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INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas

Tape 1 of 3

J: It was such happiness to be back at home in Washington. Our back porch always in the summer was a center of activity. It was great big, screened on three sides, ceiling fan, lots of comfortable furniture. At some time there arrived in it, as a gift from Tom Clark, a great big double chaise lounge and we covered it full of pillows and everybody headed to it. Then there was a swing and a lot of canvas chairs. Everything was sort of cheap and inexpensive, except our chaise lounge, but we didn't know that.

It looked down onto a beautiful green garden where the people who had originally owned the place had planted a long border of peonies, and every spring they came forth with their glory of pink and rose and white. There were lots of bulbs, and through the years I planted four trees, and sort of an oak with no great imagination, in a sort of a square. There was an apple tree which I think I found there on one side, and then I planted opposite it a pink dogwood and then a white dogwood closer to our house, and then a weeping cherry tree opposite it. Then there was quite a lot of hillside rocky area which was a natural rock garden. That reached up to an iron fence which separated us

from our neighbor, Dr. O. E. Reed, with a huge elm tree that shaded the whole backyard for many years before it died.

That backyard was a scene of just much happiness during the years from 1942 to 1960, although at this time, in the summer of 1943, we were just really settling into it. But Zephyr [Wright] had already acquired a good deal of a reputation among our friends as a good cook. We were always having company; it streamed through the house. In summertime, homemade peach ice cream was one of our favorites.

Of course, gasoline rationing had a severe effect on my ability to get anywhere, but every summer I would manage to get down to the farmers' market, buy several bushels of peaches. We'd have just loads of peach ice cream, and peaches on the table, and corn on the cob. It was the next year I think that we began our victory garden program.

In the parade of the years one of the recurring dates was always the arrival of Aunt Effie for a visit. She would come to see us about twice a year and stay two or three months. It added up to a total of about a fourth of the time of the year, or perhaps a half. Then she would go back to Alabama to visit other relatives. She loved the spring in Washington, and she loved the fall, too. Because one of the greatest treasures of her life, one which she passed on to me by osmosis I guess, was her delight in flowers, and the burgeoning earth, and just the beauty of the world around her. So I treasured my little gas coupons and I always carried Aunt Effie just about everywhere I went in the car, even if it was just to the Safeway grocery store. If we could possibly get down into Rock Creek Park occasionally, that was a great joy.

Mrs. [Sam] Johnson also came to visit us every year. That, too, was a time for celebration. It was especially nice if they could come together, even in our crowded household, because they became great friends. They loved to talk about their respective families and old times and history and art, and it was a most satisfying joy to me that they liked, appreciated, respected each other so much.

G: When Aunt Effie would visit for these extended periods, would she become part of the working family, the household? Would she be pressed into service to help the Congressman on this or that?

J: No. Aunt Effie was much too gentle and retiring, and work, unfortunately, was not a part of her life. She was a very intelligent woman, but she was the result of too much sheltering in her young days on the part of her father and her brother. She wasn't acquainted with work enough, even the work of handling her own business affairs, which was handled entirely by Uncle Claud, and that was a great deprivation. One should be made to work, I think, or at least encouraged to work. In her young days, she had played the piano, she had painted, and done the polite, artistic things that a young woman learned. Somehow or another my mother escaped that.

Aunt Effie was also a great reader. But she had many physical problems, many of them real and some of them perhaps imagined, I don't know quite where the line was. But at any rate, her eyesight was poor by this time and her reading limited. Sometime along about here I found out about, and secured for her, these records from the Library of Congress, recordings for the blind. She was not blind, but she was sight impaired. They were available, and it was a great thing to choose the ones she wanted and get them

installed in her room by her bed.

So her routine was just to stay out on the pretty porch or upstairs in her room and talk to whoever had the leisure to talk to her. As I look back on her life I am sad, and I am grateful for the many good things she contributed to my life and sorry I didn't do more to add to hers. And yet, her own life had been impaired just by not being pushed, forced into the world more in her younger days. But she was a good conversationalist and had opinions on everything.

G: Did these opinions coincide pretty much with Mrs. Johnson's opinions, could you tell?

J: In a great degree, yes, although she perhaps had wider-ranging empathy and compassion for people in general. Mrs. Johnson was oriented very much toward taking care of her own family, and it was from Mr. Johnson that Lyndon got his care for the poor and afflicted and the common man and his just real down-to-earth affinity with them.

So that summer I'm not quite sure how long I stayed at home. I just remember how good it was to get there. There streamed through our household the old friends. Bill Deason finally got stationed back there, I think, in mid-June. Jesse Kellam would come through every now and then. Sometime along the way that year he got assigned to--he was in the navy. He'd gotten out of the NYA [National Youth Administration] and gone into the navy, and he was just a knife-edge young enough to do it. He was a married man with two children and just at the breaking point in the age. He didn't need to go. He'd even been in the other war. But he was determined to go, sold his house in Austin. That was a blow, I expect, to his wife, that gentle soul, and it was to us sort of. We'd looked forward to being his neighbor out there on the river sometime.

Well, a whole stream of the old NYA crowd and all of our old friends passed through the house. That was the summer that the NYA died, leaving us with all its sweet memories and an inheritance on Lyndon's part of trying to get jobs for any of the people in there that the draft didn't gobble up right away.

G: What was his response to the passing of the NYA, do you recall in particular?

J: Full of nostalgia and sadness, and a high salute for Aubrey Williams, wanting to do anything he could for him anytime. But it was not really needed anymore because the war needed so much young men and women, and war plants needed them, and there wasn't that slack in the economy that had brought into being the NYA. A friend of ours, Oveta Culp Hobby, became head of the WACs [Women's Army Corps].

Then sometime during the summer, and I don't remember whether it was June or July or when, because I did return to Austin later on. At any rate, sometime during the summer I went to see our old friend Dr. Will Watt in Austin and got the big news that I was, at last, pregnant. It was big news because from 1934 to 1943--of course it was November of 1934--but that made eight and a half years, and so we were very proud and happy and so was Dr. Radford Brown, my doctor, who, incidentally, was a great figure in my life and a marvelously professional, empathetic, delightful man.

G: Was he in Baltimore?

J: No, he was in Washington, and I had started going to him some three or so years before. I'm sure that he felt the same sort of a sense of victory and elation that I did because he cared about his patients.

G: Was the President in Washington when he heard the news that you were expecting?

J: I remember I was in Austin. I don't know, because we both came and went that summer. I went back to join him very late in June, and then Congress adjourned July 8, but he was going to stay and tend to some more business and I don't know exactly when it was that he left to go to Texas. Congress was going to be in recess until the middle of September, as I recall. I did go down to join him some time later. We went up to Bonham to see the Speaker [Sam Rayburn]. Gee, I don't remember when that was, but I remember being in the Speaker's home a number of times, a white-columned colonial home in a very rural, bucolic setting of pastures out close to Bonham, of which the Speaker loved every acre and every stone and every citizen.

Lyndon's program when he went home to the district was to go to every post office in the district. At one point he wrote somebody that that meant visiting a hundred or more small towns and less than thirty days to do it in. So he wasn't at home very much.

G: I suppose now he was really listening to the radio, too.

J: Oh, yes, he was, with one ear to the radio. But when he got home to the district, his eye was on next spring: would there be an opponent, or wouldn't there? After having gone to Congress in April of 1937, it was this year that we then began to hear the first real rumblings of discontent. He was determined to put in a vigorous fall to avoid a harder spring.

He would get reports from his lieutenants, so to speak--Gordon Fulcher, Ed Clark, Ray Lee--about somebody had said this in criticism, or there was a meeting in X town that had some unhappy things to say about him. So, he set up an office procedure,

opened his office on Mondays of every week in Room 718, the Brown Building, and he'd take all comers. Mary Rather, his secretary then, said he'd sometimes have as many as eighty or a hundred people come in each day, maybe in a group, maybe by ones. Didn't have any regular appointments, just sit and wait your turn. I rather expect they might let a few people in the back door, but mostly that's the best way to try to do it. Sometimes he wouldn't get home until nine-thirty or ten at night. Then the other four days of the week he would go out over the district, speaking at a bond rally here or service club there or just to all those hundred towns.

G: I'm particularly interested in these Monday sessions. How did he come away from these full days of meeting with constituents who brought problems to him? Did this have an impact on him, do you recall? Did it seem to tell him something about the district that he felt was important?

J: Sure. He would try to help them solve their problems or explain the government's position to them. Lots of times he could help them; sometimes he couldn't. And oh, sometimes it was very painful because people would just plain be wanting to get their son out of going to the army at all. You were helpless. Also, you were a little ashamed and embarrassed for them, and at them. But, oh, there were so many times when you could help them. When just your knowledge of the labyrinth of Washington machinery could find an answer, an honest answer, to their what seemed to be insoluble needs.

I'd say he pretty much flourished on those times in the district. They were exhausting, but I think he was pretty much stimulated by them. The bond rallies, he was big on them. He wrote O. J. [Weber] that "the hand that signs this letter has just touched

Robert Taylor, Jack Dempsey, Nancy Gates, Governor [Coke] Stevenson, Senator Tom Connally, Major Joe Kilgore" and so on and so forth. I was telling you about one that I think I've mentioned before in his, "Billy Rose could not have done any better. Don't think there's ever been anything like it in Austin. The folks really turned out, gasoline rationing or no."

Mostly the spirit of people was still strong and firm. We weren't unraveling at the edges; we were just fussing at our congressman a little bit at that time. Whatever unraveling there was came later.

Sometime that summer we solved some of our radio problems. We got on Columbia. I think we went on nighttime.

G: Do you recall how you accomplished the Columbia affiliation? Did the President do that?

J: I feel sure that Ed Weisl was the most helpful person.

G: Who would make the decision? Would Bill Paley make the decision?

J: It would ultimately I'm sure have been made by either Bill Paley or someone under him, and our contacts with people of that caliber were very small indeed, and I'm sure that it was Ed Weisl who really accomplished it for us.

Meanwhile, the office force was pretty much strapped as you can understand, with the draft taking so many able-bodied people. We were kind of a passage through which there went very many able young men who soon went off to war. O. J. Weber we kept a little longer than usual because he had a bad eye problem and was applying for Officer Candidate School. I bet he drank lord knows how many cases of concentrated carrot

juice to improve his vision, and he got in. I don't know whether they lowered their standards or it improved his eyesight. Charles Herring, I think, came with us for a while. Mary [Rather] was there, bless her, most of those years. Glynn Stegall, who was 4F--isn't that the designation they used?

