

INTERVIEW XXXV covering 1954

DATE: March 8, 1991

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mrs. Johnson's residence in Austin, Texas

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J: --Lynda's doing all right.

G: I have really enjoyed the visits she and I have had over the last couple of years.

J: Oh you have? I called her, and I told her we were going to move you and she howled [inaudible] and I told that [inaudible].

G: Well, let's begin.

J: All years in the decade of the 1950s seem to begin with the Speaker's birthday, Sam Rayburn's, which was, I think, the sixth of January and always heralded by a big party, most often given--well, there were many parties for the Speaker celebrating his birthday, but always a very important one given by Dale and Scooter Miller at the Women's National Democratic Club.

Lyndon and I also went to a reception honoring Margaret Chase Smith at the F Street Club. She was an important figure in that time, and, to a considerable extent, a friend of ours.

There were immediately sort of vibes in Texas as the year got in gear. At the Democratic National Committee, overtures were being made to it to have [Allan] Shivers recognized as the leader of the Texas Democrats. That developed steam as the year went

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along. My own life was pretty much concerned with pleasant events, such as going to the British Embassy, something I always loved to do, for a presentation of a Chantal portrait of Queen Elizabeth. And then I went to the Australian Embassy, celebrating Australia Day and taking Pauline Gore. Lyndon was anti-party. I *liked* parties, so I very often went with other Senate wives or members of the Texas delegation.

G: There was a story regarding Senator Green sitting next to you at a party when Mr. Johnson was working late on a piece of Senator Green's legislation.

J: Oh, I remember it. Lyndon got a lot of mileage out of that. He respected and liked Senator Green--gee, it was three names in a row. He was a great old patrician.

G: Theodore Francis.

J: Theodore Francis Green. There was an odd sort of friendship between him and Lyndon, because they couldn't have been more dissimilar. He took seriously embassy parties, particularly if they were ones that touched on his committee or things that concerned him. Oh no, he wouldn't stay late for legislation.

One time I went and, as you said, sat next to him at that party, and Lyndon later found out about it, and he didn't get home till about ten o'clock working hard on a bill that Senator Green wanted passed, that he had left in Lyndon's hands saying this really meant a lot to him. (Laughter) Well, anyhow, Lyndon liked the tale so much it was worth the time.

We began to hear rumblings. Jake Pickle would report to us about the temperature politically in Texas. General feeling was that Lyndon would face little opposition. I myself began to show up occasionally in the newspapers. Isabel Shelton wrote a very nice article about me. I got better than I deserved, I think, from the press in general, and almost never ran head on into them. However, it was not to be scott-free, in the election, that is.

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Dudley Dougherty, who is a member of the state legislature and a wealthy Beeville rancher, and oilman, announced that he would run against Lyndon for the Senate. Lyndon felt, though, that he'd covered the state pretty well the year before and he did not get extremely excited about it.

We did actually go to an occasional black tie dinner. One at the Belgian Embassy in honor of Sam Rayburn. Sam Rayburn was almost as hard to catch for a dinner party as Lyndon was--not that anybody was trying to catch Lyndon then. But, if it was for Rayburn, that meant with a little hopeful, big-eyed longing for me, we would go. The Belgian Embassy was one of the most elegant houses in town, as I remember, out on Foxhole Road, and the wife of the ambassador a very lovely lady.

The Bricker Amendment dominated much of Congress' time that year. All I remember is the heated emotions it aroused, not in me because I never really knew much about it. The same anger and dissension as had gone on in various episodes of oil and gas legislation, particularly in the tidelands.

G: LBJ reportedly persuaded Senator [Walter] George to offer a substitute to the Bricker Amendment, which really diffused the issue. Any insights on LBJ's relationship with Walter George during those years?

J: Senator George he just respected without limit. He had high esteem and great affection for him. Of course, [Richard] Russell was always perhaps his number one mentor; yes, I think with the exception of Sam Rayburn, I'd have to say number one. But George he admired greatly, tried to learn about, sought his company. Yes, Lyndon was always trying to hold the Senate together and bring about compromises and diffuse issues.

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Sid Richardson and George Brown would come up to dinner, sometimes bring John Connally or Frank Oltorf or Gus Wortham. We had our canasta games with the Jenkins and the covered dish, and then with the Thornberrys and a covered dish, and maybe Zephyr [Wright] would fix us up something sort of special out at our house. We'd go to dinner with the Bill Whites, or down to Speaker Rayburn's quarters, where the conversation was unparalleled, and the food came over from across the street from a good cafe. He was a natural host, the Speaker was.

