Interview with Fred and Josephine Marshall

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Interviewed by Dr. John Massman and Lila Johnson

Johnson: I'd like to start by talking a little bit about your background. You were born in this area right here?

Marshall: I was born in this township in 1906 on the farm that my great grandfather had. grandfather ran it and my father and I ran the farm and now my son is running the farm. I've been to school down in the one-room country school that sets in approximately the center of the farm, and just last Saturday that schoolhouse was sold at auction. With the reorganization, the one-room country schoolhouses are being absorbed into the independent districts.

Johnson: That was the same school that your father and grandfather went to?

Marshall: No, not my grandfather but my father and my sons. My sons both went to the school and Josephine (Mrs. Fred Marshall) taught at the school. I won't tell you about some of the shenanigans that she was involved with.

Johnson: I understand that your father was in the Agricultural Extension Service. Was that when you were quite young?

Marshall: Yes. Father was the first county agricultural agent in Minnesota in Traverse County. That was from 1912 to 1914 that he served as a county agricultural agent. Then wages in the

Agricultural Extension Service were not very large and the home farm was more attractive so he came back to farm.

Massmann: Can you talk a little bit about what he did as a county agricultural agent?

Marshall: Yes, I think I could. His work was quite interesting. At that time there wasn't any pattern laid out for extension work as it is today. They were in a position of pioneering and a lot of the work that they did was experimenting to see what the farmers might need. Probably the greatest service rendered to the farmers at that time was the prevention and cure of hog cholera. Hog cholera ran rampant and he took quite an active part in that. I think some of the records that they made in vaccinating hogs still stand for the survival of the hogs that they vaccinated that were saved. Then as now the Extension Service took quite an active part in community activities. They did a lot of work in organizing farmer's clubs to bring the community together in groups to discuss their problems.

The work of improving the grain varieties and standards was something that was important. I remember that at Morris they put on a west central show to encourage the production of corn and alfalfa in west central Minnesota. It may seem a little strange but their commodity at that time was pretty much small grain, largely wheat. And not growing a cultivated crop they had a weed problem. So their feeling was that if they could get the farmers to grow corn and alfalfa it would provide for a cultivated crop, and alfalfa then was a new crop and many farmers were not familiar with it. And the Agricultural Experiment Station had shown it was a vulnerable crop. I think the results over the years since that time have proven the value of alfalfa, so certainly the promotion of it was in behalf of improving.

Then I remember another thing, and it seems a little strange in this day and age, but the matter of improving and finding a market for their draft horses. Nowadays you don't say anything about horses on a farm but they had a colt show at Wheaton where they brought in the colts to show and they did quite a little work in trying to improve the quality of the draft horses and also quite a little work in trying to find a market for some that they had grown. Then, as now, the problem of farm markets was an important one, so that they did all that they could in trying to develop markets.

The formation of some of their co-op organizations, they did some work on that. Beautification of farmsteads was an important item. They put in quite a little time trying to encourage people to plant trees and particularity shrubbery where they could grow some small fruits with their gardens. So, all in all, during that time Dad was a pretty busy person with all the activities. And I think perhaps that it might be said it was more interesting because he was pioneering. A lot of work that he did in pioneering has been carried on through the years through the Extension Service.

Massmann: This was right about the time when corn was brought in, actually too.

Marshall: Yes, it was about that time, yes.

Massmann: Did your father get involved after he retired from the Extension Service in other farm agencies?

Marshall: Yes, we farmed here on the farm until we had this big Depression. And we had our troubles just the same as our neighbor did during that time. The government formed an agency known as the Rural Rehabilitation Corporation and Resettlement and the Farm Security Administration. All those things were doing quite similar work but they all come in about the

same time and Dad served as a county supervisor here for the Farm Security Administration. And they had a program of land tenure known as the Resettlement Administration. He was in charge of that in, I think, it was nine counties here in the central part of the state when they bought some farms that – these farms were bought at a low figure. Because of the Depression, land values were very low. There it's a little interesting, I think, the change that takes place. The feeling was that these farms should be broken into forty-acre units. That was a mistake. Fortunately, they didn't do very much of that, recognizing that it was a mistake, so the size of the farm I think finally average out to about 145 acres for the hundred and twenty some units that they had. Practically all of the tenants on all of those farms were successful in their operations. Many of those farmers have now expanded their holdings. Of course they made a loan for their chattels, too. Dad was very much interested in that program. A person to acquire one of those farms from the government had to be in a distressed financial condition. If they could buy land any other way they couldn't buy through this agency. It did a world of good, particularly to the families that were growing up with the children. I think Dad began to look at the children of these borrowers and tenants as practically members of his own family. I know nowadays occasionally we see some of them and they say "Oh, yes, we remember your father, he did such and such, and such and such with the program." The things that were done were done by the government, but it seemed to have been a habit for them to give that credit to my father since he was in charge of this program.

Johnson: There were federal programs at that time?

Marshall: That's right. That was a federal program. And so he worked with that until he retired. And about the time he worked with that, Josephine and I took over the farm here so that we were living on the home farm. Dad and Mother moved to Litchfield and lived in Litchfield. I became

interested about the same time in Agricultural Adjustment Administration. I worked for that and a little later I was offered the state directorship of the Farm Security Administration. I was my father's superior officer so I could issue orders to him, to my father, and I wished he'd obeyed them better than he did.

Johnson: What year was that?

Marshall: That would have been 1941 when I became the state director of the Farm Security Administration. And I stayed there until I resigned in 1948 to run for Congress.

Choate: I am wondering what were some of the reasons that made you decide to run for Congress?

Marshall: Well, that might be a little interesting. Mr. [Harold] Knutson had represented the district for thirty-two years and there were some people in the district that thought that a change would be desirable. They hadn't liked his views on some things and so they were very desirous of having somebody who would carry on a campaign against him. Their thought was that even though they didn't win the election, that it would be a good thing to have some of the issues that were facing the Sixth District brought out. And they had talked to several people that they thought might be good candidates and came to me more or less of a last resort. I remember when the group talked to me. I tried to stall for time and I said, "Well, I'd like to talk that over with Josephine", thinking, of course, that she would make a decision that I didn't want to make. So I came home and I broached the subject to Josephine and I said, "Some of the people have thought I would be a good candidate for Congress. What do you think of it?" And she said, "Good. You go ahead and run. You'll get beat and then you'll tend to your own business." And of course, we

did get into the campaign rather late. It was in July--this was the last part of June when I was broached on the subject, and July I resigned and filed for the Congress.

