INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: DR. MELVILLE B. GROSVENOR

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: National Geographic Society offices, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 2

F: Mel, I suppose we may as well quit the formalities and be informal since I've known you a long time through the National Geographic Society and as chairman of the Advisory Board of the National Park Board. You have been the chairman and the editor-in-chief of the National Geographic Society?

G: Yes.

F: When did you first come to know Lyndon Johnson and Mrs. Johnson?

G: The first time I met him was when he was vice president and he kindly came to the dedication of the Richard Byrd Memorial Statue out on the approach to Arlington. The National Geographic supported Byrd for many, many expeditions back in the earliest days, and Vice President Johnson had been interested, too, along the way. He dedicated this memorial bust of Byrd done by Felix de Weldon, and it's on a new Avenue of the Heroes. The plan was to have the statues of the great heroes that are up in Arlington, right above, line this street because they do not allow such memorials nowadays in the Arlington Cemetery. So the idea was to have these great heroes up there and make this sort of like they did in Rome, where they have the Avenue of the Heroes.

F: Yes.

G: So he was a first. Lo and behold, they have not carried this out, so the poor Admiral Byrd statue stands there by itself. If you drive to the approach, you'll see it on the right.

F: Why do you think they haven't carried it out? Just haven't followed it through?

G: I don't know whether it was Stew Udall--he looked down on statues and wanted to get rid of them, you know. But I'd always thought that was a natural place for it and I still think so and hope eventually that it will come back.

Then at the same time [I met Vice President Johnson] I remember I first met the then-Secretary of the Navy [John] Connally, who was the governor of Texas. I was very much impressed with him.

But the Vice President made this very fine presentation and dedicated it, and I met him there for the first time.

Now I have here a copy of the Congressional Record for January 18, 1962, page 356 [see attachments], which tells in detail of the ceremonies for the dedication of this building, in which my remarks start it off and the Vice President's are included.

It's a very beautiful bronze statue. A duplicate of it is in our Explorer's Hall here. That was the first one, and then this is a duplicate. I beg your pardon, the original one was for up there and we have a duplicate here of the head--not the bust, the head. Another duplicate has been erected at McMurdo Sound in a very key place, of this same statue.

But that's the first time I met the Vice President, and his sincerity and what he said about Byrd and the whole thing impressed me very much.

F: Did you meet Mrs. Johnson on that occasion?

G: I can't remember whether she was present.

F: Not enough to realize--

G: I don't think she was there. She might have been, but I don't think so. I was in charge of things and, you know, you get a little--

F: Yes, I know. When did you next get together?

G: The next was for the award for the Hubbard Medal in the Armory to John Glenn who had just been the first astronaut to orbit the earth. The Vice President awarded this Hubbard Medal in the Armory on April 9, 1962, and there were some ten thousand people in that hall. We had it packed. Every seat that the fire department would allow was taken.

F: Was this an invitation sort of affair, or did anyone come who wanted to?

G: There was a guest list of distinguished people, but then it was made up of members of the National Geographic Society here in Washington who were invited to come if they subscribed, at no cost. They would write in and ask for tickets and then be assigned. There was a guest list, but a great majority of them were members of the Society. There was no charge in any way for that. It was just a public service, as it always is.

F: You were in charge again?

G: Yes.

F: So this again was a fairly formal occasion when the two of you were together?

G: Oh, yes. I'm just going to turn over to you for your records the speeches which were said at that time. [See attachments] These are the final drafts, as I understand it, with any extemporaneous stuff added. I thought that you might like to have that for your records.

F; Good. I would indeed.

And then you next met at Senator Byrd's garden party?

G: Yes, down in Berryville, April 29, 1962.

F: Was this for anyone in particular, or was it just a pleasant occasion?

G: No, this was Senator Byrd's annual spring apple blossom reception.

F: When the trees are white?

G: All of his cronies, you see. There were mostly senators there and distinguished people, and of course the Vice President was there.

I'll never forget, this was really my first introduction. This came about four weeks after the Hubbard presentation. I didn't think the Vice President really knew me, because it was all so formal--these presentations. I'll never forget--I came out on that great porch and there was the Vice President way across the room talking to this group--he waved his hand at me and said, "Hi, Dr. Grosvenor" across the room.

So I went right over there. He was talking to Senator Saltonstall and a congressman. The Vice President introduced me to them and said, "Of course, he's editor of the National Geographic

Society." Then he said, "You know, Senator, when I was a boy, my mother brought me up by putting the Bible in my right hand and the National Geographic magazine in my left. With those two, I was brought up, and I learned about the world and I learned about character and so forth. And the Senator, Senator Saltonstall, said, "Why, you know, Mr. Vice President, it was the same with me. My family had the Geographic and I was brought up with the same thing!" And the congressman here said the same thing. And if you don't think I was pleased! But the Vice President was so pleasant about it, and nice.

F: You couldn't have a better beginning for an evening.

G: Oh, Lord, and the point was that he was sincere about it because it went back to his boyhood. We were talking back and forth, and he said some nice things to me about how he watched the Geographic over the years. My father had taken it and done so much with it, and he was worried that it would go backwards. And then I'd come in the picture. He said nice things about what I've done, and was so pleased that I was carrying on the work of the Geographic, which pleased me, too. Because he said, my being a son, he was glad to see it going on and that I was interested in the job. Nice things like that.

Then the next time [I saw him was when] our Board of Trustees decided to award the Vice President a medal. We have a Jane N. Smith Medal, which was presented many, many years ago by this little school teacher who had left her bequest to the Geographic to give those who have done distinguished work in spreading geographic knowledge.

The Vice President had made this trip to Europe and to Asia, made several trips.

F: Africa.

G: And Africa. He traveled in that year 1961 seventy-five thousand miles around the world. And we had one of our men, Bart McDowell, with him, and a photographer, Volkmar Wentzel.

F: Who was the photographer?

G: Wentzel. He is now married to [Chancellor Kurt] Kiesinger's daughter. He is Kiesinger's son-in-law.

Well, anyway, they came back, and here was Bart McDowell, a dyed-in-the-wool Republican who had run down in Virginia on a Republican ticket--and darn near won it, too, I'll tell you, way down in Virginia--just thinking the Vice President was the most wonderful guy. I asked him if he would like to give you a few anecdotes about his trip, and he said he would. He's going to have lunch with us.

F: Good.

G: But he came back and we decided [because] this was such a real first-hand visit with these people to run this article. It was a very popular story. It's in this issue here of February 1964, which I am giving you so you will have the whole thing. [see attachments]

So then the Board voted to give him the Jane N. Smith Medal. Actually we did not have a good medal, so we had a special one made up for him, gold, and we presented it at that occasion. I have the remarks here that were made at that time. [see attachments]

The thing that appealed to us, this wasn't just a Cook's Tour. He went over there with the pure and simple desire to make friends for the United States of America of these people, wherever he went. As the pictures show in the article, he would speak to the people, the Laplanders. He'd go look at the reindeer, you know, and talk to the fellows with an interpreter, just all the way through.

F: Your cover picture on that was of a little Laplander child?

