

INTERVIEW III

INTERVIEWEE: NASH CASTRO

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

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

F: This is the third interview with Mr. Nash Castro in his office in Washington on March 20, 1969, Joe B. Frantz, Interviewer.

Nash, tell us what you recall about the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, how it came into being.

C: It's very appropriate that we should talk about the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden today, Joe, it being almost the first day of spring.

The development of the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, which had always been called the East Garden, was the continuity of the work that Mrs. Paul Mellon did in behalf of the Rose Garden, the one which adjoins the President's office. Mrs. Mellon retained the services of Perry Wheeler, the very distinguished landscape architect, to work with her in redesigning the garden. The first time I saw the East Garden was in 1961. I thought it was a rather shabby garden, quite unworthy of the dignity of the White House. It was very plain, very vanilla-ish and I'm delighted that Mrs. Mellon addressed herself to doing something about it. In this, of course, Mrs. Johnson exerted great interest. She went into it wholeheartedly, working with Mrs. Mellon on it.

F: Where do you think Mrs. Mellon got the idea?

C: I think it was a carry-over, an extension of the idea of doing the Rose Garden on the west side, because the two gardens rather complement each other. The thing that always struck me about the then so-called East Garden was the fact that all the tourists who come to the White House walk right by it.

F: Yes, it's the one garden to see.

C: It's the only garden they see, and I always felt that it needed refurbishing and rehabilitation. Well, Mrs. Mellon undertook to do this for President Kennedy and to underwrite the cost, or part of it, I should say, for the White House Historical Association also donated \$10,000 toward the project. The cost wasn't very much above that, maybe another three or four thousand dollars at most, and this we paid for out of our National Park Service appropriated funds, in addition to what the Association and Mrs. Mellon donated. Mrs. Mellon's donation covered the payment of Perry Wheeler's fees, some plant materials, and the sculpture and pool located at the east end of the garden.

When the idea of dedicating the garden was first propounded, about which Liz and I talked in the summer of 1964, the suggestion was made by Mrs. Johnson that it honor Mrs. Kennedy. It was Mrs. Johnson's idea, and strictly her idea, that it be named the Jacqueline B. Kennedy Garden.

We did the work ourselves on the garden, meaning the National Park Service, with its gardeners and other craftsmen, carried out the

plan designed by Mrs. Mellon and Perry Wheeler. Whitey Williams, our horticulturist at the White House, who has been there since 1962, spearheaded the project for the National Park Service. He did a great job, too.

We scheduled the dedication of the garden for a fall day in 1964; however, two days before the event, former President Hoover died. For this reason, Mrs. Johnson concluded it would be better to defer the dedication until the following spring. The dedication took place in April of 1965, on a very lovely spring afternoon. The garden was brilliant with tulips and other bulb plants. Mrs. Kennedy didn't come for the dedication—I think it would have been too tender and painful an occasion for her; Mrs. Hugh D. Auchincloss, her mother, represented her.

We had a gathering of about 200 people. Mrs. Johnson made a very appropriate and moving statement. George Hartzog, the Director of the Park Service, was master of ceremonies. The ceremony was quite simple, informal, tasteful, and very warm, very tender. There were some misty eyes there, as I recall—it was that tender a ceremony. Mrs. Auchincloss was a bit tearful, but dignified and controlled. There were many people that I can remember, including Mrs. Sargent Shriver, Mrs. Mellon, John Walker, and others. Bette and I were privileged to have been included.

Mrs. Kennedy has never seen the garden. She has seen pictures of it, obviously; but she has never returned to the White House since

she left that day in 1963. I doubt that she will ever again come to the White House, which holds such painful memories for her.

I recall that the President joined us for refreshments, which were served on an outdoor table in the garden. This took place after the brief ceremony. Clark Clifford was with him, and Secretary Rusk, too. They had been having a session of some kind and happened to come over and went about very cordially greeting the guests. The President partook of snacks and refreshments along with the rest of us.

The garden adds a real touch of beauty to the White House, Joe. That part of it that's so joyous for me is that all of the tourists who come to the White House have the opportunity to see it. In the spring, the garden boasts the typical spring flowers like tulips, hyacinths, daffodils; in the summer time, we have the colorful annuals; in the fall, mums.

One interesting thing about this garden, as is true of the Rose Garden: in very early summer we lift up the Merion sod, and replace it with Zoysia sod. Zoysia thrives here in the summer time, as you well know. We do this in the case of both gardens so that we are assured of having a nice-looking turf the year round.

