

[This interview is one of ten oral history interviews of Kansas legislators in 2015 done by Dr. Burdett Loomis under the auspices of the University of Kansas and the Shawnee County Historical Society with funding from the Kansas Humanities Council. This set of interviews became the foundation for the Kansas Oral History Project with its incorporation.]

LOOMIS: So, it's April 22nd, 2015. We're in Jack Euler's—it is YOU-luhr, right? —

EULER: Right.

LOOMIS: —law office here in Troy, Kansas, and we'll talk a little bit about the state legislature and how you came to be there and what you did. And thanks voice mail for taking part in this project. It's a real privilege to talk to you and your former colleagues.

So, we'll start out with "Jack R. Euler announces for state representative" on May 23rd, 1968. Nicely typed. Probably copied somehow, in an earlier copier. So how did you come to enter politics that first time?

EULER: Well, when I returned after my service in the Army in March of 1955, —

LOOMIS: And you'd already graduated from law school.

EULER: I graduated from law school and had been admitted to the bar in Missouri and Kansas, and I had—at that point in time, the local district judge had died, and the prominent lawyer in the county, Andrew O. Delaney, Jr., was appointed as the district judge, which left his practice in need of somebody to look after it.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: He agreed with me to let me take over his practice and split the fees on the cases which he had worked on and that were unfinished yet.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: We reached that agreement, and then that same year, the county's attorney's office became open, and I ran for the county attorney's attorney and was elected, so that gave me another job.

LOOMIS: That was elected in the county, by the people?

EULER: Right. Yeah, right.

EULER: So that then gave me a pretty good practice to start with, —

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: —with a young lawyer who hadn't really ever had an office.

EULER: And so, I served then as county attorney for six years, and that would have been from '56 until '60, when there were three. And my then district judge encouraged me—he was an ex-legislator, Chester C. [Ingles], I-n-g-l-e-s. He encouraged me to run for the legislature. At that point in time, every county had at least one member of the legislature.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: And our local representative had been in that office for eight or ten years, and he encouraged me to run against him, which I did.

LOOMIS: Oh, that's interesting.

EULER: I had a very intense campaign, actually. Overwhelmed him with signs, really. So, I got—

LOOMIS: Was this the Republican primary?

EULER: Yeah, yeah. I won the primary, and I can't recall whether there was a representative appointed or not. I don't think [there] would have been. And I won that and became the representative from Doniphan County.

LOOMIS: And that was 19- —

EULER: '63.

LOOMIS: 1963.

EULER: '62 election.

EULER: And as it happened then, the fellow that I beat, Orville Hazen, O-r-v-i-l-l-e Hazen, H-a-z-e-n—

LOOMIS: I will tell you, the woman who does the transcription is going to love you. [Laughs.]

EULER: I had defeated him, and the office of speaker—not speaker but clerk of the Kansas House was open, and he ran for that job, and I assisted him in running for it, and he was elected.

LOOMIS: Okay.

EULER: So, he didn't only lose a job, he got a job.

EULER: And then kept that job for about ten years, I imagine. Orville Hazen.

LOOMIS: Yeah. I'm just checking to make sure—yeah, we're good. Okay. So yeah, actually, his job paid a lot more than the legislature did, I'm sure.

EULER: Right. Yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: So, you're elected now. And we'll come back to this, but it was from a county.

EULER: Right.

LOOMIS: About how many people in the county at that time, do you think?

EULER: Oh, about ten, five, something like that, 11,000, maybe 12,000.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm, mm-hm. So, it wasn't one of these small western counties.

EULER: No, it was—actually, we lie adjacent to St. Joseph in Buchanan County, Missouri, and we're only sixty-five miles from Kansas City, so essentially, we're a semi-metropolitan area.

EULER: And a lot of our people who reside in Doniphan County actually held jobs, non-farmer jobs, in St. Joseph and elsewhere.

LOOMIS: That's just interesting to me. Were there any special problems or interesting issues in representing people who earned their living across the river?

EULER: No.

LOOMIS: Okay.

EULER: That never really came up. There weren't any bad feelings between labor and management here in Doniphan County. Actually, at that point in time, in '63 there wasn't that much industry yet in the county. We had a couple of industries. Affiliated Foods Company [sic; just Affiliated Foods], and we had another industry down there, a machinery company. I can't recall what it was.

LOOMIS: So, you get elected to the legislature. How long were the sessions in those days? Do you recall?

EULER: Well, to begin with, you had just a full session every other year.

EULER: And then they changed it from a full session every other year to a full session one year and then the next year would be a thirty-day budget session.

EULER: I lived through that, and then a short time later, we passed the constitutional amendment that changed the legislature to—gave the legislature authority to determine when they would hold session. They were required to have one—both sessions ninety days or more, at least ninety days, as I recall, and then you could extend a session by—they used to call it “stop the clock,” you know.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: You set it at twelve o’clock and let it set there till you got through, even though that might be a week later.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm. Sure. Yeah, yeah.

EULER: And that went on, then, for a few years. And then the next thing that happened was you had the ninety-day session and the sixty-day sessions. And during this entire period of time, the makeup of the legislature and the composition of the legislature was changed. You had, about that time, the one vote—single—

LOOMIS: One man—

EULER: One man, one vote rule came in, and the rural legislators lost their hold on the legislature.

EULER: Or began to lose their hold. They didn’t totally lose it.

LOOMIS: No, no. I understand.

EULER: It took a long time, like twenty-five, twenty years.

