

E. William Henry Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 03/14/1966
Administrative Information

Creator: E. William Henry
Interviewer: Ronald J. Grele
Date of Interview: March 14, 1966
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 51 pages

Biographical Note

Henry was a staff member of the Nationalities Division of the Democratic National Committee; and the Commissioner and the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission [FCC], from 1962 through 1963 and 1963 through 1966, respectively. In this interview Henry discusses working on John F. Kennedy's [JFK] 1960 presidential campaign as part of the Nationalities Division of the Democratic National Committee; getting the vote of different ethnic groups in the 1960 presidential election; impressions of JFK; joining the Kennedy Administration and the FCC; Newton Minow as Chairman of the FCC and his successes; the relationship between the FCC and Congress and between the FCC and the broadcasting industry; keeping the broadcasting industry fair; White House involvement in FCC conflicts with the broadcasting industry; and meeting with JFK on November 20, 1963, among other issues.

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Suggested Citation

E. William Henry, recorded interview by Ronald J. Grele, March 14, 1966, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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E. William Henry – JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

E. WILLIAM HENRY

Washington, D.C.
March 14, 1966

By Ronald J. Grele

For the John F. Kennedy Library

GRELE: Mr. Henry, do you recall when you first met John Kennedy or became involved in the Kennedy organization?

HENRY: Well, those are two separate things. I first became involved in the Kennedy organization in August of 1960. I was attending the American Bar Association Convention in Washington, D.C., and had made a determination before I came up that I would seek a position with the Kennedy

organization. Through some mutual friends, John Seigenthaler and John [J., Jr.] Hooker, both of Nashville, I obtained a meeting with [Robert F.] Bob Kennedy in his office as campaign manager. We met, and I expressed an interest in going to work for his brother. It's rather interesting to me what took place because, although it doesn't relate to President Kennedy, it does indicate--shed some light on--the way the campaign was handled. I told Bob that I had had no previous experience in political campaigns of any kind. I also told him that I was a partner in a law firm in Memphis and that in order to justify an absence of, say, three months from the law firm I would have to have a fairly responsible job in the campaign or else I couldn't do it; that I thought that presented a rather

difficult problem for him--a fellow with no experience wanted an important job--but that if he found some way to reconcile those two things then I would be happy--I'd be privileged--to go to work. He said, "Well, we don't want any pros. All we want is people who are loyal, reasonably bright, and willing to work hard." That took care of the first point. He then said, "I don't know exactly what position you could have, but there are a number of positions open in the campaign that will be very important to me personally, and if I ask you to come to work, it will be to fill one of those." Then he said, "Okay?" And I said, "Okay." And the interview was over and the next day I was hired.

GRELE: To do what?

HENRY: As I recall it, Bob Kennedy said, "We need

somebody to provide liaison with the regular arm of the Democratic National Committee which deals with so-called nationalities." This was the Nationalities Division of the Democratic National Committee. He told me to go see [Lawrence F.] Larry O'Brien to talk about this possibility with him. I went to see Larry O'Brien. Larry said that sounded fine to him. I went back to Bob Kennedy and he said, "Can you report tomorrow?" I said, "Well, I need two days to collect my belongings and clear it with my office, and I'll be back." So I went to work two or three days later as a part of the machinery of the campaign organization and Bob Kennedy's representative to the Nationalities Division.

GRELE: Who did you work with specifically in the Nationalities Division?

HENRY: Well, the permanent director--I suppose you would call it--of the Nationalities Division was Michel Cieplinski. "Mitch," as we called him, was a man in the advertising business in New York City who, as I understand it, did most of his business with the foreign language press, radio and so on in this country. I worked with him, and he was in New York and I was in Washington. We together set up the machinery and did the day-to-day liaison work that was necessary to keep it going. It was a matter, incidentally, in which I had had no previous experience. In Tennessee the country of origin is a matter generally considered of no particular importance in a political race. Most of it is just old Anglo-Saxon, or Negro, persons.

GRELE: What was the general strategy of the Nationalities Division?

