INTERVIEW III

DATE: April 1, 1982

INTERVIEWEE: EMMETTE S. REDFORD

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Dr. Redford's office, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: Let's start today by discussing the school system in Johnson City and I would like for you to begin by discussing the physical structures. Was it all in one building from grade school through high school?

R: That is correct. There was a six-room building with five teachers and an auditorium, and this building housed the total school system from grades one through eleven, eleven being in those days the terminal grade in the state of Texas. It was a good school building. However, [it was] all virtually destroyed internally by fire later. So it's not the building that is now there.

G: I see. Is it in the same location?

R: Same location. Three teachers taught the seven elementary grades, and two teachers taught the four high school grades.

G: Was the building a stone building?

R: Yes.

G: Now, let me ask you if you can recall any of the teachers, and let's start off with Scott Klett, who I guess was the superintendent. Is that right?

R: Yes, he was superintendent for a number of years and including at least a portion of the period when Lyndon was in school. I don't recall who any of Lyndon's other teachers were in high school. Because I had left Johnson City by the time he entered high school.

Scott Klett taught us mathematics and civics and perhaps some history or other social science subjects. I am sure that Lyndon had more interest in what he was teaching than he did in what anybody else was teaching. Not mathematics, but civics and any other social science subjects. We had a great advantage--me for some time, and Lyndon for a longer period of time I'm sure--in having Scott Klett as a teacher. He had been to the University of Texas, attended the law school, was therefore well-educated, better educated than most high school teachers would have been, and particularly in areas related to American government and American history. I don't know how many years he was Lyndon's teacher.

G: What were his politics? Do you recall?

R: I don't remember anything about his politics.

G: Was he an inspiring sort of a teacher?

R: Yes, he was an inspiring teacher and did things which engrossed the interests of his students.

G: Can you recall anything in particular that might exemplify that?

R: I can recall some things that my brother Cecil has told me which occurred while Lyndon was in high school and which involved Lyndon as well as my brother. I recall two things. Cecil has told me of an incident in which the class wanted to go down and observe a

trial in the courthouse and Klett was somewhat reluctant to turn out his classes to go down for that event, but the class persisted and I think Lyndon was among those that was persistent in pressing the case that this was a justifiable thing for his class, perhaps in civics, to do. At any rate, he let them go to this trial.

G: Did they ever indicate what trial it was?

R: No, I don't know. On another occasion, the class debated the U.S. entry into the League of Nations, this being before the Senate vote was taken. And he let the class divide according to their own ideas on this subject and debate the subject whether the United States should enter the League of Nations. If I recall correctly, my brother and Lyndon were on the affirmative side of this thing by their own choice and some of Lyndon's cousins were on the opposing side. But this, my brother tells me, was quite an event for them. As I recall, partly by my own interests and partly by his knowledge of the subject matter and the freedom he gave to us in what we wanted to study and his own inspiration, his classes were, for me, very exciting.

G: Do you think he might have had an influence on your decision to go into political science, public administration?

R: No, I think that he had no influence on that. I think that's explained in a more general way. I was at the White House one time while Johnson, Lyndon, was president, had lunch with him, and while I was waiting for him to come take me to lunch, I had, as he had suggested, talked to the ladies of the press. One of

them asked me how it was that it happened that in a little place like Johnson City, two people could come out who would develop the interest in government to either teach it or public service that we had. And I said, well, there wasn't anything in town except three churches and a courthouse, and although Lyndon and I gave some attention to what was going on in the churches, that we were more interested in what happened at the courthouse.

G: (Laughter) That's great.

R: Now, the grain of truth in this is that the school system really never had, in my day or I'm sure in Lyndon's day, a really trained scientist and that the school had no facilities for laboratory work except a school garden for use in agriculture. So science was not an interesting subject. For me, my decision was really whether to be a minister or a lawyer, and a decision I didn't make until just before my senior year when I majored in government because I intended to go into law. Lyndon and my brothers and I had an interest in history and government, and it may have been that was part of the reason why is that's about the only thing that could stimulate our interest. At least we wouldn't be stimulated in the direction of science.