LOOMIS: Right, right. Let’s come back to that in a minute because that’s a great story, and I really want to talk to you about how reapportionment changed things, but let’s go back to that first session. Did you know much about the legislature, what you wanted to be able to do there?

EULER: Oh, I didn’t go down there with anything particular in mind except to look at some of the—I’d noticed, in practicing law, that there were many errors showing up in certain bills, particularly local bills and traffic bills, and I first got started—and also in running into situations in the practice of law where there was no law.

LOOMIS: Is that right?

EULER: And I got interested in addressing those deficiencies, with a lot of success. And then the legislature finally advanced to the point where you had time to get into special subcommittees of the committee.

LOOMIS: Oh, really?

EULER: And they would—during the off session, they would be assigned certain subjects to study—you know, be authorized to meet, say, five or ten days to work up this study to submit to the next session of the legislature.

LOOMIS: Right, right, the interim committees.

EULER: Interim committees, yeah. And that really made a full-time legislature out of it, in my opinion, —

EULER: —pretty much, because we didn't need to meet really—maybe we actually met too much. I don't know.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: But anyway, it eliminated a lot of the difficulties that had been existing before they had the full-time legislatures.

LOOMIS: When you got there, what committees did you serve on?

EULER: Well, at that time, in the House there was a contest. Charles [S.] Arthur, from Manhattan, had moved over to the Senate, and that left the position of speaker vacant in the House.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: And Orville Hazen, who was the clerk, convinced me to support Odd Williams of Lawrence for speaker, and his opponent was John Conard, from out west.

LOOMIS: Right. Right.

EULER: Both of these people were very capable people. As it developed, Conard won, and so it became his right to determine who was going to be in what committees.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: And since I was supporting Odd and Odd had lost, I was left holding the bag, so to speak, which didn't really hurt my prospects too much. As a lawyer, I was entitled to be appointed on the Judiciary Committee.

EULER: And the only other appointment I got was on Claims and Accounts, which is about—is the least important committee.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: You just act on bills that the legislature, itself, is either going to pay or deny.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

EULER: And that went on for I guess my first year. And then my second year, Clyde Hill, from—

LOOMIS: Your second term?

EULER: Second term, yeah.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: Clyde Hill from south of Topeka there—I've forgotten [unintelligible; 16:46].

LOOMIS: Whatever. Certainly—you know.

EULER: Clyde Hill was appointed speaker. And since at that point there weren't any more legislators—lawyers to take over the Judiciary, I was fortunate enough to be appointed. Hill asked the chairman of the Judiciary Committee—

LOOMIS: In your second term.

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: Ah! So, your interests to help you get into the legislature—you could actually act on some of those.

EULER: Right. Yeah.

LOOMIS: Just out of curiosity, was there another serious contest or did Clyde Hill win pretty handily?

EULER: Clyde Hill. Yeah, he could have gone on and been appointed to two or three more terms, , but he elected not to, —

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: —which was rather strange. And then a guy who had been—I can't recall how it worked, but anyway, I remained as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, notwithstanding the fact that Clyde Hill in—I think the next speaker was— [Pete McGill] Winfield—

EULER: He's dead now.

LOOMIS: Yeah [chuckles], as many people are.

EULER: "Wimpy." The hamburger man, we called him. He ran a hamburger shop down in Ark[ansas] City.

EULER: But he was appointed speaker, and he kept me on as chairman of the Judiciary. And as it developed, I then—that's my second term. The third term—in my second term, I had the opportunity to make an effort to be elected to the majority leader of the Republicans in the House, but I elected instead to remain as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which, as it developed in later years, was to my undoing because the next term, there was a contest. Conard went up to Senate, up to be the speaker, and there came to be a contest for House Majority Leader. And Calvin [A.] Strowig ran for that job against somebody whose name I—don't recall—but anyway, Strowig was elected as Speaker, and I, again, rather than argue with Strowig about the job of House Majority Leader, I elected to stay as Chairman of the Judiciary,

EULER: —which, again, was to my undoing because the next term, Strowig had decided he was going to run for speaker, and I can't recall who stepped out. And at that point in time, I made enough friends down there that I had some influence, so I—and I had—at that time, there had been a large number of members of the House who were elected that were lawyers, and so I decided that, when Strowig was running for Speaker, that I would oppose him as Speaker.

LOOMIS: Oh!

EULER: And as it developed, at that point in time I had been there long enough that the state Chamber of Commerce got a pretty good read on how moderate and conservative everybody was, and Strowig was their conservative man, and Jack Buehler was the moderate one, so it turned out that there was a contest then for the speakership, and I thought—the House Speaker is elected by the majority party.

LOOMIS: Sure.

EULER: I thought, in counting out the people who said they were going to vote for me—they ended up voting for Cal—that I had three or four votes to the good. In addition to that, I had two people who said they would vote for me in the event that it came to be a tie, and they needed to change their vote for me to win.

EULER: Now, at that time, —let's see. [Pause.] At that time, there became a contest between Strowig and myself for the speakership, and as I say, it was a heated race. I don't think there's maybe been another heated race in either the Senate or the House since then. But I thought I had enough Republican members who had said they were going to vote for me for speaker that I could safely decline the offer of at least two members, Republican members, to change their vote for me in the event that I needed it.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: In addition to that, the entire Democrat half of the House or the membership of the House had said that if need be, rather than just wait till the Republicans had decided who the speaker was going to be, they'd just decline to do that and vote for me for speaker.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

EULER: And I said, "No, I don't want to do it that way. Just go ahead and run it like it's supposed to be.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: But in the meantime, in a period of about two days—I was never fully aware of the fact, the state Chamber of Commerce had made some concerted efforts to find people to vote for Strowig for speaker.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh. Right.