Johnson: Who was it that came and talked to you about running?

Marshall: A group from the Sixth District. I don't know that – I hesitate to mention names because I may overlook some just from calling back on my memory at this time, but there were quite a group that came down from Sauk Center. I remember that Charlie Halsted was there from Brainerd. Charlie was considered to be at that time quite a leader and lived in the Sixth District. Some of the state party officers were there in the group. Orville Freeman was then state chairman [of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party] and he was trying to do something. Ben DuBois was there from Sauk Centre and there were some people from West Union and I remember Harry Peterson was there from the Minnesota Association of Co-ops. You see, Mr. Knutson had cast a vote which was not acceptable to the cooperative people in the state, and so they were quite desirous that something could be done about it. All in all there must have been in the group around thirty-five people who had formed a nucleus, and outside of Orville Freeman I think everyone was from central Minnesota. Charlie Stickney from Clear Lake was there. At that time he was quite active in federal farm programs in the district. So it was a substantial group, I would say, of people that were interested in the welfare of the people in the Sixth District. And they all assured me of any support that they could give me, and certainly I had no complaints later about the amount of support that I got form them, because they were stalwart supporters all the time I was in Congress.

Johnson: Had you been active before, going to DFL meetings and--?

Marshall: No, I had not. I think maybe a person goes through some rather interesting developments. My family – when I talk about my family, my grandfather and father and great-grandfather were all active in the Republican Party. I was raised in a family that discussed politics just about as much as a youngster would discuss baseball when I grew up. My grandfather referred to Democrats as Condemn Copperheads, always put a rather strong emphasis on that. He'd been a veteran in the Civil War. Abe Lincoln and anybody along that line were heroes in his eye. I had two uncles that were very much interested in the Republican politics and my father was until the McNary-Haugen fight came along. A community in central Minnesota sent a group down to the Republican convention held in Kansas City to lobby for the McNary-Haugen Bill. This county raised the funds and sent Dad down. I remember him having to borrow a white shirt from one of my uncles to go to the convention. And he went to the convention, and he came back an ardent Democrat. The Republican convention converted him over to the Democratic Party. Al Smith was the first President that I voted for. Dad became real active in the Democratic Party. I had the farm chores to do I knew what was going on and what was transpiring because he always took me into his confidence. But to say that I had an active part at that time, I didn't.

Then afterwards the Department of Agriculture had what they called a priority list. That should be people were acceptable to the Democratic Party when they considered positions. And I was proposed for a field man for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which required a so-called political clearance and because of the previous activity of the family in the Republican party, the county chairman in my county, the DFL chairman, quite actively opposed my appointment, felling that it wasn't just exactly right to name a person from a strong Republican family to serve a Democratic administration. But I had had some experience and perhaps a little

luck in something that they felt they needed and some of the people who recognized that my value to the Democratic party might be more important that what some previous commitment of my great-grandfather might have been decided that maybe that could be overlooked. And they prevailed upon Joe Wolfe to accept my appointment. So actually even at that I didn't have anything to do with it, it was friends of mine that straightened that situation out. Although during the time I was in Congress once in a great while I heard rumblings from some of the people that they couldn't expect too much from me on the Democratic side because after all my affiliations had always been with the Republican party.

Massmann: Was your father at all involved with the Farmer-Labor movement?

Marshall: No, no. He had the distinction of running for state senator against Magnus Johnson in the county, running on the opposition to the Farmer-Labor candidate at that time. Of course, you know we don't have party designations, and anyway he was the opposition candidate and he lost out by a small margin as I recall, so his activities in the political field as a candidate were not very successful.

Johnson: That was the only time he ran for any political office?

Marshall: No, he ran for county commissioner one time and lost out by seven votes. That was his first entry into politics.

Choate: Sounds as though you were a little luckier than your father was.

Marshall: Yes.

Choate: I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about the first campaign. You said you started late and that some of the people felt you should bring out issues, they weren't sure whether you would be successful.

Marshall: Yes, I would be glad to. I had talked and planned, recognizing that the time was short, that it meant organizing the campaign. Before I had got into the race I had made some inquiry about the party organization. And I was told that the party had quite an active organization, which they did in a few counties, but some counties I also found out that the organization had been quite inactive. I recall going to Wright County and I saw a man that they referred me to living at Maple Lake. I went to talk to him, a very fine person, and I talked with him about who I might see and he dug into a cigar box where he had a list and he came up with a list of the names of people that I should contact in the county. So the first man that I went out to inquire on his list had been dead for two years and the second man on the list had moved away and I couldn't find anybody who knew where he had moved. So actually in that county the organization was quite disappointing. Then I went to another county and I couldn't find anybody who seemed to know where the county chairman lived or who he was. And I finally ran him down one evening, it was quite late. He was working in Minneapolis, and driving back to Sherburne County, a very, very fine person and a real active Democrat. Because he was active he had gone to the county convention and when he was at the county convention, the people decided that tit would be well to elect him as county chairman. The reason that they elected him, they said that he hadn't joined any of the various factions in the county, and therefore would be neutral and could work with all of the people. But he said frankly, "I shouldn't be county chairman because I'm not well enough acquainted in the county to be of much help to you." And he really felt quite embarrassed about it, because he wanted to be helpful.

