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Oral history interview with C. B. (Calvin Benhan) Baldwin, 1965 February 25

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Calvin Benham Baldwin (C.B. Baldwin) on February 24, 1965. The interview took place in Greenwich, Connecticut, and was conducted by Richard Keith Doud for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project.

The original transcript was edited. In 2021 the Archives created a more verbatim transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

RICHARD DOUD: This is an interview with Mr. C.B. Baldwin at his home in Greenwich, Connecticut, February 24, 1965. The interviewer is Richard K. Doud.

[Pause in recording.]

So, if you care to start then with some sort of a summary of your background and what you were doing in the administration before you was—

C.B. BALDWIN: On how I happened to come—

RICHARD DOUD: —appointed as a Farm Security administrator?

C.B. BALDWIN: How I happened to come to Washington and—

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah, what you're doing prior to that time and anything that might help us put your focus on this whole business?

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, I was born in Radford, Virginia, small town in Virginia. My family were small businesspeople. Grandfather was a captain in the Confederate Army when he was 16 years old. I was brought up with a good deal of the background of the old south but a little bit different.

RICHARD DOUD: It doesn't sound like a New Deal Democrat.

C.B. BALDWIN: No. And I remember my grandfather telling me—he died when I was 12 years old, but I have very vivid recollection of it. After I'd been exposed to his brother-in-law, for some time, who was a rabid southerner. And my grandfather said, "You know, Benham—" which is my mother's maiden name. The name that I was called by before this thing Beanie stuck. "It's a good thing the North won the war." I was absolutely shocked. But at the time, he had—two of his sons had gone to Middle West. He used to visit them and became really quite an enlightened southerner.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: My father was really—a sort of a firebrand. A very good small businessman. We never had—we were comfortably off but never had very much money. But were able to live in the top 10 percent of families [inaudible] in my hometown. But [inaudible] back in, I guess, in the '20s. And he was responsible for the town buying out the local power company, that's before we had these giant utility complexes. And he made a terrific fight. As a result, the town still owns the power system.

RICHARD DOUD: Oh, really?

C.B. BALDWIN: Which is very unusual. And I suspect that this had a good deal to do with my subsequent political development, because he had to take on all the vested interests—

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: —that were supporting a power company, even in the town. And finally came to a vote as to whether or not they're going to sell out to one of the big power systems. And it was a freeholder's vote. You know what a freeholder's vote is?

RICHARD DOUD: No.

C.B. BALDWIN: Freeholder's vote is a vote that only people who own property can vote. And—so, he found out that the power company had moved in with a certain amount of liquor and entertainment to get the leading citizens in the town on their side. And the clerk of the court who kept the registration lists—well, no, who kept the property records for the town, found out that the power company—lawyers and representatives had deeded one lot to about 150 people to make them eligible to vote. So, my father got busy, and he had an old swampy lot. It was probably worth \$25, I guess. So, he deeded this to 300 or some people. So, we won the election. [They laugh.] So, I got my early training in politics fairly early, on how you maneuver.

[00:05:08]

But I went to VPI, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, which was probably a mistake because it's largely engineering and agriculture. And I'm not an agriculturist—professional agriculturist. I'd be the poorest farmer in the world. But my first job was for the Norfolk and Western Railway. They were bringing in young men out of college to train them for executive jobs, certain apprenticeship and training program. I didn't very well in that. I [inaudible] the job—I started 43¢ an hour as I recall, got married when I was making 43¢ an hour, and was able to get by. How? I don't know.

And then I decided that wasn't for me. And so, I went into the—a couple of my college classmates went into the electrical—distribution business of electrical appliances. And my father, by the way, he had been everything. Very early youth, we owned a little flour mill when he was in real estate. I guess we lived off the [inaudible] real estate, largely. And so, I landed back in my hometown in this business. And we're doing fairly well, at least, before the Depression. And we had two newspapers in this town. Two weekly newspapers, both of them starving to death. So, a man came to town I'd never heard of before, named Paul Appleby. And later had a quite distinguished career in government.

Paul bought both of these papers. He came into my little shop one day to get some appliances, a stove, and the refrigerator. And I sold and installed these for him. We became very fast friends. This almost immediately enlarged my, at least, intellectual horizons. He was a very bright guy, very stimulating guy. So, our families became very close friends. He came to—he's a graduate of Grinnell College. Same college that Harry Hopkins came from. And, so, he organized a discussion group, composed—we have a local college in town, state teachers college and the schools where I—VPI, was only 15 miles away. And we got a certain number of faculty members from there to attend. This became a terrific stimulating thing to me. And 70 miles away was Sherwood Anderson, running [ph]—also, had come to Virginia, and bought both Republican and Democratic paper and combined them. At least I think they were combined. Seems to me that he'd have a Republican editorial one day and a Democratic editorial [RICHARD DOUD laughs.] the following day.

So, this was a very important experience in my life. I recall that Anderson had just signed the—I think it was in '28 or '27. He along with Theodore Dreiser—now, I've forgotten the other people that signed a statement of support of the Communist candidate for president. It was a protest [laughs]—

RICHARD DOUD: Oh, really?

C.B. BALDWIN: —to what he thought was going on.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: But politically, my people were Woodrow Wilson Democrats. And I was brought up more or less in that—in the Woodrow Wilson tradition. Paul had come from Iowa, where he had worked for the *Des Moines Registry*. You know the Cowles' paper?

RICHARD DOUD: Yes.

C.B. BALDWIN: Now the Cowles empire. And he had known Henry Wallace. And he used to tell me about all of these people. To me, it was a very exciting thing he had known.

[00:10:09]

So, we went through the '28 campaign together. Paul, of course, supported Al Smith. I was an ardent supporter of Al Smith. And this was—I wouldn't say it was too hard, but it was—the feeling was very violent in Virginia at that time. Anti-Catholicism and—

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: —also the temperance people were very much opposed to Al Smith. So, occasionally, I'd get an Al Smith button torn off my coat in rather[laughs] violent discussions [ph] —But Smith lost. Then came the Depression which came later in Virginia than it did elsewhere, and began to hit me. And I was having great difficulty getting by. Then the '32 election came around. Paul and I and our—actually our wives, were all—thought we would vote for Norman Thomas. It was the best way to register a protest, we knew he couldn't be elected.

But at that time, the *World-Telegram* was a very liberal paper, and that was a Scripps-Howard paper, *New York World-Telegram*. So, Paul, subscribed to this and he used to bring me his copy in every day after he read it. In the '32 campaign, I'd never heard of Rex Tugwell before, but Rex made one of—pulled one of his greatest boners, but I think it was—it's wonderful thing that had happened. He outlined the plans for the New Deal in what he thought was an off the record discussion. And this was emblazoned—

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: —headline. Big headline. I would say largely, as a result of this—Paul and I decided we were going to support Roosevelt. He was our kind of guy. Before that, we—I don't think we knew too much about him. In Rex's excellent book, the *Democratic Roosevelt*, he tells a lot about Roosevelt that I didn't know before. And he was actually much more progressive as a governor than I think that either Paul or I recognized. Well, anyway, Roosevelt won the election by a sweep. And I remember being at Paul's one evening and I said, Well, I guess, the next thing be happening is that you'll get a call to come to Washington. And he said, No. He didn't think that would happen. And we speculated on who would be in the cabinet. And Paul said, "Well, you know, Henry Wallace would be a good selection, but I don't think he'll get it." And suddenly Wallace was appointed.

And that time, the President was inaugurated on March 4th. Now, in order to get away from the lame duck congress this has been changed, it's early January. So, the inauguration took place. We were, of course, very excited about Roosevelt's inaugural speech and had been about his campaign, generally. Not agreeing with everything and he stood for it, but most of it.

And Paul's printshop and my electric supply business were next door in this building, little building. Paul rushed in one day and said, I've just got a call from Henry Wallace. He wants me to come to Washington. [They laugh.]

I said, I told you so. So, he said that he was going up and talk with him. And he understood Wallace wanted him to be his personal assistant. So, he went to Washington. And in a few days, turned his business over to his associate. Then—

[00:15:00]

[Pause.]