EULER: And when the election was held, I thought I was going to win, and it was only after they counted the votes that I discovered that I wasn't going to win.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: I lost by one vote.

LOOMIS: Is that right? Wow.

EULER: 44 to 43, as I recall.

EULER: So that left me back where I thought I wanted to stay [chuckles], as chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

LOOMIS: He kept you on as chair?

EULER: Yeah, he did, yeah. And I remained in that position as long as I was in the House.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right. Those leadership elections are the toughest elections. Everybody tells you that. Did you just think you'd do a good job as Speaker?

EULER: Well, I was confident that—and I liked Calvin.

LOOMIS: Sure.

EULER: But he and I just operated in different ways.

EULER: I was more fluent in my speaking than he was, and I really had a greater following than he did, except that when it came down to counting votes, there were two or three people that—

LOOMIS: So, you were running for the speakership in the House that by that time had been redistricted.

EULER: Right.

LOOMIS: So, did that play—

EULER: We still had a sizeable number of lawyers in the House then.

LOOMIS: Sure. Of course.

EULER: But there were two or three lawyers who never did agree to support me. And I didn't hold that against them. [Donald C.] "Don" Amrein from Johnson County—

EULER: Nice guy. That was a friend of mine.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. So, let's go back to redistricting, because when we were talking a little earlier, you talked about how in the '60s the legislature really became the legislature, and one of the most important things was clearly going from every county having a legislator to more or less one person, one vote.

EULER: A lot of legislators would have two or three counties—that they'd represent.

LOOMIS: Later on, yeah.

EULER: Now, I—and that was to my advantage, too. I'd got enough influence in the first couple, three years I was down there that when it came time to redistrict—at that time, as I say, every county had at least one legislator.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: Brown, Doniphan, and Atchison [counties] each had — Brown and Doniphan each had one legislator, and Atchison may have had two.

EULER: But in any event—I think they did have two—any event, in that legislature which went to one man and one vote, that's the first time they said we're going to divide this 125 by the number equal to one man for one vote, —for each member. And I had been successful in [not doing?] the members of the legislature from Atchison and Brown, and so I was able to craft a district which had all of my county, Doniphan, and part of Atchison County and part of Brown County, and so that put the legislator, [Doc Geiger?] out—I've forgotten his first name; he was a good friend of mine and has remained a friend of mine—out as—he had to run in the multi-county district, and I won that race. I can't recall who my opposite was. It wasn't [Doc Geiger].

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: Doc was smart enough not to run.

LOOMIS: Right. You had Doniphan County as your base.

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: Yeah. But if Doniphan County was that big, ten, eleven thousand, it couldn't have—your new district couldn't have been too much bigger.

EULER: It was about seventeen thousand.

LOOMIS: Is that right? No kidding! Kansas doesn't grow very fast, does it? [Chuckles.]

EULER: So that went on then—I ran for another term or two with a Democrat opponent and won each time.

LOOMIS: Right. Who—as I recall, it was not Judiciary but State and Local that did the redistricting?

EULER: No, they had Apportionment. House had Apportionment.

LOOMIS: Oh, there was a separate committee.

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: I see. I guess I'd forgotten that. Did you get on that committee?

EULER: I did. I can't recall whether I was on it—I don't think I was—when I was appointed to the multi-county district. I wasn't on it then.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh. But you were able to influence the—

EULER: Yeah, I had the benefit of one little county membership, eleven or twelve thousand, and the other parts of my district, in Atchison and Brown,—Brown had—Horton was in my area. Which is south Doniphan County, Brown County.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: And over in Atchison County, I had the Republican part of the north district adjoining—the north part of the county, adjoining my district, which gave me an advantage.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

EULER: In other words, I manipulated all that, worked that all out to my advantage.

LOOMIS: So right in the middle of your term or your career in the legislature, you have this substantial shake-up. When you came back after redistricting had occurred, was the legislature noticeably different?

EULER: Yes,—

LOOMIS: In terms of the composition.

EULER: —it was. It was. Oh, yeah. It was different from the standpoint of the composition.

And also, it was more moderate than it had been previously, although Jess Taylor was still there and his following, and they were very conservative people, — most of them rural.

LOOMIS: You mentioned before that—and I've talked about this at various times—that although there was redistricting and Johnson County and Sedgwick County got lots more representatives and more senators, —

EULER: Right.

LOOMIS: —that the rural nature of the legislature didn't go away. Why do you think that was so?

EULER: I think it was a matter of necessity because there were still enough rural legislators or semi-agricultural legislators that they could control the legislature for another term or two.

LOOMIS: Right. And they were often the senior people, who had committee chairs and stuff like that.

EULER: Yeah. After I was there a while, —it didn't take me long to figure out that the legislature may have 125 members, at forty in the Senate and 125 in the House, there was a damn few of them controlling the whole thing.

LOOMIS: Sure, sure.

EULER: And my purpose at the beginning was to be one of those that was doing the controlling. [Laughs.]

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

EULER: Which I was successful at doing after the first reapportionment.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: And I was then a part of leadership, so to speak, and that went on for as long as I was in the legislature.

LOOMIS: Now, did Judiciary handle constitutional amendments?

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: So—

EULER: Well, one man, one vote. There was no argument there.

LOOMIS: Right, right. No, you had to do it.

EULER: The question was, how were you going to do it? How many counties were you going to split?

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

EULER: It wasn't going to get split. That was your argument.