We actually that year went to a white tie dinner in honor of Herbert Hoover. It surprises to me remember some of the things that we did. I think that was about the time that we got over a feeling that we had said bad things about Hoover and actually began to feel somewhat sorry and shame-faced as we were to be very much more so in the next decade, because the Democrats had just sort of chewed up Hoover, over and over, from--when was it, 1930?

G: 1932.

J: --that first race of Roosevelt, 1932, beginning then and on for twenty years plus. And Hoover said something that night rather wryly, but oh, later on one comes to learn it's so true. [He said], "You all give me too much influence, too much achievement. I did not create the Depression all by myself." He said it much better than that, but so right.

I noticed during that time in my date book repeated visits to Dr. Radford Brown all the way from early February through the end of March and then one the sixth of April that was scratched through. That must have been the spring that I now remember, just through the mists of time, as being the last of several miscarriages, about four actually. I was forty-one years old, and Lynda was ten and Luci was going to be seven her next birthday.

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As I looked at them in pictures, I realized I hadn't been as good a mother as I should. They were too fat, and also I had not paid enough attention to their clothes. But, one divides the hours of one's life as best we can.

By now [William] Knowland was Lyndon's opposite number, not the towering figure--oh, physically he was--but not the towering figure intellectually that Taft was. I think Lyndon came to feel that he could nimbly dance his way around Knowland.

G: Would he share those experiences with you when he came home after, say, a triumphant day in the Senate?

J: Oh, yes, yes. You could just tell it from his looks and mood and talk. Yes, he would tell me about it, just as he had when he had the early and complete defeat at the hands of Taft the year before and I think when he made up his mind this won't happen any more.

G: But when he would do it, let's say that he was in a jubilant mood, discussing something that had happened, would he reenact it? Would he sort of go through and describe the events and the sequence it had happened in?

J: His general reaction would be to say, "Let's invite over the Bill Whites," two or three of his chums, maybe some of his staff. That was the setting in which he would talk. I'm afraid I didn't get all the best of it. He liked a little large audience. (Laughter)

We began to hear that Dudley Dougherty was making a lot of speeches. At least it was going to be a fairly noisy, vigorous campaign on his part.

We had a birthday party for Lynda on March 19. Patty Nichols, Mylie Thornberry, Hunter Minnix, some of her Girl Scout friends. Later, she went down to the Capitol, taking her Girl Scout troop and her father attended a blowing-out-the-candle ceremony down there with the girls in the little Girl Scout costumes.

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The 81<sup>st</sup> Club and the 75<sup>th</sup> Club still were part of my life, as very much the Texas ladies delegation, a monthly luncheon, which was a wonderful opportunity to invite any visiting constituents. Bess Porter, Tharon Perkins were some of my friends in those days outside those organizations I just spoke about. I actually got to know a legendary figure, Mrs. Daisy Harriman. In fact it was one of the regrets of my life that Lyndon and I never got to go to the Sunday night salon that she conducted at her house, which she did invite us, much to my pleasure.

There were some straws in the wind that year that really sort of cast a long shadow. Secretary [John Foster] Dulles got together a meeting of eight congressional leaders--Knowland, of course, and Lyndon, and [William] Milliken and Russell and [Earle] Clements and the once and future speakers, Joe [Joseph] Martin and John McCormack--got them down to the state department to discuss the U.N. situation. He told the congressmen that the Administration wanted a joint congressional resolution authorizing the use of air and naval power in Vietnam. Admiral [Arthur] Radford presented a plan for the use of their power to relieve French troops at Dien Ben Phu, because at that time we still called it pretty much "Indochina." It was the stone around France's neck, and that became a common word as the year went on, that Dien Ben Phu was not lost on the battlefield, but on the streets of Paris. That time that Dulles asked them to pass that resolution, the congressional leaders were negative.

G: Any insights on President Johnson's thinking at this time, in the spring of 1954?

J: Something I remember, but I do not remember when he said it, about, "Why would you fight for anybody who didn't fight for themselves more strongly?" But that was not at this time and I believe that was about Laos, so I cannot honestly say. I just know that he was

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one of the leaders who voted against the request of the Republican administration and Secretary of State Dulles.