HENRY: Well, it was a pretty loose organization. The only overall strategy was to figure out as imaginatively as possible, and then to implement, policies and actions for the candidate which would endear him to the people who were interested in issues that pertained to their country of origin. This would be mainly first, second or third generation Americans who were interested in the immigration laws, in the recognition of the contributions that their countries had made to America and matters of that kind. We were alert to send out telegrams from the candidate on all of the national holidays--Pulaski Day, Columbus Day and so forth. We were alert to see that the candidate had his picture taken with various people in this country who are associated with a country of origin who have made much progress and so on.

GRELE: I've been told that Robert Kennedy set up the [Harry S] Truman method of dealing with nationalities as a model for the '60 campaign. Did he ever discuss this with you?

HENRY: No, at least not identifying it as such. We could go into great detail about this, and I will if you want me to, but essentially the Nationalities Division was organized into separate committees or divisions--I'm not sure which we called them. We had the Italo-American Committee, the Polish-American Committee, the German-American Committee, et cetera. We tried to get a national chairman for each of those committees and a state chairman for each of those committees, but we had very little money, and it takes a great deal of effort to do that. We frankly never got too far in terms of specific, tight organization. Anyhow, this was the

method. We coupled that with the printing of four foreign language brochures. I think we published in Polish, German, Italian and Spanish, although I'm not sure about that. I believe it was those four languages. We would have published in all of the foreign languages had we had the money, but we didn't have the money. We planned a campaign of advertising in the foreign language press and on the foreign language communications media. We accomplished all of these things to some extent, but we were severely hampered by a lack of money. I remember once towards the end of the campaign asking Bob Kennedy for twenty thousand dollars and not getting it because all of the money was going into national television at that point. We were very much behind the Republicans. I made one trip to California to see if I could

drum up some business out there and was told that every Lithuanian-American in that particular area of California--I think it was Los Angeles--had received a letter from either the state or the national Republican committee addressed to the box holder at the person's address. The letters allegedly were in red, white and blue and written in Lithuanian urging that Lithuanian-Americans support Richard M. Nixon for the presidency. This just gives you some idea of the amount of money that was--perhaps it's not a typical example, I don't know, but if it is a typical example, it gives you some idea of the amount of money that the Republicans were spending in this area. Towards the end of the campaign the foreign language press and radio were inundated with Republican advertisements, and we had to sit back

and give almost none because we had no money. I don't know whether it was Bob Kennedy's idea or not to set this effort up along the lines that Truman had used in '48, but I do know that Cieplinski had worked for Mr. Truman, perhaps on a less formal basis, in the area of nationalities. And Cieplinski, of course, was the guiding factor in the '60 campaign. I'm sure it was handled somewhat similarly.

GRELE: In your comparison between the Democratic efforts and the Republican efforts would you ascribe your problems just to money or could it possibly have been that the Democratic party did not rely on the ethnic vote as greatly as did the Republicans or could it be that [Dwight D.] Eisenhower had mobilized these people?

HENRY: What was the first one?

GRELE: Money.

HENRY: Oh. Well, it was all three of these things. First, we didn't have sufficient money. Secondly, it was a judgment that the money could be better spent elsewhere because traditionally the so-called nationalities vote had been Democratic. It is also true that Eisenhower had mobilized a great many of these people to the Republican side. I remember specifically Cieplinski recalling, to his great regret, how the Republicans in '52 had taken an advertisement containing a picture of Mr. Eisenhower in his general's uniform with his left hand on a bible and his right hand upraised, I believe--or some such posture--saying in the appropriate foreign language, "I solemnly vow that we will roll back Communism," or words to this effect. It had an electric effect on the

nationalities, and the Democrats were never sure to what extent they had recovered. So it was a combination of all these things.

GRELE: Could we go, perhaps, into specifics on the various groups? Did you have any particular problems with, say, the Italians?