LOOMIS: Right, right. Yeah. So, there was a substantial amount of reform that went on in the legislature in the late '60s and early '70s, as we talked about a bit. Did you help frame any of the constitutional amendments that changed the nature of state government?

EULER: Yeah, and most of what I did was not in committee, and I can't recall whether I was on the Judicial Apportionment Committee, which resulted in the adoption of a new judicial amendment. And I've got a file here on that. As I recall, I might have been chairman of the Judicial Apportionment Committee at that point.

LOOMIS: And what does Judicial Apportionment do?

EULER: They divide the county into judicial districts.

LOOMIS: Okay.

EULER: And you're just switching counties around.

LOOMIS: I see.

EULER: There's a letter here. I'll let you look at this—these files. You could—

LOOMIS: Oh, I see. So, you were on this later on.

EULER: I think I might have been chairman of the Judicial Apportionment Committee.

LOOMIS: Yeah. Right, right, right, right. So that flowed from your service, in part, in the legislature. Because you understood that stuff.

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: So, when you went to Topeka, particularly for the first ninety-day sessions, where did you live?

EULER: The first year, I lived in the Kansan Hotel, which—

LOOMIS: Not the Jayhawk.

EULER: No, no, the original Kansan Hotel

EULER: It was [the] leading hotel for Republicans.

LOOMIS: Is that right?

EULER: The Kansan. That's where all the lobbyists' rooms were there, where they did all their drinking and carousing. And then somebody bought the Kansan out, and by that time, Sam Whoever—some Jewish fellow had built the Ramada. [Transcriber's

note: Sam Cohen. Source:

http://cjonline.com/stories/051403/bus_ramadainn.shtml#.VTmE72Z8s3g]

And the Ramada took over for the Kansan.

LOOMIS: Right. Yeah.

EULER: And all the Republicans who had much influence moved down to the Ramada. So that's where I moved.

LOOMIS: Yeah. And so, did you just stay at hotels throughout your career?

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Did you keep up your law practice?

EULER: Well, I didn't very well, and that's one reason that I got out when I did, because I'd been there long enough to know I wasn't going to get very wealthy, eat very well on a legislator's salary, with regard to what job I had there.

LOOMIS: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: And I had two young sons that I—and a divorce.

LOOMIS: Oh, dear!

EULER: So, there were several things that just motivated my resignation at the end of the tenth year.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: And I frankly really regretted having to have to do that because in reminiscing, the best time I've had practicing law, the most enjoyable time, not only practicing law but just making a living has been from '63, when I first went into the legislature, until '73, and then from '73 I got involved in bar politics and legislative politics for another ten years, so that's twenty years, and that's essentially—that twenty years is the most enjoyable time I've had in the practice of law and just in the practice of making a living.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm. But did you have to put stuff on hold?

EULER: I didn't so much. Once I got—in the second half, got rid of the legislative—and then the only time I had to go to the legislature then was in answer to—testifying on bills.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: And in addition to that, lobbying bills. I turned into a lobbyist then afterwards.

LOOMIS: Oh, is that right?

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: Who were your clients?

EULER: Well, the main one I had was—[Pause.]—the labor—
which—

LOOMIS: Oh, really!

EULER: That lets you figure out everything that happened. I suppose why the state farm- —or
the state Chamber decided they didn't want to see Jack Euler.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: I would have treated him just as I would anybody else.

LOOMIS: I'm sure you—yeah, yeah.

EULER: That made no difference.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: To them.

LOOMIS: Right. In those days—I mean, I got to know—as I said, I got to know [Duane S.] “Pete”
McGill very well when he had become a lobbyist. Was there much of a lobbying community, like
in the 1970s or was it—today you get a lot of lobbyists.

EULER: But they're just little lobbyists. The guys making big money were mostly law firms.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

EULER: The railroads had their own people, and I stood in real good with all the railroads.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: And labor had their people.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: And the beverage [distributors] had a couple of guys, and the banking industry.

LOOMIS: Oh, yeah, the bank has always had—I mean, Jim Maag did well for them, and I assume the [Kansas] Farm Bureau.

EULER: The Farm Bureau had their people. That's right.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: And mostly that's—I'm not going to say that's all of the people, all of the institutions that had separate people, but that's most of them.

LOOMIS: Yeah. I think that what McGill did—he wasn't the first lobbyist at all, but he showed you could make a lot of money being a contract—

EULER: There you go. He made a living. Pete did that.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: And ran it for four or five years or more.

LOOMIS: Oh, yeah, yeah.

EULER: Before some of the other organizations got so big that they wouldn't hire Pete. They'd hire two or three other people to do what Pete was doing.

LOOMIS: Right, right. You talked a lot about Judiciary. Was that the major focus of your work in the legislature, to do the Judiciary stuff?

EULER: No. As it developed, as I got down there and got better established, it was the lesser part because I had a pretty big influence in the House and the Senate on legislation that affected lawyers.

LOOMIS: Okay.

EULER: So that turned me loose to look at other areas. Schools—I passed lots of legislation that related to schools and reapportionment [in] schools, but that was the time when the legislature was really changing the law a lot with reference to schools.

LOOMIS: Right, right. Consolidating—

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: At one time—correct me if I'm wrong—every school was its own school district.

EULER: Right. Yeah.

LOOMIS: Like, that's staggering.