G: Yes.

J: --stayed with us. At least some time that summer I did get back to join Lyndon because he writes that he's going back to Washington the middle of September and that I'm going to visit my daddy for a couple of days, and then join him.

Sometime during the late spring or early summer we got our priorities for the material that it took to build the studios in the Brown Building. I don't know exactly when we moved in, but at any rate many hurdles were crossed during that summer in the radio business. As I mentioned, in August we made our first profit of eighteen dollars.

G: You mentioned the nighttime capability.

J: Yes. We went on nighttime. I do believe it was that summer; I'd have to check more carefully. Lyndon's life, I said, was a constant stream of going to Georgetown to a barbecue, or Taylor to a rally, or to a service club in Johnson City or Blanco or Burnet, covering the district.

Our glorious relaxation, our Shangri-La of that time, was to get up to Buchanan Dam, where the administration building--built by the NYA in the last years of its existence--looked out over the lake. A very delightful view, long front porch. [A] lot of rooms that were arranged rather like dormitories with cots in them. All the men could stay in one room and all the women in the other. This was available to the personnel of

the Lower Colorado River Authority, and the Congressman was encouraged to come out there and bring friends, and we did, several weekends. We had to provide our own food, and two or three of us, the wives of the folks--well, me and whoever I could get--we were the cooks. I must have told you somewhere in here about the three fried eggs [original story is in Interview VI], which is sort of a symbol of our life.

Lyndon would ask all the postmasters to meet him out there to discuss the state of the district, to hear from them all the complaints, and thoughts and feelings of the district, because this was before the Hatch Act, and the postmaster's job was to feel the pulse of the district and report to the Congressman and hopefully to be his representative there. So Buchanan Dam was the site of several gatherings on weekends, for staff, postmasters, close friends.

G: Did other congressmen ever go out there with him, do you recall?

J: No, I don't think so. They doubtless had places similar to that in their own district, I don't know. But at any rate, these lakes that the dams served, that the LCRA served, were all in our own district, so that was our little fiefdom, so to speak.

Sometime during that late summer and fall, the sort of tide of niggling opposition that I've mentioned against Lyndon sort of came to a peak in the person of, alas, Mayor Tom Miller, our loved friend. It came about over the purchase of a house. A house went on the market under rather unusual circumstances, which caused it to be at a reasonable price and they wanted a *quick* sale. The lawyer who was handling it--it was a part of an estate, and it belonged to the woman friend of a wealthy man. She had died. The man was most desirous that the house be sold quickly and the whole circumstances hushed up

for his reputation, for his family, for everything. It was just one of those things that was right below the surface, known, but not to many.

So the Mayor had an option on buying it. At least I recall that he had an option and that he let it lapse, that the lawyer called Lyndon up right away and said, "You ought to get it." And Lyndon, flushed with the feeling that he was going to have a family and have a business in Austin, decided that he would take this other jump. And so we bought the house, 1901 Dillman, and it was a happy part of our life for a good many years. A duplex, a white duplex with a good deal of charm, an upstairs--gee, was it all upstairs? I think it was all upstairs. At any rate, it was a duplex.

G: It seems to have been very spacious, too.

J: Quite spacious, and believe me, as always in every house we have ever owned, we couldn't wait till we added more and more to it. At any rate, we did buy it. It incensed the Mayor.

G: One of the accusations that he raised was, "Where did you get the money?"

J: Absolutely, and that is the one that was bandied around on everybody's lips: where did we suddenly, on the salary of ten thousand dollars, turn out to be able to buy a radio station, and then later on, a house? That was sort of the beginning of the first strain of troubles that we had had. Always before that we had been the young white knight on the horse and poor as Job's turkey, though that was never the case, as far as I was concerned. But it's just that what I inherited from my mother was in my daddy's hands and I wasn't in need of getting it. I was perfectly glad to leave it, but the time had come when we could make use of it.

G: Was this more of your mother's money than the inheritance that you got when your Uncle Claud died?

J: I frankly do not know, but both of those two strains entered into it. Uncle Claud had died in November of 1941 and I was down there settling his estate, as I have mentioned to you, on December 7 of 1941. So all of that was coming to fruition. From those two sources there was a sizable amount, later on, but that's a story for a couple of years down the line. I made a detailed accounting of the whole thing, and where it came from.

In any case, there was a lot of talk going around the town because the Mayor was a talker without a peer. Nobody ever won an argument with him.

G: Senator [Alvin] Wirtz suggested in one of these letters that the President needed to come down and confront him.

J: Have it out with him. Yes, he did.

G: Do you know if that was ever done?

J: Oh, yes, it was indeed. Lyndon came down and I am sure that he talked to him, but I do happen to know that he did write him a long and explicit letter and asked me to read it and asked me to add what I wanted to in it, and then I did. It was a letter about two or three days before the Mayor's birthday, and it was wishing him a happy birthday. That was all quite true, because we cared about him and we weren't about to turn loose of him, and yet we were hurt and angry. And so Lyndon was explaining to him where this money did come from and says, "The latest statement that you made that has caught up with me was that you, quote, 'could not understand where my wife was getting all her money.' We paid about five thousand cash and made a vendor's lien note for the balance.

We borrowed five thousand from our friendly, ethical bank with which I've done business all my life, and we got it at a decent rate of interest. It is a demand note that will be paid off as soon as another note Mrs. Johnson owns comes due. The other note, Mayor, is in the amount of twenty thousand which represents a part-payment from her father for a part-interest in her mother's community property." When he handed it to me, I wrote up above that and he copied the letter over, this is just a draft of what I suppose he sent. Anyhow we prepared the letter. I do not have the finished letter. I wrote, "Mrs. Johnson's mother died twenty-five years ago and what finally descended to her three children was administered by their father. For the good old American right of passing on your life's earnings to your children, I have no apology to make, and I imagine it is one of the things you were working for, too, Mr. Mayor." Because Mr. Mayor set a great store by his son, Tom.

G; He himself had a reputation for being a businessman in addition to--

J: Oh, he was a wonderful businessman, and Lyndon was always so interested in helping him in all of his business.

G: Did the confrontation, or the letter, or both, slow him down or make him come to terms, do you think?

J: At least peace came between us, just how I don't know. Lyndon wrote an absolutely masterful letter. At one point he said, after he had gotten over the happy birthday bit, he said, "Speaking about quotations from you that were uncomplimentary to me, quotations which you may have intended or may not have intended to be brought to me, in most cases, I charge them off to the war." And then he goes on to outline what they were. But

some of the best ones about where really what we'd all better be thinking about was, "If we all don't work together, we're not going to have any more birthdays," or some of those close to us are not going to have any. "For all of us there's but one concern: pulling together to get this big job over with. I hope that after you have a very, very happy birthday that you will feel as good about it all as I do."

"I had a great time in the district this summer."--this is a pretty good summary of how he feels about coming home--"It was good for me to be back home. It gave me a rebirth of faith in our people and in our government. That is, if I needed a rebirth. It gave me strength to meet the problems that a man of reasonable intelligence can foresee. I should like to feel that all of us have but one concern, pulling together to get the big job over with. I hope after you have a very, very happy birthday, that you will feel as good about it as I do."

Actually, it was pretty much of a balm through the years to Lyndon to get back home. All of that period for him was a passionate, intense, often angry time. Bickering between the services, and red tape, and bureaucratic hold-ups and all that, he was very impatient with. He could get bogged down in Washington, and it did him good to get home.

(Interruption)

So Congress reconvened about the middle of September, and Lyndon was back at his desk. Our house was a sort of a way station, the whole of Washington in fact, just a tunnel through which people passed headed in every direction. Many of our good friends would stop by for a night or longer. There was one delightful period when Jake and

Sugar Pickle were in Washington for a few days and John Connally and Bill [Deason] and Lyndon, and they had a domino tournament which lasted for every day they were all together.

The uncertainty about what would happen next spring to Lyndon lingered. I think the Mayor ameliorated his insinuations. His concern about where I had gotten my wealth diminished. However, sometime that fall it became apparent that an opponent had been launched against us, by the name of Buck Taylor. He had not lived in the district long and he was not a person of standing, but he was able to get out a constant barrage of leaflets from Private Buck Taylor--and there were an awful lot of privates around those days--[leaflets] with more references to Lyndon's having been an officer, and Lyndon's having wealth and privilege and access to important people than any recommendations as to his own abilities or experience. Lyndon wanted to build up his own strength in every way he could and didn't pay much attention to this particular opponent.

As the fall went along, Lyndon was sick again with a terrible cold. All of his life, he was subject to chest and throat troubles. It's an odd thing, but I cannot remember quite how Christmas went. I think we decided that I ought not to take any unnecessary trips and that Lyndon went down to spend a few days right after Christmas. He was down there, as soon as he could get away from Congress before Christmas, and came back for a short while, and then was back in his district for the last of December and the first week in January is as well as I can reconstruct it. And gone are the people who could fill me in more on the precise dates and what we all did.

I know that he had it out with the Mayor, so to speak, in talking to him in the

letter I have just mentioned. This *contretemps* between us, this angry feeling, did not last, certainly not on our part.

(Interruption)

But words have wings, and especially rumors, and once they are afloat they never die. They circle around and around and come back to haunt and hurt. Buck Taylor, who was not a man of consequence, and did not live in the district, was soon making noises about he was going to run against us the next summer. What the Mayor had to do with actually hoisting him on the scene, I don't know. I think by the time he got going, the Mayor was back our staunch friend. There was also a local businessman, Joe Carrington, of more substance, who made murmurs about running for Lyndon's seat. That came to little, soon evaporated. But the question of where did the money come from followed us with Buck Taylor, later on with Hardy Hollers, later on with others, all through the years, coming to a head, actually, in 1946 I would say.

I don't know how many trips we made backwards and forwards between those years of 1937 and 1969, but some of them had delightful little vignettes in them that I remember, especially my automobile trips. I loved traveling by car. Lyndon didn't especially, because he was always in a hurry. First we would go by car, then by train, or perhaps he would go on the train and I would take one of the cars because the cars had to get down there. And he had the Speaker as a companion and captive adviser and audience on the train until they got to Bonham. The Speaker never flew, if he could possibly avoid it. Then later on Lyndon always went on the plane.