It was a big thing for the United States that the great highway program was passed then that would put six times as much money into interstate highway systems. It may be said of the United States that the great monument left by Rome, for instance, and Greece were their temples and their fine buildings, and their artwork, and the monuments left by us is the highway system because we sure did get to work building one giant one across the United States.

That was the spring, I think, that A.W. and Mary Alice Moursund and Melvin and Nita Winters came up to visit us, and we went to New York. We all went up on the top of the Empire State [Building] and had our picture made. I'm not sure if somewhere in those albums, those treasure troves. . . .

Allan Shivers, after some talk that he was going to retire, announced that he would seek another term. So there we were, pitted against Dougherty and Shivers against Yarborough.

G: Any insights on LBJ's attitude the governor's race between Shivers and Yarborough?

J: All of Lyndon's friends--I mean a great many of Lyndon's friends--were opposed to Ralph Yarborough. It was Lyndon's instinct to like Shivers, and he was not in tune with Ralph Yarborough, and yet he recognized in Ralph Yarborough somebody that would vote for more liberal measures. He did foresee that it was trending toward him and Shivers getting into a knock-down, drag-out for who was chief of the Democratic Party in Texas. Some of his heart was with Yarborough. I cannot say who he actually voted for. You probably have that from other sources.

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Actually, the big thing that happened that year was not recognized by its importance, perhaps, at least not by me, was in June--or was it May?--when the Supreme Court, by nine-to-zero decision, voted on *Brown v. the Board of Education* and said that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal and that enforced racial segregation of public education is a denial of the equal protection of the law guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. That sounded the clarion call for a lot that was to happen in the succeeding ten to twenty years.

G: How did President Johnson react to that decision? Do you recall what he felt about it at the time?

J: Lyndon underwent a vast change. I cannot say exactly when it began. I think maybe he knew mid-1950s, I'm not sure. I know about 1957 it was well underway, that he knew that we had to overcome segregation. We had to accept the blacks in law and education and the economy, and this was a growth process with him. It was no sudden strike of lightning, in my opinion.

G: There are some, Mrs. Johnson, that believe that he always felt this way, but only after the mid-1950s did he see the opportunity to really make it--

J: Well, that is true, too, because he was telling Virginia Durr for years and years and years, "Virginia, I'll vote for you on getting rid of the poll tax, but I'll do it when we've got the votes, when I can make it stick." And also, I'm sure he thought he would do it when it would not cost him his Senate seat, or his House seat, or whatever he had.

I well remember when he first ran for Congress in 1937 he went around to the outskirts of the crowd, shaking hands with black people. That is where they always stood, way out at the fringes of the crowd. Some of his good friends would come up afterwards



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and say, "Lyndon, don't do that." And they'd say, "You're going to do yourself harm."

And he would pass it off gently and keep right on doing it.

I remember, before that, when he was head of the National Youth Administration in Texas, he made a considered plan, determined, well-thought out campaign to meet with all the presidents of the black colleges and try to see that they got their share of the NYA money to keep their students in school with little bitty jobs that paid about 25 cents an hour and that they got their share of places in job training, all those things that the NYA did that Lyndon just loved to pieces--learning carpentering, automobile mechanics and cooking for the women and beauty parlor work for the women. So, it was a long, long process, and it was very much a part of politics is the art of the possible.

He got just real put out with the wild liberals who would rather shout and proclaim themselves from the highest hill as liberals and then never get anything done and do their best not to inch forward and take that half loaf and rather wallow in defeat, and sort of cherish being martyrs. He just didn't have any patience for that.

G: He seems to have been fairly restrained in talking about the Supreme Court.

J: Yes, he was. He was. I guess he thought now is not the time to make a move. Between 1954 and 1957, it must have become more within the limits of possibility.

G: After the *Brown* decision, did he get pressure from Texans to do something to block this decision or to nullify it?

J: I don't remember it. I do not think so. I think--what did we call them? Shivercrats? Those who left the Democratic party--I think they were pretty secure in their bastions. There were some loud liberals that had a newspaper in Houston that was financed by a remarkable old lady. Good Lord, I cannot remember her name.

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G: Frankie Randolph.

J: Frankie Randolph, who had a lot of money and chose to underwrite combative, liberal causes and never, never liked Lyndon worth a darn. But I think finally, at long last, he got thrown into her arms as being the least offensive of two alternatives and I don't know when that was.

