabilize the production of milk. When you're sitting there with three or four thousand head of dairy cattle and they've got to be milked at least twice a day everyday, 365 days a year, the labor, the utility and everything that goes with it, it's a little unnerving to be jerked around as far as the price is concerned. You can't control the price of feed, and when you—when there was such a volatile base for the price of milk, it just wasn't a very stable industry in those early days.

Now, the Graham family continued to grow and they retained their real estate, and that's now Miami Lakes. Miami Lakes is the old Graham Dairy Farm. And they did a beautiful job of developing a model community there, and, of course, the Grahams still have their further upstate. They moved up into mid-Florida, and Bill Graham, who is a very fine businessman, sort of takes care of the business end of the family. But I knew the Grahams in those days, because we had the Florida Dairyman's Association. A fellow named Andy Ley in Jacksonville headed it up. And we'd have an annual meeting and I was very active in it. The Grahams were very active in it, a number of old dairy families in Florida that are still in the dairy business. And so we'd meet, and in those days we did the best we could under the political structure that existed. But it isn't like it is today. It's a much more stable endeavor than it was then.

PK: Understood. And the other thing you mentioned in your background that I want to touch on very quickly is—you talked about cultivating. Your dad cultivating a fairly large number of acreage in

oranges in Lake County. That seems like today we now understand that's pretty far north and it freezes and whatever. Was that a pretty high-risk business in that being that far north in Florida?

TA: Well, you see, Peter, in the early days they used to produce a lot of oranges at Mandarin, and on the west side of the river, there in the Sparky area. And then somehow through the years, as well, it has changed. And, of course, the freezes knocked all of that out and it moved further south. Our orange groves were between—in Lake County between Eustis and Deland. We had about two or three hundred acres on the road from Eustis to Deland. My father additionally acquired a grove down on Lake Apopka. Now, you know, all of that ridge country in there that you ride through going up and down the Turnpike, it just used to be endless with citrus. That series of freezes we had a few years back knocked them out, but I notice that citrus is coming back in that area.

But as you say, in those days no one really perceived that you could grow citrus in Hendry County down around the lake [Lake Okeechobee], but that's where a lot of the citrus is now. And Allico and Ben Hill Griffin and those fellows, they have a tremendous amount of citrus down in South Florida, the reason being improved pesticides. Because in those early days there were just too many insects and fungus and other things in the southern regions where it was very humid and wet a lot of the time, and it was difficult to raise citrus then. But that's changed, too, with improved techniques and technologies for growing citrus. And in addition to that, the university through IFAS has been very productive in creating new strains, new rootstock and things that would resist the various pests that attack citrus just as they've done for other agricultural crops.

PK: Interesting you raise IFAS—and for our viewers, IFAS is the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida. What was, and when did, the role of IFAS as such a powerful force in Florida's agricultural history get going?

TA: Wayne Wright was president of the University of Florida.

PK: And he had been director of IFAS, if I remember correctly.

TA: He'd been provost for agriculture. There wasn't any IFAS when Wayne was there.

PK: Okay.

TA: A fellow named E.T. York was the Director of Extension Services at the federal level for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Travis grew up in north Alabama in the mountains. He was one of those mountain boys and he'd been to the University of North Carolina. He'd had a stint there, and then they had taken him to Washington as the Director of the National Extension Service. He and Wayne had become close friends, and in 1962 Wayne solicited Travis York to come to the University of Florida. There was some pretty volatile agricultural issues on the national scene at that time, and Travis delayed coming a little at the request of the then Secretary of Agriculture. I think Freeman was then Secretary of Agriculture [Orville L. Freeman, 1961-1969].

But he did come to the University of Florida, and what he found was a state extension service, which, of course, was supported by the federal operation. He found a College of Agriculture, and he found a series of experiment stations, all doing great work, but they were unrelated. Each had its own budget. There were no dialogues between them. There was no coordination between them and a "leave me

alone, I'm doing my thing." Travis York was the architect of IFAS, and I was very much a part of Travis coming to Florida. I was very well aware of what he was doing, and he not only combined the administration of those three elements of agriculture at the university under IFAS, and did it so that everyone approved. I don't know whether you know Travis York or not.

PK: I was a freshman back then. I do remember meeting him.

TA: Good, good. Travis is one of those fellows that just make people feel good about doing good things. But he needed money. Each one of these guys had their own budget, and Jerry Thomas from Palm Beach was president of the Senate in those days—and, of course, we're skipping a good deal of political history there, but that's all right.

PK: Yes, we'll come back.

TA: And Jerry was very supportive of what Travis wanted to do. To not only combine these administratively under a provost for agriculture who was the director of IFAS, but to have one budget so there was some parody between these activities and there wasn't a bunch of competition for salaries and all this stuff, which all made great sense, because Florida has always been a rich agricultural state. Somebody needed to get a handle on it.

So, Jerry and Travis came up with a budget, and Claude Kirk was then governor. And Claude Kirk initially vetoed the budget, and they came back in a special session and cut it one-third, and that didn't stay in place very long because they did the same thing to the school teachers, and the school teachers in Florida went on strike.

PK: Yeah. We'll come back to that.

TA: But part of that was that as a result of the special session that was called to cure teacher situation, York and Jerry Thomas and others in the legislature determined to come up with a full budget for IFAS. Just go for broke. Ninety million dollars, I think it was big money in those days.

PK: Absolutely.

TA: So, the governor had Wade Hoffing, who's now an attorney in Tallahassee, who then was his chief of staff, call Travis York—and this is all part of Travis' book to be written; I don't know whether you've seen his book or not—to see if they wouldn't settle for one-third, which was the original amount they'd had that the governor had earlier vetoed. And so, Travis told the governor, told Wade, that he had great respect for the governor's position, but he also had great respect for the legislature and what they felt and he couldn't do that. He couldn't agree to take a third. So, this is a little insight that you normally don't get, but I'm going to give you, because Wade told Travis York, he said, "Well, we'll have to see what we can do."

Of course, in those days, we had the Cabinet Budget Commission. And, as you will recall, Claude Kirk wanted to do away with the Cabinet. He wanted to be the king. And so he only came to Cabinet meeting on every other week, every other meeting. He wasn't going to meet but every other week. Not every week. But there were those of us that said that won't go, because there were six Democrats on that Cabinet. I was the second highest constitutional officer, and I would preside in the governor's

absence between meetings. And, in addition, in those days before the advent of the Sunshine Law, what I did was have a Cabinet breakfast every morning before Cabinet meetings, and we'd go through the agenda and we'd discuss it and we'd decide what was right and what was wrong and debated. And then we'd have the Cabinet meeting and it was open for the public and everything else, but we'd had our prior discussions and we'd get done what we thought needed to be done. Didn't make any difference whether it was a budget commission, board of education, whatever it was. Claude knew this.

So he sent Hopping down to see me, to see if he could arrange that one-third cut. Well, when Wade came to see me, I said, "Wade, this is not anything you and I can handle. We need to go see Claude." So we went down to see the governor, and in the meantime I called Travis and I asked him what these guys were trying to do to him and he gave me the whole story.

So, I went on down to see Claude with Wade, and walked in and told the governor. In spite of our political differences, we were very good friends. And I told him, I said, "Now, Governor, I'm not coming down here to threaten anything, but I just want to let you know that the politics of confrontation won't work in this situation."

"What're you talking about?"

"I'm talking about IFAS. We've been through this thing. We've spent several years putting it together. It's there. It needs to be funded. They've asked for the money. The legislature's giving it to them, and the only thing I can tell you is this is bigger than you can handle, and if you start trying to dally around with this ninety million dollars, you're going to have more egg on your face than you can get off." That was the last there was to it.

He just smiled. Threw his thumb up in the air, and that got IFAS off the ground, and Travis York will tell you that. As a matter of fact, he says that in his book. So, that's how IFAS got started, and, you know, it has been a very rewarding endeavor to be able to manage agriculture in Florida the way it's been managed.

PK: Absolutely. And I appreciate you telling us that story.

All right, Tom, let's back up. It may—it certainly won't surprise you, because I've heard you refer to yourself this way, and so let's just start with the concept that Tom Adams was the Prince of the Pork Choppers. Let's concentrate on the fifties [1950s], the political structure when you got to the legislature. What did it mean to be a Pork Chopper? Let's just do some basic things first.

TA: Well, let me tell you how I got to be one first. Well, when I ran in that Senate race it was a pretty knock down drag out, and in Clay and Baker Counties, we had the *Clay County Crescent* in Clay County and the *Baker County Press* in Baker County. There was no daily newspaper. Nobody really read the *Florida Times Union*. It wasn't distributed in either one of the counties. There was not a single radio station, and there wasn't any TV.

So, the politics were old time politics. They had a rally in Baker County every Saturday night, and we had a rally in Clay County every Friday night at a different schoolhouse around the county. And the PTA [Parent-Teacher Association] would serve dinner on the grounds, and everybody would come and have a real nice dinner. You'd visit and shake hands with everybody, and then they'd have a speak-in out

at the ball field, and everybody would park their cars around the ball park and they'd have a lectern and a platform out in the middle with lights and all that stuff and have a big speak-in with loudspeakers and all that. So, that was the way the politics was managed, other than just pressing the flesh and one-on-one and soliciting people.

Well, I had some friends in Tallahassee who I'd come to know through Charleston Henderson, who was an assistant attorney general, and Charles Tom was in charge of bill drafting. The legislature didn't have its own bill drafting in those days. The legislature depended on the executive branch of government pretty heavy for a lot of the things they did. So I got Charles Tom to assign one of the people in his office to help me go through the Senate journal for those years when Slater Smith was in the Senate, and he did that. Rose Kitchen; she was a sister of Syd Dee. Syd was quite a builder in Tallahassee and an influence peddler and all of that stuff. He's quite a guy. And Rose was an assistant under Tom, Charleston Henderson. And Tom Henderson's brother, Ed Henderson, was head of the FEA.

So everything was, in those days, pretty tight in Tallahassee. Everybody knew everybody else. So, when it come my time to get up to speak, I'd take the *Senate Journal* up there and I had all these little old things picked out. Well, Slater Smith hadn't handled himself too well in Tallahassee. See, he was given to partying a lot and he drank too much, and people generally knew that, but he had a pretty solid political base in Clay County—and in Baker, too, for that matter, through the sheriff and through his long-term having been there. For instance, he had been on a committee that had recommended—I don't think the bill had passed, but the key committee's recommendation was an increase in ad valorem taxes. Well, that bunch of cracker folks out there in Clay and Baker County didn't like that a bit in the world. They didn't want anybody—they wanted what they needed, but they didn't want anybody to increase the taxes.

So, I'd get up and read out of the *Senate Journal*. Well, he didn't know where I was reading, and he couldn't remember what he'd done, and it was a very unnerving thing when it'd come my turn to speak. So, that worked pretty good. Then I'd—you know, I would—I didn't know how to do it other than just go full bore, and I just went gung-ho day and night almost. I had a little old green Ford, and in those days they had—I think it was a little Oliver transcribing machine. It had a round record on the thing. I'd drive up to somebody's house on a dirt road somewhere, and if they were there I'd visit with them, leave my card, leave some literature, ask them to vote for me. If there wasn't anybody there, I'd take the name and address down, get back in the car and dictate a little note, "Sorry I'd miss them," this that and the other, and I'd take those little records back to the office that afternoon. I had a secretary and she'd type those letters up, so when I come in the next day I'd sign them and mail them to them.

Well, two of the big businesses in Clay County and Baker County was the moonshine business. In those days, there was Prohibition, and you didn't have liquor stores like they have now. Whiskey wasn't readily available, and in Clay Hill area, Clay County, and up in the back area of Baker County was where there was quite an accepted industry of making moonshine whiskey. And so the word leaked back to these boys up at Baxter that I had this recording device in my car, and that I was going to use that to turn them in to the Feds. Well, of course, I had to put the fire out, and I remember very vividly one day driving up the back side, made an appointment to go up there to see some fellow that Ed Fraser knew. And I drove up there.

There was just one little old store at Baxter—I don't guess you've ever been there—right on the south edge of the Okefenokee Swamp [National Wildlife Refuge]. Well, wasn't anybody there. So I parked

the car and waited, and I got out and stood in front, and first thing you know these fellows began to drift up and one of them had a quart bottle that looked like a syrup bottle with the long neck on it. Other one had a tin cup. And they got up there, got to chatting, and one of them poured some of this stuff in a cup and handed me the cup, and I'm telling you man, it's just like drinking (laughs) it was like drinking gasoline. I don't like that stuff. It'd been out of the still fifteen minutes. It was pure alcohol. But I sipped it, and talked to them and showed them what was all happening.