—he called me after he'd been there a week or so and asked me if I could bring in Ruth, his wife, up to look for house. It looked like this is going to be more permanent than he thought. And I think he [inaudible] had caught the fever. So, I drove up and I met Wallace, and of course—and I was then 30 years old. And Paul said, Do you think you'd like to come to Washington? And I said, I don't know anything I could do here, this was all above me.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: Over and beyond me. He said, well, he didn't know. He said, If you have to have a job, I could get you a job working in Virginia as in the Seed Loan Department. He said, You wouldn't have any trouble doing that. Paid \$150 a month. At that time I was beginning to think, Well, \$150 a month, that's a lot of money. I had two kids. And the bottom had—well, this time had really fallen out of everything there. And I said, Oh, no. I'll get by some—don't worry about me. And then he continued to write me some weeks before he moved his family up. And he

continued to write really—occasionally write me about what was happening there, all—this was very exciting thing, of course, to a young Virginia businessman. And I didn't know—he came up, I think, on March 14th or something like that. He came to Washington by March 14th. And I guess about the first of May, I got a call from him. He said, I want you to come up. I think there's something here that you can do and do effectively, and it'll be a reasonably good job. So, I talked to my father who I was very close to at that time. Of course, he was very excited about it. He didn't see any particular promise in my business career in Radford, Virginia. So, I went up and met Wallace. I met Tugwell.

In the meantime, Rex has probably forgotten this and I don't know if I've ever told him about it, they were bringing in all sorts of PhDs. I left college without a degree because I changed courses so many times. And I had almost enough credits, I guess, putting the work in the right places, you know. I was taking what I was interested in and the courses that I was interested in. And Paul said that the young man who had been hired as first assistant, whom he had succeeded, had agreed to stay on for a short time, but they were going to have two such jobs in the office. And this young man, Hall, was going to be—being transferred to the Bureau of Public Roads. Quite a competent young man, but certainly wasn't a New Dealer. And Paul said, I think you ought to take this job. And I said, I just don't think I can do it. [RICHARD DOUD laughs.] I don't think I have the confidence and the experience. He said, Don't worry about that. He said, We can help you. But what I started to say earlier, they were bringing in PhDs from all around—all over the country. I don't know how many we had later in resettlement and the Farm Security.

And were bringing in a lot of bright young men into the Department of Agriculture who had no agricultural experience, but were economists and so on—Rex, of course, had done awfully good job recruiting in this respect. Tugwell, at that time, of course, being the assistant secretary, which is also quite a departure for the Department of Agriculture. And although Rex had a long history in agriculture and had been—had a lot to do with the agricultural planks and the Democratic platform in '32, as a member of Roosevelt's brain trust.

[00:20:01]

But Tugwell—Paul talked with him about bringing me in. Tugwell couldn't see it. My background, my training was perfectly correct [laughs]. He didn't argue with it. He said, It's up to you. And he and Tugwell were quite close. In the meantime, Jerome Frank had been brought in. He was later a federal judge. Now dead, unfortunately. Very brilliant young man, well, I guess about 45—to be the general counsel for the triple A [Agricultural Adjustment Administration]. But anyway, I pulled up stakes and arranged to liquidate my business and went to Washington.

The first week I was there, Paul and I we're staying in a rooming house. That's right, his family hadn't come up at that time. They were waiting, I guess, 'til school was out. —And after about a week or 10 days, I told Paul, I said, You know, I don't understand what's going on. [Laughs.] This beyond me. A congressman would call and I was sitting in the outer office in a very responsible position and—this would give me the real jitters. But Paul calmed me down and said, You're doing all right. Just stick with this thing. He said, You will learn it very quickly. And after, I guess, about a month, I lost my jitters and settled down and came to love this kind of thing. And we used to go out to lunch every day. Sometimes Wallace is with us but frequently, Tugwell, Jerome Frank and all these young bright guys from Harvard—

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: —Yale and around. And I found it, of course, to be very stimulating. And then I don't know how it happened, but I got to be quite close to Rex. And we had a big public works program. We were allotted money from PWA [Public Works Administration] and CWA [Civil Works Administration] and later WPA. And the Beltsville research project, that's the big experiment station just outside of Washington. Rex had terrific interest in this as he did all research in the department. He made, I think, probably the greatest contribution to research in the Department of Agriculture than—probably than anyone who's ever been there. And that time, his relations with Wallace were quite close. Later, they weren't, now I think they are. [Laughs.] These things change.

But Rex asked me if I would go out and straighten out this thing that was developing into a considerable mess at Beltsville]. I know we had I don't know how many million dollars to build up this plant, put up new buildings and everything. And then it—the bureau chiefs in department were running it and had no centralized management. So, we were—there's no scandals about it, but we can see the possibility of scandals developing, or Rex did. So, he assigned me his young

assistant, Fred Bartlett, whom he'd brought in from Columbia, to work with me on this.

So, we trudged out through the snow, and I guess maybe we did a pretty good job. And anyway, we got the thing straightened out. And—by the way, I got to be quite close to Rex and we became very warm friends. Grace, his present wife, was undersecretary. We were, of course, good friends too. This is the period from '33 to '35.

[00:24:53]

And Rex had a very good idea, didn't too much come of it. But—because later we had difficulty getting sufficient funds from public works to do the kind of things we thought should be done throughout the country. But Rex wanted to do a job of centralizing the number of department activities in the field, particularly in terms of physical facilities that were spread all over the lot. So, he sent Fred Bartlett and me out, again, to tour the country and to come back and make recommendations to him. This, as I recall, was in early '35. We were really having a wonderful time, working quite hard but I think learning the deal [ph] [inaudible] all the department installations, the forest service and public roads, Bureau of Plant Industry, everything else that makes up this great department.

We were in San Francisco and we had about a week left when we got a call from Rex. He said, I want you to come home. There's something happening here that I think you're going to be very much interested in. Said, I hate to interrupt your trip. So, we cut short our trip and took the next train home. Went to see Rex. And Rex said, Well, I'm talking to the President. I've been very much interested in this whole rural problem, as you know. But it was a poverty problem on the farms. And he said, He's going to set up a resettlement administration, and he's asked me to head it. So, I asked him if it's going to be independent of the department. He said, Yes, but I'm to continue. He was an undersecretary of agriculture and promoted from assistant secretary after having a bitter battle on the hill. But he finally came through.

And he said, I want you—he said, I want you to work with me on this. So, I've talked with Wallace about it. And Wallace said, Fine. He thought two jobs could be combined. And within a matter of a few weeks, it was obvious to me and to Rex that this job was so great in its extent of what we had—what Rex's plans were anyway, that I couldn't continue as Wallace's assistant will do this. So, I—and he said he wanted me to come over to be the assistant administrator of resettlement. And to—and wondered how I felt about leaving Wallace. I said, Well, I don't know. It's a hard decision, I said, I think I better go in and have a talk with him. And he said, well, he'd talk with him too.

So, I went, and Wallace's attitude was wonderful. He said, Well, Beanie, the important thing in this world is psychic income. And if you think you'll get more psychic income out of working with Rex on this, [RICHARD DOUD laughs] you go ahead and do it. The only request I have to make is, we've had such a harmonious situation in the outer office with you and Paul. By that time, Jim McCrone, who was the son-in-law of Mr. Cowles, who owned the *Des Moines Tribune*, had come in. Work had gotten too heavy for just Paul and me to handle. This was prior to Resettlement. So, I went over and then we got Milo Perkins who became quite a character in the New Deal, and quite an able person. We talked—we'd met him, a young businessman that heard Wallace—a radio speech of Wallace's and had written a glowing letter about how wonderful he thought it was. And we invited him to come to Washington. And when this change in my job came up, Jim—Paul Appleby didn't want to have anything to do with the selection of my successor. He said it ought to be up to Wallace. Their relationship was a pretty intimate one. But Jim and I thought definitely [ph], so we called Milo and asked him to come to Washington and talk with Wallace. Wallace had met him. So, Perkins came in to take my job when went into Resettlement.

[00:30:12]

And it was a very fascinating but also a very difficult, complex administrative situation that we faced. Resettlement was made up of—a number of—took over a number of existing programs; one, Subsistence Homestead division of the department, which is in the Department of Interior. And this was building subsistence homesteads throughout the country with both a agricultural and, we hoped, an industrial background. Try to do something for underprivileged people in the country. And also, to—Rex was very much interested in the cooperative movement and also in his—he had seen the English satellite towns and he thought that this was a better approach to housing than just tearing down slums in the middle of the city and erecting these big apartment buildings. He recognized both of them were necessary, but that became a part of Resettlement. And there was a land utilization program that Rex had sponsored and Wallace had sponsored

which is—and handled by Harry Hopkins, partially in the Department of Agriculture. The technical work being done by the department. And the actual land acquisition carried out by Hopkins.