F: What's your problem with grass here? Acid soil or—?

C: It is the climate, Joe. We're too far north for the Southern grasses and too far south for the Northern grasses. We're smack in between.

F: Sort of at that awkward age, aren't you?

C: Exactly. We've had terrible problems with the turf at the White House. In 1962 we undertook to resod the oval on the south side of the Mansion, the south grounds. This is an area of about 3.6 acres, as I recall.

President Kennedy—and later Mrs. Johnson—was very grass-conscious and, as a result of his interest, in the early spring of 1962 we undertook to strip the existing sod and sterilize the soil, going through all the machinations of providing good turf to replace that which was so very poor and very shabby. At the suggestion of Mrs. Mellon, but against our better judgment, we replaced the sod with Merion bluegrass. Merion is a very beautiful grass. In fact, I don't know of a prettier grass. But it's also a very fragile grass. And having had a lot of turf experience here in the Washington area, our agronomists advised us not to use this variety. But Mrs. Mellon, who apparently had some successes with Merion, suggested we use it. And we did.

Well, as is typical of Merion bluegrass, in the first year it thrived beautifully. We had a luxuriant carpet of grass on the south lawn. By the summer of 1964, when the Johnsons were in the White House, the turf looked terrible. As usually happened, the Merion was attacked by a fungus and the turf became splotchy and blotchy and ugly. In an effort to keeping it look attractive, we

sprayed it, using a green vegetable dye which really didn't quite match the color of the grass.

Mrs. Johnson was concerned about this. One day she said to me, "Nash, please do something about the grass. Please put something out there, even if it's weeds—just so it's green."

So we undertook to rehabilitate the South Lawn again. This time, instead of using Merion bluegrass, we used K-31, a fescue, a hardy grass. Along with the fescue, we used Kentucky blue; it's sturdy and thrives in this climate. We haven't had any problems with the lawn since.

Apropos the East Garden, or the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, I'm reminded that Mrs. Mellon worked mighty hard on that, as she did in the case of the Rose Garden, applying her brilliant and extraordinary talents to the project—

F: She does more than just give money?

C: Oh, yes! She has great know-how in matters relating to horticulture and landscape architecture. She maintains five homes in the United States and other parts of the world. Horticulture has been a life-long hobby with her. She happens to love horticulture and arboriculture and landscape architecture, and acquits herself beautifully.

Something she did for the Jacqueline B. Kennedy Garden that I thought was touching, and I think historically important: she commissioned a sculptress or sculptor from Illinois—I can't recall

her or his name—to design a sculpture for the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden. The sculpture took the form of a little girl holding a sprinkling can. It's exquisite. It is in bronze and has weathered beautifully. We located it by a small pool on the east side of the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, at the extreme end. We built a little patio around the pool and placed the sculpture there. I can't remember how many, many, many times Mrs. Johnson has glowed about that particular sculpture. She loves it. It's a perfect setting for it and a perfect choice of sculpture for that setting.

Another thing I think is significant about the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden is that Mrs. Mellon wrote a message that was etched onto a sterling silver plate—a rectangular piece of sterling silver. The message is in her own handwriting. The words Mrs. Mellon wrote allude to the dedication of the garden, the name of it, the date; this was posted on one of the columns in the arbor that is located on the west side of the garden—at the extreme west side of the garden. We built this arbor as a part of Mrs. Mellon's plan for the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden. We surfaced the floor of the arbor in brick, bona fide colonial brick, as I recall, because Mrs. Mellon is so thorough about everything. She acquired it in Baltimore, I believe. But to give balance and color to the arbor, to make it more attractive, we planted some Concord grapes around it; these grapes have thrived and at the appropriate time of year, they come forth with their big, beautiful, bunches of ripe, delicious Concord fruit.

Mrs. Johnson used the arbor as a sitting area from time to time. We bought outdoor furniture that complemented the garden, furniture of Mrs. Mellon's choosing. Mrs. Johnson used the arbor to sit and read and visit with friends.

In the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, and to carry out the motif of the Rose Garden, we planted some magnolias soulangeana, a flowering magnolia that is very beautiful. These trees, by the way, as is true of the magnolias in the Rose Garden, came from the parks. The size trees that Mrs. Mellon projected for the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden simply weren't available commercially. If they had been available commercially, I venture to say they would have cost five thousand dollars each, because they're magnificent specimens.