In the car I would love to stop and see every place of interest, every historic home

along the route. It was a later year, but since I'm mentioning it I will say that one--no, it was an earlier year. Have I told you about my trip home with Uncle George [Johnson], Lyndon's uncle, and my Aunt Effie? Anyhow, Uncle George was a teacher of American history in the public schools of Houston since time began and a true southern gentleman, as it says on his tombstone, and a lover of history, especially Civil War history. We read every Civil War monument through the states of Virginia, Tennessee, Arkansas right down to Texas, and believe me, there were plenty. My Aunt Effie sat there beaming from ear to ear and just soaking it all up, because she loved a good conversation. The Civil War was right back where her ancestors had played a part, and she was very familiar with the names of all the generals and all the battles. We had a cat, a white cat named Poofy, whose sole ambition was to get out of that car. The cat would go scratching up the sides whenever we put down a window, to jump out. It was a lovely white Persian cat, some kind of fluffy white cat, with long hair that had been an expensive gift from Lyndon to me, and a well-loved pet, but a most obnoxious traveling companion. I was the sole driver and laughed the whole way down nearly, but loved it, too.

Then there were our trips with the colored people who worked for us, first Otha Ree, later on Patsy, and Zephyr, one or the other. They were full of difficulties because once you got into the South, there was really no place where they were welcome to spend the night. Many is the time that I would go and stop and whoever was with me--and Lyndon often provided me with a secretary to help me drive, maybe a woman, maybe a man. I remember one time particularly. Mary Rather was with me, and I believe this was

Patsy, and one child, I guess that had to be Lynda Bird. Finally after dark, exhausted, we reached a town in Tennessee. We saw a motel; there was a sign up, "Vacancy." We stopped; we told him. He said, "I haven't got but one room." We said that's all right. He said it had two double beds. We said, "That's all right, we'll take it." Patsy kind of had her head turned the other way in the darkened car. He said, "I'll take you over there." Mary said, "No, no. Just give me the key, and tell me the number." We went over there and opened the door and went in, turned down the beds. The sheets had not been changed. Mary called him up in a hot huff and said, "The sheets have not been changed!" He was so apologetic. He said, "I'll run right over with some sheets." She said, "No, no, no. I'll come get them." Alas, he had already hung up the phone and before you could say Jack Robinson, or before, at least, we had the wit to get Patsy into the bathroom, there he was at the door with the sheets. He burst the door open, and there we were, we three adults and one child, one adult quite black and big-eyed. Well, his eyes got big as saucers. Mary grabbed the sheets, said, "Thank you very much!" shut the door in his face, and that ended that. I guess he decided, gosh knows, I don't know what went on in his mind, but the desire to rent the last room may have been a part of it. He could always say he didn't know.

G: Was this a regular occurrence?

J: It was, and sometimes a very irritating occurrence to me. I remember another time when I was--I may have had both children by this time, little ones, and I needed help. Once more, I suppose it was probably Patsy. In any case, it was dark and we were tired, and my help in driving was a young man, a secretary, probably my own age. Maybe it was

Gene Latimer, I don't remember who. We stopped at this office and this rather snitchy woman--it was in Memphis, which was probably the town most rooted in that philosophy--took a look at us. She said, "I don't take no niggers." We were too tired to argue, and we knew it was hopeless, and we said, "Could you please tell us a nice place where my nurse could stay?" She said, "Well, there's a nigger house across the street. They sometimes give them rooms." Then she looked at me and said, "Who is he?" (Laughter) And it dawned on me that she probably thought we were off on a liaison of some kind. What on earth would I be doing bringing the nurse and the two children I haven't quite figured out. And I said in my most dignified voice, "He is my husband's secretary." I think I probably told her who I was, which she would never have heard of, and so we got two rooms. Me and the two little children--by that time I was not a bit enthralled with the idea of being a nurse and tending to them [in] the night. But anyhow, we were able to get two rooms, and I told Gene, or whoever it was, to mind the children a few minutes while I went over and took Patsy to her room. I remember being quite apologetic about the quality of the room. But they welcomed her, and maybe it was what she would have been used to at home in Marshall, I don't know. I was furious, but I was also tired and caught, and there was nothing I could be except the next morning tell them what I thought of the type of hospitality they offered, and be on my way.

But the funniest time was--and there was humor even in this situation--was when Lyndon--this was several years later, after we had Gene and Helen [Williams], and after we had acquired, much against my wishes, a dog, Beagle, because it made Luci so heavenly happy. So it must have been probably the year 1950 then, because Luci was

about three. It was always a question to how to get those cars home: who was going to take the cars, and now, who was going to take the dog? So Lyndon arranged for me and the girls to go on the train, and he said to Gene, "Now Gene, you and Helen come along and bring Beagle." Gene kind of looked doubtful and shook his head. Lyndon said, "Gene, I know you like Beagle. You're always mighty nice to Beagle. How come you don't want to take Beagle?" Gene kind of shook his head. He didn't say, "I won't do it." He said, "Lordy mercy, Mr. Johnson, hard enough to drive through the South if you're a nigger, much less if you're a nigger with a dog."

There were some happy times that fall, too, because Washington was sort of a hub to which all people came and all people went through, especially in wartime. And so many of our close and young would gather there. Jake and Sugar Pickle were there for a few days, and John came through to see Nellie and to get new orders or do whatever. Bill was stationed there for a while. And there was a four-way domino tournament, Pickle, John, Bill and Lyndon--night after night, much raillery and much happy times. Somewhere, there's a letter from Jake that goes something like this: "[I wish] I was there and could have as good a time as we had last Christmas. Remember? You, Bill, John, Mack [DeGuerin], Charlie, myself and all the missuses. Snow on the ground, the house full of food, and you getting beaten in dominoes. My, what a memory!" And as I look at the date of this letter, it's the 27th of November 1944, so maybe in the Christmas of 1943 we did get together sometime right around Christmas. Jake's letter begins, "Hi, Chief." All those boys in those days called him "Chief," reminiscent of the times when he was first a congressman's secretary, and then head of the NYA. Somewhere along the line

that title departed.

So 1943 came to an end, being one of the most momentous years of our lives actually. Because it was when we actually came into possession and got rolling a business, a foothold in our beloved city of Austin, and when I began to have our first child, and when, toward the end of the year, we acquired a house in Austin, what became the famous place, 1901 Dillman.

That house had charm. It was a duplex, and as the years went on, we just enlarged it and enlarged it as we did everything we ever had. It became the address, the local Austin address, of any number of secretaries who really lived sort of out of their suitcase, the biggest part of the year in Austin [Washington], but when they would come to Texas they probably very often stayed with us, but not always, but for poll tax purposes that was a good permanent address.

The backyard was huge, a marvelous place to raise children in. Through the years, many children were raised there, our two certainly with wonderful birthday parties, John Connally's oldest two. Warren Woodward moved in at one time, later on, and his children were there.

I'm trying to remember just when we dismantled our Happy Hollow home. I don't know exactly; it must have been that fall because I was far too careful to just pay rent on it if we weren't staying there. So we moved everything, at some point, over into Dillman. It must have been sometime during the fall when I returned to Washington that we rented it to the Harfield Weedins, who had come down to manage the station in May of 1943.

In speaking of the station, I can't underestimate the role of Jesse Kellam, even

from the very beginning, before he went into the service. He was a financial adviser at every turn, checked all sorts of accounts with me, receivable, payable, new things we had to buy, new equipment. And then Mr. Albert Caster became a familiar word in my life. He was the dry, thorough accountant, did not work for us, was a CPA for everybody in town. But he was a great help to me.

So it was a year of achievement and moving forward and also settling in.

Tape 2 of 3

J: 1944 began with Lyndon still down in the district, talking to farmers in Georgetown, and American Legion gathering in Taylor, and the Hyde Park Baptist Church, and going to visit the wounded veterans in the Temple hospital. There was a big time when he spoke at the Capitol, sponsored by the American Legion. And back to his old, most friendly town of San Marcos for a speech. And Lockhart. It was just a constant thread of going through these ten counties and these hundred or so towns. I remember the phrase often used in the Hill Country about, "the best fertilizer for any man's ranch is the footsteps of the owner." Certainly, the best fertilizer for the career of a congressman is to put his feet on the streets of, and shake hands with the people of, all of the area that he represents.

He also talked to the Austin city councilmen about postwar employment for returning servicemen. Lyndon always had a view down the road and he was thinking about what was going to happen next and trying to plan it. There was a sense--I couldn't pinpoint when it began, but that marvelous, "We'll all work together; we're the biggest country and the toughest state and the biggest country and we're all going to"--the marvelous sense of cohesion that was so strong in 1942 and 1943--actually the product,

the gift of Pearl Harbor--began to erode and get a little ragged at the edges sometime, I don't know, maybe the last month or two of 1943 or sometime in 1944. So many rules and regulations, so much red tape, food rationing, gasoline rationing, a lot of little irritating things, but we'd all pull ourselves together and think about the boys, as they were called.

Emily Crow visited me, as she has all through the years. Some friends come and last forever. We had first become friends when I was at St. Mary's in Dallas in 1928 to 1930. She was there sometime during the Christmas holidays I think, and that Christmas remains the sort of a question mark to me.

Buck Taylor actually did announce early that year. He was himself no strong opponent, almost in some ways a little comic, but he was certainly a foretaste of things to come.

G: In one of the letters that the President wrote during this period, he said, "They are trying to get a strong opponent for me." Who do you think he meant by "they"? Was there a group of opposition that were trying to bankroll and fund an opponent like Buck Taylor?

J: Yes. There's always natural opposition to anybody who has been in office for six or seven years. At one point, and I just don't know quite when it began, it most emphatically was the oil men, and I can't remember now when his vote was to--they wanted a raise in the price of crude. We were trying to hold the lines on prices and wages to keep inflation at bay, I guess. Prices of lots of things were frozen. Texas being a great oil-producing state, I think most of the congressmen did vote to raise the price of crude. I don't believe Lyndon did, and I think that received and earned their enmity, their desire to

band together and get rid of him. Do you remember when that vote was?

G: I believe it was 1943. This was the Dempsey [Disney] Bill, is that right?

