

INTERVIEW I

DATE: January 20, 1982  
INTERVIEWEE: LOUISE CASPARIS EDWARDS  
INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette  
PLACE: Mrs. Edwards' home, Austin, Texas

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G: Let me ask you first about Johnson City in those days when you were growing up. What was the town like? How would you describe it?

E: Oh, just a very small country town. I don't know. People did farming. Of course, my father was a blacksmith. And we didn't have the highway or anything through the town. Lyndon's dad was representative and he had a meeting of the townspeople and asked them which they'd rather have, the railroad or the highway through the town to boost the town, and they voted to have the highway. So he worked toward getting a highway through the town, and that was kind of a new awakening because it brought a lot of people in for the road work.

G: Were these different kinds of inhabitants or different ethnic groups?

E: You mean the people who lived in Johnson City?

G: No, who worked on the [highway].

E: Who came in? They followed that type work. Most of them were young, unmarried men, and they went with some of the girls in the town. Of course, my mother was pretty strict with me; she didn't let me date anybody that she didn't know real well, and usually we went with a group even then. But [there was] just farming and ranching and then

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the local things. I don't know, I guess there was one grocery store and one garage, meat market and things like that; that was about it.

G: What did the young people do for entertainment in Johnson City?

E: It was church-type entertainment. We usually all went to the same church, and that depended on whether you had good strong leaders for young people in that church. At one time the Methodists were promoting a program that we all enjoyed, so everybody went there, because your girlfriend or your boyfriend or somebody else was going there. Then the Christian Church would have a youth program; we'd all go over there. The other would die. The Baptists held on I guess longer because we had a teacher in high school who was a Baptist and a good worker, and we loved her and she became a leader of the youth in the Baptist Church.

G: Who was she?

E: Miss Knispel, Minnie. And so we all went there. And then our entertainment was to get together at someone's home and we just went as a group. I don't remember any dating or anything at that time.

G: Do you recall how LBJ happened to join the Christian Church? His mother was a Baptist, I think.

E: Right. No, I don't know, and I don't remember exactly when he joined the Christian Church. But my first husband, Floyd Ferrell, his parents and grandparents and all before were Baptists, but one summer we had an outstanding preacher at the Christian Church in a revival and he joined there and remained a member of that church until he passed

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away, or all of his life. So I don't know whether it was that summer that Lyndon joined, but many, many young people did.

G: I see. Did his mother attend the Baptist Church?

E: Not very much, no. Like I told you, Mrs. Johnson was not really a well person, seemingly, and she was not a person to get out and mix. She was at home, she took care of her home and loved her home. We were always welcome as kids, you know, from high school, and if we were having plays or any kind, debating or whatever, Mrs. Johnson was our source of help. We would go to her house, three or four or five or whatever of us, you know. She did not go to church. She encouraged others and Lyndon's sister Rebekah went really to Sunday school and to training union--we called it BYPU [Baptist Young People's Union] back in those days--they went a few times, a few years, when all the young people were going. But no, Mrs. Johnson did not really take an active part.

G: You say she was ill a lot. What sort of illness did she have, do you recall?

E: She had surgery several times, and then each time when the babies were born she seemed to have a lengthy recovery period or something.

G: Well, how did she help the students with their plays and debates and things like that?

E: Well, she just trained us, you know, just act like a teacher. As a young person, we heard or had it described to us that she was an elocution teacher. But she would help us. Now I played opposite Lyndon in one of our plays; he was the leading man and I was the

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leading girl. So she worked very hard with me to get me to express myself and to do the acting that seemed necessary to make the play a success.

G: How was she as a teacher? Was she effective?

E: Yes. Yes. We looked up to her and whatever she told us to do we did it, did our best.

G: Why was this? Why was she effective in this way?

E: She was kind, had a soft voice, and seemed to be interested in what we were doing and wanting us to succeed. And of course she was the life-line of Lyndon and his education.

G: How?