Of course, I had a couple of good friends down at Clay Hill; they weren't the only ones that voted, but it was a pretty important element, and in those days we're talking about 1956. Well, the next day we had a rally at the Methodist Church in Macclenny, and Ed Fraser was there, along with John Crews, who was running for the House. Ed Yarbrough was running for sheriff, and Ed Fraser had sort of what he called the Reform Ticket in Baker County. Well, I was up on the platform, came out there and was speaking. I was sitting there and I looked out the window, and there was every one of those moonshiners out there. They were outside looking in seeing, you know, if what I had told them was the same thing I was going to say at the Methodist Church.

So, it was a very interesting election, on and on. Election day, polls closed at seven o'clock. I went down to Green Cove Springs. My good friend, George Carlyle, was clerk of the court. And George says, "Tom, we've got machines here; it's okay. I'm going to watch this. You better get over to Baker County; they have paper ballots."

So, I went hot-footing it over to Macclenny to the courthouse, and there was Fraser, Ed Fraser and John Crews and Ed Yarbrough and the whole bunch at the courthouse, and they said, "We'll take care of it here; you better get out to Sanderson." Well, Sanderson is a little town west of Macclenny. It's on US 90, which—there wasn't any I-10 [Interstate 10] in those days, and that was a Nabs Turpentine Camp. Now, the Nabs were wonderful people. Old man Bill Nab was on the school board, but they were great friends of the Smith family and they were one of the largest turpentine operators in north Florida. He turpented that whole area from Macclenny to Lake City and they had, I don't know how many, a hundred people they employed out there.

So, I went out to Sanderson, and the polling place was the Masonic Lodge on the south side of 90. A little old wooden building—one room building—wooden house. Last time I went through a number of years ago it was still there. That was a Masonic Lodge. I got there at one o'clock in the morning, and when I walked in it just reeked of whiskey, alcohol, and there were two lanterns burning. There was a fella reading and a fellow tallying with two lanterns on the table, and another fella laying over there, he was passed out. There was three fellas in the room.

And, what they did in those days, Peter, with the paper ballots and in a lot of cases, they would count through the interesting races. They didn't count everything at one time, and they had already counted through one time. They'd counted the sheriff and the representatives and the county commissioner, and they had just begun counting the other races, which included the Senate. So, I walked over where these guys were. Didn't say anything. I just stood there and this guy—they didn't know me and I didn't know them, and as far as I knew, each one of them might have been sitting on a 30/30 rifle, but he'd hold the ballot up to the lamp and the ballot was marked Adams and he'd call, "Smith." Guy'd write down Smith.

PK: And you're watching this?

TA: Yeah, I was lookin'. And this happened two or three times. So, I tapped him on the shoulder and I said, "I know it's late, and I know you're tired, and I know the lights are bad. My name's Adams, and I'm running for the Senate." You know, you had to have some identity to get in the place. Everybody can't walk in one of those polling places while they're counting—a candidate can. And I said, "I know you've just begun, but I think you've made several mistakes. I've been watching, and I would appreciate greatly, since you've only counted about six ballots, if you wouldn't mind starting over again."

Well, I knew darn good and well once they got those ballots locked in that box it would take a court order to open it up. Well, they did that. There wasn't any argument. They didn't blow up or anything else. I guess I scared them bad as they scared me, and they started counting again. I stayed there till six o'clock in the morning while they counted those ballots. And I won that race by 125 votes.

PK: Wow. It's a good thing you were there.

TA: Tell me about it. I think there were 8500 in both counties, and I wound up winning by 125.

So the next day, my phone starting ringing off the hook, because what happened was the president designate of the Florida Senate would hire a king from Polk County, and Harry had been apprehended accepting a bribe in somebody's orange grove. I don't know all the details about it, but money passed hands and they caught Harry accepting a bribe. He'd been indicted and he couldn't run. He was out; he was removed because of the indictment, and Scott Kelly was running for the Senate. So, there was no Senate president. And it was sort of nip and tuck between what had already been established as the Pork Choppers and the Lamb Choppers, the city crowd and the country crowd. And Bill Shands was the nominee of the Pork Choppers. Bill Shands from Gainesville—Shands Hospital, all that stuff. And Doyle Carlton, Junior, a wonderful guy who has given the money—

PK: I carry his title.

TA: He and Mildred are just wonderful people.

PK: They sure are.

TA: From Wauchula was the nominee for the city crowd, the Lamb Choppers as we called them. So Doug Stenstrom, who was in the Senate from Sanford, who was a close friend of Doyle's, called and wanted to come and see me, and I talked to Doug and he told me all of this great stuff. And then old L.K. Edwards called me from Irving, and L.K. was a big fraternity brother of me. I was Phi Delta Theta. I'd been president of the chapter at Ann Arbor and I couldn't have come back home if I hadn't Phi Del because of L.K., and Bruce Phala and all my friends were Phi Dels at the University of Florida.

So, things didn't quite mesh out as far as what Doug told me, and what I found out in reality. So it became obvious to me that I needed to cast my lot with my agricultural background and the dairy business and the timber business. I just had a lot of country in me, and always have and always will, and I don't want to get it out. So, I cast my lot with Bill Shands, and I was the deciding vote that elected Bill Shands president of the Senate that year.

So, when I went to Tallahassee, I was in pretty good shape. That's where I wound up as a freshman, Chairman of Agriculture, and on Appropriation, on Education. I had quite an array of committees, as you know from the record, and that's how that happened and got elected, and that's how I got to be a Pork Chopper.

But, one other interesting story I'll tell you and then we'll move on to something else. After that first session—I had a real good session. We did a lot of stuff. Passed a lot of stuff and there's some interesting stories out of the session itself. But Charley Johns, who was my good friend from Starke, and Bill Pierce, who was in the Senate from East Palatka, got me off in the corner and they said, "Tom, we need to get Verle Pope out of here."

Now Verle was, of course, from St. Augustine, and he was the lion of St. Johns [County]. Verle had a seat in the back of the Senate. He never changed his seat. They gave him the same seat all the time, right on the aisle, right at the back. He's a wonderful guy, and of course, Verle was sort of the leader, or one of the leaders, of the Lamb Choppers. And the Pork Choppers were the majority group in the Senate. We elected the president, and we were able to do this because of the rural dominance in those days of the legislature. And, I was cutting pulp wood. I had been down in Bunnell in Flagler County, and that was part of Verle's district. So, I didn't have any more sense than to go down there with the urging of Charley Johns and Bill Pierce and campaign against Verle Pope, and that was about like campaigning against the Pope himself.

PK: That wasn't the smartest thing.

TA: Right. I can't think of who it was running against him, but it was somebody I knew from Bunnell that was in the timber business—Wadsworth, one of the Wadsworths was running. He was later elected to the House, but he was running against Verle for the Senate. Anyway, old Verle snowed him, and after it was over with, here I was. I'd been over there campaigning against my neighbor and senator, cause I was in Clay County just across the river was St. Johns. So, I called Verle on the telephone, made an appointment to go to St. Augustine to see him. Sat down and talked to him and I told him it was the biggest mistake I made and how it happened and all of that, and I asked his forgiveness.

PK: Did he give it to you?

TA: Oh, yes. You know, he was one of those kind of guys, but that's a story I'll never forget, and I learned my lesson fast. Stay out of the other man's politics and take care of your own. Don't fool with it and let him handle his. So—

PK: When I think about Doyle Carlton—for example, you described him as a Lamb Chopper. I think of an agriculturist. I think of a farmer. I think of Wauchula not as a city. How did that division between Pork Choppers and Lamb Choppers really work?

TA: Well, let me be very candid with you. I don't think it was just a matter of where you were from; it was a matter of philosophy. And the Lamb Choppers were—they were much greater supporters of social programs than were the Pork Choppers. The Pork Choppers were fiscally very conservative. Gosh, I remember when on a bi-annual basis, we had a one billion dollar budget. That was, we thought, a tremendous place in Florida. But generally speaking, the philosophy of the city group was much more liberal than it was—than was the rural guys.

Tape 1, side 1 ends; tape 1, side 2 begins

TA: —had a big clothing store down on Bay Street. I just can't think of his name off the top of my head now, but he generally voted with the Pork Choppers. Doyle, on the other hand, as you say from Wauchula in the cattle business, and he's agriculturally oriented by and large. Of course, the family also owned Eli Witt. They were—you know, here in Tampa they were big in the business community too, but even so—you take a fellow like [F.] Wilson Carraway. Wilson was a big banker in Tallahassee. So I think it was more a matter of philosophy as well as origins as to which side a person fell off on. But, you know, those were the days in politics when you'd tell a man you'd do something, and you'd shake his hand and that was it. It's not that way anymore.

I remember Harvey Belcher in the fifty-seven [1957] session. Harvey was an attorney from Bonifay. And Harvey made a commitment on a piece of legislation, and when it came down to vote, he voted the other way. The next day Harvey did not have a single committee. He was taken off all of his committees, and he went home for two weeks and he came back and recanted. But that's the way it was in those days.

And you know, with me—I didn't have much choice, really, Peter, because we didn't have voting machines in the Senate then. I think they may have had the board in the house, but we didn't have it in the Senate. It was roll call. And when we discuss a bill and it'd come up for vote, the president would, say, rap that gavel, call the roll. And old George Inman, who was the reading clerk in the Senate in those days—a great guy, a big old booming voice. He would buzz through the titles and then he'd say, "Senator Adams."

PK: Right.

TA: Now, the way I voted you could count on twenty-one of them. They were almost without exception, and in two sessions I made one mistake, so as a result Irlo Bronson, who was in charge of the management committee for the Senate, let me have two aides, two secretaries my freshman year. Normally when you were a freshman you had one. When you was—your second term, you had two. But, you know, the way this thing evolved even before the session—and Irlo was a good friend and Bill Shands and the rest of them.

I talked them into letting me have—I had two very fine young lawyers working for me: a fellow named Frank Scrooby, who still lives in Orange Park—I got him to move to Orange Park; and Jim Young, whose father had been one of the general counsels to Pan American Airways. Jim was a great big old tall fellow. Couldn't sleep in a regular bed, but I had them and a secretary. And I really worked at it. I'll tell you the dadgone truth. I didn't have much choice.

PK: You entered that first session as a major power player, and, however, we want to define—

TA: Excuse me?

PK: You entered that first session as a major power player. You walked into that first session of the legislature heading committees that freshman don't get to. And however you got there, counting votes or making sure that they got counted right, the fact is, Tom, when you got there you were already a

major figure. When you look back on that fact—and you know that that's not a normal pattern—you can't say it's just luck. What— I can't say it's just luck.

What did you do with the power, having had it so early? What are the things in the legislative sessions in the early fifties or in the late fifties when you're getting started? You're running Agriculture, you're running Appropriations committee. You're a member of the Pork Chop gang. You're the first on the roll call vote. You've got a staff larger than anybody else ought to have, and you're a Pork Chopper.

TA: Well, you know, like I told you when I found this thing, I had to shake my head. It was like you say. I wound up Chairman of Agriculture, Vice-Chairman of Forestry and Parks, and Vice-Chairman of State Institutions. I was chairman of one committee and vice-chairman of two. And on Appropriations, Constitutional Vision, Governmental Reorganization, Game and Fisheries, Insurance and Welfare.

But you know, Peter, to answer your question, I never think of things in terms of power. I never have thought of any position I ever held, legislative or anything else, as something where you have a powerful wand that you can move around. My one motivation is just to get things done. I don't care what you do with them, whether you cook it, whether you live in it with your family, whether you're doing business. Whether you're in politics, you spell it R-E-S-U-L-T-S, and if you can't get desired results, get out. So, that's always been my motivation.

But you know, one of the things that intrigued me when I read this was first thing I saw in that early session was Ed Larson let two members of his staff help the Senate. Ray Green let a couple of members of his staff help the Senate. So, when it came to appropriations, finance and taxes, the staff of the various committees, the Senate didn't have its own staff. They borrowed people from the executive branch of government to staff those committees during a session every other year. So, really, the legislature did not control its destiny. Your legislature didn't do its own staff thinking. You know, Ed Larson was signing somebody's paycheck. Dick Irving was signing somebody's paycheck. Somebody else was, and they were loaning people to the legislature.

That's why I came up with the appropriations and auditing committee, which the only thing we could do at that time because there was some unseen resistance to it, which is pretty easy to identify now from the executive branch, but it was in fifty-nine [1959], the next session. We made enough progress and people had seen the value of it that it was made a permanent thing, and of course, there is now and has been a legislative Appropriations and Auditing Committee, and the legislature has emerged with its own staff. I think in some cases they've overdone it, but nonetheless it was all very interesting.

