

INTERVIEW II

INTERVIEWEE: NASH CASTRO

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

4 March, 1969, Washington, D. C.
(Tape 1 of 1)

F: This is the second interview with Mr. Nash Castro in his office in Washington, D. C., on March 4, 1969.

Nash, you made one of the two trips to the Tetons with Mrs. Johnson, correct?

C: Yes, sir. The second trip, in the late summer of 1966. This trip also included a visit to Denver, where Mrs. Johnson planted a tree on the campus of Denver University.

F: Why did she go back?

C: I feel because of her great admiration for that part of the country, her great love for it. Also, for the reason that Mr. and Mrs. Laurance Rockefeller, who own the J-Y Ranch in Grand Teton National Park, and who are such dear friends of Mrs. Johnson, invited her to come out. And, finally, because of an important conservation conference scheduled at the time, which she had been invited to address.

Lynda went with us on this trip, and added a lot to it, I might say. We arrived at Grand Teton on a midafternoon one day with a press contingent of about sixty people. Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller greeted Mrs. Johnson at the Jackson Hole Airport.

Art Buchwald was with us, incidentally, the only time he went with us on any one of these trips. He was true to character all the way on every aspect of the trip. He and Liz kept us laughing until our sides ached.

We housed all of the press people at the Grand Teton Lodge. This is the lodge that Mr. Rockefeller built through his non-profit Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc. Unfortunately, there was no room for me at the inn. It was late summer and the lodge was filled. I ended up at the Brinkerhoff Lodge, a very attractive building acquired by the Park Service along with some land for addition to Grand Teton National Park.

It was Laurance Rockefeller's father, you know, who made Grand Teton National Park possible. His family has had an identity with that national park for a long, long time, going back to the days of Horace Albright and this would have been in the 1920's and the early 1930's.

But to get back to the housing problem. The press contingent was accommodated in the cabins at the lodge; there was no room for me in the lodge nor for Liz Carpenter's secretary, Lynn Machado, nor for Simone Poulain, Liz's assistant. So the three of us were billeted in the Brinkerhoff Lodge.

We went about our business that evening with events of one kind or another; and the next morning Simone Poulain had to leave for Denver because she was running the advance on Mrs. Johnson's

visit there later in the week. I had the problem of being alone with Liz's lovely young secretary in the Brinkerhoff Lodge and it wouldn't do, for obvious reasons; so I told Liz about this. I said, "I'm going to get one of the press ladies to chaperone us, because I don't want to compromise Lynn's virtue."

I asked Willie LaHay, a Scripps-Howard writer and a very dear friend of mine, a lady in her fifties, I would say, if she wouldn't come and spend the night with us at the Brinkerhoff Lodge. Willie very graciously and understandably agreed to do this, and I went to the Grand Teton Lodge and helped transport her things and her to the Brinkerhoff Lodge. So the three of us were to be there for the night.

We were sitting in the living room, just chatting, when a knock came on the door. I opened it to find Bob Knudsen, Mrs. Johnson's photographer, with two suitcases in hand. I asked, "Bob, what are you doing here?"

He said, "Liz sent me over. She wants me to chaperone you."

"But," I said, "we're already chaperoned."

"Well," he said, "she sent me over. She said I had to come and chaperone you."

This wasn't the end of it! About an hour later, and this must have been about 10:30, came another knock on the door. Of all people, who should be there but Liz Carpenter! I said, "Liz, what are you doing here?"

Liz said, "I decided that two and two wouldn't do, so I'm here to chaperone you all."

F: That party grew, didn't it?

C: The party grew to five, and we spent the night without event.

Liz was up bright and early the next morning making coffee.

From there, we went on the river trip, floating down the Snake River.

At the time, Brent Eastman, a young medical student, was acquainted with Lynda, and, of course, the press made much about this. It turned out that Brent was our guide on the raft, one of the rafts. As I recall, we had two of them.

F: By rafts now, are you talking about rubber boats?

C: Yes, these were substantial-sized rubber boats, and we accommodated the party, as I recall, in two rafts.

Mrs. Johnson did not float down the river on that occasion. She had done that once before, and she elected to stay at the ranch instead and visit with Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller.

The float trip down the river was delightful, the scenery beautiful. I recall that it rained on us. Art Buchwald kept us laughing all the time with one joke after another. I remember one time, as we were rounding a bend in the river, he saw an open place with a nice hummock and he made the observation, "God, what

a place for a billboard!" Art was quoted on that one pretty extensively.

I have never seen the press more enthusiastic about any of Mrs. Johnson's trips than they were on this particular occasion. If any one of them outdid it, it was the Rio Grande float trip.

It was a rather chilly morning when we set out on the float trip, and I had a bottle of Scotch with me, in case of snakebite, you know. I put it in a little bag, thinking that people might get cold because of the chilly air and rain.

F: The only time I ever floated the Snake it rained the entire distance, you could barely see the shore, and we did freeze to death in August.

C: Yes. It was chilly, no doubt about it. That's the reason I was impelled to take my bottle of spirits. We had been out for two hours or more and everybody began complaining about the cold. We had a tarp over the raft in the form of a plastic sheet which helped keep us dry, but it didn't do a very good job. In any case, Liz knew I had some spirits with me, and she asked me to break them out. Brent Eastman, who was in charge of the raft, very diplomatically said that drinking was not permitted on his raft, not ever. As a result, I had a little dilemma, but people kept pressing me, and before I knew it, somebody had taken the little jug out of the bag and passed it around. I don't think Brent ever found out about it.

We got terribly cold on this trip. We had some portable radios with us; I had one that kept me in touch with park headquarters. We decided to call ahead and see if they couldn't arrange to have some hot soup waiting for us. That made a funny story, because—

F: What did you do, go down to the Visitor Center?

C: Yes. And we were mighty chilly, Joe. I recall it so vividly. Anyway, Liz decided that we ought to have something hot awaiting us. So I got on the radio and called one of the men on the park staff and asked him if this were possible, but he couldn't understand what I was trying to say. I said, "You know, soup. S-o-u-p." And finally he got the word. I've never seen a group of people welcome a cup of soup more than that group did on that occasion.

F: Is Lynda as good a traveler as her mother?

C: Lynda was a wonderful traveler. She was just delightful, Joe. The press liked her very much. You know, I have some wonderful impressions of Lynda and Luci. They are bright, sweet, sensible kids. I have always felt that the President and Mrs. Johnson did a marvelous, marvelous job as parents, because those kids have really grown up to be a credit to their family. There's just no doubt about it.

I first knew Lynda and Luci in 1965 when I started working with their mother on beautification. I can remember many times—as I recall, this was Lynda's year at George Washington University, and Luci was in high school at that time. They did as my kids would do. They would come in their bobby socks and their loafers with their arms full of books, and sit down and tell their mother the same things that my children would tell their mother after a day in school, their successes, their triumphs, their less glorious moments. I remember Luci one day coming home from school and complaining to her mother about a teacher, I don't recall what particular teacher, but she thought he had been quite unfair about grading her. Luci was visibly annoyed and very expressive about the whole business, I might say.

Back to the Grand Teton trip: Because Lynda was along and Brent Eastman was there, the press tried to make a great, great deal out of it. They partially succeeded, too, as you well know.

