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Narrator

Rodney Richter
Interviewer

1984



The transcription of this oral history was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Any views, findings, opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society, or the Minnesota Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

RR: 00:03 This is an interview for the West Central Minnesota Historical Research Center, May 3, 1984 with James Youngdale. You were born in Benson, is that right?

JY: 00:20 No, I was born in Iowa, Central Iowa.

RR: 00:23 Okay. And when did you move to the Benson area?

JY: 00:26 Well, it was in 1923, I was four, five years old. And for practical purposes, I lived all my life in Benson.

RR: 00:34 Okay. Was your father or were your parents active in politics?

JY: 00:43 No, not especially. My parents were Republicans and so was I from 1920s until about 1940 or so.

RR: 00:53 They didn't have anything to do with the Nonpartisan League or any of that?

JY: 00:56 Oh heavens no.

RR: 00:58 Okay. What is it then that changed you that was different?

JY: 01:10 Well, I guess the Great Depression for one thing, even everybody was hard up just about in Swift County alone. I think my dad always took a great deal of pride that he never went on relief and my mother, but—

RR: 01:33 Was that something that everyone tried to avoid was—

- JY: 01:37 Well, yeah. Relief had a stigma to it to go on relief, to be a welfare person and so forth then maybe more so than now. But nevertheless, I think 90 percent of the families in Swift County were on relief in 1934. So it was relief that kept the county going and so forth. But I guess the—and the other thing was, late in the 1930s, I tended to be opposed to—I guess I was opposed to being a pacifist and didn't like the impending World War II that seemed to be on the way.
- RR: 02:22 You were against the United States getting involved?
- JY: 02:26 Yeah, I suppose. I was, in those days, you called an isolationist or something like that, whatever that means. But in—because paradoxically, I finally joined the Navy and fought in World War II and was in it.
- RR: 02:44 Did you join, you weren't—
- JY: 02:46 I joined, yeah. After Pearl Harbor. So I suppose it was those two things, finally coming to some intellectual appreciation that a system that puts 90 percent of the people in one county relief is not a very good one, but I got interested in—so I started out at college, I went to Carleton College. I started out in college being a, I guess, a pre-med or pre-dental student.
- RR: 03:20 What year was that?
- JY: 03:22 1936 I started, and finished 1940.
- RR: 03:27 Was that a tough time to go to college? Was it tough to get the money to go to college?
- JY: 03:33 Well, it only costs \$900 a year to go then at Carleton. You'd go to St. Olaf for \$600 a year. So well, times were a little better. My parents were able to help me, I guess. I borrowed some money and got a—had worked all the way through college as a table waiter. So I guess I got through, and they got me through, but, yeah, pretty good. But everybody was poor then. And I think I went through the first couple years of college with a green sweater and one pair of corduroy pants, and I don't know what I had else to wear. But I had worked—are these papers I'm turning, is that showing up in the mic or something?
- RR: 04:33 Well, I don't know.

- JY: 04:35 Well, maybe I should put it down, we'll talk about this later.
- RR: 04:37 Okay. Then after you graduated from college, you moved back to Swift County?
- JY: 04:45 No. I went to—I had a major in economics finally, not in medicine and dentistry at all, or pre-dental or pre-medicine. I finally switched my major to economics and social science and philosophy. And I went to Washington, D.C., had an internship with the National Institute of Public Affairs. And within this, which was sort of a Rockefeller founded sponsor thing for giving college, college graduates an internship in government. I did my internship in the economic advisor to the president, which they weren't called that at that time, but it was in the Bureau of the Budget, the fiscal division of the Bureau of the Budget.
- 05:39 So I had a good internship and it was interesting. They were—most speeches at the time that had to do with something in terms of economic policy that President Roosevelt were giving all passed through the two economists I was interning with there. So that was a good experience. So one of them, I shared an office with Gardiner Means who was famous for having co-authored the book, "The Modern Corporation and Private Property," which he—it's a book that's not read much anymore, but it was a very influential book at the time, in which coined the... talked about administered prices, which some people still talk about, they still don't know where the term comes from.
- RR: 06:28 So how long were you in Washington?
- JY: 06:30 Well, I was there—that was a one-year program. I switched at the end of the—well, nine, sort of a nine months program. And about eight months were up at the Bureau of the Budget, I got a job over in the Department of Agriculture and what we today call a public opinion polling division over there, program survey division it was called. And it was going out among—the idea was to go out among farmers with questionnaires to find out how the farm programs were working and what life was really like, to sort of short circuit a lot of bureaucracy. Henry Wallace and the others were very much interested in having this kind of thing done.