G: Anything else on the *Brown* decision and his thoughts about it or reaction to it?

J: No, I'm sorry. Isn't it too bad to see something happening before your eyes and to be so little conscious that this is world-shaking?

The Armed Services Subcommittee took up a good part of his life in those days, and national defense practically did throughout his career.

Coke Stephenson, of course, came out and said he was going to play an active role in Dudley Dougherty's campaign, and he did. When was the election? Must have been late July. But, anyhow, first came Luci's birthday. That blessed little girl was seven on July second, and her birthdays were kind of big events in that nice old house on Thirtieth Place, the big screened porch. We'd have a bunch of neighbors' children in the backyard. Then, of course, there'd always be a Thornberry, and a Carpenter, and one of the Speaker's relatives.

I remember what all of us mothers used to do. We would sit on the back porch, which looked down on the yard that was very pleasant. I loved that yard with its four trees--I had planted three of them. We'd have hamburgers that were made with homemade buns and peach ice cream and a great big birthday cake. Zephyr was a marvelous cook. Actually, she used to do a lot of teaching of how to cook to Luci. Lynda Bird didn't particularly cotton to it. I enjoyed the birthday parties just as much as Luci did.

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I was sort of forced out into the political arena a little bit more. I guess my debut in that must certainly have been in 1948, but more and more, the office would take the liberty of saying, "If Lyndon can't come, we'll see if we can't get Lady Bird there." To such things as a party of a bunch of women's clubs in East Texas, a dedication of a reservoir, a dam somewhere, particularly if it concerned East Texas, which I was always glad to go because that got me a chance to see Daddy. In the summer time I would always take the children down there. Some times they'd even spend a week or two with him.

Then came the Democratic primary in July, usually the last week. Lyndon won handily, turned out to be really no trouble at all, and Allan Shivers not quite so handily. In fact, when you looked at it--and I don't remember it now, but Yarborough had a very substantial vote, just one hundred thousand or so, it seems to me, lower than Shivers.

Later on in that month, I took one of those things I yearned to do, which was travel and had actually not done any of it. Hearing had sort of aroused my colleagues', Lyndon's colleagues' wives, come back and tell how they'd been to Paris, to NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], to someplace, to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We just went to every nook and corner of Texas. Lyndon, alone, went all over the United States supporting senators who were running for re-election.

This time, I asked Mary Rather, an all-our-life dear friend who was on Lyndon's staff, to go with me and we took a cruise ship to Bermuda, where I learned about bright colored houses and lovely beaches and every house had a name, and sort of learned the stamp of Great Britain on its many components--the islands that it had taken dominion over in the empire-building days. It had a representative there, I've forgotten what he was called

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now. But he invited us to the--it wasn't an embassy. Whatever it was called, he had an elegant place to which he invited visitors of some modest importance, such as me.

It was late that summer that another one of the festering problems in the Senate came to a boil, and that was [Senator Joseph] McCarthy. Knowland, as majority leader, [and] Lyndon, as minority leader, had to put together a committee, select committee to investigate Senator McCarthy, as it was called. I don't think Lyndon ever did anything with greater care and caution, and would I dare say plotting? He was very determined to get work horses, not show horses, as he would have expressed it, and senators whose reputation was impeccable, and whose word would be taken by the Senate without any consideration. They just knew that these were such responsible and respectable men, they had to listen to them. Of course, there were more Republicans; one more, I guess. Let me see: Arthur Watkins, Frank Carlson, Francis Case, "Big Ed" Johnson--that would have been Lyndon's choice--John Stennis and Sam Ervin. Sam Ervin was a great constitutional lawyer and, as I recall, the dominant figure. Is that right?

G: Well, Ed Johnson was, I think, the senior Democrat on that. Stennis and Ervin at this point were fairly young.

J: Well, I have a memory of Sam Ervin beginning to make his very considerable reputation.

At any rate, these hearing went on from late in the summer. They were quite lengthy. They didn't actually come down to the final voting, I think, wasn't it, November or December?

G: It was December, that's right. With regards to the selection of the committee, there's been some suggestion that LBJ may have even, in addition to naming the Democrats, may have even given Knowland some advice on the Republicans.