EULER: And there was a bill on schools that determined whether or not a school district was going to be consolidated with another school district, and I got an amendment approved which let the local members of those districts decide that which didn't make anybody very happy. I did that on two or three other things that don't come to mind today.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: In other words, after I'd been there five years, I could pretty much—unless it was something that was obviously impossible, I could pretty much get done what I wanted done.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: I did it because I knew the influential people, the 10 or 20 or 30 percent that I'm talking about in both houses. That, again, —as I say, that's where the influence and the decisions are made.

LOOMIS: One of the places, if we can talk about the Senate, that decisions are made, and it's often fun to watch, are conference committees.

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: So, I assume you took part in a lot of conference committees—

EULER: Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: What were they like in those days when you went into conference?

EULER: The biggest one I had, the one that created the biggest furor I was on a conference committee on the House side, with John [D.] Bower, who was the chairman of the House Education Committee, and somebody else. I can't recall who. And we were asked to be the conference committee's—on a certain bill—it's been so long ago; that's forty years ago—

LOOMIS: Whatever.

EULER: And I stacked this conference committee such that it could never reach an agreement. Usually, the conference committees would agree to disagree or agree to—or agree.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: And if they agreed, then it became law.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: If it agreed to disagree, then you simply asked to appoint a new conference committee.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: And so on the House side always came back, agreed to disagree. In other words, they couldn't pass a damn law because they couldn't get the House committee to come up with two members.

LOOMIS: Is that right? Okay.

EULER: It was an education bill.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: I can't recall what.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: But it was something that took them by surprise, and that, I think, —

LOOMIS: It never did become law?

EULER: No. And it really became well known, what was going on.

LOOMIS: I see. Yeah, yeah.

EULER: [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: Did you ever have any thoughts about running for the Senate or other higher office?

EULER: Well, I did run for the Senate, but I waited too late to file, to begin with, and I waited too late to try and get the job. I should have—I could have been appointed, I'm reasonably confident, if I had made an effort after—some senator, and now I can't recall who—took a higher job or something.

LOOMIS: This is when you were in the House.

EULER: Yeah. And Francis Gordon, who had taken my position or at least at some point in time after I had the job—

LOOMIS: Oh, I see. Okay.

EULER: And he was the House member that was eligible to be appointed to the Senate, and instead of my making an effort by going out and asking all members of the appointing committee to appoint me rather than Francis [Gordon I didn't do a thing. I just figured, Well, I'll wait and run at the next regular election, and hopefully I can win then, or I wouldn't have done it that way.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm. Sure.

EULER: But I was wrong.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: Francis [Gordon] got the job by the appointment, and then—yeah. So, I didn't contest his appointment.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: But I did contest his reappointment, his election.

LOOMIS: So, he could run as sort of an incumbent.

EULER: Yeah, I let him finish out the term.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: But I contested him on the new term.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: And I didn't get it done.

LOOMIS: —that was in the Republican primary.

EULER: Yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: So, has this area always been Republican?

EULER: Pretty much, yeah.

LOOMIS: But you get to Atchison, there's—

EULER: Atchison is—well, today and for the last fifteen, twenty years it's been pretty much 50:50.

LOOMIS: Right, right. Yeah. You alluded to this a little before, about how enjoyable it was to be—

EULER: And not only was it enjoyable to do the work, it was just as much fun to go to all these big dinners that these lobbyists would put on.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh. So, you mentioned the lobbying rooms. Those were put out of business a few years later, although there's always something.

EULER: Well, yeah, they did it a different way.

LOOMIS: Right, right. But what were the lobbying rooms like? What would go on?

EULER: Well, I didn't get drunk or anything.

LOOMIS: No, no, no.

EULER: But you could drink all the booze you wanted.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm. How did that affect—make—do the work of the legislature?

EULER: In my opinion, it didn't.

LOOMIS: So—

EULER: My opinion is that that same dinner, 15 percent of the guys were members—it was usually males.

LOOMIS: It was always—at that time, absolutely.

EULER: Were running the legislature. They weren't in any way influenced by [crosstalk; unintelligible; 53:35].

LOOMIS: Oh, no, I wasn't—yeah. I was just thinking more in terms of reaching some—having some informal conversations away from the legislature that might have ended up—

EULER: —these influential people had their influence on the so-called less prominent ones.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

EULER: They could bring them along.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: That's why—what happened—in my opinion, what happened in the lobbyist rooms made no difference. They didn't change anybody's mind.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: Now, I think that the Chamber perhaps and some of the organizational groups don't agree with that statement I made, —

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: —but I really am confident that what any member of the legislature, without regard to his prominence, did in any of these lobbyist rooms did not influence—the fact that he was a good friend of that lobbyist did not by itself cause him, that legislature, to vote his vote to the so-called friend of his, lobbyist friend.

LOOMIS: During your time and most of the legislature but certainly all during your time, Republicans were the majority and sometimes a pretty big majority in the legislature.

EULER: Right.

LOOMIS: What were your relations with the minority party?

EULER: Mine were always good.

LOOMIS: I mean, would you just talk with them on a regular basis?

EULER: Yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: Yeah. All right.

EULER: And that caused me a lot of trouble.

LOOMIS: Is that right?

EULER: In my opinion, it caused me to be beat for speaker.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: I was unaware that somebody was trying to beat me for Speaker. I thought that my opponent was Calvin Strowig and little did I know, not only was my opponent Calvin Strowig but it was also the state Chamber of Commerce and the state Farm Bureau.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: That's two groups that I know worked their butts off to beat me.

LOOMIS: Right, right. Again, you get—those leadership elections are the toughest ones.

EULER: I'd say probably, yeah, that's the most contested election that they've had down there in this last forty years.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. But after that was over, you were retained as—you know, was it pretty much no hard feelings?