I've thought sometimes about the careers of people that graduated from Johnson City High School and who went on to college who were in my period, say people five years younger than I am to those ten or fifteen years older. I think of at least five who graduated from the University of Texas Law School in that period.

two who became professors in social sciences at the University of Texas, Alton Wiley, professor of economics and myself, and a little bit later, Reverdy A. Glidden, political science area, and some went into business, but I can't think of but one person out of that period of say fifteen years of my generation, that developed a career in science. One graduate went on and became a professor of biology at either Baylor University or Baylor Belton. Now, I don't know what the total explanation for that is, but for us, for Lyndon, there was certainly the family background in politics, there was the fact that the courthouse was there, there was nothing to develop any interest in science and mathematics for him, and there was Scott Klett, who could make civics, as we called it, an interesting subject for study. Well, maybe these things all add up to Lyndon's interest.

G: What did Scott Klett look like?

R: Average height. I think a rather good-looking or handsome man. Always very well-dressed. Had a sense of humor, and of course, in a little school of that kind, was very close to his students.

G: How would you describe his manner, his teaching manner in the classroom?

R: I don't know except what I've indicated before--rather informal and open to student choice of topics to work on. I guess I came to know Scott Klett best because of my interest in debate and my participation in the Interscholastic League for two years as

representative of Johnson City High School in debate, and Scott Klett was my debate coach.

G: Was he the debate coach when your younger brother was there, I wonder?

R: Well, I'm sure he was.

G: Did he come from a well-educated family?

R: Oh, yes. The Klett family--two brothers and a sister all married and had families, but had ranches adjoining each other west of Johnson City towards Fredericksburg. The Charlie Klett family--of which Scott Klett was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Klett--had four children, one graduated from the Law School and practiced law in Lubbock, the second graduated from the University of Texas and with some subsequent education became a professor at Baylor, a third attended but did not finish the University of Texas, and the same is true of Scott Klett. All four children attended the University of Texas. A first cousin of Scott Klett's became a professor of economics at the University of Texas after obtaining a Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. So it was a family interested in education.

G: Was there also Mr. Krause [?] there that you recall?

R: Krause was later.

G: How about a Mr. Bowman [?]?

R: Later. I didn't know either one of them.

G: Were the teachers normally younger or older?

R: Normally young teachers. The superintendent was about the only person that I remember that could be called middle-aged, and I guess all the superintendents that I remember were middle-aged, but I don't remember any of the other teachers not being eighteen to twenty-five years of age. In those days you could get a teacher's certificate on the basis of one or two years of college education--temporary certificate. The school, of course, was one of the centers of community influence and community recreation. Most of the activities of the community centered around churches, schools, homes.

G: What were some of the school activities?

R: The Johnson City school participated from the very beginning very actively in Interscholastic League activities across the board--athletic and literary events. The teachers, they'd stimulated a great deal of interest in these forms of activity. Declamation, for example, there was usually a very considerable number of people competed in the little school system for junior declamation and senior declamation to represent Johnson City School. I remember that some of them went to Mrs. Johnson for her to give them some training, others came to my mother so that my mother would have a few, and she'd have a few for each of these contests. The school had a basketball team [but] didn't have enough people for a football team.

G: Did LBJ play on the basketball team, do you know?

R: I don't know.

G: Was there a basketball court at the school?

R: Oh, yes.

I don't know what Lyndon's participation was in school in athletic events. The school also would be the center of various forms of student presentations to the parents, such as maybe a couple of times a year the high school students would present a dramatic production, a play, as we said. There would be a few events probably each year to raise money for the school--might be centered around a box supper, in which everybody brought a box which was sold.

G: I see.

R: Money [was] thus obtained for extracurricular activities in the school.

G: Typically, how would you describe a class day? Would you have class in different rooms or would you stay in the same room and just take up different subjects?

R: I think we stayed in the same room, and the teachers rotated. There weren't but two to rotate, but I'm not sure.

G: And would you take--how many subjects a year?

R: We had the usual high school texts, only four subjects.

G: Were there chores that the students were required to perform?

R: No.

G: Say, cleaning the blackboard, that sort of thing?

R: Well, I guess we did that naturally, wasn't anybody's special function anymore than it's anybody's special function to clean the blackboard in my classroom here. The one thing about school in

my day which may have been discontinued by Lyndon's day, there were school rules on outside school recreation. School rules prohibited attendance by students from Monday to Friday at recreational events.

G: Why was this?

R: Well, I don't know, but that frequently existed for schools in those days. For example, a very large group of students was suspended from school for a few days because they had attended a traveling show on Wednesday night. The school and the churches and the homes were the centers of things in small rural communities.

G: Did the school sessions take into account the imperatives of harvesting a crop or anything like this?

R: School sessions were adjusted as well as they could to provide an eight months program between the end of cotton picking and the beginning of cotton chopping, so that harvest period was over when school started.

