

INTERVIEW WITH
JESSIE HATCHER

I: March 28, 1968, we are in San Saba, in the home of Mrs. Jessie Hatcher. Mrs. Hatcher, first of all we would like some background on you. What is your relation to Mr. Johnson and the family?

H: Well, I'm the only living aunt that Lyndon has now, and I'm an aunt, of course, on the Johnson side. I was a Johnson.

I: You were Mr. Johnson's sister?

H: Yes, I was Sam Ealy Johnson's sister, Lyndon's father.

I: The elder Johnson, Sam Ealy Johnson, Lyndon's father. And you were the youngest . . .

H: Yes, I'm the youngest, of the tribe of nine.

I: Nine children?

H: Nine children, only one living at this time.

I: How come you're living up here in San Saba, while the rest of the family is down around Johnson City?

H: Well, I tell you that. I just had one child, my husband died when, right after I finished college. And, so I was left a widow. And so, I went to Houston to live with my uncle. And, I just had one child, and so, when she graduated from Rice, why, she married a young man up in this country. And of course, I followed her. That's how you got me here.

I: What is her name, now?

H: Her name is Booker, Ruth Booker.

I: Ruth Booker?

H: Ruth Booker.

I: But you did spend a large part of your young life in Johnson City?

H: Oh yes, in Johnson City and around Stonewall, where the old Johnson home is.

I: Now, you then practically grew up with Lyndon?

H: Oh, yes. Oh, Lyndon grew right up in my, our home. He was a first grandchild. And of course, oh, I was grown, of course, when he came along. And I tell them that Lyndon came in a storm. The night that he came, why the biggest storm

that we ever had, and couldn't get a doctor that was 20 miles away, and so that was the beginning. I said, he came in a storm, and he's been in one ever since. Yes sir, but my father swam the river, forded the river on a big fine horse, and brought one of the neighbors there to bring that baby. And he got there before anybody thought about him getting there, and he was just as wide awake as a little owl, and he has kept that up.

I: Now your father, what was his name?

H: Sam Ealy, same as Lyndon's father.

I: Same as Lyndon's father?

H: Yes, he was a senior, Lyndon's father was a junior.

I: The man that he brought was that a doctor, he brought to bring, to deliver the baby?

H: Oh no, that was a midwife.

I: A midwife? A woman?

H: The doctor was 20 miles away, and he couldn't get across the river anyhow. That Pedernales was on the biggest rise it ever had been. My father had to go up a half of mile above the crossing in order to get through at the

crossing, across the river. He went and got this Mrs. Lindig, one of the nicest woman in the whole country. But, she was really a good woman. As a midwife, she brought lots of children. And it just tickled my father nearly to death, to think that he could do that, especially when we couldn't get a doctor.

I: Now, a Mrs. Lindig, did you say was her . . .

H: Lindig, L-I-N-D-I-G, Mrs. Christian Lindig.

I: So, he didn't have a doctor there?

H: Oh no, no, no. Doctor just laughed about it when they told him. Said, why she's just as well off, says she's just as fine a doctor as I am.

I: Now, then did you-all live at the same place, same house, I mean . . .

H: Yes, same place, yes, Lyndon was born in the house we lived in, that we came up in. But of course, several years before Lyndon married, why, my father built another home, right next--well, you can see it between Lyndon's home and the birth place. And so we live there, and Sam, Lyndon's father, lived down at the birth place. Where Lyndon was born.

I: What did Lyndon's father do in those days?

H: Well, he was a good farmer, he was a ranchman. Yes, he had fine stock. He had bred--his stock were of the finest. He used to be a trail driver, to the Kansas, he drove over the Chisolm trail, when he was a young man.

I: Are you speaking of Lyndon's grandfather? Not of his father?

H: Yes, not of his father. No, Lyndon's father . . .

I: Do you remember Lyndon's grandfather well enough to give us a description of him? Did he look anything like Lyndon does?

H: Yes, he looked a lot like Lyndon. I have several pictures here of him.

I: Tall man?

H: Yes, tall man, six feet, weighed 180 pounds. Better than six feet, six feet, two inches.

I: Right here, let's get the genealogy straight. You were born in what year?

H: In 1887.

I: And Lyndon came along - -

H: In 19 and 8.

I: Now, there is a stretch of some twenty odd years between you-all.

H: Yes, twenty odd years.

I: And then, what did you call Lyndon's father? Sam Johnson or - -

H: Sam Johnson, just like Lyndon's father was called Sam. Lyndon's father was called Little Sam. Everybody called him Little Sam. And my father was Big Sam, or Older Sam.

I: I see. Now, then when Little Sam was a young man - -

H: Yea, he was legislator for four years, I mean, four terms, I think.

