

Johnson's papers open to public

United Press International
AUSTIN — Lyndon B. Johnson's personal papers concerning his 1948 election to the U.S. Senate will be opened for public inspection for the first time today, the director of the LBJ Library said yesterday.

A South Texas election official has contended in a series of recent interviews Johnson stole the 1948 Democratic nomination from former Gov. Coke Stevenson. Luis Salas of Jim Wells County said he certified 202 fictitious votes for Johnson at the instruction of George B. Parr. Johnson eventually won the race by 87 votes, and the race became a significant milestone in his rise to the presidency.

Harry Middleton, director of the LBJ Library, said the news media will be permitted to inspect approximately 5,000 pages of Johnson's personal papers beginning at 10 a.m. today.

He said the documents relate to the 1948 election.

"What we have are seven manuscript boxes that are identifiable as documents relating to the 1948 election, and the estimate I have been given is that they total something around 5,000 pages," Middleton said. "I don't know what they are. The archivists are going through them now. I would guess they would range from memoranda to newspaper clippings."

Middleton said materials relating to Johnson's early political years have not been made public before because they were on a lower priority than papers from his tenure as senator and president.

"But because of the publicity we decided to go ahead and make these public," he said. "They're being made available just the way all our papers are."

Salas said Johnson attended a meeting with Parr in San Diego, Tex., on the Tuesday following the Saturday Demo-

cratic primary runoff in August, 1948, and told Parr he needed 200 more votes.

Salas said Parr promised Johnson the votes, and had the votes registered from lists of persons who had not voted in the election.

Three former Johnson aides said Monday Johnson did not leave Austin for the week following the election, and could not have attended such a meeting with Parr.

"It would have been absolutely impossible for Mr. Johnson to have been outside Austin for the length of time it would have taken for him to go to Alice," said Walter Jenkins, Johnson's administrative assistant in 1948.

Salas said he is sure Johnson participated in the meeting, however. "I don't recollect the day or the date, but I know he was there," Salas said. "It was a nighttime meeting in San Diego. The election was on the 24th. It was after the election."

Tax lists contradict Salas' story

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AUSTIN — Poll tax records uncovered by Comptroller Bob Bullock contradict the story of a former henchman of George Parr who claims Lyndon Johnson stole his 1948 Senate election.

Luis Salas made headlines Sunday claiming Johnson personally asked Parr to find him 200 more votes three days after the poll closed and that the South Texas political boss and his backers complied by stuffing 202 ballots into Box 13 in Jim Wells County.

Salas said the names were taken in alphabetical order from poll tax lists and named three Alice residents he said voted fraudulently — Mrs. Miguel Acero, Miguel Acero and Hector Cerda.

Records maintained in the comptroller's office, however, include complete poll tax lists for Jim Wells County for 1947 and 1948, and none of the three Salas named are on the list.

"I really question what that man said," Bullock said.

Until a federal court declared the arrangement unconstitutional in 1966, a person who wanted to vote

in Texas had to pay a \$1.75 poll tax to the county tax assessor-collector between Oct. 1 and Jan. 31 prior to the election to be signed up to vote.

The only exceptions were for people who were 60 years old at the time and people who had paid their poll tax in another county and moved to a new area six months before an election.

Salas, however, told interviewers the names signed to fraudulent ballots were taken directly from the poll tax lists.

"They all came from the poll taxes, I mean, from the poll tax sheet," he said.

Salas said the poll lists vanished after Coke Stevenson, a former Texas governor and Johnson's opponent, lost a court challenge over the change in vote totals from Box 13.

Unknown to Salas, copies of the county records on poll tax receipts were forwarded to the state comptroller along with a portion of the money.

A check of names entered during each of the four months for Box 13 in Alice shows none of the three individuals Salas said were selected from the poll tax lists had paid poll taxes.

"If they hadn't paid their poll tax they couldn't do nothing," Bullock said. "They ain't going to take anybody that didn't even pay their poll tax."

Bullock said close associates of Parr have told him the "Duke of Duval" ordered the ballot box stuffed on his own without Johnson's knowledge.

"They said he just did it voluntarily," Bullock said. "He thought it would make him a kingmaker with Johnson."

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