- RR: 07:19 Was he the secretary of agriculture then?
- JY: 07:20 Yeah. So I worked—I guess I worked there and this was about a year, and then I enlisted in the Navy. So I was really living in Washington technically during the war years, I had an apartment there until 1945, '46, I guess. And came back out here after the war finally in, I suppose, sometime in '46, I got out here and got involved in politics.
- RR: 07:54 You eventually became the chairman of the Swift County Democratic Party, is that right?
- JY: 08:00 Yeah. When was—I've forgotten the dates, but that wasn't in '46, so it must have been—what was it? I don't remember dates anymore, yeah. I was the chairman there for two years. I must have been elected in '46, which I've forgotten. And in '48 then of course, the—and I was elected with the support of the Farmer-Labor wing of the DFL Party. By '46, the Farmer-Laborites and the Democrats were merged, and so we had the DFL Party by that time. And the Farmer-Labor wing of the party was, in terms of popular support, was much more—had much more popular support than did the Democratic Party.
- RR: 08:57 So did you identify more with the Farmer-Labor Party?
- JY: 09:01 Yeah. Of course. But, yeah, by this time I'd been radicalized or whatever the words you want to use. So I was very much in the Farmer-Labor side of it all.
- RR: 09:10 Was there a problem then getting elected chairman or was it—
- JY: 09:13 No, not in our county. Most of these rural counties, the Farmer-Laborites outnumbered the old Democrats. The Democratic Party didn't amount to much in Minnesota, didn't amount to much in the north after the Civil War. It tended to be, especially here in Minnesota, it almost died out in the 1920s. I think the election of 1920, they got 15, 20 percent of the vote, and by this time, the Farmer-Labor Party, they were running as independent ships then, and some of these people.
- 09:52 And so the real split was the—within the Republican Party. The Farmer-Labor Party really broke off from the progressive Republican ranks, the Republican Party. And the Democrats never amounted to much, they were always handy. If the Democrat didn't get elected president, they

were there to get some political jobs, postmasterships and few other jobs that were handed out as political patronage. But they were always thought of that as a patronage party. Not as a party that was involved in social issues or trying to do anything about important political issues.

- RR: 10:33 That changed after—
- JY: 10:35 Well, during the course of the New Deal, if you—under Franklin Roosevelt, this tended to change, of course, people became much more—the Democratic Party then picked up a lot of support. And in this state, between the Democrats and Farmer-Laborites, there was a working agreement then to some extent. But back in the 19th century, of course, the Democratic Party was—and into the 20th, tended to be the more conservative party, and the Republican Party was the more progressive one. These roles switched especially in the 1930s.
- 11:20 Today, we think of the Republican Party as being the more conservative party, the Democratic Party, the more—supposedly the more liberal party. Sometimes you can't tell much difference between them.
- RR: 11:33 Was Elmer Benson who's from Swift County, right?
- JY: 11:37 Right.
- RR: 11:38 And was he a really—in Minnesota at this time, he was an important figure or—
- JY: 11:44 Oh, yes, of course. Former US Senator and former governor, he was the titular leader really of the Farmer-Labor wing of the DFL Party.
- RR: 11:59 What made you decide to run in 1948?
- JY: 12:05 What made me decide to run?
- RR: 12:08 I read in the paper that you—that a letter had been circulated requesting that you run, signed by 24 or 25 people. But was that the major influence or had it been something that had crossed your mind before?
- JY: 12:24 Well, no, it had crossed my mind. The reality is, when a letter like that is circulated, they didn't do it before they talked to me, a few of them. And fact of the matter is, well, I help them write the letter even, so this is the way it really

works. So—well, I was interested, I guess. One reason I came back to Minnesota and didn't stay in Washington to be an economist was that I saw enough of it in the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Budget that being kind of a flunky in Washington, you didn't have much power or influence, really. The real power was I thought over in the Hill, over in Congress and the Senate, they really called the shots, it looked to me like.