EULER: Yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: I mean, I do think—I mean, I don't want to get too much in the legislature today, but you do see some changes in the legislature as it exists more recently.

EULER: Yeah, it's a lot different now. I tell you; you talk to the people that's been there under the old—the way it used to be and the way it is now, and they'll tell you it's no longer the enjoyable time it used to be.

LOOMIS: No, I think that everybody—you know, I think that's one of the uniform conclusions that people I've talked—

EULER: Is it?

LOOMIS: Absolutely. Oh, no. And I think—often with, you know, with regret and I think some sorrow that it's a different [crosstalk; unintelligible; 57:46].

EULER: Well, [David J.] "Dave" Heinemann would probably tell you this.

LOOMIS: Oh, yeah, absolutely. But [Michael L.] "Mike" Johnston --I mean, all these guys. Yeah.

EULER: Yeah, Mike was a good man. He was from [Parsons], I think. A Democrat, wasn't he?

LOOMIS: Right, right, right. So how do you think—you were a legislative—what? in your late 20s, early 30s?

EULER: In my 30s. My entire thirties, from 31 to 42.

LOOMIS: How do you think that—I mean, you talked about the enjoyment, but, you know, having that experience, how do you think that affected your approach to law and how you—you know, what you did the rest of your life?

EULER: Looking at how age has changed me, and I've been active in the practice of law ever since I started, I will say that I just was more capable from the time I was thirty-five to forty-five than I was the time I was forty-five to sixty-five, and I've been practicing law during all of that time.

LOOMIS: Sure.

EULER: But you just—you just found it easier to get things done. I think a lot has to be done between the House and the Senate, —

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: —and there was a lot of good feeling, again, among the 5 or 10 or 15 percent of the people on both sides of the House [sic]. They were doing all this work for the House, both houses.

LOOMIS: You know, sometimes speakers and leaders get a lot of publicity. Can you think back and think of one or two legislators who might not have always been in the spotlight but were in that group of 10 or 20 percent that really helped get things done? Can you see what I mean there?

EULER: [It doesn't] come to mind right now, but there are two or three that—Ross [O.] Doyen was a guy that—a nice fellow, but he never was a part of that game.

LOOMIS: It's really remarkable. That comes up frequently. And I think particularly the—

EULER: I liked Ross.

LOOMIS: —latter part of his career in particular. And I regret that he wasn't alive to interview.

EULER: He was not the only one.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: Ted [Hutchinson]. Nice guy. I forgot Ted's name, but I had—John [F.] Hayes had a great influence over Ted. Anytime I needed Ted's vote, that's where I [unintelligible; 61:10].

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

EULER: And I had two or three more like that.

LOOMIS: Yeah. So, you could actually reach out and say—

EULER: Yeah, yeah. Another good man I had was John Unruh, U-n-r-u-h, who was a heavy equipment dealer out of Montezuma, and a very likeable guy and very influential.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

EULER: Another one: I mentioned Don Amrein, and Don was—he just was always on the other side of me pretty much [unintelligible; 61:54], if there was any controversy.

LOOMIS: Hmm.

EULER: He was not among that group that made the decisions.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

EULER: And, again, I liked Don.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm. Your term not completely but roughly corresponded to much of the [Gov. Robert B.] Docking era.

EULER: And that was some of my—the way I got some of my prominence was raising hell with the Dockings.

LOOMIS: Oh, is that right?

EULER: Oh, I just tore them up every time. And Calvin never had much to say, you know, or if he did, it was in a lot milder terms than the ones I was using.

LOOMIS: What was the type of quarrel you had with the Dockings?

EULER: Well, you know, they were always crying about taxes and reducing taxes and doing things there that cost money, and I spent time raising hell with them for wanting more taxes.

LOOMIS: You wanted more taxes.

EULER: No, they wanted more taxes.

LOOMIS: Oh, they wanted more taxes. I see.

EULER: Any time they wanted any tax, why, I was usually against it.

LOOMIS: Did you know Bob Docking personally?

EULER: Yeah. Oh, yeah, sure. And I liked Bob. I will say when he was there, he was a relatively young man. He used to get so goddamned drunk.

LOOMIS: I know. He has this great reputation—I mean, not—but substantial reputation along those lines.

EULER: It was not good.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. I think that was a little different era—

EULER: It was, yeah. There was more drinking.

LOOMIS: —in some ways.

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: Did you ever have any aspirations to run for the U.S. House?

EULER: No. If you're going to do that, you've got to devote your life to it.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: And I didn't want to do it.

LOOMIS: Were you active in any of the statewide campaigns for people running for Governor or anything like that?

EULER: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: Did you work for [Gov. Robert F.] "Bob" Bennett?

EULER: Oh, yeah. Bob Bennett was a good friend of mine.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: We worked closely together in the legislature. In the Senate, it was Bennett and— [Pause.]—somebody. Bob was really one of the more influential people that I ran across [in state] government. In my opinion, he was a most intelligent, capable Governor.

LOOMIS: You know, everybody says that. That's a common—and I don't doubt that it's true. How did he get—did he just convince you you were doing the right—

EULER: He was smart.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: He just come up with the answers before anybody else did.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh. And he was a worker. I mean, he'd anticipate your objections.

EULER: He was the conservative part of the combo of Bennett and—

LOOMIS: And [Norman E.] Gaar?

EULER: Gaar! Norman Gaar.

LOOMIS: Yeah, Norman Gaar. Right.