Very fortuitously, Joe, we took these trees from West Potomac Park where they had been planted 35 or 40 years ago. They were located in a place where they were rarely seen by the public. Moreover, and happily for us, they were in the alignment of a sewer project, so it was very natural that we take them and relocate them in the White House gardens.

I recall the day that Mrs. Mellon, Whitey Williams, her chauffeur, and I went out—

F: Who's Whitey Williams?

C: Whitey Williams is our horticulturist at the White House. We drove out in Mrs. Mellon's car to West Potomac Park and looked at the trees, walking around each one and inspecting it for shape and size.



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She was enchanted with the trees. As you know, they're superb trees—magnificent specimens.

In the case of the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, we also took one magnolia tree out of an area we call fountain number four, near the Inlet Bridge to the Tidal Basin. We have a lovely circular garden there. We had a number of magnolias there and determined that one of these could very beautifully fit into the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden; therefore, we took one of them. Of course, we've replaced it with a smaller tree.

F: Moving one of those big magnolias must be like moving a church.

C: Practically, Joe. The ball in the case of each tree measured about eight feet in diameter and about four feet in depth.

F: What did you put it on?

C: On flatbed trucks. Our crews dug these out by hand, because we wanted to be—you know, these were valuable trees. We had to be very careful. We didn't dare use mechanical equipment except to cut a swatch around the tree. From that point on, the work was done by hand; the bailing of the ball of earth around the roots was all done by hand and tied with big ropes and the trees loaded with a crane on a flatbed truck, one at a time, and then taken to the White House and put in place.

We haven't lost any of—well, no, I take that back. We haven't lost any of the trees in the Rose Garden; we did lose one of the

magnolias in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, and this is the one that we replaced from fountain number four that I spoke about a few minutes ago.

One of the enchanting things about the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden is that Mrs. Mellon planted herbs in some of the beds—chives, marjoram, oregano—some of the typical herbs that are used in a kitchen. The White House chef snips his herbs right out of the Garden, and takes them into the kitchen and spices his dishes with them.

F: Added flavor.

C: Indeed.

F: Did Mrs. Johnson ever show any interest in the patina, or the lack of patina, on various Washington statues? Can you express any opinion on that?

C: Joe, I don't recall that she ever said anything about it. Mary Lasker did, though. Mary has been after me for years to do something about the dirty statues, as she calls them.

F: She wants them cleaned up?

C: She wants them cleaned up, as I do, and curiously enough, Laurance Rockefeller gave us some money, I think about \$20,000 in 1965, to do this and we did it experimentally, with good success. On the basis of the success we had, I undertook to clean other statues,

using some of our appropriated money; and I caught the devil for it from the press.

F: They don't like them bright and shiny?

C: They sure don't. They like them weathered and dirty. I don't recall Mrs. Johnson ever expressing an opinion on this particular point. As I said, Mary Lasker certainly did. In fact, she still does.

One curious thing about this: after we undertook to clean some of our statues, in fact, last year, we had a meeting of the Advisory Board on National Parks, you remember. We drove by the Witherspoon statue, which is one of the statues I had cleaned. I asked the Board to advise me on this—whether we should clean our statues—and asked for a showing of hands as to which they preferred. Apparently the Board members prefer the tarnished statues. We can't ignore the wishes of the public in managing a park system, even though our opinions may differ as to how statues should look. For now, at least, they will stay tarnished and soiled.

F: Does the pollution of the Potomac—is it more than just a sort of incidental concern of yours?

C: The pollution of the Potomac is a very deep concern of mine. I am reminded that Mrs. Johnson was also concerned about water pollution and air pollution. I recall that the second or third meeting of

her First Lady's Committee for a More Beautiful Capital addressed itself to water pollution. On a lovely spring day, in 1965—late spring—we convened the committee aboard the U.S.S. Sequoia, the Presidential yacht. We made a trip on the Potomac, leaving from the Navy Yard and returning to the Navy Yard. We lunched aboard the boat, and had a talk on the history of the river.

Stewart Udall spoke about the pollution of our rivers and lakes. Mrs. Johnson showed great interest in this, and you'll find that, in many of her statements, she alluded to this problem and her concern for it, and especially about the need to do something about it. Her expression of interest influenced the President because we now have a Water Pollution Control Act that has teeth in it.

Then too, the President established the wild rivers concept in the National Park System. Additionally, he pushed for a Potomac National River, which one day we hope to achieve, after we acquire some 66,000 acres of land. The Potomac is one of the least polluted rivers in the nation, but that doesn't mean anything, Joe; it's still woefully polluted.