13:12 And so I guess I was more interested then in coming—I was interested in living out here to engage and become a candidate and engage in politics, so I guess that was, in the back of my mind, the reason coming out here again.

RR: 13:31 What was the major problem that you encountered when you ran for the first time?

JY: 13:37 Well, the major problem in 1948, of course, you had the big division. Henry Wallace announced that he was going to move toward a third party. And here in this state, we argued that since the DFL Party, the FL wing was much bigger than democratic wing, that we would not organize a third party, that we would put Henry Wallace, make him the DFL candidate, and that if they wanted to run Truman, he could run on a third ticket then. Well, this became divisive, of course, so we failed in getting Wallace on the DFL ticket.

RR: 14:20 That caused a problem at the state convention, didn't it?

JY: 14:22 Well, yeah, we had two state conventions, and the—and two—and the courts finally ruled that the Truman ticket was the official DFL ticket, which meant Henry Wallace had to go third party. But in the process, while the courts were ruling on this, we were all acting as if Henry Wallace was on the DFL ticket, I was anyway, and a number of others. And that being the case, a lot of us filed on the DFL ticket even though we were supporting Wallace.

14:58 Well, after Wallace became the third party candidate, the problem for me in particular, was being on the DFL ticket where Truman was a candidate, but yet supporting Wallace for president. Well, the public doesn't understand this very well ordinarily, it's done all the time. People switched parties in 1948, the so-called Dixiecrats under Strom Thurmond organized a fourth party, and they were good Democrats, nobody complained too much of the fact that

that they left the Democratic Party. And as soon as the election was over, they welcomed them back and gave them seniority in the Democratic Party.

15:40 But the Wallace people who were presumably more radical and so forth never did get welcomed back, and I don't know if a lot of them didn't want to get back. But anyway, in my case, and a number of others here in the state, we were on the DFL ticket and there was a primary contest. In my case, again, I won the primary, so I was the official DFL candidate and I almost won the final election within, I think, 3,000, 4,000 votes.

RR: 16:08 What was the major problem, the major difference between Henry Wallace and President Truman?

JY: 16:16 Well, I guess foreign policy was the big thing. Have you gone into that at all?

RR: 16:20 Yeah. The Marshall Plan and the aid to Greece.

JY: 16:27 Yeah, aid to Greece. And even on domestic issues, Wallace was using the troops. I think he called the National Guard in to break some strike at the railroad, unions had called.

RR: 16:42 That was—Truman did that, or—

JY: 16:44 Truman did, yeah. And he started all these loyalty oaths, and everybody talks about McCarthyism in the 1950s when everybody got uptight about communism. Well, this really started with Truman, too. So a lot of things that would finally show up in the 1950s had their roots in Truman's activity when he was president.

17:09 I guess I should say for the record that in retrospect now, I think the Henry Wallace third party attempt was a great mistake, that if Wallace had done as Eugene McCarthy did in '68 and challenged Truman in the Democratic Party, I think we would've gotten rid of Truman in '48, and probably we would not have gotten Wallace either, neither one of them probably would've gotten it.

17:38 But I think it would've been a more—we would've been a much more influential and not been left out in the cold is really what happened in this state and elsewhere, the more progressive people who supported Henry Wallace were left out of politics for the next 20 years. A lot of them got back in behind Eugene McCarthy in '68. So the whole farmer-

labor tradition then went down the drain after '48 here in Minnesota.

- RR: 18:07 In '48, you ran in the primary against Roy Burt?
- JY: 18:14 Roy Burt. Yeah.
- RR: 18:15 And he was a clergyman.
- JY: 18:16 Yeah, he was a Methodist minister from Willmar. As a side light to him, and I didn't know at the time, he was a socialist and then formerly a national vice president of the Socialist Party under Norman Thomas, I think. And I didn't know that at the time, but I think they very purposely ran him to try to—because he spoke to a large extent, against Truman's war policy and foreign policy. But I think they ran him to confuse people and to make it appear as if they had a candidate almost as good as I was or something like that, at least on foreign policy.
- RR: 19:07 The democratic part of the party recruited him to run?
- JY: 19:10 Yeah.
- RR: 19:11 Okay. Well, you won the primary.
- JY: 19:15 I won the primary, yeah.
- RR: 19:16 And after that, the leaders of the democratic part of the party just ignored you, is that right? And they were just—
- JY: 19:28 Yeah. I think that's a fair statement, yeah. I did very well in the finals anyway, and I guess if we hadn't had this serious split that probably would've won, no doubt about it.
- RR: 19:46 The people at the head of the party, were they opposed to you just because of the political opinions that you had or was it something more than that, or was it they were just strictly opposed to everything that you believed in?
- JY: 20:04 Well, I can't speak for them. I don't know what was on their minds, especially. Generally, by '48, the feeling was running pretty deep on the foreign policy question, I think. Truman was elected in—see, he took office in what, '45 did he? So he had about three years by then. And he—and I think it was pretty clear that the lines were being drawn in between two different foreign policy perspectives. And, well, Henry Wallace was setting forth one. Wallace gave

