

INTERVIEW IV

DATE: December 1, 1977
INTERVIEWEES: WELLY K. and ALICE HOPKINS
INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE
PLACE: The Hopkins' home in Culpeper, Virginia

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G: Your maiden name is Wyatt, is that right?
A: No, Isaacs. I-S-A-A-C-S.
G: Oh. I don't know why I have Wyatt down here.
A: Alice Isaacs. That's the way I sign, Alice I.
G: Mrs. Hopkins, let's start with your first impressions of Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson.
A: Well, I met Lady Bird casually the second or third day after she moved in with this architect and his wife. They had a nice home.
W: Sybil Kuehne [?].
A: Yes. Sybil Kuehne [and] Hugo Kuehne. He was an architect, a well-known one in Austin. I just remember her as a pretty, young, gay girl. Her coloring was beautiful, and that's all I remember.
G: What year would this have been, do you remember?
A: I guess it was about 1933, wasn't it, Welly?
W: 1932, 1933. 1933, I would say.
A: Yes, 1933, yes. [The] early part of 1933.
W: You were living out there with--
A: With the Kuehnes, and boarding, too.

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- W: With Sybil Kuehne, and Lady Bird was in the University or was coming down to the University, and Aunt Effie came with her, didn't they?
- A: Yes, and they took the same room that I had, the bedroom. I don't know how long they stayed there or anything, because my connection was not with the Kuehnes, socially. I was visiting. So I didn't know that Lady Bird was in college. I didn't know her then, really.
- G: I think he did some architectural work for the Brick House in Karnack, didn't he?
- W: Kuehne?
- A: Kuehne?
- W: Yes, he probably did because I think Mrs. Kuehne was--no, let's see, she wasn't related in any way, was she?
- A: No, she was a Glass.
- W: That's right. But he was a well-known architect and a very capable one. I think he became friendly to--
- A: Well, they boarded right there in his home. Naturally, he--
- W: See, I wouldn't be surprised if he did work on [the Brick House].
- A: I don't know in those years what went on, didn't know Lady Bird again until she was in Washington.
- G: Was this a boarding house?
- A: No, no.
- W: Just a private home.
- A: Sybil Kuehne and her husband, Hugo, had this lovely home, two little children, and she had this extra room. The girl that roomed with me

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was distantly related to her, and she was the one [who] got me in there with her. She rented us this room. She had a cook and we had our evening meal there.

W: Just a case of a family taking care of a relative or giving them a place when they were in school.

A: I don't know how she knew of Lady Bird and her aunt. I haven't any idea, except I moved to an apartment and my friend came to Washington. That broke that up. I just met Lady Bird one day out there, just to say, "How do you do," that's all.

G: Do you recall the first time you met Lyndon Johnson?

A: It must have been with Welly Hopkins. I don't remember where.
(Laughter)

W: He used to come to Austin occasionally when I was in the [state] senate. We would visit around.

A: I think we had a meal or two together.

W: Alice and I were going with each other and Lyndon would--

A: That's long before he proposed to me. We were just good friends, on any account.

W: It was in Austin, that was where Alice first met Lyndon.

G: I have a note here that LBJ did some lobbying before the Texas legislature, I guess in two instances: one, when he was teaching in Houston, he went up and lobbied for some cigarette tax that would benefit the Houston Teachers Association, or something like that. Do you remember this?

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W: No. I remember Lyndon as a debating coach down there was very active in trying to get public attention and legislative attention and maybe appropriations for the--what was it called--the state association that fostered debates among all the high schools in those days. There was some state money [that] came through out of the legislature to support that. I think that if he had been supporting cigarette tax or tobacco tax, that would have been for teachers' salaries or something akin to that, because I know he felt very strongly as a teacher in trying to support teachers' causes. But I don't recall any specific item of when he came to Austin for that purpose.

G: There was reportedly an earlier occasion when he was still a student at San Marcos and went up to the legislature to try to help with something that the college was interested in.

W: Well, I wouldn't doubt that, because the college was also very anxious to get as generous as appropriations as they could for its maintenance on a biannual basis, because it was only state monies that made that college live and created it. When Dr. C. E. Evans was down there he was very active in support of his own causes. When I was in the senate on the appropriations committee he came up to see me many times in behalf of and in support of the claims that he was making for the appropriations for the school. I would have no doubt that Lyndon came up in such a capacity under Dr. Evans' sponsorship even before I came to the senate. But I would assume that if he came while he was a student it would have been in that regard.