EULER: He was a good friend of mine. Gaar was the—and, again, super smart.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: He was the moderate one of the two.

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: But they were real good friends.

LOOMIS: For a while. [Laughs.]

EULER: Until Bob got out of the Legislature.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. They—

EULER: Bennett and Gaar. God almighty, they had a lot of bills then. If you looked at those—

LOOMIS: Oh, I have.

EULER: —old calendars back in those years.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: You see where Bennett and Gaar introduced a lot of bills.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm. And it's interesting. You know, they were coming from Johnson County. So how did he get people from western Kansas to go along with him?

EULER: He just got certain numbers of them. I mean, he had—who was the guy from Larned.

EULER: Who was from Larned?

LOOMIS: We can look it up. So, he had people from the western part of the state.

EULER: Two or three of them.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: And they got the rest of them, like I told you.

LOOMIS: Yeah. And you can, of course, make deals on—were you involved in highways at all?

EULER: No, not too much. There really wasn't much done in highways then, when I was in the legislature. There wasn't much money, —

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: —was the problem.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, it sounds like you had fun as a legislator.

EULER: Oh, I did. I had a great—as I told you, it was the best twenty years of my life.

LOOMIS: Yeah. So, would you, like, go down there on Monday morning and come back Thursday or Friday?

EULER: Usually, yeah.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. How did you deal with two young boys?

EULER: That's why I came home. There's one of them up there. [Apparently points to a photograph.]

LOOMIS: Right. And so, you got divorced. You get remarried?

EULER: To another woman, yeah.

LOOMIS: Yeah. Right, right, right. Right, right, right. [Laughs.]

EULER: It wasn't my idea, but—

LOOMIS: Well, —

EULER: —it was partly my fault.

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

EULER: I never denied that.

LOOMIS: I don't know. I've got—you know, I'm pretty run out here of questions. Is there anything I haven't touched on, part of the legislative life that was important that I haven't—we haven't at least discussed a bit?

EULER: Well, we haven't—there were some members, influential members who never reached the hallowed vale, so to speak, —

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: —but were still excellent people. And one prime example and good friend of mine was Ralph [E.] Skoog. He just was awful smart.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. I had a great time interviewing him in Topeka probably about six weeks ago.

EULER: Did you?

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

EULER: He's retired, I think, hasn't he?

LOOMIS: Oh, yeah.

EULER: I haven't seen Ralph in—

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

EULER: He was a good friend of mine.

LOOMIS: I assume you stayed in touch with him through the bar.

EULER: Oh, I have, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: He was very active.

EULER: And I've done some legal work back and forth with him over the years. He's one of those guys that I was telling you about, that figured out [what the hell a nut? 70:58] the thing was way ahead of anybody else—

LOOMIS: Right.

EULER: —and had something to do with disclosing that fact.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

EULER: And yet for some reason, he just never did—well, one reason he didn't was that he didn't stay there long enough.

LOOMIS: No, he didn't, yeah.

EULER: Did he tell you that?

LOOMIS: A little bit, yeah.

EULER: I begged him to run another term or two, but he didn't do it.

LOOMIS: He also said that, although he knew he shouldn't speak quite as much as he did—

EULER: [Laughs.]

LOOMIS: —he said, "I had to speak."

EULER: He told you the truth.

LOOMIS: No, no!

EULER: He told you the truth.

LOOMIS: [Chuckles.] Because some people—

EULER: And that hurt his influence. That hurt his ability to influence others.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh.

EULER: There were some things that he talked about that he'd have been better off not talking about.

LOOMIS: Right. I'm sure that's true.

EULER: Not that anybody disagreed with what he was saying, but there was about two or three other people that said the same thing.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: So why waste their time listening to Ralph?

LOOMIS: Right, right, right. No, that—yeah, I think he was—

EULER: Now, another guy—you talked about [Robert W.] "Bob" Story, and Bob was an influential guy, but he's a guy that would find weak places—he particularly was interested in tort law and bills related to negligence and such as that, and he was good at finding places where he could get the law changed to what he thought it ought to be, in a different way than Ralph did.

LOOMIS: I see. Yeah.

EULER: And he was a popular—

LOOMIS: Do you think that—right now in the legislature, there are relatively few lawyers anymore. Do you think it was good having a fair number of lawyers in the legislature?

EULER: I think even the legislature there now will tell you that they need more lawyers.

LOOMIS: Yeah, they will.

EULER: Then they raise hell because, you know, they get them down there and they cry about they're making too much noise, trying to do too much.

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

EULER: I don't know what the middle is.

LOOMIS: Well, —

EULER: But I appreciate your comment about Ralph Skoog because he was honest with you about where his weakness was.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: [Chuckles.] Ralph knew that that was true.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: But he just didn't let it change him.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. No, we had a good conversation. Well, let me thank you—

EULER: And his—

LOOMIS: Go ahead.

EULER: Ralph's sister—

LOOMIS: I don't want to cut you off.

EULER: Skoog's sister was my secretary.

LOOMIS: Is that right?

EULER: Norma [Betty Bomar]

LOOMIS: No kidding!

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: When you were in the Legislature.

EULER: Yeah. I never seen her since. Oh, I've seen her since—

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

EULER: —two or three or four times.

LOOMIS: No kidding!

EULER: But I've never had her do any work for me.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

EULER: But she was my secretary down there for as many as six years.

LOOMIS: And she worked just during the session.

EULER: Yeah, pretty much, yeah.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. That was always interesting to me to see those mostly women come in and work for the session—

EULER: That's right, yeah.