E: She always thought that he could do anything, and she made him think that by the way she helped him and loved him and carried him along.

G: Well, tell me about the school play that you were in.

E: I don't know what there is to tell.

G: What was the name of it?

E: Titled The Thread of Destiny. It was a Civil War play. And we took it to other communities around to make some money I guess for the class, maybe for our closing out, I don't even know.

G: How did LBJ do in the play?

E: Oh, yes, he was always outstanding. In whatever he did, he was a leader. Always had a good strong voice, just put himself into whatever he was doing.

G: How did the two of you happen to get the leads, do you recall?

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E: Oh, I don't--the high school teachers chose us. I guess because I had long curls and probably they thought I fitted that young person of that age or something, I mean the part that I was playing. There were many of us in the play. There were other couples who were lovers and so on and so forth. But. . . .

G: Do you recall who directed the play or if there was a teacher responsible?

E: Well, Mr. [Edward] Bowman was our superintendent. I don't really know who the lady, who the teacher was. I think it was after Miss Knispel, and I don't even know who the woman was.

G: Now you indicated that you worked in the Johnson home.

E: Yes, I did, just as an early teenager.

G: Can you describe it?

E: Just a child. Like I say, I can't really remember. I guess if I put some thought to it and tried to figure out, maybe I could. But Lyndon must have been--I'm two years older than he is. I'm going to guess that maybe he was ten and I was twelve. Anyway, I guess Mrs. Johnson had just had the youngest baby, Lucia, and was weak and didn't do much. She asked my mother if I could come and help with the housework and the children. It was in the wintertime, just after Christmas I guess, because Lyndon had got a new red wagon for Christmas, the toy. That type of toy was something that just every little boy had to have, and it was not just a play toy, it was a strongly built wagon because you hauled the wood from the woodpile into the house for the fireplace or the cookstove, you know. We didn't have oil and gas and all those

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things, everything was wood. He was very proud of this little wagon and would come to the door where I was sweeping or whatever and say, "Louise, come on and play. Come on, I want to show you my new wagon. I'll pull you in my new wagon." And I went out, of course, kid-like a time or two. I don't remember that I ever got in the wagon, that he ever pulled it, but I looked and I helped enjoy the wagon with him. But his mother came to the door and said, "Lyndon, Louise didn't come to play. She came to help me. I need her in the kitchen. She can't play right now." Very kindly, like she was afraid she might upset him or he'd have a tantrum or something, you know, because I couldn't go play with him. But I came on in. I just remember that particular instance.

Of course, children were rowdy and loud and squealy, you know, scuffling, fight and disagree and all, like when you have four or five little ones all about the same age. But I know, or noticed, that always Lyndon sort of led out. He usually got what he wanted. Of course, his mother was real proud of him. She showed her love to him and for him all the time. I don't know whether the girls were particularly jealous or not.

G: Did they receive less attention than he did, do you think?

E: They demanded less. It took less for them to be satisfied than it did for him I think.

G: How about Sam Houston?

E: Sam Houston was young. Rebekah and Josefa were older, see, than he, so he was small. I don't remember much. My sister Margaret was in

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school with Sam Houston. In fact, some of our family, because we were ten, you know, and some of them were in all the classes with the Johnson children. My aunt, my mother's sister, worked in the Johnson home a good many months, maybe even into years, but she was older and did more. I was just there kind of to help out, I think, after this period of the baby.

G: Were you paid for doing this?

E: Yes, but as I recall just maybe two dollars a week or something like that, and to go in for just a few hours maybe after Mama and I had washed the clothes and got them on the line, then maybe at ten o'clock or eleven o'clock I could go to Mrs. Johnson's and clean off the breakfast table and wash the dishes and sweep the kitchen and stack the wood up a little more neatly, maybe help a little bit with the cooking as she directed or something like that. I don't really remember that I did all that much. I don't remember making beds. I guess it was just mopping and cleaning and corralling the little ones.

G: Tell me what the house was like, their home in Johnson City.