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- G: Mrs. Hopkins, what was Lyndon Johnson like when you first knew him?
- W: Big and tall.
- A: I knew him so casually--a big, tall, jolly, handsome fellow that was Welly's friend. He was always slapping you on the back, or putting his arm around you and saying, "You're just the girl for Welly," or something like that, you know, just complimentary. That's all I knew of him.
- W: Well, you knew him in a friendly, social capacity.
- A: Yes, that's all in Austin.
- W: He was a very genial sort of person, even as a youngster, outgoing.
- G: Did he give you the impression then of being hard working?
- A: To me he didn't, because I didn't know him well enough. After he was in Washington I realized that, but not in Austin.
- G: He could relax then and enjoy himself?
- A: Yes. He knew how to relax and enjoy himself.
- W: He was a hard-driving person though, in my mind, from the time I first met him, and always was. He had an intense, burning desire to succeed.
- G: I was going to ask you if you ever met his Uncle George?
- W: Once, or twice, yes, or several times, but never at any extended period of time, like I did his father. I saw his father much more than Uncle George. Uncle George, as I remember, was living down in Houston, wasn't he, at one time. Was he in the schools down there?

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- G: Yes. I think the President stayed in his house when he was down there.
- W: That's right. That's my recollection, too. I saw Uncle George only when he'd come back and forth up to Blanco or Johnson City at different times, and I'd see him then. I never saw Uncle George in Houston except maybe at that banquet.
- G: I get the impression that he thought quite a bit of his uncle.
- W: Oh, yes, I think he did.
- G: Do you recall anything he said that indicated this admiration?
- W: I can't give it any exact quote that I recall, but he referred to his Uncle George many times. I think his Uncle George helped him when he was a schoolboy and later on maybe, financially, as well as giving him advice. Lyndon had a high regard and respect for him, and I think he consulted with his Uncle George very often. But I can't recall any exact quote except Uncle George may have said this or that and the other, but I don't recall exactly what.
- G: Let me ask you to describe this debate banquet that you went down to.
- W: Oh, Lord. If I had some of my old files and newspaper clippings in front of me I might be much more articulate. I remember very vividly the occasion, because it meant so much to Lyndon. I remember he had Pat Neff there, and I felt rather honored that he'd asked me. I knew that Lyndon was making a very fine impression on the whole city of Houston, which was unusual for a newcomer and a teacher in a high school. As I said a while ago, he'd attracted the attention of

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"Mefo" [M. E.] Foster, who at that time was quite a power in the sense of swaying public opinion through the Houston Press.

G: How did he do this? Did he know Foster before Lyndon went to Houston?

W: No. Foster just recognized in Lyndon that a young, up-and-coming man had been made a young debating coach out there. Lyndon may have solicited his support of his debating team, but I'm not sure. Foster was very sincerely an advocate of Lyndon and an admirer of the young man. I think Foster had a penchant for looking out for young men. He recognized Lyndon as a man of up-and-coming, of talent, and he gave him prominence in his paper, and supported his cause.

Foster was really quite a go-getter himself, a little-bitty person physically, but a gigantic mind in a small body. He was well known that when he was for you, he was for you, and when he was against you, he was against you. He had his causes, and he had those he liked and those he didn't like. Lyndon, he fortuitously liked.

G: Did his friendship with LBJ continue on through the years?

W: So far as I know; I would have every reason to think so. I don't know that there was any intimate relationship, but the friendly relationship I'm quite sure remained, because I never heard of anything that would have broken the one that I knew.

G: I knew that Pat Neff was invited, but I didn't know that he actually attended. He did?

W: Well, again, you see, my memory may be tricky. You mentioned Neff a while ago, and I thought you said he attended. My recollection was

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that he didn't attend and "Mefo" Foster spoke. What do the news accounts show on that?

G: They show that you attended and they show that Neff was invited, but I'm not sure that he attended.

W: I don't think he attended, but I think "Mefo" Foster did. That's my recollection.

G: Where was the banquet held, do you remember?

W: I don't know whether it was at the Rice or not. My recollection is of a rather large banquet hall.

G: Do you recall what you spoke about?

W: Probably about Lyndon. (Laughter)

A: Welly was another one who saw an up-and-coming young man with a future.

W: Well, Alice is right. I think I did. I recognized that in Lyndon, as an up-and-coming young man. He said to me many, many times in my early acquaintance with him, "I'm going to be president someday."

G: Did he really?

W: Oh, yes. He said it to my mother any number of times. He was very fond of my mother, and we used to go see her quite often. I remember my mother telling me right after we came back up here--1936, 1937, somewhere in there--after Lyndon was back in Texas and I was back on a visit, she used to tell me about a visit from Lyndon, who kissed her goodbye the morning after he had spent the night there, and said, "Mrs. Hopkins, I'm going to make a million dollars and be president."

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She quoted that to me. And I remarked to my mother, "Well, he'll probably do both."

G: He did. Let's talk about Senator [Alvin] Wirtz for a minute. We've talked about him before, but I was wondering if you could outline this conflict over the receivership of those Samuel Insull dams.