To give you an example: We built—we installed a jet of water in the river in December 1968. In early January, we had some cold weather in Washington and some ice floes formed in the river. The ice caused the jet structure to drift; we recaptured and repositioned

it. Not knowing what was wrong, we sent a diver into the water and asked him to determine what caused the jet structure to drift. He spent about two hours in the water, but came out three different times to warm up. He said the water was so dirty, so opaque, that everything he did he had to do by feel.

F: Down below, he couldn't see?

C: The water was that dirty. And this, mind you, is one of the cleanest rivers in the nation. It's incredible.

F: What is it doing to life in the river?

C: Despoiling it and killing it—almost forever, unless we do something drastic. You know, there was a day when people fished in the Potomac for 100-pound sturgeons. I recall that Mrs. Johnson used this fact in one of her statements on water pollution. It's a terrible problem, Joe, but I think we're coming to terms with it. We have to. We can't perpetuate it, for it will only worsen.

F: It can be cleaned?

C: It can be cleaned. For example: I have learned recently, because I have a problem in respect to the pollution of the river in connection with Piscataway Park, which will become a cause celebre eventually, I learned that the technology exists today to remove

all phosphates and nitrates from our rivers. It's costly to do it, but it can be done.

This is being done in Lake Tahoe, and I think we're coming to that in the case of all the nation's rivers. We just can't keep polluting them. We're going to kill them. Consider Lake Erie. Someone estimated that, if Lake Erie were left to its natural devices, it would take 500 years to restore itself.

Yes, Mrs. Johnson concerned herself with water pollution. She has also concerned herself with air pollution, but not to the same extent. She made references to this problem in her statements and remarks.

F: Did you get any political kickback over the naming of Columbia Island after her?

C: No. We had only one letter of complaint, and it wasn't literally a complaint. It was—

F: That shows that people care.

C: It's wonderful that we did this. I might tell you the background on this, Joe, because I am not sure that it has ever been told before.

The day before the President announced his plans not to run for a second term was on Saturday, March 30, 1968. I remember the date well. I was working at my desk in this office and the phone rang.

Mrs. Johnson was on the other end of the line. It was a lovely spring day, with the temperature in the high 60's. The sky was blue, the air perfectly clear. The daffodils, which we had planted on, at that time, Columbia Island, were busting out all over, as the song says; and Mrs. Johnson called to ask if I, in her usual wonderfully modest way—to ask if—well, she asked me, "Nash, what are you doing?"

And I said, "Oh, Mrs. Johnson, mostly fighting the paper. I'm trying to get a little caught up today."

"Oh, dear," she said. "Do you think you might sneak in a few minutes to go out with me and look at the daffodils?" She added, "It's such a lovely day."

I said I would be delighted. So I drove to the White House, and we—I think I've covered this, in one of our previous discussions.

F: Yes.

C: I won't repeat it; but to make a short story of how we came to name the park lands on Columbia Island after Mrs. Johnson: The following day being March 31, everybody listened to the President—I among them—when he announced that he chose not to run again, I was flabbergasted. So was Bette. In fact, I found it hard to believe what he said.

The next morning, being Monday, the very first thing I did when I came to the office was to dictate a memo to the Director, proposing



that we rename Columbia Island after Mrs. Johnson. The reason I was moved to do this is that it contains her favorite sculpture—this the Navy-Marine Memorial, the one with the seagulls. It's a lovely thing over by the 14th Street Bridge. Mrs. Johnson was greatly responsible for the beautification of Columbia Island. She inspired Mary Lasker to donate the million daffodils we planted there. And she also inspired Mary into donating the 2,700 dogwood trees we also planted there. When I say she inspired Mary to do these projects, I mean to say that they inspired each other. Mary is the one who proposed these plantings. She told Mrs. Johnson and me about her planting plans for Columbia Island and we immediately bought her ideas. Many times, when I drove with Mrs. Johnson on Columbia Island, she inevitably had something lyrical to say about the sculpture, something poetic to say about the setting with the Lincoln Memorial across the river. I always had the feeling that this was one of her favorite places. So it was only natural that the next morning the first thing on my agenda was to dictate a memo recommending that we rename Columbia Island after Mrs. Johnson.

Well, nothing happened after I wrote my memo. After about a month, I got a little impatient and started making some friendly calls and a little friendly needling here and there. And then the decision was made to ask the Board on Geographic Names to consider the proposal formally. This is a Board constituted by the Congress.

It is a small bureau in the Department of the Interior, reporting to the Secretary.