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J: I think that is true, and I'm sure in the most courteous and respectful way. But I think he managed it, because it's my belief that he thought we had to get rid of this man, but without making a sideshow of it. The less blood spilled, the better.

During the campaign, there was, even President [Dwight] Eisenhower, with whom Lyndon and the Speaker had gotten along so well, and had served so well, pushing his legislation when they could. They had just made an art, I think, out of helping run the government, although they were on the minority side, and collaborating with Eisenhower whenever they could. They got a little mad at him, the Speaker especially, when--gee, I think he had some lines in his speech about McCarthy, the President did, as he did his Republican politicking, that really set the Speaker off. McCarthy, very inadvisedly, took a bite out of Sam Rayburn, almost to the extent of questioning his patriotism, and you didn't do that with Sam Rayburn without him being your enemy forever.

Do you remember exactly how that was?

G: [inaudible] McCarthy attack.

J: When McCarthy attacked him, and we all felt thought Eisenhower would rise to the defense of the General, because General [George] Marshall was just so enormously respected by Lyndon, by the Speaker, they didn't take lightly anybody attacking him.

It was one of the summers--I forget just when--when we also went down the Potomac on a boat, which had seen better days, but was still a beautiful old boat and docked at a town closest to Williamsburg. You could take your car for a dollar, as I remember, and get off, and ride on over to Williamsburg and sightsee, and then drive home. I did that with the children, and I think I had one of the senate wives along, seems like it might have been

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B.A. Bentsen; it might have been Mrs. Smathers. Anyhow, sightseeing was in my blood and I always did as much of it as I could.

The Senate adjourned in August, but it was subject to recall for the study of the McCarthy censure. And, sure enough, it did get recalled in November just solely for the McCarthy issue. But that fall was taken up for me by other and more important matters. Lynda acquired some sort of an illness that was hard to diagnose. I think it was in the late summer, perhaps August, September. I can't even remember the name of it now, but it was something kin to heart--you've got to help me think of the name.

G: Heart murmur or--?

J: Well, the actual symptoms were exceeding lethargy and just sort of spasmodic, uncontrollable movements, jerkings. It really was a most concerning matter. Our doctor there in Austin just could not handle it. I took her Scott & White. We began to run it down. I suppose we must have made eight or ten trips to Scott & White. Perhaps we spent the night the first time. But we got on the trail of it, and adversity can sometimes be looked back on with a warm feeling, if you win, that is, and we did win. Because Lynda Bird and I were together so much that we were shut-up in the car, starting from the Ranch, where we really headquartered in the summer--it was fully a three-hour drive. We'd sing a popular song called "This Old House." We would just rattle it off together. She had a pretty good voice. I had a *horrible* voice, which did not deter me a little bit. And we would stop at the Stagecoach Inn and have lunch going or dinner returning. Those trips together are a warm time in my memory.

Of course, I was very worried and Lyndon was somewhat impatient, and made me mad because he wasn't as understanding as I think he ought to have been with something

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that doctors couldn't get to the bottom of, and it was just strange. I think it left a lasting mark on Lynda in that her handwriting is still very bad, from those involuntary, spasmodic movements.

I hope I think of that word. It's not a heart murmur, but it's something close to that. In fact, the doctors said she just mustn't go to school. She must not be subjected to any stress. So she didn't go to school in September or October. I think finally, in November, they had her start half-time at St. Andrew's, a little Episcopal school where they would recognize her difficulty and give her special care and attention. By Christmas time, she was quite all right again, and it was just all an episode in the past.

That was sort of the sealing of the close relationship with Willie Day Taylor, because when I couldn't be with Lynda, Willie Day would. Lynda at this--

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G: --Kathleen Connally was--

J: --was still one of her greatest friends. Although Kathleen was a year older chronologically, perhaps maybe a year and a half or two, and very considerably older in her social maturing.

Lynda was always smart. In school, she was maturing intellectually, but not socially. I mean, she didn't make all that many easy friends and move with as much assurance in the world of children and certainly it was a good long while later before she began to even take notice of boys, whereas Kathleen was beautiful and becoming more so much ahead of Lynda.

There was the Democratic run-off in which Shivers did defeat Yarborough. Was this the knock-down, drag-out between Lyndon and Shivers, or did that come later?

G: That's 1956.

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J: Yes. That was to be postponed, but I think it was already a flag in the wind, perhaps.