J: I guess so; I don't know. In any rate, it did defeat--well, several Texas congressmen got defeated that time around.

G: I notice there was a lot of opposition to Speaker [Sam] Rayburn, too, in his district.

J: Yes. He was seldom without opposition, but he weathered it all.

Once back in town Lyndon--I saw a memo where he wanted to go in and see FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt], and FDR scribbled on the bottom of the note: "Sneak him in the back way for five minutes."

G: Do you have any idea what that meeting was about?

J: No, I don't. Lyndon always came home with an excitement level, I could sort of tell something was going on. But he didn't really talk about it. He might talk about what the President had on and what they ate, because he frequently ate a meal with him sitting at a bridge table in his office--not frequently, but sometimes. He sometimes even went in to see him when he was lying in his bed with his dark navy cape around him as sort of a wrap against the chill.

G: Drew Pearson had a column during this period that seemed to indicate that in that meeting the President hinted that he had an interest in running for another term, a fourth term. Do you recall anything on that?

J: No, I don't. Of course, later that year that's exactly what did heat up.

The big news in our family was that Lyndon's sister, Lucia, who had been married actually longer than I had--she'd married at about seventeen--had a baby girl in February

named Rebekah Sterling Alexander, Sterling after Uncle Price. Interestingly enough, we named our second child after Aunt Lucy. They were Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Price, Lyndon's Aunt Lucy and Uncle Sterling, always very good to us.

Jimmie Allred came to town. He was one of the threads of friendship that ran through our lives. George Brown was in and out of town and often sick. George had a long siege with ulcers, which really never kept him from being one of the most vigorous people, cerebrally especially. I mean he was as full of ideas as a pomegranate is of seed.

G: You know, there's been a story for years in this period that Brown & Root had some tax problems, and that the President helped get a settlement to resolve the thing and ended the problem. Do you recall anything about that?

J: No, nothing. I really did not know much about substantive legislation or substantive projects that he undertook for people in the district. I just know that he had the highest respect, and it came to be affection, for George and Herman, after having begun in a very cool way back in 1937. I think they actually had worked for our opponent. When I would be out of town staying with my daddy in East Texas especially, if George were in town, he and Lyndon would see a lot of each other. They were close as brothers as the years went on. Lyndon and George would have knock-down, drag-out arguments, which neither ever won and neither ever gave in and each affected the other in my opinion. [They] were ameliorating forces on the other, let me say, Herman being a tough conservative and Lyndon a believing, hopeful liberal.

G; And where did George Brown fall in between them?

J: (Laughter) Maybe that's why he had ulcers. He was one of the kindest and gentlest of

people, a great imagination and great vision and confidence. A rare man. It was in the middle 50s that he participated in an in-depth study of resources that could be used up, could come to an end, and he was preaching the gospel, "going to give out of oil, got to have some other sources" in the middle 50s.

Naval Affairs Committee and its work remained one of Lyndon's time-consuming loves.

Back in the district the opposition to the fourth term began to build up. I think Dan Moody was predictably one of the leaders on the side of opposition, and Alvin Wirtz on the side in favor. I have a note here that there were rumors in Texas that LBJ would not run for re-election. Did he have any doubts during this period whether he would continue in politics? Did he have any urge to do something else, do you recall?

J: There was always a pull for Lyndon--business was always a strong pull. It intrigued him. He kept on thinking, "I can do as well as they can," "they" being self-made wealthy men. "I can think and work and achieve just as much as they have." It had an allure for him, and yet, public service always won out. First and last, he was offered several good jobs in business and one or two higher posts in government. I remember at one time he was offered the head of the REA [Rural Electrification Administration] by Roosevelt. That was sometime prior to this year though, as I recall.

In the early spring the New Deal suffered a real body blow when there was a tax bill, which FDR vetoed, and Senator Alben Barkley resigned as the majority leader in a break with FDR over the veto. It [was] pretty crushing, hard to overcome. And you see, this in 1944 and actually one cannot foresee, but we were really entering the last year of

the long Roosevelt years.

There was a big meeting of Democratic stalwarts in Dallas to which Lyndon of course went and spoke. This was in February. It featured a senator from Missouri that we were hearing a lot about these days, Harry Truman. His committee, called the Watchdog Committee, [was] just to make sure the military got a dollar's worth for every dollar spent and got things done on time. I think he made the cover of *Time* with that. He was becoming better known across the country. Bob Hannegan, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was there, and Ed Pauley, and my old friend, Myron Blalock from Marshall, one of the Blalock boys whom Daddy and all the family had known forever and who was a Democratic national committeeman for the state of Texas for many years. And of course Lyndon. It's one of those odd things about memory. I feel sure I could not have been at such a dinner because that was about three weeks before Lynda Bird was born. And yet I have a clear picture of being in the gallery of the Adolphus [Hotel] and looking down on the floor and thinking, "So that's Senator Truman, is it?" and just looking at him in the way you look at somebody you're hearing a lot about in the papers.

The draft kept on and on, draining our office and draining our business. At one point at KTBC we had several men that were for one reason or another 4F. I remember there was one man who had had polio and one who was crippled from some other reason. Harfield Weedin was going to get his orders to leave that spring. He had been with us just about nine months. So we got Pat Adelman, who had managed a jewelry store and was well known up and down the avenue as an amiable, hard-working, young

businessman. He came on as general manager in March.

When whatever Lyndon was doing I was cozily getting things ready for our son's or daughter's arrival in March. I remember the focal point of the so-called nursery. In that small house a room had to serve lots of purposes, but anyhow, Lynda was going to have a room. Baby was going to have a room, and the best thing in it was a white wicker bassinet, very big, on wheels, and very elegant with ribbons and pillows and things that Jimmie Allred gave us. I cherished it then and for years to come, and many children--Luci later, other favorite families, their children used it. It was well seasoned with the close intimacy with lots of loved children. But, the height of its life was to be a sort of a taxi around the house when our children got big enough to push it. They would put each other or friends in it and go barreling around in that house at 4921 30th Place. I think it is now, in somewhat limp condition, at the Library.

And speaking of that house, which served us so happily for so many years, it had three bedrooms and two baths on the second floor. The biggest bedroom, which was small indeed, was our room with a very inadequate closet space and a bath that had only a shower, but an adjoining little sort of study or nook which I sort of took over as extra--I built a closet into it for my clothes, making it even smaller, but it was still a very pleasant little study. Then across the hail there were two rooms served by one bath. One of them had the big brass bed in it that we'd gotten from the old lady. I think maybe it was the room on the east side that became the baby's room, and the other room would serve Aunt Effie when she was visiting, or Mrs. Johnson when she was visiting. And of course, later on when Luci came, we kept them separate for a while, but then they were together in a

big bed in the bedroom on the east side that looked down into the garden.

At an early time we took that third floor, which was unfinished, and put in a bath and did a partition and divided it into two rooms, one of which remained a sort of a storage room. The other was a guest room that, as I've mentioned before, housed a long train of servicemen and women, secretaries, staff, friends from home. Hotel rooms were scarce. It wasn't at all unusual to get a call from some constituent and say, "I just can't find a room. Can I come out and stay with you?" If there was a place, the answer was always yes. Dorris [Powell] came up from Karnack and visited me for nice long stays, one time bringing her thirteen or so year-old daughter. Lyndon's cousins came up from Cotulla, Cousin Margaret Johnson--I can't remember her married name--bringing her little daughter Ann. Various of my Alabama kinfolks came up.

We expanded that house, pushed it just as far as it could go, making out of that third floor a fairly acceptable guest room and bath, adding down into the basement, besides the one room that was there, for a maid and a very second-rate bath. We tried to improve the bath; we added another room. Because both Lyndon and I always looked upon service as much the most desirable thing. Jewelry I could do without forever. Big cars held no interest for me. Service did. I wanted a good staff, and I was lucky all my life in that, beginning with Otha Ree I guess, whom we brought up for one or two or more years, and then Zephyr, who stayed with us from November of 1942 until we left Washington in January of 1969. Then, along the way, Helen and Gene Williams, who came when Luci was about two. In between there was Patsy [White?], who was dear and sweet. There was a very high class black man named John Glasgow [?] who was with us

for about a year from down at Culpeper, Virginia.

G: How long did Patsy stay, do you recall?

J: Patsy must have stayed--she came up when Lynda was quite little and stayed until Luci was two--three or so years, and went home to be married.

So, my doctor, as I have said, Radford Brown, was one of the nicest human beings I ever knew and one of the most admirable. It was an experience to know him, as well as a great help to me, and I daresay, except for his knowledge and his guidance, some of the physical problems that had kept us from having children might never have been overcome.

But one Sunday morning, the 19th of March, I felt the time had come to go to the hospital. I had my little suitcase packed and I sort of said to Lyndon, "Let's go." Aunt Effie was there visiting us on one of her long visits. Mrs. Johnson had come up to participate in the arrival of new grandchild, having just fresh come from the triumph of her first grandchild the month before in Fort Worth, Becky Alexander. They were cozily visiting with each other. We were all getting ready to enjoy the spring beauty of Washington. So I said, "Lyndon, I think we better go to the hospital." About that time he got one of those interminable telephone calls, and he got on it, and I was kind of patting my foot in the car, for the first time--not the first time, oh, heavens no, but for one of the rare times--rather put out with him because he didn't hurry off the phone. Finally he came and we went to the hospital. His recollection is that he spent the day--he stayed a while at the hospital, but neither he nor I were anxious for him to stick around. The customs change, and this business of fathers staying to be of assistance was not in at that

time. I think doctors wanted them out of the way. I certainly did because I soon began to feel like it was no time to put my best foot forward and try to look attractive and have my lipstick on. So he, I think, spent a large part of the day driving around with Tom Clark, as he later told me. And then first we all thought the baby wouldn't be born until the next morning. Then I think the doctor did ask him to come back later that night, and I think Lynda Bird was born before midnight; I don't really have any idea when.

G: Was he worried before she was born?

J: No, I don't think either one of us were worried. It was a momentous occasion, but it just didn't occur to us that anything except the best could come of this. Although I feel sure that all the time he had been expecting a boy, he never talked about it to me. I had, too. It was quite a surprise when it turned out to be a girl. We hadn't even considered. I mean, he never had expressed to me that he would be disappointed if it was a girl. He had been very careful about that. But we had talked about boys' names. We had not talked about girls' names. It was Mrs. Johnson who, I think, just the night or two before I went to the hospital, had said, "Well, now what if it is a girl? What are you going to name it?" We both had a sort of a blank stare, and she said, "Why don't you name it after both of you?" I guess she prudently thought this might be the only one. So she said, "Name it Lynda Bird, and spell it with a L [Y]." That suited me fine; I loved it.

