

William Jefferson Clinton History Project

Interview with

Sheila Foster Anthony
Hendersonville, North Carolina
22 July 2004

Interviewer: Andrew Dowdle

Andrew Dowdle: It is July 22, and my name is Andrew Dowdle. We are in Hendersonville, North Carolina, with Sheila Foster Anthony. My first question is when and where were you born?

Sheila Anthony: In Hope, Arkansas, in November of 1940.

AD: Who were your parents?

SA: My parents are/were Alice Mae and Vincent Foster. Their parents lived in Hope, and, actually, my great-great-grandparents lived in Hope. Our family has been in that area since the 1830s.

AD: Oh, wow. So a very long history there in terms of years. What did your parents do in terms of occupation?

SA: My mother is a homemaker. My dad was a real estate broker, principally farmlands in Texas, Arkansas, and northern Louisiana, but he also did some house sales as well.

AD: Up to about high school graduation, what school did you attend?

SA: Let's see. My first grade was in Paisley School, and Miss Bessie Green was my teacher. Prior to that, however, I went to Miss Mary's kindergarten. All the children who went to kindergarten, just about, attended. I can remember it being—I think I'm correct in this—on Second Street, on the east end of town

in a house. The kindergarten was behind her home—a little house in the back. And we had a play yard. I can remember being perfectly terrified the first time I went there because I had not been away from my parents very much. I was a kind of shy child, I think. I remember several classmates that I went all the way through school with also attending Miss Mary's kindergarten. I went to the third grade at Garland School, and stayed there through elementary school, and then went to Hope junior high and high school.

AD: And you graduated in . . . ?

SA: 1958. There were about ninety-plus classmates in my graduating class. I was lucky enough to be the salutatorian only because, I'm sure, my mother insisted that I do my lessons every night, so I made very good grades all the way through. I remember my junior high and high school years were a lot of fun. We had a lot of fun growing up in a small town, although sometimes we wished that everyone didn't know everything that we were doing. [Laughter]

AD: Could you tell us a little bit about what the schools were like when you were growing up, I guess looking back at it now in terms of the perspective, and also what you thought at the time.

SA: Well, I think I appreciated it more after I left than I did when I was there because we had some very, very fine teachers. The strengths of the school system were probably in the elementary grades, but also in the English department of the upper schools—the junior high and high school. The teachers were, for the most part, long, long, long-term professional teachers. When I was in school—it was much before the women's movement, and

teach[ing], nurs[ing], and secretarial positions were just about all women could do. And most of the best and brightest, I think, went into teaching, so our teachers were really very strong, except in the social studies area. Commonly, in smaller schools, the coaches, the basketball and football coaches ended up being social studies teachers and history teachers, so my background in those subjects was not as strong as they were in math and English.

AD: After you graduated high school, where did you go to college?

SA: The first two years I went to Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia. It was a school for women then as it is now. One of the few women's colleges left, I think. It was academically a very strong school, and a good number of girls from the South attended. In particular, from my hometown, Alice Graves attended there, and Miss Beryl Henry, for whom an elementary school was named, attended. My parents had a passion for education, particularly my mother. She was unable to go to college, so, for her, education was just about important as breathing and eating and drinking. So she saw to it that we did our lessons, made good grades, and [she] sent us to schools out of the state for a while.

AD: We were talking about Randolph-Macon. Where did you go after your two years there?

SA: I transferred to the University of Arkansas, [Fayetteville]. I had met Beryl Anthony after my freshman year in college. We started dating that summer, and we began to correspond my sophomore year, so about the summer after

my sophomore year, I was ready to come home and protect my interests.

[Laughter] So I transferred back to the university.

AD: When were you married?

SA: Right after I graduated in 1962.

AD: And from there where did you go?

SA: We lived in Fayetteville for a year while Beryl finished law school, and I taught school in Springdale, Arkansas for a year. Then we went to Little Rock. He was working in the attorney general's office then, and I was preparing to have a baby. She was born there, in St. Vincent's hospital. We lived there until 1965. Then we moved to El Dorado, Arkansas. We lived there for the next fifteen years, where he made a career.

