

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT M. JACKSON, EDITOR, CORPUS CHRISTI CALLER- TIMES. DONE
BY ERIC F. GOLDMAN IN MR. JACKSON'S OFFICE, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS , April 5, 1965.

- G: Mr. Jackson has been discussing the period with the President in Washington, beginning in December 1931 and running until the President left Washington to take over the NYA job. He has told about their basement apartment, or rather, basement set of rooms, in the Dodge Hotel in Washington on E Street, off the Capitol Plaza. Would you correct me if I make any mistakes? They were little, cell-like rooms. Mr. Jackson paid \$30 a month for his. The Johnson room was a little bit larger and the President had many visitors. The hotel had been a "woman only" hotel. Living there and very close in relationship were Mr. Jackson, Arthur Perry and the President. They spent all their waking hours together except for their hours at work. At that time, Arthur Perry was secretary to Senator Connally, Mr. Jackson was secretary to Congressman R. E. Thomason. Am I correct?
- J: Yes, but I was not his secretary. I was a clerk in his office.
- G: And the President was aide to Congressman Kleberg. Now I had just asked if the President had talked about his ambitions and Mr. Jackson -- would you pick up from there?
- J: My answer is that, I do not recall ever hearing him express a specific ambition in regard to his long-range future. We took it for granted that he was going to make a career of politics. He indicated that many, many times in conversation but I never recall his ever saying he wanted to be President or Senator or Governor or any other specific office.
- G: One thing that has been commented upon is that, although the President grew up in the thick of Texas politics, he never had a role in Texas politics as such. Do you think this was merely an accident?

J: That's not quite accurate, Doctor. He never held office in Texas politics but as a very young man, I believe even before he could vote, he had participated in Texas political campaigns, and he had made political speeches.

G: For his father and other people?

J: Yes, and for other people.

G: I meant there was no running for state office.

J: Yes, but he managed the campaign of a successful candidate to the Texas State Senate before he came to Washington and of course he was very young when he came to Washington.

G: Would you tell us about that campaign?

J: All I know about it is what he told me. The campaign occurred in either 1928 or 1930.

G: It was a candidate for State Senator?

J: Yes, I'm embarrassed I can't remember his name because I knew it as well as I know my own. At any rate, the President organized work -- did a great deal to carry the election, also participated in several others -- I'm sure in other campaigns -- both when he was in college and right after. But as you say, he never sought or held state office.

G: How did he come to seek the post in Congress?

J: The story, I believe, is that the late Roy Miller, a man who was at one time the publisher of this newspaper and who was the representative in Washington for the Port of Corpus Christi, the Intercoastal Canal Association and a number of other things, had been active as a legislative representative in Austin and Washington. He was a great friend of the President's father and a great admirer of the President. The President was then teaching debating in a Houston High School. Mr. Kleberg was elected in a special election to fill the vacancy by death of the only Republican we had in

Congress in those days, Representative Wurzbach. And a great deal of interest was centered on the election because it appeared that the Democrats could organize the House but only by one vote or so. It turned out that that was the way it was; Mr. Garner was elected. At any rate, Mr. Miller ran Mr. Kleberg's campaign for Congress. After Mr. Kleberg was elected, Mr. Miller recommended to him that he appoint Lyndon Johnson as his secretary. Mr. Miller called the President who was then in Houston and arranged it over the phone. It was my understanding that the President had never seen Mr. Kleberg or vice versa until after he was appointed as his secretary. Now, that story may not be entirely accurate. Ever since the President has become President, it's surprising how many people have told me that they got him his first job in Washington. It was just one of those things.

G: How did you and the President come to meet?