I: Was he a ranchman, too?

H: Well, he taught school, and he was kind of a roustabout. He traveled alot, and back and forth, but when Lyndon was born, he was back there on the ranch. And he had cattle and he had charge of a lot of things about. Well, he was at the Legislature at the same time.

I: Well, yes that was what I was going to say. You can be on the Legislature and be an independ - -

-7-

H: Yes, and be a ranchman, too.

I: Yes, sure. And at the time, how old a man was Little Sam?

H: Well, Lyndon must have been about 25 or 26, something like that.

I: Little Sam was about 25.

H: Yes, Little Sam.

I: Yea, ok, now, picking up the story. The birth was at the place on the Pedernales River there.

H: Yes, that's the birthplace there now.

I: Where the house has been re-constructed?

H: Re-constructed, just exactly like it was when it was standing.

I: Did you have something to do with helping to reconstruct . . .

H: Oh, yes. I messed around there alot. And did alot of taling, and a few little things scattered about over the house, you know, that belonged to family. For instance, this little light, there, Lyndon has it, this here little

-8-

yellow one. Lyndon has the double to that. There was two of them. He's got one of them, it's in there, no, I believe it's down in Johnson City. But anyhow, there's a lots of things in the old house there that come from the Johnson's. Rawhide chairs, and one thing and another.

I: I assume that you also were very well acquainted with Lyndon's mother? Mrs. Johnson.

H: Yes, very well acquainted with Rebecca.

I: Can you tell us something about her?

H: She was a splendid woman. She was of a high type. She really was. She never came down to a level with Lyndon on a lot of things, cause Lyndon was, you know, he was country like--what he said and did, I mean, Sam did, he come down and said what he wanted to any time. But Rebecca was always, always dignified, you know, in everything. You know, I don't think Rebecca ever would . . . Is this being recorded?

I: All of this is being recorded, yes ma'm.

H: I was fixing to say, I don't think Rebecca would have ever wanted anybody to say that Lyndon came with a midwife instead of a real doctor. I don't think she would've ever

-9-

wanted that said. But, still it was one of those accident things that had to happen.

I: But in those days, so many of the neighbor women were so well qualified.

H: Yes, that's just my idea that she wouldn't want it said, because she was of that type, that she, oh, she just wanted everything just so.

I: Proper?

H: She dressed them little children. Oh, they just looked like little angels, her little children did. Of course, this kid like Lyndon, and like I was, we came up hamper-scamper, you know. Any thing that Mama put on us that was alright. But Lyndon's children, I mean, Rebecca's children, were always dressed.

I: Now, let's get the order of Rebecca's children.

H: Yes

I: I don't know them so - -

H: Lyndon, Lyndon is the first, then - -

I: Is he the eldest?

H: Yea, he is the eldest, yea, he was the first grandchild.

-10-

That's why we were all there when he came. Everybody looking for him. We was all expecting him.

I: Now, these are the children of Rebecca Baines Johnson?

H: Yes.

I: And Sam Ealy Johnson?

H: Sam Ealy Johnson.

I: Now the children of Rebecca Baines Johnson, and - -

H: Lyndon and Rebecca - -

I: Are first Lyndon, Lyndon Baines.

H: And then Rebecca Bobbit, Rebecca. She married a fellow by the name of Bobbit. You know him.

I: I know Mr. Bobbit.

H: And then Josefa.

I: Josefa.

H: Josefa White, and then Lucia, that's the baby. Oh, no, Sam Houston comes in there.

-11-

I: Sam Houston comes before Lucia?

H: Before Lucia.

I: Just before Lucia? Ok, well you were living right here in the same neighborhood - -

H: Yes, the neighborhood, yes.

I: In Johnson City, or Stonewall?

H: Well, I was living in Stonewall and so was Lyndon.

I: Yes.

H: But, we all went to school in Johnson City, when, you know, school was in. Papa moved to Johnson City and carried all the children. We went to school. Of course, we were all grown, though, when Lyndon come along.

I: What I was leading up to was that you knew him throughout his boyhood.

H: Oh, yes. He lived with me, he stayed with me. When he was little he run off and come up to our house. Of course, I taught school in the winter time, I wasn't there in the winter. But, when I was there all during the summer he was

-12-

always at my house, at my mother's home, my father's home, with me. Wherever I went, that child was right at my heels.

I: Tell us something about Lyndon as a boy? Can you remember anything . . .

H: Well, Lyndon was a go-getter when he was a boy. He was always the lead horse. Made no difference what come nor what went, he was the head of the ring. He used to have a donkey. Well, there'd be four or five boys in the neighborhood, and they all came. They'd all ride that donkey. All got on the donkey, but Lyndon was in the forefront, he was the head. And he had the quirt to make the donkey go. All right, then when they got off the donkey, why, whatever they were doing Lyndon was the head. He was the main one.