So we had a couple of other experiences somewhat similar to that. So immediately we recognized that we had to do something to build an organization and we had to do it right quick. At that time I felt quite discouraged and I remember that I went out to talk to a man who late became my secretary in Washington, Paul Presseller. Paul had worked for the Farm Security Administration and I knew Paul quite well. He was out in the field pitching hay and I went out and talked to him about the situation and he said, "Well, I guess maybe we'd better do something about that." And he stuck the fork in the ground and we started out campaigning. As far as I know he never went back to the pitchfork. It's probably still in the field. But he and I began to work to put an organization together. He used anybody that might be willing to help us and we organized it as an all-party volunteer committee. We worked night and day at the formation of this committee and I guess luck was with us because we did in every county get somebody on that committee who were active and well respected in the county and who went out and did a lot of spadework. I don't recall that anybody that we talked to at that time at refused to help. They were all interested. In fact one of the men, a man by the name of August Koep that we had known through our work in Triple A programs, came into the office and said, "Fred," he said, as I recall his conversation, "Fred, I'm interested in politics. I've never taken much of any active part." He said, "Would you mind if I tried to help you out in this campaign?" And he was just a wonderful person. He never offended anybody and was well-respected. And when he talked with the people he did it in such a nice way that they couldn't take any resentment. And the fact that he got around and worked as he did certainly helped us.

So it was work like that and the work that these people were doing in the counties that led to a phrase that was picked up by the press, that I'd been carrying on a whispering campaign. The whispering campaign came about because of these people just going out, oh, they spent days of

their time contacting their neighbors and talking to them about the possibilities of my election. We had something like twenty-five members of the volunteer committee and with the time as short as it was, these people expanded my time about twenty-five times over what it would have been otherwise. Paul Presseller took charge of the office, an excellent administrator, he saw that the material was out and so on, and kept things moving, and it have me an opportunity to get out and meet with groups and spend some time. He did a rather unique thing, I think, in campaigns, at least it seemed to me unique. He would set up the time that I should spend in the county and we adhered to that schedule. So I wasn't jumping all over the district, I was concentrating on these certain areas that he had assigned me. These helpers of mine would make arrangements to make the best use of my time for the time I was in those counties. It worked out real well.

Johnson: Why do you think you had such success in getting these people? Were there certain issues or was it your personality or what?

Marshall: No, I think it was pretty such the issues that they were thinking about. I don't want to confuse this thing, because these so-called key people that we were working with, they were people that were interested in the issues and understood why a campaign was necessary. When I was out campaigning I might not talk issues at all. Then you got into more of personality sort of thing. For example, I might go out campaigning and shaking hands and telling people that my name was Fred Marshall, and that I was running for Congress. I don't know how many times I repeated that phrase, we might not discuss an issue at all. But there it was more of a matter of personal contact. But I am sure that any one of my campaign committee, if they had been put in a position of debating the issues, were well-informed enough so that they could have debated why I should be a member of congress with anybody on almost any subject. They were people that were quite well-informed.

I think the key for the success in my first political campaign and those following it were the personal following that we had that we built up through these leaders in their community. They were leaders in other things in their communities, other than campaigning. They'd had experience before in things and were public-spirited men. And these men, none of them ever expected to receive anything in return for their public services. It was for them a public service and a responsibility of citizenship.

Massmann: What do you think were the key issues?

Marshall: Well, possibly the taxation bill was the biggest one. It had been referred to as "one rabbit and one horse" operation. The feeling was that Mr. Knutson had been chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and that the tax relief wasn't exactly fair, that he was giving more benefit to the wealthy than he was to the poor. And he had made some rather off-hand references to taxation of co-ops that was quite offensive to the co-ops. That was one of the issues. And then possibly the turning point of the campaign, he gave a speech at St. John's University and he was questioned at St. John's University about his vote on the so-called Marshall Plan. And he couldn't recall just at the moment, or else he didn't understand the question, so anyway he was caught off-guard and indicated that he hadn't known just how he had voted upon that particular measure. And the Marshall Plan was something that a lot of people in the Sixth District were interested in. They were anxious to see that some of the countries would get back on their feet, particularly Germany, and looked quite favorably on that program. When he made that statement it was even picked up by the New York Times that the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee hadn't been sure how he voted on the Marshall Plan. And that created quite a little distress in the minds of a lot of people because they felt that something as important as tat was that he ought to have known how he voted. And frankly, I think he did know, but I don't think

that he quite understood the question that was proposed to him. And farm legislation had a lot of effect on it. Mr. Knutson's labor record had been quite anti-labor, and so the labor people were quite up in arms from the standpoint that they felt that his voting on labor legislation had been poor. The Taft-Hartley act was an issue.

And so it was the circumstance of a number of these things kind of coming at a head all at the same time. And then I think possibly at the start that getting into the race rather late that Mr. Knutson didn't fully realize at the start that he had a campaign on his hands. The type of campaign that we carried on, the so-called whispering campaign, was somewhat different than he had had in his years of experience. He didn't have an organized effort such as we had. We knew who his key people ware in the community and we made it a point to avoid any contact at the beginning of the campaign with these people that might be key people, so that he wouldn't be aroused, and so naturally when he would go to make the rounds and meet some of his key people, these key people honestly told him they didn't know very much about me or anything and that he had nothing to worry about. That kind of had the effect of lulling him to sleep, and then when he woke up it was too late. So that was a method of campaigning that was somewhat different than he'd had in the past.

Johnson: You also had the advantage that year that Hubert Humphrey ran for the Senate?

Marshall: Yes, that was the same year, and Joe Ball had quite a lot of opposition that year from people generally. Joe Ball had been rather outspoken and one of things that he did was spending a terrific amount of money for billboards. And Hubert Humphrey in his first campaign statewide running for the Senate was a real active candidate and, as he is now, an excellent speaker, his party support meant a great deal to me in running for Congress in the district, because he always

made some reference to me and it certainly helped. And I recall that at one point in the campaign that Mr. Knutson said, that in supporting the party candidate (Mr. Knutson was a loyal party person supporting the Republican party) that he said he was concerned about Joe Ball, and he made reference to the fact that he hoped the audience would support Joe Ball, didn't campaign for himself saying that he would be willing to take his chances but that he thought that Joe Ball was in severe trouble. So some of the people made quite a little use of that in campaigning against Mr. Knutson, because they'd kind of laugh and chuckle and say, "Mr. Knutson doesn't think he's in any trouble." There is a little advantage in that. And Mr. Knutson had made the reference sometime along in the spring that he didn't want to be a candidate again, that he felt that the time had come when he might retire. And I don't know how often I repeated the phrase but I made the comment that Mr. Knutson had said that he wants to retire, and I'd like to help him. That seemed to sort of get a chuckle out of people. And I'm sure that had some influence in getting some of the people to support me.