The idea was to buy land that was not suitable for cultivation or would have been misused and move the people from this land to better land where they can make a decent living and convert this submarginal acreage to state parks, to put it in grass, or put it to the best possible effective land use. So, this is a big part of it. And then Harry Hopkins had started another program to help rural people, called it a rural rehabilitation program. And this was a matter of making both loans and grants to small farmers, giving them some supervision, and to get them off work relief rolls, off of CWA at one point and later, WPA took that over. And so, it was—these are the main parts of the program that was given to Tugwell to administer.

The administrative complexities were caused by the fact that we had to bring these people—transfer them from agency to agency and we had to set up a central administrative machinery to make it operate effectively. But another complicating factor was that Hopkins had carried on the rehabilitation program, which was the biggest thing that we inherited, largely through the states, not entirely, but he had set up state rural rehabilitation corporations. And he exercised some control over him but also the state's particular extension service exercised a good deal of control.

RICHARD DOUD: Can I—

C.B. BALDWIN: Yeah.

RICHARD DOUD: —ask you a question now? You mentioned a number of these various activities that were sort of incorporated.

C.B. BALDWIN: Yeah.

RICHARD DOUD: I'd like to ask you a bit now about, under resettlement administration, after you got these things all together, which aspect of it you feel was most hotly pursued? Thinking of—were you really more concerned, at this point, with rehabilitating people? And if so, how? Or were you more concerned with loans or grants or with the resettlement of people? Or were you equally concerned with all these?

[00:35:19]

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, [clears throat] the problem was so enormous. People were so poor and so desperate that I'll say that our hand was forced on it, somewhat. So, we had to give perhaps a greater emphasis, or devote a greater part of our—of the resources that were available to us through appropriations to the President, which he allotted to Public Works Administration, WPA, and so on, that the loan and grant program was, in size, was much larger than the others.

RICHARD DOUD: I see.

C.B. BALDWIN: The thing that we were—that Rex was most interested in—and as his young associate, I didn't know very much any way—we were much more interested in doing something about [clears throat] the basic land problem in the country as it related to people.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And so, our—we gave a major emphasis—as much as we could considering this other problem that we were reaching so many more people. Loan and grant program finally reached—well, and I'd have to look this up, but probably reached a total of about 800,000 families, over a period of years. So, Rex was interested in the more fundamental adjustments that he thought should take place and unfortunately, they hadn't taken place. We were stopped on this politically. And then he was interested in setting up cooperative farms.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: We set up a number of cooperative farms. They've all been liquidated now. And it's a great crime that they have. It was a—really a great experiment. It was tough, but it was—so we devoted as much attention as we could do this. And as I said, Rex was—had this great interest in this, what he thought was a fundamental adjustment that had to be made, in relations of land to people, people to land. And also, then he was very much interested in the—in

building these Greenbelt Towns which were modeled to a certain extent from the—after the English satellite towns and—which that they now have in Norway and Sweden. My wife and I were in—went to Norway and Sweden, also the Soviet Union four years ago and the—some of the Eastern European countries. And we saw these satellite towns very similar to our greenbelts.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: So, we were only able to get—we got four of them started, the one outside of Washington, which is called Greenbelt; the one in Cincinnati, outside of Cincinnati, Greenhills; one in Milwaukee, Greendale. And I've forgotten—because I said that's three. We had one planned for Bound Brook [NJ], and we were stopped by the local real estate people. We had a bitter fight through this whole period with real estate interests.

RICHARD DOUD: I dare say—

C.B. BALDWIN: They looked on this as socialism.

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: And then we were attacked for being—trying to set up collective farms on the Soviet pattern. And they had some similarities. There's no question about that but—and they—and this is the thing that brought down the wrath of the Farm Bureau and reactionaries, generally, on Tugwell. And later on, Will Alexander and me.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:39:48]

C.B. BALDWIN: But it was—I still think if we—we had good support from Roosevelt. There was a certain amount of infighting, always, between PWA and WPA. And we were, to a certain extent, involved in that; we had to use—in building our projects, our housing projects, rural housing projects, we had to rely largely on funds that we got from—that Harry Hopkins controlled. Well, fortunately, Harry is—Harry and Rex were always quite close. We had—always certain amount of bureaucratic squabbling [inaudible].

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: But Harry—we understood Harry's position. He was trying to get the maximum work for people that needed work. And this, of course, led to rather gross inefficiencies.

RICHARD DOUD: Certainly.

C.B. BALDWIN: Perfectly justifiable with inefficiencies. Let me just give you one illustration. I recall one time at Greenbelt, we were building this—a thousand houses there. And we can get all-the-day laborers we wanted, unskilled worker. We needed 17 plasters, as I recall. And we had to get an exception, we couldn't get them from the relief roll. We had to get them from the trade unions or people that, at least, had part time, if not full-time, employment. This meant getting an exception from Hopkins, so I want to see Dave Niles who was Harry's—one of Harry's assistants. And he was more or less controlling the allocation of manpower on this. After a long argument, he said, Well, we'll let you have 17 plasters, but you have to take 300 additional day laborers. [RICHARD DOUD whistles.] And so, I finally had to agree to it. So, as a result of this, our cost went up.

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: And we were subject to criticism. It actually wasn't justified criticism. We understood Hopkins' position, but this did run our costs up. And then we were attacked by Harry Byrd who became our—almost our nemesis but we survived it. But the—and Rex stayed on until, it was '38, I guess, first of the year. And he, of course, become a—really the center of controversy in the New Deal. He was—he became the number one devil. And it wasn't just because of our work in Farm Security and—I mean, at that time, the Resettlement Administration. But it was—he fought for a revised Food and Drug Administration.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: This meant taking on the advertiser. And believe me, when you take on the advertisers, you have a formidable enemy. Anyway, Rex decided that the very—an extremely

conscientious person, very fond of Roosevelt, he decided he had become a liability to Roosevelt. It was interesting you know—Moley, of course, had now become a—well, he is an ardent advocate of Goldwaters in the last election, going on all the way to the right and broke with Roosevelt. Farley broke with Roosevelt. Rex never broke with Roosevelt.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And they had this warm relationship until he died. But I don't know how much more of this—I could talk indefinitely on it. But the—at some point, I know you want me to get into this historical [inaudible].

RICHARD DOUD: I want to ask you a question before we go into the historical business. Would you hazard a guess or maybe you know, what percentage of the rural population was in dire need, say in 1934 and 1935? How deep was this thing?

C.B. BALDWIN: It was very deep. They—all of agriculture was depressed. Very few escaped, some of the big operators. But even they were having a hard time. See, everybody was broke.

[00:45:03]

They—you'd have to check this figure, but I think the net income for farmers went down. It was down—no, I think the gross income of farmers around four—got down to around \$4 billion. It's now, what? Gross incomes are about [\$]35 or [\$]36 billion, so that'll give you some idea. And, of course, we were plagued by droughts at the Northern Great Plains states—

RICHARD DOUD: Yes.

C.B. BALDWIN: —through that period. Then one time, we were helping either through loans or grants, as recall, over 75 percent of the farmers in North and South Dakota. The situation in the South was quite different. There were literally hundreds of thousands of farmers with incomes of —again, I'd have to check on testimony that we all gave at that point, but hundreds of thousands of farmers' with incomes of \$150 a year, \$200 a year.

RICHARD DOUD: [Inaudible.]

C.B. BALDWIN: Many of them plowing with oxen. A mule was a real luxury. And I remember, particularly in Alabama, we'd—we were—we had a big program to get rid of oxen and then substitute mules. Much more efficient, of course. But it was a pretty, pretty desperate situation. And one time, Harry Hopkins was—seemed to be impressed with the idea of getting people back to the land. Well, this was an interesting point of departure on the Tugwell approach and I—our approach and Hopkins' approach. We knew that there were more people on the land than land could support.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: So—but we also felt that these people had to be helped where they were, at least until something else could be done for them. They—and Harry actually tried some limited projects moving people from the city to the land, which made absolutely no economic sense. I might say that Harry Hopkins is one of my real heroes. I'm not being critical of him—the three really great people that I knew in the administration where Tugwell, Hopkins, and Harry White, Treasury Department, later thoroughly condemned and accused of everything under the sun. Harry and Rex were not close. Harry came in somewhat later, but I was there for many years after Rex left, but they were my—people that I had the greatest admiration for. Of course, I had great admiration for Wallace and others, but they were in a somewhat different category. But the—we never had enough money, for one thing, to do the kind of job that we set out to do. As Rex said to me some years later, and I think it's been simply proven—later proven, that we were really pikers.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: They—[laughs] looking to see that they—the way money is spent by government now, you know what I mean.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: It was never adequate. But Rex was always in there battling. Will Alexander later. Then when I finally succeeded—when I succeeded the job in '40 after Dr. Alexander left, I

continued to fight as long as I could.

