

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Floyd and Margery Long

COLLECTION: 4700.1177

IDENTIFICATION: Floyd Long is Gillis Long's brother, Margery is Floyd's wife.

INTERVIEWER: Gary Huey

PROJECT: Gillis Long

INTERVIEW DATES: August 15, 1986

FOCUS DATES: 1940-1985

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1714, Side A

Floyd Long explains close relationship with his brother; Floyd wrote a history of his family for Winn Parish; Margery Long explains where she grew up; Floyd shows pictures of relatives; seeing concentration camps during World War II disturbed Gillis deeply; Floyd reads letter Gillis sent to him at LSU; Gillis's time at LSU was interrupted by WWII; Floyd reads letter from Gillis about Gillis's expenses at LSU; letter from Gillis about winning first primary for LSU student body president and needing money for the final campaign; letter from Gillis about teaching ROTC classes and a vote to move Mike the Tiger to New Orleans; letter from Gillis about needing money before leaving for Officers' Candidate School [OCS]; Gary Huey relates story of his father in WWII; letter from Gillis about training at OCS.

Tape 1714, Side B

Letter from Gillis from France talking about wound to his face; letter from Gillis about life in France 1944 and war souvenirs; letter from Gillis about returning to LSU after WWII; Floyd explains V-mail; Gillis did not have to go to the Pacific because the atomic bomb was dropped; discussion about what Gillis got his Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts for; letter from Gillis from Belgium talking about receiving mail, trying to ski, and his parents; letter from Gillis about end of war, Roosevelt's death, needing new boots, and war souvenirs; Gillis as a guard at Nuremberg; Gillis's decision to go back to LSU rather than stay in the army; Floyd helped convince him to finish his education rather than stay in the army; Floyd reads his remarks at the dedication of the Poverty Law Center at UNO for Gillis; Floyd explains UNO moved faster than LSU to dedicate something to Gillis; discussion on what LSU might do in honor of Gillis; how Gillis met his wife, Cathy, in sociology class at LSU; Floyd discusses his mother's influence on he and Gillis; Floyd explains how he paid to go to LSU; Floyd took a job to help Gillis and his sister get to college.

Tape 1715, Side A

Gillis running for student body president at LSU on twenty dollars Floyd sent him; Gillis's self-motivation; Floyd states life was not too bad growing up during the Depression; his father's job at the American Café; Floyd washed dishes with the black workers; Floyd and Gillis seeing Huey Long at a drugstore where Floyd worked; Floyd speculates that their father worked Gillis hard and that is what motivated him to go to LSU; Earl Long giving their father a job is reason for family moving to Pineville; Margery relating when Earl Long visited her and Floyd after they got married; the job Earl gave their father helped financially and allowed Gillis to go to Bolton High School which was considered very good; Gillis won a debating trophy at Bolton High; Earl's influence on Gillis; Russell Long calling Gillis after he was elected student body president; Russell's help to Gillis early in Gillis's career; Floyd states Gillis winning the student body presidency proved himself to Russell but he patterned himself after Earl; Margery working on Gillis's 1971 campaign; Floyd describes the mood after Gillis lost in 1970-71; Floyd and Margery believe Gillis was too young to run for governor in 1963; they believe the Long name helped him early in his career but hurt him in the 1971 election; Floyd believes Gillis proved himself in Congress.

Tape 1715, Side B

Floyd relates why their mother chose the name Gillis; Gillis wished he had been named after his grandfather, Thomas Jefferson Long, because he admired Thomas Jefferson; Gillis was influenced by the hard times growing up and seeing his father and brother working beside blacks and accepting them; Floyd believes Gillis's time with the Poverty Program had a negative influence on him; Floyd believes Gillis was ahead of him time on civil rights issues; Margery believes this helped him later because the black voters were his biggest supporters; Gillis's respect for others came from his mother and father; Gillis admired Julian Bond and Andrew Young; Floyd and Margery both believe Gillis would have been a successful politician even without overwhelming black voter support; Gillis helped to keep the U.S. Public Hospital for leprosy open and how the patients loved him; Margery talks how her and Gillis liked to challenge each other with "useless" knowledge; Margery believes the many medication Gillis was taking contributed to his death; Floyd tells of their family history of heart trouble; Floyd and Margery talk about how Gillis loved to eat unhealthy things; Floyd does not believe Gillis worked himself to death, but he did work too much; Gillis could relax when he visited Floyd and Margery; Gillis loved Louis L'Amour books.

Tape 1716, Side A

Floyd states Gillis told him he would rather die than quit Congress; Gillis died in bed watching the New Orleans Saints; Reagan paid tribute to Gillis in his inaugural address; Joe Ticheli's coping with his own illness and trying to care for Gillis; Joe Ticheli's story of crushing tablets to dissolve in water because Gillis thought it saved time; Floyd states Gillis had a driver to save time; Margery tells how Cathy used to write Gillis's speeches and run his campaigns; Floyd states Gillis was not very religious but had respect for religion; Floyd speculates Gillis wanted his funeral to be simple; Floyd states Gillis was a strong Democratic party man; Floyd and Margery both believe Gillis did not have much respect for Richard Nixon; Floyd and Margery both believe Gillis had a good staff and was a good organizer; Margery believes Gillis was too trusting; Gillis sent Floyd to a political seminar; they both feel Gillis never knew how to relax; Gillis's medication caused physical fatigue, but his mind never rested; Floyd believes Gillis's

main contribution was working for everyone no matter their standing; Gillis felt this country was for everyone not just privileged people; Margery believes one of Gillis's main contributions was his public works; Floyd discusses the redrawing of Gillis's district.

Tape 1716, Side B

Floyd describes Gillis landing at Normandy; Floyd recalls a discussion he had with the workers at the cemetery where Gillis is buried; Gary Huey relates interviewing Robert Bookman; Floyd suggests Huey interviews some of the cemetery workers; Floyd relates story of his father's funeral.

TAPES: 3 (T1714, T1715, T1716)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 3 hours

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 141 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Transfer and copyright to Gary Huey

RESTRICTIONS: None