G: That's right. I think maybe there's a reprint of that. I will have to find it. [see attachments] But it was a great success.

He came very informally and we had a luncheon here at the Geographic. My father was a great admirer of the Vice President; he'd always been. He went up, and of course the Vice President remembered my father--had known him through the Geographic all these years--and they just had a little talk in the corner. I have a wonderful picture of that, of the two of them together, which I have autographed at home some place; I don't think I have it up here. But Father had it, and I'll get it, mustn't forget to get that for you. My father was very enthusiastic about it because the Vice President made these trips and so forth.

F: When did you get together next? You're gradually getting closer and closer.

G: He came to the dedication of the building in January 1964, and it was wonderful.

F: He had just become president at that time.

G: Just become president in the fall.

F: Had you invited him before he became president, or had you invited President Kennedy and he inherited the job?

G: No, we had not invited President Kennedy. The point was that the building wasn't ready, and we didn't know just when it was going to be. Then of course the President was killed. We wanted to have the president and this was the date it worked out.

F: By this time had you come to know Mrs. Johnson very well?

G: Not too well--

F: Still not yet.

G: --until an incident happened at this occasion here. That's when I really first got to know her, as you will see. I have the remarks here that were made, and you probably have copies of it, but anyway I'm giving you this printed copy of his remarks and then mine. [see attachments]

What pleased us very much--he'd asked us to draft something for him, a basis for him to talk about geography and so forth, which we did and sent down to him. We thought it was very good. When he delivered it, he'd changed the whole section, added a lot, to say some nice things about the Geographic, which we didn't put in. He did that himself which I thought was very, very nice. He mentioned the Geographic quite a bit in here. But we were very pleased. I was very pleased with that. Then I came with mine and I picked up the story--what he said about the Bible in his right hand and the Geographic in his left. I checked at the White House before I said it, because he was going to be there and I didn't want to embarrass

him. I think I have it in here; we used it once. I checked because I didn't want to quote him--that was a personal thing--without his [approval]. And word came back "Quite okay." So I used it, either in this speech or in another one, or in the magazine. So we used it.

But in this particular introduction of the President, I mentioned that I looked up--he told me he had it as a boy--when his mother had become a member, and sure enough it was October 25, 1919. So I got out the first issue of that article that she received, October 1919, and I found it was a bird sanctuary in California, islands south of Mexico and the Congo. As you will see in my remarks [see attachments], at that very time those four subjects were right in the news again, and my theme was that maybe the Geographic had helped him have a feeling of conservation with the bird articles in it, of travel, and of Mexico, you see. He said it was true, that it had helped to stimulate. So it became very pleasant to me.

F: You mention that he goes to Mexico on his honeymoon.

G: Yes, and I have that on here. Then we had bound up this issue of the magazine and other issues relating to it into a bound volume--the stories of the magazine about metal, land, et cetera--and I presented it to him. It had no inscription, so it came back up and they wanted me to autograph it because they wanted to send it down to the Library. I had this printed, written up, and then I signed it, the introduction to the book. It's a red bound book--you've probably seen it--for the Library, which tells about it. Then I believe these remarks--that's why this is printed and put in here.

F: Did Mrs. Johnson make any response at this time?

G: Oh, I have got to tell you, that is where I met her. You see, we've got that big globe down there that turns--you've seen it--and it's never been stationary. The whole room was packed full of people. So we had Mrs. Johnson start it. I asked Mrs. Johnson [to do it. I said,] "The globe is decorative, of course. We can also use it. It can do wonderful things in the teaching of geography. You can turn it upside down and see Australia close up if you choose. But the world always needs a woman's touch. Now our charming First Lady will push the button to set the world in motion."

With that, she came up and of course we were both worried because the thing was brand new. We didn't know if it was going to work. But she pushed that button and, sure enough, the globe started round and round and round.

F: And you gave a little prayer of thanks.

G: Yes. And she was so pleased. We have that picture down in the Explorer's Hall. You can see it as you come in the door. You may have seen a picture, a close-up of the two of us, right after she had done it--faces lit up because it turned.

That was the first time that I met her. Then we had a little reception up here afterwards on the top floor, and the President came up and met the staff and some of our close associates, about a hundred and fifty. He was there just as informal as if he weren't even president. He greeted all the guests.

This is a little interesting incident you might not know.

This was the time that Senator Byrd was wild about not reducing the taxes because of expenses. He said, "We must cut the budget 10 per cent," and the President wanted to cut the taxes the first time, you know. So they had been fighting for months. Well, the very day that we had this meeting the budget had been announced, 10 per cent. The Senator had gotten the tax through, the reduction, and this was the first time they had had a chance to meet. When Senator Byrd came in, he put his arms around him--each put their arms around each other--and said, "We did it, we did it, we got it!" They were both like a couple of little boys, so pleased because the Senator had gotten his reduction in the budget and expenses and the President had gotten his reduction in the tax. That's the first one. Oh, he was very cute.

A little human interest touch came up which also touched me very much. Our housekeeper was an elderly woman at that time, and I invited her to come. She was standing by the door. I'll never forget, after the line and everybody had gone through, the President and I were just chatting there and he said, "Who is that little lady over there?" I said, "Mr. President, that's my housekeeper, who wanted to come down and take a peek at you." "Oh," he said, "let's go over and speak to her." So the two of us walked over and here was this little lady. She was flabbergasted. I introduced her, and the President shook her hand and said, "It's very nice to meet you." Then he said, "You take good care of my friend, Dr. Grosvenor, because you can take care of him. You take good care of him and see that he has the proper diet and everything. You look out for him for me, my friend." She just beamed. That was a very sweet thing to do.

Then we presented a globe, a geographic sixteen-inch globe, to Mrs. Johnson and on it [was Johnson City]. I noticed once before when the President was up here he looked to see whether Johnson City was on the map, and we'd got it on. Well, anyway, on this globe we put a diamond on the spot of Johnson City, and we presented that to her. I told her that was for her personally and I hoped she'd use it. I wondered what had happened to it because I imagined that it got lost down there or something, but it would be nice to have. It was a beautiful globe with a diamond on it. I hope nobody's picked it off!" (Laughter)

F: You gave him a map case at the time, didn't you?

G: Yes. A few days later he asked--and I'll never forget Nollie Stowers, one of the colored men, and Bill McGee, that had been here for years--

F: Who was the colored man?

G: Nollie Stowers. He's still here. S-T-O-W-E-R-S. Nollie Stowers. Nollie was just so thrilled. These two fellows have been here a long time, so I said, "You will bring the thing down." So when it came time to bring it into his office here, the beautiful office on the corner of the Rose Garden, they came in with this thing, these two darkies with their uniforms. The President went over and shook hands, and I introduced them. They were so pleased. Nollie to this day talks about it. The President insisted on it [the map case] going up on that wall right then, insisted that they bang a hole, and put the nails in. I said, "Mr. President, are you sure you want this? He said, "Yes, I want it up there now!" So they put the

cabinet up there and centered it off, put it right up there while we were--the darndest thing--watching all this. He seemed very pleased. Anyway, it was a nice little visit.