[00:49:42]

RICHARD DOUD: Well, let me just sort of recap some of the stuff that's gone before. After the Resettlement Administration was established and these various units or other organizations brought together under Tugwell, one of the departments within his organization was the Historical Section, which involves a lot of things. One of the major things, as it developed later, that this thing involved was the business of photography. Of course, Roy Stryker had known Tugwell, and worked with him at Columbia, then in the economics department as a teacher and assistant. And worked with him on a book Tugwell and Thomas Munro put out on American economic life or something like that.

C.B. BALDWIN: That's right. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD DOUD: And Stryker was brought down as—to the head up the Historical Section, ostensibly to do a lot of things in the way of keeping records of Resettlement Administration, keeping the documents and the files and the—as Laurence Hewes' job description—the description that Laurence Hewes wrote up—to be in charge of photography. Well, it developed that photography became [C.B. BALDWIN laughs] the thing for the Historical Section. I'd like to toss back a quote, not in verbatim, but a quote you made once saying that you never really understood the significance of this photo business. Never understood the significance of what the photo project was doing. It's a historical fact, however, that you supported the thing wholeheartedly, and I'd like to ask you why? Do not—

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, they—let me put it this way, because that's sort of an overgeneralization, I probably said it to Roy. I didn't understand it when it started, but it wasn't long before I saw the value of it and—the great value. And of course, now, as I said to Roy Stryker, and I know that I said to him some time ago, that this would become a medium by which this whole period is best remembered. And—but—which the Resettlement Administration is best remembered, which I think is in itself a major contribution to our culture and to—and it could be to the so-called poverty program that LBJ is—timidly embarking on.

But—see, Rex had great imagination. He didn't always articulate it well, even to those of us who are close to him. But looking back on it now, I've recognized how far in advance of his time this man actually would. And he had great courage and starting new things. Some people thought he had too much. I don't think so. I don't share that. Some people think that if he had been softer and easier and hadn't fought as hard as he had, that some of these programs would have survived. Part of it has survived, in quite an important way. [Inaudible] this is true. He had—I might say he had a rather singular—antipathy is hardly the word, but maybe it is—to working with congressman. I wouldn't say to congressman but to working with congressman. Oh, he was terrible.

RICHARD DOUD: [Laughs.]

[00:54:55]

C.B. BALDWIN: And I sort of bore the brunt of this. I had—Rex would send the congressmen in to see me. But Rex brought a number of people in that he had met in academic circles. A number of them from Columbia. George Mitchell, who later became assistant administrator under me. He was brought in to head the labor division and—well, and this was related, I think, to this—to how this Historical Section evolved. No one thought at that point about having a labor division in an agricultural—in the—in an agricultural program.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: Rex knew it was necessary. So, George came in to do that job. He brought Roy Stryker who he had great confidence in because he—I don't know that—this had better come from Rex and I'm sure you that you'll talked with him about it. I think you're right, I think he wanted a history of this period recorded and recorded adequately. Actually, I couldn't tell you how the—the photographic thing actually got started. Roy would have to tell you. I just remember Roy coming in and we—and he was a—he was put in charge of the Historical Section which was a part of our Information Division. Our General Information Division, which Jack Fisher later headed. But Jack came in much later.

And someone decided—it must have been Roy, I'm not sure that Rex did, that the best way to do

this was through photographs. And, so, I guess we had legal authority to do this. But it was—if Congress had known at the time what we were doing, we would have been blown right out of the place. And it was done on a very—actually, it started on a very modest basis.

RICHARD DOUD: Yes.

C.B. BALDWIN: And we had a reputation. We were the great New Dealers but probably paying the lowest salaries in Washington, which I was somewhat responsible for but not entirely because we were—I don't want to get off too much on it, I'll just give you an illustration. Harry Hopkins had a lot of administrative people hired that he spent \$50 a month to, around the country.

RICHARD DOUD: I say.

C.B. BALDWIN: So, we had to gradually move from that, and there were thousands of them. And they were chosen—again, this is because of Harry's great anxiety about putting people to work—they were chosen not—in many cases, not because they were qualified for the job but because they needed a job.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And this is no way to set up a government agency.

RICHARD DOUD: Right.

C.B. BALDWIN: And see Rex would take just diametrically the opposite approach. He would see Harry's point. But Rex wanted efficient people. He wanted competent people. So, we had to move gradually to higher salary levels and conserve much of the money that—which is always limited—allotted to us to help poor people and to carry on some of these things that are all much more fundamental, like land use adjustments and so on. But this enormously complicate our administrative job.

So, Roy started by hiring a couple photographers. I don't know who the first ones were. I've forgotten. And I think we probably started Rothstein at \$2,600 a year or something like that.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: I don't think he ever made more than [\$]3,800, when he worked for us. And the same thing was true all down the line. But Roy had this marvelous sense of responsibility to—not only to his job but to his workers. They absolutely adored this guy, and properly so.

RICHARD DOUD: Still do, most of them.

C.B. BALDWIN: He was their father confessor. He was—and he was the one who's coming over to see me to get a little more money to put on another photographer.

[01:00:04]

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: I was in charge of the administrative end. Rex, after a while, left it practically to me. He always—he was a great administrator because he didn't try to do too much administering.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: This was the secret of a good administrator. But—so the thing sort of grew like Topsy. And we—and I was keeping a very close eye on it, because I thought we were—we would be subject to very serious criticism. Although I thought it was fairly justified. But try to justify a thing to Congress is sometimes quite difficult. You know?

RICHARD DOUD: It certainly is.

C.B. BALDWIN: And you go up and you sit across the table from 12 or 14 members of the House Appropriations Committee and all of them trying to be prosecuting attorneys. It's—you got to sort of watch your step. So, we did a good deal of covering up, I might say, on this. I don't—it wasn't illegal, but we would—of course, when our photographs started to be published, and Roy

Stryker insisting that Resettlement Administration or Farm Security Administration have a credit line on them, the story was fairly well out. But it was impressive. It was—I think, politically, it did us much more good than that harm in spite of the fact that we were—that I was worried about the congressional reaction.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: But I was worried about the congressional reaction when we decided—and I was in on this from the beginning—to produce some movies: *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River*. And *The Plow That Broke the Plains* came, of course, the—resulted in a bitter controversy with Congress, particularly a number of senators and congressmen from the Great Plains states. They said we were trying to wipe that part of the country off the face of the earth. We were trying, actually, to save it.

RICHARD DOUD: Isn't that something.

C.B. BALDWIN: And *The River*—of course, the story of the Mississippi, was also a great conservation movie. But this bold spirit of Rex's was manifested, of course, in other ways. He set up the Special Skills Division which Grace had a good deal to do with.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And that's— actually Ben Shahn—a number of artists—we brought in these artists to work. Ben, I guess, became the most famous. We had a number of terrific artists. We got into folk music. This was all Rex. This was Rex's imagination.

RICHARD DOUD: Excuse me. Let me turn this off.

[END OF TRACK AAA_balldwi65_8358_m.]

C.B. BALDWIN: All right. Let's see. I don't know exactly where we were.

RICHARD DOUD: Well, you were talking about the Special Skills Division and—

C.B. BALDWIN: Yeah.

RICHARD DOUD: —some of the artistic that talent came in there. And this brings up something that I wish you'd touch on for me. This whole business of Adrian Dornbush, and of course, this isn't really part of the Farm Security and what we're primarily interested in but—

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, later he was in the Special Skills Division.

RICHARD DOUD: Was he sort of the ramrod? The guy who was brought in to get this—

C.B. BALDWIN: I think so.

RICHARD DOUD: [Inaudible] going?

C.B. BALDWIN: I think he had—well, you know how artists are. You can't very well have a boss. They worked pretty well on their own. I think that Adrian probably was one of the more aggressive. Now Ben works, I think, quite differently from the way Adrien worked. But actually, I don't remember too much about it. I knew Adrian quite well.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: Later he went to Puerto Rico. I guess he's down there now, isn't he?