AD: Looking back at Hope, if you were to describe Hope to somebody, during the time period of the late 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, how would you describe that town?

SA: It was a traditional, southern small town. There were lots of churches and a thriving downtown. Like all small towns, it was very interested in all [of] its citizens and what was going on. There was a lot of community interaction, especially for some who were settling there and raising their families. I remember our upbringing, particularly, in the Presbyterian Church. My grandmother Foster was a long-term member of the Presbyterian Church. My dad was very active in the church, as was my mother. Because Hope had so few entertainment opportunities for young people, the centers of our lives were our schools and our churches. Fortunately, when we were a bit older,

there was a youth center, where we would meet on weekends and have dances after football games and whatever. So that's mostly what I remember about it. Also, you could drive when you were fourteen years old. You could get a license to drive then. We walked everywhere without fear of any kind. There was little crime—if there was ever any, it was just such a big deal, we could hardly believe it. We bicycled everywhere. We came home for lunch most of the time, or ate at school. We grew up in a very wholesome, protected, community.

AD: Could you talk a little bit about the race relations in Hope?

SA: Yes. The schools were totally segregated. There was never any expectation that we would go to a school with a black; I didn't even think about it, actually, until 1954 when *Brown vs. Board of Education* was decided.

[Editor's note: In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racially segregated schools violated the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution.] Then the [1957] Little Rock [Central High School integration] crisis occurred. I think I was a junior in high school—it was either my junior or senior year of high school, I can't recall which, but I remember it being very traumatic for the Little Rock students, some of whom I knew personally, who were unable to finish their senior year. In particular, one of my very dearest friends to this day is Gail Blossom, whose father [Virgil Blossom] was superintendent of the schools in Little Rock. Of course, the schools in Hope weren't integrated at all until long after I left. I'm not sure any of my friends went to school with black people, and I didn't either until I was in college. I don't remember that

there was any kind of animosity of any sort. People seemed to get along well together. Maybe it's because...I don't know. I can't answer that exactly why. Certainly there was not this racial animosity that I feel now when I go back home. It's very interesting.

AD: So it wasn't, for example, the dissention that would have existed in Mississippi or Alabama at that time.

SA: I don't think so. George Washington Carver, I believe, was the name of the black high school at Hope. It had a football team, a band, and marched in the parades. We went to see their parades, and they came to see ours. I don't think the teams ever played one another. They might have scrimmages before school started for practice. We were just totally segregated. Not until Beryl and I were living in El Dorado, Arkansas, I suppose—and I taught in an all-black school. So I can't answer when segregation came to that part of the state except when my older daughter was in the first grade, and I think that was about the first time we had integration.

AD: Looking back at Hope, it's interesting that such a small town achieved national prominence, especially in that generation, just about following the war. Obviously, Mack McLarty, your brother, Bill Clinton—why Hope? It's a really interesting question.

SA: I can't answer that. I don't know, really. Perhaps it was our teachers. As you are aware, the governor of Arkansas now, Mike Huckabee, is from Hope. So it's not just the Democrats [laughter] who were lucky to have leadership. I think it was just the whole atmosphere that we grew up in, and our schools;

we were very disciplined. We wouldn't dare talk to our teachers in anything but a respectful way. And they encouraged us to do our best. I would guess that was probably where it came from.

AD: So I guess I am looking at President Clinton and his family. I know we talked about this a little bit before [on] the phone, but how familiar were you with Bill Clinton when he was growing up?

SA: Not very. He was about five or six years younger than me and, as a child, that's a big difference. So I really didn't know him. I vaguely remember him playing in our backyard from time to time. Our backyards adjoined one another. His faced Hervey Street; ours faced Second Street. I can remember the house as though it were yesterday. I was there when Bill's family would come and go. His mother or his stepfather would be over there. But I really didn't know him very well.

AD: Did you know his grandparents?

SA: The Cassidys? No. I knew they lived there, and I would see them from time to time, but I really didn't know them.