F: Let's go back just a minute to the formation of the White House Historical Association. Can you tell me something about the beginning of that? That pre-dates Mrs. Johnson.

G: I can tell you briefly what it was. They'd never had funds to buy special things for the White House such as nice drapes for the living room and rugs and antiques. Congress gives them money for the maintenance and upkeep and painting of the walls and all of this stuff, they'll spend millions of dollars. But they wouldn't give them any money for furnishings and special furnishings. So the presidents over the years have had to help out on this, and the White House has gotten very shabby! Awful!

Mrs. Kennedy was very anxious to find some way to raise some money to help her because she wanted drapes for the East Room ordered from Paris, of the finest gold material. I think they were going to cost six thousand dollars. She wanted French because she wanted them beautiful. That's what George Washington and Dolly Madison always wanted to do, used to get the stuff from abroad. There wasn't any fund, so how to do it? Then she also knew there was no guidebook for the White House. There were thousands of tourists coming there, no souvenirs to take away.

Just at this time we had had this article in the Geographic on the White House. Word came, would I come down and meet with her

and David Finley and Dr. Carmichael, who was then the head of the Smithsonian.

F: Now who is David Finley?

G: He was head of the National Gallery then. I think he knows the President. He knew the Kennedys, I know. David Finley and John Walker.

F: Who's John Walker?

G: David Finley is retired. John Walker is the director now. He knows Mrs. Johnson and the President very well, John Walker does. That's in the Cultural Arts place.

So we went down and she said she wanted to have a guidebook like the Geographic articles which we had, which was graphic. It showed the people going through it, it showed something of it, but in more detail, which could be used as a guide for people coming through. They could buy this and then go through the grounds and take it away as a souvenir. She wanted beautiful pictures in it in color, et cetera. How to do it?

Clark Clifford was there. They decided to form this Society, the White House Historical Society, a non-profit organization which would publish the White House guide. We said that we would be glad to do it--the editing. They had no money to start with, the White House, not a cent. We'd be glad to do the editing, the photography, all the writing and put it together, and we would give that as a donation--all of that part. We would finance as a returnable loan, non-interest bearing, a grant--I think it was a couple of hundred thousand dollars at the time--to print the first four or five hundred thousand copies

of this book, which would be sold for a dollar at the White House. Well, that would mean they would pay, oh, about thirty-five cents, the printing costs. But somebody had to pay those printer bills to start with because a printer won't go ahead and do it and then let you sell them. Or you've got to borrow it from the bank.

So we made that grant, and we went ahead and published this guidebook, [with] Mrs. Kennedy guiding us. It was a tremendous success. It's gone over two million now, and it's in its ninth edition that's coming out.

F: Did you really anticipate that large a sale?

G: I did. I knew it because I knew the popularity of our article in the magazine. That White House article stood right at the top.

F: You didn't take your White House article and just throw a cover on it? You went ahead and redid it completely.

G: Oh, my, no. That was only thirty-five or forty pages, and this is a hundred and forty, I guess. We used some of those pictures, yes. We used it as a skeleton. It was enlarged tremendously, as you see--the text and pictures.

F: I wanted to get that in the record.

G: Special pictures were made for months. We assigned a photographer. The problem was how to get the photographer in there without Life and the other magazines being jealous, because they would all normally want the rights. We at the Geographic said, "We can't go in there, but the White House Historical Association, a non-profit organization, can." So we came to this arrangement. We said, "We will donate to the White House Historical Association our best photographer." I think it was

George Mobley; I know he was there for a while. There have been different ones. [We said,] "And the White House Historical Society will own all of the photographs outright, to do anything they want with them, and they will be credited to the White House Historical Association, courtesy of the National Geographic Society." So it was done that way. The White House Historical Society got permission to make the pictures officially, and our photographers would go in. The only return the Geographic got was an agreement that at least we would have the first right to publish the pictures in the magazine if we wanted to, whenever it was. We had the first rights, but the day when it was made public, the first edition was finished, they would be released across-the-board to anybody who wanted them. They would become public property.

So all we had was a few weeks jump, you see, by having the first right. We were able to select, but actually the ones we selected the others wouldn't want anyway; 90 per cent of the time our pictures are different from what Life and the rest of them want. They're a different type.

F: Have you used some of them?

G: Oh, yes, we used some of them, but not too many because we'd already published our article. Then we also started covering historic events. The White House Historical Society could go in and photograph dinners and things like that which had never been done before. They had never made photographs of state dinners, until the White House Historical Society started making them. I think that was for President Johnson. I don't think Kennedy allowed them in at the dinners. I can't remember,

but I can find out.

F: How long did it take the White House Historical Association to pay off the loan?

G: They paid it off within a few months.

F: It was an instantaneous success?

G: Oh, this thing became a best-seller overnight--the five hundred thousand. I can get you all that detail from Bob Breeden, who's the editor.

F: And you've done a new book since though?

G: Each edition we bring up-to-date.

F: You've done one on the presidents, too?

G: Yes. But we're in our ninth printing right now. Now when Mr. Kennedy died we were all worried about what would happen. We immediately--we waited and asked President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson if they wanted to continue it or not. Because we didn't want [to continue without their approval]; Mrs. Kennedy had started it. Oh, Mrs. Johnson just took it up and she became even more enthusiastic and helpful than Mrs. Kennedy was. She followed it right straight through.

She helped us get sales in the White House. You see, never before had anything been sold in the White House to the public. Everybody would come in free. Well, the only way the guidebook would be a success to get the money to buy things for the White House would be to charge. So they charged a dollar and they'd sell, I think ten thousand one day. This thing became a best-seller and with the money they paid off the loan first. From then on and since then I think

they've averaged--in some years more--fifty thousand dollars a year, which has been contributed to the White House to buy paintings. It purchased that famous painting of Mrs. Roosevelt, which was twenty-five thousand dollars. You remember that, the beautiful one with the hands and the five portraits. There's a story behind that. I don't know whether you'd like to hear it or not.

F: Yes, I would.

G: I may be giving you too much.

F: No, you can't give me too much.

G: This is the story as I understand it. The painting was made for James Roosevelt, who wanted a picture of his mother. So he went to this artist--I can't remember the name of the artist--and the agreement was five thousand dollars. That was an informal agreement for the painting. Well, you know the painting, it had all these faces. So when he got the bill it was for thirty-five thousand dollars, and of course James said, "Oh, I can't pay that!" And he refused. He went to see his mother about it and his mother said--this is the story as I understand it from John Walker and the rest of them--"Well, James, you asked for a single portrait. Tell you what you do. Cut out the center face and send him five thousand dollars, and you've got your portrait. You only asked for one portrait, you didn't ask for five."

James didn't do that, of course. So the artist hung onto the portrait and then he died, and his widow had it up for sale. We bought it for twenty-five thousand dollars out of the funds from this

thing--it was one of the things we could do--and presented it to the White House. It is now one of the key paintings, I think one of the most wonderful paintings of the wives of the presidents. You know, it has all this character study.

F: Right.