One of the more delightful things I remember about this trip was a visit we all made to the Rockefeller ranch while we were there. Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller very cordially invited all of us in the party to come to their J-Y Ranch, and we were taken on a little tour and ended up having coffee and doughnuts in their main house.

From there we flew to Denver, and Mrs. Johnson planted a tree on the Denver University Campus. I don't recall the species of

the tree without looking into my records, but on this occasion, John Love, the Governor of Colorado, was there to greet her. John Love and I were old friends, the reason being that we both were pilots in the same squadron in the Navy in World War II. We had a great time getting reacquainted.

I hope that tree is still at Denver University.

We came back to Washington. On the return trip, we rigged up a bridge game. On more than one occasion we arranged bridge games and Mrs. Johnson played with us. Lynda played with us on this occasion. Lynda, by the way, is a very good bridge player, too.

F: Probably brings less concentration than Lynda from my observation.

Lynda seems to me, goes all out in the game.

C: She does. She's a real competitor, no doubt about it. But she was a real joy to play bridge with.

Betty Beale was one of the players and Willie LaHay was another one. Anyway, we had a lot of fun. I was privileged to play at Mrs. Johnson's bridge table on several occasions.

The trip after this one would have been the Appalacia trip, the one that we made into western North Carolina and Tennessee and Kentucky. I handled the North Carolina end of it. I went there by myself and ran the advance early in March of 1967, maybe late February. I would have to look at the record.

F: Do you think that there was some motivation in this Appalachia trip dealing with the fact that this was economically a backward area comparatively?

C: In respect to her trip to Kentucky, yes. That's the thing Mrs. Johnson was seeking to highlight there, the economic plight of the Appalachia people.

But over and above that, Joe, she also wished to highlight education, which she did in Kentucky and even more so on the rest of her trip into the western North Carolina country and Tennessee.

As I said, I made the advance on this trip by myself, and stayed at Asheville. I went to a little village called Canada Township, which is tucked away in the mountains of western North Carolina. It's a very depressed area. Concurrently with that, I also visited a college in the hills of western North Carolina called Western Carolina State Teachers College.

I looked into the possibilities of things that Mrs. Johnson might do there. At the time, there was great concern that the Teacher Corps program would not be continued; this was a program of great interest to President and Mrs. Johnson because the Teacher Corps, which utilized college students part-time to teach in these out-of-way places like Canada Township and who attended college at the same time, was on the verge of extinction. It was thought that this trip might focus attention on the program and, in fact, revitalize

it; and that's exactly what it did. Because after the trip was done, Congress acted affirmatively in respect to continuing the program.

F: You didn't try, in advancing this trip, to pick the rosy spots necessarily?

C: Far from that. As a matter of fact, I tried to pick the spots that would give emphasis to the need for giving continuity to this particular Teacher Corps program. I ended up in Canada Township. As I say, it's tucked away in the mountains of western North Carolina.

I came back to Washington and sat down with Mrs. Johnson and Liz and people from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and others, and outlined a plan for her consideration.

I learned, on this advance, to take a Polaroid camera along, and made pictures of people and schools and projects and other things she might wish to consider doing. After she approved the plan, Liz, Erv Duggan, Marcia Maddox, and I went back and made the final arrangements.

F: Now, before you made the initial advance, did you consult with her? Did she sort of lay out a broad itinerary, or what is the method of operating in this?

C: The method of operating, first, was to find a program to which she might address herself, as in this case—education. Liz had already

consulted with specialists from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, who had advised her how their department was concerned with specific programs like the Teacher Corps. With this information, I was asked to go down and look at the possibilities and highlight those things that she might do. I did not consult with her at this particular point, but I did after I returned from my advance. As I say, Liz, people from Health, Education, and Welfare and I sat down and visited with her and discussed the possibilities. Then she approved certain things.

One interesting thing I recall about this trip: We gathered in Liz's office one morning—Liz, Marcia, Erv Duggan, HEW types, and others. Among other things, we were trying to come up with a name for this particular trip. All kinds of ideas were kicked around. One would come up with one name, another one with another name. I came up with several names, and finally Liz called Doug Cater to see if he might have some suggestions. While they were talking, we were all shouting names to Liz to relay to Doug. Finally, I came up with a suggestion that we call the trip "Adventure in Learning," and sure enough Liz said, "That's it." Doug agreed and we named the trip right then and there. It's curious—the way we came about naming the trips.

I went on ahead with Marcia Maddox to Asheville, Joe, and firmed up the arrangements for housing Mrs. Johnson and the press. We arranged for the First Lady to stay in Governor Dan Moore's

summer home in Asheville—on one of the mountain tops there.

It's a very lovely place.

While we were in Asheville, we looked into the possibility of holding some kind of an event in connection with the Thomas Wolfe house. Thomas Wolfe was born in Asheville, and his birthplace is there and open to the public. Liz decided this would make a great press room. She said, "The press will really be inspired to write the best copy they ever wrote."

We had many problems because the house is rather small.

F: No boarding house then?

C: No, not then, only when Wolfe was living. The house is right in the heart of the city. It is an old house and the electrical system was antedeluvian. Because we had to get TV cameras in there, lights for the working press, power for the teletype machines, etc., we faced some problems as the power facilities were not at all adequate. But we resolved all this, and the Thomas Wolfe home became the press room, which I think was interesting.

On the day of the trip, as I usually and typically did, I met Mrs. Johnson's airplane and greeted her, introduced her to the Governor and his wife and other dignitaries, who regularly appeared to greet her. My mission was to do this and then get out of the way, out of the way of the cameras. I can't begin to tell you how many cameras I've ducked in these years.

This brings to mind another interesting story. On my first trip, the Landmarks and Landscapes trip, we met in Liz's office one day to plan it. Because we were new in this type of endeavor, she was very specific, saying, "If I ever catch any of you in any of the pictures, I'm going to break your damned necks," and she—

F: I can hear that.

C: —and she meant it. That stuck with me, and I always made it a point when with Mrs. Johnson, as soon as I presented her to someone, to duck out of camera range. Looking back now, I appear in relatively few pictures; it was an accident that I appeared in any of them.

On this trip, again, Mrs. Johnson spent the night of the first day at the Governor's summer house in Asheville. The Governor's wife, Mrs. Dan Moore, and her daughter stayed with the First Lady that night. The next morning the Governor rejoined the party.

We bussed down to a little place called Canada Township the next morning. Mrs. Johnson went to the school—no, she didn't go to the school at that point. At a road fork near the school, she was met by the principal of the Canada Township School, a lady named Gertie Moss, a dear, dear lady born and raised in those western North Carolina hills. Mrs. Moss accompanied Mrs. Johnson by bus into one of the "hollers," as they call them, one of the hollows way back in the mountains, where Mrs. Johnson visited with

a very financially depressed family. She wanted to see the conditions under which some of these people lived, and I think she was rather startled as I was startled when I—

F: Who selected this family?

C: Liz selected the family, this on the advance that she and I went—

F: They knew Mrs. Johnson was coming?

C: They knew Mrs. Johnson was coming, but—

F: No effort was made to dress them up for her?

C: Absolutely none. As a matter of fact, Liz was very specific about this. She wanted Mrs. Johnson to see this family precisely as they lived every day of their lives.

F: Big family?