I: Mrs. Hatcher, I would like to revert just a few moments to Mrs. Johnson, Lyndon's mother, Mrs. Johnson.

H: Yes, yes.

I: Because you are one of the few people still around who remember her distinctly.

H: Oh, yes.

I: What was her background? She was from . . . Where was she from? She was from Waco, was she not?

-13-

H: No, she was from Blanco.

I: Blanco?

H: Blanco, yea. Her father was in the Legislature, and then he held some other office. What was it? But, anyhow, and he was a preacher, too. A Baptist preacher. And a very, very fine person.

I: Well, Mrs. Johnson, as I recall, was a school teacher, was she not?

H: Yes, well she was a elocutionist, she taught elocution.

I: Oh, yes.

H: Yes.

I: And she was not accustomed to the rough ranch life?

H: Oh, no, no. Not like I was used to. I was brought up on the farm. I could do anything that any of the boys could do. I could ride a horse, any horse that they could ride. I could do anything that they could do. Yet, I felt like that everything that I could help Rebecca do I wanted to do, to make it easier for her. She wasn't used to that kind of living. She married Sam when he lived down on the farm and he was out all the time. And he had lots of company, and she had lots of company, and she didn't--she never had done

-14-

much of anything, except school work. And it was hard on her. I used to go down and help her all the time.

I: You mean when she had company or something like that?

H: Yes, when she had company, or any time that I happened in. I'd go in and help her wash the dishes, help her sweep the floor, help her bathe the babies. Oh, I'd just do anything that was to be done. Now, that was all there was to it. That's how much I loved her.

I: Yes. Well, now when these children were coming up, you were telling us about Lyndon and the mule. You remembered some of the boys that - -

H: Oh, yes, there was Tom Andrews. Tom Andrews, and the Hodge boy, what was his given name? Well, I ought to call Ruth, and tell her to come on over, she knows more. Well anyhow--Hiram Hodge. Tom Andrews, Hiram Hodge, and the two Crider boys. I can't remember the Crider boys . . .

I: Ben Crider, was that one of them?

H: Ben Crider's sons.

I: Oh, they're his sons?

H: Might have been young Dan.

-15-

I: Ben, there was a Ben Crider.

H: Yes, there was a Ben Crider, but I don't know whether anyone of those boys was named Ben or not.

I: Yes.

H: Anyhow, there were the two Crider boys, Tom Andrews, Hiram Hodge. There were four of them.

I: Are you going to tell us the story about Pablo?

H: Oh, about Pablo? Oh, I think we'd better not. That's sort of . . .

I: Well, if that's your judgement. Now then, when Lyndon was a young boy, I understand that you and he were in some sort of business partnership?

H: Lyndon and I?

I: Yes, when he borrowed some money from you.

H: Oh no, no, that wasn't business partnership, only that he -- As I said, his family was in pretty hard circumstances, it took all they had to make a living. So Lyndon was up at the age that he wanted a little money of his own, and he

-16-

wanted to work, too. He had nothing to do there, in that little town. So he decided that he'd come to his Aunt Jessie -- I was visiting there at the time, and he always thought lots of me, anyway -- and he said Aunt Jessie, he says, if you loan me a hundred dollars, he says, I'll tell you what I'll do. He says, I can go down here and buy me a stripped down Ford. Then he says, I can make five dollars a day. I says, reckon you can Lyndon? Oh, yes, yes I can. I gave him the hundred dollars and off he went. He got that little Ford, and he went to work, and he went to work on that highway, and he made a good hand, good hand.

I: What was he doing?

H: Hauling gravel.

I: Hauling gravel for the highway?

H: For the highway department, yes, siree.

I: Did he pay you back the hundred dollars?

H: Oh, I have to tell you about him paying it back. Well, oh, it was after he was a Congressman or way up along. He give a party one time, and he asked all the neighbors and everybody, no, all the family and all around, and he

-17-

had a big birthday cake, like this. So he give all of them there, all present, all but me. And so, giving out the presents somebody said, well, didn't you bring Aunt Jessie anything? No, he says, I didn't give her anything. But then they cut the cake, there was a hundred dollar bill in there. He'd paid me back. And he said, he said, no I didn't get Aunt Jessie any present because this is her hundred dollars, and says, it's hers, it's not mine. Says, I borrowed it away from her ten years ago, and he says, here it is.

I: Well, now what other stories do you remember about Lyndon as a boy? Or should I call him Lyndon?

H: Oh yes.