J: That's the best story that I know. Mrs. Garner gave me a ticket to the House on the day that Mr. Garner was going to be elected Speaker. It was a big ceremonial occasion, the convening of the 72nd Congress. I'd been in Washington about a week. I thought I knew everything about Congress and Washington and everything else. I went to the Speaker's box in the House of Representatives and this long, tall young man, came in and sat about two seats behind me and started introducing himself to everybody there and shaking hands with them. A great many of them were Texans and he introduced himself to me. He reached over a whole row of seats and shook hands with me and when I told him who I was, he wanted to know when I got there and where I was living and everything else. I remember, it embarrassed me. I was so countrified myself, and to have someone booming out there, asking me questions about where I lived and everything, embarrassed me. I told him I was living in this \$30 a month room, Arthur

Perry had told me about in the Dodge Hotel. He wanted to know if there was a vacancy there. He said, I'll move there. Started right off like that. Turned out Mrs. Garner had given him a ticket too. Of course, she had given them to the new young employees.

G: What part of Texas do you come from?

J: I lived in San Angelo at that time.

G: This is where you grew up?

J: No, I grew up out in El Paso. But I was working on the San Angelo paper and Thomason was elected to Congress and he wanted me to go up there with him for a short time. I took what I thought was a leave of absence for one session of Congress but as it turned out, I stayed in Washington for a few years. At any rate, that's where I first met him and from then on I was with him pretty continuously.

G: We now have him living in the Dodge Hotel. Could you tell us what life was like in those days for you young fellows? Obviously you worked long hours.

J: Yes, we did, we devoted practically all of our time to Congress and politics -- things of that sort. We didn't have much social life except something in connection with the Hill or something of that kind. We talked all the time and of course the President talked the most. He talked continuously and we learned a lot from him. I don't recall too many times having breakfast with him -- we did on some occasions. We were in the House Office Building all day and always the three of us ate dinner together.

G: In one of the rooms?

J: No, no, we generally ate at that little restaurant along Constitution Avenue, right over across the street from the Post Office Building in Washington. The building is still there, I think. We used to go over there and sit and have all kinds of arguments. Then we would either go back up to the Capitol or we would attend some kind of meeting or something that was going on. At night we frequently were in our offices. I didn't work half as much overtime as the President did. He would frequently go back up to Congressman Kleberg's office and work until 10 or 11 o'clock at night and come back to the hotel and wake me up and we would sit around and talk for hours.

G: What time did he used to get up in the morning?

J: He got up early. I couldn't recall the hour, but he was an early riser. His energy -- it is almost impossible to exaggerate. He was just a bundle of nervous energy -- he was moving, going all the time. He would never rest or sleep or anything at all. Perry and I loved to go to shows but the President thought that any kind of show or picture was a complete waste of time.

He would go only under protest and he would start arguing and talking sometimes with us. Very, very frequently we would have dinner and he would go back to his office and Perry and I would go to the movies. Then by the time we got back to the hotel, why he would come in -- he would be through working -- he would come on in an talk to us.

G: Mr. Jackson, other people have said that the President as the aide to Congressman Kleberg, for all practical purposes was the Congressman. The President was very soon running that office. Is that your impression?

J: Very much so. With all due respect to the Congressman, all of the work which pertained to the District -- the routine work of carrying it on -- was carried on by the President. The Congressman quickly thought he would

do it and so he did it -- he just took over. One thing about Congressman Kleberg is that he failed to see to it that veterans -- perhaps either veterans of the Confederacy or veterans of the Mexican War--received pensions. No it wasn't a Confederate pension, although some of the old men that got it were Confederate veterans. It was veterans of the Indian War. I am not too sure whether they were Texas Rangers that were engaged in skirmishes with Indians in the frontier.

G: And getting this was wholly the President's doing?

J: Completely his doing -- he worked the thing out and got some legislation introduced. Now then, to understand how we knew each other and how these things went along, you must realize that in those days, there was only one House Office Building -- the so-called new House Building was opened after, I believe, work was done on the Senate. In the period that I am talking about there was only one House Office Building. Congressmen, that is, those who weren't Chairman of Committees, had only one room. It so happened that quite a few of the Texas delegation had offices very close to each other. So, therefore, we saw Congress members and talked to them and we knew them, I think, considerably better than some of the clerks do now.