Massmann: You were able then to pretty well avoid that 1948 split in the party?

Marshall: Yes. Actually as far as we were concerned, I had a primary opponent and we recognized that we couldn't spend very much time campaigning against a primary opponent. So we took the attitude that we wouldn't campaign against him, that we would have to carry on such a campaign that we would get the support of his followers. So we didn't have any serious amount of trouble with any party split at that time.

Johnson: Who was your opponent in the primary?

Marshall: Mr. Gustafson, the county Superintendent of Schools in Pine County and I were opponents in the primary.

Massmann: When you first went to Congress, you said that Knutson was not in touch with his district, that he reflected too much of an isolationist viewpoint. How did you come to that conclusion?

Marshall: I'm glad you asked that question because he had been recognized in the Congress as being as isolationist. He voted against the entry of the United States into war in 1918 and he followed most of his career a strictly isolationist viewpoint. Now I analyzed it this way. I think that the people in the Sixth District, by and large, are quite interested in world affairs. Most of the people in the Sixth District are quite well-informed people and they make a study of a lot of these things. They do quite a little reading. I don't think that Mr. Knutson had drawn the line of distinction between war and programs, like the Marshal Plan, of assistance. The people in the Sixth District had kept track of people in the older country. There was some correspondence back and forth. And some people felt that it would be well to help build the economy of Germany and some of the other foreign countries. So they recognized, too, that Stearns County, particularly had quite a little arrangement of marketing of their products with Europe. I sort of resented the idea that the Sixth District was isolationist because I didn't think that they were. And I'm sure that after experiences that I had, that they weren't. And I think while a lot of people commended Mr. Knutson for his vote against entry into war in 1918, a lot of those same people didn't agree with him when they were thinking in terms of some of the assistance programs that we later had to help these people. There's a lot of difference between helping people and shooting people. And I think that was part of that distinction.

There had been a lot of talk about reciprocal trade agreements, too, about that time. There's quite a wave of sentiment in favor of reciprocal trade agreements. One of the things that the farmers remembered after World War II was that the price of their farm commodities dropped because of

the drop of world trade, and reciprocal trade agreements gave them some hopes of recovering some of that trade. And so that was hitting them right in their pocketbook. And you know somebody said in some political campaign that the price of hogs was more important than the issues that might be discussed. I think this might be a little parallel of that. But I firmly believe that the people of the Sixth District in Minnesota are far from being termed isolationist. They're quite interested in affairs all over the world.

Massmann: They would be generally anti-war, however?

Marshall: Yes, that certainly is true. That certainly is true. And I think all along that that's borne out with all of the feeling that I've been able to get in touch with. We're a peace-loving group of people and we abhor war. And we were very unhappy with the Korean conflict, and we've been unhappy with Vietnam. I think it's just because of that inborn hatred of war. Many of our ancestors came to this country to avoid military conscription. And so that's something that they've grown up with. They just feel that there ought to be some other way of working these things out than having to go into shooting war to settle their differences. Although I think that Pearl Harbor was a pretty good example of what happens to this group when they're attacked. They're certainly loyal Americans and if something happens like Pearl Harbor, the Sixth District would be unified in their support, whatever it took to preserve the United States.

Massmann: In Congress you were very early in your early days a critic of military expenditures, and hold-the-line and readjustment of military expenditures. Were you somewhat alone among the Democrats?

Marshall: Well, I remember one time that we had a military appropriation bill that was up and I was the only vote cast against it in the entire House. And later on, that same bill went over to the

Senate and I think there was, as I recall, there was something like twelve votes in the Senate in opposition. This bill, I think, was a rather fantastic bill from the standpoint of the amount of money being spent. I'm sure that people would value the defense of the country, and I certainly wouldn't have been one that would have voted no if it had been detrimental to the defense of the country. But there was so many, many, many things in that bill that I thought had nothing to do with the defense. And it's a little interesting that as a comment on it that as much as three of four sessions after that there were members that would come to me and say that they had wished that they had voted as I did in opposition to the bill, because they didn't fully appreciate some of the things in the bill that were not related to actual defense. And even today I think that there are lots of items that go into the defense appropriations that could well be changed. We had an item of a hundred million dollars one time for construction of an airplane. And the people that had presented this to the Appropriations Committee made mention of the fact that this plane was obsolete. The plans of it had been drawn but it was recognized that the progress had moved so rapidly in airplane construction that this plane was obsolete. The Appropriations Committee in the House of Representatives did their best to eliminate that but the members of the House wouldn't go along with it. It seemed rather strange thinking in terms of a House upsetting the Committee on Appropriations from the standpoint of trying to put in some hundred million dollars for a plane that the House Appropriations Committee, not unanimously, but had rejected.

I'm always a little suspicious, and still am suspicious, of defense appropriation bills. I think President Eisenhower referred to a military industrial complex, and I think that might have been part of the thing that he might have had a little reference to, thinking in terms of defense appropriations. So many industries have depended upon war expenditures that they want to get all of it they can for that purpose.

Johnson: You went into Congress the same time Eugene McCarthy did, didn't you?

Marshall: Yes, John Blatnik was in Congress one term before I went, representing the Eighth District, Democratic-Farmer-Labor. Then the year I ran, 1948, Senator Humphrey was elected to the Senate, Gene McCarthy from St. Paul was elected to the House from St. Paul, Roy Weir from Minneapolis was elected from the Third District in Minnesota. We elected at that year four new members of Congress, with John Blatnik being the fifth.

Johnson: Was that the first time you had been in Washington, when you went in January of '49?

Marshall: No, no I had been in Washington a couple of times in advance of that. I had gone down for conferences with the Department of Agriculture. They would call some of us in at time to time to discuss some program developments and I had been in Washington for that purpose.