HENRY: Let's talk about the various groups. Shall we do that? All right. No, no particular problems with the Italians. Let's put it this way--the Italians, Germans, Irish perhaps, and many others seem to be less inclined to have their minds finally determined by issues pertaining to their country of origin. Many of the Italians are second and third generation. Even if in fact they pay great attention to so-called nationalities matters, they don't like to admit it, and they don't like to be reminded of it. You might say this was a problem. They had to

be approached very carefully and indirectly. While we would be sure, for example, that Senator Kennedy had his picture taken with Supreme Court Justice [Michael A.] Musmano of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, we would let it go at that and not make any great statement about Italo-Americans. I remember that we did not approach Senator [John O.] Pastore, for instance, because we were told that Senator Pastore didn't particularly like to capitalize on the fact that he was of Italian origin, et cetera. So this problem ran throughout. You never knew to what extent a German-American was interested in a German issue or not.

Now, with respect to the German-Americans they, and many of these nationality groups, voted on other issues. The German-Americans, for example, by and large were fairly conservative,

were heavily concentrated in the Midwest. We just figured we did what we could, but there wasn't much you could do.

The Spanish-Americans, for example, were concentrated in New York City and voted pretty much along the lines of the bread basket issues rather than what issues might pertain to Spain. They voted on issues of minimum wage and fair housing and so on, although we made quite sure that Mrs. Kennedy spoke a little Spanish when she was in Spanish-speaking Harlem. That's just standard procedure.

The Polish . . .

GRELE: Before we get into the eastern Europeans, could we go back to the Italians for a minute? Did you have any dealings with Generoso Pope?

HENRY: How many Popes are there?

GRELE: There are about seven or eight. The newspaper . . .

HENRY: Yes. No, all I remember about the Popes was that one of them was trying very hard to get his picture taken with the candidate. I believe we passed the word that he should not have his picture taken with this man because I think the man was then under indictment. That's the only thing I recall in the entire campaign about the Popes--that we should just be careful.

GRELE: Now to the eastern Europeans--with the Poles was there a problem over Yalta?

HENRY: I don't remember, frankly. I don't know. The President's brother-in-law, [Prince] Stanislaus Radziwill, was a very great success with the Polish-Americans, and Cieplinski, who was also of Polish origin, took a great pride and pleasure in squiring Prince Radziwill

around the hills of Pennsylvania and Ohio and so on. But in many of these groups our activities from day to day didn't seem too. . . . The concern of these groups with particular issues didn't seem to filter up, at least to me, to the extent that we had to do anything on a high level about it. If there was a problem about Yalta, the candidate simply got advice on that from [Myer] Mike Feldman or Archibald Cox. They could handle that pretty well separately from our efforts at organization, brochure printing, advertising and so on.

GRELE: Do you ever recall any debates over support of the Captive Nations Resolution or is that another thing that they would handle?

HENRY: Yes, I do recall some debate, but gee, it's been so long ago and I haven't tried to refresh my recollection of it. I can remember

preparing, I think, a letter on that issue or, if not on that particular one, on one similar to it, and taking it over to Mike Feldman and having him authorize it, or Archie Cox. But it was on a one shot basis. These issues were not recurring problems that we had to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

GRELE: How did you approach these groups in terms of the immigration laws? You mentioned that this was one of the particular fields that you used to . . .

HENRY: Well, primarily on the fact that Senator Kennedy wanted more equal and fairer immigration laws. Particularly, we emphasized that we wanted to make these laws more flexible to permit families to come together who were, for one reason or another, separated. If, for example, an Italian girl

married an American, the laws were such that she couldn't bring her mother over. It was very appealing, we thought, to urge that these should be relaxed which, I think, he was genuinely for, and I suppose that these are some of the concepts that were embodied in the new immigration law that passed Congress last year.

GRELE: Did you have any dealings with Jewish voters?