I: Should I say Mr. President, shouldn't I?

H: Well, I'll tell you this. When we were in Houston, he was staying with me. He lived with Uncle George and me.

I: Wait a minute. When he was in Houston, he was a school teacher, wasn't he?

H: Yes, he was a school teacher. Well, he had borrowed money to go to school on. So, his Uncle George was always told him, said Lyndon, now whatever, every month you got

-18-

to pay a certain amount on that thousand dollars that you have borrowed. And so, well, his Uncle George would have him pay it, and George was always after him, telling him, oh, he must pay it. So, Uncle George went to England on a visit, and Lyndon phoned me from downtown one day, and said, Aunt Jessie, says, have you heard from Uncle George? I said yes, I got a cablegram today. Well, where is he? I says, he's in Germany. He said, good, good. Are you sure of that? I said, yes sir. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going down here to this Pig Stand and I'm going to eat all the ice cream I can hold.

I: Instead of paying on his debt?

H: Instead of paying on his debt. Now, that was just as typical of him as anything on earth. Of course, he was just making out like, but just made out like his Uncle George wouldn't let him have enough money to buy him an ice cream cone. But when Uncle George was in England, was in France, or Germany, he knew that he couldn't tell him, then, not to do it. Now, that was a real story.

I: Well, now you were, to go back a little further, you were in Johnson City at the time that Lyndon, Mr. Johnson, decided to go to California. What was the background of that? How did he happen to go to California?

-19-

H: Well, I tell you. These Crider boys, they had some kin folks out there, and I think it was more for the trip than anything else. But he knew Tom Martin was out there. And he knew Tom Martin was a dipnailing good lawyer.

I: Who was Tom Martin?

H: Well, that was his first cousin, and of course, my nephew. And so, when got out there, why he phoned Tom and told him he going to pay him a visit. But Tom, Tom found out where he was. Had him come out to his home, and when he got there, why Tom brought him some new clothes and fixed him all up and put him in his office. Of course, Tom was doing a magnificent business with all those actresses staying right there in Hollywood. And so, there's where Lyndon said, that, well, I'll just tell you right now, he says, he charged them actresses from two to five thousand dollars to get them a divorce. He said, Aunt Jessie, you know, he says, that wasn't right. And he said, I knew that wasn't right, quickly I got enough money to come home and I come home. I just went off and left him.

I: Now, is this the same Tom Martin, who subsequently moved back to Texas?

H: Yes, it's the same Tom Martin.

-20-

I: And he ran for and was elected to the Legislature?

H: Yes, it's the same one.

I: From Johnson City, yes.

H: But see he was a grown man, and way up in years, when Lyndon was born.

I: How old was Lyndon at the time he went to California?

H: He was about fifteen or sixteen. I think it was after he'd finished high school. I think he finished high school at sixteen. That's the first money he ever made of his own, was when he got that Ford.

I: He took that money to go to California?

H: Oh, yes, he got that . . . Oh, now, I have to tell you this little story. But, I don't like to tell stories that, only what I think would interest you, I don't think it would interest the public.

I: Well, this is for research. For people who will be hearing this tape many years after you and I are gone.

H: Well, I heard Lyndon tell this story. He said, him and them old Crider boys, that's how he spoke, went on that stripped down Ford to California. And he said,

-21-

you know, said, we got way out there on that desert some where, and said, I don't know how much money I had, but not very much. Said, the Crider boys didn't have any more than I did. And said, we stopped way out there on that desert somewhere, and said, we found a little stand to buy us some cold drinks. And, Lyndon told this, he said, one of them Crider boys went up there, and said, you know what he did? He pulled out a five dollar bill, and Lyndon said, the other boy grabbed hold of him and said, you damn fool you, showing all that money, what do you mean, we'll be robbed before we get to California!

I: As a boy, did Lyndon show any evidences that he was politically minded?

H: Oh, all of his life. He was right by the side of his daddy wherever he went. When he was little, two years old, he used to go with his daddy down to get a shave. They had to shave him, too. They put him up in that stand, and they put stuff all over his face and took the back of the razor, you know, and shaved it all. Washed his face, set him down, off he went with his daddy. Yes, sir. And he had a business of his own one time, running a shoe-shine outfit. That was five cents a shine.

I: At the barber shop or --

H: Well, close to the barber shop, right close to the barber shop.

-22-

I: Out doors then?

H: Um hmm, right close to it. He had a business of his own. Then he had a ad in the paper. Lyndon Johnson, Shoe Shine Shop.

I: Oh, I swear, that's one that I hadn't heard before, that he had a shoe shine shop. What else did he do as a boy around the Johnson City?