Now, another little aside is how the system worked in those days, and then I'll quit. When I went up there, I was imbued with the fact that the Clay County Co-op, Florida Power and Light, and other utilities that were selling electricity in Clay County all paid taxes. But the City of Jacksonville was furnishing power to Orange Park, which was a good ways outside of their municipal boundaries because Jacksonville then didn't encompass all of Duval County, and they weren't paying any taxes. So, I introduced a little bill. It was one of the first bills I introduced. It simply said that a city cannot sell utilities outside of its municipal area without being taxed. And that's the sense of the whole thing. I introduced a bill, and it was assigned to a committee that Judge Dilworth Clarke, Senator Clarke from over in Monticello, was chairman of.

Well, I never did see the thing on the—it never was on any committee calendar or anything. And after about two or three weeks, we were having dinner one night out at the Talquin Inn. The Talquin Inn and the Silver Slipper were the two places where everybody had dinner to talk about what was going on. In those days, we didn't have all the computers. You had to physically have—you had to have the physical bill. You had to have the original piece of paper; that was what you acted on. There weren't any computers.

So, I knew it had been assigned to the judge's committee. We were out there having dinner, and I went up to Judge Clark, and I said, "Senator, I introduced a little bill on utilities over in Clay County, and it's assigned to your committee and I wonder where it is?"

"Oh," he said, "Tommy, I can tell you where it is. That bill's in my desk drawer."

"Well," I said, "you know, I'd like to get this thing moving along."

"Well," he said, "you've got two choices. We either give it a pocket veto, or we'll bring it before the committee and kill it, whichever one you want."

"Well," I said, "I don't want to get it killed. Tell me about the pocket veto."

"Oh," he said, "I just hang onto it. I just—you know, it don't ever come up, and you can tell your people back home how hard you tried to pass this bill, and it's just this, that and the other, it didn't work."

PK: Disappeared.

TA: Just disappeared. Died a natural death. I said, "Judge, that won't do. Bring it up."

Well, I didn't realize what I was getting into really, because this thing affected Orange County because they had a generating plant on the Indian River. It affected—and Tom Gurney showed up from Orlando, and he was pretty much a legal heavyweight in those days. Tallahassee had one down at St. Marks, and Jim Messer showed up. He was City Attorney for Tallahassee. And of course Bill Madison from Jacksonville, because they were the one that we were working on, and there were a couple of others. And, we got that doggone committee meeting, and I looked up and there's all these guys out there against my bill. But I'd done my homework, and I got it out of committee and we got it passed. And then, of course, they went to litigating over it, but—

PK: How did you get it passed?

TA: Huh?

PK: How did you get it passed?

TA: I just—I spent as much time in the House as I did in the Senate, and usually in those days you could go back and forth with spreading my time around. So, you know, there was a lot of fellows that thought the principle needed to—it was pretty tight, but it was close. It wasn't a landslide anywhere, cause the other side was working pretty hard, too. But we had right on our side, and you know, I just—I

enjoyed what I was doing. I just go talk to people, shake their hand, get a commitment, and you know, I just got it passed.

PK: It was very personal, wasn't it?

TA: Sir?

PK: It was very personal. It was politics—

TA: With me it was. Yes, yes, sir.

PK: For you, it was the very personal contact.

TA: Because I—you know, it wasn't—don't do it because of Tom, do it because of what Tom was trying to do.

PK: Right. Governors that you worked with in the fifties [1950s] and personalities, who stands out in your mind as the most interesting?

TA: Excuse me.

PK: Of the governors that you've worked with, who stands out in your mind as the most interesting personality?

TA: Well, there's no question Claude Kirk was the most interesting personality. I think there are few people that can compare, as far as personality is concerned, with Claude Kirk. But you know, I served—well, I was there for the tail end of LeRoy Collins. And, Collins was a great guy, and he was LeRoy Collins. And then, I guess there was a little short stint in there when Charley Johns was governor. And, you know, Charley is a very politically misunderstood person. Charley is very straightforward. Very well meaning, very well intended guy, but Charley let his friends do him in.

PK: Let's talk about that. You say he's much misunderstood. I think there are a whole lot of folks that wouldn't agree with that view.

TA: Well, I'm sure of that, but to me he has been. I have never known Charley Johns in any of the dealings I had with him—of course, bless his soul, he's gone now—to ever argue with me about anything that was right. You know, he may not have been what you'd call enlightened on all subjects, but Charley, when he was elected Governor surrounded himself with—and don't make me call names, because some of them were very good friends of mine—with people who just wanted to partition state government. This guy is going to have his little playground, and this guy's here, and that one is, and Charley let his friends take advantage of him. That is to me what happened.

Now, I'm not comparing Charley Johns and LeRoy Collins or Dan McCarty or any of the rest of them, but that's my observation. I always enjoyed my friendship and relationship with Charley Johns, and Charley Johns never asked me to do anything that I didn't think was right.

PK: Comment, if you would, Tom, as we pass by Charley Johns, comment about the Johns Committee and the Communist investigations of that period.

TA: Well, I have to admit that my memory on that whole thing—I know there was a Johns Committee and stuff, but I don't really have a vivid recollection of what took place at that time. I think that Johns Committee was before my fifty-six/fifty-seven [1956/1957] entry into the legislature. I remember the tail end of LeRoy Collins, because Collins wanted me to be Chairman of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, which we organized the department and I remember Roy personally as a very wonderful person. And then, of course, I didn't know Dan McCarty. He'd passed out of the scene before that. And then, of course, they went from there to Farris Bryant, and then from Farris to Haydon [Burns] and then Haydon to Claude, and then Reuben [Askew] and I beat Claude.

PK: Well, let's go back to the beginning—well, let's not go quite back to the beginning. You're in the State Cabinet. Elected to the state as head of the secretary of state, Department of State, and Farris Bryant is governor. What was it like working with Governor Bryant? What was he all about?

TA: Well, Farris was an able fellow. He'd been—you know, he was quite a capable attorney. He's from Ocala. He'd been Speaker of the House. He had a whole lot of friends, but, you know—and I don't say this critically, but Farris, like some others, he was just a pious individual. He gave you a very pious impression of him. But, you know, some of the little things that happened—when you see that happening with a fella and then you're a part or exposed to other things that happen, it kind of turns you off.

Just as an example, we had lunch at the—and I enjoyed associating with Farris greatly, don't get me wrong, but Farris— Let me start out by saying when Farris was elected, Doyle was elected—Doyle Connor was elected Commissioner of Agriculture. Farris was elected governor. And I was elected Secretary of State. That was the ABC ticket, and I guess Buster Hancock was running for Commissioner of Agriculture. Doyle Carlton was running for governor, and Jess Yarbrough was running for secretary of state out of Dade County.

But because of Farris' position on the segregation matter, after the election was over and John Kennedy was elected president that same year, Kennedy wanted the states to send representatives to Washington to put together programs that would assist the development of favorable relationships with diplomats from the Third World countries, because at that time, these African nations and others were emerging, and it was obvious that America just couldn't isolate itself and these fellows couldn't find a place to eat. There wasn't a place for them to sleep. Hell, we were bringing people to this country who were at the same level as some of our top people in their countries, and there wasn't any place for them to go.

So, Ferris wouldn't go to Washington. He wouldn't go associate with that effort. He sent me. I hadn't even been elected then. I was a nominee. I was a secretary of state nominee. Of course, that was tantamount to election. I guess—I can't think of the guy's name, but there was some fellow from Gainesville, who was a son-in-law of Dwight Eisenhower, that was running on the Republican ticket for secretary of state.

But at any rate, I went up there, and that's how I got to know Kennedy. John Kennedy, Bob Kennedy—of course, that was in George Smathers', heyday and Scotty Peak and that whole crowd, and helped not only with the Kennedy campaign, but then after it was over we put together a diplomatic visitation

program to Florida for these Third World people. And it was very successful. We didn't take them to Quincy, but we took them to Tampa and took them to Miami and did take them to Kissimmee, and then (inaudible) Bronson entertained them and we took them out on the ranch. It was extremely successful, and that was what developed my relationship with the OAS, the Organization of American States, and how I got to Colombia.

But that told me a little something about Ferris. And I think that you know he was elected governor. I can appreciate the issues of the campaign, but here's a guy who's governor of the state, and he's not going to participate in a mainstream activity that the nation needs to develop for the good of the nation.

The other thing was, one day we had lunch at the mansion. He'd invited us out there to lunch every now and then. And, in those days the configuration of the capitol was quite different than it is now. But [in] the old capitol, governor's office was in the southwest wing, and the parking lot was there just next to the governor's office. The governor had his parking place, and next to him was secretary of state and then on down the road. That was when we had Gray Park out there, before we had the Senate Office Building down there where Gray Park used to be.

Well, we went to lunch and came back, and he—when I got there, he was standing on the sidewalk waiting for me. And he said, "Tom, I need to talk to you a minute." We'd got a second and we were standing there and chat before we go in the office.

I said, "Fine, Governor."

He said, "Now, what I want to tell you is that [in] this administration, we're going to handle the state insurance a little different than we've handled it in the past. What I'm doing, I'm having a certain portion of the state insurance allocated to every member of the cabinet. So everybody can designate who wants to handle their share of the state insurance. I haven't had a chance to talk to you, but we allocated your share to the Brown Agency." Well, now, my mother-in-law had a real estate and insurance agency in Orange Park, sort of a little family business. "So," he said, "we've allocated your share to the Brown Agency."

"Well," I said, "Governor, I thank you very much for thinking about it, but let me tell you. The Brown Agency has never written the first ten cents worth of governmental insurance for the school board, the county commission, anybody, and they don't intend to. We're not going to start now. I appreciate very much your generosity, but how about assigning my share of the state insurance to somebody else? I don't want it."

Well, you know, that was a little bit of a shock to Ferris, but that was it. That was it. That's the way that thing worked—and the same thing with the refunding of the turnpike bonds. You know, [we] had that "bobtail turnpike" that stopped at Ft. Pierce. And the big deal then was to run it on over to Wildwood and let it join up with [Interstate] 75. By then the interstate system was in the works, and so Ferris knew what was happening. He'd already started a bond law firm with the Richardsons in Jacksonville, and with Wilt & Miller in Tallahassee. Olive, Miller—I mean, Brown, Miller & Olive—and he was sort of getting things set for after his four years.

But those old turnpike bonds were just about worthless. They weren't worth the paper they were written on, literally. But John Hammer—who was from Tampa, I think—and the group that was on the then

Turnpike Authority, they knew what was going to happen, and it was shared with him, and they went to the bank and borrowed the money to buy up those old bonds. So, they had all those old bonds, which were refunded at face value when they refinanced the Turnpike and took it on to Wildwood. Now, you know, I don't think that kind of stuff is right myself, and I have always been—I've always said so. You know, I have not hesitated to say it ain't right.

And, so, you know, Ferris was a good governor, but when these things began to happen—another one that was very interesting, but, you know, it begins to set a little trap for you here there and the other place, because Ferris was big on this bond business and he made a big to-do out of going to New York once with a group of fellows—I don't know who it was—and they came back with the idea they were going to float a bunch of bonds to build facilities for the university system that were badly needed. But they were going to do it without any statutory authorization. They were just going to issue bonds.

Well, I remember sitting in a Cabinet meeting once when he announced this great coup, this great program. And, it was, you know—everybody knew it was questionable. And Dick Irvin—great guy—was attorney general. And Dick Irvin sat there, and he said, "Well, if we agree, who's going to disagree?"

"Well," I said, "Governor, I hate to say it, but we don't agree, and I'm telling you right now what you're planning to do is not right. There needs to be a statute for the procedure of issuance of bonds that encumber the faith and credit to this state. Now, the purpose is great, but the procedure you want to use is not right, and I'm going to object. And, if you all pursue it, I'm going to blow you out of the wall."

Now, we followed that with legislation, and it worked and it did a lot of good. But, you know, that kind of stuff didn't work, and I guess that's where I've always found myself. And every now and then you get a knot on your head for doing it, and I've collected my share of knots.

PK: Well, now, let's talk about—

TA: Huh?

PK: Well, now, let's talk about the end of your career and the big knot. We've got about ten minutes or so left. You ran for lieutenant governor with Reuben Askew.

TA: Yeah.

PK: And, at the end of your time in that office, you have a unique—

TA: And what?

PK: At the end of your time as lieutenant governor, you ran into a unique circumstance that resulted in your being impeached. In the few minutes, Tom, let's talk about that. What was that all about?

TA: Well, I wasn't impeached. They tried to.

PK: They tried to impeach you. I stand corrected. You're correct.

TA: Let's get this thing straight.

PK: Absolutely.