E: Just the bare minimum. I mean, to look at it outside it looks much as it does today, but inside the floors were bare, the furniture in Mrs. Johnson's bedroom was just a big old iron bed and dressing table or a dresser, old-fashioned. I don't even remember a chair in there that you could sit in. Because if she was lying down, then I was standing beside her to get the directions of what I was supposed to do. In the dining room there was a big fireplace and they had a long table that they ate off of. I don't remember that it was even a bought kind of

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table, it just seems like just boards. But on the backside against the wall was a bench that three or four of the children sat on to eat.

Just there was nothing. In the living room there was a little kind of a loveseat and an old victrola and I believe what we used to call a library table, a big table that sat in the middle of the room with some big books on it. The Bible was there, I remember, and maybe a little kind of a stand in the corner and a rocking chair. Just bare necessities, really. I was never in the other bedrooms much. There was one room that was supposedly Mr. Johnson's room, and I don't remember of even making that bed but about one time. I guess somebody else did it or she did it or something, I don't know. Of course, he was not there that much.

G: Was he in Austin?

E: Yes, he was here a good lot of the time. Mr. Johnson was always very nice to me. I was not particularly afraid of him, but my mother said to me when I went there, "Now if Mr. Johnson is at home, you just don't pay any attention to him and you don't be talking with him. You just go ahead about your work." That didn't mean anything to me. I was a shy youngster and so that was all right. But I've heard since then, you know, that there were reasons. And usually if he came home he'd say, "Hello, Louise," and then go to his room and I never would see him any more anyway.

G: Why would your mother tell you that?

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E: See, I don't know, but I just remember that she did that. I didn't know whether he was somebody to fear or whether--I know I heard him scream out to the children a few times, but I guess I didn't think anything about that either. You know, back in those days children were brought up differently anyway. What dad said, you did, and that was it. There wasn't any back talk or anything else. So I don't know.

G: Do you think that Mrs. Johnson was happy in Johnson City?

E: Well, she never indicated, as much as I could know, that she wasn't.

G: What did she do with her time, other than raising children?

E: I don't know except read.

G: What did she read? What kind of books?

E: I don't really know. I didn't pay that much attention.

G: Did she work on the newspaper at all or write or edit a newspaper at any time?

E: I don't know. Since you mentioned it it seems like maybe that she did. I don't really know.

G: Did she participate in community affairs?

E: Not that I know of. And I don't ever remember seeing--I'm sure she came, but I don't ever remember seeing Mrs. Johnson at school or PTA or anything. But somehow we went to her; she didn't come to us, but we went to her. And I even remember--I guess when I applied for my first school that summer I went to her and asked her, "What do you say in a letter when you're asking for a job? I don't know, Mrs. Johnson." So we talked a bit about it and she told me what she thought that they

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would like to know about me if they were going to hire me as a teacher. But it was sort of like she was just one of our teachers, you know, because we just went to her for everything. In fact, she was always there and she always made you feel like that you were welcome. Of course, our teachers were people who came in, you know, and they were just there during the school year and not there in the summer to call on or ask things.

G: Let me ask you about Sam Ealy Johnson some more. He was the state representative, is that right?

E: Right, from that district.

G: Did he have a political philosophy that you could identify? I mean, did he represent one set of issues he was in favor of and oppose another set?

E: I don't think that I would know that.

G: Was he associated with Jim Ferguson?

E: Yes. Yes. He was wholeheartedly in agreement with Jim Ferguson. But as a youngster and one who didn't enjoy history, I didn't read and I didn't enjoy it and I didn't really pay that much attention to politics except that Mr. Johnson was sort of regarded by the townsfolk as our spokesman. I'm sure there were those who did not agree with him, but I'm sure also that there were people who appreciated what he did for the county and the town.

G: What did he do for the county?

E: Well, just that highway through there was the big thing. I don't know what else. I can't really remember. But if there was something that

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they wanted done or thought was important, they would certainly go to Mr. Johnson to get him to help.