HENRY: Yes, although not directly through the Nationalities Division. It just happened that the national committeewoman from Panama--a lady by the name of Adelaide Eisenmann--had a desk in my office. She was helping with the nationalities activities but, being Jewish, she also had some contact with the various people of similar faith around the country. She did try to make some effort with them. I remember I came into contact with Milton Schapp

who had taken an advertisement in one of the Philadelphia papers, I believe. He came into the office one day and worked with Mrs. Eisenmann, and I simply met him. I was in touch with a man in Los Angeles--whose name escapes me now--who wanted to do some work out there with some of his friends. The main effort was outside the Nationalities Division and was simply through the. . . . My opinion is that it was mainly through the liberals and the reform Democrats in the New York area.

GRELE: Do you recall offhand whether or not there was any problem with Ambassador [Joseph P.] Kennedy's pre-World War experiences in England?

HENRY: I think that no, no particular problem, no more so than. . . . We didn't have to deal with it as such, but, again, this was not

part of my operation.

GRELE: Did you deal at all with Mexican-Americans?

HENRY: Yes, Mexican- and Spanish-Americans.

GRELE: You put the two together?

HENRY: Yes, by and large we did. Certainly organizationally we did although I'm sure they were treated differently in that Puerto Ricans--people who came to this country from Puerto Rico--in New York were treated differently from the Mexican-Americans in the Southwest. We had a very interesting operation run by Carlos McCormick. Carlos, I think, had an Irish father and a Spanish mother. Carlos had met Bob Kennedy when Bob went to the University of Arizona where Carlos was a student. He came back here, and he organized the Viva Kennedy Clubs. They were a big success in the Southwest and to some extent in New York and a couple down

in Florida. Carlos was very active and energetic. A number of people from Texas in particular--I think some of the Junior Chamber of Commerce down there and some others--came to Washington. We briefed them, met with them, gave them material, literature and so on. They went back to the Southwest and set up a very good Viva Kennedy organization. I remember when I went to Los Angeles, the taxi driver had a Viva Kennedy button on. It was a very good phrase and I think helped. Again, our effort was mainly in the organizational end of things--distributing brochures and so on. The substantive issues, again, were handled pretty much apart from me.

GRELE: Did you have any contact with the people who were organizing the registration drive?

HENRY: Well, where? Do you mean just generally?

GRELE: Among the Spanish-Americans in particular.

HENRY: Yes. My contact with them was in New York. On one of my trips to New York I met two young fellows who were handling the registration drive for the Puerto Ricans in New York City. One was Herbert Schmertz and the other fellow's name was John something--I forget. They were in charge of registering Puerto Rican Americans in New York City, and they were desperate for money. They asked me to give them some help. I did. I went to see Byron White who was then running the Citizens for Kennedy-Johnson. Over a drink of scotch whiskey he agreed to give me two thousand dollars for this purpose. Apparently it was very much appreciated up there. I was familiar to some extent with the New York City problem--the in-fighting between the various

groups up there--and what a difficult job it was to get this thing done. But there was a great deal of excitement generated up there among the Puerto Rican Americans, and I think the vote for Kennedy was very strong in that area. I also worked with [Angier] Angie Biddle Duke who headed the Nationalities Division of the New York State Democratic Committee. We had some liaison with fund raising and other matters. I think we also discussed this matter of registration.

GRELE: Who opposed registration in New York?

HENRY: Oh I don't think anybody. . . . I don't remember who opposed it. It was mainly a question of which of the Spanish-American or Puerto Rican American leaders would be utilized. Who were the good guys and who were the bad guys and so forth. The question

was whether the money would be spent for advertising in general or whether it would be to setup neighborhood registration centers. The latter view won out, I believe, and I don't remember specifically who might have opposed it. But, again, operating as I did from Washington, I simply touched all of these bases very lightly.

GRELE: Who organized the Mexican-Americans?

HENRY: Well, it was primarily . . .

GRELE: In terms of the registration.

HENRY: Oh. I don't know. I don't know.

GRELE: Would you say that having a Roman Catholic as a candidate for the presidency made your job easier or harder?

HENRY: I don't know. The pros and the cons of that situation were about the same as they were nationwide. It did not arise as an important

factor for discussion. It didn't create any specific problem that we were called on to handle. I think we may have emphasized the fact in some of our literature if it was primarily addressed to people who had a large number of Catholics in their group. Again, that was just a generalized approach.