TA: You know, hindsight's twenty-twenty, and it's easy to see what I didn't see then. But when Reubin was running for governor, when he started his campaign, few people really knew Reubin. Reubin had been in the Senate. And, don't get me wrong, Reubin's a great guy. He and I are good friends. Politics is a strange animal. The old saying anything is fair in love, war and politics.

But I had been secretary of state for ten years, and I decided that was long enough. I was one of these guys that just felt some turnover, fresh blood, new ideas, you know. I was elected the first time in sixty [1960], and then I ran twice without opposition. And I guess I could have continued to run without opposition. We had a pretty effective organization, every county in Florida, and we met regularly. I had a little soiree with these guys—the north Florida crowd—once a year, the south Florida crowd once a year, and I never went anywhere that I didn't have some of them with me. We just had an ongoing relationship. It went beyond just a political organization. It was very personal, and sort of a big family statewide.

But I just figured ten years was enough, and I had accepted a position at Florida Institute of Technology to be a vice-president down there with my good friend Jerry Cripple. Well, I had some friends that were in Reubin's campaign. One of them was a fellow named Al Morantz. And having been secretary of state and brought Jim Smith into the picture—Jim was a deputy secretary of state, and Jim Apthorp was there, who was one of the assistants. Smith and Apthorp, Henry Vincent—well, of course, I had collected twenty-five or thirty very fine young men as part of my staff as secretary of state office. And they enjoyed government, and I'm sure he didn't like the prospect of getting out. Of course, a lot of them are still there.

But Reubin would campaign and then they got to talking to me about running with him. And, it was primarily Jim Smith and Jim Apthorp, and of course, Al Morantz was working in Reubin's campaign. And Reubin would come back, and they'd want me to sit down and meet with him. And I'd meet with them on a weekend, and we talked about running together. Well, this went on for several—for thirty days, and finally at—I was very apprehensive to tell you the truth, because I knew that Reubin's philosophy and mine was very divergent. But, finally Reubin said, "Tom, let me tell you if you will run with me, I'll run. If you won't run with me, I'm not going to run."

PK: And that was because Reubin Askew believed he couldn't win without your kind of connections—?

TA: He needed my organization to win.

PK: Right. Okay.

TA: So I conceded, and I ran.

PK: If Reubin Askew needed your connections—I remember him as the senator from west Florida. Relatively unknown, and the general interpretation is that he could not have won that election without your organization and connections. Do you agree with that?

TA: Sir?

PK: Do you agree with that?

TA: Well, in retrospect, I think that's true. That's what everybody tells me. I'm held responsible for electing Reubin Askew.

PK: Yeah, I think that's a pretty fair judgment. At least that's been the judgment of a number of people who were here at the time.

There was another relatively unknown person running at that time, and I just want to skip to him quickly and then come back to the point of you and Governor Askew. Lawton Chiles was also running as a relatively unknown person. Did you know him, and what were your impressions back then and his chances?

TA: Oh, yeah, I knew Lawton. Knew Lawton well, and of course, that was the case. Part of my job during the campaign and a lot of the campaigning was together with Reubin and Lawton, particularly after we were nominated. And my job was to go introduce them. We'd go to big Jaycee [Junior Chamber of Commerce] Convention, and of course, I had been very tight with the Jaycees. They were big supporters of mine. A lot of my staff were former Jaycees. I'd been a Jaycee, very active. And I remember my role in the campaign was to introduce Reuben and Lawton when they appeared together, and I did that and enjoyed doing it greatly.

But you know, what you say is very true, and of course with Reubin and me, I think it was the corporate sales—corporate income tax was one of the catchy things that did it, and Lawton's walking. Because Reubin had to have a lieutenant governor, and by bringing me on board, he at the same time got this ready built organization, which he didn't have. And of course, Reuben and I agreed, knowing that I was not and never had been and never will be a darling of the newspapers. The deal was that he'd take care of the newspaper and he'd take care of the money raising. I've never been a big money raiser, either. That was one of the things that began to turn me off about government was the large amounts of money that you had to raise, the Madison Avenue approach and all that stuff. That I'd stay in the Hushkins. I'd work with the organization. I'd take care of the city halls and the courthouses and all that stuff and he'd handle the other end of it. And, it worked.

PK: Philosophically, were you and Governor Askew enough alike to be effective as a team?

TA: Well, that was my big concern initially. You know, Reubin had always been anti-Cabinet. I was very pro-Cabinet. Reuben had been part of the Lamb Chop side of things. I'd been part of the Pork Chop side of things. We just had a different philosophy. Our philosophies were divergent. I knew that. I had been very close to organized labor in Florida, but at the same time, I had great friends in the corporate side of Florida.

These to me were not inconsistencies. Somebody had to have their hands in the various pots that were important as far as making up the structure of this state to try to get things done, to bring people together, to be reasoned with. The only thing I belonged to organized labor doesn't mean that I was the darling of big business. But if you can't communicate with those elements in a political environment to make it happen and work, you're in bad shape.

PK: Right.

TA: And there were none of them I couldn't communicate with. And I did, of course. But you know, shortly after we were elected and I had this infection I was out of circulation for a little while, but I didn't just bring with me that organization. I brought with me a pretty solid reputation as a public official. I guess Alan Marsh Awards—you know, that's just sort of a barometer—but the most outstanding freshman senator, the most effective member of the legislature. The most—whatever it is—administrator of a state agency three years straight running.

PK: Absolutely.

TA: And it was all with the legislature, you know.

PK: So how did this solid citizen and effective government legislator wind up under a cloud in terms of possibly looking at impeachment? What happened, Tom?

TA: You mean with Reubin?

PK: At the end.

TA: Yeah, yeah. Well, several things happened. I think I made the governor very uncomfortable. And Wayne Mixson has addressed this to me. He said, "Tom, you don't know what an effort it was for me to stay in the shadow of Bob Graham for eight years." I didn't stay in Reubin's shadow.

PK: No, you did not.

TA: And that caused the problem. In retrospect, it caused the problem. He was governor. The constitution says a lieutenant governor shall perform certain duties that the governor may assign. Well, he gave me a job over in commerce, and that was considered to be one of these unworkable arrangements.

And then these guys came up with—I don't know who really drafted this little thing. It was published in the State Employee News. And it's a pretty glowing report of how things worked in commerce that first year, all the way from workman's comp to unemployment in Gadsden County to—well, you've got a copy of this, and things like this didn't help. It generated a considerable amount of political apprehension. You know, here's this Adams, he was going to get out of government. We brought him back in government, and now he's reincarnated. He's going to cause us a political problem. And it wasn't just Reubin. I think it was concern on Reubin's part, but I think there were people who were part of Reubin's legislative entourage, primarily, who felt the same way.

PK: Tom, are you saying—and then I think we probably have to close and continue this at our next session—but just for purposes of ending this tape for the moment. Are you suggesting that Governor Askew's—you're not suggesting the governor himself created the environment by which you came under as a possibility of impeachment?

TA: Well, I don't know that he created it. I think there were those in the legislature that were determined on the good ole boys. I was a good ole boy, always have been, always will be. The governor could have stopped it with a snap of his finger if he'd wanted to. But instead of that, on two different occasions, the governor asked me to resign.

PK: Right.

TA: Now—so Reubin let it run, knowing full well that it would destroy my effectiveness. That it would get me out of the way, though I had helped him get where he was. And him being where he was, [there] weren't going to be any trouble with him staying where he was. So he didn't need Tom anymore. It'd be a whole lot better to dispense with Tom and let him go to the dogs. So, I don't—I think—and there are many little insights into this that I can give you when we have more time that will make this point. Now, I'm not condemning Reubin. This is politics.

PK: Understand.

TA: And when you get to where you walk on the other fellow's feet, you need to have enough sense to know you can't control your own destiny.

PK: I think that's probably a real good place to stop for today, Tom, and we have opened a whole bunch of conversations that we are going to pick up on a second interview because you represent, as I said at the front end of this tape, a remarkable participant in some of the most important parts of modern Florida history, that which occurs after, of course, World War II and the fifties [1950s] and sixties [1960s]. I thank you for the opportunity of doing this today, and I look forward to doing it again.

TA: Well, I told you this would make a good start.

PK: It will do it.

TA: Well, let me tell you, old buddy. There's some extremely interesting stories about the environment in Florida.

PK: Right.

TA: About why some things didn't happen. What should have happened, and you know, it's worthwhile, and I appreciate the opportunity to tell somebody. You don't know how many people have wanted me to sit down and do what we're doing today, and this is the first opportunity I've had to do it.

PK: Well, I think the university appreciates the privilege. Thanks, Tom, and have a good day.

TA: Thank you, thank you.

Tape 1, side 2 ends; tape 2, side 1 begins

PK: Good morning. I'm Peter Klingman, the Mildred and Doyle Carlton Curator for the Resource Center of Florida History and Politics at USF. This is a second tape oral history interview we're doing with the former lieutenant governor of Florida, Mr. Tom Adams. Tom, good morning.

TA: It is a pleasure to be back with you on television so we can tell a few war stories about what was happening in Florida politics in the fifties [1950s] and sixties [1960s].

PK: And that's where we kind of left off. And so I think that's probably a good place to begin. Let's talk about war stories and campaigns first.

TA: Well, since our last interview, I have been thinking of things that did happen. It's impossible, instantaneously, to remember everything. But in retrospect, those were political years in rural Florida when we still had the problem with segregation and integration. And I talked about Ed Fraser, who had been my predecessor from Clay County and Baker County, and of course I ran from Clay.

I vividly recall getting a telephone call from Ed's brother. He had a brother named Ernon Fraser. Ernon was very active in the Ku Klux Klan. I was requested to meet Ernon at the Blue Haven Restaurant in Macclenny, right there on US 90, which I did, late in the afternoon. I was met there by two or three fellows. A couple of them I'd never met before. They escorted me out to an automobile, put a blindfold on me, and asked me to lay down in the back, which I did. And they drove around about thirty minutes. I was aware just from general directions that we were getting out in the country. I was aware that we crossed the cattle gap—by then it was getting dusk dark—and drove out in what turned out to be the middle of a cornfield. There was a little house about the size of a flue-cured tobacco house.

PK: Mm-hm.

TA: I'm sure you're familiar with those. And I was led into the house, and the blindfold was taken off, and there everybody was. They had on the hoods and the sheets and the whole thing, and the grand wizard was there. There must have been fifty or sixty men in the house, in tiered seats. And of course, I was given the third degree as to questions that these folks were interested in. Then I was blindfolded and taken back to Blue Haven Restaurant. You know, that seems totally out of place in today's society, but that was the way rural politics, things that happened, in those days.

PK: Did it make you nervous?

TA: No. No, I wasn't nervous.

PK: So you expected—

TA: No, I knew it was part of the political process. It was about like visiting the bootleggers in Baxter or Clay Hill, and then being on the church stage at the Methodist church in Macclenny. It was—while we have different pressure groups today in politics, of different kinds, those were some of the rural groups that you were exposed to in politics back in the fifties [1950s].

PK: Tom, before we leave the subject of the Klan in rural Florida in the fifties [1950s], did that—was that an extensive organization in other places that you were aware of?

TA: Well, I really don't know. That was my exposure to it in Baker County. There was no similar exposure in Clay County. (clears throat)

Another very interesting story, talking about politics in those days, is, however, when I ran for secretary of state. There were eight of us in the race, and I worked real hard and wound up in the runoff with Jess Yarbrough from Dade County. And of course, everyone thought, “big Dade,” you know; they’ll boil you over. But I worked hard in the rural counties of Florida, and there was a gentleman that lived in Orange Park named Steve Ramsey. I knew Steve. They were not close friends, but he worked for Ed Ball. He was Ed Ball’s lobbyist.

And when it got into the runoff with Jess Yarbrough, Steve Ramsey, who obviously had ties to the Klan, developed a little foldout, a little newspaper looking thing, a political piece. And they had obtained a picture of Jess Yarbrough, who was on the school board—he’d been on the school board in Dade County—raising the flag with a couple of little black girls there with him. And of course, they’d made great progress in a place like Dade County with integration. But most of Florida was still real rural. And they printed those things up and distributed them in bales, apparently, from central Florida all the way to Pensacola.

What effect it had, I don’t know, and I don’t know whether it was a Klan effort. But I was told that they delivered these things to designated people from central Florida west, and they had pretty broad distribution. But you know, the campaign laws were quite different then, because there was no regulation against other people doing things for a candidate.

PK: Right.

TA: They were pretty well wide open. But I thought those were a couple of interesting sidelights as to the campaigning techniques in those days.

PK: Campaigns and Ed Ball.

TA: Yes. Well, I knew Ed Ball, and any time I needed to see Mr. Ball, I could always go see him. I remember vividly his office in the Florida Bank building there in Jacksonville. You’d go in to see Mr. Ed at the appointed time. He lived in the Robert—

PK: Robert Hotel.