G: One of the letters he wrote at the time said that he wanted to name her Lady Bird after you, and that you said no.

J: Oh, it's bad enough to perpetrate a nickname like that, or any nickname usually, on a child. I would not want to be a party to it, although I long ago made my peace with my

own.

So, in those days, one was supposed to stay in the hospital about a week. As it turned out, I stayed longer. I don't know quite why, because I don't remember having any troubles. Lynda Bird was a big-boned child, seven pounds, seven ounces, long, big hands, feet, head, lots of black hair. Not pretty, highly vocal, opinionated from the beginning. It was later that she became really a beautiful physical specimen. She took after her father in her stature.

We had, of course, such lovely things. The Wesley Wests sent us the loveliest sheets and pillowcases for a baby cribs and beds. Constituents from all over sent us everything from handmade booties--gosh, we could have stocked a [store]. We had just loads of those--and several silver cups, one of them with her name misspelled, which I valued almost the most of all. I think it was spelled Lyndia, L-Y-N-D-I-A. They became a sort of a part of the family heritage and later on we used [them] on coffee tables for cigarettes. I hope some of them finally got into the hands of the genuine owner, Lynda.

G: Was he a proud father?

J: Oh, yes! He was calling right and left as soon as the news was available. We did stay a bit longer than usual in the hospital. I brought home with me a tyrannical sort of a baby nurse who stayed for I don't know quite how long, a couple of weeks anyhow. I give myself small plaudits for knowing how to handle children, and I remember the absolute horror I felt on the day when it was finally this lady's day off and I saw her disappearing down the street growing smaller and smaller in the distance. And there was that squirming red infant in that bassinet that I was totally responsible for. Anyhow, we made

it together. Mrs. Johnson, poor dear, got a childhood disease of all things for a woman who had raised five children--I think it was mumps--and had to be confined to the third floor. The doctor said that that was catching, and that we must by all means not be exposed to her for a while. Maybe that is why I actually stayed in the hospital several days longer. I don't remember for sure.

G: How did this event change your lives, immediately, not down the road?

J: I was not so mobile. I stayed home and made a place for the baby with regular meals and a regular life, certainly until the baby was a good bit older and Patsy came into our lives. Patsy was from Austin, a nice young woman, loved children, easy with them. I forget when or how we found her, but she came and stayed with us several years, actually until Luci was two years old. No, we had one nice young Washington person with us. Everybody I had in my household, almost without exception, I cared very much about, and I cannot remember the name of this Washington person. She did not stay very long by her own choice, and then we got Patsy. We must have gotten Patsy when we went home to Austin.

G: Did having a daughter change your thinking or your plans, and his plans? Did suddenly being parents alter your lives in any other way?

J: Stabilized them. I can't say changed them greatly. Affected my mobility, not his. Lyndon was always looking to the future, and thinking about not just the future of his family, but of all those returning servicemen and of the country. He really had a long vision all the years that I knew him.

Somewhere along the road, and I guess it must have been in one of those bond

rallies, we became acquainted with the Western actor, Gene Autry, and Lyndon was helpful to him in his service plans, opened some doors to him to get to meet people in the Air Transport Command. From there, he went into it at one time.

Meanwhile, as I believe I've told you, Buck Taylor had announced; we officially had an opponent. He was making as much noise as he could. Lyndon adamantly refused to call his name or take much notice of him, but just as vigorously covered his district with mail when he couldn't be there, and was down there whenever he could. I think I must have told you at some point about his State of the District letter every year, which was a great teaching tool to me when I learned that we, the Tenth District, and probably we, the United States, were by no means just a white, Protestant, Anglo-Scotch-Irish country.

There was one funny letter that Lyndon wrote somebody back home, Raymond Brooks I think, farther along into April, maybe it was probably a month, and he said that I was not feeling well at all; I was having back trouble. I do not remember it a bit. And [he wrote that] the baby does not know the difference between night and day, and that Lyndon had gotten food poisoning, and that Zephyr Wright had an attack of appendicitis and had to be rushed to the hospital for an operation, and he was on his way home to nurse and cook. (Laughter)

G: You know, this was a time when the Supreme Court legally overturned the white primary that prohibited blacks from voting. It might be a good time to just sort of survey his views of civil rights at this time, and anything in his attitude that you feel is significant about minorities, that held some significance later on? Do you recall?

J: I remember one incident in Sommerville, Texas, I believe it was, when he went to make an outdoor speech. It was customary, particularly in outdoor speeches, for blacks to come and listen, standing at the edge of the crowd. When he would issue his usual invitation to come up and shake hands, meet the congressman and tell him their problems and their views, they always melted away--I don't mean in our district; I mean everywhere, throughout the South--except a very few cultured, educated, perhaps preachers or schoolteachers. Their views were sought, accepted, and they would shake hands with them. That was a very limited number. I would say in our district I can't name any. I can in Marshall, because it had two Negro colleges.

But I remember at this time some blacks in this Sommerville meeting came up and shook hands with him, and he was just as friendly with them as with anybody else. I remember murmurs and ripples of disapproval and some of his friends saying to him later, "You better not do that. You're just going to lose a lot by doing that." And him saying well, he didn't agree and he thought their opinions needed listening to. I don't think he lost any friends over it. He was not belligerent about it, placating and persuading, but not really successful in persuading, and they didn't condemn him too much, "Well, that's old Lyndon. You have to put up with a few things." In fact, what with his vote against the oil bill, there were lots of things that make me wonder how Lyndon ever survived in Texas from 1937 to 1969. I think one factor, oddly enough, is his size. They thought he looked like a Texan, and they were kind of proud that he did look like a Texan, and they knew one thing for sure: he loved Texas and fought for Texas as he envisioned Texas ought to be, and they could forgive him a lot for that.

G: I gather that he was just entitled to a little more latitude on the issues because he took such good care of his district and he always came back to it.

J: Oh, yes, he never forgot public service and answering every letter. He had a rule that it was supposed to be answered within twenty-four hours, and if you could not pursue the answer through the labyrinth of the departments, you would say, "Your letter is received. I'm going to work on it. I'll let you know as soon as I can hear something."

G: Now he was to be one of the chief beneficiaries of the black vote, well, in 1948.

J: Yes.

G: Do you recall his reaction when the white primary was overturned? Did he say anything about the right to vote or what it meant?

J: Well, this is one of the things I fault myself for, is that I did not have the prescience and the foresight to know important things when they happened always, and to observe them and mark them in my mind. No, I really don't remember that. I do remember that our friend, Virginia Durr, had long acquainted us with the inequities of poll taxes, and that Lyndon, within the limits of not getting himself defeated, had helped. And I do know that he believed what he finally was able to finally exercise, in that if you've got the ballot, you've got your future in your own hands to some extent at least. He believed in them having the ballot at an early time and worked to put that into [effect]--when he finally got in a position to exert power.

Also I remember another avenue to his empathetic relationship with blacks. At that time I would never have called them blacks. I would have thought that I was insulting them. They wouldn't have wanted to be called blacks. You called them colored

folks. Sometime as a whole race you called them Negroes. But colored folks was the nice thing to say. And very respected elderly ones were called Uncle Ned and Aunt Mary, if you had known them all your life, and you treated them like that.

In any case, back during the days of the NYA, Lyndon was very insistent that the benefits of the NYA, whether it be support for continuing college education or training of young men and young women, be used equitably among the young folks, black and white, that were out of jobs and in need. He became at that time a friend and ally of the heads of several black schools, particularly Prairie View [A & M] and one or both of those in Marshall, and those presidents remained his friends and advisers. They were canny, sage men for the most part, and knew how far a congressman could go, or in those instances, how far the director of a federal agency could go. They pushed for everything they could get, and they were not angry and did not exert vengeance for things he couldn't get, is my recollection of it.

G: How about the black colleges in his district, I guess Samuel Huston College and Tillotson, which became Huston-Tillotson? Do you recall his association with them at all?

J: I don't really. It's the others that I mentioned, which were not in his district, that I remember the particular heads of and his relation with. I'm sure that the same was true of those, and that he sought to be equitable in those instances.

This was the spring that we had our first victory garden. Bill Deason planted it, and it was in the right-hand half of our little backyard, probably thirty feet square, and never was so much of beans and tomatoes and black-eyed peas, especially, even a few

messes of corn, raised in such a small plot of ground. We did this. Bill Deason did it magnificently. Later on, when he wasn't there, I did it happily and less well. But we ate out of that garden from probably about June on until we were still getting tomatoes when frost came in early November. There was a little tiny back porch that opened off of the kitchen, and you went down some steps, and we had a round table that came from the old ladies, as we said, and we just let it sit out there until finally after six or eight years the rain finally rotted it, but we'd had our pleasure out of it. You could get about six or eight around it. Zephyr would fix us many a good meal from the garden, and we would serve surprised constituents such things as black-eyed peas that were grown right under their eyes a few feet away. We had lovely flowers out there, or at least I thought they were.

You asked me what changes the baby made--mainly that I was less mobile and stayed home. The back porch became the center of my leisure and the backyard the center of my work, together with going to the grocery store and all the other marketing. I was the purchasing agent for a growing family, and it included a good bit more than just husband, wife, and children and staff, as the years went on.

The Speaker was one of our most valued guests, because he liked cornbread and buttermilk and black-eyed peas and turnip greens and that sort of thing. The several congressmen, a few newspaper people that were our close friends, like Bill White when he wasn't off with the army. Marvin Jones, who was food administrator for a while. And Fred Vinson, who later became chief justice. Paul Porter always. Jim Rowe. We just had a marvelous succession of good friends. Then whenever they were in town the old gang of John and Nellie and Jake and Sugar and any of the NYA folks. George Brown

came out lots of times on his sparse little diets.

It settled into a very nice summer personally, but actually in the country the good spirit of 1942, 1943 was eroding and I guess we could afford to let it erode a bit, because we were on the road to winning the war. It was no longer as scary as it had been, although there were often these painful messages about somebody close to you had died. My Alabama cousin, Gus, lost a handsome young son. Mary Rather--no, no, her brother died later.