H: Well, he use to plug the watermelons for me. I used to stake him, I'd go out and be fooling around the garden someway or another. And if I didn't watch him, he pull the watermelons off of the vine and he finally found out that the only way that you could get a watermelon to eat was to find out if it was ripe. And he use to plug them, and I wouldn't know it. I had to hide-tied him to keep him from getting to the watermelon patch, til I could go do what I was doing.

I: I was going to say, you didn't grow your watermelons in the garden, you had a patch, didn't you separate?

H: Well, out in the garden. There was watermelons all around, in the garden and everywhere. Different vines here and there and yonder. There were watermelons running all over the place.

-23-

H: Oh, good gracious alive, wherever you had potatoes or tomatoes or anything, you could put a vine here and there and yonder. Good gracious, yes, they grew any where. Of course, they usually had if they . . . to sell, they'd have a big patch, a half an acre or so, but we never had that, we just had them for use.

I: Now, after he came back from California . . .

H: Oh, when he came back from California was when that he started to college.

I: How did he happen to do that? Do you know anything about the background of that?

H: Well, his mother told him, she said, Lyndon, says, you've got to quit this running around now, and you've got to go to work. And he realized it himself, that since he'd been to California and he saw what Tom Martin was doing, and how he was making money, and how he had to be, why he just was a real little man, then. Then he started to school. Of course, when he got to San Marcos, he didn't have any money, he's like everybody else that was poor at that time. And so he got him a job of cleaning the college, and taking care of this and that and the other. And he made his way right smart. That's though when he borrowed a thousand dollars.

I: That's what I was going to ask you. From whom was this

-24-

thousand dollars borrowed? You refered to . . .

H: Oh, from the bank.

I: You refered to Uncle George or --

H: Uncle George, that was my brother. He was an old bachelor brother, that lived with me after my husband died.

I: I see, and he was a banker?

H: No, no he wasn't a banker. This is just from the Johnson City bank or Stonewall bank. Whatever bank, I think it was the San Marcos bank he borrowed it from. And, anyhow, Uncle George helped him get it, or he didn't need any help. He just went down to that bank and asked for a thousand dollars and said he was going to go to . . . , but he taught school, though, he taught school after he graduated from high school. He got a certificate and taught school. And he saved some money, but not much. Didn't make over a hundred and twenty-five dollars a month. Took half of that to live, and the way Lyndon lived, took it all.

I: You mean he lived up his money and --

H: Oh, yea, he lived it up, pretty much.

I: How did he do that?

-25-

H: Oh, he dressed well, he always dressed well, and stayed at the best places and went to the best things. And when he came to Houston, to stay with me, now, then was when his Uncle George and I had to hold him down. There's too much to see in Houston. But he stayed with us and he minded us. He was twenty-two or three years old, at that time, and he minded us, he minded me. Oh, I say, generally speaking. Of course, if he wanted to do anything, he'd do that, he didn't have to mind, but --

I: I was going to say, you didn't hold very tight rein on him.

H: Oh no, no. Only what was right. He was never found in bad company, nor he never get out and drink, you know, like a lot of boys.

I: During this period in Houston, he was, as I recall it, a teacher of --

H: Public speaking.

I: Public speaking?

H: Yes.

I: Do you recall the interest that he worked up in public speaking?

-26-

H: Oh yes, yes.

I: Tell us about that?

H: Yes, he was good, he was good at that. He was head of the speaking department. And he won ever, ever, whatever they call them, you know, one of these district meets. He won every one with his speaking class, every one. And L. E. Jones, I know I seen his name in the paper now, every once in a while. He was one of Lyndon's leading pupils. They made the grade in everything. He always was head of the class.

I: L. E. Jones, would that be Luther Jones of --

H: Houston.

I: Of Corpus Christi, I --

H: Well, he, I don't know, he may be in Christi. He lived in Houston then.

I: He lived in Houston at that time?

H: Yes.

And what's this man there, in Houston now, that's so--such a great, used-to-be mayor? His name was in the paper this morning.

-27-

I: Roy Hofheinz?

H: Roy Hofheinz, he went to school with Lyndon.

I: Oh, he did?

H: Yes, he did.

I: Now, this is the same Roy Hofheinz who runs the Astrodome?

H: Yes, runs the Astrodome. A millionaire, a millionaire.

I: I believe I saw on television recently where he was President of Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey.

H: Yes, sir. That's what money will do for you.

I: He was a student in --

H: Yes, he was a student in Lyndon's class. I'm pretty sure he was. I know he was. He was often with Lyndon's bunch. I'm pretty sure, of course, I wasn't in school.