C: As I recall, five children, husband and wife; but these people all of their lives have lived under very depressed, poverty-ridden conditions. The head of the family was younger than I, but looked to be sixty or even more. He had lost most of his teeth and appeared to be in very poor health. He raised his own food there, including pigs. The conditions under which they lived, Joe, were rather heartbreaking. Their house was a typical mountain shanty with an Abner Yokum roof that slants, a tin roof. All manner of

clutter was lying around and it is incredible that people could live under those conditions, but they did. They subsisted, I guess, barely.

His wife was even younger than he, but she had aged long before her time; and the children also showed signs of malnutrition—their physical appearance told us this. I know that Mrs. Johnson was very touched. In her typically sweet way, wouldn't you know that she brought with her as a gift to the family some homemade preserves from the ranch? She was so thoughtful to do things like that.

She spent about a half hour visiting with the family. I think the press and I were equally as startled to come upon a family situation such as that; and I think they realized, as I realized, that this was not untypical of Appalachia.

After visiting with the mountain family, we went back to the school where Mrs. Johnson was greeted most effusively by the children and faculty. I had arranged for them to perform folk dances and sing and present her with a—

F: This was an elementary school?

C: Yes. First through the sixth grades. They presented her with some flowers that grow in the mountains there.

F: Was it one of these typically one-two room schoolhouses, or had it consolidated—?

C: No, it was a consolidated school, made of brick. It had a nice-sized cafeteria, which doubled as an auditorium, and classrooms. They had all the modern teaching aids like tape recording equipment and films and all manner of things like that. They weren't lacking in the amenities that modern schools have, but they were lacking in the more basic things, for example, food. I was startled to find, Joe, and Mrs. Johnson was equally as startled as everyone of us was, that most of these kids came to school without breakfast and in bare feet, even in the winter months, and the snows are pretty deep in that part of the country.

I learned—and this really tugged at my heart-strings—that many of these children came to school, as I said, without breakfast; but through the efforts of their very wonderful, angel-like principal, Mrs. Gertie Moss, they were served a bowl of oatmeal and milk; and this represented the only food they would have from the night before until they got to school the next day. Fortunately, they had a wonderful lunch program. Mrs. Moss said to me that if it weren't for the breakfast and lunch program, some of the children wouldn't even come to school.

F: They came to eat?

C: They came to eat.

F: Was this a federally-financed school lunch program?

C: It was indeed, except that the breakfast aspect of it was financed personally by Mrs. Moss and her teachers and people in the neighborhood, who donated a few dollars here and there.

The reception for Mrs. Johnson there was warm and delightful, with the youngsters playing music and singing and folk-dancing. In her typical way, Mrs. Johnson joined right in and visibly enjoyed her visit. She made a little speech, and then she went through the classrooms and in fact sat down in some of the classrooms and listened to the kids go about their studies.

We all went into the cafeteria for a typical lunch, which was very plain but tasty.

F: Nothing special for your benefit?

C: No, just a typical lunch. It was very, very plain, Joe, but nourishing. Mrs. Johnson sat with some of the children and enjoyed herself very, very much. She was so wonderful.

I grew very fond of Gertie Moss, who is one of these down-to-earth, wonderful, unheralded Americans. I can never say enough about her and her work. As I was saying goodbye to Mrs. Moss, Bob Knudsen took a picture of us—just the two of us. She's a very tiny woman; I doubt that she's even five feet tall. Anyway, Bob Knudsen took our picture and one day in the mail came a print of it from Mrs. Johnson with a marvelous inscription on it, saying something like "Two real pieces of gold." Well, I felt that way

about Mrs. Moss, and I think Mrs. Moss captured Mrs. Johnson's heart and vice versa. They just seemed to communicate perfectly with each other from the very beginning.

After that, we returned to Asheville by way of Western Carolina State Teachers' College. The First Lady dedicated an addition to the college library. Secretary John Gardner was with us and made a marvelous speech. Then on to Asheville and a visit to some adult education classes. Mrs. Johnson especially enjoyed her visit there.

The next morning, we got word that the President was coming to Nashville—

F: Nashville or Asheville?

C: Nashville. Nashville, Tennessee. The rest of the itinerary called for Mrs. Johnson to go to the Andrew Jackson Home, the Hermitage, right near Nashville, Tennessee. She was scheduled to make an address at a new college in the outskirts. We got word the night before that it was likely the President would come also, so the next morning we flew on into Nashville, Tennessee, and waited but a few minutes and here came Air Force One with the President and his retinue. He had a lot of press with him.

We boarded busses and went to the Hermitage, where the President spoke. From there we went to the college where the President made a speech on education. Then we returned home.

F: You didn't go on up into Kentucky?

C: No. I handled the North Carolina end of the trip. It was Simone Poulain who ran the advance on the Kentucky portion of the trip. Marcia did the final advance on the visit to the Hermitage. She was with us in Asheville—or she was for a part of the time, and then she went on ahead to Nashville.

I'm trying to recall which trip we went on after that one.

F: New England would probably come next, wouldn't it?

C: I think the New England trip. This was in June 1967.

Marcia Maddox and I ran the advance on this trip. No—Simone Poulain and I did the original advance. We went to Boston and then to the John Adams National Historic Site, near Boston. Mrs. Johnson had always—

F: At Quincy?

C: At Quincy, Massachusetts. Mrs. Johnson always aspired to visiting as many presidential homes as she could. Simone and I went there and looked into the possibilities of her making a visit to the Adams home. We came back and reported to Liz and Mrs. Johnson on the possibilities, and she agreed to make the trip. We consummated the arrangements, and Marcia Maddox and I went up and did the final advance.

By that time the scope of the trip had been enlarged some. For example, Mrs. Johnson had been awarded an honorary doctorate by Middlebury College in Vermont. She planned to go to accept the degree. It turned out that Mr. and Mrs. Laurance Rockefeller have a lovely summer home at Woodstock, Vermont, and this came into the picture. The net result is that she did all of these things. And it took several of us to advance the trip.

Charlie Boatner, whom you know, and Marta Ross did the advance on that part of the trip which took them to Strawberry Banke in Massachusetts.

F: What is Strawberry Banke?

C: I don't know because I've not been there, but it's an interesting historic site that dates back to colonial times. They handled that part of the trip. I was asked to handle Woodstock—Middlebury so Marcia Maddox and I did this because there were so many events involved with it. We arranged for Rex Scouten, who up until last Friday was my assistant here—he has now gone to the White House to succeed J. B. West as Chief Usher.

F: Oh, he has?

C: He used to work over there, you see; I proselyted him from the White House. He was one of the ushers, and I called on Rex to help us with the John Adams National Historic Site visit. So he and Simone Poulain handled that. I went up there with Rex one day

and ran through the arrangements with him, introduced him to all the people who were involved. Then I went on to Woodstock, Vermont, where I met Marcia, and we did all of the planning there on Mrs. Johnson's visit to Woodstock.

We found the lovely Woodstock Inn where we accommodated the press. The First Lady made a speech at the Rockefeller home, on the porch, in connection with conservation matters. She visited Calvin Coolidge's birthplace and presented a plaque designating it as a National Historical Landmark; she visited an old wood-covered bridge; she visited the Robert Frost home—or the approaches to it. We didn't have time to go clear up there and then finally to Middlebury College, when she accepted her degree.

There are several interesting aspects of this trip that I remember. First of all, on the day before Mrs. Johnson was to arrive at Woodstock, Liz called me and said, "Mrs. Johnson would like to see a covered bridge. Can you find one?"