W: I don't know that I can answer your question. I can get maybe on the periphery of it. I was a young lawyer in Gonzales at the time. I took Wirtz' place in the senate, as you know, and began to know him from then on. He was beginning the building of the Colorado River dams, up and down the Colorado River, using Chicago money that was Insull money, operating through a Chicago broker named [G. W.] Peck, [Emery,] Peck and [Rockwood Development] Company I believe it was. I had known [R. W.] Morrison before, because when Central Power and Light, which was an Insull-owned company, bought the Gonzales power plant and electric lights and water system, Morrison came down and employed myself and my partner to do the legal work and the transfer of the title. He visited back and forth a few times. In fact, Martin Insull came down there one time himself. But Morrison was a rather vigorous sort of fellow, a little bit on the Roy Miller type. He had a lot of public relations goad to him in addition to his abilities otherwise.

I think in the earlier days, after the Colorado River Authority bill was enacted that Wirtz drew, but I sponsored and passed for him--that was after the Insull receivership, after the Insull empire blew up--Wirtz then turned to federal money in the PWA days, and of

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course, that's where Lyndon came in the picture later. But Morrison at that time [was] still with the Central Power Light and had acquired other properties besides Gonzales. He had operations in several other places and had acquired or was in the process of acquiring and controlling the San Antonio utility. Before I left Texas I think Wirtz was already in litigation with him or was shortly after that. It was after that. I think that the Colorado River Authority or somebody that Wirtz was representing was undertaking to acquire the San Antonio utility, wasn't he?

G: I don't know.

W: There was quite a bit of litigation, anyway, between Wirtz on the one side and his client, and Morrison on the other side. And I think it grew out of the ownership or control of the San Antonio public utility. Morrison was a fascinating character in many ways. As I say, I think in the early stages of the Colorado River Authority development he was on the periphery of support, but he sooner or later changed over.

G: He opposed Wirtz being named the receiver for those dams, didn't he?

W: Yes. Yes, he did. That was after we were up here because--well, now, let's see. The dams went into receivership earlier with the collapse of the Insull empire, through whom Wirtz had been getting money for the Guadalupe River development. Wirtz became a receiver for them, I've forgotten under what circumstances. While receiver he was undertaking, through the Colorado River Authority, to set up a legal framework upon which to get federal monies, and we finally

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succeeded. Morrison was in opposition to all of that. Morrison, I think again, was still alive and active in the background when he tried to get the legislature to investigate the operation of those dams in the incident that I have previously related to you. That was back in 1936 or 1937.

G: The dams didn't have the capacity to hold back water--

W: Well, it was one of their purposes. They were multi-purpose, not only for generation of electric power but for flood control.

G: But they weren't high enough, was that the case?

W: Now there were various and sundry arguments about the matter after one or two of them had been built and were in operation, and they had these floods. There came a public discussion of whether they had opened the floodgates under Wirtz' control or the Authority, or whether they had mismanaged them. At that time there was still a number of dams to be built and the utility interests generally were opposed to the whole operation, and looked to the wrecking of the Colorado River Authority in the operation of the dams if they could. They seized upon this one incident, as I recall, as a way of attacking it, claiming that they had mishandled the operation of the floodgates. They finally failed to make any of the allegations stick. I don't know whether any litigation grew out of it, but the legislative inquiry that they were fostering more or less died aborning.

Finally Wirtz wrote a report that I had occasion to see before it was filed, in which, as I remember, there was the statement that I had made into the record reflecting the Attorney

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General of the United States' attitude in the matter, and the position that the Department of Interior and Public Works Administrator, Harold Ickes, took is in there.

But going back to Morrison, it stemmed from Morrison's representing adversary utility interests. But the feeling between them arose early, to my recollection.

G: Would you recount your role in that hearing where you came down--

W: I came down as a representative of the Attorney General of the United States, as an observer, to the initial hearing of this committee at its first meeting. Because the threat was clear from those who were backing the committee that they were adverse to the operation of the Colorado River Authority, claiming mismanagement, and the Attorney General wanted to be sure that the interests of the United States were properly represented. After consulting with the Department of the Interior, Ickes, I was sent down there as an observer to see if there was any federal question that would arise, because there were federal monies--multiple millions of dollars--going into this project. And I appeared as his representative and made a statement to that committee to that effect.

G: You conferred first of all with Attorney General Homer Cummings, didn't you?

W: I did.

G: And Ickes, too, both of them?

W: My recollection is, yes. I had a couple of telephone calls with Ickes. That's my recollection of it.

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G: Who asked you to come down? Do you remember?