The Watkins Committee did censor McCarthy. That pretty much put an end to his career, and it did it with less bloodshed than might have happened. I think Lyndon's hand was very adroit in that, although he didn't do it with a light heart, because he did not like to see any fellow senator broken, which is really what he did to him. But what he was doing to the Senate couldn't be tolerated, at least Lyndon thought.

G: His speech reflected that point, that he felt that McCarthy's behavior had harmed the body of the Senate, the prestige and--

J: Yes, it had indeed. It had denigrated it. Lyndon, he really liked that system of government and the body of the Senate, which he thought was the greatest deliberative body in the world. It was a good time, more or less, in the Senate, the fifties were. [There] were rough spots, but generally, they--a good time.

Willie Day would take over, even in Texas, for a while when we went back up, for instance, for the last of the McCarthy episode. I remember there was a White House dinner, in honor of Syngman Rhee, that was--it's amazing to remember across this span of years what somebody said in the toast, but I do. This old man, who had been president of South Korea and had staunchly held them together as I remember, came over, and at the White House, he made the most plain-spoken speech. He went through the usual courtesies of the friendship and our gratitude and all of that. Then he said, "You all have never *been* the victims in a war. You fortunate people of the United States have never known what it is to be ground under the heel of tyranny."

Now, we had a bad time in the Civil War, we did, in the United States, but that was a long time ago, and we surely hadn't had a war on our soil since then, and we really didn't



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have the personal acquaintance with war that he had lived with for quite a number of years. He was a very impressive person. Does he loom so in history books or not? At least the White House toast most often nothing much is really said except pleasantries and that one was a hard, strong speech.

Late in October--but I think I've sort of spoken of this--Lyndon and the Speaker--Rayburn, who was not speaker then, of course, he was the leader of the House and Joe Martin was speaker. That's the interlude of that time, isn't that right?--did issue a statement complaining to President Eisenhower that he was making an unjust attack on the many Democrats who had done so much to cooperate with your administration and to defend your programs against attack by members of your own party.

We went home to vote in Johnson City for election day. Of course we were all--Lyndon, Shivers, and Rayburn--re-elected. In those days, the Democratic primary was *the* election, and you just relaxed after that. The rising strength of the Republicans in Texas had not gotten up much steam. There was enormous affection for President Eisenhower, but in the rest of the offices, it didn't have much strength.

G: This was the election in which the Democratic senators gained a majority, and so, when they would come back in January, LBJ would then be the majority leader.

J: And the Speaker would again be the speaker.

G: Do you remember any of the details of learning the results that night or the next day, whenever the fact that the Democrats would take the majority in the Senate?

J: Lyndon always gathered around him all of his staff and a whole bunch of close friends. We would probably be in the Democratic Headquarters. I don't know. It all becomes a montage. There's the Hogg Suite of the Driskill [Hotel], in which we sometimes were; the

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headquarters in the Stephen F. Austin [Hotel]; in the earlier days, our own modest-sized home.

There would be a blackboard and the candidate's, the latest news would be recorded on that, usually by Walter Jenkins, and people would be phoning in from all the counties. The word "county man" and "district man," which was so much a part of the vocabulary of those years, they would be telling us how they had done, usually with pride and big grins. We'd all listen with extra *passion* to see how East Texas and, yes, Karnack had come in, or how Blanco County and Johnson City had come in. Little bitty drops in the ocean, but they were there a good bit of our hearts were centered.

No, actually, I really don't remember which place we heard the results, but I think Lyndon had covered about, I think we saw almost none of him that fall because he was covering ten or twelve or more Western states for senators who were up for re-election, which, in a way made it easier for me to have all those trips to Scott & White with Lynda Bird.

G: So, you didn't go on any of those Western trips?

J: No, not a one of them, and I feel that I missed a lot, but I had a lot. In the particular fall, it was very clear the important thing was to be with Lynda--

(Interruption)

--which was not a hard way to operate as far as Lyndon was concerned and every last one of them voted to censure McCarthy, whereas in the Republicans, it was half and half.

[Wayne] Morse voted to censure. Morse was occupying a strange island, would've been lonely for some people, not for him; he was a natural maverick. I may have told you this at some other time, but at one time Morse was a thorn in our side. Over and over and

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over. But he could always be counted on to help Lyndon in certain things. Labor, I think, was one of them; education, I think, was one of them. He was always reminding the senate of "something it ought to think about." He was prickly. Somebody asked Lyndon one time, something they thought surely would present an answer that oh, if he could just get rid of Morse, he'd be so happy. But actually Lyndon said, with considerable force and thoughtfulness, that "every Senate should have a Morse."