AD: So at what point did Bill Clinton reemerge on your radar screen? I'm gathering probably after he moved that he kind of dropped from your consciousness.

SA: Probably so, except that there were times that I recall their [the Clintons] being back, visiting the Cassidys. I remember that it would be a commotion over there. There were obviously visitors and extra people in the house. But not until Beryl and I were living in El Dorado, Arkansas, did Bill Clinton

reemerge on my radar screen, and it was because Vince wrote me. My brother Vince wrote a letter, and it said, “Our old friend and neighbor Bill Clinton is running for Congress in the third district in Northwest Arkansas, and he needs our help. Can you send him any money?” At that time, I hardly had two nickels to rub together, but I did send him a check for \$25. I watched his progress in that race, and I was just delighted to see that he came so close. As a matter of fact, I thought he was going to win it, but he didn’t. But after that, I received a letter from him thanking me for my contribution, and recalling our childhood.

AD: So there was the next race for [Arkansas] Attorney General. How aware were you of that, besides what you read in the newspapers?

SA: Beryl, as I said, began his political career in El Dorado, and Bill and Beryl ran for office the same year. Beryl was running for district attorney, and Bill was running for attorney general. Now, I hope I have my dates right. What year was he elected attorney general? Can you tell me?

AD: 1976.

SA: All right, then. Beryl had run for district attorney in 1974 or 1972—1972, I guess. He had served four years when Bill was running for attorney general. Then they both ran—Beryl ran for Congress, and Bill ran for governor the same year. So our paths had crossed in politics and our childhood before then. I remember his being a dynamic candidate, coming down to the southern part of the state to campaign, and he was charming, bright, obviously well-educated, and we were on his team.

AD: When did you think that he might have potential to become president, or did you ever think that far ahead?

SA: I didn't think that far ahead until one occasion. We were home, probably for one of the elections. Beryl was in Congress for fourteen years, so we were coming back every couple of years or so to run for office. Vince, my brother, came down to El Dorado to campaign for Beryl with me. Our district was so large, we were having to split it up to cover it. Vince said, "I think Clinton is going to run for the Big Office." And I said, "You mean the Senate?" [Laughter] He looked at me, and he said, "No. I mean the presidency." I said "You've got to be kidding me!" "No, no. I'm actually serious about it." This was, I think, 1988. And I thought, "Well, I just can't imagine that someone I know personally could be elected president. But if there was anyone that I know personally who could get it, it would be him."

[Phone rings]

AD: So we were talking about your first awareness that Bill Clinton had some presidential ambitions. When he announced, what were your thoughts or feelings?

SA: I was pretty sure he could do it, at that time. It was apparent to me that he had acquired the skills during his years in the governor's office to deal on a national level, especially in the years that he was in the public. He headed the governors' counsel—all the southern governors and democratic governors—he had their attention. I just knew what kind of skills it took to have a successful program with the Arkansas Legislature because they can be ornery

and contrary sometimes, too. After all those years of dealing successfully with them, I thought not only was he ready to be president, but that he had the personal skills to appeal to the public. I was practicing law at that time, and I had dinner one evening with the editor and publisher of the *Dallas Morning News*. I was working on some copyright matters for them, and one of them said, “Do you really think Bill Clinton could be president?” And I thought, “You know, yes.” I really did at that point. I thought he was going to make it.

AD: That’s interesting because there have been a number of people who said that their first inclination was that this was a not very likely possibility until things happened later on in the campaign. When did it really sink in that he really was going to be the next president?

SA: Really not until election night. Beryl and I planned to go to Arkansas, and got there late in the afternoon. Vince picked us up at the airport, and he said, “Do you want to go by the mansion tonight and see how things are going?” And we said, “Well, sure.” So he drove Beryl and me over to the mansion—just family was there—and the returns had begun to come in. And when Bill came to the door to greet us, I said, “How does it look?” and he said, “It looks great.” And I knew then that we were going to win. *We* were going to win. Because we had been political allies for so long, I considered it a “we” thing. He was very excited that night, and, of course, we were all very excited, too.