his famous speech on Madison Square Garden sometime in '46, I guess, and Truman fired him for it.

21:03 Jimmy Byrnes in the southern wing of the Democratic Party demanded that Wallace be fired and Truman did fire him. So Wallace, in effect, was saying—I think it's a speech that ought to be reprinted more than it is these days. He was, in effect, saying that if we continue trying to practice friendship with Russia, they will become more democratic, and we ourselves will probably change, too, in the process of developing a more thorough going New Deal and this kind of thing. Well, that was the whole point of his speech. And of course—

RR: 21:45 People didn't accept that, they didn't—

JY: 21:47 Well, Truman didn't accept it. I think a lot of people did. This was—I think this was basically a very popular opinion among American people. Came out of World War II, we've been fighting with the Russians over in World War II. And there's really no reason that—and the opinion of a lot of us, that we had to launch into a Cold War. The Cold War was pretty much of our doing against Russia, which was starting right away after—as soon as the war ended, started before the war ended.

22:22 When I was in the Navy, we took—I was on a merchant ship that took landing mats to Casablanca, the kind of things you embed in cement for airplane runways and so forth. And so we took a shipload of them and dropped them off at Casablanca. And this must have been 1943 already or so, '44 maybe. And there was no reason whatsoever to bring these kind of steel landing—steel matting over to Casablanca.

22:58 At this time, the war was already going on in France, we were not going to build an airport in Casablanca for bombing Europe. We had Britain and we had probably already bases in France at the time we were doing this. And so there was no earthly reason for starting to construct an airport in Casablanca for the current war. However, about two years later, it was announced that we did have—or maybe three years later, the war was over, anyway.

23:29 I remember US News and World Report published a big world map showing where all of our main air bases were from which we could attack Russia, and of course,

Casablanca was the main one, that was our main depot for the Southern European Theater and so forth. So I think some—here, we didn't even know if we were going to win in Europe yet and hadn't even thought about defeating the Japanese, but we were all already building an airbase in Casablanca in 1944 for the presumably future war against Russia. And the Russians know this, nobody—they're not fools.

24:10 So I think the suspicion was—and to talk about this more fully means going into relations between this country and the Russian Revolution since 1919.

RR: 24:25 But that was when Roosevelt was still president then.

JY: 24:28 Roosevelt was still president, yeah.

RR: 24:29 He was fully aware of it and—

JY: 24:32 I have no idea if he was aware of it or not. Pentagon has ways of doing things that the president may not be fully aware of then. They want to prepare for every contingency, so with that argument, they can prepare for war against every country in the world. And these days, maybe to fight every country in the world at once, then they spent a lot of money.

RR: 25:02 Who were the members of the Minnesota party hierarchy that were working against your campaign?

JY: 25:16 Well, I don't. People around Humphrey, I suppose were the—after '48, the wing of the party that the courts declared the legal DFL Party, I don't remember anymore who was elected. There was basically the people around Humphrey, Arthur Naftalin was a professor here at the Humphrey Institute and now is—he used to write a newspaper column that went out to rural newspapers. He used to criticize me every chance he got. And out in the district, again, I don't remember fully who the—some of the people were. In our own county was myself versus Billy Perzo. Billy Perzo was the old Democrat there. I'm sure he was the new DFL chairman after '48 as I recall.

RR: 26:16 Did any of them ever make an effort to approach you personally? Did they say—did they send you a letter or call you on the phone and say, don't run again in 1950 or 1952? Or was it all done as a media campaign against you?