Sometime during the spring Secretary of the Navy [Frank] Knox died. There were rumors about Lyndon succeeding him. Lyndon just naturally attracted rumors, but he didn't want any such job as that, and there was never any serious thought, so far as I know, of offering it to him and certainly no serious thought of him accepting it.

Oh, it was Mary Rather's mother that died that spring, and she went back to Texas, for a while. Then I think she came back and interviewed people for us and helped settle in somebody. Maybe it was Jo Crouch [?], I don't know. Then she left us for about a year. She often left us for family necessities and always returned.

This rising feeling of anti-administration in the state and people growing restive we would hear from our lieutenants back home. Lyndon went down and stayed for about ten days when the baby was a month or two old. James Forrestal became secretary of the navy. He was a man we admired and had a pretty close relationship with, a far different type from those we were raised with, a New York financier as I remember, a very, very smart high-strung, top-notch man. [He] liked Lyndon apparently when he first met him, and they saw a good deal of each other.

The cry of the Johnson wealth grew shriller: the home in Washington, the home in Austin, and KTBC. Meanwhile, KTBC was doing real well. We got a report every week from every salesman, and for years I used to sign every check. They would come in the mail and go back in the mail. I must make an observation on how much more fast and reliable the mail was then. I hate to, because I don't like deterioration in any facet of our country's life, but the mail was better then.

Texas was getting two rival, irreconciliable sets of Democrats. Who they were going to send to the convention was the bone of contention. They finally had a big meeting in, let's see, sometime in the spring, and it actually split apart, with Lyndon walking out because he was going to support FDR. I think Dan Moody was the head of the other faction. Of course, Wirtz was with Lyndon.

A phrase that Lyndon used over and over as the war was boiling up to a start was, "It is later than you think." That's the theme that sort of went through his whole life, and he was always looking for the next step and where we're going to get jobs for the returning servicemen. I think I've already mentioned that he was put on a House committee relating to postwar military readjustments. It was a passionate time for him, the whole war period was. There was a rising feeling of anger against labor racketeers and strikes, and an equally rising feeling against people who got rich off of the war--war profiteers.

G: Do you recall anything else on that walkout, the convention?

J: Nothing except that Lyndon protested that he wasn't walking out, that it was the other side. (Laughter) He was staying in what he saw to be the true Democratic Party, and

others were deserting it. And of course, those are semantics I guess one could say.

G: There was a Mrs. Alfred Taylor of Austin who was a staunch pro-Roosevelt leader there. Do you recall her and her role in this?

J: No, I don't, but women were indeed active. I met quite a lot of knowledgeable, working women, Jane Y. McCallum probably leading the group. And oh dear, one lady from the garden clubs whose name, alas, I can't remember, but who remained active. And of course, Mrs. [Hilda] Weinert of Seguin, who, although the wife of an extremely conservative senator and herself conservative, somehow remained true to the Democrats forever as I remember it.

G: Did LBJ sense any deterioration in President Roosevelt's health at this time, do you know?

J: If he did, he didn't talk about it.

G: How about you? Did you feel that he wasn't going to be around much longer?

J: No, I was far from intimate enough to have observed it. The annual parties of many organizations came to an end during those war years, and the annual entertainments at the White House for the House and Senate, for the judiciary, for the Speaker, those set-up things that had gone on year in, year out, they stopped as a sort of a patriotic gesture. They consumed time, that most valuable thing, and they certainly consumed money and gas. It was well accepted I think. Nobody thought ill of the Roosevelts for stopping them; they applauded it. We therefore, the general mass of us plain folks, saw less of them. Of course, Mrs. Roosevelt was just everywhere. You saw her.

I do remember--speaking of women and their roles--what to me was an

extraordinary campaign rally for Lyndon. It may well have taken place in 1946, because that was the first time that he really had any opposition, and not in the year we're talking about, 1944. But while I'm thinking of it I think I will mention it.

It was in a hotel where the headquarters were. It was attended by all sort of [people], open to the public, everybody encouraged to come, but it was a so-called women's rally. There was a sort of a dais and a speaker's row, and I was up there just to represent the family, and not because I was going to say one word. But there were such luminaries as Mrs. Jane Y. McCallum and Ouida Ferguson Nalle and other women who, because of their positions in clubs and organizations, were used to speaking, and who did get up and speak impressively. I just thought, gee, isn't this wonderful? Isn't this big time stuff? And then a rather dowdy little lady got up, and she was introduced, and she was really Mrs. Nobody. I just sort of shriveled inside and I said, "What can this poor lady say? She's going to be embarrassed." And she made the most marvelous speech. She said, "I'm not a speaker, but I just want to tell you, I remember Johnny. Johnny is my son, and he was off in the army," as she told the story. He dropped from view and she got a note from the Red Cross that he must be a prisoner of war. Time passed and she couldn't hear from him, and she wrote her congressman, and her congressman got after it, and he would write her about every two or three days about the steps that he was taking. And finally he must have kept in behind the Red Cross so hard that they probably put more time on it than they would have or should have, but they found Johnny, and he was indeed in a prisoner-of-war camp. His mother was notified, and she was able to send packages and Johnny to write letters. He was injured and hadn't been able to. And he did

come back--this is bound, therefore, to have been 1946--but in her simple way she explained all of that, and about every two or three lines she'd reiterate it, "and I never would have found him without Lyndon." So she really outdid the daughter of two governors and the head of all the organizations in town. So that speech, "I remember Johnny," became fixed in my mind as one of the best things to do in making a speech is just to tell one story that points to the service that this legislation, or this person, or this thing can provide.

G: Now the soldiers' vote issue came up that year, and the provision for allowing the soldiers who were overseas to vote absentee. Do you recall that? It's my understanding that Governor [Coke] Stevenson impeded the ability of Texas soldiers to vote.

J: I don't really remember it except that it's the first time I remember hearing over and over the phrase "equal opportunity." It was used to mean that the soldiers should have an equal opportunity to vote as well as fight, in that instance. Lyndon was in favor of it. Beyond that, and once again, it's just a sad tribute to my lack of knowing what's going on around me in the world that is significant. I would no doubt remember the dogwoods in Rock Creek Park, and how long the line was in the Safeway grocery store, but alas, not all the legislation do I remember.

Tape 3 of 3

J: A minute ago I was telling you about how we had so many servicemen passing through Washington who stayed at our house, and constituents who couldn't get a hotel room. I remember one time Lyndon and I looked at each other and one of us said laughingly, "Some of these days somebody is going to come up there and going to stay, and I'm

going to think you know them, and you're going to think I know them, and neither one of us is going to know them!" Well, it finally happened once, about like this.

A young voice on the other end of the telephone line gave his name and his rank--he came from somewhere in the Hill Country of Texas--and said, "I'm just passing through and I don't have a place to stay, and I remember when I saw you all out at Buchanan Dam you said, 'Come and see me sometime,' so could I spend the night?" I said, "Sure, come on out." He was a nice looking enough young man. We took him up, and I felt sure that Lyndon, when he came in, could identify him further.

Well, I told Lyndon all about him, and he couldn't and he was up there on the third floor where all our visitors stayed. But everything he mentioned was something that we knew, and he said, "You remember, I drove the boat that time y'all came out to Buchanan and Senator Wirtz was there." He rattled on and on, several people who did always come with us out to Buchanan Dam. But neither one of us could remember this serviceman who had been driving the boat and working, no doubt, for the LCRA. It was all very nice and warm and happy, and he went on his way the next day, and I don't think he ever knew that either one of us couldn't remember.

One of Lyndon's activities that spring was in the renegotiation of war contracts to avoid war profiteering. It was riding herd on a lot of big businesses, a very touchy thing to do, but necessary, he thought, that some people not make big money out of the war while other people were suffering and losing their lives.

Maintaining the office was an increasing difficult thing. Mack DeGuerin was with us. After Mary Rather went home because of her mother's death in I think maybe it

was May, she came back and did some interviewing, and maybe that's when Dorothy Nichols came back and joined us. Jo Crouch, a darling girl from Austin, was there for a while. And Glynn Stegall was an old reliable throughout. For a long time Glynn was a 4F. At any rate, with everybody working harder and longer hours, somehow we managed to maintain the level of service.

Texans had already landed on the coast of Italy, and Lyndon's speeches when he went home were full of references to that and calls to unity. Then I remember one night in June being waked up by a telephone call. It must have been 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. Anyhow, the sort of call that when you get it you know it is a great moment one way or the other, good or bad. This time it was high excitement, and which way it was was still to be told, but American troops had landed on the coast of Normandy. It was D-Day. Having been poised in England for an indefinite period of time, they had made that momentous crossing. Our friend, Bill White, was with them writing about it, and our friend, Earl Rudder, was with them leading a part of them, I don't know how many, scaling the cliffs. The reason for its success was because they had gone up in an area that the Germans had not really considered that anybody could. But they scaled most difficult cliffs.

G: Do you know who placed the call?

J: I think maybe it was Mary Louise Glass, and it went on, and I could tell from Lyndon's expression that it was something tremendous and dramatic. He did turn to me for just a moment, because of course I was wide awake, and tell me what it was, and then he was listening to every word. I don't know how Mary Louise happened to hear it at that time

of night.

Then the country was heating up for the convention. It was in Chicago, I think. My recollection is that Lyndon did not go to that convention, but once more, it's almost like the Christmas of the year before; it's vague. He went to practically every convention, from the Al Smith one in Houston in 1928 until the one in 1968 [1964].

This was a bad year for the Democrats. They lost a majority in the House for the first time in thirteen years. A big battle was that the rise in the price of crude oil, which was defeated with Lyndon voting against the increase, which earned him the enmity of the oil men of Texas, which was a dangerous thing to have, for many a long year although he had tried hard to serve them in many ways, in other ways. But that he thought was too crucial.

And a lot of the irksome regulations went on, like price, rent and wage control. And the invasion gave a sort of a new shot in the arm for unity. My own personal life was pleasant that summer with the baby and the big porch and the garden.