G: Mrs. Kennedy also got her beautiful drapes, which just now are being replaced, I believe. The Nixons said they thought they were getting shabby again; well, that's seven or eight years, eight or nine.

F: Yes, and a lot of use.

G: But you've seen those. Every single affair that's happened in the East Room has seen those curtains. So that's gone on. Then the portraits of the presidents, which we filled in, we bought them, some of them antiques, originals. John Walker can tell you all in detail what pictures have been bought for the White House through this, and for the first ladies.

We paid for the Johnson portrait and the Mrs. Johnson portrait. She was very cute. We always try to get the president's wife to do the arrangements so she gets what they want, and she arranged this portrait. She liked it, but she was worried about it because she said she thought that the White House. . . So she had a special tea down there for the trustees of the White House Historical to see this portrait last summer sometime. We loved it, beautiful. She was very pleased that we liked it. But it could not be shown until they left the White House. It's up there now.

F: That's the one by Elizabeth Shoumatoff?

G: Yes.

F: Did you pay for the one by Peter Hurd?

G: That one--I remember there's a story about that one, but I've forgotten. I think we did. I think that was one that we commissioned.

F: It was commissioned and the President didn't like it.

G: I think that we did, but the person who can tell you this is John Walker, because he is the director of the Art Gallery and he has charge of all that.

F: Where did the idea originate to have the then-Vice President do the article for the National Geographic on his flight to northern Europe?

G: When did that originate? At the time he was doing it, before. You know, as I remember, out there at Harry Byrd's I mentioned--I think I mentioned it that day when I saw him--sometime when he was making one of these trips we would love to have an article about his trip because we thought it was real geography and human interest geography. [He said,] "Why, I'd be delighted to." And as I remember, I said, "If you just have one of your aides call me when you're going to make a trip that you think would be suitable." As I remember, that's the way it came up. Then we got a call from one of his aides saying would this interest us, and immediately we took it up. We sent Bart McDowell--Bart may be able to give you more of the details--and Volkmar Wentzel with him. They got along wonderfully, and Bart came back just--oh, he just loved the Vice President.

F: Almost made a Democrat out of him?

G: Yes. "The Vice President was the most wonderful guy," you see. He's

got human anecdotes which he can give you.

F: Then what was your next official [association]?

G: Oh, yes. Then we put out this presidents book. Mrs. Kennedy started that, and we did it. We were going to do it in a beautiful way. We wanted to have about seven or eight pages for each of the presidents, pictures of their high points with etchings and drawings. No, Mrs. Kennedy didn't want it. She just wanted one painting--an official painting in the White House--and one page of text all the way through. And she didn't want any exceptions. She didn't want FDR to have more than Calvin Coolidge, or George Washington to have more, and so forth. We did it the way she said, but Freidel, who did the story--we had to cut these down so much to get them in that we knew we had marvelous material. So after the book was published, we asked her if she minded if we published it in a series of articles the way Freidel had written it, and elaborate on it and do it our way. She didn't mind. So the presidents book went on first. It sells about one to two to the guidebook, so that went over. People going there could pay fifty cents and get a history of each president--a thumbnail sketch, a portrait--and carry it away with them going home. It was a wonderful thing.

F: I imagine I have bought a couple of dozen of those. Someone is always calling me from somewhere, they have seen one, you know, and "will you get me one!"

G: Five articles were published. We published our own presidents book and that amounts to two hundred and fifty pages. This is the elaboration of the articles, with pictures of their homes and their backgrounds

and their wives, which is what we wanted to do for the White House. Mrs. Kennedy didn't want it, so we decided to do it ourselves. That's been one of our most popular books. It doesn't seem to affect that because it reached different people. I'm going to give you a copy of that. You don't have that, do you?

F: No, I don't have that.

G: You might like to have it.

F: Good. Then when was your next official connection with the President?

G: The next one was Mrs. Johnson, still the White House Historical. We wanted to print a book which we titled "The Living White House"--and we tried to get Mrs. Kennedy to do this--in which is recorded not so much the White House as a museum which the guidebook was, but to show that the rooms that these ten thousand people a day go through, see in the morning as a museum all roped off--they see the East Room, they see the dining room, but to them it's like the Smithsonian, it's dead, nothing in it. So what we wanted to do is have a book which would show these people how that very night or that very afternoon after they left, there would be a reception in the afternoon, a tea with Mrs. Johnson, and in the evening there might be a state reception with the cabinet. Through this White House photographer arrangement we were able to make a series of pictures recording historic events.

Our greatest problem was to get state dinners, because never in history had they ever made pictures of those great dinners in the East Room--never! We got it, and I think it was the Johnsons that let us. It may have been the Kennedys. I can't remember which it was.

But Mrs. Kennedy would not let us publish it because she said it would be a build-up piece for the Kennedys, or I think it was the President that said it. And we said, "It's terrible. We must have it because history is being made, you see, right here, history. This would be a wonderful thing. And it's supposed to be a combination of the White House way back to Dolly Madison and on up." "No," they said, "You can do it the second term when there's no election at stake." Then we said okay, but went on and made the pictures, but not as much as we would have if we had had this [approved]. Then the President was assassinated, and the book would be priceless today. Because of this little comity, because of the election, politics, they didn't want to do it.

The Johnsons allowed us to do it, and we put that wonderful book out, "The Living White House." Now, purposely we have used that edition to include much more of the Johnsons in there than there is of the past. There has been some criticism, unfortunately, but we felt that that was to be a historical document for this administration.

F: You were trying to make it contemporary.

G: Yes. Then for the next administration, if they wanted, we would do the thing, and that president and his wife will be dominant and the others will be picked up in proportion, but there won't be quite as many of the wedding in there and so forth.

F: Right.

G: So we went ahead. And that book has gone very well.

The President let us down terribly. He has let us down awful!

We ran out of the first edition and we had to print another one. It's much cheaper to print about four hundred thousand than it is to print one hundred thousand, so we went ahead and put the order in and got the four hundred thousand copies. Within two or three days after they were delivered, the President made his famous announcement of March 31, "I'm not going to run [for] a second term." And we'd been counting on selling this over the next four years, you see, so here we were caught with these things.

They had been selling very well, but the question was, came the new administration, what to do? So we all decided that it is up to the new administration to decide whether they want to continue "The Living White House." We withdrew it from sale January 20. We took it off the stand, right there. We didn't want any criticism. We sat back and waited until things shook down and then we contacted the lady who took Mrs. Carpenter's place. They checked it out, and word came back, "We've got those three hundred thousand copies that the White House Historical has paid for, and you don't have a new one. We want a new one, too. It's going to take us a year to produce it because nothing's happened. It's just started, takes us a while to get enough pictures." So they said, "Go right ahead and sell it. Why, of course, you should sell it! Why not? Go right ahead." Well, we said, "If that's all right, we'll put it back on."

But that fading out, letting them make a decision rather than having them walk down there and suddenly see a Johnson book with all Johnson in it, they might have objected. But we did this and it worked.

So now the book is back on sale and they're selling about four thousand a month. They've ordered fifteen thousand from the Johnson Library at eighty cents apiece, which we're going to sell.