- JY: 26:37 No. There's never this kind of contact. I did what I damn please, and I wasn't about to make a deal with them on that. See, in '50, everybody was sure I was going to be elected then, I had a clear shot they all thought. Then the war in Korea broke out on June 30, 1950. So again, that complicated matters, where again, I argued for negotiation and calling India and trying to get it settled and talk first and shoot last. And of course, again, with Truman and Truman promoting the war and everything, you had the same kind of divisiveness then, specifically over on the war in Korea that you had the previous year—two years earlier about the other.
- 27:33 And '52, I ran again, and again, the war in Korea was still an issue. By this time, public opinion was shifting. And this time, I won the primary again. I lost the primary in '50, but I won the primary in '52. And again, this is why—this really disturbed the Humphrey crowd and that's when the so-called persona non grata in DFL circles. And Humphrey, I think, he was quoted as saying he'd prefer H. Carl Andersen, a Republican than me to be elected.
- RR: 28:08 Well, let's go back to 1950 for a minute. You lost the primary right, to—
- JY: 28:15 '50 to Carl Eastvold, yeah.
- RR: 28:17 Mayor of Alexandria?
- JY: 28:20 Well, no. Carl Eastvold was a lawyer in Ortonville. Well, wait a minute. Oh, you got me all confused. Are you straight about which—who did I run against in '50, do you remember?
- RR: 28:31 Let me check if I have something from '50. I don't remember.
- JY: 28:39 I think—
- RR: 28:45 I may be wrong.
- JY: 28:47 I think the mayor, Cliff Haug was—I think I defeated him in '52 in the primary. I think it was Eastvold in '50, I'm fairly sure. But I could be wrong about that, I don't have that quite straight. I'm fairly sure that's right.
- RR: 29:08 Okay. I'll check on that. I noticed that you ran advertisements before the 1950 primary that showed a

picture of you with a military uniform on. Was that some new campaign strategy?

- JY: 29:28 Didn't I do it in '48?
- RR: 29:29 No.
- JY: 29:31 Oh, I don't know. I guess—I think it's—I don't know if it's new or not, I don't know why people that want to shoot first and talk afterwards should be allowed to be the patriots of this country. So I imagine I have something like that in mind that they want to call me unpatriotic. Part of the irony was that this whole Humphrey crowd, except—well, Orville Freeman was a veteran and Humphrey never went in the war and Naftalin didn't. A whole bunch of them had all gotten some kind of a war time deferment, World War II, and they were all questioning my patriotism, I guess. So I thought it—I suppose it's a way of visually confronting them on this issue.
- RR: 30:27 Did you encounter the same kind of problems within the district that you did at the state level? Were the people in the district more receptive to what you were talking about?
- JY: 30:37 Well, yeah. Of course, my friends were the old Farmer-Labor Party. And at that time, this Farmer-Labor wing of the DFL—what were we talking about?
- RR: 31:04 The people in the district, how they responded to your ideas.
- JY: 31:07 Oh, well, it depends on who you're talking to, of course. The Farmer-Labor wing, I basically had their support. And so as long as that was true, I was doing very well out there. The Farmer-Labor Party or that wing of people who were supporting me in time by the 1960s, a lot of more older people, a lot of them died and so forth. And increasingly, the role of the Farmer-Labor Party became—or the memory of it dimmed, and my chance with them began to—it began to—they dimmed also. Here, I'll give you that. I don't know if you saw it, but I see there's a duplicate over here. Well, you may have seen the Minneapolis Tribune, there's no date, it's 1952, I see.
- RR: 32:13 So even by the '60s, the Democratic Farmer-Labor name was just a name and it really wasn't—