And it is quite an interesting thing -- in a very short time, the President was meeting, talking with those members of Congress on the basis -- as if he were a Congressman. I know he would come in to see my boss and sit and talk to him and maybe some one or two other Texas House Members would come in and they would sit there and talk about legislation just as if he were a member of Congress himself. And after all he was only what? -- about 27 at that time.

G: Mr. Jackson, do you remember any other things that the President did like this Indian War legislation?

J: No, I can't specifically. There were a number of private bills I remember that he got quite stirred up about and he would get the bill drafted and go around and talk to the Chairman of the Committee about whatever it was. He would go downtown and work the matter out of getting the report out to the Department and handle the whole thing himself. But I can't remember any other general legislation. Although I am inclined to believe there were some.

G: Can you remember any of the issues he was particularly concerned with?

J: Well, of course, very quickly after I met him, the campaign of 1932 started and he was just terrifically stirred up about the Roosevelt campaign and President Roosevelt. Radios were not very common then. But Arthur Perry had a little Chev c-op with a radio in it -- car radios were especially unusual. Every time the President -- not the President then but the candidate, Roosevelt -- talked and it was broadcast, we would get in this little coop and drive around. We would get the reception better down around Haines Point. We would drive around and around there listening to the speech and he was very enthusiastic about listening to any kind of political talk.

G: You spoke of these discussions that he would have with you. In these discussions, do you recall whether the President expressed any particular philosophy of government or of politics like what was later called New Dealism?

J: No, I actually don't think he did. I used to joke with him sometimes and accuse him of being more conservative than I was. And I thought of myself as sort of moderate, middle-of-the-road, almost certainly not ultra-liberal. I remember jokingly telling him that he was a Republican.

I said he talked like a Republican or something like that. But I think it was a good deal -- in all fairness -- I think it was a good deal setting up an argument. Just like in the debates, you know, you would choose sides and whatever side you were on, you would talk about that.

One thing that I do remember. This is possibly after Mr. Roosevelt's election, but during that time a lot of demagogues of one kind or another were always coming to Washington and Mr. Johnson always wanted to hear them and see them. He was quite interested in those people. I remember once Alfalfa Bill Murray of Oklahoma came up there and he couldn't get a hall to talk in so he talked in some small church building way over in Southeast Washington somewhere. Mr. Johnson wanted to go. Perry and I didn't want to go so we had a big argument and finally Mr. Johnson and I got on a street car, I think, and we finally found the place and went out there to hear Alfalfa Murray. He just wasn't.

G: Why was he so interested in this?

J: Because he was interested in anybody who was interested in politics. He looked on him as a professor would look on a specimen under a microscope. He didn't think anything especially of Alfalfa Bill Murray. That one just popped into my mind because I remember how much difficulty we had in finding the hall where he was speaking. The point was that anything, anything like that he loved to go to -- hearings before either the Senate or the House Committees too, anything going on and he could get away from his office, why he would be down at the door waiting. Any time there was a hearing at night or a night session, he was always there. I am sure I could take an oath that as long as he worked in Congress there was never a night session of Congress that he wasn't right there listening.

- G: You said that you had very little social life, not much going out with girls?
- J: That's right. We used to go to Texas Club dances and things like that and he dated various girls around but he never had any real serious or steady girl.
- G: You don't remember any hobbies?
- J: He had absolutely no hobbies. He never had any hobby period.
- G: Reading would be confined to Congressional documents, etc?
- J: That's right. I never saw him reading a popular magazine or anything like that at all. He was a great newspaper reader. He bought every issue of the paper and of course at that time there were quite a few dailies in Washington and he would buy each latest edition and he read them very, very rapidly. He could read as fast then as he can now. I have always been impressed with his speed reading.
- G: About broad political attitudes. On something specifically like the big battle over whether the Federal Government should give money for relief -- and this was before FDR was elected -- your recollection is a good deal hesitant?
- J: Yes, I can't recall specifically.
- G: Then when FDR comes in and the "100 days" start, he is all for that?
- J: Oh, my, yes. He was enthusiastic about it.
- G: And this enthusiasm for FDR. Was it enthusiasm for the man, or for his policies, or both?
- J: I would say for the man and for the way he got his policies through.
- G: How about the policies themselves?
- J: I don't recall. Yes, I do too, he was quite strong for some of them.