After the election, we were, and after the episode of going back for the final censure of McCarthy, we were home for a good little while at the Ranch, and Senator and Mrs. Bridges--unlikely as that is, to some--come down and visited us, and we enjoyed them very much and had a very pleasant time with us. Lyndon took him on a wild turkey hunt, which he enjoyed very much.

I think maybe by that time our shooting days had begun. We shot briefly. Lyndon shot most of his life, not with any great enthusiasm, but just because he liked to be out in the open with people who liked to shoot. It was social thing with him, and a time for masculine companionship and outdoors. I never was the least bit interested in it, but I got a little hurt because I missed out on a lot, and didn't get included on a lot, and so I was determined to learn. I did. I shot one or two or three deer, and that was, it was very soon the end of it. Certainly, it was the end of it in that November day when the President was shot.

G: President Johnson didn't do any hunting after that?

J: No. Put up all--asked the Secret Service to take all the guns and store them and lock them.

We had made so many passes at trying to quit having guns around homes. I can

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think of at least two people in my own personal life, and important people, who I very surely believe would be alive today if there hadn't been a handy gun in their house.

But, I think we went, right after Christmas, we went back, to Washington. We very often went back in time to get there for New Year's. Strange I don't remember much about New Year's celebrations. I guess it was later in our life; I'm wondering just exactly when it was that we started going to those marvelous New Year Day parties at the Clark Clifford's. Have I spoken of them yet?

G: No, ma'am. I'd love to hear that.

J: I wish I could remember--

G: These were the skits or--?

J: Yes. I've forgotten what year, but they got bigger and bigger and finally killed themselves off by sheer success and there wasn't one more square foot for a guest to sit down on the floor while the skit took place.

But, predictably, Clark was the *star* of the skit. Each of the children had a part. They were frequently, an occasional other person participated; mostly it was family. Marny didn't ever, but she had the most wonderful refreshments. They were parties everybody wanted to go to, which is what finally killed them off.

It was satire on the Washington scene. Funny--uproariously funny skits on the well-known people of the day. It wouldn't cut them up; it would just prick them. But the lines! It was as good as the Gridiron. Or else reputed to be, of course. I never went to the actual Gridiron. Women weren't allowed in until they began to have an abbreviated, short version of the Gridiron on the Sunday following the big Saturday night. That was open to women. That was the biggest entertainment in town.

Johnson -- XXXV -- 21

Gee, what was the year that Senator Russell actually allowed himself to run for President? Was that 1956? I think it was. Was it 1952 or 1956 that Dick Russell allowed himself to be put up as an actual candidate for president? He didn't get the nomination, as we all remember, but anyhow, the Democrats, they had a wonderful skit in the--

G: Was this the Gridiron?

J: In the Gridiron. It was a song in which each of these newspapermen danced out and said, as a take-off on a well-known song of that time, a western, [sings] "Do not forget us, oh, Dick Russell, on this our wedding day." Such amusing words.

Well, if there's anything else that you want to ask me about the year 1954, I'll try to remember.

G: I have one note that LBJ was looking for a new ranch manager in 1954.

J: Yes. Are we on?

G: Yes.

J: I cannot remember; our first one was named [Julius] Matus, M-A-T-U-S. He was with us one or two years, I forget when. Then Lyndon's--the son of his first cousin, Ava Johnson Cox. The son was named Corky, I would think thirty-ish, a young man with a young family moved in and took over for one or two years. And then he left, somewhere in there. I think we only had three before we got Dale Malachek, who was a perfect fit, and that was in 1960. I just don't know; there were at least three. Number three we also liked very much; can't remember his name, but he took himself off and went to a bigger ranch because, remember, our ranch, although it was interesting, was not all that big a ranch.

G: Okay. Well, I think you've covered--

Johnson -- XXXV -- 22

End of Tape 1 of 1, side 2

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

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

Sharon Everett 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~~ on 5-10-2011.

Mrs. Johnson's Oral History Interviews:

**Assistant Archivist  
For Presidential Libraries**

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



## CTJ Appendix A -- 2

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