- JY: 32:21 It became just a name and people weren't quite that—weren't all that aware of there being a special Farmer-Labor tradition. This is not an absolute kind of thing, but this was a tendency, I think. And a lot of older folks who've been good Farmer-Laborites I think were dying off and Humphrey had a certain kind of popularity developing in some of the people around him, so it was more difficult as time went on.
- 33:02 And increasingly, I think America in the '50s got caught up in Cold War politics, and the public became—and I guess the amazing thing is that in these campaigns that I did as well as I did when you look back at it all. No one else in the United States did as well as I did, I don't think, in terms of challenging the, I don't know, maybe there were a few of them but not very many.
- RR: 33:31 As you were out campaigning, did you find that the people were more concerned with local farm issues or were they more concerned about the foreign policy issues?
- JY: 33:44 Well, that's hard to say. But I talked about both of those. It seems—you've probably seen some of the campaign literature. And I think in '48 and '49, we had a rather serious farm depression as I recall. And then you got caught up in this whole parity question, what rate of parity. Truman dumped Brannon in 1950 or '51 and acquired Clinton Anderson, secretary of agriculture. And Clinton Anderson immediately started to talk about lower farm prices and lowering the parity rate and so forth.
- 34:20 Well, so I think farm prices and REA was popular, and H. Carl Andersen, a Republican congressman there, he was anti-REA, he was anti the farm programs. And so I think it's hard to make a judgment, why do people support you because of your stand on farm parity or because you're stand on foreign policy? I suppose some of both, but who knows whether it's 50-50 or 60-40 or 70-30? I don't know, there's no way of knowing that.
- RR: 34:58 You mentioned, when you were campaigning, lots about something called AAA. Can you explain what that is?
- JY: 35:05 Well, AAA stands for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, AAA. And it was an administrative vehicle through which the farm programs were administered, the loan program and this kind of thing. And maybe, I guess

today, it's called PMA or—well, it then became PMA, soil conservation, SC, what is it? Well, today it's got different letters, but in those days, it was AAA, and every—it wasn't the American Automobile Association, and all the farmers knew it or everybody knew what AAA was.

RR: 35:53 After the trouble that you had in '48, and then in '50, why did you decide to run again in '50 and why did you decide to run again in '52? Wouldn't have it just been easier to—

JY: 36:07 Well, I was getting ornery at that point. Again, in '52, the chances looked good. But this time, this Korean War was not popular. And Eisenhower promised he's going to go to Korea and settle it, and he really defeated—won the election by, well, blatantly at least, criticizing the war and saying, it's got to end. Well, that's what I was saying, too. If I'd been smart, probably I should have considered after they read me out of the party, I should have considered announcing I was for Eisenhower. That seemed a crazy thing to think of at that point, but in retrospect, why, Eisenhower was much better than the Democrats in this Cold War issue.

RR: 37:02 What do you think it was then that made you as successful as you were even though the people, supposed leaders of the party were talking out against you?

JY: 37:18 There was a grassroots tradition, the Farmer-Labor tradition, a peace tradition was very strong then in Minnesota. And again, we saw it in '68 supporting Eugene McCarthy. In the 1930s, this state was very much opposed to, you can call it isolationist Gene, which is a tricky term to use. But among radicals and the Farmer-Labor Party, very much opposed to war and war spending and so forth, along pacifist tradition almost. That was popular among ordinary folk.

37:56 And so—and I think this still persisted in the '50s, and I think I was tapping that tradition in a certain way. By and large, the Cold War liberals, the Humphrey crowd don't even try to tap it, they never did. And I think this is truly our today in American politics.

RR: 38:22 Was the majority of the party against you, or was it just that certain group at the time?

- JY: 38:28 Well, it was the party, the party of the people that vote in the primary. If I win a primary, the majority of the party supports me, doesn't it?
- RR: 38:36 Okay.
- JY: 38:37 Party leaders are a different story. I'm sure a majority of them after '48, after they took over the—took this over, the majority of the leadership were unhappy with me. But that's quite a different thing from saying—talking about the party, whatever the party is.
- RR: 39:00 Did you, anytime, during any of the campaigns just want to give it up, have second thoughts or doubts about what you were doing?
- JY: 39:11 Oh, no. I was having fun.
- RR: 39:18 Did you ever feel that maybe you were taking the wrong approach to getting your ideas across? Was there anything else you could have done?
- JY: 39:26 Oh, I don't know. Especially, I don't think—I don't remember I ever thought much in those specific terms. I guess the only thing that finally came—that I finally came to realize, I think, which I feel strongly about today is that the Henry Wallace movement of '48 was a major mistake not only in Minnesota, but in national politics at the deep state, he was a powerful figure in the democratic party and he could have—if he stayed in the Democratic Party, he could have done a lot more than I think he did. Could have—was trying to go that third party route.
- RR: 40:17 Do you think that you or Henry Wallace would be successful today?
- JY: 40:24 Well, that point of view has been so obliterated from the American consciousness that if you were alive today, I don't know, it's so much to think that he'd be successful. There's too much water over the dam as of right now. Every, I guess, American public's been brainwashed on cold war politics to great extent. And I think it's hard to think about so-called peace candidates such as Henry Wallace emerging out of the Democratic Party. The closest we had with was George McGovern in what was that?
- RR: 41:24 '72.