Throughout all the rising tempo of unrest in the country and resentment against some of the things our local congressman was doing, Lyndon had the stout support of the papers. Now we've had it, and we've not had it, and he's often made the remark that it sure was easier to get along when you had it. We had it because of people like Charles Marsh and Houston Harte and Bernard Hanks, and all the local newspapers in all the little communities, most of them Lyndon knew well, liked, went to see regularly; most of them supported him. Raymond Brooks, Gordon Fulcher, Buck and Lorraine Hood were friends and advisers. He had good press relations as a congressman, in those years.

The Democratic convention was bloody and lots of boos and catcalls, I mean the one in Austin, you were speaking about when Mrs. Taylor led them out. *Time* described Lyndon in this way, "When handsome, New Dealing Representative Lyndon B. Johnson hovered near the platform to prompt pro-Roosevelt speakers, the Texans shouted, 'Throw Roosevelt's pin-up boy out of here,' 'Get that yes-man off the platform,'" and that "up rose Alvin Wirtz, red hot fourth-termer, to propose the name of one-time Governor James V. Allred." I presume that was to be chairman of the delegation. "His voice was barely heard above the shouting," and the anti-fourth-termers did win, not greatly, but some nine hundred and something to seven hundred and something. So that is when Mrs. Taylor led the other seven hundred out of the hall.

(Interruption)

Lyndon left Washington early in July and went home for a very hard campaign, not talking about his opponent, but he was just going to every town in his district and working them vigorously, had an office in the new federal building and went to the Business and Professional Men's Club in Lockhart and Luling and Smithville, and the veterans' meeting and barbecue here, there and other [places]. Of course, in Granger it would be a Catholic gathering.

Meanwhile, I was at home, getting acquainted with Lynda Bird and never feeling very at ease tending to a baby, but liking her very much and very interested in her. There was one delightful diversion. I was asked to christen a submarine in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in July. It had the unlikely name of *U.S.S. Tench*. I asked Mary Clark [Mrs. Tom Clark] to be my attendant--fancy those things were in those days. We went by train

up to New Hampshire and went to the shipbuilding yard, and there it was on the ways, ready to slide down in. There were admirals and servicemen and everybody spic and span lined up in attention, and national anthems and prayers and a gift of, I think, records from me to the servicemen for their recreation time on the submarine. I smashed a bottle of champagne over it with great difficulty and a horrible grimace, and the pictures are nothing to rejoice over, except those that are posed. Dear sweet Mary was the most delightful of companions and it was a marvelous break from a vigorous four or five-month-old little girl. It was the big outside world, and for once I was sort of the center of attention. I must say I enjoyed it.

Meanwhile, Lyndon was going from Taylor to Georgetown, all over Williamson County, the old traditional speech in Wooldridge Park, visiting the Austin League of Women Voters. I've often thought if I were to ever write just a tiny little chapter on politics, I would maybe name it "Memories of Wooldridge Park." It was a traditional place in the capital city of Austin where every politician either kicked off or wound up his campaign. It was a lovely, natural amphitheater, sort of a bowl-shaped, very green park with live oaks in it, and an old, old--it was not a summer house, but it had a roof and white columns and slightly Victorian decoration, no walls.

G: Sort of a gazebo then.

J: A gazebo I guess one would call it.

Service clubs figured in his life prominently all summer, the Kiwanis and Lions and Rotary Clubs. San Marcos remained a stronghold. Bertram and Marble Falls and Johnson City, particularly he felt secure in Burnet County and in Johnson City, I would

say. He lived at the Driskill Hotel.

Something frightening happened in the family that summer. Lyndon's sister, Rebekah, got very sick first. I think that was probably the time that she had a kidney out. It was done, as almost everything was for the family, at Scott and White [Hospital] by our dear Dr. Arthur Scott, who was personal and close and amusing and had depth and charm. Later on, Josefa got sick. They were both in the hospital at the same time. And then Mrs. Johnson went to Temple. She, too, had [gotten sick], and I do not know what, because in the course of her life, having lived a very strenuous, vigorous life raising five children and country living, she'd hardly ever been sick. But in her later years from about the early forties on until her death in--was it 1957 or 1958?

G: 1958.

J: --she did have a number of ailments. This may have been one of the times when she had a disc operation on her back.

Bill Deason and Jesse Kellam were my faithful visitors whenever they could get by. Lyndon worried about Brenham. Washington County, the Germans, were--we had staunch friends and bitter foes.

G: Why do you think that what opposition there was, a lot of it seemed to come from the German vote? He mentioned that--

J: They were naturally conservative. They were naturally opposed to Roosevelt and the New Deal philosophy. And then, deep in their hearts, I guess they had to remember it was their ancestors' fatherland that we were fighting, although they were just as good a soldiers as anybody else. I don't mean to imply otherwise. Did it have an effect

psychologically? I don't know.

At any rate, Washington County was not strong for us in several years. Thank goodness we never had Gillespie County, except in the national elections. Gillespie is now our home and we love it, and I think they care about us.

Somewhere along the way Lyndon decided that he would not attend the national convention in Chicago. The Governor of New York, Tom Dewey, had already won the Republican nomination.

G: Do you know why he decided not to attend the convention?

J: I really don't. Maybe he thought it was wiser to stay home and work the district, but I don't know.

So the rounds went on to Giddings and Elgin, and in Chicago the Democratic National Convention re-nominated FDR for the fourth time, and Senator Harry Truman of Missouri was tapped for vice president.

Then came the election in July 22 and we defeated Buck Taylor with no trouble, getting 70 per cent of the votes, losing Washington County by a fairly narrow margin. Lyndon called me that night about midnight disappointed with the results, but I wasn't; 70 per cent I'll stay with anytime. As it happened, I do think that was one of our high points. You see, we had been in there with no contestant for--1937, bitterly contested, but 1938 and 1940 nobody contested us; 1942 nobody contested us. Now here in 1944 we win by 70 per cent. I think most of the other times when we had a contest, whether for the district, the state--that is when we were in the Senate--or the nation, our portion of the Tenth District vote remained at about two-thirds, somewhere between 61 and 65 [per

cent] almost all those years until the last time.

Two Texas congressmen went down to defeat: Dick Kleberg--Johnny Lyle took his place--and Cousin Nat Patman. A young man named [Tom] Pickett won that district.

G: Do you recall what the President's reaction to Kleberg's defeat was?

J: No. You see, the ties had loosened there when Kleberg did not support him, emphatically did not support him in 1941. That had been a great surprise to Lyndon, and I was quite tearful about it.

Lyndon came home to Washington briefly. Bill Deason was living on the third floor, working in the garden. Lyndon didn't stay long; he flew back down to the district.

Then Congress went back into session in early August. Lyndon was in the district as much as he could. I stayed in Washington, I think, and I wrote Lyndon at one time that "Lynda was too active for my peace of mind, and she fell off the bed today." By that time she was about five months old, didn't hurt her any.

Rayburn called everybody to come back for important legislation. That was fairly early in August.

The delight of our lives whenever we could get off, of Lyndon's if he was there without me, of both of us if we were there, was to go out to Buchanan Dam to the administration building, and take groups of friends and sit on that front porch and prop up our feet on the rail and tell tales.

There was a stream of letters from the near and dear: Jake Pickle and John Connally, Walter Jenkins, other of the boys. Finally Bill Deason left us.

I see a handwritten note among Lyndon's papers, "What to do when Johnny

comes marching home? Jobs, pensions, education." He was looking forward to that time and making plans. We were beginning to think that the duration was not going to be forever after all, that well-used phrase that the end was in sight. Paris was liberated. One night he wrote--let's see, I believe it was Bill talking about his garden, and he said he had Senator Truman, Rayburn, Bob Hannegan out for supper, and everything came out of the garden except the chicken and ice cream. I'm sure we sat on that little table down at that little porch looking right out onto the back ground.

Congress finally adjourned some time in September. A saga came to an end in Texas when Jim Ferguson died.

(Interruption)

Lyndon's father had been a long-time friend of Jim Ferguson, had been his local manager in Blanco County and the surrounding area. He had been in their home many times for chicken dinner and political advice. It was to his speeches that Lyndon had listened as a young man, and also to Senator Joe Bailey's, and also to Pat Neff's. One of my favorite stories was what he told about his father at the end of an election which was between Pat Neff, that staunch Baptist who was espousing the cause of no whiskey, Prohibition, and Jim Ferguson, who was against it. Not that he was a drinking man; oddly he wasn't. But he was just for freedom to make up your own mind.

Mr. Johnson counted the votes at the end of the day and was pretty pleased with the way Johnson City turned out and Blanco County. His candidate, Jim Ferguson, won handily. But there were about five votes against him, and he was trying to literally count them up. He said, "One of those will be one of those Lindigs that lives in Rocky Hollow.

Never could count on him." And he would name them off. But he couldn't get to but four. He could not figure out who number five was. Mrs. Johnson meanwhile had been walking from the dining room to the kitchen bringing a plate of hot biscuits or putting some more gravy or meat or something on the table, and finally she said, "Sam, did you count me?" He said, "My God! Did you vote for Pat Neff?" She said, "Of course I voted for Pat Neff. He's a good Baptist, and I do not believe in drinking." (Laughter) So much for independence and for political influence. It's really got its limits.

G: Now you were back in Austin, I gather, early that fall.

J: Yes, we did get down there in our house at 1901 Dillman, which had a big, lovely bedroom, and I had moved all my stuff much earlier so the Harfield Weedins, I think they had used mine and not furniture of their own. I do not know who we rented the other side to each year; I just know that we never had any trouble renting it. Housing was scarce. We always had our own group of secretaries and friends; there was always somebody standing in line for that rather nice house. Such fun the children had in the backyard.

One of the stories of our life, and maybe it took place that summer, was that Lyndon was determined to get the backyard, which looked rather scraggy in spite of nice trees, planted with nice St. Augustine turf grass. He just wanted a beautiful backyard. He wanted a barbecue pit made out of stone. He delivered his desires with a deadline, of course, and I said, "But, honey, this is August," or whatever it was, "and it's hot. The right time to plant grass is September, or maybe get it in the ground maybe early sometime in March or in--" I shouldn't have said September; more likely down there it would be in late October. He said, "Oh, it will do all right, it will do all right." He was

so insistent that we went on and got it planted, and I was almost hoping it would die. Well, the heavens opened up and those bountiful rains came and the grass prospered and did beautifully. It was just a great laugh for everybody.