RICHARD DOUD: Yes, I think he is. Tugwell mentioned something about the Key West colony where things really got going on artists—

C.B. BALDWIN: That's right.

RICHARD DOUD: —doing things at the time, and Adrian coming up from there.

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, I got to know Ned Bruce quite well, through Rex.

RICHARD DOUD: He was the big man.

C.B. BALDWIN: He was really a great guy too. He was a lawyer, you know? But he took up art—

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: —rather late in life and, I gather, is quite an accomplished artist. I visited him in Key West, Rex and I visited him there and I visited him there later, and then when he was the—finally he went to Treasury in order to head the Treasury Art Division.

RICHARD DOUD: Yes, they had a commission, I think, of Fine Arts.

C.B. BALDWIN: Yeah.

RICHARD DOUD: Not commission but a section of Fine Arts.

C.B. BALDWIN: See, this was really something because before that, a few not too good artists—at least I didn't think they were too good, although I'm no expert on art—were monopolizing all this art in the country in terms of public buildings and Ned broke that hold and brought in all of these young artists, then young artists.

RICHARD DOUD: I think he certainly started something that proved to be a real boon for artists in the country and really opened a way for the WPA Art Project which was more far-reaching than any of the previous programs that they have.

C.B. BALDWIN: Yeah.

RICHARD DOUD: Well, to get back to photographs now, Tugwell admitted that he had conceived photography as playing essentially a propaganda role in this whole business, and also admitted that he didn't foresee the thing growing the way it did. You mentioned that it grew like Topsy. Roy says it grew like Topsy. It's still hard for me to conceive, though, of something like this being able to flourish in a government agency. And when—well, on one hand, it was doing a particular job, a propaganda job. On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of pictures were being taken that really couldn't serve much of a purpose at the time.

C.B. BALDWIN: That's correct.

RICHARD DOUD: And it's fascinating that this could happen and I'm wondering how you people got by with it.

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, we were then spending—it would level out later—but we were spending about \$30 million a year in terms of administration. And this wasn't—shouldn't all be considered administration really because we had in about, I guess, over half the counties in the country, we had offices. This was chiefly the Rural Rehabilitation Program. And that was a matter of rather intensive supervision of farming operations. Working out farm and home management plans. We had the largest number of home economists that had ever been employed by any agency.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: Now, unfortunately, this was gone. The successor agency, now called the Farmers Home Administration, don't have one home economist. These women working with these small—these foreign families, teaching them to can, teaching them to sew, seeing to it that they—that there was enough money in the budget that we prepared for them, which we would advance money against, adequate, at least, to meet the minimum needs, looking after the health of the children, seeing to it they have doctors for their families.

[00:05:27]

And then we had this magnificent Medical program which has now been liquidated completely. I was the greatest medical program, I think, the country's ever had, for any segment of the population. Well—and so, over a period of years, we did spend a rather substantial amount of money and this, to a certain extent, was sort of covered up because of our other activities.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: I don't know whether Roy knows how much we spent on it. I recall a figure of about a million and a half dollars over a period of years. And at that, I guess, it's the cheapest photographic job of that magnitude that's ever been done—

RICHARD DOUD: [Inaudible.]

C>B> BALDWIN: —and I see that *Cleopatra* cost, what, \$30 million to produce?

[They laugh.]

RICHARD DOUD: I'm not sure you can even fairly compare them.

C.B. BALDWIN: No. [Laughs.] But we were not—I didn't think it was an extravagance, but it's a little difficult to capture the atmosphere of this agency of ours. It was—I don't think there's ever been anything quite like it in government. It was—I think we had a good many hard-headed realist. I think that Rex was a realist. I think I was.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: I had to be because I was [laughs] running the administration with the show, but it's a little hard to recapture that. This enthusiasm, it carried this thing along and, of course, we had to make—we weren't spending money just on anything. We turned down many things that were proposed to us. But when we started something, we put everything we had into it.

RICHARD DOUD: Obviously.

C.B. BALDWIN: [Laughs.] That, I guess, is the answer.

RICHARD DOUD: Well, do you think that at that time you got your money's worth out of this photo project? Do you think that it served adequately as a propaganda device? And do you feel that—

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, I don't think it'd been—no, I don't think it would have been justified purely as a propaganda device. I think, by that time, as I said, I didn't understand when it started but then I also got the fever and developed a terrific enthusiasm for it. And Roy, often quite properly—I think Rex is entitled to more credit than anybody else Rex and Roy. And I sort of followed along with Rex's lead after Rex left, and I gave all the support I could. But—well, from ahistorical standpoint, from a cultural standpoint, I think it's been justified—

RICHARD DOUD: Oh, certainly.

C.B. BALDWIN: —100 times over, you know [laughs], that's—and this is really a sort of foresight that is lacking in so many people in government today. It was lacking in a lot of people in government then, but this is the difference between Tugwell and the brass up in the Pentagon. Maybe that's not a very good illustration but I think you understand what I'm trying to say.

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: But as the war came on, we were getting a little nervous about it, and I had very frank talks with Roy. How long are we going to be able to continue this? Get by with it? And just as importantly, how we were going to protect what we had?

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: And this became—I'm sure it's a passion of Roy but also it became somewhat of a passion to me. This has been done and this is a kind of thing that could fall in the wrong hands and they'd simply burn up the negatives. You know?

[00:10:05]

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: The archives are wonderful that we have in government, but they are far from being complete. I'm sure a lot of important things have been destroyed. You get an administrator that says, All of this—I'm going to stop this waste of money, and I don't want to fill up all our offices with all these negatives. Let's get rid of them. And we were afraid of this, that this might happen. And then we had to shift when World War II started. We had to shift our operation in order to save it and it needed to be saved. And so, we went on a—particularly with our Rehabilitation Program, on a program to expand the production of small farmers because—

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: —it's the reverse of the situation today, the food was needed. And then, I think, these little farmers that they contributed a lot, in terms of increased egg production, milk production. And under the stimulation of the money that we were able to use and the advice we were able to give small farmers. But also, this wasn't opportunism but it was facing up to the facts that if we didn't get into the—make a contribution to the war effort, we were afraid we'd be out of business.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: And so, [RICHARD DOUD coughs] we made this shift in policy. By this time, the heat on our projects had become so intense that we could hardly get money to—we couldn't get money to build any more, and we can hardly get money to sustain the ones that we had. This was a long fight that I had and a bitter fight in Congress, when Senator Byrd and a number of others were out to liquidate the entire operation. And I had to go before the Byrd Committee on Uneconomic Expenditures, I got quite a pummeling. And I was accused of paying the poll taxers for Southern voters. And I was, and proud of it. [RICHARD DOUD laughs.] We weren't paying them, we were including them in loans. We took the position that a person couldn't be a good citizen without being a voter.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And we couldn't do anything but the poll tax, so I told our people in the South to include money in their loans if these people could be—if these poor people could be registered, so they can register and vote. And I was accused of political manipulation and this was—and nothing else. But I was—I might say, I was interested in the political effects of it—

RICHARD DOUD: Certainly.

C.B. BALDWIN: —but I thought it was thoroughly justified. And it was very interesting, as a result of this, I got a lot of Republican support because Republicans traditionally take a position against the poll tax. So, Byrd didn't get by with what he was trying to do, and we won the fight, finally, in the Senate by [inaudible] considerably better than a two to one vote.

RICHARD DOUD: Oh, really?

C.B. BALDWIN: But I had become a storm center then, not anything like as important as the storm center that Rex was, but I become a storm center of my own. On my own part. And so, I had to watch things like this and at the same time, I wanted to be sure I was protected. So, finally—Roy probably wouldn't remember this because I had so many other irons in the fire—better than I'm able to tell it, but Roy talked with me about what ought to be done. And this was, as I say, after World War II had started. And I would guess, Roy recommended it. I don't know if I did or not, probably Roy. And we got Archibald MacLeish interested. And after some maneuvering, as I recall, Roy went over to OWI [Office of War Information]. Isn't that right?

[00:15:04]

RICHARD DOUD: Yes.

C.B. BALDWIN: He went to OWI. And then the—our negatives went with him. And this was a major move to save it, to save the whole operation. And then, I guess, it was after MacLeish was made Librarian of Congress, we got them transferred there. So, there they are, and their safe. Thank God [laughs].