JY: 41:24 '72, yeah. And if McGovern—and McGovern was representing the—and this was coming out of the protest against the Vietnamese War, but McGovern didn't win, so I suppose that's a partial answer to your question that McGovern wasn't able to do very well. So there may be other reasons than just his foreign policy position, he got screwed up with this vice presidential candidate of his and lost the campaign momentum while he was doing about that for three weeks.

RR: 42:02 Do you still hold basically the same beliefs that you did then?

JY: 42:07 Yeah.

RR: 42:10 Do you look back and say that you were right in running times that you did and you were presenting the correct views for the time?

JY: 42:21 Yeah, I guess so. Yeah.

RR: 42:30 I didn't have any more questions written down.

JY: 42:34 Well, I suppose you've gotten other information, haven't you, from other sources?

RR: 42:37 Yeah. Some.

JY: 42:38 Have you been able to interview some of the old Democrats who didn't like me out there?

RR: 42:45 No, I haven't. I was—I noticed that there was an advertisement in one of the papers right before the '48 election, that vote straight DFL, and there was no mention of you at all.

JY: 43:03 Well, okay, who's the other candidate in '48, the congressional candidate? They listed them, didn't they?

RR: 43:10 Well, this would be—they did before the primary, this is before the general election.

JY: 43:13 Oh, I see.

RR: 43:16 And I was thinking about looking up the chairman, but—

JY: 43:22 Whose name is on there?

- RR: 43:23 JP Hanrahan. His name is not in the phonebook in Morris anymore.
- JY: 43:27 Oh, is he a Morris person?
- RR: 43:29 Yeah. This is from Stevens County.
- JY: 43:31 Oh, I see. Because I never remember him. So there was a woman out there, see, west of Willmar—of Morris. I can't—she died, I think. I can't think of her name anymore. I don't know who that would be right in Morris anymore, that area.
- RR: 43:50 I was going to talk to some people who've been associated with the party for a while and see if they would know of anyone who would be able to answer any questions I might have about that time.
- JY: 44:01 One person who would have a memory of this, I think, and he didn't like me very well, I guess he was on the other side, was Gordon Duenow. He's still living in Alexandria. At that time, he was editor of the Alexandria paper. And there was a lot of flack in that paper back and forth, and it was an old Non-Partisan League paper. And some of his board didn't like what he was doing, his board supported me, a lot of them. And he got tied, hooked up with the Humphrey bunch.
- RR: 44:29 Was Alexandria in the congressional district?
- JY: 44:32 D-U-E-N-O-W, his name was, Gordon. And he's still out there, and he might have some—he'll tell you everything that's wrong with me. Of course, one of the big issues that got involved was the communist question. Are you into that at all?
- RR: 44:54 Yeah, that was—
- JY: 44:56 Yeah. And the—of course the Farmer-Labor Party, well, I don't know, you have to start back with the control of the communist party. They were the super revolutionary party until 1935 and '36. And then they adopted this so-called popular front position and began working then with—well, they were very influential in the CIO and the labor union movement. And so there were a certain amount of communists in the Farmer-Labor Party, probably.

45:32 And in those days, people didn't get that excited about all this that much. The party even bonded initially by some of the early founders of it in the early 1920s and before it was socialists. And so I think people weren't as uptight about that kind of thing as they are today. So automatically then, if you were part of the—of this kind of a coalition of which some communist might be a part of, automatically, the CIO was part of a farm labor coalition, and the unions were, well, you automatically got some communists involved in.

46:14 And so nobody thought a lot about it, but this was always used, and this political ammunition against you. The irony is it was a Humphrey bunch who use this kind of thing, and Humphrey himself could never have been elected mayor without communist support in 1945, because of CIO unions were the powerful unions, especially in South Minneapolis. And they supported him and he met regularly with communist leaders in his office and everything else. And so I got blasted for being part of this kind of coalition, but it was okay for Humphrey to be supported.