After all of this, we estimate that by the time the next edition comes out, which is about a year from now, we're going to have a hundred and thirty thousand left which we cannot see--and in addition to that an additional thirty thousand that we know of. Well, what to do with them? The recommendation by the staff was to destroy them. I said, "Why not give them to the Johnson Library?" I whispered this to Mrs. Johnson the other night, and her fact lit right up. She said, "You know they're selling very well down there." I said, "Well, don't you think rather than destroy them that we could store them and then when they want them for the Library or the Johnson home, they'll be as good ten years from now as they are today."

F: They'll be better.

G: Maybe twenty years from now. They'll have them and as they want them, they can have them bound; they're unbound. We can store them in a government warehouse here, the White House Historical, without any charge. And we're going to do that, if they want them. We haven't heard yet whether they want them. Mrs. Johnson thought it was a great idea. But don't you think that's a good idea?

F: Oh, I think it's perfect.

G: It's a real historic document now.

F: Quite seriously, if you could get such a document at, say, the Lincoln home, which had been done in Lincoln's time, but which was contemporary

a hundred years later I don't see why this thing won't sell forever in a place like that.

G: I'm so glad you feel this way because you see we can get them stored in a government warehouse without any charge for storing. They can be stored. Then as they want them, we would pull them out of print and we could add a little something to them if they wanted, you know, a foreword, change that a little for the new edition, and then have as many printed as they need and send them down there. Those things would cost them about ten cents. That's all it would cost them, the binding and shipping, less than ten cents we estimate. They can sell them for a dollar or seventy-five cents or whatever they want to sell them for. And I don't see why they won't pick up some money for their Library and be a public service. Right?

F: Right.

G: Well, we're planning now, we're all up on attack now to bring "The Living White House" up-to-date. That is, we'll cut down and we're going to add more, which we didn't have time for in that edition, of the back presidents. Because I know there is a lot of material that could be added, maybe some of it from this book, of their homes and so forth. It could be enlarged a little bit. Some of this can all go in "The Living White House" so as to expand the ancient ones as well as the current ones; then have a big section devoted to the current president, and keep that up-to-date. In that section, what we do is print the back part in a big block, and then the latest signatures, we put them back on the presses, and we can change that for each edition.

F: How much do you estimate that the White House Historical Association has contributed to the White House since it first began to bring in some money?

G: If I remember, it's around five hundred thousand dollars, plus or minus a little.

F: That makes a lot of difference in a budget when you don't have any budget at all!

G: Completely free and available.

F: Unrestricted.

G: For instance, the curator, as I understand it, there are a few things like that, salaries, which we pick up which they couldn't before. And they're also using the funds to publish a real catalogue of White House antiques with a history and description of them. That's all going to be paid for by our organization. There are no other funds, no government funds.

But, you know, Jack Anderson or Drew Pearson had the most scurrilous--whether he likes Johnson or not is immaterial, but he ought at least to have his facts correct! He didn't even have his facts correct, didn't have anything correct. And he could have gotten those facts if he had just called somebody and gotten figures. He can get those right. And he causes a big--what I've given you, the stuff on the background of how it was formed as a non-profit organization of Geographic. He said the reason Geographic did it was so that we would have exclusive pictures of the White House and beat everybody else. The deuce we did! We haven't published them,

because we did the first article before there was a White House [Historical Association], and we published a few along the way. But these news pictures, these daily event things, we don't publish them. Life publishes them, the newspapers publish them. We don't. But without checking to find out, he printed that, put the Geographic in there, too, as getting inside, all this stuff, which was absolutely the most absurd poppycock! All it was, it was one of these digs he was trying to get into President Johnson. To me, why people can't get facts right--well, there wouldn't have been any story if he had gotten the facts.

F: Right.

G: There wouldn't have been. He wanted a particular stileto, you know how they work.

F: Yes. To shift slightly, did you work with Mrs. Johnson at all on ideas for the Lyndon Johnson Library down in Texas?

G: Yes, up to a point. I gather that the architecture had pretty well been settled, but Mrs. Johnson was not too happy--or the President wasn't. They remembered our Explorer's Hall and this building and so Mrs. Johnson asked if she could come up and if I would take her through, which I was very glad to do. She came up, and I think we had lunch together. We spent several hours, and I took her all through. One of the things I tried to stress was to have a building that was open all around like ours is--no front, no back--you know, like the Lincoln Memorial, that's what this building is. You see, you don't have any back. I haven't seen it [the Library], but I

gather the architects weren't able to do that, or they were too far along probably at the time.

F: Yes.

G: But I think she got some ideas. Instead of having a speaker spilling a lot of noise, you have a little earpiece you pick up. Whether they have it down there--she got that idea and liked it very much. I was very glad to help her.

F: Did she ask you some fairly searching questions when she visited here?

G: Yes, about how we display our things, how we do it. I said one of the main things is don't have too much. It's better to have a perfect soupcon of representative things and have lots of open space so people can walk around and they can have space. And then change exhibits now and then rather than try to cram everything into one place.

F: That was the old Smithsonian's fault.

G: Yes. They're not doing it now as much, but they used to. They rotate and that's the answer to this. That's why our Explorer's Hall is so popular. People are not confined, it's open and breezy. They're not captured. They can pick up a thing and listen as long as they want and put it down.

F: In 1967 you gave President Johnson the Alexander Graham Bell Association Medal for the Deaf.

G: Yes.

F: Why did you give him that?

G: He had just signed a bill which he had fostered to help handicapped people--the deaf people, the blind people, and all. I can't remember

the name of the bill, but this bill had been signed. This was a very wonderful thing, and it stimulated an interest in the deaf. The Alexander Graham Bell Association was founded by my grandfather back in the eighties with the Volta prize which he got over in Europe.

F: How do you spell Volta?

G: V-O-L-T-A. Voltage is named for it. That was the great electrician. He won this prize and he gave that fund, all of his prize--it was forty thousand dollars or something like that--to found this association to help teach the deaf to speak and read lips. Up until then you were deaf and dumb.

My grandfather always said that if you taught them as children to read lips, and these parents would come to him with deaf children, knowing his interest. He couldn't help every child, so he set this association up. So now what it does is if parents suddenly discover they have a baby who is deaf, they can write to this organization and they will tell them what to do, what schools are available, how to do it, give them literature and guide those parents in helping their children to be normal. Otherwise, they will have the learn the Gallaudet Method with the hand, and they never learn to talk and they have to associate with deaf people the rest of their lives. But his principle was that if you taught them to speak and read lips they could then go to ordinary colleges, ordinary schools, and live an ordinary life, which is the theme.

So this award was given to the President. It was the first time, if I remember, they decided to have this award for people who helped this cause along for the deaf.

F: This is the first time the award had been given?

G: Yes, As I remember, it was.

F: And it was at the White House.