W: I think I talked to Lyndon and to Wirtz both about it. I'm sure I did. At that time the legislature was in session, I remember--I think it was on that occasion--after this committee thing was over--you remember how the former members returning to the legislature after they'd been out of office were asked as a matter of courtesy to make some sort of little appearance, and they called on me at the senate, naturally. I made some favorable comment of the Roosevelt Administration and whatnot. They kind of--[they] didn't laugh at me, but some of my former colleagues said, "You converted damn quickly after you got up here. Didn't you always have those kind of feelings?" Because I differed with Ickes sometimes when I was in the senate. (Laughter)

G: Let's move up to the period when LBJ was in Washington working for Congressman [Richard] Kleberg and you were down in Austin. Before we turned on the tape we were reconstructing the circumstances under which he was considering going back to Austin. You and Senator Wirtz had helped him get a job, or a job that would open up. Will you talk about this?

W: My recollection is--if I'm right in my timing--that it was in the early fall of 1934, at a time that Bill McCraw had been the successful Democratic nominee for state attorney general. I was a rather close friend of McCraw and had been his supporter and then one of his campaign managers. He felt grateful to me and told me when he was nominated, knowing he was going to take office the following spring, that whatever he could do for me in the attorney general's office he would

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do, which I knew was good politics and I knew he would have done it.

When Wirtz and I found out through Lyndon of his desires of wanting to come back to Texas, my recollection is that after talking to Wirtz about it, I talked to Bill McCraw and asked him if he would be able to give Lyndon a place in his office, Lyndon having recently, I think, gotten a degree at law--going to law school in Georgetown University. I don't know whether he had gotten admitted to the bar or not. But at any event, Bill said he would make a place for Lyndon Johnson, if I wanted him to, in his office when he took the office the next spring, the next January, whatever it was. Wirtz and I had various conversations with Lyndon about it, maybe some telephone conversations. It would be my recollection that that would be one of the things that he might have been counting on doing if he decided to leave Washington, that he was contemplating at the moment. But he was never quite certain about it in his own mind, as I recall. Of course it never materialized. But that would be my recollection.

G: I wonder if his marriage the following month or so changed his mind with regard to wanting to return to Texas?

W: Very much so, in my personal judgment. Yes.

G: Do you think that's what caused him to change his mind about coming back to Texas?

W: No, I think at the time Lyndon was just uncertain what he wanted to do. He was ambitious, and he was looking into every potential possibility for his advancement.

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G: How about something else I mentioned, going down and working with Roy Miller on some job in South Texas. Now, this was not a legal job but it was something that--

W: Well, Roy Miller had been very active in the intercoastal canal work for many, many years and had been the chief Washington representative of the Canal Association. He maintained an office in Houston and operated from there. It may well have been that in connection with some of Roy's representation there that something had been offered to Lyndon. Roy also was the chief lobbyist for the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company and it may have been conceivably there, but that would be pure guesswork. I don't know.

G: Did you ever hear that he was offered the job of president of Texas A & I College back then?

W: I think I knew it in later years, after the fact. I didn't know it at the time, I don't believe. That was the college down at Kingsville?

G: Right.

W: I may have known it, but I have no distinct recollection about it. I think it was basically after the fact. That was that agricultural [college.] I think Dick Kleberg helped and took a great interest--and the Kleberg family did--in that, and it may have been through the family connection that something was offered to him. But I have no knowledge of it.

G: I was wondering if you have any memories of him working in one of Maury Maverick's early campaigns?

W: You mean on the ground, as their supporter?

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G: Yes. Down there, at I think--

W: I don't mean to interrupt, but I'm trying to reconstruct it, time-wise.

G: It's either 1932 or 1933.

W: Maury was in the Congress before Lyndon came up here, wasn't he?

G: Yes. This was back when he was secretary to Kleberg. Maury was either running for congressman, or before that I guess he was tax collector.

W: Well, he was mayor, you know, at one time or another.

G: This was later though.

W: He became mayor after he was congressman.

G: This was either in 1932 or 1933.

W: Yes. Maury had been one of the heads of the reform ticket, the anti-machine ticket, in Bexar County, one of the firebrands under the direction of John Boyle, whose name you may or not have ever run across before. Lyndon, I'm sure, tried to help Maury in every way, may have made a special trip down there. He and Maury were very, very good friends, and a good deal alike in many respects I thought, not physically but in some other things. You asked me if I ever heard him take an interest in Maury's campaign, I'd say yes. I can't go into detail about it but I

G: Okay. I have a note here that says that he met with Ogden Mills at one time when he was working for Kleberg.

W: Ogden Mills?