TA: —Robert Hotel, which was right across the street. He had a secretary—I can’t remember her name, but that was the most dressed up lady I ever saw. She always had on a big hat, always had bouffant dresses. Painted up—she used a lot of lipstick. And she was sort of his right-hand man. And you’d go down and talk to Ed, and then if Ed was going to give you a campaign contribution, she’d go to the safe and come out with an envelope, and that would be the contribution. Mr. Ball himself never made any demands of me, but I guess he was wily enough to know where you stood and what you did and what you would do. And folks that were conservative and did things that he thought needed to be done, he was pretty generous with his support.

PK: What was he like as a person, when you met him?

TA: Well, I’ve dined with him on numerous occasions, and he was just a real—he was all business. He wasn’t very social. He was pretty direct, and he’d tell you—talk about things that he felt needed to be done. He was quite an individual, and obviously, different than many people of that day.

PK: Well, he was certainly the premier financing power in the state of Florida in the political world.

TA: Oh, yes. When you think in terms before the empire, so to speak, was broken up—the St. Joe Paper Company, the East Coast Railroad, Florida Banks—they controlled a pretty big slice of the economic activities in this state.

PK: Absolutely.

TA: But of course, then we went on to the campaign, and I was successful, as I told you, and got to the legislature. My first session as a freshman in 1957 was very interesting for me, because I had—as I explained to you last time—had been the deciding vote in electing Bill Shands President of the Senate. And as a result, I wound up—I brought a few notes with me so I wouldn't miss anything. I was Chairman of Agriculture, and Vice-Chairman of Forestry and Parks, and Vice-Chairman of State Institutions. Chairman of one committee, vice-chairman of two, and on Appropriations, Constitutional Revisions, Governmental Reorganization, Game and Fisheries, Insurance, and Welfare. And it kept me—I was a pretty busy boy.

The other thing about the Senate, in those days we had roll call. We didn't have push buttons with the scoreboard.

PK: Right.

TA: And when anything came to be voted on, they'd call roll, and Adams was first. And George Inman would call my name, and the way I voted was the way the majority was supposed. So as a freshman, they ensured that I did my homework, knew what I was doing, and I didn't slip up too much.

But there were a couple of little anecdotes that session. I mentioned to you when we interviewed last about Sheriff Hall in Clay County, and the sheriff had customarily sort of run things back home. And Sam Saunders was the representative from Clay County. John Cruise was the representative from Baker County. Sam was very much a friend of the sheriff, and had been part of that little group that controlled things.

The sheriff had Sam introduce a local bill, and back in those days local bills weren't scrutinized. A local bill was drawn up, and it would go to the local calendar, and nobody really looked to see what it did. Sam passed a bill in the House. It was only a question; he was the representative, and he said, "Go," and it went. It came over to the Senate, and I looked at the bill. And what the bill did, it took the feeding of prisoners in Clay County out of the purview of the state auditor.

PK: Mmm.

TA: That gave the sheriff a pretty free hand with feeding prisoners—his own count, everything else. To me, that just wasn't right, so I let the bill sit on the local calendar. The sheriff came to Tallahassee for a little visit, and spent a couple of days up there. He came by and visited me in my office, went over to see Sam at his office, and came back the next day. We just visited and chitchatted.

The third day, early in the morning, I got to the office early, as I generally did, and the sheriff was waiting for me. He didn't call me "Senator," he said, "Adams." He called me "Adams." He said, "Adams, I've got a local bill that Sam's passed. It's over here in the Senate, and I'd like to know when you're going to go ahead and pass that bill."

I said, "Sheriff, I am not going to pass that bill. It's on the local calendar, and it's going to stay on the local calendar."

Well, he wanted to argue about it. I said, "There's no use to go over into the details of this thing. It's a bad bill, and it's not good government to do what you want to do. And I'll tell you, the best thing for you to do is go back home and be sheriff, and I'm going to stay up here and be senator."

(laughs) He didn't like that very much. (laughs) He and I got to be good friends, kind of like Claude and me in the later years, same— But it was all very interesting.

But in that fifty-seven [1957] session, we—it was obvious that we needed to do something, Peter, as far as state institutions were concerned, because as I explained to you last time, we had a Cabinet of six members in the government, and each Cabinet officer had a separate state institution. (clears throat) Mr. Mayo, who had been Commissioner of Agriculture for thirty years, had charge of the prison system. Mr. Gray, whom I succeeded as secretary of state, had charge of the mental hospitals in Florida. Ed Larson, who was the treasurer and insurance commissioner, had the schools for the retarded. And so it went.

But in that fifty-seven [1957] session, we created the Division of Corrections, which is still in existence—it took the prisons over, so that they were not just under a Cabinet officer—and the Division of Mental Health and Child Training, which incorporated both the mental hospitals as well as the schools for the retarded. And I figured if I gave up my little operation that we could bring in the others, and it worked, and of course it's still there, and those institutional programs are managed as such.

And then, the other thing that impressed me so about the legislature in fifty-seven [1957] was that the executive offices loaned personnel to the legislature to run the various committees. And when the executive branch was staffing the Appropriations Committees, why—you know the legislature wasn't standing very well on its own feet. So we created the Legislative Appropriations and Auditing Committee, and did that by resolution. I couldn't get a bill passed in fifty-seven [1957]. But it worked so well, and we were able to staff that committee, that the legislature created by resolution came back in fifty-nine [1959] and did it—by law. And of course, while the bureaucracy is out of hand—there's no question about that, in my opinion—at least it gave the legislature its own thinking capacity as far as spending money, which is, of course, a requirement to pass that appropriations bill.

And then, to help my county, Clay County, we created the Clay County Development Authority, and gave the Clay County Development Authority bonding authority for economic development in Clay County. And it was sort of a new approach to economic development in Florida, and soon it was—

PK: Copied.

TA: —emulated by a number of other counties. I was fortunate enough to become—been made a member of the special committee that authored and led the passage in fifty-seven [1957] of the

education package plan, which was the big step from the—the only big step in that whole time that advanced education.

PK: Tom, let me stop you for a minute. Let's take some of that apart, because there's a point to all that, it seems to me. Let me make sure that we agree if that's the right point. When you entered the legislature and you looked at the way things were being done, and you moved toward modernizing—I mean, that's really what happened after 1957, isn't it?

TA: Well, yes. I think that that time period, this was the beginning of—well, I hate to use the word modernizing, but at least moving Florida government forward. And of course, in the fifty-nine [1959] session, one of the things I had the opportunity to do, as a result of working fifty-seven [1957], Governor Collins requested that I be chairman of the Agriculture Services Committee, which was quite a distinguished group of gentlemen. It led to the reorganization of agriculture services in Florida.

I guess getting the prison system out from under the Cabinet officers, as well as the mental hospitals and schools for the retarded, was the first step toward doing that. But I guess this was an effort—I was rather appalled at some of the archaic structures and practices that were in place when I got to Tallahassee. It was very obvious to me, just from a management standpoint, a lot of these changes needed to be made.

PK: When I think of anybody making those kinds of changes and modernizing, there had to be people who didn't want those changes to happen.

TA: Well, you know, it was a case with Mr. Mayo. People said—they laughed when you talked about reorganizing the Department of Agriculture. But I cultivated Mr. Mayo, and we went to great lengths to hold meetings all over the State of Florida. I never will forget one meeting at Irlo Bronson's set up in Kissimmee with the Florida Cattlemen's Association.

But when you think in terms of—in those days, we had the— a number of boards. Forestry was a separate board. They had the Dairy Commission, they had the—I forget the name of the beef group. It had a separate board. All of these were appointed by the governor—had the plant board. And when you start eliminating those boards and moving them under a Department of Agriculture, the key to doing that, and making it acceptable, was to set up advisory councils, which we did for each group. (clears throat) But you know, people want to be reasonable, and if people can be assured that their interests are not going to be trampled on, that they'll have a voice in what happens, the resistance melted. And that whole reorganization effort to pass the legislature [had] one dissenting vote in the House in a committee, some guy that didn't know what was going on.

PK: (laughs)

TA: Yes, but— It was quite successful, and it's still the basis of the organization of agriculture in Florida.

PK: Tom, at the time you were doing that in fifty-seven [1957] and fifty-nine [1959] and sixty [1960], so on, you're five or six years in front of the new constitution. Was that going—was that reorganization in your mind aimed at then being codified in the new state constitution that would be coming?

TA: Well, I was on the constitutional revision in the fifty-seven [1957] session, and of course the effort then wasn't to revise the constitution. But there were always changes that people thought needed to be made. It wasn't my mission to go to Tallahassee and make a lot of changes, but I really dove in head first into the system of government, and it just appeared to me to be common sense changes that needed to be made to make the system work better, more effective. You know, that was my motivation. It wasn't any big constitutional upheaval; it was simply an effort, as I perceived it, to try to make the system run better.

PK: Right. Let's also talk about the legislature and local bills, and how that worked back then in a little more detail. You were talking about the sheriff wanting to take care of his food outside the public sector. Today, in 1999 as we sit here, turkeys of course are now a thing of the past, the legislative turkeys. But back then, it's what a lot of what you did was really all about, wasn't it?

TA: (clears throat) Well, yes. Today, if a bill is introduced, whether it's a general bill or local bill, it goes to a legislative staff group that evaluates the legislation. And it comes out with the impact—what the cost of it is, what the fiscal impact will be—and, sort of, an executive summary of what the bill does. And a local bill—any other bill, but a local bill particularly, that has a fiscal impact, it's put over into Appropriations.

Well, in fifty-seven [1957] and fifty-nine [1959], that was not the case. Those bills were really not—they were, I guess, generally scrutinized, but certainly not to the extent that they are now. And I wouldn't say it was a cakewalk, but what I found (laughs) in those days, if you wanted to do something, like the Clay County Development Authority, you'd put it through, a lot of good language, do good things, but no money. You'd get it passed pretty easily. Then you come back the next session, and you can stick the money on a lot easier. So while there was an overview, generally speaking, it was nothing comparable to what happens today.

And of course, when you say turkey, that's a legislative wish by an individual member or a group that has not gone through the process. It has not been part of the budget review. It's presented in the legislature. It's not part of a departmental request or an agency request; it just originates in the legislature. It's a little bit of pork barrel. But in those days, we used to talk about bringing the bacon home, and if I had something I wanted for Clay County or Baker County, my district, I'd work hard to get it and bring it back home. And really, to answer your question, it was not subject to the reviews that it is today.

PK: Is that a good or a bad thing?

TA: Uh—

PK: Are legislators more effective or less effective than you were in 1957?

TA: Well, individually, I think we're more effective.

PK: Today?

TA: Then.

PK: Then.

TA: Yes, sir. I think a senator or a member of the house that really did his homework, cultivated his colleagues, could be very effective in those days, much more so than he can today. There's no question that the bureaucracy, the development of the bureaucracy, and the development of lobbying efforts have defused a lot of the individual efforts of legislators.

And another thing that in my opinion will make that even worse is term limits, because when you get into term limits, you really have no senior members of the legislature. Now, I know there's been a fifty turnover; that's the reason I, after ten years, got out of being secretary of state. I just thought the system needed new blood, but generally that's not the case. And I know some people tend to entrench themselves in government. And so it's—you know, it's sort of *comme ci, comme ça*.

PK: Back in 1957, there weren't lobbyist organizations like there are today in the legislature.

TA: Well, there were lobbyists.

PK: Right. But they weren't at the number—

TA: No, nothing like it is today.

PK: —and the clime and every occupation and all of that.

TA: Lobbying today is big business, and—

PK: Yes, it is.

TA: —very specialized, and tremendous amounts of money are contributed by lobbyists to campaigns. That was not the case then, because it didn't cost as much then to run for public office as it does now. When I ran for secretary of state, statewide race, I spent \$150,000. I had a little old green Ford, and drove it all over the state of Florida. Did wind up, in the final go down, flying an airplane that my friend Bob Thomas here in Tampa helped me get, just to be a bit more mobile. But you know, politics then were quite different than they are now.

PK: Right.

TA: But after the fifty-seven [1957] session—we had a great session, and I went on and was very active in the legislative council, which in those years we only met every other year.

PK: Right.

TA: The legislative council kept things going in between times. Then in fifty-nine [1959], when Dewey Johnson was president of the senate, I was made Chairman of Finance and Tax, and Vice-Chairman of Appropriations, and was on Agriculture and Livestock, Education, Forests and Parks, Games and Fisheries, and the state institutions of welfare. So I was pretty busy, again. And Dewey was determined that we were gonna keep a handle on the money spending, and that's why he wanted me to be Chairman of Finance and Tax, and Vice-Chairman of Appropriations, tie the two together.