G: How do you think he got elected? Do you have any idea who his supporters were?

E: No. No, I don't. Seems like I don't even remember when he was elected. Seems like all of my young life that that's what he was.

G: Did he also deal in real estate?

E: I don't know. I don't remember.

G: Do you know anything about his cotton business?

E: No.

G: How would you describe his enemies, his political enemies or personal enemies in Johnson City? What sort of people were they? Were they businessmen?

E: I don't really know who did not like Mr. Johnson or get along with him. I don't know who his enemies were. To me--well, we didn't talk those things at my house. My mother and dad did not enter into those things much. I think maybe Papa did with the men, but it wasn't talked at home, and so we didn't know as children much about that. And of course, I don't know, we had to work--or I did--had to work so hard and do so many things and were so busy helping my mother to make a living for our big family that I guess I just wasn't in on the know on a lot of that and I didn't read that much because--

G: Do you think that he was opposed by prohibitionists because he himself [was a drinker]?

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E: I would say yes, but I have no other reason for thinking except that I know he did drink.

G: Do you think he drank too much?

E: I wouldn't know, because like I said, I didn't see him much. I had heard people say that he did, but I never saw him do or say anything out of the way. And of course my dad didn't drink; I never saw my dad but one time in his life that he had a little bit too much. So I wouldn't be a judge of that at all. I would say that maybe people who were strict prohibitionists would be against Mr. Johnson.

G: Would you say that he was well liked or disliked or liked by some and not by others, if you had to generalize?

E: Yes, I guess that's what I would say, that he was liked by some and not by others. It seems like now as you ask the question and I think, that I can hear people say or I don't know what it is going through my mind at this time, but like, "Oh, old Sam, you can't tell about what he's going to do about that or what he'd say" or "you can't depend on him" or something. Those things kind of just wave through my mind, but I don't have anything specific on it.

G: Okay. What sort of economic situation were the Johnsons in then, do you recall?

E: Well, of course we felt like, or I did as a child, that they had more than we had, but we really were at rock bottom most of the time at our house. But being around them and being in the home, I would say they just didn't have very much of anything.

G: Really? Why do you say--?

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- E: Now I think when the grandmother came that she probably contributed some to them financially, but I don't know that. I didn't see it happen.
- G: Why do you say though that they didn't have anything? Was this with regard to furniture or with regard to food? What were they lacking in?
- E: Well, there was never anything around except the necessities. They didn't have--like I mean I could point out other families where there were just one or two children in the family where they had a lot of toys and a lot of things that I would have liked to have had, but I never did see anything at the Johnsons' house that seemed much more than what I had. And we just didn't have it. And the food was very simple. There was nothing ever elaborate, just bare necessities is all I saw. I wasn't there for any kind of celebration or it was just everyday things that I saw, but they had beans and cornbread like the rest of us.
- G: How did Sam Ealy Johnson get along with his children? Was he a stern father?
- E: I never did hear him. Like I said, I never did hear him say or do anything but very few times, but when he spoke everybody jumped. He was law and order I felt, but that's sort of the way we all grew up back in those days.
- G: Did Lyndon get along with his father well?
- E: I just don't know because I didn't have an opportunity to see them together that much.

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G: Now let me ask you about LBJ in school. First tell me what the school was like in Johnson City. Was it divided into a high school and an elementary school?

E: One building. Yes. One two-story building and it was primary or elementary, all six grades downstairs, and high school upstairs, four teachers up there I believe, two rooms on either side. Of course, the old building has burned down now, but when Lyndon became vice president, people started right away trying to find out more about him and asked questions and everything. And I remember my Papa's youngest sister, Aunt Hattie, Mrs. Sharp, coming to me and saying "Do you remember Lyndon in school? What was he like in school?" And I said, "Well, yes, I remember Lyndon in school." And she said, "When? When did he come to Johnson City to school?" I said, "Goodness, I don't know." I don't think I can hardly remember him until high school, at school, you know. I mean I knew he was there, and he was at home and I was in their home and all like that, but I just couldn't really tell you when he came to school. And I was in his class from the day one on, because we would just have eight or ten or twelve children in third grade or fourth grade or whatever, you know. And I just don't remember much.