G: You don't recall any that he was against, do you?

J: No, sir, I don't.

G: On this question of

J: Excuse me. I remember that we used to argue prohibition a lot.

G: You were for it and he was against it?

J: Well, I don't know what I was but the Congressman that I worked for was not very strong for repeal and, as you recall, there was a three-way split. You were for repeal, or retention or submission. Some of these Congressmen who were a little hesitant and a little timid were saying, I don't say that we ought to repeal the 18th Amendment but we ought to let the people vote on it. That was called submission. I remember arguing with the President several times about that. I think he thought that was rather ... well, I don't know what he thought about it but I know he was for repeal. He thought it was forthright and courageous to meet it as Roosevelt wanted to meet it, head on. And that was, as I recall, his thinking on it.

G: During this period, do you recall any other political heroes that he had in addition to FDR?

J: No, I can't especially.

G: Did he know Sam Rayburn yet?

J: Oh, yes, yes. I remember he told me that Mr. Rayburn knew his father. He knew everyone of the Texas Congressmen before he had been in Washington 2 days. Actually I think there were several of them who had served in the Texas Legislature with his father. My old boss had served there with him.

G: Was he particularly close to Rayburn yet?

J: No, he wasn't especially close to him. I think he was sort of getting more and more that way all the time. Every single one of the Texas Congressmen knew him and most of them knew him quite well .

G: Do you have any idea what they thought of him?

J: Oh yes, they thought a lot of him. They used to talk about him -- how capable and smart he was and they predicted that he would be a Congressman himself. I'll tell you a curious thing. I remember one time Martin Dies sitting in Thomason's office and they got to talking about Lyndon Johnson and Dies was talking about what an outstanding person he was and predicting that he would be a member of Congress himself before long and all that sort of thing.

G: This period leads to the NYA offer. Do you know how he got that?

J: I don't think he got the offer. I think he applied for the job. He told us -- this is an honest effort to recall but it is after a real long time -- as I recall it, he told us, Arthur Perry and me, that he wanted to go back to Texas. He thought that the way to get ahead was to get your roots in Texas. He was continuously talking about this. He wanted to get back to the state. At that time there was about the biggest scramble and fight on that you can imagine for political patronage jobs. It is hard now for anybody to imagine how bad it was. The depression was so grave. People of today and even prior to that time would never even consider a political job but then they were just fighting and scrambling for them. At that time I was working over in Senator Connally's office. 90% of the business in his office was patronage and that might be an understatement. We devoted about all of our time and all of the correspondence to it. The legislative end was just completely overshadowed by this wild scramble for federal jobs, from politicians and from people who were normally expected to seek that sort and professional and business people who were ruined from the depression.

So we would always be talking about that and one of our prime topics of conversation was who is going to get the postmastership at this place, that or the other -- and Lyndon of course was quite interested.

The Texas Congressmen had the appointment of the postmasterships. The two Senators -- Senator Connally and Senator Morris Shepherd -- had the appointment of most of the others.

As I recall, he made it very clear that he was seeking a job, he would like to go back to Texas. He wasn't very specific about it, he just was looking the thing over. The first time I ever heard of the NYA opening was sitting in Perry's car in front of the hotel one night after we had driven up there and Perry told us that there was going to be an appointment of a state head of the NYA. Lyndon immediately wanted to know if Arthur knew who was seeking it. There was some young fellow who had come up to Washington seeking the job. The questions were, was Senator Connally committed to him or how was it going to be handled? We discussed the thing at that time. I never did know from there on how he did go about getting the job.