The formal proposal to the Board was written up in the Washington Office of the Park Service. I was asked to review it, which I did, and then it was sent to the Board on Geographic Names. By this time, several months had passed, Joe; in fact, I think it was October 1968 and we were getting close to the wire. The Board on Geographic Names didn't act on it, but concluded instead that this was an administrative matter for the Secretary to make a judgment about. This was not a matter within the province of this Board, the members held.

I then talked with the Secretary about it and he said, "Nash, I would like to do it, but I wonder with the forthcoming election if it's politically timely." You know, he is such a wiseman that he considered all aspects of everything. He was greatly in favor of it; there was no question about it. It was the timing that he was uncertain about.

He determined to go ahead with it after the Board on Geographic Names advised him that it was his responsibility and not that of the Board. So we went ahead, got his approval of it, but kept it a secret from Mrs. Johnson, never once uttering a word to her about it.

In the fall of 1968, we decided it was timely to dedicate the plantings on Columbia Island, including Mary's one million daffodils and 2700 dogwoods and 220 dogwoods given us by the 1964

Inaugural Committee. Dale Miller, who was chairman of the Inaugural Committee that year, very kindly made a donation of \$40,000 for this purpose, meaning the planting of 220 dogwoods. These were funds that were left over from the Inaugural and Dale and his committee decided to do a beautification project with them. We determined to start the plantings on Columbia Island with Dale's money and after we made this start, Mary Lasker came along with her bigger project. Anyway, we determined that we would dedicate these plantings in a formal ceremony. We scheduled the ceremony for the north side of the circle on the west end of Memorial Bridge. As it turned out, we had one of the rainiest days on record, so we decided to shift the ceremony to the Interior Department auditorium. It fell to me to serve as the emcee on that occasion. Liz, who was as pleased as I over the naming of these park lands after Mrs. Johnson, insisted I be the master of ceremonies.

F: Where is the auditorium?

C: In the Interior Building, 18th and C Streets, N.W. We filled the auditorium—the First Lady's Committee was there and lots of others interested in beautification. The press was present in great numbers. The auditorium holds about 900 or 1000 people. We had the Marine Band play music. Dale Miller sat on the platform, and he presented the trees for his Inaugural Committee. Carol Fortas, as Treasurer of the Society for a More Beautiful Capital, presented the daffodils

and the dogwoods. I accepted for the National Park Service.

Then, Secretary Udall announced that he was appointing Mrs. Johnson to serve on the National Park Service's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments. I looked at Mrs. Johnson as he made the announcement. She indicated total surprise by the animated expression on her face. Then Stewart Udall went on to announce that hereafter the lands on Columbia Island would be known as Lady Bird Johnson Park. She was really overwhelmed when the announcement was made. Joe, her eyes opened as big as saucers and she smiled and her face brightened. It was a show of total surprise and equally total delight.

I cannot think of anything we might have done that would be more worthy of recognition of her great work for this nation than the naming of that particular site. Another reason I was moved to suggest this site is the fact that, unlike other places, which physically can be changed by roadways, subways, and all kinds of things, this one is very unlikely ever to undergo any physical change. It's very unlikely that there will ever be any structures on it, for example. In fact, it would be a tragedy to clutter it up with structures. It is an open space of 121 acres, dredged out of the river; physically it is in Virginia, geographically—legally—a part of the District of Columbia. There was great unanimity about naming this feature after Mrs. Johnson. I am glad we did it.

One interesting thing about this is that Lynda and I were talking one time, early in November, I believe, maybe no more than a week before the dedication, and—Oh, I know, this was at a breakfast that the Lindows, who are friends of the Johnsons, gave for their daughter—a birthday breakfast—

F: Helene?

C: Helene. She is now Mrs. Johnson's secretary. Bette and I were there, Lynda was there, and Lynda and I started chatting. She said she hoped that some day, something would be named for her mother to recognize her work in beautification. I said, "You might just be surprised one of these days, Lynda."

Later that week I saw Lynda in Liz Carpenter's office, and we started chatting again along the same vein, at her instigation. I decided then to take Lynda into my confidence. And so I told her about our plans to rename Columbia Island after her mother the next week. She was thoroughly delighted.

Mrs. Johnson was so sweet. I don't think that she knows to this day that I am the culprit behind the naming of the park for her. That's immaterial, but Bette and I were in a receiving line one day shortly after that. Mrs. Johnson said to me, "Nash, I think you had a great deal to do with it—the renaming of that park, and I'm so grateful."