AD: Can you talk about your own political career in Washington, [DC], working with the Clinton Administration?

SA: Yes, I will talk about that. When Bill was elected President in 1992, Beryl [had been] defeated in the primary that previous summer, so he was going out of the government. He had always been in government, practically, since we had been married except for that first year. I thought this would be a time for me to go into government—serve in the government. I don't really know how I let it be known that if there was place in the administration I would love to be a part of it. I first thought about going into the Trademark Office because that had been my practice in law. But when the ethics rules were decided by the incoming president—if you worked at one of the agencies of the government, then you were prohibited from dealing with that agency for the next five years. Well, if I had gone back into my trademark practice, I couldn't have practiced law before this agency, and I decided perhaps that was not quite the place for me after all because I didn't know how long he would serve as president. I went over to the Commerce Department as the appointed Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Intergovernmental Affairs. I stayed two months—two or three months—and got a call from the Justice Department, from Webb Hubbell, asking if I would be interested in coming over there in sort of the same capacity. And I said, “Well, my confirmation hearing is in two days.” And he said, “If you would rather take the Justice Department job, it would be no problem to switch you over there.” So I prayed about it over the weekend, and I decided I'd try the Justice Department. It seemed like a little job somehow, and little did I know how big it was. I went over there and was confirmed very quickly, and struggled

through those two years, which were really very difficult. Vince died in July. I was confirmed in May; Vince died in July—eleven years ago, just a day or two ago. And the administration was trying to get through [the Congress] some very controversial matters: The Brady Bill, for one. Following that, the Assault Weapons Bill. There were other matters that were going on—the Crime Bill was being rewritten. My office had charge of the process for getting all of the federal judges confirmed. The selection process was not in my office, but the confirmation process was—as well as for all of the other political appointees of the Justice Department in the Assistant Attorney General capacity. It was really a kind of a hellacious time, actually.

AD: That sounds like a lot to bite off.

SA: It was. It was a lot to bite off, I think, during that period of time. The office that I held—the office of Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs—we were also tasked with clearing any constitutional conflicts in legislation from all of the administrative agencies—from every department of the government. Those legislative proposals would come through us, and then we would spread them out among all of the different divisions in the Justice Department for clearance for constitutional conflicts. And it just seemed that it was almost more difficult to deal within the administration, getting things organized between the departments and between the agencies, than it was when we actually took them to the Congress for passage. [Laughter] So—and I thought there was always—it was a very difficult job made more

difficult by the personal anguish that my family was suffering as a result of Vince's death.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2]

AD: . . . been there two years . . .

SA: I stayed there two years, but, during that period of time, the independent counsel was appointed. [The] Whitewater Investigation was going on madly, and the Republicans were preparing to run Bob Dole for president against Clinton, so nothing that the Justice Department did was without very, very strong scrutiny. It seemed that we were always caught up in the midst of something exciting.

AD: In retrospect, were you sorry that you made the switch from Commerce to Justice?

SA: Yes, in some ways, because I was not a criminal lawyer. My prior career had been in corporate law and intellectual property. I really didn't know very much about the criminal bill and the section that was to be amended. I just think I would have enjoyed the Commerce Department more. But I did learn a lot about government as a whole in that very vital position because I could see the entire government from the administrative perspective and from the Congressional perspective. And, in fact, from the court's perspective. So it was an opportunity of a lifetime. I can't say that it was the most fun I've ever had, but it was a really wonderful opportunity.

AD: What do you know now that you wish you had known then, in terms of politics and in terms of any actual factual information or thing to watch out for?

SA: Well, I don't know that I could have made or would have made a different choice even—I'm not sure that I would have turned down the opportunity, even knowing how difficult it was going to be, but if I had known that Mr. Hubble was going to have the difficulties that he had, I would probably have had some second thoughts about it. But I didn't know anything about it at the time. Vince's death really had nothing to do with what was going on in the Justice Department. His problems were more dealing with what was going on in the White House at the time. And in the newspapers. I don't know. I wouldn't have turned down the opportunity to work with the administration. Probably, I would have been happier if I had stayed with the Commerce Department, but I was delighted to be part of the Clinton Administration, and I will eternally be grateful for that opportunity.