I think he spoke to Mr. Rayburn about it, I think he spoke to Mr. Connally, and perhaps Senator Shepherd, and I think maybe... But I don't think anybody sought him out and said, "Look, would you be interested in taking this job." I think he made it clear that he was interested in the position. Those things moved fast in those days. From the time when we first heard that there was going to be a State Director of the NYA until he was appointed and left Washington -- oh, it was a matter of just days.

G: Do you know Professor Robert Montgomery of the University of Texas?

J: Yes.

G: It is his recollection about the NYA job that Aubrey Williams became the strong supporter of -- of course Williams was the National Director ...

J: Yes.

G: Of the President.

J: It is my impression that it went through the regular political channels. Lyndon Johnson later became a very close friend and of course a very trusted assistant of Aubrey Williams. But I think it was after he got the job and did such an outstanding and spectacular job in Texas that he became closer to Williams. I may be completely wrong but I believe that his appointment stemmed from Capitol Hill.

Professor Montgomery also recalls another young man in the picture. He wasn't sure of this but he thought that the other young man was far into the job that actually there was a news release that he had received it.

I don't believe that the news release was that he had received it, in the sense that NYA had formally put out a press release. But it was published that he was going to be named -- you know how those things come out -- before the President got it. The fellow came from Beaumont or Port Arthur or somewhere over there. He is the one that was in the back of my mind. He came up to Washington haunting the Senate Office Building corridors trying to get Senator Connally and Senator Shepherd to do something about his getting the job.

G: Did the President, in your recollection, talk about why he was particularly interested in this NYA job? This job became so important in his life and such a turning point in so many ways -- I wonder whether he saw any of that before he actually sought the job?

J: Yes, he did. That was why he got so excited about it that night. The idea of doing something with young people hit at his heart.

G: This grew out of his experience of being a teacher?

J: Yes.

G: Did he express -- what showed up so much in the job itself -- a great deal of sympathy with people in trouble?

J: I don't recall his talking about that in Washington. After he got the job, Arthur Perry quit Senator Connally for awhile -- he subsequently went back however -- and I became Senator Connally's aide. I remember in the summer of 1934, I came to Texas and Senator Connally had a very hard campaign for re-election. After the campaign, I went down to Senator Connally's home in Marlan and operated his office there and I saw a great deal of the President, who was living in nearby Austin. I remember going down to visit him and I remember his coming up to Marlan to visit me. At that time he was right at the height of this job. He had enormous enthusiasm and he wouldn't talk about anything else. You would ask him about the weather and he would start talking about projects.

G: Do you recall any of the NYA projects that he was particularly enthusiastic about?

J: The road-side parks. That was his favorite. He thought they were perfectly wonderful. And incidentally, I do too. I think they are one of the greatest contributions he ever made to the State.

G: One other that has been mentioned that he was especially proud of -- the cooperative housing enterprises that were set up in some of the colleges. Do you recall these?

J: No, I don't.

G: Are there any others that you do recall?

J: No. He was proud of the whole thing. He was really proud -- just like a father of children -- of the whole operation. He worked day and night around the clock on the job.

G: Did you see him much during the NYA period?

J: No, not a whole lot, but I saw him a number of times. I visited him down in Austin and, as I said, he came to Marlan and I remember making a couple of trips around the State with him on various things.

G: In his co-versations, did he speak of the political opportunities that this NYA job was opening up?

J: No.

G: He talked more about the projects?

J: He wanted to make it the best in the country. He wanted to attract a lot of attention with it. He wasn't overly modest about it. But I never heard him say that he was going to use it. But he was very proud of the possibilities of it.

G: Were you ever in his NYA office?

J: You mean, worked there?

G: No. Did you ever visit him?

J: Oh, yes.

G: Can you tell us what it looked like?

J: All I can remember is that I had the impression of its being crowded and cluttered and everybody worked so hard.