Lyndon was--he had a great heart in him. There used to be an old woman that took care of the college--that is, swept it and cleaned it and everything. And Lyndon would meet her at the bottom of the stairs, and he'd put his arm around her all the way up the stairs, all the way up, and pat her on the back, you know, as he went up to his room. Mrs. Jackson, was her name. She

-28-

had a hat set on back of her head. She's the cutest old thing you ever saw. And he used to tell me, "Aunt Jessie, get Mrs. Jackson a dress for her birthday, and put it in her box up there."

I: Where was that now?

H: That was in Houston. When he was teaching school in Houston.

I: When he was teaching school, I see.

H: Oh, he had such a good heart in him. And he always was bringing me something. I've had him come to my house and I wouldn't find a fifty dollar bill, 'til after he was gone. That was when he was in Congress though. Underneath the dresser scarf. I'd find that after he'd been gone a week, maybe. I won't pick up the scarf or something. But I knew that, who, where that money come from.

I: Now, Mrs. Hatcher, during this period that Mr. Johnson was teaching elocution, or public speaking, in the Houston public schools, did he live with you all that time?

H: Yes.

I: How long a period was that? Do you recall?

-29-

H: Oh, a year and a half, or more.

I: And he --

H: And he was in and out at my house, he didn't know whether my home was his or what. He never knew the difference between my home and his own.

I: You mean, after he left, when he wasn't living with you anymore, why it still his --

H: Yes, still that was home to him. Always coming and going. He always said home, so it couldn't have been, maybe he was off somewhere else, but then --

I: Well, now, I believe that he gave up the job in Houston to become Congressman Kleberg's secretary.

H: Yes.

I: Is that right?

H: Yes, that was when he, yea, that's what he did.

I: You recall anything about that? Did he talk to you about it? Did he ask your advice on whether --

H: Oh, yes, yes. He asked what I thought about it. I said, well Lyndon, you're awful young, honey, I don't know

-30-

whether you can make it or not. But, I says, there's nothing like trying. "Oh, Aunt Jessie, I'll make it. I'll, I'll make a stab at it." And I said, well you just do it.

I: Did you know Sam, Representative Kleberg?

H: Yes, yes, we knew senator, I mean, Mr. Kleberg.

I: Was he, what kind of a guy was he?

H: Well, he was a very, very nice person. Yes he was. He was a good person to work for, I imagine, of course, I didn't know anything about him, only just acquainted, that was all. But you know, he said that, when Sam Houston went to Washington, that Sam Houston made a better secretary than Lyndon did.

I: Did Sam Houston go?

H: Yes, Sam Houston went to Washington and was Mr. Kleberg's secretary. When Lyndon quit, I think.

I: When you speak of Sam Houston, you're speaking of Sam Houston Johnson, the younger brother.

H: Yes, Lyndon's brother. And he was an awful smart boy, awful bright little fellow.

-31-

I: Well, now did Lyndon come back and see you after he was the Congressman's secretary? During the period that he was the Congressman's secretary?

H: Oh yes, he'd come every time he was in Texas. Why, he'd always come to our house. He loved his Uncle George and he thought a lot of me. And he knew, he had all of his friends--yes, he was with us every time. He stayed, I believe, with me more than he ever stayed at home or as much.

I: Well, now, from the job of Congressman Kleberg's secretary, where did he go? Do you recall what his next step was? Was that when he went to NYA?

H: Yes, right after that.

I: Right after Congressman--

H: Congressman--

I: Kleberg, yes, and then he moved to Austin?

H: Yea.

I: And --

H: Then he announced for Congress.

-32-

I: Do you recall, did he talk to you about announcing for Congress?

H: Oh yes, yes. He talked to his Uncle George and me both about it, you know, and what we thought about it.

I: What did he ask you? What did he say?

H: He said, "Well," he says, "What do you think about me making the race?" And his Uncle George said, "Well, Lyndon," he says, "You're qualified. I'm sure you are. The only thing we want you to make a good one, if you make one, make a good one. Make an honest one, and do always what your good judgement tells you, because you won't go wrong if you take your daddy's advice."

I: His daddy's advice?

H: Yes, his daddy's advice.

I: Which was what?

H: Which was Lyndon's father.

I: Yea, I know, but what was his daddy's advice. His daddy was not --

H: Oh, his daddy's advice was to always be on the up and up about anything. No, nothing shadowed, shady about

-33-

anything. Come out in the open, fight straight. Right down the line.

I: Now, when did Mr. Johnson die? The elder Mr. Johnson, Lyndon's father.

H: Well, it was after he was in Congress.

I: It was after he was in Congress. Yes I see.

H: Yes.

I: Now, of course, you were in Houston, which was quite a way from Austin, at the time he ran for Congress.

H: Yes.