There weren't many hours left between that time and the time Mrs. Johnson was scheduled to arrive. I remembered, driving around that country, that I had seen a covered bridge; but I couldn't recall its relationship to the airport or to the Rockefeller home, her final destination.

Incidentally, on that trip she dedicated a lake behind an Army Corps of Engineers Dam, a recreation area. And if I'm not mistaken, that lake was named—oh, I can't think of the name of

it, Joe, my memory about some of these things is a little foggy as you can see, but—

F: There's a lot to sort out.

C: She made a wonderful talk that afternoon in respect to the dedication of the lake behind the dam. This was her first stop on that trip after she got off the airplane.

Then we went to the covered bridge, and I recall so well how much she enjoyed this. She was so enchanted with the bridge that she decided to walk the length of it and back. It was a long bridge about 300 feet long. She and Stewart and Lee Udall and Governor Phil Hoff of Vermont and his wife all walked together all the way to the other end of the bridge and back.

From there, we went to the town hall in Woodstock, where she was greeted very warmly by the people of Woodstock. I recall that Woodstock had been placing a great, great deal of emphasis on beautification. In this little village, the merchants and the town manager jointly had located many potted geraniums all over the downtown area. It brightened it up beautifully. Mrs. Johnson really enjoyed this. The town officials had retained a high school youngster and decked him out in a white helmet and white uniform and supplied him with a golf cart to which a steel drum had been adapted. After school, this youngster went about the downtown area with his stick, picking up litter, and depositing it in his drum. He made his spending money from his job.

F: You mean this wasn't in connection with Mrs. Johnson, this was a regular thing?

C: This was a regular thing. Mrs. Johnson was really inspired by the attention that this community was giving to the beautification program.

From there, Mrs. Johnson went to the Rockefeller home, which is a very lovely, old, old Victorian-like building, not far from the heart of town. The setting for it is superb, with broad expanses of grass and lovely trees and other amenities, including a swimming pool, a tennis court, and bowling alley. I'll tell you more about this aspect of it later on. We didn't see Mrs. Johnson that night. She had dinner with the Rockefellers and the Udalls and the Hoffs.

The next morning, which was Sunday, we all met and went to church in Woodstock. After the church services, we took her to a historic house in Woodstock, which she was anxious to see. We had arranged for her to take a tour of the village in steam-driven cars of the early twentieth century. These were cars that were owned by two youngsters who live in Woodstock.

F: Stanleys?

C: Stanley Steamers. As a part of the whole, to make it come more alive, Shirley Clurman, Governor Nelson Rockefeller's social secretary, arranged to rent some hats of the period that the ladies

wore, the big, big hats with the long tie-ons and big ribbons. Sure enough, after church, we visited the historic house and then presented Mrs. Johnson and the ladies in the party, Lee Udall, Mrs. Rockefeller and Mrs. Hoff, the Governor's wife, with the hats and they put them on. They were extremely colorful. The drivers were also appropriately garbed, wearing long coats and the typical caps of the day, you know.

F: And goggles?

C: And goggles, the whole works. The pictures that were turned out from this event are great. We got the Stanley Steamers going on their tour of Woodstock and I returned to the Rockefeller home to make the final arrangements for the speech Mrs. Johnson was to make there that afternoon. In due time they came along, and she made her statement on conservation matters. We had a large turnout—and wonderful refreshments.

I recall that Mrs. Johnson wanted to present a personal gift each to Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller, and I was asked to come forth with ideas. I knew that Mr. Rockefeller likes to fish, especially for trout. Liz and I talked on the telephone a number of times, and we agreed on a fishing pole for each of them. So I made arrangements to buy two fishing poles.

F: You're not talking about rods—you're talking about poles?

C: The whole works. Yes, rod and all. I looked around Woodstock and inquired here and yon. I was led to, of all places, the town drug store. I found that the owner of the drug store was the agent for the manufacturer in Vermont who made the poles or rods; and so I went ahead and bought two of them, one each for Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller. I'm trying to recall the actual inscription that Mrs. Johnson wrote for the handles on the fishing rods. I can't recall the exact wording; again, I'd have to check the record—but it was a very personal message both to Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller. After the ceremonies at the Rockefeller home, Mrs. Johnson presented each of the Rockefellers with their rods and they were very touched.

That evening I was privileged to be invited to dinner at the Rockefellers' home. We gathered in their living room and enjoyed a cocktail or two, and then went to the dining room for dinner. It was a small party; I think there were only about twelve of us, including Mrs. Johnson, of course, and the Rockefellers and the Udalls and Governor Hoff and Mrs. Hoff and the Hitchcocks, family relations of the Rockefellers—and Shirley Clurman and Walt Rostow and I.

While we were having our cocktails, Mrs. Johnson came up to me and said, "Nash, do you think you might rig up a little bowling after dinner?" She knew and I knew that Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller had a bowling alley on their estate. I said, "Mrs. Johnson, I'll

check on it." I approached Mr. Rockefeller, and said, "Mr. Rockefeller, I think Mrs. Johnson would be interested in bowling after dinner, if that's possible." He was delighted with the idea.

So, after dinner and some moving toasts, we all walked up to the bowling alley, which is only a hundred yards from the main house. The bowling alley is in a separate building, a very charming building, also in the Victorian style. The lower floor contains a lobby, which was used as the press room at the Rockefeller home. Behind it was the marvelous bowling alley, as magnificent as one will find anywhere. Upstairs, Mr. Rockefeller had his study, very tastefully done, not ostentatious, but very tastefully done.

Anyway, after dinner we went up there and split into two teams. As I recall, Phil Hoff and Lee Udall and Mrs. Rockefeller and Walt Rostow and I were teamed together. The other team consisted of Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Rockefeller, Mrs. Hoff, Stewart Udall and—

F: Clurman?

C: No, Mr. Hitchcock. We bowled two games. None of us were especially good. Mrs. Johnson did well. As I recall, she scored better than I did on both games. That was a memorable evening, and I'll never forget it.

F: Was this strictly private, or was the press permitted to—?

C: No, this was strictly private. The press never even knew that the dinner had taken place or that the bowling had taken place. These are the private things we didn't discuss. We liked to afford the First Lady some privacy. She was exceedingly generous with her time, exceedingly attentive to the press. I never, never saw her do anything except cooperate in every way with the press people. It's no wonder to me, Joe, that the news hens loved her so. Not only the news hens, but the men. I can remember going back to the first trip—the Landmarks and Landscapes trip—that Stan Wayman of Life Magazine and Ollie Atkins of the Saturday Evening Post, both photographers, came to me and said, "Could you possibly arrange for a stop so that Mrs. Johnson could pose for some pictures for us with the Blue Ridge Mountains in the background?"

Liz wasn't with us at the time. She had gone ahead to Roanoke. So I asked Mrs. Johnson and she said, "I'd love to." So I told the fellows to let us know when they wanted to stop, and she accommodated them very nicely.

In fact, she is a great photographer herself, you know. She was always taking movies. I'm sure you know this. And it was so funny—we got out there and while they were photographing her, she was photographing them and Mrs. Humphrey and all the other ladies who were with us on the trip. By the way, Mrs. Henry Fowler was with us on the Landscapes trip, as I remember, and the wife of the Postmaster General was with us on that trip, Mrs. Gronouski.