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- G: Yes. Do you recall that? I guess it was just a meeting with regard to constituent, district interest.
- W: I don't recall with any specifics. I know that Lyndon, while with Dick, was privy to a great many meetings that Dick, as a congressman, had with other people. Kleberg himself was a figure outside of Congress because of his family and the King Ranch connections. He had a lot of high-placed friends in the financial world and so on. I know a lot of them would drop in at the Kleberg [office], and Lyndon met them any number of times. His field of experience with knowing people of public repute was very much broadening in those very early days. But you asked me about his specific meeting with Ogden Mills, I don't know.
- G: Also in my notes is an indication that he met Will Rogers once when he was up there, and also that he went to hear a speech by "Alfalfa Bill"[William Henry] Murray.
- W: I'm sure both of them are true, too, because Kleberg and Rogers, I think, had been friends before Kleberg came to the Congress. At least they knew each other, because again of the King Ranch connections. You asked me if I have any recollection of Lyndon meeting Will Rogers. I can't say that I did, but I wouldn't doubt it a bit that if he had an opportunity through Kleberg he would attend the Rogers meeting and the "Alfalfa Bill" political speech. Lyndon's father was a little bit of a populist himself, and Lyndon inherited some of it. And he admired that sort of thing.

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- G: How about Al Smith? Do you recall LBJ ever talking to you about having gone to hear Al Smith speak, either in Houston or in 1928 at the convention or in Oklahoma City during that campaign?
- W: That was in 1928, because I was a delegate to the national convention that nominated Smith through Roosevelt's presentation. I stumped Texas, all over South Texas, for Smith, through Wirtz and John Boyle that I mentioned. But I didn't know Lyndon in those days; I hadn't yet met him. I didn't meet Lyndon till 1930. I should think though that if it's said that Lyndon is quoted as saying that he attended the meeting, it would be true, because I imagine he would have admired Smith very much and his type.
- G: Did Wirtz support Smith in 1928?
- W: Yes, sir. He sure did.
- G: Do you have any particular recollections of his support?
- W: Well, I recall that I spent about a week in Austin with Wirtz and John Boyle coming down from San Antonio. We ran the South Texas headquarters for Smith, Smith and Robinson. Joe Robinson of Arkansas was running on the ticket with him, you remember, as vice president. We were doing our best through every connection we had to see him carry Texas. It rained like the devil on election day all over Southwest Texas. We felt that that was part of the margin of his loss of Texas, because that would have been his stronghold as against dry communities like Dallas or Waco. Boyle was a Catholic. I wasn't, Wirtz wasn't. Of course Smith was. There were these early settlements all over South Texas; there were some Catholic trends there.

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G: There was a feeling that if it had not rained that Smith would have done better?

W: Yes, sir. We thought we would carry Texas. I've forgotten, it wasn't too big a margin we lost it by. I spent the last ten dollars I had in the world, almost. As a little, young, shave-tail lawyer I had a dry goods friend of mine in Gonzales send it off to St. Louis to buy a brown derby. And I wore that brown derby when I made my speeches for Smith all over that area. I guess I made twenty speeches.

G: How about Wirtz? Did he [campaign?]

W: Yes. He was very active. He was helping to run the headquarters there.

G: Where were the headquarters?

W: In Austin. I think in the Stephen F. Austin Hotel [is] my recollection. But it was in Austin.

G: Did Wirtz ever characterize Al Smith or explain why he was supporting Smith?

W: I can't remember, any more than if you'd asked somebody why I supported him, except we both admired him as a public figure, thought he was courageous in his stand on Prohibition, in favor of repeal. I thought his opposition because of his religion was politically wrong and not morally right. We thought he was an outstanding statesman as governor of New York. We supported him just generally because we liked him; we liked his attitude. Wirtz may have had some other reason, but I don't recall any. At that time I don't think either one

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of us had ever met Smith. That was in 1928, again. That's nearly fifty years ago.

But Lyndon would have liked the rough--not the rough, but the rugged, virulent type of public figure like Will Rogers, in or out of politics, or Smith in politics, or an "Alfalfa Bill" Murray as a populist governor of Oklahoma. He would have reacted with interest to any public figure like that, I'm sure.

(Interruption)

G: [Let's] talk about that.

W: Yes, I'm sure he did because Lyndon talked to me about it any number of times. I remember sitting with him [in] several night sessions over a drink and just a little general confab talking about it. He of course had talked to Wirtz. I don't recall exactly whether Wirtz just said, "Do whatever you want to," but I'm under the impression Wirtz didn't look with favor upon it, and I know I didn't. I counseled Lyndon not to take it. I told Lyndon in those days it would be just putting him off on a shelf way up in Maine, and he'd never have the platform or the opportunity for recognition. Although I think he was flattered by it at first.

G: What was he doing then? What position was he in at the time?

W: Well, tell me the year.

G: Well, I'm trying to find out the year.

W: I know it was after I was up here.

G: That must have been while he was NYA director, right, or later when he was congressman?

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W: Seemed to me like he was congressman.

G: So he was back up in Washington?

W: That's my recollection, because I talked to him in Washington several times, and I know that wouldn't have been exactly feasible if he'd been NYA director. No, I think it was after he was congressman, [that] is my recollection.