G: At the White House. As busy as he is, he gave us that little Cabinet Room and we had this little ceremony. He was just as cute as he could be. We had this little deaf child who could read lips and could talk come down. We wanted her to speak to the bunch. She had a little speech, but she met the President and he picked her up in his arms and kissed her, and you know that little girl couldn't open her mouth. She wouldn't open her mouth and we couldn't get her to! What it was, she was scared, just like any little girl, because we got out in the car and she started chattering about what a wonderful man he was, how nice the President was, but she was tongue-tied--

F: What age child was she?

G: She was deaf and dumb--I would say she was seven or eight, something like that, cute little girl. The President was very much taken with her. But it was children [like that]. She was a child whose parents had been helped by the Association and the child was learning to speak and read lips. But she was supposed to show off what we were doing, and instead of that she just sat there dumb because she was scared.

F: When the King of Tonga was crowned, the President asked you to be a member of the delegation?

G: Yes, that's very interesting. At the reception of our dedication here, which I told you about before, this great Crown Prince of Tonga

was a guest. One of our men had just been there doing a story and he had met this Crown Prince, a great big prince. He happened to be in town and we invited him to come to the reception. Well, he came through the line--here was this great big man, weighed about three hundred pounds--and the President was very much taken with him. I introduced him, told him who he was, let them talk back and forth, and then he went on.

I never thought about it until suddenly one day I got a call from the White House [from] somebody down there saying the President was appointing an official delegation to represent him at the coronation of the King of Tonga and the President wanted to know whether I would represent him on the commission. I said I would be very honored to do that, and they said Mrs. Grosvenor was included. So I went there. I couldn't figure out why I should be selected to go to Tonga until I was talking to Bart McDowell and I was telling him about this and I said, "Why do you suppose that is?" He said, "Don't you remember the reception when the Prince was here and you introduced them? That's just the sort of thing he would do!" He would remember that "I had met this prince who has now become king up there." He associated me with him, so he had me [go]. Because why should I be selected? The State Department would never think of me. It was somebody, and it must have been from right at the top. Governor Burns of Hawaii was a member [of the delegation] and Pat Brown, who had just been defeated but a great fellow. I took a great fancy to him out there. It was a wonderful trip. I met the Duchess and Duke of Kent.

F: When you go on a delegation like that, are you briefed beforehand, or are you just told to be at a certain place at a certain time. What's the mechanics of it?

G: They briefed us. A State Department lady came up here and told us about our costumes. At one of them I would have to wear a formal outfit, a cutaway, top hat, and Mrs. Grosvenor would have to have a long dress. She said, "You know it must be very somber, " because the ladies of these missions should have either black or white, and long sleeves and long white gloves because they do not want to outshine the Queen. Well, this was in June and it was hotter than Hades. My wife tried to find a black or white dress. She couldn't. She finally did find a very pretty long black dress which she took out. We got out there and, lo and behold, Mrs. Brown was in this white outfit, but very sort of voluminous and peculiar. The ladies got to talking about their dresses. She had gotten the same word, and so she went down to Magnin's down there in San Francisco, to Magnin. What's the name of that?

F: I. Magnin.

G: Yes, I. Magnin or wherever it was, and they could not find a white or black long dress for love nor money. So she finally went in the negligee department and found a nightgown, or a lady's evening--you know, it was white. So she wore that. This thing was very big, but she wore that.

Anyway, the last thing before we left the day before I got a call from this lady. She said, "I want to check once more on your

costumes and everything. You've got your topper. Which topper is that?" "Oh," I said, "I've got two kinds. I'm taking the one that collapses because I've got it all in my bag and it goes so easy." "Oh," she said, "you can't wear that. That's an opera hat." I said, "Yes, I'm afraid it is, but I didn't think the King of Tonga would know the difference!" She said, "Oh, no, the British will be there and we're not going to be second to the British." So I brought my silk topper that I had bought as a principal aide who do you suppose for--the inauguration of FDR!

F: Oh, really?

G: Yes, I was about twenty-eight, twenty-nine or thirty, you see, and you know how they had the young fellows around Washington serve as principal aides. I had to take the Governor of Vermont--it was Senator Austin; he had been governor.

F: So you brought it out of forty years storage nearly.

G: Well, thirty-five or thirty-six. And the old thing was perfectly all right. I carried that in a little box all the way, right under my seat there in the plane, all the way out there. I didn't want anything to happen to it.

F: You made one trip with Mrs. Johnson, didn't you?

G: Oh, yes, that was last fall. The President and I worked on that. That's another thing I'll have to tell you about. It's going to be a little long, but let me tell you.

Connie Wirth and I were trying to get a national park. My father had before me in the early parks and had never been able to get it

because the lumber industry always stopped a redwood park. But the state of California--

F: This goes back almost a half-century, doesn't it?

G: Yes. And no luck. They had always had this great lobby kill it. So Connie and I got the idea--the national parks had no money and they wanted to make a study of all the redwoods to see what are the best. We went out on the preliminary survey and I'll never forget sitting under the Rockefeller tree, which is marked as the tallest. I said, "Mr. Ranger, are you sure that's the tallest tree in the world? How do you know there aren't some more around here?" He looked at me and he said, "Well, we don't know. I'd be willing to bet you that there are taller trees up some creek that these lumber companies have got hidden away, but we parks people can't get in there. They won't let us in. They keep them hidden. It's private property. And we don't know."

So Connie and I went back, and we decided a scientific study of these redwoods to find out where they range and all about them would be the proper thing. So the Geographic puts up this grant--I think $65,000 to finance this thing for the national parks. So we sent out this team of experts under this aura of a scientific research project, which it was, to discover the full range. All these people being members of the Geographic, they gave us carte blanche. It was wonderful, and I'll tell you, we're very grateful to the lumber industry who were castigated by the Sierra Club people. But they were very courteous to us, and Paul Zahl of our staff

stumbled upon way down in this redwood creek this block of the three tallest trees in the world. And the national parks were there with us, too--this was the joint. We announced that to the world and we published a magazine article. Well, came time to kick off the bill up here at the Capitol, so George Hartzog by then, I guess--

F: George came in at the beginning of 1964.

G: So therefore it was George. We got the idea that if we could get the President, if he was interested, to hold a press conference to kick off this thing, it would be great. I wrote down there and I called down. At that time I used to know his secretary because I had worked with him so much.

F: Which secretary is this?

G: I'm trying to think who it was.

F: Mary Rather?

G: I'll ask Judy. She would know. That sounds right.

But, anyway, I found out the President was very enthusiastic. He would be delighted to hold this press conference. With that, with the Park Service leading it, you see, we set up this big press conference there in which the President kicked off the request for the bill for the Redwoods National Park, with all the press in there. He had that picture right there which he held up, of the tallest trees. And he said, "Just think of these trees being cut down," and made a nice little talk about it, which must be in the files down there. He got to talking about me, "Dr. Grosvenor and his redwoods." Really, he was just cute. I couldn't get over it, referring to me and the

Geographic in relation to these tall trees, and how we had been trying to get this for years and working with the Park Service. His little remarks were very good. Then he said to me, "We'll have this by next January." Well, he was a couple of years ahead.