AD: After you were at the Justice Department, you then went on to...

SA: I went home and stayed two years, and just sort of regrouped. I needed a break. I stayed there as long as I did because, by that time, the Republicans were trying to suggest that Vince had been murdered by the Clintons, which was just the most ridiculous, outrageous thing in the world. They were seeking to convince people that [that] could possibly be correct. I felt that if I left the Justice Department, it would reflect badly on the administration, and I didn't want that to happen. So I did stay, but it was not with all of my heart

that I wanted to be there. After that, I left and stayed home for a couple of years and just read, gardened, reconnected with my friends and my family, and began to talk to the White House again about another position. When I resigned in 1995 the President asked me to come by his office sometime that summer. He just wanted to know how I was, and I told him I was doing fine. He wanted to know about my family. He said, “What do you want to do next?” and I said, “Well, I would like a little rest; then I would like to come back and help you if you get a second term.” So we agreed that that might be a possibility, and sure enough, it was. I wanted to be of help in the administration in something that I had some legal background in. The Federal Trade Commission [FTC] seemed to be a good spot for me. I was lucky enough to get appointed commissioner.

AD: And your term lasted from...

SA: I started at the end of September of 1997 and I finished last year in 2003, in August.

AD: How is working in that capacity in terms of an independent body, different than working in the Justice Department from what you saw?

SA: It was like night and day. It was a wonderful position. I think it's the best position in the government. I can't think of any other place that I would rather have been, the reason being that I was making my own judgment calls about the matters before me. It operates in a quasi-judicial manner. It was intellectually challenging, but it was also what I would term a “white hat” agency. We were really the advocates for consumers, and that was our

mission in both the consumer protection side of it, and in the anti-trust side of it. So we felt good about what we were doing, and felt that we were giving a real service to our fellow citizens. In the Justice Department, it was different because I was serving several different masters; and none of them were happy with one another. [Laughter] Either somebody in Congress was always mad at someone in the administration or vice versa. And no one—it was just a matter of juggling a lot of different interests and agenda, and trying to keep everyone happy, which is almost impossible [to do] in the government.

AD: What were your big accomplishments when you were in the administration?

SA: I would say probably in the area of—I worked a lot in the area of privacy—but I think probably—a goal that is ongoing still to this day is in the area of database fraud. That's been amazing in just the last couple of days, actually. And dietary supplements. There's a lot of fraud in that area, too. Overselling and bad advertising practices. And on the bright side, probably some of the most important work we did was in the area of generic drugs and getting those to market and avoiding mergers that would have suppressed competition for generic drugs. The base of jurisdiction was so broad in the FTC. I could go on and on and on about different areas of industry that we were involved in, but those were the most important, I think. The pharmaceutical and generic drug—[phone rings] excuse me a moment.

AD: So have you talked much to President Clinton or Senator [Hillary] Clinton since President Clinton left office?

SA: No, not really. We've kept up with both of them. I've seen Hillary a few times because she was very active in Mark Pryor's [senatorial] campaign, and other campaigns that she's had fundraisers for and invited me to come to, and I always try to do that. And her book—when her book was published. When the Supreme Court came to the decision on the photographs of Vince's body, President Clinton called and we had a nice visit. He invited Beryl to come play golf from time to time. But I try to keep up with him through mutual friends. We wish him well.

AD: From your position, what is your assessment of the Clinton Administration in terms of successes and failures?

SA: In many ways, the administration helped a lot of people—did a lot of good and helped a lot of people. I think I'd have to be honest to say that the investigations and the scandals during the administration created an atmosphere that resulted in, I think, some lost opportunity. It's a shame in many ways. But the things that I particularly recall, the things that we've done in the area of consumer education, in the area of community policing—which is in the Justice Department—my office—we worked on it a great deal. Crime rates came down. I think, overall, history will be kind to that administration. He certainly has a number of political skills, and I hope that he continues to use them throughout his life. I would like to see him be more involved in government somehow through an advisory capacity—whatever he chooses to do—because I think he is so talented.