LOOMIS: —and then go back and—

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: —you know, do whatever they did. And often, I don't think, anything. But they loved that. I think many of those women really, really—

EULER: Oh, they really loved it. Yeah, they did.

LOOMIS: Have you been back to the Capitol since it's been refurbished?

EULER: I haven't been there since they got the downstairs or down—

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: They got the underground parking now, don't they?

LOOMIS: Yeah, they do. It's—

EULER: I need to get back there.

LOOMIS: You really should. It is—oh, they spent a lot of money on it, but they did just a tremendous job.

EULER: I wish I could go back, but, as I say, I'm over the hill.

LOOMIS: Sure. Well, take a trip.

EULER: [Laughs.]

LOOMIS: Get your son to drive you down.

EULER: [Laughs.] I got so many good friends out of the Legislature. As I say, it was the best time of my life.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: That was because I was able to relate with the people who were—the ones that were making the decisions.

LOOMIS: Sure, sure.

EULER: And that's why.

LOOMIS: Sure.

EULER: You know, if I'd have been outside looking in all the time on every issue, it wouldn't have been so much fun.

LOOMIS: Well, I mean, I think there's some people who never understood that at all.

EULER: No.

LOOMIS: So—yeah.

EULER: Well, a lot of them who are down there, they think it's just being there, just setting in a chair and voting yes or no is all they're supposed to do.

EULER: [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: Well, one final thing: When you came back on weekends, would you meet with—would you have regular meetings with your constituents?

EULER: If necessary, and usually, though, I'd work on the law practice, —

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: —trying to keep up with what was going on.

LOOMIS: Right. No, no, I've seen that many times. Did you have a group in town that you sort of had coffee with and talked—

EULER: Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: So, they'd tell you what was going on?

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: Well, again, thank you very much.

EULER: Yeah.

LOOMIS: Oh, thank you, thank you. So, did your sons ever thing of going into politics?

EULER: No, and I wish they would, but they [noise; unintelligible; 77:41].

LOOMIS: I've got a son who's done some politics, and he might run, but he's starting out in law practice. If Paul [T.] Davis would have won, he probably would have been running all across [noise; unintelligible; 77:58], but Paul Davis didn't win, and so—

EULER: I voted for Paul Davis.

LOOMIS: I don't doubt that. [Laughs.]

EULER: I knew Paul Davis when he worked for the Bar Association.

LOOMIS: Right, right. Yeah, yeah. He's a good guy. I taught him. He was my intern. I know his dad, and I see him at the gym all the time, so—

EULER: Yeah, I knew Paul when I was in the Legislature.

LOOMIS: Well, it's a different era now, that's for sure.

EULER: Yes, it is now. It's entirely different. I don't have any real idea how to explain it.

LOOMIS: Well, you don't use e-mail yourself, huh?

EULER: No, I guess I started too late. I'm eighty-six years old, and—

LOOMIS: Right, right. Well, I'll tell you, you and Shelby [Smith] are the two oldest that I've talked to, and there's no recorder on or anything, but you may think you have some issue remembering a thing or two, but Shelby was—I—

EULER: Well, Shelby was this man that—he was a state Chamber of Commerce follower which is all right.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

EULER: Of course, I say hell, I knew Shelby Smith when he was in St. Joe.

LOOMIS: I think over time, a lot of those people ended up moving—

LOOMIS: Yes. So, we did—oh, the guy who was a long-time legislator and then the Mayor of Topeka— [William W.] "Bill" Bunten.

EULER: Yeah, Bill was conservative.

LOOMIS: But at time when he—at first, he did Appropriations, and then he got to be Mayor of Topeka, and he's never going to become a liberal, but he—

EULER: He was a different Bill Bunten.

LOOMIS: He was definitely a different Bill Bunten.

EULER: Bill was a good friend of mine, too.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. It was fun because I saw all his old pictures of him and—

EULER: Good-looking guy.

LOOMIS: Heck of a guy!

EULER: [Laughs.]

LOOMIS: No, no question about it! And what's fun is, for me, almost all of these interviews, I think have either been in a law office or—I think Rochelle Chronister I did at the State Capitol, and Jim Maag. And so those were kind of—

EULER: Yeah, Jim kind of—actually, Jim—he got out of the Legislature in pretty short order.

LOOMIS: Oh, right.

EULER: He stayed with the bankers.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EULER: And worked with the Legislature.

LOOMIS: Oh, he was a fixture over there. Absolutely.

EULER: He was aware of the fact that he had a lot of influence.

LOOMIS: Oh, yeah, without—

EULER: But he had a good job.

LOOMIS: Without any question. But Bill Bunten —I went to his house, and then Bob Storey, I went to his law office, and Fred Kerr, I was down in Pratt at his house, and it's fun. I mean, I've never been to—I've been to Atchison, but I'd never been to Troy, for example, and so it's great fun for me to see you as you sort of wind down your practice, to see all the papers and—

EULER: These papers down here in this room, now, are copies of every deed or—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

EULER: —bill of sale or court case that has gone through our county.

LOOMIS: I saw that. Coming up, I saw that that was [noise; unintelligible; 82:26].

EULER: And up above, [unintelligible; 82:27] even in those boxes.

LOOMIS: But they've all got—are they now computerized by now or are you still going through some copies?

EULER: I think a lot of this is [unintelligible; 82:45], getting the deeds.

WOMAN: I make copies, and I post them in our book, and then I have them here. But they have it all on computer there.

LOOMIS: Well, I came in and I saw this little corner office, and I thought, Oh, that's a quaint little office.

[End of interview.]