GRELE: Did you work with Congressman [Clement J.] Zablocki in Milwaukee at all?

HENRY: Well, we had some contact with Congressman Zablocki and others. Cieplinski knew him, I believe, and worked with him at some length, but my contacts with most of the congressmen and senators were primarily to get them to make a speech here or there, not to deal with the substantive issues on which they might be of help. Cieplinski did much of that.

GRELE: I've been told that at one point in the campaign Congressman Zablocki became upset

or disillusioned with the campaign and retired for a period of time. Do you recall that?

HENRY: Well, he may have, but if so, I was not involved.

GRELE: Did you have any contact with the Civil Rights Division and the Negro voters?

HENRY: No, they were in the same building, but that's all.

GRELE: What states did you pick as particularly important in terms of the nationality vote?

HENRY: Well, I think Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York, Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, perhaps, and to a lesser extent Ohio, Indiana, Florida to some extent because of the Cuban-American population, and perhaps some others. Those were the principal ones.

GRELE: The Cuban-Americans. Was there any particular pitch to the Cuban-Americans?

HENRY: Well, again it was the Viva Kennedy approach, the Spanish-speaking approach.

GRELE: In retrospect, how would assess the effect of your work in terms of the election itself?

HENRY: Well, I've never been quite sure how to evaluate it. It was underfinanced, and there were a number of more pressing problems, day to day, in the campaign machinery. I found it extremely difficult to get any money or even to get much attention. I think that didn't bother me because, one, it was a compliment to us to think that we could handle it and, secondly, apparently everything was going all right. I think we did a reasonably good job under the circumstances but, of course, the candidate himself was 90 per cent of the success in this particular field as he was in most of the fields.

GRELE: Do you feel this vote did in reality prove crucial in the number of states that you mentioned?

HENRY: I don't know. I never made any analysis

of it. When the campaign was over, I went back home, having been satisfied the candidate was elected, and I didn't go into any of the statistics. Then I haven't had time to do so since.

GRELE: After the election you went home. How did you become involved in the Kennedy Administration?

HENRY: Well, I discussed with Bob Kennedy after I got home the possibility of joining the Administration. In a letter he made it quite clear to me that he hoped I would join the Administration without specifying exactly what the job would be because he didn't know whether I'd come. I thought it over seriously, and I discussed it with my wife and decided that I would not do so at that time for the simple reason that I was, relatively speaking, quite young, that

I had just gotten started in the practice of law, and if I went to Washington, it would be on a permanent basis. I decided at that point that I didn't want to do it on a permanent basis. When the call came two years later, or a year and a half later, to join the FCC [Federal Communications Commission], I made up my mind that the temptation was simply too great and my desire to be a part of the Administration was simply too great. And even though it might have meant changing the course of my life for good, I accepted it.

GRELE: Before I move on to the FCC, did you have any personal contacts with John Kennedy when he was a candidate or in the year and a half that he was president before you came to Washington?

HENRY: No, I did not meet the President until the

night before his Inauguration at a party given by the Kennedy family which he attended, and did not see him again until I came to Washington as a member of the FCC.

GRELE: What were your impressions of him that night, the first night you met him?

HENRY: He lived up to his publicity. He was charming, quick, bright, interested, gracious and obviously a man who was not only capable of doing the job but looking forward to it with great enthusiasm. I did notice quite a change in the President between that night--the night before the Inauguration when he was bubbling with enthusiasm and looked like a very young man--and the time when I saw him some two years later, having spent two years in the White House and having absorbed its cares and burdens. He was very definitely a changed man.

GRELE: In what ways?

HENRY: Well, just in his appearance, primarily, because both of my contacts were superficial. I really wouldn't be qualified to say other than that. His appearance and his manner was changed in that he had obviously aged and he was obviously more deliberate.

GRELE: When you first came to the FCC, did you come as chairman or as a member . . .