Johnson: Had you met President Truman before?

Marshall: No, I had never met President Truman. I didn't meet President Truman until I had been in the Congress for about five months. And then Representative Lemke, a Republican from North Dakota, had occasion to go to the White House and took me down and introduced me to President Truman. And I didn't have any more judgement than to go back on the House floor and make mention of the fact that I thought it was peculiar that a Democratic Congressman had to be introduced to a Democratic President by a Republican Congressman. It wasn't long after that before I got a special invitation to come down and talk to President Truman and I had a very enjoyable meeting with him. It also wasn't long after that when Speaker Rayburn and John McCormack, who was majority leader, made a special effort to have the new members of Congress meet the President, which was followed out every year after I was there. They may

have done it anyway but anyway but anyway I sort of felt that my remark might have had something to do with their activities.

Massmann: Was Truman at all appreciative of that?

Marshall: He didn't make any mention of that. We talked about campaigns. His campaign had been considered by the people to be a terrific upset. In my case it was the first time in the history of the United States that the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee had been defeated in an election, so that mine was considered to be an upset. And I recall that we talked about that, and we talked about a number of things. Mr. Truman assured me that he was interested in m welfare and enjoyed working with me. Mr. Truman was a real interesting man to meet, quite common, and not at all difficult to talk to.

Johnson: Was it Truman's or President Eisenhower's request for a military budget that you voted against?

Marshall: That was Mr. Truman's.

Marshall: This meeting with his was before that, so we never discussed that. This came up later. As I remember now, and I'm remembering back, it was more just a kind of social chit-chat affair not talking about any issues. He seemed to be giving me the impression that he was interested in meeting me and that he wanted to work with me and with other members of the Congress also. We met any number of times after that and he always remembered me and always had a smile for me and always had something nice to say to me, so I thought as the result of our conversation that I at least had a friend in the White House. And I know that a few occasions that we went down to the White House he was always considerate. New members of Congress don't as a rule work very much with the President. The committee chairmen and the senior people of seniority

on committees go down and work out the details with the White House. I think it must be handled that way because people who have served on the committee have a fuller understanding. It takes a little while for a so-called freshman member of Congress to become acquainted with the various procedures of the Congress. In the first term, a person is kept quite busy trying just to keep up with the parade, as you might say.

Johnson: What committees were you on when you first went to Congress?

Marshall: The first session I served on the committee that was then called the Public Lands Committee. Then the next session I went on to the Appropriations Committee and I served on the Appropriations Committee the remaining twelve years that I was in Congress. I think I might have been a little more fortunate than some members. I know that there were some members who were put on the committees where the chairmen were rather arrogant and sort of ran the show, so to speak. But every committee chairman that I served under were some of the real leaders of the House. The first chairman that I had was J. Hardin Peterson from Florida, one of the best liked members of the Congress. He went way out of his way to be considerate and helpful to me. Oftentimes in pace of seniority in calling for people to ask questions on the top of the committees, he'd reverse the procedure and he'd start at the bottom of the committee in discussing things.

Then when I went on to the Committee on Appropriations, I served under such chairmen as Jamie Whitten on Agriculture, H. Carl Andersen from this state on Agriculture when the Republicans were in control, and the State, Justice, Commerce, and Judiciary under John Rooney, under John Togarty and Clarence Cannon. And I think the mentioning of those names

would let people know that are familiar with the congress that every one of those were well-respected men in the Congress. So my association with committee chairman was excellent.

The Committee on Appropriation was a hard-working committee. We put in long hours but I found the work real interesting. I think one comment about Carl Andersen might be a little interesting. One day he was called to the phone and he was called to the phone and he looked over at the Republican side, his side of the committee, he didn't trust any of them to preside over the committee, so he gave me the gavel to preside over the committee while the Republicans were in control of the Congress.

Johnson: What are your impressions of President Eisenhower?

Marshall: Yes, I had occasion to go down to the White House when he was the President, and he wasn't nearly as easy to meet as Harry Truman was. Of course, it wasn't nearly as easy to meet as Harry Truman was. Of course, it was a little difficult for me as a Minnesota farmer to find something that I could discuss with the president. He was a person who could talk to members about military strategy and campaigns and would get off on excellent footing in conversation with those things. He was interested in history, he could talk quite a little about the history of the White House, and he was interested in painting. I went down with a group as a rule – I never had instance where I had a single conversation with him, there was always a group present – but the other group as a rule they weren't interested in talking to him about his Gettysburg farm, so these other matters were things that were easier to discuss. But he didn't have the warm personality that Harry Truman had. He was a little stiff and he had, well, he had a nice smile, and he was always very courteous. Somehow or other, you sort of felt that he was kind of holding you at arms-length to some extent. I think Harry Truman grew up with politics,

he liked politics, he liked politicians, and I think President Eisenhower was suspicious of politicians. I think he just had a little different bringing up that way. He acted just a little bit aloof and a little bit uneasy when he had a group in to see him.

Johnson: You served just one term under President Kennedy.

Marshall: That's right. Yes, I was down to the White House several times when John Kennedy was president. Of course, John Kennedy served in the House when I did. He was in his second term. He had an office two doors from mine. My office staff and John Kennedy's staff visited back and forth quite occasionally and I knew John Kennedy in the House reasonably well. And I could have become better acquainted with him, but at that time there were two Irishmen from Massachusetts that were carrying on a sort of an Irish feud. John McCormack was majority leader and John Kennedy sort of resented his leadership, so there was a feud between the two and I couldn't see any advantage in getting caught in the wheels between two Irishmen so I avoided some opportunities that I wished later on that I had taken advantage of to become better acquainted with John Kennedy.