It seems like I remember him on the school grounds playing ball just with all the kids, but nothing particular at all until eighth grade. That's when Miss Knispel came as our high school teacher; she was eighth and ninth grade--well, high school English and History. But it was then that I remember his leadership quality and his bossing.

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We were in debates; I was in girls debate at the time he was in boys debate, and his mother was helping us. I don't remember whether as grade school, maybe in seventh grade we went to Mrs. Johnson for some help in things. But it just seemed like to me, and I guess to some of the others, that she knew more than some of these young teachers that we had, and we felt that we were really getting what we were supposed to get when we went to Mrs. Johnson's house.

G: Do you think that he shared that attitude, that his mother did know more--?

E: I believe so, because I've heard her say that he didn't like to go to school. She had a hard time getting him up in the morning and getting him to school, and I don't remember that he came in late or anything. Maybe he did. But she just had to be after him all the time to get him to go. But maybe he didn't even feel the need of it because he had school at home all the time.

G: Do you think he did in fact stay home for large periods of time and just study under his mother?

E: I just don't know. I really don't. But I know she helped him and pushed him and encouraged him. She thought that he could do anything, and I think she made him believe that he could do anything. There was nothing too hard for him.

G: How well did he get along with the teachers, do you recall?

E: Oh, he was high tempered and we all thought a little spoiled. He wanted his way; he'd had his way at home, at least with his mother. I guess they got along all right. He and Mr. [Arthur] Krause had a

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little trouble one time out on the playgrounds. I think it was over  
Kittie Clyde [Leonard], but I'm not sure.

G: Well, now Mr. Krause was a teacher?

E: A teacher, yes.

G: What did he teach, do you know?

E: I think History. I'm not real sure. I don't remember too much in  
that.

G: Can you recall the details of the argument or what happened?

E: No, it was something that Lyndon picked up a baseball bat and was  
going to hit him I think, but I don't remember what the remark was,  
some kind of--and Mr. Krause was kidding him about something, and  
maybe it was something about Kittie Clyde or his being with her. It  
wasn't anything bad, but it rubbed Lyndon the wrong way, and of course  
he was quick to--his temper would fly. He had a temper.

G: Do you recall how the crisis was resolved?

E: No. Seems like maybe some of the big boys took the bat away or  
something. I just don't remember. I didn't see it all. I remember  
some of the girls saying "they're going to have a fight, they're going  
to have a fight." I was already down toward the door of school and  
looked around when it was being settled. So I don't know that much  
about it, but I know it. . . .

G: Did he have a teacher who was a particular favorite?

E: I don't really know if he did or not. Oh, Mr. Klett, Scott Klett.

G: Now he had been a superintendent earlier, is that right, before Mr.  
Bowman? Or was he after him?

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- E: Well, he was after, I guess, because we were over on that east side and that was tenth and eleventh grade, the last two grades.
- G: Did he teach debate or dramatics?
- E: Math was his major, Mr. Klett. I don't even know who was helping us with debate. I don't know whether it was Mr. Krause. Of course, Miss Knispel really was the one who helped us a lot.
- G: Someone recalled that when you would practice debate you would use one of the churches, the pulpit from the nearby church to practice declamation or debating or something like that?
- E: I don't know.
- G: Do you recall going to debate tournaments or debates with other schools?
- E: Yes. Yes. We had our county tryout in Blanco. Both boys and girls won. Georgia [Cammack Edgeworth] and I were debating that night, and Lyndon and John Dollahite, and they won. And then we went to San Marcos for the district meet. I think the boys won second or something, but we didn't place as I recall.
- G: Was LBJ disappointed that he didn't win first?
- E: I don't think I heard anything like that. Of course, I guess he was but he was running from one building to the other to find the girls to see how we came out. I guess the fact that they did better than we did was encouragement for him, I don't know.
- G: What was his debating style? How would you describe him as a high school debater?