But getting back to Woodstock, after dinner and bowling, we called it a night. The next morning we boarded busses and left Woodstock for Middlebury College, where Mrs. Johnson was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws, along with Walt Rostow.

On the way from Woodstock to Middlebury, we stopped at the site of the Robert Frost take-off point for his home. Unfortunately, because she had a timetable that was rather rigid, we were not able to walk up to the home itself. She did walk in the woods that form the approach to the home and greatly enjoyed that.

Then we returned to Washington, uneventfully, I might say.

F: Were you with her when she went down to Adams?

C: No, I was handling Woodstock. Rex Scouten and Simone Poulain handled the Adams part.

F: So you came back from there?

C: Yes, right.

F: What's next, Crossroads?

C: Well, let me think.

F: It must be.

C: Yes, for me it was, the Crossroads trip. This one was designated to highlight several things—the rehabilitation of a depressed part

of a city, as in Montevideo, Minnesota; to highlight the arts, as in the case of the theater in Minneapolis.

F: The Tyrone Guthrie.

C: The Tyrone Guthrie theater in Minneapolis; to highlight history and culture in the sense of the visit to the Mark Twain home at Hannibal, Missouri; to highlight architecture as in the case of Columbus, Indiana, where so many of the great architects of our time like Warnecke, Owings, Philip Johnson and others have left their mark. This trip combined a number of things.

It worked out in this way: Marcia Maddox and I were asked to go to Minneapolis and look at the possibilities there in respect to the Tyrone Guthrie Theater. We were also asked to look into the possibilities of having Mrs. Johnson visit a senior citizens' home—again to highlight the President's programs in respect to this.

So Marcia and I did Minneapolis, and also the western part of the State; we visited Montevideo where we saw a part of a downtown—

F: How did Montevideo get in Minnesota?

C: I don't know, but it did. How did Peru get into Indiana, or Mexico into Missouri? In any case, we found this little town in western Minnesota called Montevideo, where the initiative of the

citizens resulted in the vast improvement of a part of the downtown where they had repainted buildings, torn out old structures and put in other amenities to supplant them; in other words, the facelifting of a little community.

Then we visited a senior citizens' home in another place in Minnesota. Marcia had to leave for some reason—I'm trying to recall the sequence of things here. As a part of this advance, Mrs. Humphrey had invited Mrs. Johnson to visit her at her home in Waverly, Minnesota. As a part of this whole exercise, Marcia and I visited the Vice President's home in Waverly. The Vice President was not there, but Mrs. Humphrey was and we spent a delightful morning with her making the arrangements for the visit.

From there, again as a part of this whole trip, Mrs. Johnson wanted to highlight conservation, too. After all, this was her main thrust and her first love. As a part of this whole exercise, we went up to the Sylvania National Forest in Michigan to look into the possibilities of having Mrs. Johnson make a stop at a Job Corps Center, again to give emphasis to this part of the President's program; and also to dedicate the Sylvania Recreation Area. This is a marvelous, outstanding, scenic and recreational resource in that part of the State.

Also, as a part of this trip, Mrs. Johnson was giving consideration to visiting the Frank Lloyd Wright home at Taliesin, Wisconsin, because Mrs. Wright had invited her there. And finally,

a visit to the Wisconsin State Fair. She had also been invited there—to Madison, Wisconsin.

Then we went south and looked into the possibilities of her visiting the Mark Twain home in Hannibal, Missouri; and finally a visit to Columbus, Indiana, where she was considering stopping to take a look at the great work that the people of Columbus have done in the way of bringing varied forms of architecture into that part of the country.

F: How did Columbus happen to have that distinction? There's not that much city.

C: That's right. Columbus actually is the home of the Cummins Engine Company. Mr. Irwin Miller, who is the Chairman of the Board of Cummins Engine, has taken the lead in bringing about a new environment to that community, varied architecture mostly. He has done a tremendous job, Joe. It's a lovely little place, believe me—outstanding, in fact.

Well, Marcia and I came back to Washington and checked in with Liz and ultimately with Mrs. Johnson and consummated the arrangements for the trip. Because of the breadth of this particular trip, though, we had to resort to the use of quite a number of people to do the followup advances and the final preparations. I asked Rex Scouten to handle the Sylvania National Forest part of the trip. Liz assigned Charlie Boatner and Marta Ross to

handle Madison, Wisconsin. She assigned Marcia to look after the Minneapolis visit, including the trip to Montevideo and Waverly, Minnesota; and she asked me to handle Hannibal, Missouri, which involved a barge trip down the Mississippi. Helene Lindow, who is Mrs. Johnson's secretary now—a lovely youngster about the age of one of my children—went with me so that we could check her out on advances. Simone Poulain was asked to handle the Columbus end of things.

I can't tell you a whole lot about the Minneapolis part of it because—

F: Well, I'm mainly interested in your involvement.

C: —I wasn't involved there particularly, after that. But in the case of the visit to Hannibal, Missouri, the Mark Twain home—

F: How did you get her to Hannibal?

C: By airplane. We landed her at an airport at Quincy, Illinois, up the river because there was no airport in Hannibal to accommodate the airplane. I made arrangements for her to be greeted at the airport, and she had a very nice reception on the part of the people of this Illinois community.

We stopped the motorcade along the route to Quincy from the airport, for thousands of school children were waiting to see her. She got out of her car and shook hands with a lot of the kids and

greatly enjoyed this, as she always did. You know, Joe, she always made it a point to take the time to go and shake people's hands—airports, everywhere; she was very considerate that way, and people loved seeing her—and loved her for doing it.

The big part of this expedition was the trip down the Mississippi River to Hannibal from Quincy, using regular grain-carrying barges.

F: These weren't specially slicked out, kind of tourist barges? These were working barges?

C: Working barges, those long things that carry hundreds of tons of grain. We had made arrangements for a luncheon to be served aboard the boat that pushed the barges along and takes them downriver. We got her aboard this boat, where she had a typical Mississippi River luncheon, including—I don't think they had catfish, but they had the typical foods—

F: She rode the barge and then transferred to the boat?

C: No, she never actually rode the barges. She stayed on the boat; nobody rode on the barges. These were huge metal barges, and as I recall, we had about ten of them. They're a mile long, each one, it seems, a tremendous—

F: Like a caravan—

C: Tremendous things, that's right. The barge company had a superb luncheon for her aboard the boat, with music and all the trappings.

I wasn't able to go on the boat and missed a fabulous luncheon because I had to get to Hannibal to handle the arrangements there. Instead, I settled for a hamburger on the way.

In that wonderful little community of Hannibal, I determined to flush out the crowds. As a result, we had a tremendous reception for her at the landing when the boat came in--high school bands playing, groups singing, all kinds of activities. It was a gay and colorful reception, one of the best I can remember.

The Mark Twain house is only a half a mile from the landing, and we walked Mrs. Johnson there along three streets. Bright flowers were placed in tubs in the area to add color to the occasion. She made a speech from the very small porch of the house in front of the Mark Twain home, that is, directly opposite the street from the Mark Twain home. Secretary and Mrs. Freeman were with her on that trip. Mrs. Hubert Humphrey was also with her on that part of the trip. After she made her speech, which was perfect for the occasion, she went across the street and spent about forty minutes in the Mark Twain home. The curator, Mrs. Anderson, a local lady, was her guide.