HENRY: No, I came as President Kennedy's second appointment to the Commission. Newton Minow had been the first, and he was chairman. I was the second, and it was at a time when Minow was still chairman. Minow left in May of 1963, and on June 2, 1963, President Kennedy named me as chairman.

GRELE: Had you had any background in broadcasting prior to the time that you came?

HENRY: No, absolutely none. Again, this was--apparently

and insofar as I know--simply another Bob Kennedy decision to get a man who was loyal, reasonably bright, and willing to work hard. Experience didn't count. As a matter of fact, although I'm prejudiced because of my own particular circumstances, I'm convinced that government needs a sprinkling of inexperienced people along with the experienced to give it some spice that it might not otherwise have.

GRELE: When you first came to the FCC was there any backlash or undercurrent still around the FCC and the broadcasters concerning Minow's condemnation of television as "a barren wasteland"?

HENRY: Oh sure, there was plenty of controversy going on. Minow came in on the crest of the Kennedy wave and did a superb job of capitalizing on the impact that that

wave made nationwide in all areas, in all activities. The fact that I was young and was a Bob Kennedy protege simply added to that general feeling that things were undergoing a change. People used to ask me if I usually followed Minow's lead and voted the same as he did on various issues. I always responded by saying that here at the Commission we followed the same practice as the Supreme Court--that the most junior member voted first and that the chairman voted last--and that Minow usually voted as I did. But it is true that, although we disagreed--and sometimes seriously--on some issues, for the most part we took the same approach toward the regulation of the broadcasting industry. That, of course, is a long story that I don't want to go into here, but it's an interesting one and perhaps I can at some other point.

GRELE: Were there other members of the Commission who did not see regulation the way Chairman Minow did?

HENRY: Oh yes. At that time I think we were the only two who did. The man I replaced, Mr. [John S.] Cross, took pretty much of an opposite, laissez-faire approach to regulation as did most of the members of the Commission.

GRELE: What were the relations like between the FCC at that time and Congressman [Oren] Harris?

HENRY: Well, the relationship was good. The chairman of the agency must get along, in the best sense of those words, with the chairmen of the House and the Senate Committees on Commerce. They have the power of the purse strings, the power of appointment. They have tremendous power in the industries that you regulate, and you simply must get along. You can get along with honor and good

humor and still disagree on some occasions which I have often done--not often, but on occasion--very drastically with Chairman Harris, for example. The relationship between the chairman and the commission has always been good. I say "always." It's been good with these men at least since 1960. Before that time the FCC had a notoriously bad reputation as being a repository for political hacks and as being more a tool of the industry than it was supposed to regulate than a regulating body. That was changed, and I think if Minow made any contribution, that was his most important. It was underway because of the efforts that Federick W. Ford had made when he was appointed chairman by Mr. Eisenhower, but Minow took it on from there, as I hope I have.

GRELE: In operating the FCC did you give any credence to Professor [Bernard] Schwartz and his book, The Professor and the Commissions?

HENRY: Well, I accepted the conclusion that the FCC had in many instances exceeded the bounds of propriety in dealing with the industry in terms of accepting favors from the industry, in terms of judging matters more on personalities than on the merits of the situation, and that the FCC had, as I said, earlier some unfortunate people on it. Some of the people on it had, unfortunately, been unable to act properly. Now I didn't have to look any further than that. I was just determined to keep it on the course it had attained by the time I came to it.

GRELE: Did you ever discuss this problem with either the Attorney General or the President?

HENRY: Well, the Attorney General and I. . . .

When I was a commissioner seeking to become chairman, I had conversations with a number of people in government who were in a position to influence the decision--influence in the proper sense of the word--the Attorney General, Ralph [A.] Dungan in the White House, and so on. These were the people who advised the President. Generally, my statement to them was that we had to maintain this image and we had to continue to do what we thought was right even though it might be opposed by substantial segments of the industry. We had to stand up to these interests.

GRELE: In what particular areas?

HENRY: Well, I remember talking to the Attorney General in terms of the. . . . Well, I don't know. It was just general, a general proposition that you couldn't be regulated

by them. You had to do the regulating.