I say, Joe, no matter what we did, we could never repay her for what she did for our country.

F: As far as you know, did she go back then and make a sentimental visit to the park? To the island, I mean?

C: I am sure she did, but I haven't been—

F: But not with you?

C: Not with me. I'm sure she did. And she's coming, you know—

F: Yes, in April.

C: Well, off the record, she's coming next week, too, for one day. And I'm hoping that the daffodils will really be very showy and she will go and take a look.

That's the story of Lady Bird Johnson Park. I have never known more unanimity, press-wise, public-wise, over the naming of any feature in this area than there was in this particular case.

F: I think she left enough imprint around here it should be—

C: Absolutely.

F: —rewarded.

Let's switch to sterner stuff and get into another phase of your life, which in one part is running the Park Police—and that

brings you into any number of incidents, developments, and what not which, in turn, has brought you into contact with President Johnson.

C: Not a whole lot, Joe.

F: Well, he was aware, at least, of what was going on.

C: Oh, yes, there's no doubt about that. My relationship with the President was more a social one, but I did work very closely with the people around him. For example, Juanita Roberts, Jim Jones—very closely with Marvin Watson, who is one of my favorite people. I always admired his great management skill and his *modus operandi*. I'm one of Marvin's great admirers.

I'm trying to recall—

F: We have, among other things, of course, the march on the Pentagon; we've got the April riots; we've got Resurrection City, to name three. You may have others.

C: The more significant of these probably was Resurrection City. Before I venture into that, I might say that my contacts with the President were usually on the social front. I do not recall ever doing business with him directly. I did it with the people around him. But he was always very warm and cordial to me. I recall—and this may appear to be immodest, but I recall one day that Mrs. Johnson and Mary Lasker

and I were visiting in the West Sitting Hall. The dining room, you know, is off the sitting hall, on the north side. While we were chatting about beautification, the President came out of the dining room. He had been holding one of his National Security Council meetings, I believe. With him were Jack Valenti, Secretary Rusk, Clark Clifford, a general and two or three others—all important people in government. The President walked up and bussed Mrs. Johnson on the cheek and bussed Mary Lasker. He always bussed Mary, of whom he was very fond and which she reciprocated. I had been working with Mrs. Johnson about a year by this time. When the President and I shook hands, Mrs. Johnson said to him, "Now, Lyndon, you can't have Nash—I need him for my work."

I'll never forget that; Mrs. Johnson's statement made me feel like I was helping a little bit around the edges.

I remember, at the ceremony attending the signing of the Highway Beautification Act in the East Room, the President said to me as we shook hands: "Nash, I want you to know that I really appreciate all the help you're giving to Lady Bird."

F: Before we get into more serious things and leave Mrs. Johnson, how much influence do you think she played in getting the highway beautification idea and act into our national scheme?

C: I think she had great influence, Joe. Being the wife of the President, she had to subdue her lobbying activities. I know that



she had a tremendous interest in getting this legislation passed, because she felt, as we all felt, that we had to do something about the appearance of our highways. She worked quietly and unobtrusively with key people on the Hill. Liz, I think, made more direct approaches to people on the committee on the Hill and to individual members of the Congress than anybody else. Liz worked very diligently on this. My gosh! I think without this show of interest on the part of the First Lady, we would not have a Highway Beautification Act.

I know that one of Mrs. Johnson's great disappointments was the fact that the Congress did not fund the beautification program generously. And it's not because she didn't try, for I feel she did all she could have done as First Lady without overdoing, without overstepping her bounds. I'm convinced that, if it had not been for her interest and her quiet, effective, tactful, discreet way of approaching the problem, we still wouldn't have a Highway Beautification Act.

F: Of course, I think she helped make people beauty-conscious too.

C: There's no doubt about it.

F: Which, in turn, sets the climate for that kind of act.

C: There's no doubt about it.

As to the President, I must have seen him fifty times in the years I worked with Mrs. Johnson. He was always extremely warm and

cordial to me, and especially so to Bette. He always had something very complimentary to say to my wife—about her appearance, about my little contribution to beautification. He was always most thoughtful that way.

(End of beautification transcript)

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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:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, except that the portions of the transcripts indicated below shall not be made available during my lifetime, after which they may be made available as part of the transcripts:

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.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request, limited by the above restrictions.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, limited by the above restrictions.

Nash Castro  
Donor

9/26/83  
Date

Robert M. Stone  
Archivist of the United States

October 11, 1983  
Date