To give variety to the event, we arranged for that year's Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher, who were in costume and the official representatives of the town of Hannibal, to be right with the First Lady from the time she stepped off the boat until she left Hannibal. Becky and Tom were high school youngsters, and both of them discharged their roles in impeccable fashion.

Mrs. Johnson's Hannibal speech, although brief, was very lyrical, very poetic. I also remember that the Mayor of Hannibal presented the First Lady with an oil painting of the Mark Twain home. It was painted by a local artist, a lady.

In her usual way, she asked many questions about the Mark Twain home, which is a National Historic Landmark, by the way. The plaque designating it as one hangs on the front of the building.

We boarded our busses at the Mark Twain home and went back to the airplane at Quincy. By the way, Liz Carpenter still mentions the fact that we ran behind schedule on the Hannibal trip, and still needles me—in a friendly way, of course. The reason we got so far behind schedule is that I simply underestimated the time it would take for the barges to travel to Hannibal from the takeoff point at Quincy. The distance wasn't a long one, only seventeen or eighteen miles. I simulated the trip, as we always did. We timed our trips on busses, automobiles, airplanes, the whole business, by actually dry-running them. On this occasion, I simulated the trip on a motorboat at supposedly the exact speed the barges would travel. In practice it didn't work out, and we ran an hour and a half behind schedule, which made our Columbus, Indiana, arrival very late. But Mrs. Johnson was determined not to disappoint anyone and she observed the planned schedule. Through it all, Liz had kittens and I had butterflies. We

arrived at Columbus very late, but she went through her whole schedule, in any event. That night in Columbus, Mrs. Johnson stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Miller, a devoted Republican, by the way. I mention this merely to show that the universal love Americans hold for Mrs. Johnson is not limited to the Democrats. The press and all of us on the staff were housed in a motel that night. Columbus held a glittering dinner for her in a superb school designed by John Warnecke, I believe. John was at the dinner along with other architectural greats of our time.

The next day we flew to Ironwood, Michigan, and bussed to the Sylvania Recreation Area. On the shores of Clark Lake, she dedicated the 18,000-acre wilderness area, which was acquired through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Rex Scouten advanced that part of the trip and did an outstanding job. He turned out very large crowds everywhere—even managed to arrange for school children to be let out of classes.

The setting on Clark Lake for the dedication of Sylvania was superb. A bronze plaque was unveiled to commemorate the event. As I recall, several gifts were presented to Mrs. Johnson, including a locally made toy for her grandson and a canoe—also locally made—for her and the President. After the ceremonies, Mrs. Johnson shook hands with many people who were there, including about 200 Job Corps boys. She took time to say a word to everyone of them.

We bussed back to Ironwood and flew on to Madison, Wisconsin, where we visited the Joseph Johnson farm, near there. The Johnson farm is a milk producer, and we all had cookies and milk on the lawn.

Then we bussed to Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's renowned home, where Mrs. Wright entertained the First Lady at tea. Taliesin is quite a home. That evening, a lovely dinner was given for Mrs. Johnson in Spring Green, Wisconsin, followed by a performance of a production called "Hodag" by the Wisconsin Idea Theater. Mrs. Johnson spent the night at Governor and Mrs. Knowles' home in Madison.

Next morning, we visited the World Youth Forum at the Coliseum in Madison. Secretary Freeman and Mrs. Johnson both spoke to about 10,000 people in the Coliseum. Madison, the home of the University of Wisconsin, was a hot bed of radical students at the time. We got word Mrs. Johnson would be picketed, but the Secret Service boys really came through. They simply changed the route of the motorcade and we didn't see even one picket. From Madison, we flew home in our chartered Electra.

F: That leaves us the one you made just before she went out of office.

C: That's right, Joe. That leaves us the "This is Our Country" trip, which began in Washington, went to New Orleans, to Cape Kennedy, Denver, the Redwoods, and home. I fielded the New Orleans part of the trip—and Denver.

F: Well now, unlike the previous trips which were usually—well, they were regional and had a definite sort of a regional theme, this one hit one coast to the other and up and down. Was she just trying to get in a number of things before she went out?

C: Exactly that. In this case, she wanted to highlight, as in New Orleans, for example, the historic importance of the place. She also wanted to highlight the performing arts—culture and history.

As for Cape Kennedy, she had aspired for a long time to going there because of the emphasis the President placed on our space program.

In the case of Denver, she sought to highlight health programs. I'll tell you more about that later. In the case of the Redwoods, of course, conservation and the actual dedication of a new national park.

F: Would the fact that you have a through-way problem in New Orleans have had any role in deciding her to go down there?

C: I don't quite understand what you mean, Joe.

F: You know there's an expressway that's supposed to come right in over the Quarter.

C: We didn't touch on that issue because it was too sensitive. I purposely stayed away from it. They tried to inject the problem into the picture, but I put a tactful foot down, pointing out it

was too controversial to involve the First Lady. But she knew about it. There's no doubt of that.

Getting back to the specifics of New Orleans, I worked on that advance with John Singerhoff, of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; and the reason he was sent there is that Mrs. Johnson planned to highlight education on this trip by visiting St. Xavier College and an elementary school in a very depressed part of town.

Another one who worked on the advance in this case was Barbara Keehn, who was Bess Abell's assistant at the White House and has since joined Roger Stevens.

My main thrust was arranging for her visit to the French Quarter and looking into other possibilities. By the time that I arrived, Barbara and John had already done some exploratory work in respect to a number of possibilities, including a theater, St. Xavier College, and another school. Neither one of them had much experience in discharging total responsibility for an advance, so I helped coordinate their work, in addition to checking out French Quarter possibilities.

I returned to Washington and checked in with Liz, who posted Mrs. Johnson. I didn't discuss this particular trip with Mrs. Johnson, as I had the others. I went back a second time and firmed up the arrangements, which included a welcome at the airport by the Mayor of New Orleans, Victor Schiro; and I arranged for music, flower presentations and other things. We turned out a quite large crowd,

which I'm sure pleased the First Lady. Liz was mighty happy about it.

I learned about a group of postmen in New Orleans who played jazz music, in their postal uniforms, if you please. We arranged for them to be present for the arrival, and these guys were terrific. They played the best and liveliest jazz music I have ever heard.

F: White or black?

C: They were all black. Also, we turned out a big high school band from one of the communities adjoining New Orleans, and they performed beautifully. The motorcade went on to visit the two schools I mentioned earlier where Mrs. Johnson chatted with students, looked at classrooms, evaluated training programs, etcetera.

We were obliged on all trips to check a myriad of details. It seems that everybody everywhere wanted to present her with yellow roses, inevitably yellow roses. I had a bit of a time convincing people that although she loved yellow roses, she liked all flowers. For the New Orleans arrival, I suggested to the Mayor's wife and two other ladies meeting her that Mrs. Johnson would be pleased to be welcomed with flowers. I expressed the hope they would not be yellow roses. Well, all three ladies appeared with flowers, but they were not yellow roses. Instead, they were red roses! Typically, on these trips we made arrangements for hospitals

to receive the flowers. Mrs. Johnson simply couldn't carry flowers all day and instead of letting them go to waste, we used a little White House card that said "Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson," and would have somebody standing by to deliver them to an already selected hospital or hospitals.