I remember going out to his house one night. That's when he lived in that duplex in Austin and he had all of his key people gathered -- it must have been on some kind of a terrace. I told him later he looked like he was leaning on the balcony addressing his troops. He didn't

particularly like that -- but he had them all out at the house. Mrs. Johnson was serving them some kind of refreshment. He was giving them quite a pep talk.

G: Did Mrs. Johnson help him a lot in the NYA period?

J: I don't know. I wasn't around him enough to know. But I remember that night she was serving some kind of refreshment.

G: The key man during the NYA period -- was it Jessie Kellam?

J: I believe so. There were a number of them. I believe he was one of the ones I met. I would hesitate to say that he was the key man.

G: Could I drop back to the "Little Congress" election? You were close to him during that period?

J: I remember that very, very well.

G: Can you tell us the whole story of the "Little Congress" election?

J: The point, as I recall, was that he went to the Little Congress and he was quite intrigued with it. He decided he wanted to be Speaker and so he organized the thing and got himself elected Speaker at the next meeting. This was quite unheard of. The organization was somewhat like the old Congress. They were heavy on seniority. And they had the idea that here was some young whipper-snapper that had only attended two meetings -- I think he only attended two meetings. If I'm not mistaken, he was elected Speaker on the very second meeting.

G: Do you recall how long it was from the time he first thought of becoming the Speaker to the time he actually did become Speaker?

J: Just two weeks.

G: It met weekly?

J: I believe so. It might have been monthly. One or the other.

G: Did he visit non-attending voting members?

J: That's the way he got elected. He walked up and down the corridor of the House Building and said, My name is Lyndon Johnson, I'm running for Speaker of the Little Congress. I want you to be at the meeting tonight and vote for me.

G: Did he appeal to them, Mr. Jackson, on the grounds that a bunch of old men...

J: That's right. We're going to reorganize. We're going to make it a big effective force and get moving.

G: Did he also say that we're going to make it liberal -- in the ideological sense?

J: I don't recall that part.

G: What did the Little Congress do -- what role did it play?

J: The best way to describe it would be a kind of college debating society. I don't know if colleges have such things now. Many years ago they did. It was organized on the basis of Congress. That is, it had a Speaker and Committees and so forth. They used to take up various things in debate. The idea was that it gave the clerks and secretaries some chance to get acquainted and gave them some knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

G: Where did it meet?

J: It met in the Caucus Room of the Old House Office Building and also various other places on Capitol Hill.

G: Do you recall the scene the night he was elected? Would you describe it for us?

J: I can't recall it too vividly that way. The main thing was that people attended who hadn't been to one in years. Theoretically, every employee of the House was entitled to go or to become a member. The membership restrictions weren't very great. I had attended several meetings, many more than he had, and before he had ever gone to one of them. The

attendance was very small -- I don't know, 15, 20, 25 people. Most of them were young and, as I recall, most of them were males. Some young girls but not many. But all of the old women secretaries who worked up on the Hills for years, middleaged women who worked for first one Congressman and then another, they never attended those things. He got those. That's the group he sold on coming and they came. There were more old ladies there than had ever been to a meeting before.

G: Roughly, about how many people in all?

J: As a wild kind of a guess, I would say about 150, something like that.

G: Did he win easily?

J: They had a lot of debate and the debate was often shouting. But on the final vote he won hands down. I didn't know very much history but I remembered that I had read somewhere that Henry Clay was elected Speaker of the House on the first day that he was in Congress.

I think that's so too, but I'm not sure.

Don't accept my word for it. But I remember that somebody got up and made a speech against Lyndon on this particular night and told us how ridiculous it was to have an organization called the Little Congress and elect as Speaker a newcomer -- it was never done in Congress. So I jumped up and told them that Henry Clay was elected Speaker the first day he got to Congress and it made quite a sensation and it pleased Lyndon very much. He praised me for it a long time afterward.

G: Do you remember, did he make a speech?

J: Oh, yes.

G: How did he speak in those days?