I: Did he come down to Houston?

H: Oh yes, yes. He came to Houston often. Went to see all of his old-time pals. All of his pupils that went to go to school to him. He'd see them all. Call them up, have them come to see him. Lyndon's a kid yet. He liked young people around him and he gets the biggest kick out of all the things that they do.

I: In 1937, I believe it was, he was elected to Congress --

H: Yes.

-34-

I: And --

H: I think there was eight in that, or six, in that race.

I: There was a large number. I don't recall the exact number.

H: Six or eight!

I: But, did his Uncle George or you give him any advice on what to do in that race?

H: Well, not anymore I'd guess than the father or uncle of good standing would give him. That--shoot square in everything.

I: Well, when he came back down to Houston to see you-all after he was elected to Congress, what did he tell you about what was going on in Washington?

H: Oh, he liked it. Oh, he was, he liked it there and he told us lots of things about people he'd met and how everybody was nice to him.

I: Do you recall any particular stories that he told you about anyone? About Sam Rayburn or the President?

H: Oh, Sam Rayburn. Sam Rayburn was his second daddy. But, I can tell you when Sam Rayburn used to come to see Lyndon's father. Lyndon was little fellow, like this,

-35-

and he used to stand right by Sam Rayburn to listen to every word he said. Every word that Sam Rayburn said, Lyndon was right there to hear it. And of course, him being a good friend of his daddy, why, Sam, Lyndon's father and Mr. Rayburn were good friends, and they'd talk politics back and forth, and Lyndon's little old ears was listening to everything.

I: Where was that? Was that in Johnson City?

H: That was in Johnson City. Yes, that was in Johnson City.

I: Mr. Rayburn came up to Johnson City?

H: Oh, yes. Mr. Rayburn had been in Sam's home, I guess, a lot of times. And that's one thing you could always say about Rebecca, she was always nice and good to Sam's friends. Now, Mr. Rayburn was one of the real ones.

I: Well, I imagine then, that Mr. Rayburn and Sam Johnson were friends in the Legislature.

H: Oh, yes, yes. They were friends in the Legislature. I had a big picture of Sam Rayburn and Lyndon, I mean Sam.

I: Sam Johnson?

H: Yes.

-36-

I: Sam Rayburn and Sam --

H: Sam Rayburn. When they were in the Legislature together.

I: Did you know Sam Rayburn?

H: Yes, not--I met him that's all. But not, I couldn't say I--Yea, you love him and knew him ~~more~~ because of his friendship with Lyndon's father. Not that I was any-- cause I was married and gone. I'd see him when I'd come in, probably visiting in Johnson City. I came back every year, nearly, to see the different ones and be at the old home folks and old home place and everything.

I: Well, now after Mr. Johnson, Lyndon Johnson, was elected to the Congress, he looked upon you and his Uncle George, as I take it, as something of, a kin to being a father and mother.

H: Oh yes, yes definitely.

I: He asked you for advice on numerous things.

H: On numerous things, yes. He always went to his Uncle George for advice. And a lot of times his advice to Uncle George, I mean, what he was telling his Uncle George, his Uncle George, would say, "No, no, Lyndon, you can't do that." "Why, Uncle George?" "Well, because of this." And his Uncle George would convince him that what he was

-37-

doing wasn't exactly the thing to do. And he'd always change, whatever his Uncle George told him. And his Uncle Tom too. Uncle Tom Johnson was a brother to Uncle George, and he always respected, he respected their advice about anything. And he went to them, too.

I: Oh, do you remember any specific examples of things that they talked about or --

H: No, nothing more than just common politics or something. Or what each said or each did, or what that man was doing, or what the other, and whether it was ethical or whether it wasn't, or what, so. But Lyndon's been in politics, I mean, he's been at it, been listening politics all his life. From the time he was fifteen years old he had--the one he was going to vote for. Oh yes, oh and he go against me just lots of times, you know. "Oh, Aunt Jessie, you're wrong, you're wrong." I'd go, oh no, no sir. We just argued back and forth.

I: What were some of the differences that you and he had, were you for Roosevelt?

H: Oh yes, yes I was for Roosevelt. One hundred percent, yes sir, always.

I: Well, I don't know what differences you-all had, that was his main --

-38-

H: Oh, well, I'm just talking about local politics.

I: For instance?

H: Yes, for maybe the mayor of this city, or maybe the county judge, or the, the legislator, or something.