And I guess the Pork Choppers in those days, Peter, were sort of the Republicans of today. It was a very conservative approach. Of course, there were mostly rural legislators—not all of them were, but it was more a matter of philosophy than anything else. And a lot of it was personal relationships. You know, it was a pretty tight group, (clears throat) the Pork Chop crowd was, and of course by the time the fifty-nine [1959] session got around, they'd designated me the Crown Prince of the Pork Choppers. (laughs)

But it was a great session in fifty-nine [1959]. We reorganized Agriculture, and when you think that fellows like Andy Dooter and Buster Hancock and Abney Cox and Cushman Radebaugh—all those guys were on that committee; they'd been put on there by LeRoy Collins, and it was sort of a blue ribbon Agriculture group. He wanted me to be chairman of it, and we got that thing passed. I think that, for me, was sort of a hallmark. I thought that was a big step for it.

And then, I'd always been concerned with this welfare business, about people living off of welfare. And we developed and were able to pass a suitable home law—

PK: Mm-hm.

TA: —which set certain requirements for people if they were living in a home without a husband and children and on welfare. You just didn't want that thing to propagate itself. And I think a number of other states copied that law. Where it is now, I don't know.

And the other thing was, I thought that a lot of the land in Florida was not being equitably assessed, because it was simply a value situation. We passed what we called a just value tax bill, where size and location and use, as well as value, had to be considered when you assessed property. The governor vetoed it, but it did pass the next session, in modified form. But at least it made people conscious of the use of property, the location of property, in the state of Florida. And then we had a tax study committee that we authorized that session, because it was obvious we had a very hodgepodge tax arrangement in Florida. That's how I got to know my friend Bill Roberts. He was executive director of that committee, the director of it. The amazing thing is that report is still very valid. I remember the things that came of that report; they're still being put into place.

And I've always been a supporter of private education. So in fifty-nine [1959]—and people really don't realize this very much—we passed a private board of education, and the education tuition grant fund, which was the same—it wasn't funded the way the voucher program is now, that Governor Bush was so anxious to get passed this last session—but it was the same principle, the idea being that if a taxpayer in Florida opts to send his child to a private school, he was still paying taxes while paying tuition. He was taking a load off of the public system, but still contributing to the public system. And if we were going to do that, instead of letting a hodgepodge of private institutions develop, we'd have a board of private education to sort of regulate private schools.

PK: Tom, some people would say, looking back on that, that that was an exercise in the state supporting what would be “white flight.”

TA: An exercise in what?

PK: In the state government supporting what would become “white flight” from integration. That that whole process that you all did with education and setting up state assistance to private education was going to happen because of integration, and that it would enable people to get into the private schools more. What’s your reaction to that?

TA: As far as I was concerned, there was no thought of integration—or segregation—

PK: In that session.

TA: —with it. We had started in Orange Park the St. Johns Country Day School, because we just weren’t happy with the quality of public schools. And it’s a very flourishing institution today. Two of our daughters by my first marriage were some of the first students in the school. They were part of the original student body. It was an effort to get them educated; it wasn’t an effort to not expose them to integration. My part, as far as my thinking is concerned, that had nothing to do with it.

PK: Okay.

TA: Nothing to do with it.

PK: Back in fifty-seven [1957] and fifty-nine [1959], cause we’re on the subject of education and you were doing this piece, there were things wrong with public education. Teacher salaries were incredibly low. There was no strong support. Why would the legislature have not wanted to address, even that early—it would happen later—

TA: Well—

PK: —but why not in fifty-seven [1957] and fifty-nine [1959]? Would not have the Pork Choppers—or Lamb Choppers or anybody else—said, “This state’s growing. We need to do more for public education.”

TA: We did do several things, and maybe it wasn’t enough. Of course, I was right in the middle of that, too. We had the package plan in fifty-seven [1957]; it was the first big step since the minimum foundation.

PK: Right.

TA: And then in fifty-nine [1959], I authored the legislation creating the county school fund to provide additional funds for public education. That let the counties kick more money in if they wanted to, but in addition to that, we also established the county school sales tax fund, which provided additional operating money and funds for teacher salaries. That was earmarked for salaries. The fiscal strings were so tight in Tallahassee that—as you say, it was difficult to get broad based state support. But these two county initiatives did allow those counties that wanted to exercise the sales tax prerogative in their county to pump more money into schools. That was about as far as we could go with it.

The other approach we tried unsuccessfully, but the county initiative did work, and it did infuse some additional dollars into teacher salaries. Because, as you say, they were just inordinately low.

PK: Oh, they were terrible back then.

TA: And that, of course, was part of my continuing interest in the whole educational process, and my ultimate association with FIT [Florida Institute of Technology]. But you see, when Jerry Keuper asked me to come down to FIT and dedicate a dorm down there—which I did; he needed a little publicity, I guess—and some of my friends in Melbourne asked me to come over. Roberts Hall, the first dormitory there, I was there and dedicated it as secretary of state. I'd just been elected. And I was very impressed with what those guys were doing at FIT with private education. But it had nothing to do with integration. It was a supplement to the state system, cause we were struggling then, even with the universities, to try to get adequate colleges and universities in Florida. And that day was soon coming, of course.

But I've always been very impressed about quality private education. I had the pleasure of going to the Hill School, which was great prep for me before I went to the University of Michigan. And while I don't think private education should supplant public education, even the origins of this nation were built on private education. Harvard and those were all private, started out initially before we got into public education, realizing that as a nation we couldn't continue to exist if we didn't have an educated electorate. That was a basic requirement of being free people. But it took a while for that to emerge. Now, when it did emerge, it didn't mean that what had brought us that far was bad. I've always been an avid supporter of quality private education, and of course, by no means detract from the necessary support for public education.

PK: Okay. Good enough.

TA: Those legislative years were very interesting. They were very productive. I enjoyed it greatly, and I think, really, looking back—you know, the wind always blew free in the Florida Senate for me. I was from a rural environment. I didn't have any pressure groups. I could speak my piece and do my thing and do what I thought was right, and it's always been a very exciting period in my opportunity to be a public servant.

PK: But you were different in your power and in your influence, Tom. Fair enough? I mean, you were a significantly different, more powerful, effective legislator back then than most everybody else. The question is why? What did you have that other legislators didn't have to gain that kind of influence?

TA: Well, you know, really, Pete, I never looked on it as power.

PK: But you were.

TA: Well, maybe. But, you know— (laughs)

In any group of people, there's about ten percent that make things work. If you've got a hundred folks, there's generally about ten percent—ten people—that make the thing tick. And I've always been very active. I just—it's just me. I don't know how to sit still. And when you see things that need to be done, the challenge is to get it done. You spell it R-E-S-U-L-T. Now, you sit down in the legislature, if this needs to be done, how am I gonna get it done? Well, you've got to cultivate the right people. You've got to cultivate the right situation. You've got to create situations for getting the thing done.

And to me, those constructive—I hope, improvements—steps forwards—were a real challenge. How do you get it done within the framework of what we had to do it with, within the atmosphere in which we worked? So, you know, you say no sometimes to people, like the sheriff; it wasn't right. But then you've got to work on the other side. The legislative process, whether today or then, it's so easy to kill a bill. It's pretty difficult sometimes to pass a bill. But it was a challenging endeavor.

PK: And one you did well in that period of time. Very quickly, before we leave the legislature, Tom, who would you rank as the top three, four legislators?

TA: Would I do what?

PK: Who would you rank as the top three or four most effective legislators from that period of time?

TA: Well, of course the president. Bill Shands was one of my presidents, Dewey Johnson was another, and then Randolph Hodges followed them. Uh— Turner Davis was almost a perennial Rules chairman, and the Rules chairman—well, he works closely with the president; he wields a pretty heavy stick, and Turner always did. And then Appropriations was generally Wilson Carraway. Wilson was a banker in Tallahassee and a great friend, and he was very influential.

On the other side, (clears throat) I'd say Doyle Carlton, Verle Pope; they stand out as being real leaders. They always were—still are, wherever they are. Of course, Doyle's in heaven—I mean, Verle's in heaven, and Doyle's still here.

PK: Doyle is quite well.

TA: That's right. But you know, those men—John Rawls was always quite active and influential, and Randolph Hodges, in another very quiet way. Uh— Judge Clarke was there for a long time—Dill Clarke, from Monticello. Judge Clarke was generally—he was always chairman of the banking committee. That was about—I remember Joe Eaton very vividly. He was from Dade County, and he was very active from Dade, as was Bill Harrell. But those are the people I remember most. In those days, the president pretty well ran the show.

PK: Right. Good. Okay, let's talk about being a member of cabinets, as a secretary of state, for a long period of time in Florida.

TA: (clears throat) You know, Pete, I have to say that I really enjoyed being a member of the cabinet. I always felt that the Cabinet system afforded the people of Florida an opportunity that they don't have under the single executive. I know there's difference of opinion; [some people] want the strong executive, want the governor to do everything. But anybody could appear before the Cabinet, and the Cabinet was the budget commission. Appropriations were all laid out there at the executive level before it went to the legislature. And then we met on state institutions. We met on the Board of Education, and the various boards that the Cabinet sat on. As long as the Cabinet members were shorn of their administrative responsibility to run the state institutions and that stuff, which was an administrative responsibility, it appeared to me that that plural policymaking was very beneficial.

Of course, it's beginning to change now. But what's happened in the process is we have developed agencies that are so horrendously large that they're unmanageable. You take (inaudible) and put DNR

[Department of Natural Resources] and DEP [Department of Environmental Protection] together, and HRS and I know from experience—ongoing—that it doesn't make a difference who the secretary is, if folks way down at the bottom still do their thing. We've gotten— I think it has destroyed a good bit of the direct exposure that the public had. I always enjoyed my days on the Cabinet, and I think the Cabinet in those days took some considerable initiatives.

Course, as a member of the Cabinet, secretary of state, that office, (clears throat) too, needed to be brought up current. You know, it was—it didn't even have a fiscal division to process cash control in the secretary of state's office when I was elected. So we introduced fiscal control, and had the director of purchasing, and put computers and push-button filing and that sort of stuff, and just tried to modernize that office, which Mr. [Robert Andrew] Gray, a wonderful person, been secretary of state for thirty years, and he had a group of wonderful employees. When I went into the office, I just brought two people with me, that's all; kept everybody else there. (clears throat) But there were just a number of things that needed to be done that we began to do to update that office.

And then, as far as the Cabinet is concerned, plurally, the Cabinet began to take a number of actions as a group. It also brought things up several pegs. We created the State Revenue Commission to unify state tax collecting, which previously had not been the case.

PK: Right.

TA: We reorganized the Board of Conservation, and wound up with a very comprehensive conservation program that was copied elsewhere in the nation. The Cabinet gave leadership, enacting Florida's first sufficient water control law. And as a result of the little run-in that I mentioned with Ferris and the bonds, well, he was going to issue them executively. We provided for bond financing for the state universities, but it had to have proper approval. We reorganized the mental health program, and created community centers instead of remote asylums, so that people could be treated on an outpatient basis if possible, but to try to keep them close to home.

Another big step forward, we had the old border control in those days.

PK: Yeah.

TA: And the Cabinet gave—the Board of Education gave leadership in creating a Board of Regents, because there was an inordinate amount of political interference in higher education in Florida, and that began to give this thing a little bit of a stable base. And then later on, we gave leadership in creating the office of Chancellor. So there were some big steps forward, as far as higher education is concerned, that were initiated by the Cabinet.

We worked to modernize the election laws, which—there really wasn't very much. Politics in those days in Florida was a pretty wide-open business. And of course, it's impossible to plug every hole. There are always people out there that can figure out a way around it somehow. But I think elections in Florida today are run on a much higher level than they were then.

So, the Cabinet days were great days, and very constructive. You know, you can just go on and on about the things that happened.

PK: Let's talk about the things that happened in the Cabinet that you've mentioned, some of those issues. By the time you hit the Cabinet, there had to be some major changes as Secretary of State, dealing with historic grants and preservation and ideas. What did you do, in terms of—what would you claim as your most significant achievements in the areas of, say as secretary of state, dealing with Florida history and all of that?

TA: Well, (clears throat) we created the state Board of Archives and History, among other things, because there was no supervision of records management in state government, and we needed to coordinate the compilation and preservation of historical documents and artifacts.

And of course, that was done, but in the Secretary of State's office itself, we had legislation passed to create the Administrative Code and Register. Because literally, when the legislature passed an act for a specific agency of state government, that state agency proceeded to make rules, and a lot of those rules were written on the back of a matchbox, or anything. There was no procedure for compiling a rule. There were no public hearings. And once that rule was passed, there was no central place for it to be filed and codified. So, one of the things that we did do was get legislation passed authorizing the Secretary of State to set up the Administrative Code. And that Administrative Code established a procedure for establishing rules and regulations, and had all of those filed in the code so they were accessible by whoever needed them.