G: Do you remember when Blanco County was moved from Kleberg's district to [James P.] Buchanan's?

W: As Will Rogers would say, "It's kind of odd you'd ask me that." Yes, I do, because I was in the senate at the time and promoted that change, and saw to it in the gerrymandering that went on in the congressional redistricting in the legislature, that it was changed and just so as to give Kleberg some benefits. I mean Kleberg had had the benefit of it, as I recall now. I purposely--well, I authored the bill and I think those were the reasons for it.

G: Why did you want it moved from one district to another?

W: Well, as I recall, [Joseph J.] Mansfield's district was up for revision at the same time. Gonzales County was in Mansfield's district and I was taking it out and wanting to put it into Kleberg's district, which I did. In the gerrymandering, Blanco County, that had been originally in the Ninth Congressional District that Kleberg was elected [from], was shifted out of that district and was placed in Buchanan's district. Then when Buchanan died in later years, it just so happened that because of that shift that I had negotiated--not knowing that it would ever be of real significance to Lyndon as

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a politician, but I had been the author of it anyway. It so happened that when the time came and Buchanan died, well, Lyndon was living in the right county at the right place and at the right time. Pure circumstance. If we hadn't gerrymandered it around that way without being able to foresee that, the boy might not have had a chance to run, probably couldn't have, because he was living in Travis County as NYA director, but he was a citizen and resident legally in Blanco County. Yes, Lyndon and I used to laugh about that in later years.

G: Was the purpose of moving it out of Kleberg's district because it had gone against Kleberg?

W: No. No. As I recall, I wanted Gonzales County put in Kleberg's district because when he originally ran it was not in his district, it was in Joe Mansfield's district. I was trying to take care of Joe Mansfield, too, and I talked to him any number of times as to whether he would object if I took Gonzales County out and gave it to Kleberg. No, he didn't. In the same bill, in the gerrymandering and the trading that a member of the senate had to make with other voting members, for some reason or another we took Blanco County out and gave it over to Buchanan. I can't tell you any precise reasons except it was part of the gerrymandering process. I was in charge of it because it was in my senatorial district. I could speak for Gonzales County and for Blanco County, too. As I repeat, I wanted Gonzales County put in Kleberg's district, which was done. In hindsight, it was a very lucky, fortunate thing.

G: That's fascinating. You really enabled him to run.

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W: Well, in that sense, yes, I guess. (Laughter) Of course I had something to do with his coming up here, and if he hadn't come up here he never would have run, I don't assume. In other words, the springboard was his coming with Kleberg to Washington. That was the springboard and the beginning, the genesis, of Lyndon's political career.

(Interruption)

G: That's a good story. Let's get this on tape.

W: When Kleberg was running for re-election--

(Interruption)

Well, I'll try to make it as brief as I can so as not to--

G: No, elaborate.

W: When Kleberg was running for re-election, he had been elected in a special election for a part term, and during the campaign that ensued, a former World War veteran--whose name slips me but who was kind of a wild-eyed campaigner in the pay of Dick's opponent--had come into Nueces County in and around Corpus. [He] was apparently having some effect, Dick's friends thought, adversely to Dick, because the men who were undertaking to answer him were doing it in a more or less very dignified way. He was making such wild-eyed statements that it was becoming embarrassing to Dick, [statements] about Dick's position on the soldier bonus and a few other things, votes that Dick had cast in the Congress.

Lyndon asked me to come down [and] asked me if I'd mind just taking the gloves off against this fellow. I told him that I would,

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so they arranged a big political rally in Corpus on a given day and I went down there. Lyndon and Dick and Jim Doughty and Roy Miller, and one or two other lawyer friends of Dick's, and some of Dick's family, took me out to this meeting and I was introduced. This fellow made his usual wild-eyed statements. I countered them, as I remember, in two ways. First, I just let my hair down a little bit and was just as much of a rabble-rouser as he was. Lyndon had gotten photo-static copies of Dick's votes from the clerk of the House, showing exactly how he had voted on all these issues, including the soldier bonus, that this man was defaming him about. On that basis I just tore into him, as I thought it was necessary to overcome the adverse effect he was having as a rabble-rouser. I remember one thing. They reminded me of it in later years--let me see how I put it--I said, "I believe your mind is red, your heart is black, and your liver is yellow, and I think the man for whom you speak conforms to the same color scheme." I went on and just attacked him like he'd been Well, anyway, it was a successful political meeting.

Now, at that time, I think that Dick had some rather lukewarm supporters who may have been influenced by this sort of demagogic political campaigning. I know Lyndon had some arguments with some of the people that he thought before had been friends of Kleberg. Now whether he had an argument over that with a man named Babe Kenedy [?], I don't know. But I know that there was that sequence of events in there in which Lyndon was defending Dick just like I was, but in private arguments with people. Whiteside [?] may have written a

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letter later on referring to an argument that Lyndon had had with Kenedy in that period of time, and it may have had something to do with that. I really don't know. But I felt so friendly to Dick in so many, many ways, politically and personally, that I was pleased to do anything that I could to be helpful.