J: He spoke like an old-school Texas politician. He spoke loud and did a great deal of arm-waving and he didn't speak in a natural speaking voice.

G: Was it sort of the old-style declamation?

J: More of that type, yes.

G: Did he use humor much?

J: Yes, he used jokes and anecdotes. The humor was the anecdotal. Incidentally, he told in those days several anecdotes that he has told right up to modern times. I wouldn't say since he has been President but while he was United States Senator and Majority Leader. I have heard him deliver in his public speeches anecdotes that he was using back in those days.

G: Do you remember any of those?

J: Yes, the old story about the school teacher applying for a job with the school board. He went to the school board and they wanted to know if he thought the world was round or flat and he said he could teach it either way. I've heard President Johnson use that up to relatively modern times -- I wouldn't say since he was President, but I think I heard him use that when he was United States Senator. I remember it was one of his favorite stories back in those days.

G: Mr. Jackson, about how long was it after the President was elected Speaker of the Little Congress that he remained in the Little Congress. Was it a long time?

J: No, no.

G: Then there was no chance to get any indication as to what he did as Speaker of the Little Congress?

J: Yes, there was. He promoted 2 or 3 big trips. I can't remember exactly what they were but I think they were things he promised that night he was seeking this job. If he were elected Speaker, they would put on some big deals to get everybody acquainted -- everybody should be acquainted. I remember that he promoted and carried on an excursion up to New York

City and it was quite successful. Railroads in those days ran a fantastically low price excursion to New York. I think it was \$3 a round trip. He worked out a deal that the whole Little Congress could go up there and go to a night club and eat dinner something like that. He appointed committees and they worked on it. I forgot what it was but something happened that I couldn't go.

G: Did he hold most of the people that he had brought into Congress?

J: I think they stayed in there as long as he was there but that didn't last very long. I might be wrong but I believe that it wasn't too long after that that he left.

G: Do you recall, by any chance, anything else he did besides the arranging of this excursion?

J: I think he had some kind of a picnic or something like that. There were several things.

G: But they were along this line of getting everybody together?

J: Yes.

G: Your seeing him a great deal -- of course you have remained a good friend -- ended at the close of the NYA period, is that right?

J: Yes sir, that is right. I was still in Washington when he was elected to the House. As a matter of fact, the night he came to Washington after he was elected in that special election, my wife and I met him at the Union Station and brought them to our apartment. We lived in an apartment now torn down, on the present site of the New Senate Office Building. We walked up there from the Union Station and he kept us up practically all night telling us about his campaign. He gave us a blow-by-blow account of the whole thing. My wife, she had never met him before. She was just amazed by him. She said, That man is going to be President of the United States, and that was the first time I ever recall anybody who knew him

say that in all earnestness and all seriousness. I remember it because I argued with my wife that nobody from Texas could ever be President of the United States. I told her how stupid she was and how little she knew about politics because nobody from Texas could ever be President.

G: Mr. Jackson, just what is it in these early years which made people feel that they were in the presence of somebody so very unusual? There was obviously a lot of brains there, there was obviously a lot of energy there. Is there any other way you would define what struck people?

J: It was a drive, a determination. That was the outstanding impression you got even when you met him occasionally -- the old saying about a young man in a hurry. I've never known anybody in my whole life with so much of this -- even with an occasional meeting, you got the impression.

G: What drove this man? What did you think drove him?

J: I just don't know. I really don't. I don't suppose I ever analyzed it at all. I do remember some things that I did think of. I remember one thing that greatly impressed me way back there -- we were poor and I was hoping to find some way I could make some money. I remember what I thought was his peculiar attitude toward money. He had no interest in money for his own sake. His own idea of money was to buy something for somebody with it.

G: He would give it as a present?