John Kennedy called up one afternoon about three o'clock and wanted five of us from the Appropriations Committee to come down and talk about the foreign assistance program. There had been a bureaucratic group at that time that felt that the authorization bill and the appropriation bill should be combined, that the authorization bill was authorizing a yearly expenditure and the Appropriations Committee was then also authorizing a yearly expenditure and they were having to make a trip up to the House to see the legislative committee on Foreign Affairs and then after they got their bill through, then they would come up to the Appropriation Committee and justify the expenditure. So they had prevailed upon John Kennedy to see if that

couldn't be changed so that the authorization bill would also be the appropriation. And we went down and John talked with us, John Kennedy talked with us about this procedure. It is a little difficult when the president asks for support to say no. And he asked three members of the group for their opinions before he came to me. But by that time they had used up all of the excuses. I couldn't think of any excuse so when he came to me I just simply told him I couldn't support his viewpoint that I thought it was well for these people to come up for their authorization and then also come up for the expenditure. And John Kennedy was real nice about it. We went back to the House and his proposal was voted down.

Then later on, John Kennedy came around to our point of view and strongly supported our point of view. Whether our meeting down there had any bearing on it, I rather doubt that, but anyway that's the way it turned out. I remember going back up to my office after that interview and sitting at my desk. And I remember feeling kind of weak to think that I'd had to say no to the President of the United States. It was kind of a queer feeling that come over me when I got back to the office. Probably a twinge of conscience but also it seemed strange from myself who's training had been farming in Minnesota to tell a President of the United States that I couldn't go along with a proposal. But John Kennedy never in the least ever resented my stand on that. But later on when I would go down to the White House for a number of things, he always went out of his way to make me feel welcome there. I thought a lot of John Kennedy. I think John Kennedy grew a lot after he left the House and went to the Senate. And certainly history is going to place him in high position as far as the presidency is concerned. He was a real scholar and a real gentleman.

Massmann: In terms of the internal workings of Congress, what was your reaction to the system of operation of the Congress?

Marshall: Well, I was like a lot of the new members. When the person grows into the Congress for the first time, you resent the seniority system in effect there. And it is bad in some instances. There ought to be some better way when a man has reached the point where he cannot handle the work of the committee. I can recall several instances where a chairman of a committee had reached the time in their life that they weren't very far from being in a senile condition. And serving under chairmen like that is a terrific burden upon the committee people that serve under him. Occasionally there are chairmen that get to the point that they can't--they lack tact, diplomacy, and can't get along with members of their committee. That's when you get a split in committee, then you have trouble all during the session. You see my speaking of that is very good from the experience that I had there, because every chairman that I served under were a different type. And these chairmen that I served under were all people who were well-informed, and they had tact and diplomacy. And not a single one of those persons ever did anything except to be helpful to me, and if I disagreed with them, that was something that they didn't resent either. They accepted it as a matter of course, so I was in a little different position. But I can see the feeling of some of these members that are quite upset about the seniority system who have served under committee chairman that were arrogant, uncooperative, refused to work with their committee. During the time I was there, there were a few that came up in the Department of Agriculture for a hearing and the chairman of the committee, Harold Cooley, didn't handle the situation very well. So serving on the committee was not very pleasant. At best, it's a lot of hard work, and if you can have pleasant circumstances it helps a lot in working out the intricate details of a bill.

Massmann: Was it most of the time under Rayburn, one session was under Martin, and then--?

Marshall: Yes, I had quite an experience. I think this is the one you are referring to. And it was a very unhappy experience. We were talking about some of the things that were unhappy experiences. The House had passed the Public Works Appropriation Bill and President Eisenhower vetoed it. Then it came back and the Democratic leadership felt that this would be a great master move to pass this bill over his veto. One of the things that they do, as I am sure you are aware of, the whip makes a survey to find out how the members are going to vote on different bills, and they counted noses and they thought that they had a sufficient number. They felt that some of the Republicans that had quite a lot of public works in their district would naturally support overriding the veto. But they overlooked the fact that the Republican leadership and the pressure that they put on kind of whipped their members back into line, using that expression. So when the bill came up to be passed, they lacked one vote of passing it. So I was the target. The members, some of them, felt that if I'd change my vote and give that one vote that they could override. So I was sought after, I suppose, maybe I had twenty or thirty members around my seat trying to convince me to change my vote. And Speaker Rayburn saw them working trying to get me to change my vote. And he stood there with the gavel balancing in his hands, hoping, I think that I would change. Anyway, he teetered that gavel until he got tired of teetering it and he finally brought it down and I had refused to change my vote. There wasn't a thing in that bill that passing it over the veto of President Eisenhower that would have helped the people in our district, except making more taxes for them to pay. And so I felt that it would be wrong in representing them for me to change.

I suppose it was maybe six weeks or two months later that I had occasion to seek favor from Speaker Rayburn. And Speaker Rayburn rather crossly looked at me and said, "You didn't vote to help us override the veto." And I said, "That's right." And I told him why and he leaned over

and patted me on the arm and he said, "You don't worry about that. You're here to represent the people of your district. That's your first piece of business." And he said, "When I was balancing that gavel, I knew they'd never change you." So that made me feel better about it. That was the item you had reference to?

Massmann: Yes, in a general way. What you generally thought of Rayburn as Speaker?

Marshall: Well, of course, Speaker Rayburn's place has been made in history. He was a terrific speaker. He was a terrific leader of men. He had the facility of letting members know how he felt without ever saying anything. His looks were more commanding than any words that he might express. I served under Joe Martin. Joe Marin was Speaker one term. And Joe was a person who attempted to be fair in every way and was fair. He had a little problem that year. So many of his committee chairmen in seniority had reached the position that they'd been negative so long that they couldn't switch over when they had to be positive. And committee chairmen must be positive if they expect to pass legislation. So Joe had some difficulty. His committee chairmen had been in the minority so long that they couldn't shift over to where they were carrying the load of the majority party. It seemed rather strange but there were several committees in the Congress that Joe had to rely upon the Democratic minority leader to carry the load for the Republican majority leader in the committee. And that was a little embarrassing for Joe. But Joe was a fine person and fair, considerate Speaker.

Massmann: McCormack was whip when you first--?