GRELE: You said earlier that you did have some disagreements with Chairman Minow . . .

HENRY: Yes. If I could return to . . . You said the Attorney General, the President or anyone else. I did talk to the President before I became chairman. He was particularly interested in keeping the broadcasting industry fair. It's no secret that he felt that the press, the newspapers were "unfair," or that if they were fair, it was by the hardest, because the influence of the Republican party was felt by the newspaper management rather than the Democratic influence. He was very interested that that not happen in the broadcasting industry because the law was such that it shouldn't happen. We had to be very alert to see that that law and that policy, that spirit, was upheld. He was very interested in that. Of course,

I assured him that if I were made chairman, I would see to it that such a policy was upheld, not in terms of giving preferential treatment to any candidate or the advocate of any issue, but to keep things fair and balanced.

GRELE: Back to the question which I originally posed. You said that there were some serious disagreements which you had with Chairman Minow. Do you recall any of the specific disagreements?

HENRY: They related to specific cases. On most of the policy issues, with very limited exceptions, we were in agreement. However, that wasn't put to too serious a test because this is a seven-man, bipartisan commission, and Minow never really had the votes to do a lot of the things that both he and I wanted to do. So many of the things that

he advocated actually never came up for a vote. He couldn't command enough votes to even get it up for us to consider and perhaps to disagree on. So by and large we didn't have. . . . He left, you see, eight months after I got here. If he was still here and we'd both been here and he'd been here five years and I four we would have had, I'm sure, many disagreements.

GRELE: What were your relations like with Governor [LeRoy] Collins?

HENRY: They were cordial, and I think there was mutual respect between us. I certainly had the highest respect for him. He was part of the overall wave that came in when President Kennedy was elected, part of the proposition that something had to be done, some improvements were going to come about. He felt very strongly that broadcasters

could on their own improve themselves, and should. He urged them to do so in no uncertain terms and became very unpopular in some quarters as a result. I always supported him and, as I say, I have great respect for him.

GRELE: Did you personally feel that he was correct, that the broadcasters could indeed regulate themselves?

HENRY: Well, he was certainly sincere in that belief, and he was able to effectuate at least a different attitude towards this goal of self-regulation. However, I think, personally, that he did not succeed in putting any teeth into self-regulation. The conflicts are too great and the stakes are too high for the broadcasters to regulate them effectively. In the tempo of the times he was a good public relations man, and that was his job.

GRELE: In general, what were your relations with the broadcasting industry?

HENRY: Well, I think again that there is a They respect my ability and they respect my sincerity. Now other than that, I think in many respects they think I am on the wrong track, getting bad advice and, in some instances, misguided. I think they feel that I should have more and better knowledge of their industry. However, I think, particularly in the last year or so, they've come to realize that I have come to know pretty much what I need to know about their business and that I have been able to resolve some of these conflicts that swirl around us here in pretty good fashion, getting something for the public interest and at the same time recognizing the needs of the industry. So on the whole I would say,

although many would be happy to see me leave, the relationship in general is a good one.

GERLE: During the Administration of President Kennedy did any of the conflicts between the FCC and the broadcasters ever reach the White House?

HENRY: I don't think that any of the conflicts between the FCC and the broadcasters ever did. I'd have to think about that, and maybe I can think of some. Whenever we got. . . . I say "whenever." I kept the White House informed, as I think any chairman must, from time to time, of what we were doing. As a matter of fact we make a monthly report to the President. We also send copies to the Chairman of congressional committees. On one occasion when we were contemplating some action with respect to the American

Telephone and Telegraph Company, there was some reaction in the White House.

GRELE: From who?

HENRY: Well, through Ken [P. Kenneth] O'Donnell who had been in touch with some representative of AT&T. Again, this was simply to express the general view of the Administration that if we were going to do anything, we should be sure that it was based on very careful and thoughtful study, and that the Administration was not anti-business and didn't want to be characterized as such but for us to go ahead and do it if we felt like it.