RICHARD DOUD: Well, you're talking about some of your problems with certain congressmen, sort of leads into this idea that Roy keeps bringing out about how not only Tugwell but Will Alexander and you protected him or held an umbrella over him through this whole thing. I was wondering if you could tell me who you protected him from, was there any particular individual or agency that was out to do him in or did he have a justifiable persecution complex through this whole thing?

C.B. BALDWIN: Oh, [inaudible]. I don't think it was a persecution complex. It was—the danger was always there that it might be destroyed. And they were—I would say, there are a number of factors entered into it. The main thing that we have to do was to watch our situation with Congress. But also, the Bureau of the Budget, you know, is always on your tail trying to cut expenditures.

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: And so, we just didn't tell the Bureau of the Budget too much about it. So, this was a kind of umbrella we held over. We—I don't think most of the photographers were—I don't like any of them were on—you'd have to look at the job descriptions, which you probably have. But I don't think many of them were on as photographers.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: They were various administrative assistants and other things around the government. Some shift papers, well we decided to this group should take pictures.

RICHARD DOUD: That's bringing up the whole business about Roy's job description. I mentioned earlier that Mr. Hewes wrote that really said very little about photography. And Roy had always been, I guess still is, concerned about the fact that he wasn't really sure what he was supposed to be doing and was he doing the right thing by taking pictures and all? . And I know Mr. and Mrs. Tugwell were laughing about Roy coming in periodically and saying, Am I doing alright? What am I supposed to be doing and all. And Tugwell mentioned then that the job description was purposely written the way it was.

C.B. BALDWIN: Obscure, sure.

RICHARD DOUD: To be obscure. They deliberately wrote it to keep people from knowing what they were actually trying to do. And I guess this follows along with the same thing you mentioned here. You can't always tell everything you know in a situation like that.

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, this doesn't bear directly on this but it's sort of interesting in terms of government administration, I think. I told you, our salary levels were low, but Rex and I—and I had to take, I guess, most of the pressure on this because this was my job. You always have supervisors— top people in any organization are always trying to get increases in salary for their immediate assistants. We were in—we were excluded from the Classification Act as most—many of New Deal agencies were. So, there were certain—there were always the budgetary limitations but the pressure would just get to be intense. And we did something—I suggested this to Rex and he immediately agreed—to get rid of this pressure we voluntarily went under Classification Act. I met with the Civil Service Commission. I asked them if they wouldn't come down and set our salaries and do our job descriptions. And they sent a very competent, old-line guy that we got to be very fond of named John Overholt to us to do this job. And he wrote a— really what amounts to a book on it, and I have it somewhere. It's a fascinating thing, and it's very humorous. Generally, civil service people, you know, are not very humorous.

[00:20:08]

RICHARD DOUD: [Laughs.] Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: This guy has a terrific sense of humor. And he got to be very fond of our organization. And he was very helpful, because every now and then, you've got a very peculiar situation on government salaries. You want a man to do a particular job, like Roy Stryker and there were many others and—but it's very hard to describe this job. Because the job requires a good deal of imagination which the Civil Service Commission doesn't—at that time, didn't give too much emphasis to. And so, I had to work with John on a lot of these special jobs. And Larry [ph], at that time, was really my assistant. So, Larry [ph] would work on these descriptions with Overholt. . Overholt was realistic—John Overholt was realistic enough to know that these descriptions did not always mean too [laughs] much, but—and we have some very peculiar situation.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: And so, anyway, it worked out. It worked out beautifully. We also work out an arraignment with Jim Farley on patronage that was highly successful. I'm not a great admirer of Farley's today but at that time, I had a great deal of respect for him because the Democrats all wanted jobs and the congressmen all wanted, to be able, especially, to appoint people. And we were determined that we were going to make a selection of our own people. So, we—then in any organization, the great—the majority of people are in clerical work, secretarial work, or something. And we—so, we made an agreement with Farley that we were going to give all these people Civil Service examinations, although they weren't required.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And then we'd make up a list. Then—no, we'd let congressmen make recommendations, not to us for our supervisory personnel but for our clerical and secretarial, which gave them a lot of patronage. They'd send us a list of people and then we we'd give—have Civil Service examinations given to them and we'd select from that list.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: In other words, the congressman could not name John Jones—if he wanted the job, he would send us the list, if John Jones' was on it, if he was qualified, and if we thought he had the right background for the work, we would appoint him. And this—we had a lot of patronage trouble, but this kept us versatile and certainly minimized it. And enabled us to build what came to be, I think, quite an efficient operation. Particularly considering the emergency nature of it. I mean, it had to be set up quickly and—

RICHARD DOUD: This is one thing that must have plagued you all the way through, the immediacy of all these problems. The fact that things should be done yesterday—

[Cross talk.]

C.B. BALDWIN: That's true.

RICHARD DOUD: —must have been a tremendous amount of pressure.

C.B. BALDWIN: But it also added to the excitement and to use Wallace's term, the psychic income was great [laughs].

RICHARD DOUD: Do you think this whole photo business was generally well-received by the press and the public, in spite of the opposition to the congressional level? Do you think it did an adequate job of telling people what you were doing, and the progress you were making?

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, I think it was amazingly effective. The—well, it couldn't have been better. It's one thing that I, you know—that I obviously take great satisfaction in, and I think it was done well. And I think it was effective. And then—Roy might recall, I don't—the press was glad to have this, by and large.

RICHARD DOUD: I think probably—I mean, they were getting free pictures.

C.B. BALDWIN: They were getting free pictures, sure. And it was a very dramatic story. They—and I think the—what is this term that they use now for these market surveys? You know, how they—advertisers have been accused of throwing in little things that you hardly see and—

[00:25:25]

RICHARD DOUD: Subliminal advertising.

C.B. BALDWIN: Right, yeah. I think we just had a subliminal effect that was quite important.

RICHARD DOUD: Was it—

C.B. BALDWIN: I don't think we recognized it then but I think it did have.

RICHARD DOUD: Was it politically very important?

C.B. BALDWIN: I think it was. It's not that—let me give you an illustration which doesn't deal with our photographic thing, but I think it might give emphasis to this point. John Steinbeck got in touch with us, and this is after Rex had left. I've forgotten when *The Grapes of Wrath* was written, about '39—'38 or '39. He'd gotten terribly interested in our work with migrant workers. We built migratory labor camps, we'd established a medical program for them. We were—these were really the poorest people in the country, subject to all the hazards of the worst parts [inaudible]. And Steinbeck said he wanted to do this book, but he said, You know, my method of working may be different for many novelists. I'm going to have to live this thing for a while.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And I guess he said that if he was going to do it, something would have to be

worked out. Well, we'd read, then, I guess, *Of Mice and Men* and a number of other of Steinbeck's books. We certainly thought that he was the person to do it. So, we said, Sure, we'd give him our fullest cooperation. And we had a little character that was manager of one of our migratory labor camps, He originally came from Northern Virginia and finally started working in the pea fields in California, and he was down and out. And—but he had certain leadership qualities. And so, we picked him up from among the migrants and made him a camp manager finally.

So, we had—I got in touch, I guess, then—or was it Larry Hewes —had gone—that we'd sent to the West Coast to be our regional director. Another great guy, Jonathan Garst [ph], and arranged for Steinbeck and Collins to have a talk. So, we assigned Collins to Steinbeck, full-time, paid his salary, and they both worked as migrants. Steinbeck grew a long beard and wore the same clothes as the other migrants, he actually worked in the field. That's what—that comes out in the realism of his book. Really a great book, a great movie too. Steinbeck finished the book. He came in and thanked us for the help we'd been to him. And said that Tom Collins had been enormously helpful. And he told us then he had sold the rights to the book for \$175,000, to, I think, Selznick. It was a very high price then—this happens, I guess, now. But this is—but Steinbeck had entered into an agreement with—I think it was Selznick. Or—in the contract had specified that the book had to literally—the movie has to literally follow the book.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And he had to have—that he would approve the director. John Ford directed it. And Collins was made the technical [laughs]—the—what was it? The technical director, I guess. This guy had once been a migrant. And so, he worked—he left us—I don't suppose they gave him a lot of money but it's big money for him, \$10 or \$12 thousand I'd guess. But he got a credit line.