But the President's leadership immediately got all departments of the government, even the Forest Service who had bucked us, too, because they had a lot of the redwoods and it was a question of getting swaps. Everybody up and down the line got behind it because at the top the President was for it. I figured this would happen. All barriers were down to the thing. Then over on the Hill the same way, "the President wants it." And of course with these articles, Bill Blair of the New York Times--are you going to get him? He might be somebody who could give you some stuff, because he's been on this redwood fight with me all through--the New York Times has. I know he's a great friend of Mrs. Johnson and I think the President's.

F: He made a couple of trips with Mrs. Johnson when I was along.

G: Yes, he made one with me. Anyway, he kept hammering at it, we got more converts to it all the time. Then finally, by jiminy, last fall it went through, and I'll never forget it. We had this reception on this signing of the National Parks Bill. He had this big reception--you may have been there--and made these nice remarks about me and the Geographic. I just couldn't get over it. I went through the line there and I'm saying to him, "We made it, Mr. President!" And he said, "We certainly did. It's wonderful!" Oh, he was so pleased, I'll never forget that.

F: You then went on the trip with Mrs. Johnson out there?

G: Yes, that was in November, I believe, or October.

F: November. Did you make the entire trip?

G: I surely did. I surely went every foot of the way, down to New Orleans first where we saw the cultural side--the arts, the music and so forth of New Orleans. That was cultural, all cultural. Then we flew from there over to Cape Kennedy where we saw that. That was entirely diff-ent, you see. We jumped from one to the other the next day. And the high point of that to me was when they put Mrs. Johnson in that simulator. Have you ever heard that story?

F: No.

G: They have that simulator for the training of the astronauts to land on the moon. It's a very huge thing, all fixed up with television cameras and everything, and they have photographs of the moon. They fix it so the astronaut when he's coming in that module with all the controls, he comes in and he makes his landing right on the moon, right on this picture, a great big mammoth thing.

Well, they asked if she would like to fly in the module and land on the moon, and she said, "Oh, yes, I'd love to." So she climbed in this thing--I think Carpenter was with her, the astronaut--and they got the controls. We could see the moon way in the distance here on the television because we in the group had a monitor television. It got bigger and bigger and began to get faster and faster, and all of a sudden she said, "We're going to crash! We're going to crash!" "Yes, you are, Mrs. Johnson, if you don't push this button, push that button, do this and do that." And with that she said, "Oh, oh, oh," and she pushed the buttons and immediately the thing slowed up, and then she touched down very nicely. But to hear her squeal in there

when this thing you could see coming right up at you, just as if you were falling headlong into it, because the thing was getting bigger, you see. And to hear her squeal for help, it was so real. She told me afterwards, "It was very real." But there are very few people, I gather, except those astronauts who have been in that thing. It was quite a thrill for her.

We took off from there the next morning and saw the Atlantic and headed for Denver where we saw the square there--what's the name of it? Laramie Square, that development, which is what a local business group can do to rejuvenate a historic section of a city. We went out and saw the Head Start Program, one of the pilot schools. And I want to tell you, I came away with a tremendous impression of what that is doing for the people, I mean for these poor handicapped children. In this particular school we were in, I remember the lady in charge was a Catholic sister, I've forgotten her name. She told us that she goes to all the public schools and she says, "Now, if you have any problem children." in the elementary schools, "I want them. I don't care how much of a problem they are, I want them. I don't want your good students. I want the problems." So they bring them over to her and these are the kids--well, some of them due to their poor situation but many of them mentally are not quite right, not bright. But that has nothing to do with your environment. That's one of the things I think a lot of people forget. They blame it all on the poor. It isn't that completely. It's just congenital. The parents may have been syphilitic and the children are not normal. But what they were doing to train

those kids and the devotion they had for their teachers, I just thought it was great. She even told that she had a sixteen year old in the school, with all these little youngsters. They had a way of trying to teach them.

Then we took off for California the same day and we landed that night at Eureka and had a reception right off the bat. Here we had been at Cape Kennedy in the morning, Denver, and all this.

F: It's been a long day, hasn't it?

G: Then the next morning we got up early and made the tour of the redwoods and she had her first view of them. I remember we gave her a little briefing before--

F: This was the first time she had ever been in the redwoods?

G: Yes. She asked my wife and me to come down to the White House to that little reception room on the second floor down at the end where she had--

F: Before you went, you mean?

G: Yes. Because she wanted sort of a briefing on what it was like--clothes and so forth. My wife said, "Now, Mrs. Johnson, it's gray out there, dark, so wear something bright. Then when the pictures come, the color pictures, it will pick you up." And there she is with her red outfit. She got that for the trip. And in all the pictures she would stand out. Look how drab everybody else is. Well, anyway, we told her about rain clothes and what kind of clothes and gave her some hints on who to get to speak out there, Newt Drury and Ralph Chaney and others. It was a wonderful, wonderful trip and Liz

Carpenter is one of the greatest organizers of anybody I ever saw.

F: Yes, I think so, too.

G: She ran that show!

F: What kind of weather did you have in the redwoods?

G: Very good. It wasn't perfect, but it was open and shut. As I remember, there was just a little drizzle one time.

F: Did you drive around in cars or open buses, or how did you--?

G: They had buses for us, but she went with the superintendent in the car ahead, and then she got out and she rode in different buses.

F: Oh, she did?

G: We'd get out and stop and walk up woodland paths. Oh, my, yes. She took that half or mile walk through the redlands at one place, and we'd follow along behind. She'd talk to different ones of us, you know, as if we were just old friends on a stroll.

F: Her energy seems almost [boundless], or at least she renews greatly.

G: And so very interested. You know her great interest in this beautification. This country is going to feel that for hundreds of years, because she stimulated and got people to plant shrubs, dogwood, pines and everything at these expressway interchanges, and to shield ugly things, which before were just absolutely barren.

Now wherever you go in this country--and I travel a lot--no matter where I go, I see some little bit of landscaping at an interchange or a filling station which has put some flowers around. It's because of this stimulation of publicity that has gotten people conscious of it. We owe her a great deal.

F: For instance, you'll come up

junk yard. I'll be with people who aren't interested in Mrs. Johnson or beautification particularly, but invariably now they'll react and say, "Oh, Mrs. Johnson wouldn't like that. I'm surprised they don't have a screen out in front."

G: Yes, yes.

F: So that people have become very conscious of it.

G: And I think it is a seed that she has sown that's going to grow and continue.

F: Did you ever work with her on any of these beautification things?

G: I've been to I think all of these conferences she's had, many of them, down at the White House and at Georgetown Tavern where they have them, and I remember these bus tours where they take us around. We'd get in a rapid transit bus and it'd be decorated with flowers from fore to aft, little bouquets on every post. And all around the edges--

F: All kind of gay.

G: Yes. Then each bus would have one of those attractive people, like Mrs. [Sharon] Francis or somebody, to talk to us. Then we'd make the tour around and see the Watts section and Shaw and all these parks that she had been interested in.

F: Did you attend the President's Conference on Natural Beauty in 1965?

G: Oh, yes, I was there. I surely was.

F: Do you recall any previous presidential conference on this sort of environmental--?