RR: 46:56 Well, that's another question I was going to ask you, I forgot. It was—well, it was common knowledge even after the two parties merged that there were some people in the DFL that were communists or were former communists or—and I had read something in a book that said that Humphrey didn't mind if someone was so far left, that they were on the other side of the world, he said.

47:30 So was it just that in 1948, in 1950, and '52, it was just an issue that was at the forefront and it was in front of everybody so it was a handy issue to use against you and against others?

JY: 47:42 Well, it was a handy issue to use, and it was being used widely throughout the whole United States, in the CIO and the Farmers Union to some extent, too, there were some of the state Farmers Union organizations were probably quite left. And if not outright communists, at least they had connections probably. And you developed, as this Cold War took effect then, in the unions and the farm movements, you developed these internal fights then, in which new union, more conservative union leadership sought to get rid of the communists who were an internal bureaucratic contest and fights. The conservative side would use the communist issue to discredit the old-time leaders. They wanted—

- RR: 48:44 To get rid of them?
- JY: 48:45 —new leadership. And then the same way in the DFL Party. A fellow interviewed me the other day about Walter Mondale or some writers writing a book about him, I guess. But I told him, the Mondale and Humphrey crowd were the first yuppies. They represented—they were trying to get rid of the farmer and labor element of the DFL, which played a genuine role. And they wanted the new professionals, the upper middle people the party is attracting today, they brought them in the DFL Party then, and they were the main support.
- RR: 49:23 Were they former members of the Republican Party and independents?
- JY: 49:26 Oh, I don't know. Not necessarily. I know a younger generation that Orville Freeman and Humphrey brought in, it wasn't—well, Don Fraser was, his father was a prominent Republican, and I think Fraser was. But I think that wasn't the issue so much is that they brought these new yuppies into the—I guess that's a popular term now, isn't it? Into the picture, and they became the backbone, really, of the Humphrey organization, and they're still around today, a lot of these people.
- 50:02 And so these people, these new yuppies were—most of them were younger, they didn't know much about farmer-labor politics. And again, both the farm and the labor movement had a certain amount of communist support. And I think it gets exaggerated how many communists there were. I think in the State of Minnesota, they...even here where we had a lot of—in the Iron Range, maybe not. Because that—the Finns up there were very much attracted to the communist party for certain reasons, had to do with Finnish politics back in Finland.
- 50:40 But there really weren't that many. But it became a handy club, again, for clubbing the old farmer and labor elements of the DFL Party into submission. And I guess the sad thing was, again, repeating that the farmer and labor people, in effect, walked out of it all by supporting Henry Wallace in '48. It wasn't that Humphrey defeated them in '46, for example, the former Farmer-Labor Party defeated the Humphrey crowd. And Harold Barker from Elbow Lake was made the state chairman.

- 51:21 But he was the candidate of Elmer Benson, not of Hubert Humphrey. Humphrey supported some old Democrat from up at Cloquet, Minnesota, McKenna, I guess his name was. So I think the more I—from just a lot of points of view, the whole Henry Wallace experiment in '48 or attempt to form a third party was just a total miscalculation as far as trying to keep a peace position before the Democratic Party and within the party.
- 51:55 They would certainly walk out if Humphrey didn't win it, or if you think of Humphrey and his crowd, they were really never very good at organizing this kind of thing. Well, I guess I can't think of anything that's—what are you doing? You're writing a paper, you're going to write a paper on all this—these three years and so forth?
- RR: 52:27 Yeah.
- JY: 52:30 Have you gotten a hold of the various kinds of ads I ran in those years, in the newspapers or—
- RR: 52:37 I have a few of them here.
- JY: 52:42 Those little ones.
- RR: 52:43 There's one.
- JY: 52:46 What was that one about? I got some of those here, too. Well, here, I'm quoting the—I see the Alexandria Echo that Duenow was editor of, which he endorsed Congressman Anderson. So if you show that to Duenow, you'll make him squirm. But I think you might enjoy going and talking to him. He's a great believer in this runestone up there. And so you can talk to him about that, too.
- 53:34 He ought to be interviewed on that and other things. I know I've—he runs around the state. I'm quite sure he does, that maybe just sees it as a propaganda ploy for the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, I don't know. But he's very much into that runestone debate. And let's see, so we—let me think of—have you talked to anybody down around Benson at all? Have you got a car so you can run around, just talk to some of these people?
- RR: 54:07 I don't have one on my own, no.