G: I get the impression that LBJ was able to persuade him to vote for some relatively liberal measures that he might not have otherwise.

W: I think that's correct, because Dick's background of a man of wealth and stature, and not having any political experience at all, and Lyndon having a good political mind, I wouldn't doubt but that he would have an influence on Dick in some of his votes.

G: Let's bring him to Washington again, and while we've got you hooked up again Mrs. Hopkins, talk about what sort of association you had with the Johnsons when they were back up here. He was a congressman then.

A: Well, our associations really began when he was working for Kleberg in the beginning, isn't it, up here? We didn't see much of him

W: No, honey.

A: I can't remember.

G: When he came up for Congress, I think the first night he was here after [he was] elected he went out with you, didn't he?

W: He did. He spent the night with Alice and me out at our little house in Foxhall Village.

A: Foxhall Village. Yes, I remember now.

W: That was when he was elected to Congress.

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A: To Congress.

W: But he was still--what year was he elected to Congress, in 1938?

G: 1937.

W: 1937.

G: And he flew up. This was the situation where he rode the train with President Roosevelt back part way, and then took a plane and flew up the rest of the way and was going to be sworn in the next day. Do you remember that?

W: You remember him spending a night at our house in Foxhall Village. Lady Bird was not with him.

A: No [she wasn't.]

G: What do you remember about that evening?

A: We just sat around and talked, as I remember. I happened to have a good cook at that time, and we had dinner and he slept there that night. Just kind of reminisced, old times and things like that.

W: Yes. He was a great one, as Alice says, for reminiscing.

A: He used to say to me that I never forgot anything and I talked too much, and with that, every now and then he'd give me a little china horse and say, "That's to remind you to keep quiet while I'm talking," because I was great at interrupting him. He was teasing.

W: Oh, he took a lot of kidding in later years.

A: Oh, yes, he was kidding me all the time.

W: Alice built up a whole collection of little china horses, from Lyndon. (Laughter)

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A: I still have them. He was a great kidder really. When he relaxed and all, he'd just have fun. He didn't think about anything else. We used to argue, friendly you know, about everything that was going on, he and I did.

W: We saw Lady Bird and Lyndon socially after we came up here in 1936, before he was elected to Congress, while he was still with Kleberg's office.

A: Yes, that's when I heard--

W: But the same relationship, as Alice was saying, continued.

A: Because I remember lending this man a book on etiquette.

W: You mean L. E.? [Luther E. Jones, Jr.]

A: L. E., L. E. called me up. It was something on protocol or something he didn't know [about]. I said, "I don't know either because I haven't been here long enough, but I have a book that will tell us everything." So they kept it down there for about two years, I think, learning all the ins and outs of society in Washington, what have you.

But we used to go out almost every weekend together.

G: Where would you go?

A: Oh, my heavens. I remember one of our favorites was an Italian restaurant over there, used to be across from the Mayflower Hotel.

W: Yes, right across De Salles Street.

A: Yes, we loved Italian food.

W: Yes, I say across De Salles Street.

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A: We'd go there often and eat Saturday night supper, the four of us. And we often had another couple who were good friends of ours and not in politics. That was Cecile Whittaker and her husband, Jack Whittaker. They were not in politics but old time friends through us. They were often with us. We just had a real nice, happy time.

W: Alice, you remember you and Lyndon, Lady Bird and I used to picnic down in Skyline Drive sometime on occasion, and in Rock Creek Park at different times.

A: Yes. We spent a lot of weekends together because he was not congressman yet, at that time, and we were new in Washington, and we had time on our hands on weekends. We took some nice drives and picnics, as Welly said.

G: Did you ever go out to Charles Marsh's place in Virginia?

W: We visited there occasionally.

G: I'm making a note of that, the Italian restaurant and having picnics on Rock--

W: Down at Rock Creek Park. At that time, there wasn't too much traffic through the park and there were beautiful spots, places up and down, and rather secluded. Down the Skyline Drive in the Blue Ridge Mountains, we would drive down there very often to the picnic grounds. That, as you may recall, had been developed in the early days of the Roosevelt Administration through the Tree Army Camp they called them, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and was maintained by PWA monies. Lyndon had taken an interest, while he was with Dick, in that sort of legislation, and Dick had supported it.

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A: Then after he was in the Congress they lived out on Connecticut Avenue. I've forgotten that big apartment house.

W: Yes.

A: The traffic was bad and Lady Bird hated to drive down about four-thirty or five to the Capitol. We lived, at that time, in a small apartment right there in the edge of Georgetown, not in it, and they used to meet there. Lyndon would come home with Welly in his car to our place, and she would come there and pick him up. We had lots of fun that way, and we would always have a little visit for an hour.