AD: As you kind of mentioned, your brother had a pretty close friendship with both President Clinton and Senator Clinton. Are there any insights that you gained about either one of them through things he had said over the years?

SA: Yes. Vince thought a lot of both of them, and their families got together quite a bit. They were on a social plane as well as a professional one. I can remember going to Little Rock on my trips back home, and going by Vince's office and I would usually stop in to say hello to Hillary, or we would meet for lunch, or after work. He just thought that she had a very fine mind and was a very capable attorney. He also observed—like all of us governmental wives who have had our own professions, we have to direct our work so that it doesn't conflict with our husbands' careers, which can be frustrating. I think there were times when, my guess is, Hillary could have done work in certain areas and for certain clients who would have loved to have her serve, had her husband not been governor. And as far as their friendship with each other, it was always a warm and comfortable friendship.

AD: Do you have any predictions for Senator Clinton's possibility, in terms of future in higher office?

SA: Well, let me just say this: If she runs, I'm voting for her. I don't know if she will want to take that on or not. But if she does, she'll make a good one, and I hope she will. She's one of the better speakers that I've ever heard in my life, and she has a big heart. She's a caring person. I hope she does.

AD: Is there anything that we really haven't touched on? Any thoughts or anything that you would like to add about either President Clinton or Senator Clinton?

SA: Well, there's one period that you might be interested in, that you might add to this interview. In 1980, when Governor White defeated Bill Clinton for office, it was a terrible shock to him. The worst thing about it for Beryl and me was that Beryl's father had endorsed Frank White. Publicly. We were very stressed about that. We called the Clintons, talked to them about coming down [from Washington] to campaign personally with them in 1980. Beryl didn't have an opponent. So we did, and I traveled with Hillary, and Beryl made some radio spots for Bill for our section of the state. I knew that she was a remarkable person, but I really didn't know how remarkable she was until that trip with her. I heard her speak several times during the day that I traveled with her. It's just such a gift she had that I thought, "She is a very special person." That night we got back to the governor's mansion, and Mrs. Rodham was there, and Bill came in. We all talked together. I just remember thinking how lucky the people of Arkansas were to have this talented couple represent them and to have their interests be in the government rather than the private sector where they both would have been financially successful. And I really think it's a wonderful gift to the state of Arkansas. I wish more people recognized it as such, but I'm sure a lot of people do.

AD: Were you surprised that Frank White had won?

SA: Well, I was disappointed. I knew that there was quite a bit of controversy about Bill's administration. I can see the parallels, frankly, in those first years of his being governor and president. We weren't in Arkansas—we were in Washington by then, but we came back a lot. We were, of course, keeping up in the newspapers. Bill put a lot of liberal people in his administration from out of state, and that was a mistake. I could see that same thing happening in the first two years of the presidential administration. There were a lot of people who worked in his campaign who had an agenda—a personal agenda—and they were pushing it very hard because the Democrats had been out of office for a long time. It was just too much, too fast. I could see the parallels between the two and I knew there was big-time trouble by 1994. And that, of course, was when Congress, the House of Representatives [went to the Republicans], for the first time in years and years. But you could see the parallels, also, in the thinking of the country. An evangelical movement had begun. Corporations were banding together to get a more conservative person in the White House. The Moral Majority was still in its heyday. It was just politically a very interesting time.

AD: After Bill Clinton lost his reelection to the governorship, what did you think would happen to him politically? Were you surprised that he made a comeback?

SA: No, I was not surprised that he attempted a comeback. I didn't know whether he would be successful. But he, as you know, has extraordinary skills, and he put them to use. People who wanted him to be successful worked extra hard

for him to be successful. He frequented Washington in that interim period [from] 1980 [to] 1982. We saw him on several occasions. It was clear he was not through with politics and that he would continue to go on. I guess I thought that he would eventually run for Senate. It just never occurred to me that he would run for president until much later. But it was not surprising to me that he became president, and I think the country will be well served now if he becomes active again. He's such a charismatic person, and he is so smart.