GRELE: Did you go ahead and do it?

HENRY: No. It had not reached the point of actually determining what we were going to do. I think we probably did. . . . It related to a rate reduction. The question was

whether we had a hearing or whether we just got a rate reduction without having a hearing. I think we got the rate reductions without a hearing.

GRELE: In your experience at the FCC would you say it's easier to deal with the networks or with the independent stations?

HENRY: Easier in terms of ability to regulate? Oh well, I suppose it's easier in political terms to deal with individual stations. They do not have the force in government that the networks do. Apart from that, the network problems are more complex. It's harder to find the right solution. Then, when you're dealing with individual stations, if you propose a general rule that relates to a number of individual stations, they get together, as is their right and in fact their role. And when

they get together, they're just as hard to deal with as the networks.

GRELE: Do you recall offhand which networks or who in the industry gave you the most problems in the Kennedy Administration in any of the cases that came to you?

HENRY: Who in the networks?

GRELE: Which networks or who in the industry?

HENRY: No. You see, I was chairman in the Kennedy Administration only the months of June, July, August, September, October and November--only six months. I don't believe in the course of that six months any matter came up that necessitated contact with the White House that had to do with the networks.

GRELE: Were you at all involved in the changes in the equal time formula, or did that occur before you had come in?

HENRY: No, that occurred in 1959. The last changes in the equal time law were in 1959. In 1960 the

provisions of Section 315 with respect to presidential and vice presidential candidates were suspended. I testified in 1963 that they should be similarly suspended in 1964, but then the Congress decided that they should not be. We didn't. . . . That was the extent of our involvement.

GRELE: Why did Mr. Minow resign?

HENRY: Well, he quoted Joseph Kennedy, saying to the effect that you should stay in government only so long. But he resigned because he wanted to get back to private life. I don't really know exactly what went into his decision, other than that.

GRELE: Was he successful in getting the broadcasters to devote a larger percentage of their program time to public affairs?

HENRY: I think he was partly. . . . I think he was successful, yes. It's the best answer

I can give you. At the same time there's more news on, for example, and there's more effort along the public service or the public affairs kind of program. I think he was. I think I've been somewhat successful along the same lines. By and large, however, neither he nor I have been able to effectuate changes that the public can recognize as substantial programming changes. I'm not really sure that we should. I think we should urge them to do better, but to do better in their own way.

GRELE: Were there ever any directives or opinions from the White House concerning commercials on TV?

HENRY: No, we never discussed it with the White House. I never discussed it with the White House. I don't think I discussed anything with the White House in the

broadcasting field, period.

GRELE: Can you think of anything that we've missed?

HENRY: Well, I met with President Kennedy on November the 20th, I believe. It was a Wednesday. We had gone to his office. I had gone to his office in the company of Harlan Cleveland and [Joseph] Joe McConnell. Mr. McConnell was the president of Reynolds Metal, and he had chaired the United States delegation to an administrative radio conference in Geneva whose job it was to assign frequencies to outer space. I accompanied Mr. McConnell to the President's office so that the President could thank him for the very effective job he had done. I believe the picture that was taken with Mr. McConnell was the last official photograph of the President. Again I was impressed by the fact that Mr. Kennedy did appear somewhat

careworn, although I believe he was actually in good shape and good spirits. I remember at one point Mr. McConnell telling him that before he had taken this job he had never had any experience in the government, that he'd heard much pro and con about the State Department. The President interrupted him at that point and said, "Tell me something pro," and smiled. Mr. McConnell then went on to say that he had been very gratified by the experience and that he had been so impressed with the diligence and industry and intelligence of the people in the government with whom he had come into contact and his confidence in it had been in large part restored. The President was very pleased to hear that.

GRELE: Were you at all involved in the assigning of the communications satellite to AT&T?

HENRY: Well, the satellite wasn't assigned to them.
No, the Satellite Act governed that and that
was an act in August of 1962 and that was
before I came.

GRELE: Can you think of anything else?

HENRY: No.

GRELE: Well, thank you very much.