Marshall: Yes, McCormack was the floor leader, majority floor leader and also became Speaker. Of course, John McCormack was a different type than Mr. Rayburn. Mr. McCormack was a very fluent debater, sharp, particularly the first years that I was there while he was

majority leader. Sam Rayburn and John McCormack made a terrific team. I never thought that John McCormack filled the shoes of Sam Rayburn as a Speaker. I felt that he just didn't have that quality of leadership that Sam Rayburn had. John was a person who was extremely fair. He wasn't as well liked as Sam Rayburn was. During his time as majority leader and carrying the load of debate on the floor, why, be at time made some enemies that he had to live with later on. And the House members as a whole didn't have the respect for him that they had for Mr. Rayburn. But at the same time, John certainly will go down in history as one of the most fluent speakers that we've had. He certainly was a shrewd parliamentarian and he knew the rules of the House of Representatives forward and backward. He presided over the House in excellent fashion. But my feeling is, and history may prove me otherwise, but my feeling is that he will never be considered the powerful leader that Sam Rayburn was. Which is no reflection upon John McCormack because Sam Rayburn I think would be recognized in the history of the entire world as being one of the most powerful leaders that a person could find anywhere.

Massmann: What about the relations in Congress with party members and relations between North and South Congressmen.

Marshall: Well, there's quite the split. I never served in a Congress that could be termed as a liberal congress. The conservative element of the Southern Congressmen was largely conservative and the Republican Party was largely conservative. The Congress was conservative-minded all the time I was there so that I could not say that I served in a liberal congress. And so that brought about some difficulties for a person who was a liberal President to get their programs through the Congress. As far as relationship is concerned, I had maybe a unique experience because I was interested in an agricultural district of being able to work with the Southern Congressmen quite well. They seemed to feel that I was a member that could be trusted

and certainly I didn't carry any tales back from one group to the other. And I know that on several occasions that I would be placed in a position where I could hear their strategy being discussed and after I had been there a few terms they never had any hesitancy about discussing their strategy in front of me. And I remember one time a group of us went down to the White House and they wanted their picture taken with John Kennedy but they didn't want to see some of the liberal Congressmen from the North in the picture and so they tried to finagle around so they could get me to have my picture taken with them so they could have a picture taken of Northern Congressmen with a Democratic group. I didn't object or mind that in the least.

Southern Congressmen are very dedicated hard-working group and their astuteness and their statesmanship is something that shouldn't be overlooked. They're a heard working group and they are an intelligent group. And in the Congress a number of the chairmanships, the important committees of the House, are under the chairmanship of a Southern Democrat. You see tenure of seniority has built them up to that position. It may not be well when you think in terms of the country that that's happened. That might be something where the workings of the Congress might be improved. But all during the time I was there, Clarence Cannon from Missouri was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and Carl Vinson was chairman of the Military Affairs Committee and Howard Smith was chairman of the Rules Committee, all of them powerful committee. And agriculturally Harold Cooley was the chairman of the House committee. All Southerners. So they did have quite an impact upon the way in which legislation moved through the House. I remember one time they wanted the Rules Committee to meet and Howard Smith said that he was putting up his hay, he had some farms out of Virginia, and he couldn't come in to call the Rules of Committee together for a meeting. The Rules of Committee wasn't called either to discuss that legislation, although I think that if Mr. Rayburn at the time

had been real anxious for the Rules of Committee to meet, Mr. Smith maybe would not be putting up his hay in order to have a meeting of the Rules of Committee. So I think that's a part of the workings of the Congress. I think there's a certain amount of passing the buck around on certain times of the year on some of those things.

Johnson: Would you consider yourself quite a liberal?

Marshall: Well, one of my friends said that I was a liberal with conservative instincts. That's the best way that a person can answer that. He might be a better judge of that. I don't know. Sometimes a person uses terms. I don't know that terms are politically expressive of how a person stands upon certain things. There are those members and I think a person can say that they are valuable members of Congress and they have crusading instincts. I couldn't put myself in the position of saying that I was a crusader. I think maybe that sometimes that crusaders, and they're valuable, become quite visionary and emotional about certain issues and I never felt that way. I think maybe I might have been called a little more of a realist than some of the others. And of course sometimes a person can think in terms of some program being liberal programs and sometimes some programs as being conservative programs. A judge of that, the CIO Political Action Committee always rated me up fairly well with the liberal element of the Congress. Possibly that's the way my record would be judged.

Johnson: I know you must be getting tired of us but I have another question. Why did you decide not to seek reelection in'62?

Marshall: Oh, there were a number of things that came about. You see we went through a period of reorganization. Minnesota lost one Congressman and my district was cut three ways, no criticism of the state legislature at all. I think the state legislature did a fair job of congressional

reapportionment, but it did mean that we had to go out in a number of counties and rebuild an organization. At the time I sort of looked ahead and I didn't feel there was very much opportunity that I would move up in seniority to the chairmanship of a committee. All of the people it seemed to me that would be ahead of me were at least as sure of election and were younger. And while their treatment of me had been fair, it's not quite like being a chairman of a committee. My oldest son, Frank, came back on the farm and was kind of anxious that we'd come back and work with him. I had seen some members of the Congress that had stayed there I thought too long, and I had been there fourteen years. And I had found myself out of step with a few policies and if everybody's out of step except me, it must be something wrong with me. So taking that in consideration, I felt it would be just kind of nice to come back here and live. We've missed it but we haven't regretted that we did that. Of course, I was wrong about a few things. One of the committees that I thought there was the least chance was the committee that I served on, Labor, Health, Education and Welfare. John Fogarty was chairman. John had a heart attack and died and it was a real loss to the country. Winfield Denton from Indians was defeated in the election so I would have moved right up to the chairmanship of that committee almost immediately after I left the Congress. But we've kind of burned our bridges behind us and while we miss the Congress and miss some of our associations but not bad enough to want to go back. We haven't regretted the decision to drop out at that time.

During my terms in the Congress I was fortunate in having an excellent office staff. The people of my district were fair and considerate of me in every way. They permitted me to vote my convictions without pressure and accepted my decisions. Every opponent that I had with one exception were worthy and were true gentlemen. The one exception was Frank King who lied about my record in the Congress. I found that the Republican Party in the Sixth District to be a

responsible party. They, like the DFL party, were interested in good government and I firmly believe that the actions of both parties lent a dignity to the Sixth Congressional District that put our district on a high level of ethical politics.