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E: Well, I don't know what to say. I mean I don't know the word to use for it, but I guess I want to say oratorical, if there is such a word. Anyway, I mean he did have a wonderful voice and expression and of course knew the history about it. It was the League of Nations we were debating I believe.

G: Did he also go to Austin as part of an Interscholastic League function?

E: I don't know whether they came here or not. I thought that we had the district--oh, I guess it was here that we came. I don't even know. But it was a district meet. Maybe it was here in Austin. I don't know. Just vaguely it seems like it was San Marcos where we were. It might have been down in old B Hall over here at the University. Back in those days I don't. . . .

G: Was LBJ interested in athletics when he was in Johnson City?

E: I don't remember that he was. He played baseball with the boys but not that I know of on a team or anything like that.

G: Did he normally run around with children who were older than he or children who were younger than he?

E: Older.

G: Can you name any in particular that were his closer friends?

E: Well, the Crider boys were all older than he. I guess the Rountree boys. My second husband, Robert, was older than Lyndon by a couple of years or three. The Summy boys, they were all older than Lyndon.

G: Did LBJ have any jobs, either summer jobs or part-time jobs that you're aware of?

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- E: Well, just the job on the road, building the highway there, when his dad came to my first husband, Floyd Ferrell, and said that he wanted Lyndon to have a job and that Lyndon doesn't know how to do anything. "But maybe if you'll take him under your wing, Floyd, and help him, maybe he can learn to do something." I don't remember how long he worked there with them on the road, but he was pitching rocks and doing shoveling. They loaded their trucks by hand during those days, weren't no steam shovels or anything like that. And of course he really had to work. There was no play about that kind of a job. It was real physical labor. But after a few months or weeks, whatever time it was, he was driving a truck, which of course was not so hard, a dump truck.
- G: What did your first husband think about him as an employee, do you recall?
- E: Well, he said, "He's the hard-headest thing I ever tried to work with. He could do better if he'd let you tell him something, but he won't listen." But I think he was pleased that he made some progress.
- G: I understand that early on it was LBJ's job to milk the cow at the Johnson home. Do you recall that?
- E: They probably had a cow. We all had our own cow. I don't remember particularly about the Johnsons, but they did have a small barn, shed area, and I guess they had a cow. I don't know. Actually, when I was helping and working in the home, he would have been nearly too small to have done that job, so I don't know whether he did or didn't.
- G: Did he ever shine shoes in the barbershop? Can you recall that?

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- E: Yes. Yes. Yes, I remember that he shined shoes. Cecil Maddox was barber I guess, maybe Roy Scofield [?]. But yes, he did shine shoes.
- G: And how about working in Robstown? Do you recall him working down there in a gin?
- E: No, I don't know anything about that.
- G: Someone remembered that LBJ used to wear a necktie to school when other children did not.
- E: Well, I don't remember that. See, that didn't impress me, but the picture that we have of all the children, he has on a tie. I don't know, maybe his mother knew that he was going to get his picture taken that day. I don't know. It didn't strike me as being anything different.
- G: Did he give a high school graduation speech? Do you remember that?
- E: I don't know. I guess he did, if one was given, because he was always the speaker and was willing. He wasn't shy. You know, back in those days we were scared to death to get up on the stage. We were just shy little country kids. It was really something. I don't suppose he ever felt that way. It seemed like it was always just natural for him.
- G: Do you recall his trip to California?
- E: No. I don't remember anything about it, only I remember that all of us girls were so upset. We just thought that was the awfulest thing for those boys to run off to California and especially for Lyndon to go with them.
- G: Why was that?