AD: As the wife of a former Congressman, I guess you would probably be an expert to anyone on this, but if he won in 1974, and had gone to the House of Representatives, how do you think he would have fit in as one person out of 435?

SA: Well, he would have been frustrated at the seniority system because he would have wanted to be a leader right away. But he would have also been young enough to learn the skills in the House over the term. My guess is that he would have run for the Senate earlier, perhaps even—I don't know, it's hard to think what might have happened to him.

AD: It's kind of funny, just that thought, because I was talking to you in terms of what would have happened if he would have won.

SA: Well, the people who are in the House of Representatives who show great leadership skills usually become frustrated there after a while because of the seniority system. Many of them go back and run for governor of their state. And very likely that's what he would have done, too, had he been elected to

the House, especially since the Senate seats were taken by two other very popular people with whom he personally had worked. Whether he would have run against either one of them is anybody's guess, but my guess is no.

AD: I guess there still would have been that opening [for] governor when David Pryor ran for the Senate. That would have been another active governorship.

SA: Well, David Pryor ran for the Senate the same year that Beryl ran for Congress and Bill ran for the governorship. So they were all elected the same year, and they were each from the same political base. So it would have been a tragedy had he ever run against David Pryor because I don't know that he could have won that one. David's popular in the government.

AD: Looking at that political base, can you describe it a little bit in terms of . . . ?

SA: Well, the year that we all won was the year that—let me see if I can reconstruct who was who in Congress then, and that should give you some idea. Jim Guy Tucker was running for Senate, and Ray Thornton—the run-off was between Jim Guy and David. Bill was running against [Lynn Lowe]. Well, I remember that during that race—oh, Ed Bethune was also elected that year in Little Rock—the first Republican to hold the first district seat. It was largely a management versus labor race, I think. The labor candidates lost, and the management candidates won. Bill Becker was in his heyday. Gee, I can't remember who was the governor! Who was running for governor? But I just remember that all of us were elected at the same time, and the same people were supporting us all. It was interesting.

AD: That is very interesting. Do you have any other insights you would like to add, or is there anything else that was not touched on?

SA: Well, I can tell you a couple things. These may be things that I'll edit out at some point, but these are two things that I remember. I was talking to Beryl about this before you came today because I didn't know whether I wanted to discuss it or not. When I was a child—I told you that I would hear a lot of commotion at the Cassidy house when Bill's stepfather would be over there. I remember it was very loud. I was unaware that there was an alcohol problem because I was too young to know about things like that. But I can remember thinking that it didn't sound right over there. And having read part of Bill's autobiography [*My Life*], and Virginia's book, I now know, as an adult, that there were times when alcohol was abused in that household. It was loud, it was a ruckus, and there was shouting. It was something that a child would notice because it was so unusual in our neighborhood. So I can collaborate at least to that extent what his childhood must have been like in a troubled household. And that would just be when they came to visit the Cassidy house. I can't imagine what it was like when he was at home. The other—I was going to tell you one other thing—was about the famous Clinton temper. [Laughter] Beryl and I went to a dedication at Ouachita Baptist College in Arkadelphia in the 1980s. They invited all of the politicians, and, of course, all the politicians show up any time there are more than ten people gathered. [Laughs] Bill accosted one of the politicians verbally in the hallway. There was, apparently, some sort of altercation in the state legislature over a piece of

legislation. From what I could gather, Governor Clinton felt that this particular legislator had let him down in some way, because I had never seen such a public dressing down. We were right behind him. He was just shaking, he was so angry. And I thought, "Wow, I have never seen this side of him before!" But he feels strongly about what he does.

AD: That's an interesting story. Is there anything else that we have not touched on? As I go back and think, I think we got just about everything.

SA: I can't think of anything else.

AD: Well, I appreciate your time, and I appreciate you having me into your house. Thank you very much.

SA: You're so very welcome.

[End of Interview]

[Edited by Rebecca Willhite]