Also, the barbecue pit, he commissioned me and Nellie to get it built. We didn't know a thing in the world about barbecue pits; we didn't *want* to know anything about them. Nevertheless, we rounded up somebody who built the barbecue pit and got it done in jig time, and I think we used it once. It turned out, you know, to be quite a lot of trouble to build that fire and get it to exactly the right temperature and put out the meat. The ingredient that we omitted was the man of the house who was going to do the cooking.

G: Well now, you did have cookouts there though, didn't you?

J: Oh, we had innumerable, marvelous picnics, but we would either make fried chicken and ham or stuff in the kitchen and bring it outside and serve it on tables, or else we would have some local barbecue person drive his wagon up into the backyard and set it out.

G: How about the telephone on the tree?

J: Oh, indeed.

G: When did that come along?

J: I'm sure it must have come along that summer or fall, because as soon as we were in residence the first thing Lyndon wanted was a telephone by his bed and by wherever his easy chair was going to sit in the living room, and I'm sure the one in the yard got put in that fall. We lived out there, a great deal of the time, in the yard.

G: Was there any precedent for that, having the phone outside? Did anyone else have one?

J: I don't know. (Laughter) Oh, I'm sure that they had, and people kind of got used to Lyndon and were very helpful and nice. I cannot remember when the time of the three refrigerators was. But at any rate, at that house as we were moving in, there were war shortages, it was hard to get lots of pieces of equipment. You were thrilled to get them secondhand. The stores could sell every one they could get pronto, and they favored their favorite customers. I think it was for us; it could conceivably have been a later year when the Connallys lived there. But at one time Lyndon went down the street practically announcing to everybody that he'd meet, "My wife says our refrigerator has gone out and won't work, and I've got to find a refrigerator." He told Mayor Miller, and he must have told every furniture man in town. Well, refrigerators began to arrive, in trucks. (Laughter) I think three arrived the same day. It was hilarious. I called the office and put a stop to it, but we thanked everybody profusely, and I don't know what we kept and what we sent back.

At any rate, we were at Dillman for--we may even have had our Christmas there, and once more here we are with Christmas and I don't know where it was. I remember early on we had a Christmas at Dillman. I remember the . . .

G: I think . . . it looks like . . .

J: At any rate, we did have a party for the KTBC folks, our first--no, not our first, because the first one was right out there at Barton Springs with a picnic the day Harfield came to work. But this began an annual tradition that flourished until Jesse's death in 1977, which put an end to it. A fairly small group, but by that time we had a pretty close feeling among them. So Dillman became a kind of a second gathering ground, the house in

Washington a busier and for more months of the year gathering ground for our near and dear. Whenever we could, we'd go to a football game, I not knowing much about what was going on and not enjoying it particularly, but enjoying seeing everybody's clothes and what happened at the halftime.

G: Was the President really interested in football?

J: Yes! He was really interested. He was really interested in betting and in ribbing his friends. He loved to find somebody who was just tremendously in favor of a team, and then he would take the other side with fairly considerable ease, and all during the game just make insulting remarks and sort of rib that person. Thank goodness I don't think he ever did it with anybody who didn't understand him and like him.

G: It's been said that he would go to these sporting events, particularly baseball games, and just talk politics the whole time.

J: Well, I'm sure he would do a lot of that, too, and get around over the stands and speak to everybody. It was just one big gathering, and how could you see more people than in the stadium?

There was a big rally in Wichita Falls of the Democrats. Bob Kerr, who was at that time governor of Oklahoma, came down across the Red River to speak to us. Sam Rayburn and Jimmie Allred and Lyndon and Myron Blalock and Bill Kittrell, who was one of the best storytellers I'll ever know, and Wright Patman, already a strong man in the House and for many years on.

We had a precursor of things to come, though we did not know it was. The students at the University of Texas marched on the Texas State Capitol in protest over the

dismissal of President [Homer] Rainey by the Board of Regents. They were a young and passionate lot, incensed at the lack of understanding and feeling on the part of the regents, and very fond of Rainey. I was detached enough from it not to--I'd lived so much in Washington that I didn't know enough myself to become really involved. I had a considerable empathy with them.

G: Did you know Homer Rainey yourself?

J: Had met him, didn't know him well.

And of course, in November, FDR was elected, and Congress reconvened. We lost one of our good old friends from the Naval Affairs Committee by Maggie [Warren Magnuson] going to the Senate.

Lyndon and the office force went back to Washington on the train, and I stayed there with Lynda, hoping Lyndon would get back by the middle of December and we could have Christmas in Texas. Then the office probably reached its low during the whole war period when Glynn Stegall, our standby, got sick and was ordered to bed for two months, and the office just practically came to a standstill.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull resigned and [Edward R.] Stettinius took over his place. Cordell Hull we had known and admired and looked up to, from a distance. We were not intimate at all. But we felt it was a sizable loss.

I went back to work on the radio business, went over to see Daddy. Lyndon came down and stayed just very briefly with us at Daddy's, and then we drove by Dallas on to Austin, just in time to get there just before Christmas.

G: Was this your father's first acquaintance with Lynda Bird?

J: Yes. Let's see, from March to December, she was about nine months old. And yes, that was his first time, and he was properly interested in her.

Dillman, which became a part of our lives from--well, certainly from 1944, because I cannot remember whether we ever moved in in 1943, until the middle fifties, was a house with a good bit of charm. It was a duplex. Our side was upstairs where you walked into a large living room with a huge picture window that looked out onto a nice bending live oak, the hills in the distance, for what I could see of them, the rapidly building up area in front of us. I had my first oil painting given to me by my brother Tony. Perhaps it was a primitive. At any rate, of a Mexican village and a snowcapped mountain in the distance. Adobe houses and a street and the snow-capped mountain, probably Popo[catepetl], in the distance. Very soon later on we got our second one, which was a [Porfirio] Salinas, from Edmunds Travis, a dear and well-loved part of our life. It still hangs here in the Ranch house in the den over the fireplace. Salinas soon became Lyndon's favorite, and he gravitated to his paintings because they expressed the spirit of the Hill Country he felt, which was so much home to him.

There was a wall of books [which] went on each side of the fireplace, and then a nice long wall that was just right for a sofa and end tables, which I messed up most horribly by getting a great big Hawaiian type bed. It has a special name, but it really is just sort of the grandfather of all kingsize beds, which you were supposed to loll on with pillows and [was] not really very suitable for our life. And the usual reclining leather chair for Lyndon. That was his piece of furniture from the time we began to have a home, was a good, rearing-back chair with a large ottoman, a good light by it, an ashtray

handy, and a telephone immediately adjacent. My furniture, most of it, came from Happy Hollow Lane. We did buy perhaps a little bit of new furniture.

G: Did you get to know your neighbors at Dillman Street?

J: Yes, oh, yes. We really knew our neighbors a good bit wherever we lived. The little girl across the street when Luci came along became one of her best friends and used to take Luci to Sunday school, because she early manifested a desire to go to Sunday school and church every Sunday. I sadly say that we did not in those years as regularly as we should.

We made a pleasant home out of it. It had a little charm, although I invested little time and little money in the making of it. The backyard was the shining part.

[End of Tape 3 of 3 and Interview XVIII]

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

CLAUDIA TAYLOR JOHNSON

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, I, Claudia Taylor Johnson of Austin, Texas, 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 with me and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. A list of the interviews is attached.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available to all researchers.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to all researchers.

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

(4) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be provided by the library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to other institutions.

Claudia Taylor Johnson 6/20/02
Claudia Taylor Johnson Date

by Patti Ehrlich
Allison Fawcett 5-10-2011
~~Archivist of the United States~~ Date

Assistant Archivist
For Presidential Libraries

Appendix A

Attached to and forming part of the instrument of gift of oral history interviews, executed by Claudia Taylor Johnson, and accepted by the ~~Archivist of the United States~~ Assistant Archivist For Presidential Libraries on 5-10-2011.

Mrs. Johnson's Oral History Interviews:

May 26, 1975, with Merle Miller
June 25, 1976, with Merle Miller
June 29, 1976, with Merle Miller
January 30, 1977, with Merle Miller
February 14, 1977, with Merle Miller
August 12, 1977, with Michael Gillette
August 13, 1977, with Michael Gillette
August 14, 1977, with Michael Gillette
February 4, 1978, with Michael Gillette
April 1, 1978, with Michael Gillette
August 6, 1978, with Michael Gillette
October 9, 1978, with Michael Gillette
January 23, 1979, with Michael Gillette
January 24, 1979, with Michael Gillette
January 25-26, 1979, with Michael Gillette
February 27-28, 1979, with Michael Gillette
August 19, 1979, with Michael Gillette
September 2-3, 1979, with Michael Gillette
September 9, 1979, with Michael Gillette
November 13, 1979, with Anthony Champagne
January 4-5, 1980, with Michael Gillette
January 29-30, with Michael Gillette
September 20, 1980, with Michael Gillette
September 26-27, 1980, with Michael Gillette
February 6-7, 1981, with Michael Gillette
February 20-21, 1981, with Michael Gillette
August 10, 1981, with Michael Gillette
August 23, 1981, with Michael Gillette
September 5, 1981, with Michael Gillette
November 15, 1981, with Michael Gillette
January 2-3, 1982, with Michael Gillette
January 10, 1982, with Michael Gillette
January 30, 1982, with Michael Gillette
March 15, 1982, with Michael Gillette
March 19-20, 1982, with Michael Gillette
March 22, 1982, with Michael Gillette

March 29, 1982, with Michael Gillette
August 3-4, 1982, with Michael Gillette
September 4, 1983, with Michael Gillette
December 30, 1984, video and audio interview with Michael Gillette
January 4, 1985, video and audio interview with Michael Gillette
February 23, 1991, with Michael Gillette
March 4, 1991, with W. C. Trueheart
March 8, 1991, with Michael Gillette
August 1994, with Harry Middleton (six interviews)
November 5, 1994, with Harry Middleton
January 23, 1987, with Nancy Smith
August 18, 1987, with Lou Rudolph, Jim Henderson, and John and Sandy Brice
August 19, 1987, with Lou Rudolph, Jim Henderson, and John and Sandy Brice
August 20, 1987, with Lou Rudolph, and John and Sandy Brice
August 1994, with S. Douglass Cater
March 22, 1985, with Louis S. Gomolak
July 16, 1996, with Jan Jarboe Russell
July 17, 1996, with Jan Jarboe Russell