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E: Well, we all sort of claimed him as our boyfriend, although he wasn't. He wasn't ever anybody's boyfriend except Kittie Clyde's, if you could call that that. That's who he cared about. But I made the mistake of saying to Georgia--Mrs. Edgeworth--"Gosh, I just miss Lyndon so much, and when we hang his blue jeans up on the line when Mama and I are washing, oh, I just could die when I think about that he's gone way out there to California." Now you know in those days California was like if you'd gone to Africa or some other place today. That was just a terrible long ways to go from us. We needed him. So--

G: What did Georgia say in reply?

E: Oh, she made all manner of fun of me. She said, "Oh, so that's it. So you're liking Lyndon!" "No, not that. Just that I just miss him and I think it was silly for him to go."

G: Did he write letters to Kittie Clyde or any others while he was out in California that you [know of]?

E: I don't know. He wrote to me when I was here in Austin those two summers that I came down here right after graduation. I had letters from him.

G: Do you think that his experience out in California changed him?

E: I don't know. I just didn't see Lyndon that much after that. I saw him that little bit in college and of course by that time I had lost all interest, if I had any, as a boyfriend or anything like that because I was thinking seriously of getting married myself at that time. I just don't remember whether there were changes or not.

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G: Well, somewhere down the line he seems to have acquired more ambition than he had.

E: That might be after going out there and having to rough it a little bit. Maybe he got busy.

G: Did he seem more ambitious in college than he had when he was in high school?

E: I didn't notice the difference, but I guess maybe I didn't see him in the same light that other people saw him in college. I guess I always thought that it didn't matter in high school whether he paid attention, whether he got it, whether he did anything or not, because his mother had it and he'd eventually get it anyway. I just don't remember that it bothered me at all, except in high school he didn't ever do his own work. Kittie Clyde did his math for him, and I wrote his English themes for him. You know, he could just get somebody else. I always think teachers assigned different things just for busy work and homework and so on, you know. We'd have a book report every week, read a book and write a report. Well, I bet he didn't read a book, but he got his reports in because we saw that he did.

G: So that meant you had to read two books, I guess?

E: I really did.

G: Why do you think he didn't read? Did he not like to read or did he not have time?

E: Oh, I think that there were too many more things exciting than just sitting down and reading. That was for the birds for him.

G: What did he do instead?

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- E: I don't know. Try to tend to everybody else's business I guess. He was a busybody.
- G: You mean in terms of gossip or in terms of--?
- E: Oh, just telling you what to do, you ought to do this, you ought to do that.
- G: Did he figure into the rivalry between Blanco and Johnson City at all?
- E: I don't really know. A lot of the boys from Johnson City went to Blanco often and dated the girls over there. My first husband did. I guess Bob did, too, I don't know. But Harold Withers and others of the older boys went to Blanco. They had beautiful girls over there, prettier girls than we had in Johnson City.
- G: Did LBJ date any of the Blanco girls?
- E: I don't know. My brother married one of them. I really don't know.
- G: When do you think he first became interested in politics?
- E: Probably as a little child when his dad was a representative. I think he'd be just as--I believe that he might have been proud of the fact that his dad was a representative. And of course he came down here, he was a page in the legislature. And I guess, you know, I would say it began way back there.
- G: Let me ask you what you recall about him at San Marcos?
- E: Not a great deal except, like I said, I was just there that one spring term or half term actually that he was there, and I knew he was there longer, you know, before that time. But I saw him often, and the one time he borrowed Miss Davis' car, Ethel Davis' car, and took some of

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us young folks, three girls, to, I don't know, New Braunfels or somewhere to hear a political speech.

G: Was it Dan Moody, do you know?

E: I'm thinking that that's who it was. It seems like I can't be real sure, but I'm thinking that's what it was.

G: If you had to place a time on that when would you think that it was? Was it in the spring or the summer?

E: I'm going to say the spring. But if it were not, then it was early summer. I just don't know.

G: What year would that have been?

E: Well, let's see, we graduated [from high school] in 1924. I was there in 1925, 1926. 1927 I guess.

G: Okay.

G: Before we turned on the tape you mentioned Carol Davis and her coming to Johnson City. Can you recall the details of that?