J: Yes, this habit of present-giving was very much there even when he really had no money at all. I remember one time just before Mother's Day when I told him I was going downtown to get my Mother a present. He apparently forgot all about Mother's Day. He thought that was a wonderful idea and so he went with me. Instead of buying just a present for his Mother, he bought things for the mothers of any number of people that he knew from

Texas. I have forgotten what it was, a box of candy or something. This impressed me. I thought he couldn't afford it and here he was buying all these things for these people. This was characteristic of him. I don't know what was driving him. It wasn't money. I guess it was ambition. I can't emphasize too much how he drove himself -- how he never rested.

G: Was he ever sick?

J: My goodness, yes. He almost died when we lived there. He got pneumonia. He got sick and wouldn't take care of himself. I mean he kept on going to the office. He had the flu or something like that. In the middle of the night, we got terribly concerned about him and we called the hotel desk and they called the hotel doctor. I got to know the doctor well. His name was Dr. McNaulton (sp ?). He lived in Washington for years. I guess he is still down there.

Dr. McNaulton came down and t-ok a look at him and was terribly concerned about him. He ordered him to go to the hospital. He didn't want to go to the hospital but he had to go. We got him an ambulance in the middle of the night and took him to the hospital. What frightened me so is that the doctor got to praying. He wanted to know who his parents and family were. He told us that we had better get in touch with them. He said that this boy was not very well at all. He has a very bad case of pneumonia. Of course that was in the days before antibiotics and when somebody got pneumonia...

G: Were there any other illnesses along the way or was he an exceptionally healthy, rugged person?

J: I think he had at least one other attack like that while he was down here. But not as bad. He was on the go, as I said, from early morning until late at night 7 days a week. He never took any recreation for recreation's sake. He never exercised or went swimming or anything like

that. He wasn't at all fastidious in what he ate. Eating was just a necessary evil to him.

G: About his election to Congress. Is that a story that you know?

J: No, I don't know anything about it because I was in Washington during the time of the campaign. He was elected to the Congress when an old man named J. P. Buchanan died unexpectedly and they called this special election.

One very, very important thing -- at least I think it important. I happened to think of it earlier when you were talking about when he was secretary to Congressman Kleberg.

Mr. Roosevelt was elected President in November and of course he wasn't to take office until March 4. During that time the depression of course got much worse and all of this job hunting thing got bad -- the big push to get Federal jobs. The Democrats were trying to organize. In a lot of these states they had a Democratic Committee, etc., and they were setting up very formal arrangements whereby they would clear people for patronage jobs, etc. They didn't have anything like that in Texas and there was a lot of hasselling among the Congressmen and the Senators and the Democratic National Committeemen as to who was going to appoint what. They finally came more or less to this consensus: The Congress would appoint the Postmasters in the districts. I believe that was all, although I think there were also some deputy marshals or some very trivial jobs that were not to be appointed. But the point of the story is that the thing was not reduced to writing. LBJ decided that it should be. He personally sat down and wrote out the patronage agreement. He succeeded to getting all, I believe all 21 Texan Congressmen. He got the Texas Congressmen and the United States Senators to sign. This, for a boy of that age, is an amazing political achievement. The agreement was in existence for

many years and I am sure a copy of it can be found. The whole thing was drafted and there were compromises on things, etc., and there it was.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement
of Robert M. Jackson
By Mrs. Robert M. Jackson

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Section 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Mrs. Robert M. Jackson, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and a transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.
2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.
3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.
4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed Mrs. Robert M. Jackson
Date July 18, 1975
Accepted Amy J. Hadden
Director, Lyndon Baines
Johnson Library for Archivist
of the United States
Date July 18, 1975

- A. If you do not wish to impose restrictions on the use of your tape and transcript and if you do not feel the need to retain literary property rights upon the material, please sign the enclosed statement and return it to the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.
- B. If you wish to restrict the use of your transcript for a period of time, a new statement will be prepared (either by you or by us) deleting paragraph 2 and substituting the following, with one of the alternatives:

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be available for examination by anyone except persons who have received my express written authorization to examine it. This restriction shall not apply to employees and officers of the General Services Administration (including the National Archives and Records Service and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library) engaged in performing normal archival work processes.

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