Johnson: What church were you church historian of?

Mrs. Marshall: The Union Grove Methodist Church.

Johnson: How do you come to Union Grove?

Mrs. Marshall: Well, this is Union Grove Township, so it's just around the corner a little ways, but mainly it's Union Grove Township.

Johnson: How did you write a book on the history of the book?

Mrs. Marshall: Yes.

Johnson: Did you publish it?

Mrs. Marshall: Yes, I published it.

Johnson: Oh, I haven't seen it.

Mrs. Marshall: A year ago.

Johnson: I hope the Historical Society has a copy. I suppose they do.

Mrs. Marshall: Well, I gave them one.

Massman: We have one at St. Cloud.

Johnson: How long had the church been in existence?

Mrs. Marshall: 105 years. I started in ’65 and I published my book in 1970.

Johnson: You’re from this area, do you live in this area?

Mrs. Marshall: Yes, I’ve lived here all my life.

Johnson: Did you go to school with Fred?

Mrs. Marshall: No, he went down to this school and went to what we call 27th.

Johnson: Was that a county schoolhouse?

Mrs. Marshall: Yes, both of them were county schoolhouses, about two and a half miles apart, so his parents knew my parents and the same thing with grandparents.

Johnson: Is that a high school too?

Mrs. Marshall: No, it was just grades one through eight when we went.

Jonson: And where did you go to High School?

Mrs. Marshall: I went to high school in Paynesville. Fred too. He graduated in June as I started in September.

Johnson: So what did you do after high school? Did you marry Fred then?

Mrs. Marshall: No, I went to two years of teacher’s college at St. Cloud, and then I taught for four years.

Johnson: Back here?

Mrs. Marshall: In rural schools in Stearns and Liecher counties.

Johnson: And Fred was farming at that time then?

Mrs. Marshall: No, he was working with what they called, there was a farm program. I don't know what it was. What the proper name was. It was a corn hog program. It was to cut down the production of hogs and so forth. He had his office in Mitchell, and he had it for many years and then he went into farming and agriculture. We were married in September of 1936, and we've been married for forty years.

Johnson: How many children have you got?

Mrs. Marshall: Two boys. Frankie lives across the road and George is still in D.C. We're hoping he'll come back to Minnesota this fall. He is starting his law practice.

Johnson: Is he going to school there?

Mrs. Marshall: No, he graduated a year ago in February. He's working for Senator McCarthy, and so he'll be closing up the shop and coming this way I hope.

Johnson: He grew up in Washington I suppose.

Mrs. Marshall: Well partly, yes. It didn't really occur to my but last year he said that Washington seemed more like home than Minnesota. It was king of a shock to me at first but he was eight years old when we went there. Then we'd come home for summers and then he'd go back and go to school till he was in the eighth grade, and then he stayed in Litchfield and went to school. He stayed with his grandparents and then he came back and spent a couple of summers with us. He worked in the office and he had his friend there that he still sees, and I just hadn't

realized that it seemed that much home to him because Frank never seemed to have any ties in Washington. He always considered Minnesota as his home.

Jonson: Is Frank the older of the two boys?

Mrs. Marshall: Yes, he was ten and George was eight. He just couldn't see living and moving and leaving the farm. But Frank never did care much about the farm until he just thoroughly enjoyed Washington.

Jonson: Do you expect him to run for Congress someday too?

Mrs. Marshall: Oh, I rather doubt that, I just don't know. He'd like to get into law now. He thought he would go to Albert Lea but he said he declined the offer the other day. And then he might look into it more when he comes home next week. He's going to look around and see what he can find.

Johnson: You must have been away from the farm and friends here for--

Mrs. Marshall: Ten years. Parts of ten years. When the youngsters were small I'd come home in June just as soon as school was out and I either lived with Fred's folks in Litchfield or lived with my sister on the farm out here and helped them out. So it was king of a suitcase affair.

Johnson: Which did you prefer, Minnesota?

Mrs. Marshall: Oh, it really doesn't make much difference. I enjoyed it while I was down there, but I enjoy this too. And the thing is, we've got too much work right now.

Johnson: Where, back here?

Mrs. Marshall: We're getting older and my knees don't spring like they did.

Johnson: Were you quite active in Washington?

Mrs. Marshall: Oh, in my local community I was. I took part in church activities and belonged to the club there, and I belonged to the Congressional club and the 81st club. Then we had other interests, we'd generally go sightseeing on weekends and take in something new each weekend that we could. Each year I tried to take up something different. One year I took up Chine painting, another year, melnerae, another year, ceramics, and a couple years of dress making and typing. I tried to improve myself each year.

Johnson: Is this something you did by yourself or did you go to school?

Mrs. Marshall: No, I took typing through the high school, it was one of those night classes. There was a china painting teacher that lived about a mile from us, so she taught us every Tuesday in her home. Then there was a dress maker. She lived about a mile from us so she taught that in her basement, so I took that for two years. So I make quite a few of my own clothes.

Johnson: Where did you live?

Mrs. Marshall: In Alexandria, Virginia. It was a lot of open country between Alexandria and D.C. Because it was just across the river. Fred could make it to his office in twenty minutes. A lot of people who lived in Maryland they had stop signs and it would take maybe an hour and a half to get home and yet they didn't make very much mileage than we did. But it was highway there and we just sailed along.

Johnson: Did you campaign, give speeches and get involved at all?

Mrs. Marshall: Oh, once in a great while, but not very much. I never got too involved in it. Fred never discusses anything with me at home. He never did even with farming or anything. I never knew what was going on outside the door unless I can see it. And I just didn't want to get involved. Because we got our own ideas, and maybe I'd have a different idea. I might say something that they would say, well, that's what Fred thinks.

Mr. Marshall: I'm like, I don't know whether it is running or not, what were you going to do, were you going to ask my questions, is that what you had in mind?

Johnson: Yes, we have a series of questions. So we'll just break in on the questions. I'd like to just start by talking about a little bit of your background. You were born in this area right here?