E: No, just that it was some sort of a school affair, I'm thinking an alumni group, just a get-together of everyone, and she sang for us. It was real, real beautiful. Right now I can't tell you what it was that she sang, but every once in a while I remember and it comes to my mind, but right now I can't. But she was attractive, and Lyndon seemed pleased.

G: She was older than he, is that correct?

E: I would guess, but I didn't know.

G: Yes. Tell me about LBJ at San Marcos. Did he have a favorite teacher or professor?

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E: Mr. [H. M.] Greene.

G: Did he do well in history?

E: Yes. Yes, he was always interested in history, even in high school, I remember. He tried to make me a good history student, but I couldn't do it. I just couldn't get all those dates and things straight in my mind. I just was not a historian.

G: What was Professor Greene like as a teacher?

E: He was fun. He really knew history and he was a little old common, ordinary man, a little fellow. Oh, I can see him now. He just was interesting and I could see how that Lyndon might like him or that he might take Lyndon under his wing.

G: Where did LBJ live when he was at San Marcos, do you remember?

E: I thought in one of the little houses there in the yard of President Fowler, isn't that his name?

G: [Cecil] Evans, I think.

E: Evans. Because he worked around the place there, you know, did all kinds of jobs and things, and that's what I always thought, that he must be living. I didn't ask. I don't know. But I thought he must be living in one of those little two-story kind of a thing that was there.

G: Anything else on San Marcos?

E: Well, I just didn't see him that much or know that much about him there, just that little while. Of course, I said he was wearing or had my high school ring. I had a hard time getting it back from him. In fact, I felt like he didn't have it, that probably a girl or

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somebody else was wearing it, and it was not until after I was married--and Floyd had bought that ring for me; my family could not buy me a ring, they didn't have any money. And he said, "You're going to have a ring. I'm going to pay for it. You go ahead and order it." And so I did. Then all the time we were going together, for the last year or so before we married, he'd say, "I want you to get that ring back from Lyndon." He knew that Lyndon had it. And I said okay. So I had to ask him about it and had written him a few times that I wanted my ring back. So finally I explained to him that Floyd was the one that was pushing me to get the ring back, because, after all, he had given it to me and I wanted it. Well, it was just a long, long time and I thought I was never going to get it, but it was after I married that he finally sent it back to me.

G: Why did he get your ring in the first place?

E: He just asked me if he could wear it and I let him wear it. Of course, I was not that serious about anyone else at that time, wasn't thinking about getting married.

G: Well, do you have any recollections of him when he was NYA director or when he was working for [Richard] Kleberg in Washington?

E: No. No. I didn't keep up with him. I had a rather busy life then, just married. I really didn't see Lyndon at all hardly after he got out of college. He would come home to Johnson City occasionally and I would accidentally see him in the cafe; Mama and them were in the cafe and he always came in there to eat chili. Sometimes I would see him just for a few minutes and we'd talk in there. But I just through

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town gossip or hearsay or the paper or whatever was able to keep up with him a little bit, but not much.

This picture, when he ran for the Senate, it was just more or less an accident that I was just getting out of my car with the babies--my husband had died; my first husband had a heart attack and died very suddenly as a young man. My babies were both small, one year and two years at that time, and I was just getting out of my car and my uncle came to help me with the little girls to go into the cafe, and Lyndon came across the street just at that time. The person that was with him taking pictures snapped the picture, and I didn't know it for a good long while, and then his mother sent it to me. But I didn't see Lyndon much at all. I saw him when his mother passed away, and then I saw him and Claudia, Mrs. Johnson, in the cafe one time. Oh, they hadn't been married too many years and they were in there, and I saw them. That's when I first met her. Really, I just didn't keep up with him except what I saw in the papers for those other years.

G: Do you recall anything on his role in the rural electrification and bringing electricity to the Hill Country?

E: No. No. I guess I don't know too much about it. I just know that he did help. He was implicated. I just really don't know much about it.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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