PK: It's hard to understand, and that's why I started there. It's really hard, I think, for me or anybody else to understand how the state functioned without a Bureau of Archives and Records Management.

TA: Well, you've got to realize, Peter, that coming up in through the fifties [1950s], Florida was not a large state. Florida was not anywhere near what it is today. Jacksonville was sort of the hub of commerce. Tampa was there. In those days, Miami wasn't much more than palmettos and rattlesnakes.

PK: Mm-hm.

TA: It was easy to manage things when we were a state of that size, but as we got air conditioning and mosquito control in Florida, here we go! And the state began to grow, and it just—it determined that these things had to be done.

One of the experiences of mine that was so rich and rewarding was as a member of the legislative council and going off to legislative conferences, the national conferences, and seeing what other states were doing to cope with the growth we were beginning to experience in Florida. But you know, the charitable solicitations act that we passed, it was administered by the secretary of state. There were people running around this state passing the hat, taking advantage of everybody in the world. These were things that just became obvious to anyone that was a student of government. It wasn't any use to reinvent the wheel. Other states—New York, California, and some of the—at that time—largest states—had experienced the same problems we were, and we needed to get busy and do the same thing.

So, it was an area of great change and great flux. And of course, I always—I was just tickled to death to be in the middle of it.

PK: One of the things you were in the middle of was, as you pointed out, about the growth of education establishing the Board of Regents and beginning to see the growth of the university system. At the

same time, starting in the late fifties [1950s] but certainly moving through the sixties [1960s] and seventies [1970s], you had the exploding growth in the community college system in Florida. That was right along with the other elements of things you had to deal with as the Board of Education. Did you all have some kind of a master concept of what you thought education ought to look like in the state?

TA: Well, I did. What I envisioned at that time, because we already had initiated the community college program in Florida, and it was going under Jim Wattenbarger. Jim, of course, was succeeded by Clark Maxwell. And I think we had about as fine a community college program as is in the state. We had begun to make improvements in public education, and the public schools were beginning to lift. While there still was a funding problem, at least we were getting more money in. But what I envisioned in Florida was what had worked so well in California: Public schools, quality; community college system, quality; then a series of four-year degree granting colleges, with a capstone of great universities.

Well, we were just about on the verge of selling that concept when my good friend Sam Gibbons appeared. Of course, Sam was a great guy, a wonderful friend, and he was in the Senate. I was there; we were on Appropriations together. Sam came before the Board of Education, and literally got on his knees and begged for the University of South Florida. Well, I have to admit that I initially resisted it, because I just did not think we should proliferate the university system in the state. I was afraid that what has happened would happen, and we'd wind up with just a lot of mediocrity.

But anyhow, Sam prevailed, and the Board acted and designated the University of South Florida. Well, the ink wasn't dry on the paper before Beth Johnson appeared from Orlando, and did the same thing for the University of Central Florida. And then, of course, the demand was great and they had the Florida International University. And now today, I guess we have eight or ten. I don't remember how many.

PK: There are ten.

TA: Ten state universities, and no state colleges!

PK: Right.

TA: No state colleges. Now, there are a lot of kids that don't need to go to a university. You know, you've got the business graduates, and those four degree things could take a whale of a load off the university system, instead of everybody wanting a law school, everybody wanting a medical school, and everybody wanting all the professional goodies that you just have a very difficult time trying to adequately support. So, you know, that was my thinking, and I have to say that it didn't work. (both laugh) That was what I was trying to do.

PK: And it's interesting, because I think that that whole difference between state colleges and universities, which has worked effectively, as you pointed out, in other states, has been a long subject of debate.

We're in good shape on time, I think, Tom.

In the Cabinet, education, population, and environment. What about the ending—the ending—

TA: About what?

PK: What about the ending of, or the doing or the processing, of a piece of something I know you had to be involved in. It was still going on from God knows when till the 1970s. The Cross-Florida Barge Canal.

TA: (clears throat)

PK: Hot political subject.

TA: No, sir! Let me tell you, as a member of the Cabinet, and as a student of Bob Vernon, who had been the state geologist who gave me the initial concept. Florida was a very fragile environment, an ecosystem. Bob Vernon told me—he was a great—I don't know whether you ever knew him or not, but he was a great big man, wonderful fellow. He said, "Tom, on an average, forty-four billion gallons of water a day fall on this state—as is. It has and it is and it will. Today, about a third of that percolates into the aquifer. About a third of it runs off into the ocean. And about a third of it evaporates."

I said, "What's happening?"

"As this state grows and we are putting more impervious layers on the soil on the ground, there's less percolating, there's more running off, and there's more evaporating. And all the while, we're pulling more out of the ground. There's going to be a point of no return."

Well, I was very impressed with that. I thought that the day would fast come when water in Florida would be more valuable than petroleum. And I went around, every time for me to make a speech and you got them all, that's what a lot of them are about, just exactly what I said. And I said, "If we don't do something to conserve this resource, we're going to be in deep dark trouble." Well, they thought I was against growth and economic development. I've still got a few knots back here from saying that. But I became very active in water matters, and we put together a comprehensive program in Florida, because every area of Florida, every port in Florida, was going to Washington with its own requests.

PK: Right.

TA: We used to have a Florida meeting in those days, which I chaired as a member of the Cabinet, and we developed the Florida program, and it was pretty hot to start with. But once we got our act together and went to Washington in unison, the dollars began to grow. From literally nothing for public works in this state, we wound up, after a very few years, with a big bundle, I'm telling you. Our congressional delegation was very grateful that we'd gotten things together in Florida.

But I went on, and I was appointed a member of the Study Commission for Southeast River Basins, that studied everything from the Alabama rivers all the way around up into the Carolina rivers, including our Florida rivers. I became president of the Mississippi Valley Association. I became president of the National Waterways Conference, selling this water thing in Florida, what we were trying to do all to enhance it.

And then came along the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, which had been sort of limp for a long time. It'd been laying there. Well, my whole approach to that was that, knowing the billions of gallons of water that are discharged into the St. Johns River down the Ocklawaha and out into the ocean, and the same

thing on the west coast of Florida at Yankeetown, tremendous volumes of water from all those great springs just going into the Gulf, that if a barge never floated across the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, that if we could build a reservoir across that ridge, the pump-back capacity into that from the east and the west would solve the problems of fresh water for south Florida, because in California they had already built a very expensive aqueduct from northern California to southern California to try to cure the problem. I'd been to Phoenix, Arizona, and seen what the dams out there had done, and how it had made the desert fertile. I knew if we didn't do something to preserve water in Florida, we'd have a real problem.

In addition to that, I knew that it would greatly enhance the economics of the state if we could attract that traffic across Florida—St. Johns, Jacksonville—there's no question it would have done that, and we were very active and helped with the fruition of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway that connects to Tennessee down—comes out at Mobile now. And what it did to that whole northeastern Mississippi area and western Alabama area where it runs, it revitalized it all.

Well, we had it just about ready to go. Spessard Holland was for it; everybody was for it. And then along comes Claude Kirk and my good friend Nat Reed, and Nat keeps talking about oil spills in the water sources of Florida and all this bird and bees stuff. Environmental concerns—I don't degrade them. They are important, and we can't destroy the environment. But we need to harness the environment a little bit, too. And I'll tell you, it just—it saddens me to think of the tremendous volumes of high quality fresh water that we are letting go wasted in Florida, when we've got salt water intrusion coming in as badly as we have.

At any rate, Claude and Nat put the stops on that. And then when Reubin came on board—and I helped him get there, and that's fine, I'm glad I did—but he kept Nat on board and by then, this thing was getting to where the environmental people were blowing things all out of proportion, as they do tend to do. You know, anything's fair in love, war and politics. And of course, the old Cross-Florida Barge Canal died a death. I'm just— Old Admiral Fortson, who lived in Jacksonville—was a real good friend; knew the old admiral—he kept that thing alive for years.

And of course, the canal would have gone past my senatorial district, Clay County, right down the St. Johns River. And I had a real interest in that thing, in seeing it done, not only from an economic development standpoint, which has always been one of my fortes, but I felt environmentally, too, from the standpoint of conserving water. So, you know, I just hoped that they would have kept that thing alive across the ridge of Florida, even after the transportation aspects of it were killed. But in the process of working with the Mississippi Valley Association, National Waterways Conference, it became very apparent to me that the big lobby that was killing it all—the two of them—were the truckers and the railroads, because water transportation is terribly cheap for bulk commodities.

PK: Sure.

TA: Oil and sand and gravel and ores of all kinds—that's the cheapest way in the world to haul it. And I knew that. But I'm telling you, the railroads have always had a very powerful lobby in this state, even though one of the guys that I brought into state government—a wonderful young man—Bud Williamson, represented the railroads. And the railroads are a necessary ingredient. My daddy was division counsel for the coach line—

Tape 2, side 1 ends; tape 2, side 2 begins

PK: Tom, let's talk about, in the thirty, thirty-five minutes we've got left, let's talk about governors. We started talking about Ferris Bryant and kind of skipped around. Let's take them off from your time forward, and start where you wish.

TA: Well, of course, when I was in the Senate, Peter, LeRoy Collins was governor, and he was a great guy. And I think LeRoy Collins sort of started Florida marching toward the modern era, really. Changes began to take place, reapportionment and other things. Collins was a very forward-looking man, and he was a great governor.

And then, when I was elected secretary of state, of course, Ferris was elected governor and Doyle Connor was elected Commissioner of Agriculture. And Ferris was a good governor. You know, I told a couple of those stories last time about Ferris and the insurance business and the bond business, and you know, that's just little nitty-gritty things in government. But you know, when Ferris ran against Doyle—Doyle Carlton—the under riding issue was integration/segregation. Of course, Ferris won, and I don't think—I don't know that that prolonged segregation in Florida, but Ferris was just not open in wanting to get involved in things nationally that needed to be done.

Of course, that gave me a great opportunity, because he sent me to Washington to represent Florida with the Kennedys, and I enjoyed that association greatly. But more than that, it introduced me into foreign affairs, so to speak, as a state representative. And after Kennedy was elected, and I'd been very active up there, I was invited to go to Colombia by the Organization of American States. And out of that grew the Florida/Colombia Alliance, which really was a forerunner of the Partners of the Alliance, because we had an exchange program in place with Colombia before they ever got the Partners program started.

And it was sort of a prototype. Florida later belonged to the Partners, but at one time through that program we had about fifty sister cities in Colombia, counterparts with Florida cities, people back and forth. Through the community college system, we had about two hundred Colombian students in Florida colleges and universities, and a comparable number of Florida students in colleges and universities down there. We worked very closely with a fellow named Gerardo Eusse, who was the head of their foreign studies program in Colombia—a very enlightened fellow, great guy, still a good friend. All of the screening would be done through his agency there, and through our system here.

But I used to go to Colombia about twice a year, and we'd go from sister city to sister city and meet with them. And it was a wonderfully viable program. And, you know, they wound up naming a school down there after me. In Colombia it was Tom Adams and Jack Kennedy (laughs) for a good long time.

But where the real payoff came for me was having been that familiar with Colombia when I was elected lieutenant governor. Reubin, of course, because of corporate income tax, had alienated himself from the corporate side of Florida. And you know, we've had, and still do have, the Florida Council of 100, and Reubin was very reluctant to associate [with them], so it was my happy lot to go to the Council of 100 meetings and represent the administration.

Well, I took a trade mission from the Council of 100 to Bogota, to the Bogota Trade Fair, which is the largest trade fair in South America. When I checked into the Tequendama Hotel that evening about

seven-thirty there was a note, and it says that, “As an adopted Floridian and as a student of Don Duden’s recreation program”—now, Don Duden had worked for me when I was secretary of state; he was Randolph Hodges’ son-in-law. And Don had gone on out—when I went to lieutenant governor he’d gone out to DNR, and he headed up the recreation program. Randolph was executive director of DNR. And she said, “And as a student of Don Duden’s recreation program, welcome to Bogota. If I can be of assistance while you’re here, please call. Signed, Fran Brewer”—TJ’s mama.

PK: Right.

TA: Well, you know, you don’t get many notes like that. I didn’t know whether the lady was six feet tall or ten feet around. And it was a little late, I thought, to call, but I called the next morning at seven-thirty and she’d already gone to work. Well, that impressed me very much. They said she’d be back at noon. So, I called at noon and she was there, and I told her thanks for the note. We were there and we were going to have a dinner that night at the Tom Adams School, at the home of one of the faculty members of Tom Adams School; would she join us? Well, she came by and said she’d be delighted. She came by the hotel, this pixie little thing, and we went to the dinner at the faculty home of the Tom Adams School, and I arranged for her to interpret. *Mi español es por quita*. And she did a great job.