G: Never. From my time around here, there have been presidents interested

in saving the Potomac. I think it was Hoover or before him Coolidge or somebody at that time--it's got to be the early thirties, before FDR. Save the falls of the Potomac from being a dam or a lake--that wonderful gorge up there. That's all. But as a national effort of beautification, to me, it's new and it's fantastic!

F: And just waiting there for you.

G: All the countries, yes. Just waiting.

You know Secretary Udall had to appoint two people on his advisory board for National Park, of which I have been a member and was chairman for two years. I'm just retiring now, but I'm still on the council. That's tantamount to being still a member. He decided he wanted to replace Mrs. Heiskell. He always liked to have a lady on it, a woman's point of view. So he decided on Mrs. Johnson. She was a little indefinite, I gather, a little bit worried about this.

When we were down there for this conference to go out to the redwoods, we were sitting there and I said, "Mrs. Johnson, I've heard from George Hartzog that he and Stew Udall want you on the board. And I want to tell you, I think this is a wonderful opportunity for you to carry on these trips that you love to take around the country, because this National Park Board goes on a field trip every year, under the finest auspices. You see the inside of these parks, the new parks and the new areas that should be saved, without a press corps following you along." And I said, "This would be a chance for you to do the same sort of thing as the redwoods without a press corps but with very congenial and brilliant people. I think you

would like it." I said you [Joe Frantz] were on it, and so forth. And [I said] I thought this would be something that you would really like and I hope you will do it, because I tell you, I think it will keep you in touch with the very things which you want, which you've been interested in, and it will be a great help to the Board to have your ideas. "Well," she said, "Thank you very much."

She did join it, and you remember this meeting, how wonderful she was. I'll tell you, she was sitting listening, but as time goes on, she will be a great influence and to the good! Wonderful! And it means she can carry on this beautification at the source.

I might put this in the record. I'm perfectly willing to put this in. You know when Secretary Hickel was appointed the furor that went up from the conservationists and over on the Hill!

F: They thought he would turn the clock back sixty years.

G: He went over there and they put him through the third degree, and as he said to himself right afterwards, "I got educated quickly that the American people are interested in their conservation and so forth."

So I was invited down there right after he became secretary for the swearing in of Russ Train, whom I have known for many years. I was one of the little group that was invited. Afterwards I happened to go up to the Secretary and I was saying hello and I said, "Mr. Secretary, I'm on your advisory board for National Parks. I don't know whether you know it, but Mrs. Johnson is on the board, been appointed by Stew Udall. I happen to know she's a little bit worried about it, whether she should stay in such a thing in the new administration.

He said, "Did you say Mrs. Johnson is on my committee?" And I said, "She certainly is." "That's wonderful, wonderful! Couldn't think of anybody better." And he called his secretary over and said, "Make a note. I must write a letter to Mrs. Johnson about the advisory board, telling her I hope she comes. I'm so glad." Then he called over his aide and said, "See to it that I write this, will you? Follow it up." And he said, "Thank you very much for telling me this because I didn't know it. She'd be just wonderful."

F: That probably clinched it.

G: I don't know whether it did or not, but anyway--

F: It didn't hurt.

G: I never heard whether he did write. I've never been able to find out whether the letter was really written or not, but the way he spoke--he's that way. You remember, he was very friendly with her. He insisted on her coming up and having her picture taken beside him. But I also whispered in his ear, "Mr. Secretary, I think it's good for politics and conservation if Mrs. Johnson would serve and come on here, because it shows that this is non-political. It's American." Right? That's why you and I are all on this Board. It's neither one or the other, but I did say I thought it was a very good move politically. I don't think he heard me because he was off on something else.

Tape 2 of 2

(After the interview with Bart McDowell and Volkmar Wentzel on tape 2, there is another short segment with Dr. Grosvenor recorded.)

F: We're back with Dr. Grosvenor now. Your father knew Mr. Johnson.

G: As I mentioned, I think a little earlier, they became great friends. I think the President had known my father over those many years through the Geographic. Then they seemed to be very simpatico the day of the Jane N. Smith Medal presentation. Always the President asked me how Father was whenever I would see him.

I remember at a Georgetown convocation out there, the two of us [my father and I] were in our regalia for the ceremony, with our mortarboards, standing there. The President comes by. We're with all the group in there, and all of a sudden, he sees my father and shakes hands with him and tells him how much the Geographic has meant to him. Then he said hello to me and so forth, and went on. So he was very fond of Father.

F: Is this when you received your LL.D.?

G: No, that was George Washington. This was Georgetown. We were out there for some convocation. I'm trying to think what it was, the last public thing my father went to. Well, Father was just so tickled because you hardly would recognize him with these outfits, and Father was getting pretty old then, you see. But he knew him.

But, anyway, Father was very sick up there in Canada and we couldn't bring him home. I was up there, icy and snow, when he died on February 4, 1966. I was up there in an icy waste, and my father passed away. The message went out over the world.

That night--I was just getting ready to turn in--the phone rang and I answered it. It was long distance, saying the White House was

calling me. Well, I didn't know what this was. I was way up in Nova Scotia, Canada, way up in the sticks with snow and ice like arctic regions, and the next thing I knew the President's voice was on the phone telling me he had just read about my father's passing, and how all his life he had been an admirer of my father, and read his articles, admired what he had done with the Geographic, and all these things, nice things, you know. Then he paused for a minute and Mrs. Johnson chimed in on the phone. She said, "Yes, you know we read it in the paper tonight and we felt as if we'd lost a member of our family. We've been so close to the Geographic and your father through the magazine through all these years that we just felt we wanted to call you and extend our sympathy to you and the family about your father's passing." I just thought it was the most lovely thing because here, we weren't close in a sense, but he thought of that and they did it on the spur of the moment. I know he did that with a lot of people, but still--

F: It was a thoughtful thing to do.

G: I've never forgotten that call from him because I was pretty low that night. You know, it was ten o'clock and I'd been up for days with him. But this confirmed what Father said, his last words. I told the President this one day, the last words my father said to me, rationally. The time before the last the President had just gone out for his first conference in the Pacific to try to stop the Vietnam War, met with the South Vietnamese Premier out there on one of the islands. Do you remember that trip? The whole thing was to go out there, and he had

great hopes that he could stop the war, get us out of the war. Father was very much impressed with that. He said, "You know, here he is going out there busy as he is, trying to get this war over." He said, "It's marvelous. If anybody can do it, he will." He went on to say, "You mark my words, there will come a day when President Johnson will be considered as our greatest president since Lincoln for what he's done for this country." That is, for trying to help the poor and this Great Society and trying to get peace and trying to solve the Vietnam thing. But I never forgot. Here was this gentleman in his last days, and here was a picture up on the mantelpiece of the President that he had autographed to him. And he said that to me. I've never forgotten it. I've told Mrs. Johnson this once. But here's a guy who really knows the history of this country.

F: It's more remarkable in this case because your father had known just about every president in this century.

G: Absolutely, beginning with McKinley. Taft was one of his relatives and he was very fond of him. But, anyway, I am just glad to get that on the record.

F: Good. Thank you.

[End of Grosvenor section of Tape 2 and Interview I]

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