W: The Kennedy-Warren was where they were living, wasn't it?

A: Yes.

G: Did he talk much about President Roosevelt and his enthusiasm for the New Deal?

A: He was always a great admirer of Roosevelt's. He didn't just sit down and have a conversation about it, but every indication, everything that he said about it, was most complimentary. He was enthusiastic about him in anything he said about him.

G: Did he ever talk about meeting with President Roosevelt while he was congressman?

A: Not to me. He may have to Welly. Welly, did he ever talk to you about meeting--?

W: Oh, I can't recall a specific conversation, but I do know that Lyndon was always flattered when he was asked to come to the White House, which he was at a very early age, so to speak. But I don't think he

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went to the White House until after he was a congressman. He may have been in and around the White House set-up, because of his attempts to help Wirtz in the Colorado River Authority, through Tommy Corcoran and Abe Fortas and all the people that had to do with PWA public works. He and Tom Corcoran became friends very early. To that extent he was in and around the periphery of the White House even as a youngster, even before he became a congressman.

G: Did you see him when he was in uniform?

A: Yes, I saw him. Do you mean in his naval uniform?

G: Commander.

A: I saw him one time. He was very handsome in it. I have several pictures of him. He used to send Welly and me pictures from the coast. I think twice he did.

W: When he first came back he was still in uniform and came out to our house where we lived in Alexandria.

G: I get the impression from talking to a number of people that he was very concerned about the war in the Pacific at that point after coming back.

W: He was. He had seen the Zeros, Japanese airplanes, that were out-doing us completely as he told it to us, and he'd seen a lot of that. He was much disturbed as a young congressman, seeing that sort of thing, as to our abilities to combat it. He was all gung ho to do whatever was necessary to get this government going in its war effort.

He came to see us the afternoon before he left Washington to go into the [navy.]

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G: Oh, did he? What did he say, do you recall?

W: He said he was going out with Admiral [Richard] Ghormley that night. And he did fly out with Admiral Ghormley that night. He was all gung ho then, ready to go.

A: I must say to you that Lady Bird and I were not the talkers when the four of us [were] together. These two men did most of the talking. That's the reason Lyndon would say to me, "Don't talk when I'm talking; you talk too much." Because I'm very volatile myself. We'd laugh about it and he would say, "I'm going to give you a horse if you won't talk." But they talked between themselves a great deal, and Lady Bird and I would talk about household things and what was in the market and what was going that way.

G: She ran the office when he was gone to the coast?

W: Yes, I'm sure. Yes, she actually took charge of it for him, that's right. We didn't go up there very often in those days, didn't have occasion to. I don't recall being up there but very seldom when Lady Bird was running it during the war, because we were busy, too, in other things.

G: Sure. I was just wondering if you saw much of her during the time that he was gone.

A: No, we didn't.

W: No. They had that house out off of Linnean Avenue, out in Washington at that time, right close to where J. Edgar Hoover lived, you remember, where George Shea lived. No, we didn't see too much of Lady Bird.

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A: We had moved to Alexandria then.

W: Yes, we had moved.

A: She was on the other end. We talked on the telephone.

W: Yes, we went to Alexandria in 1940, and he went to war in 1941.

A: Yes, so we really didn't see one another very much. She was busy and we were busy.

W: Representing John Lewis in those days, we had our problems, too, and I was a busy man.

G: I bet you did.

Well, is there anything else you want to add today?

W: No, some of these days, if Alice will help me, I'm going to go down to our shed, as I call it, and unload a couple of old trunks we have down there that I know have some considerable material of different kinds in it. How much of it will pertain to Lyndon and how much of mine, I really don't know, but I'm sure there's a little bit of both. If I ever get into that, Harry Middleton has asked me one time or another if I'd let him know and I told him I would.

G: Well, we'd be delighted to copy it or have it.

W: I don't know what's there. I'd have to get up enough nerve someday to go through all of it.

A: I know we were delighted when Lady Bird had their first baby. We were all excited to death. We had a little girl then. Their daughter is younger, but, oh my.

W: Yes. Our daughter is just a few months older than Lynda Bird.

A: I would say a year or so older than--

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W: Older than Lynda Bird?

A: --the oldest daughter, yes. Lynda Bird was about two and a half.

I took my daughter out to see her and with us went her cousin. Lynda Bird took a dislike to the two girls, [she was] just a baby, and she bit my daughter on the hand. Kennon, my daughter, never got over it. Lynda Bird always laughs about it. She says, "I can't remember it, but I know I must have. I was a real biter when I was little."

G: Well, I certainly do thank you.

W: Well, you're welcome.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview IV]

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Date

Alice Hopkins
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Date

Robert M. Worne
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