[00:30:21]

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: But the movie came out. And Senator Bankhead, who was our good friend in the Senate, but—I had really a very good relationship with him. He was very interested in small farmers, really quite conservative. And he would tell me from time to time, he'd say Beanie, I like you but you're too radical for me. [RICHARD DOUD laughs.] And I was, I'm sure. But he saw this movie, he called me and asked me to come to his office one day, wondering if I've seen it and I said, Yes. He said, Do these people really live like this? And I said, I've been trying to tell you, Senator, for years that these are the most disadvantaged people in the country. They certainly do. This is an honest presentation. He said, Well, maybe I'm going to give you some support on this. He had been very much opposed to our migrant labor program, and he liked most of the other things that we were doing.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: Senator Russell who also was helpful to us and friendly, but he also didn't like many of the things we were doing liked the Rehabilitation program, that was simplified. And that was strictly consistent with the whole American system. Lending people money and they had to pay it back.

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: I don't know if he saw the movie, but I appeared before the committee one day and he asked me if I'd read the book. I said, Yes, I read as soon as I can. I didn't tell him everything we had done on it. And he said—I've forgotten his exact words, but he said, I t certainly made a deep impression on me. This is very helpful, politically.

RICHARD DOUD: Certainly.

C.B. BALDWIN: So, I would say that how they saw these pictures, whether they saw them in the newspapers are where they saw them, that made a very, very deep impression and therefore, I think it was helpful to a lot of them.

RICHARD DOUD: That's a good answer. I think it points to something that needs bringing out, the fact that perhaps a lot of the opposition to a number of these programs was due not to stubbornness or political apathy but just the ignorance of what—

C.B. BALDWIN: There was no—there's no question—

RICHARD DOUD: —what was going on or what wasn't going on. Certainly, I think the photograph—and the written word can play a strong part in this whole. Well, now, I'd like, if you would, to have you comment on some of these people that keep cropping up in this whole thing, as I've been going along and I'm sure you're probably in a better position than anyone else to tell me who these men were and where they fit into this whole business. You can get as personal as you want or as objective as you care to be on any of these.

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, I guess, we can edit anything out that I [inaudible] [laughs]—

RICHARD DOUD: Anything you decide—that you wish you hadn't said, you'll have a chance to strike out.

C.B. BALDWIN: Thank you very much.

RICHARD DOUD: Jack Fisher, as I understand, was, at one time at least, head of the Information Division.

C.B. BALDWIN: Jack was our third or fourth head of the Information Division. The first one was John Carter, John Franklin Carter.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: Last time I saw John, he was working for Nelson Rockefeller. He was at the democratic convention, sort of a special agent for Rockefeller and I spent some time with him. But John wasn't around very long. He resigned, had no pressure on him. I don't think John was particularly suited to this type of bureaucratic work, he's a very able writer.

[00:35:07]

And then this is—and we brought in another guy. He became a very good friend of ours. He'd been in charge of an important part if not the entire WPA work in Key West. And I can't think of his name. [Inaudible.] I didn't know him very well. And he was around for some time. And then after Rex left and Dr. Will became administrator, we brought Jack Fisher in. Jack Fisher has been a protégé of—and again, I'm getting bad on names—Dr. Montgomery, Bob Montgomery who had the—he was at the University of Texas for a long time. He's still living or probably is. And he inspired a lot of these young Texans to become new dealers and liberals, he was a real progressive economist, political scientists, I guess. I guess he's a political scientist. Sometimes it's a little hard to draw the line.

RICHARD DOUD: [Laughs.] Yes.

C.B. BALDWIN: And Jack had been a Rhodes scholar. He did really quite an effective job. Of course, he's very successful, [laughs]guy. And I think he's gotten very conservative. I disagree with him pretty thoroughly on everything he believes in or seems to believe in. I no longer take *Harper's* but he's had some things on the race question that I think have been pretty bad. And also, he's gotten—I think he's getting to be quite conservative. He wasn't when he was with us.

RICHARD DOUD: Was he in favor of this photography business—

C.B. BALDWIN: All that time, Jack was—yeah, Jack was practically like Lyndon.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: Jack—when I first knew Lyndon, Lyndon was a great radical.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: He's changed. Now, he seems to stand back to a certain extent, at least in a liberal position. And I want to differentiate between liberal and radical, I think they're quite different. The—but as far as that, I had the feeling that I might have been wrong about Jack but maybe he didn't—maybe he thought we were gone too far. He didn't agree with us, but I didn't have that feeling at the time. I said, as the Director of Information, I thought he did quite an adequate job.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And then given the kind of support to the organization, I want to say, to me, I felt that he was quite competent and that he believed in it.

RICHARD DOUD: Who or what was Robert Hudgens?

C.B. BALDWIN: Oh, Pete's a marvelous character. I think the first trip that I made with Tugwell, with Rex, was he was asked to deliver the commencement address at Clemson College. And he asked me to go with him. I think this was in '34. It must have been June of '34. And of course, Rex was given the red-carpet treatment. At that time Jimmy Byrnes, who later become an arch-conservative, Jimmy Byrnes was very active in trying to get New Deal legislation through.

[00:40:04]

What happened to him I don't know. [RICHARD DOUD laughs.] He supported Goldwater in the last campaign. I don't know if Jimmy Byrnes was there to introduce Rex or not. I remember that we had breakfast for the faculty, I guess, with the president of the school. That evening we went out to a big party steak—had a big steak party and the alcohol flowed rather freely. And I've forgotten if Pete was at that party or not but we met him on that trip. And Pete was—I started to say a graduate of Clemson, he wasn't. He went to the Citadel. Citadel is as always had—it was a military school, military college, very much like the VMI.

And Pete—World War I came along about the time when Pete was just out of school, and he was commissioned a second lieutenant. He ended up as a captain in the Army. He almost lost his, I guess, both of his legs, one leg, and all this muscle's practically shot away. This has always troubled him to a certain extent, but you'd never know it to look at him, he's a big husky guy. But we were very much impressed with him. He had just taken over the job of subsistence homesteads in South Carolina, which we inherited. So, we were looking around for talent and I forgotten the first job we put Pete in. We brought him in to Washington for a conference. I can't exactly fill this in although I had this long intimate relationship with him. But Huey Long was in the Senate. [Inaudible] Rex was up for confirmation as undersecretary, Huey Long was just about his strongest supporter. And—but Long broke with the administration, with Roosevelt. It was a bitter break.

So, they shut-off patronage, or attempted to. Everybody was told Long wasn't getting more patronage, which of course, made him all the more furious. But the people that are to get the patronage in Louisiana, at least, I thought, and I think Rex thought, were worse than Long, Long at least was interested in poor people. With all his other characteristics, he probably did more for poor people in Louisiana than any governor the state ever had. We had a state director we weren't satisfied with, in Louisiana. And we knew we were going to be in trouble if we replaced him, between the Long faction and the other Democratic leaders there. I don't know if this was after Rex left or not. But we decided we'd send someone in from out of the state. And quite obviously, we couldn't get by with sending a non-Southerner in.

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: And Pete, with his wonderful South Carolina brogue, and also, we were sure he'd do a good job, so we sent him down. Huey Long called me and asked me what we were going to do. And I said, We're going to send someone from outside the state. He said, All right, just don't let these bastards down here name anyone. If you do, you're going to be in trouble. I said, We don't want to be in trouble with you or anyone else. We just want to do a job. So—and I say, He's going to be a southerner and I think you'll like him. So I sent Pete to see Huey Long, and we were able to work out—because Pete had the strong backing, at that time, of Byrnes and was able to do some maneuvering and around to get the other people in Louisiana to accept this out of state guy.

[00:45:04]

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: So, Pete was appointed. Huey told him, when he went to see him, he said, Hudgens, if you have any trouble with these bastards, just let me know. I'll take care of them. The only thing I want you to do is do an honest job for the poor people of Louisiana.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: And so, he was there for some time and then we had the need for another—but

no—then we transferred him to Alabama and made him a regional director which is another step up. He was in charge of all our work in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. That was—that comes to one of our regions. And then, later, I guess it was between—it was before Dr. Will left, we had an opening for another assistant administrator. I was really a sort of deputy administrator at that point, not in title but I was the second person. So, Dr. Will and I decided to bring Pete in—excuse me—to be the assistant administrator in charge of our rehabilitation work and project work. And when I left to take the first—the State Department job, which didn't materialize—well, I worked there for a while; but then I was asked by Phill Murray and Sidney Hillman to go to [Seattle Pack (ph)]—to direct [Seattle Pack (ph)]. And I did what I could to get—I wanted Pete to succeed me, but they appointed a lame duck congressmen from North Carolina. Not a bad guy, but the whole atmosphere of the agency changed pretty rapidly at that point. And Pete decided to leave. And he went with the—I guess, when he left us he was—I guess he was executive director of the cancer fund for a while. But he is interest was still in the kind of thing that he had done in Farm Security. And Nelson Rockefeller decided to—and this was after Nelson Rockefeller was out of government—he decided he wanted to do some work in agriculture in Latin America. He set up this development organization, I forgotten the name of it. So, he brought Pete in to be the director of that. And Pete worked with him, I guess, for several years.