I didn't go with her to visit the two schools, because I had to field the arrangements for her at the French Quarter. I went on ahead, and awaited her arrival at the hotel where she was staying, the Royal Orleans in the French Quarter. When she arrived there, at the entrance to the hotel later in the day, I introduced to her an architect who is especially knowledgeable about New Orleans architecture. His wife is descended from the architect who designed the White House and must be a great, great, great grandniece. The architect's name is Sam Wilson, a very distinguished looking gentleman, very knowledgeable about the history of New Orleans and practically every building there. I had made arrangements for Mr. Wilson to be her escort on the walking tour from the Royal Orleans Hotel to the famous Old Convent and finally to the Beauregard House. This took her by way of Jackson Square. New Orleans has a Jackson Square, as we do, and in it they have a copy of the Mills statue of Jackson. We have the original here, in Lafayette Park. Jackson Square in New Orleans is a very colorful place where artists can be seen painting their pictures.

Anyway, I had advanced every foot of the route she was to walk. She arrived right on schedule and Mr. Wilson took her in tow, along with an entourage of press and photographers, following as usual. Mrs. Johnson's first destination on the walk through the French Quarter was the Old Ursuline Convent, so called. This is a convent built by missionaries way, way back, and is still in use as a church or at least a part of it is. The convent itself is no longer in use, except as offices for the padre in charge of it and the adjoining church. When we arrived at the convent, I presented the Pastor, Father Vincent Liberto, to her. They got along mighty well, not only because he is a splendid gentleman but is also a transplanted Texan. The First Lady spent about twenty minutes in the Old Convent and greatly enjoyed it. Lynda was with us on this leg of the trip and appeared to enjoy everything, too.

After we visited the convent, we walked with Mrs. Johnson across the street to the historic Beauregard House. This is now the home of Frances Parkinson Keyes, the authoress, and the First Lady spent about twenty minutes in the house.

I had made arrangements to have a typical horse-drawn carriage transport Mrs. Johnson back to the hotel. I told Liz I thought this would add a lot of color, and said, "I think this is a picture that will move on the wires, Liz." She agreed. Sure enough, it was the picture that moved, showing Mrs. Johnson and Lynda in the horse-drawn carriage with a Negro driver and all his trappings. The picture even appeared in Time.

We started back to the hotel when I got word over my portable radio that one of the news hens had taken a fall in the Beauregard House. I dashed into the house to assist the news lady and stayed with her all the way to the hotel. Meantime, Mrs. Johnson and Lynda rode to their hotel in the carriage. I missed their arrival at the Royal Orleans Hotel.

That evening Mrs. Johnson and Lynda visited the civic theater in New Orleans and saw a performance of one of Shaw's plays. After that she went to the International Trade Mart for a dinner given for her by a gentleman called Bill Hellis, a friend of the President's. I must say that I've never attended a more glittering dinner in my life than that one.

F: Where was this?

C: In the International Trade Mart Building, at the exclusive Plimpton Club. Mr. Hellis, I take it, is quite well to do. He's involved in oil and many other things.

Mrs. Johnson was quite tired. She had had a long day and said to me, "Do you suppose Mr. Hellis would be offended if I shortened my stay a little bit?" And so I tried, as hard and tactfully as I could, to impress upon Mr. Hellis, who was very gracious and understanding, and managed to get Mrs. Johnson on her way before she became even more weary.

The next morning I got up at 5 a.m. in order to catch an airplane for Denver. Cynthia Wilson was advancing the Denver trip,

and this was the first time that Cynthia had been on her own on an advance. She was very queasy and uncertain about herself. Helene Lindow was with her, by the way. Liz asked me if I would go out and help them. This meant that I had to miss the Cape Kennedy visit. Of course, I agreed to do so and got up at 5 a.m., after going to bed about 1:30, and jumped on an airplane and went on to Denver where I met Cynthia and Helene and helped them wrap up a few things.

F: This was a regular commercial flight?

C: Oh, yes. All the flights we went on, Joe, were on commercial airplanes. They were chartered, typically 727's or Electras. Most of the time we used 727's.

I worked all of Saturday afternoon and well into the night with the girls setting up the motorcade, working with the Secret Service, walking the route she was to walk, visiting every site she was to visit, meeting the people she was to greet, instructing them as to where to stand and be introduced and all that kind of thing; the details on these trips are incredibly fine, meaning lots of attention to them.

The next morning, Sunday morning, she arrived at Denver Airport. She made three stops in Denver; I handled two of them. Cynthia and I awaited her at the library where she saw a film on health.

F: This is the Denver Public Library?

C: A branch of the Denver Public Library. I got her introduced and in the hands of the people who were concerned with her visit there, and then went on to Westside Health Center, where she made a visit and a speech.

We had quite a large crowd there awaiting her. In fact, such an enthusiastic crowd of Mexican-Americans that all wanted to be right with her—

F: Viva, huh?

C: Viva, and we had quite a time from that point of view, so enthusiastic was the crowd. She was presented with flowers, as she always was, and greeted exceedingly warmly by the people. She made her remarks, and then spent some time touring the health center and its facilities. We learned that many of the people served by this health center really could not have had medical attention otherwise. It was just one of those situations where people are so poverty-ridden that they can't afford medical care.

That's one of the problems. The other problem is that they don't know about the availability of some of these services. I think Mrs. Johnson's visit highlighted this, and it gave her a great lift to be able to do it.

From there we bussed to Larimer Square in Denver, which is in an old part of the city, but which has been very tastefully renewed. It's magnificent. This demonstrated that attractive

buildings will attract customers, regardless of their location.

She spent a good deal of time in Larimer Square; she had lunch in a restaurant there, a luncheon that Cynthia had arranged.

And then she visited the shops.

I got word over the radio from Liz that Mrs. Johnson should stop at a toy shop in the square, because it was so unique. So I took her there, much to the surprise of the owners, who hadn't been primed. Anyway, the owners were overwhelmed to see her there—

F: I can imagine.

C: —and they gave her a couple of stuffed animals to take home to Luci's youngster.

We also made an unscheduled stop in a book store, and I quickly had to search out the people in charge, so I could bring them up to be presented to her, and they too were overwhelmed.

That afternoon we boarded the 727 and flew on to the Redwoods. Typically—

F: You went direct to where?

C: To Eureka, California. Typically, Joe, Liz sought me out to sit by me on the airplane, because she was such a nervous flyer. The weather was a little messy in Denver; in fact, snow was predicted that night. When we got up in the air, Liz started getting nervous. She took my hand and held on to it and crushed it. Mrs. Johnson,

apparently, was a little bit nervous too. She was sitting right behind us all by herself next to the window, and she called over and said, "Nash, won't you join me for a minute?"

Liz got up and flew across the aisle and sat with Erv Duggan and crushed his hand while I sat with Mrs. Johnson. For the second time in all the years I had been flying with her, I realized the First Lady was a little nervous in an airplane. But she never showed it or said a word about it.

We arrived in Eureka in a rain storm early in the evening. The local people had arranged a reception for her at the Eureka Inn. Rex Scouten and Bess Abell and Tom Bendorf all did the advance on this trip, and also Con Heine, of the National Park Service. They had made some wonderful arrangements for her visit there.

Mrs. Johnson spent about an hour at the reception greeting all of the people who had gathered from throughout the State to be with her.

F: Did Governor Reagan show?

C: No, the Governor didn't show, but—as a matter of fact, he had no representative at this reception, as I recall. But the next day he did have a representative at the dedication of—

F: Ordinarily, it didn't matter whether the State administration was Republican or Democrat. They trotted out—

C: It never mattered, and I am reminded that one of the problems I usually had on my advances was convincing people that Mrs. Johnson was not there for political reasons.