And the next evening, we had a reception at the governor’s palace, and I thought the governor was going to take her away from us. She did pretty well there, too. Well, I, at that time, was single. I had been divorced from my wife for thirty years, [we had] three lovely daughters, and our lives just grew apart. I was looking and it looked pretty good to me, and that was in August. So, I arranged to get back to Colombia every month after that for something.

PK: (laughs)

TA: And by December I asked her to marry me, and she said she would. So we were married the following September—took me about a year—in Wilson, North Carolina, and everybody from Florida went up there. I was lieutenant governor. It was a big deal. There’s thirty-three years’ difference in our ages, and we have one daughter, twenty-one, a senior at FSU, and Sarah is a junior at the University of Florida and on the pole vault on the women’s track team and teaching. So we’ve had the wonderful experience for me. Florida-Colombia Alliance caused it all.

PK: Definitely worked for you, didn’t it?

TA: That’s right, it did.

PK: That’s nice, Tom.

TA: But the Ferris—got a little bit ahead of the story—

PK: That’s all right.

TA: —but that all came out of the Ferris administration, the Bryant administration. And then, of course, following Ferris was Haydon Burns. I had known Haydon very well. He’d been mayor of Jacksonville. Haydon came in, and I, as secretary of state, felt extremely strong that we needed to get state elections into the off year. There was just absolutely too much coattail riding, because if we had a popular

president, regardless of what party he was—and Florida was beginning to change then. The Republicans in Florida were growing, and it just seemed to me that to have the national politics have a profound effect on Florida politics was not good government. So we came up with an amendment to the constitution, and Haydon was very skeptical of it.

PK: Turned out to be skeptical with justice.

TA: Well, you know, he felt that if he had a bobtail term—I had a pretty high profile in Florida those days and was reasonably popular and had a lot of friends and a whale of an organization, and Haydon thought that if that thing passed and he had a bobtail term that he'd be looking me in the eye. Well, I found that out, so I called him up and made an appointment, went to Jacksonville to see him—this was during the gubernatorial campaign. I said, "Governor I think this off-year election business is too important, and I came over here to tell you that if you will support it, I won't run for governor in two years. I'll not run—well, you sure can."

Well, of course, you know Hayden didn't do very well, and wound up not even getting the nomination. Bob High [King] got the nomination, and of course, along the way everybody kept just jugging me to run, jugging me to run. Well, I couldn't tell everybody the story. I did the ones I had a chance to, but I had shaken a man's hand and told him I wouldn't run, and I didn't run. And of course, Claude Kirk got elected as the result of Bob High being nominated. Wasn't any way in the world outside of Dade County folks were going to vote for High. A whale of a nice guy, but at that point in time everybody was just very afraid of Dade County. And of course, you know, High had to stand on a Coca-Cola crate to get up to the podium to make a speech.

But anyhow, that was the story of Haydon, and then Claude came along.

PK: Well, let's go back to Haydon for a quick second. If he—he'd been mayor of Jacksonville for—gosh, probably twenty years before—.

TA: Long time.

PK: —he became governor, yeah. In that period of time when he was looking at what you called the bobtail term, the two year term as you switch over to off-year elections, did he realize that he was weak other places in the state? I would have thought by twenty years of being mayor of Jacksonville he would have made a lot of friends.

TA: It wasn't that Haydon was weak. He got elected. But Haydon didn't handle himself very well after he got elected. You know, it was all this business about these offshore bank accounts, and Haydon's advisors had him making big time out of that. I know he'd walk around with dollar bills stuck in the brim of his hat, and that sort of business. He was a good politician. I remember the barge they had go down the east coast campaigning and all that.

But after Haydon got elected, he just didn't surround himself with good people, and he didn't handle himself well at all. And when it came time for him to run again, Bob High and that crowd from Miami ate him alive because of those indiscretions. That's what it was. And you know, people thought he was pulling money out of here and pulling money out of there and putting it all overseas and he was going to—you know, getting rich off the governor's office.

PK: Was he?

TA: And they did him in. I don't think so. I don't think so. But Haydon did a lot of good things in Jacksonville. That's how the expressway system got started, with Haydon Burns. And it was during Haydon's term that Walt Disney came to Florida, and I think his son Bill still works at Disney. But Haydon just did a whale of a lot of good things, but there were those indiscretions that did him in. But anyhow, I didn't run against him. I did what I told him I'd do.

PK: Well, because you did what you told him you were going to do, we got Claude Kirk as governor instead of Tom Adams.

TA: Yeah, I guess. And, you know, of course Claude and I had a lot of good—we're good friends, always have been. Had a lot of good times together.

PK: There would be a lot of people in this state who would say that Claude Kirk was a terrible governor.

TA: Well, I'm sure. It's right, you know, (laughs) but I'm not going to get into that.

PK: I know you're not.

TA: The only thing I know is old Claude tried to tear up the Cabinet and I didn't let him. And, you know, that was it.

PK: And that's the issue.

TA: And it was primarily me, because I was secretary of state, and I told the rest of the guys, "Let's meet every week, I'll preside, there ain't no problem, we'll keep this thing going," And we did.

And, you know, then I was going to get out after ten years, and I told you the story about Reubin coming back and this, that and the other. So I agreed to run with him. But, you know, I was disappointed with a number of things because I knew Reubin as a legislator had not been pro-Cabinet, and I got a commitment from Reubin that he would support the Cabinet system. There wasn't any sense, you know; we had to have some understanding because philosophically we were a little bit different.

PK: Right.

TA: And—excuse me—we had dinner out at Bud Dickinson's house one night, and Reubin came out and he laid hands on about how he was going to support the Cabinet. Well, we got elected and it began to go the other way. I was very pro-labor, in spite of a lot of things that may seem a little bit like an enigma. Charlie Hash, who headed AFL-CIO in those days, was my good friend. Bubba Seaman, who was head of the ironworkers in Jacksonville, was my good friend. Perry Harvey right here in Tampa, head of the longshoremen, he's my good friend. And I brought them all to the table, and if you look at the pictures of the inaugural parade I was riding in there with a hard hat on. And we got elected, and it was a little bit of a—Reubin wasn't doing quite what he said he would do. I thought, while unions had

been badly abused by a lot of people, the concept of organized labor has been one of the bedrocks of development in America.

PK: Sure.

TA: And that was my position, organized labor, so that the individualized workingman could equate himself to the economic power of the people he worked for. Now, the fact that labor unions have been abused, that's another story.

PK: You and Governor Askew separated at the end of the first term—politically.

TA: Yes.

PK: What regrets, at that point when you left office—and we've already discussed the leading aspects of it on the first tape, Tom, but what regrets have you got about your political career? Is it that you didn't run for governor?

TA: Well, you know, I never anticipated that our differences would result and what took place, because Reubin and I both agreed that we were philosophically poles apart on a lot of things. But I guess it was an effort to politically support somebody to get them elected that led me to do it. I just like to be successful. And I don't think Reubin initiated it, but I think a lot of people associated with him became very jealous with me and that's what initiated this thing. Reubin could have put the fire out, but he didn't, and I think he kind of let it run. But I have to tell you that while Reubin and I are good friends—we see each other and we are friendly, and bygones are bygones—but it's obvious that they tarred me so that as far as me doing anything publically anymore, it puts me in a position of being suspect. You know, they sought to impeach Adams.

PK: Absolutely.

TA: And that doesn't help, and when you read all those newspaper clippings, it stopped the legislative work for about half a session until they came up with the idea of a censure. They were gonna censure me. That's the only way they got it off the calendar. But it has hurt, and it still hurts, because there are a lot of things I'd like to do that there's no sense in me trying to do, even though I'm involved in some very challenging undertakings at the moment, which I enjoy greatly.

But, you know, I have to say I resent the outcome, which was unwarranted and not merited and all that. It's kind of like I told you before, and Wayne Mixson told me, he said you just have to keep a low profile when you're in the other man's shadow. That was difficult for me. And a number of our differences surfaced, and I think there were those that felt it would be better off for me to just get out of the way.

PK: As we end this tape, Tom, and this interview, let's make sure we've covered all the grounds that you want to cover, that we finish up talking about the things that we need to talk about. What do you want to talk about? Is there anything left that you want to say that we need to say here today?

TA: Well, no. Really, Peter, my opportunity to serve in positions of public office has been a tremendously rewarding experience for me—even some of the political disappointments that we

mentioned as far as the end of my association with Reubin, which I hated greatly. But I have tremendously enjoyed public service. And I'm delighted that when I got out, my dear wife got in. Fran is in her second term as county commissioner in Indian River County. She's been chairman once, and she'll be chairman again next year. She's sort of a little carbon copy of me. She says what she thinks and she does what she ought to, and it don't make any difference if it's a 400 pound sheriff or what it is. But she's doing a good job. I keep out of her politics, and if she needs me, she tells me and we handle it that way.

But what I'm doing now is very exciting for me, as I've had the opportunity to associate with a group that have developed some technologies in conjunction with NASA that are very water oriented, very environmentally oriented. Their part of their task has been to decontaminate a lot of the reusable equipment that NASA uses. And they wanted some agricultural and commercial and industrial applications.

So, I was busy doing that when Wayne Mixson knocked on the door and wanted me to join him with the Farm Foundation. And I told him I'd be delighted if we could make it an action-oriented group, and he was agreeable. So, the first thing we needed to do was to broaden the base and strengthen the membership, and I'm just delighted that Doyle Connor has joined the board, that my old dear friend Travis York is joining the board. He is now retired but still active, and has an office at the University of Florida. Dr. Mike Martin, who is the new vice-president for Agriculture at the University of Florida, has joined the board. Dr. Jimmy Chief, who is a dean at the School of Agriculture, has joined the board. There is Dr. Bobby Phils, who heads up the land grant program at Florida A&M has joined the board. Carl Loop, who is president of the Florida Farm Bureau, has joined the board.

So, it's a pretty exciting group of guys, and we've got two or three more that we want to bring into play. But the mission of the Florida Farm Foundation is to try to revive rural Florida. Because what people don't realize is [that] becoming an urban state is wonderful, but for every dollar you collect in taxes where you've got a residential development, it requires a dollar and a half in services. But when you get around the other side of the coin, for every dollar you collect in taxes from agriculture, it takes about sixteen to twenty cents, and for every dollar you collect from industry it taxes about sixteen to twenty cents. So, if we don't continue some balance in this thing, local governments are in bad trouble.

PK: Yes.

TA: And what we are doing is the same thing that labor unions did, really. The small farmer has got to come together and form a producers' co-op with added value. And there needs to be some entity to bring that to pass. Now, that is the current mission of the Farm Foundation, and we're doing it. And we're working on this animal waste problem. It's a big problem for Florida agriculture, and we are beginning to put together co-ops where dairies can come together and we can pool developer facilities to handle this waste and sell it as high grade organic fertilizer, and pay for the facility at the dairy to do it and give the farmer some return. That's one thing.

We're working on alternative agriculture in Polk County to use those old phosphate clay lands by growing kenaf, and also growing ramie, and developing a processing facility to go from the growing of the stuff, to harvesting of it, to separating the fibers, degumming the fibers just to make pulp. But let the producer participate in the added value, because what's happening, the little individual farmer can't

pay his bills, but the people that buy the things that he produces—that buy the products he produces—are getting rich processing it. Otherwise, we've got big corporate farms.

So, if we want to preserve rural Florida, this is the technique we're using to do it, and I'm delighted to be part of it. Now, a fellow like Mike Martin came to Florida from the Midwest, and this is what they've begun to do out there to try to revitalize the rural areas and make family farms pay off. So we are about doing that in Florida with a very distinguished group of individuals who've banded together as the Florida Agricultural Resources Mobilization Foundation, the Farm Foundation. I'm president and Wayne Mixson is chairman, and we're in the process of doing this stuff.

PK: Well, I have no doubt, Tom, that if it's there to be done, you are the person to take it on. What can I say? It's been a wonderful couple of hours that we've been able to spend on these two interviews, Tom, and the University of South Florida is honored to have you participate in this interview, and we're—the graciousness with which you've opened up to people. We appreciate it.

TA: Well, you know, really, there's so much to tell. The things that can be important, I don't know. I know there's all kind of stuff we could talk about. But it's been a real treat for me to have the opportunity to be here. Of course, we've known each other for a number of years. I'm delighted and excited about the things you're doing here to put together this whole activity for Florida political history. I think it's needed to be done for a long time, and I'm just delighted to have been a little bit a part of it and have an opportunity to sit here and chat with you about it.

PK: Well, thanks, Tom. Really appreciate it.

end of interview