For some reason, I don't know why, the Rockefellers decided to liquidate this operation. And so, Pete decided he would do it independently. And so, he set up this organization to carry on the same type of activity and he got some government contracts. This was before the Alliance for Progress, but there was a governmental tie into a lot of the work that he was doing. And I think that they work not only in Latin America, they did some work, I think, in the Middle East. Along the same general lines, he recruited most of the people that he used in his work from Farm Security personnel. So, he retired two, three years ago. And typical Pete, he's got to be active in some way, so he is now—he's gotten interested in printing. He has one of these handset printing presses, very artistic. Another old friend of ours used to be in Farm Security, John Beeshur [ph] has done the same thing except John's doing it commercially. So, Pete is now publishing a little paper called the *Rooster Press*.

RICHARD DOUD: I've seen some.

C.B. BALDWIN: [Laughs.] Have you seen some?

RICHARD DOUD: It's very, very good. It certainly is.

C.B. BALDWIN: Yeah. But Pete made a terrific contribution to this thing. We had some awfully good people. Larry Hewes did an awfully good job for us too.

[00:50:05]

RICHARD DOUD: He wrote a very interesting book on that, *Boxcar in the Sand*.

C.B. BALDWIN: Yes, yes. I have it here somewhere.

RICHARD DOUD: I was quite interested in that.

C.B. BALDWIN: He's in India now with, Chet Bowles [ph].

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah, I think so. I tried to get in touch with him.

C.B. BALDWIN: I think he—I think this is a two-year stint. I know he wants to come back. He's at about retirement age. And I think he's due back this November.

RICHARD DOUD: What can you tell me about Jonathan Daniels, who, I understand played a part in getting this file into the Library of Congress?

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, I'm sure he did. I expect he worked with Roy on that. I'm sure that I've talked with him about it. But this was after Jonathan, I guess, became the White House press secretary. He came in—you know his background.

RICHARD DOUD: No, I don't.

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, his father was the secretary of the Navy under Woodrow Wilson.

RICHARD DOUD: Oh.

C.B. BALDWIN: Josephus Daniels. An interesting thing because he was really almost a pacifist when he took this job. Very interesting, wonderful character, and later he was ambassador to Mexico. Roosevelt made him ambassador of Mexico. You see, Franklin Roosevelt was the assistant secretary of the Navy under Daniels.

RICHARD DOUD: Oh, yes.

C.B. BALDWIN: And although he was very fond of him, Roosevelt was frequently accused of undercutting his boss or going over his boss's head. There was never a break between them, a real break. Daniels was opposed, until the last minute, of our going into World War I. But he was also—and I think—I'm sure he was very unhappy about this at that time. But he was also a secretary of the Navy at the time of Vera Cruz and with our intervention in Mexico, with Poncho Villa. When we sent troops in to capture Villa. One of the less auspicious moments in American history, I'd say.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: But anyway, this is Jonathan's background. And Josephus Daniels was on the *Raleigh Observer*. Yes, *Raleigh Observer*. The newspaper, he was a newspaperman. And so, Jonathan was brought up in the newspaper, and the newspaper business. And Roosevelt brought him in as one of his so-called anonymous assistants. And later, after Steve Early retired, he was made Roosevelt's press secretary, and he continued on under Truman for a while.

RICHARD DOUD: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

C.B. BALDWIN: So, he was in a place of a great deal of influence. And he was able to exert a good deal of influence at the White House. So, his assistance on a thing like would be very helpful. And I know he was very much interested in everything—in what we were doing. I knew he was one of my staunch supporters at the White House, and White House support was quite important to me, I must say.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah, I daresay. Well, I think we're sort of running out of time. I'd like to ask you, concerning these great file of photographs in the Library of Congress, what do you feel should be done? How could they be put to use? What use should they be put to today? Is there anything that could be done with them that would make them continue in value for—

[00:5501]

C.B. BALDWIN: Well, actually, they're still used a lot. Quite a lot, I think. They are available.

RICHARD DOUD: Yes.

C.B. BALDWIN: I don't know what else—actually, I hadn't thought about it. Of course, I'd like to see the same thing done again today, that we did, and I think the government should do it.

RICHARD DOUD: A lot of people think so.

C.B. BALDWIN: But it's—and this is what I wrote Roy about this last year. But the thing you have to recognize is that this was 30 years ago. Things are always done definitely, even in the same generation.

RICHARD DOUD: That's correct.

C.B. BALDWIN: So, if this kind of thing just couldn't be repeated, quite obviously, I don't know. Maybe it could. I don't know whether they might be able to talk to Sergeant Shriver or not. They might be able to get him interested. This nationally so-called poverty program of Johnson's, I'm all for it, but it's so totally inadequate. And people in this country are—an awful lot of them are pretty abjectly ignorant of the extent of poverty in this country. And I think this would be a means of—I think if you ought to bring Roy Stryker, we could try to do it and done a little bit differently whether Roy would want to do it or not, but—

RICHARD DOUD: I don't think he'd touch it with a ten-foot pole.

C.B. BALDWIN: I don't think he would but he—but his advice would be awfully helpful on that.

RICHARD DOUD: Certainly would.

C.B. BALDWIN: And I don't know why you couldn't take some of these unemployed youth and properly train them in photography and start them on their way bringing this file up to date. It isn't up to date, that's its weakness today.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: The—as a matter of fact, what we set out to do just hasn't been accomplished, unfortunately. I don't know, someone might be able to get the President interested in it. Apparently, he's very much interested. He's asked each department, I think once a month, to submit the best photographs they have of their activities. Now, this is quite different, and then these are supposed to be put on prominent display.

RICHARD DOUD: Yeah.

C.B. BALDWIN: The—but it really should be—it could be, I think, a tremendous help to the—to the better understanding of and lead to the implementation of what the President, I'm sure, would like to be able to overcome poverty.

RICHARD DOUD: Well, I think it could be a powerful tool in this whole business. I don't know whether it would work or not.

C.B. BALDWIN: The one other thing about Roy, I don't think I mentioned this, when Roy left OWI, and I've forgotten the exact reason for it, but I think he sort of felt his job had run out there. And I guess it was no longer sufficiently stimulating and that's from the Standard Oil Company got in touch with him. I remember him calling me at home, and like I said before, he's a very sensitive person, and he wanted to be sure that this wouldn't be misunderstood. [Laughs.] And I said, Roy, listen, what do they want you to do? And he said, They absolutely assured me I'll have a complete freehand. And I think he had—no one who works for a big corporation has a completely freehand. I was interested that he would call, and I think he wanted to be sure that I wouldn't feel that this was a mistake for him to do this.

[01:00:04].

RICHARD DOUD: Sure.

C.B. BALDWIN: It was between trust and sense of—

RICHARD DOUD: He's a very sensitive person. There's no doubt about it. Well, I'm sorry I took so much of your time.

C.B. BALDWIN: That's all right.

RICHARD DOUD: I'm glad that—

C.B. BALDWIN: Set aside as much as you want.

RICHARD DOUD: —you did feel free to talk with me so long on this.

C.B. BALDWIN: I hope it's helpful and—

RICHARD DOUD: It has been, very. Unless you've [inaudible]—

C.B. BALDWIN: I don't think so, no.

RICHARD DOUD: —let you go back to your business. Thank you very much.

C.B. BALDWIN: Do you do have this transcribed?

RICHARD DOUD: Yes, sir. This will be transcribed, and you will be sent a copy for whatever editing you might want to make, and then sign, and return it.

C.B. BALDWIN: And if you—anything else occurs to you or through your other interviews, if you want to get in touch with me, I'll be available. You see, I work from here. I'm generally in Washington about a week out of the month, but the rest of the time, I'm here in Greenwich, except for next month, we're going to Scotland for a month.

RICHARD DOUD: Sounds great. Well, I just may call on you again then.

C.B. BALDWIN: Fine.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]