I: I'm still getting, trying to get you to tell us some specific advice that you have given to the, Mr. Johnson--

H: My advice wouldn't, I don't imagine, would be very good, I mean, very enlightening to anybody, but--I said, Lyndon always remember this, don't ever go against the, against Israel. Because Israel as a nation was given to them by God. That's the only nation in all the land that was ever, that's the only nation that God ever recognized as His own. And He made a nation out of the Israelies when all the rest of us are gentiles. We're not anything kin. If we ever get in the Israelitish family we'll have to get through a broken off branch, because we're not of the orginal branch. The Jews are the orginal branch of the Israelitish, and they are God's people, and they are always going to be, and always let them, because they are going back, at the time that, most--when Lyndon was little, the Jews were scattered around, there were not--but when Roosevelt went in, why--long before that, though, they began to gather back into Jerusalem, in which they were told in the Bible that they would be scattered. I believe they did say, they would be scattered everywhere. But after that they're

-39-

told, they'd be regathered back into the land, and that's their land, and it's their lands now. And nobody is going to take it away from them.

I: Do you think that you influenced Mr. Johnson in his--

H: No. I don't think I, I don't know anybody that influenced Lyndon, that he didn't want to. But that's truth, that's Bible, and the Bible is so, let every man on earth be a liar, don't make no difference who it is. Roose--President Truman would have never been elected, (interruption) the last minute. Why? Because he made a nation of Israel, that's what he did. Put them there as a nation. And I says, they're there for good.

I: You don't know whether Mr. Johnson--whether your advice to Mr. Johnson on this subject influenced him any?

H: No, no, I don't know that it would, but it is facts, and it is true. And the Bible is true, let every man on earth be a liar. And whatever he does for Israel will be to his advantage.

I: Did you ever advise him on any other subjects?

H: Well, no, only to be careful what he says, and what he said that will go against him. Now, the other day when he made the remark that the Kennedy boys were baby, something to that--if I had been around Lyndon, Lyndon

-40-

should have never said that. That isn't right. It may be your idea, but don't ever say things like that. And he's always pretty good, though, to, to not say things that he oughtn't to. He has never criticized the other candidates much about anything. He has always been pretty good about that.

I: You don't believe it was a very good idea--to criticize?

H: No, no it's not a good idea to lambast your, your fellow that's running against you. That will kill Kennedy if he keeps it up.

I: Now, Mrs. Hatcher, from talking this afternoon with you, I gather that, a number of people have helped to shape the life of the man who is now our President. There's his father and mother, of course, and you, to a very large extent, and his uncles. Could you tell us, starting, perhaps, with your brother Sam, how these people helped to shape Lyndon Johnson?

H: Well, one thing that shaped his life was their walk before him. Sam Johnson was as clean a politician as ever was. And his Uncle George was an exemplified person, He was--he was the head of one of the biggest--he was one of the big teachers in Houston. And, he had influence over great, many, many boys of Lyndon's age, and so forth, and he was a man that read plenty. He read lots, kept up with everything.

-41-

I: What was his position?

H: George's? He was head of the--What is the name of the school? But, anyhow, he was one of the principals of the biggest school in Houston. Yes, Sam Houston High School, yea, he was principal of the high school. And then--

I: And then his brother, His Uncle Tom--

H: His Uncle Tom was a ranchman, that lived out at Johnson City, but was always interested in politics, in every way. And you could always count on Johnson, on Lyndon's uncle as being on the up and up, on the squarish. He wouldn't vote for a man that he thought was dishonest in any way, shape, fashion or form. And he always told Lyndon, "Lyndon, when you're going to vote for anyone, be sure he's a man for the job. No dishonest, no chickrey, no things that didn't mean anything. Always stay on the right side of anything." Honest and uprightness, that's what--that he always told him. And Lyndon listened too. That's what I say, when he come back from California telling that, why, no, he, he says, you know that man charged them three thousand dollars for that--getting that divorce. And that wasn't right, that's too much money. He was honest enough to think that, you know.

I: Then what, I'm sure that his mother had a very large influence.

-42-

H: Oh yes, she did.

I: And in what respects would you say?

H: Well, she always wanted him to be a child that went to church and live right, in that way. Of course, he wasn't too much that way, but, then anyhow, her influence was that way. She liked for him to go to Sunday School and church, and be found with the best company in every way, and not be found out drinking or anything like that.

I: Did she try to teach him elocution?

H: Oh yes, yes she tried, and she did. She used to have him, do you know, when President, not President, but Governor was out there, made a speech in Johnson City and Lyndon was four years old, and the Governor was making a speech, and when he got through, he says, well, says, suppose they let Lyndon make us a speech. He was just four. He crawled up on an apple box and he recited the Preamble of the United States.

I: Constitution?

H: Yes, of the Constitution. Now he thought that was making a speech.

I: Well, for a boy of four, I would say that was a pretty good speech.

-43-

H: Yes sir, four years old.

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