F: Not there as a Democrat?

C: Right. Inevitably the local politicians sought a reason for getting involved with the visit, and we had to be as tactful as we knew how to be to convince them that she was there for other than political reasons. Some times things got a little sticky, because they just wouldn't accept our word for it. You can never imagine the ideas that were propounded to us by local people covering things they felt she ought to do—"She should address our Democratic Club"—you know, that kind of thing. We found it awkward at times to get ourselves extricated from certain invitations, but in the main people understood. There were but a few cases where people were not understanding.

On the next morning, a Monday morning, the dedication of the Redwoods National Park took place. Apropos this, I went on ahead to the dedication site to make sure that everything was in readiness and in order. Con Heine and I went up together with one of the park people, and we awaited Mrs. Johnson's arrival.

The day was perfectly glorious, unlike the preceding three weeks where it had rained every day, I understand. In fact, it was raining when our airplane landed that night, but unlike the preceding three weeks, the day was crystal clear, magnificent.

F: In general, you never got messed up by weather in any of these trips, did you?

C: Not very much, Joe, fortunately. I can't—

F: Except that day on the Snake?

C: Yes, but she wasn't with us on that river trip. I can remember a number of occasions here in Washington when we went on beautification plantings where the weather hampered us. But I will say this—I never once saw Mrs. Johnson chicken out because of weather. The one time we absolutely had to cancel out was on the occasion last fall of the dedication of Lady Bird Johnson Park, which is an interesting story in itself.

In the case of the Redwoods, we had glorious weather. You know, I never paid much attention to what Mrs. Johnson was wearing, but I distinctly remember that she always looked very nice. When I first started working with the First Lady, Bette would sometimes ask me, "What was she wearing?" And I'd say, "Betts, I don't know what Mrs. Johnson was wearing." I said, "I don't pay attention to those things." But this day, for some reason, I did, Joe, and I don't know why. All I know is that she was always impeccable, beautifully and tastefully dressed, never ostentatious, just perfectly right for whatever the occasion. But on this particular day, she wore slacks, beige slacks and a beige jacket, and a sort of a—

F: A hunter's cap?

C: Yes, something like a hunter's cap. Actually, more like a Sherlock Holmes cap. And she looked just delightful.

Mrs. Johnson was absolutely sparkling that morning, just—

F: How did you come out—in a regular automobile?

C: Yes, she did.

F: Or was she on the bus?

C: Well, on that part of the trip she was in a car, and rode with George Hartzog.

F: How do you handle security in a bunch of trees?

C: We have agents around and other law enforcement people. But you know, around Mrs. Johnson, security was never really a problem. We were always conscious of it, of course. We worked with the Secret Service very closely, and always had our plainclothes people and others. But, thank God, we didn't have to take the precautions with her that had to be taken around the President.

In any event, Joe, she was in her glory among the big trees. She was radiant. She has always had such a love for the outdoors and this was a really important occasion, because she was dedicating the newest national park in the United States.

We had a nice crowd there. We had nice music, brief speeches; I recall that Mr. Ike Livermore, who was Governor Reagan's representative, hinted at our not overdoing in acquiring more acreage for this park so that it would not be taken off the tax rolls. George Hartzog served as master of ceremonies and Mrs. Johnson made what I thought was an eloquent and inspiring speech.

On speechmaking by the First Lady, I can remember when I first started working with her that her speeches were very adequate. They always were, but she wasn't the polished speaker that she was five years later.

F: You saw her grow up?

C: I've never seen anyone improve the quality of her speechmaking capability as she did. Anything she did, Joe, she did well. Just one of these extraordinarily gifted people.

F: Did you ever help on any of those speeches?

C: Oh, yes. Quite frequently.

F: On conservation?

C: Mostly on beautification, Joe. I wrote a fair number of her speeches. I drafted one article that I'm especially proud of. It appeared in Life Magazine and was on the subject of beautification. I would write drafts, then Liz would edit them, and

Mrs. Johnson would polish them. One time when Liz was out of town I got a call from Simone Poulain, who was acting for her, saying that Mrs. Johnson was scheduled to make a statement at 2 o'clock as a response to a presentation she was to receive from the American Institute of Architects. Simone wondered if I might come over and help draft some remarks for Mrs. Johnson.

This was about 12 o'clock. I jumped in my car and dashed to the White House. I asked Simone if she had a copy of the statement the architects were to make, and she produced it. The two of us sat down together, trying to compose remarks for Mrs. Johnson. After working with Simone for about twenty minutes, I said to her, "Why don't you go have lunch and let me try my hand at this?"

I found it hard to compose with anyone else. So I sat down at Liz's desk and typewriter, and pounded out about a three minute statement. When Simone came back from lunch, she looked it over; she liked it; we weren't going to have an opportunity for Mrs. Johnson to review it, because she had a Senate wives' luncheon that day. And this presentation—

F: You handed it to her on the way in, then?

C: The award she was to receive was to be in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden promptly at 2 o'clock, and she wasn't going to have time between the luncheon and the presentation to do any editing. So we decided to put her statement on cards. Typically, she talked from cards.

I got Liz's secretary to put the remarks on cards, and when she delivered it she read it for the first time.

F: But no stumbling?

C: Never. Not one stumble, I should say not.

F: Let's finish up the Redwoods trip and then we'll quit for now.

C: The thing that stands out in my mind about the dedication of the Redwoods is the tremendous joy that Mrs. Johnson showed through her remarks and her actions on that day. I think she sensed the great significance of the event, more so probably than many, many of the other things she had done, because she realized that she was dedicating a resource that for all time would benefit the people of the United States. And I think she sensed that—

F: A resource that had been fought for too.

C: And one that the President had fought for very, very hard. She sensed this, and I think her actions that day, her delivery of the statement—I think all of these things showed the keen, keen sense of conservation statesmanship that she felt on that day.

After the dedication ceremonies and after greeting people as she always did, after reading some friendly picket signs—which is another subject, Joe.

F: We'll get into that next time.

C: Okay. We went on down to a site where the local people entertained her with a box lunch in an amphitheater. Then we went up to the Jedediah Smith State Park where she took about a two and a half mile hike along with the press and everybody else. Then we went on back to Eureka, boarded the airplane, flew to San Francisco where we took on more fuel and food, and then departed for San Antonio, Texas.

On the way we had a party for her aboard the airplane, with ballons and crepe paper and funny stories. Bonny Angelo was the mistress of ceremonies on that occasion, with champagne and all the trappings. It was delightful. One very tender thing about this trip was that we landed at San Antonio to let her out of the airplane because she was going on to the Ranch from there. We all got off the plane and sang, "Auld Lang Syne." There were many misty eyes, including mine, for we realized this was our last trip together. We had all been a part of an exciting, unforgettable drama.

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Legal Agreement pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of Nash Castro

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Nash Castro of Palisades, New York, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on February 25, March 4, March 20, April 25 and May 1, 1969 in Washington, D.C., and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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Interview IV, in its entirety
Interview V, in its entirety

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcripts in accordance with the above stipulations.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes, limited by the above restrictions.

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Nash Castro
Donor

9/26/83
Date

Peter M. Ware
Archivist of the United States

October 11, 1983
Date