G: I see. To what extent did the parents become involved in what was taught in the school and how it was taught and that sort of thing?

R: Not at all, to my memory.

G: You never had a flare-up or anything where the students objected to--

R: No.

G: Now, we know, of course, that when LBJ went to San Marcos, he had to prove some credits or demonstrate a certain level of competence in subjects before he could take the freshman courses there, and I'm just wondering if this was because the Johnson City school was

unaccredited or if it was because it didn't offer all the courses [that were required].

R: In those days schools were accredited with the University of Texas, and Johnson City was an unaccredited high school. Consequently, all of us had a problem of getting into college. San Marcos was not only the closest place to Johnson City with a college, but it also made arrangements by which you could make this transition. I don't know what Lyndon's arrangement were. Some, I think, went down and took a term of high school before they were admitted to college. One of my brothers went to San Marcos for one year, and I think they admitted him subject to making grades sufficient to wipe out the lack of high school accreditation.

G: Which brother was that?

R: Clarence.

G: Clarence.

Let me ask you if LBJ was a discipline problem in school. Do you have any recollection of that?

R: I don't have any recollection. All I would know would be on the basis of hearsay. I really don't know. I recall one incident that one of my brothers has told me about. Lyndon was a tease, and on this occasion, members of the class were passing the basketball around the room while the teacher's back was turned at the blackboard. The teacher turned around just as the ball was coming to Lyndon, Lyndon let it hit his shoulder and then shouted, "Oh, he hit me." So the other student got the punishment for passing

the basketball. (Laughter) Well, I guess such incidents exist in most schoolboys. [I] never heard of Lyndon being a really disciplinary problem--or anybody else. The infraction of rules usually resulted in whippings.

G: Oh, really?

R: Consequently, that kept down disciplinary problems.

G: Would these be whippings with a paddle?

R: No, with a switch.

G: Oh, I see.

R: I might tell of another incident that my brother Cecil tells about. For some infraction of the rules, he and Lyndon were kept in after school, and the principal or superintendent, a man, at any event, told them that he was going to give them a whipping. But then he found he didn't have any switches, so he said, "We'll just go out here in the pasture and you can cut your switches." So they crawled through the fence into the pasture that adjoined the school ground. He picked out the appropriate size switches, and they got out their knifes and whittled on them. He was about time to have the whipping administered, and Lyndon said, "Now, Mr.--" whoever he was--"you can whip me, but I don't believe you'll want to whip Cecil. You know, his uncle's on the school board." They didn't get a whipping.

G: Is that right? Was his uncle on the school board?

R: Oh, yes.

G: Is that right?

R: But I don't know whether these things add up to a disciplinary problem or not. I wouldn't conclude my brother was a disciplinary problem because of this, because he wasn't. A rather quick retort.

G: Do you have any recollection of how diligent a student, or have you gotten any insights from others, on how diligent a student LBJ was?

R: Well, from all I heard--and this is hearsay--Lyndon was not a very diligent student. And I think that was true at San Marcos also, except for a few things that he had a definite interest in, such as Mr. [H. M.] Greene's course in government and maybe some special extracurricular activities. Lyndon was not a serious student. Nobody I've ever heard said he was. Books was not his long suit.

G: Others have suggested that he really didn't like to read books that much, that if he could get it by listening to others talk, well, that was fine. But he didn't really have a desire to read books.

R: I would doubt that Lyndon ever read a book on the side that wasn't required while he was in school.

G: Why do you think this was?

R: Well, it's characteristic of other people in the school system.

G: But how would you explain it?

R: Because most high school students don't have an interest in doing outside reading.

I think other people who knew him would say the same thing, that Lyndon was, well, not any more serious than the ordinary student in high school in a rural community.

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G: Let me ask you to skip forward through the years on the same subject and ask if he compensated for this in other ways.

R: Certainly! You read the oral histories of the people who worked with him when he was president, and you see that repeatedly they say that they never saw a brighter person, they never saw a person who was more knowledgeable about the operations of government and the policy issues of government, that they never saw a person who could absorb information as quickly as he could. This man must have been almost a genius in absorbing information from others. I've known other people like that who didn't read but were very well-informed people on the basis of picking other people's minds. Lyndon had his other ways of gaining knowledge. Now, I think it must be added that he must have acquired a great deal of ability to read memos and documents and read them fast.

G: These things that you've just said, was this your own impression also when you met with him, say, in the White House or visited with him?

R: That was an impression I had from long before he was in the White House, in fact, before he was in Congress, that Lyndon was quick in picking up information in conversation, particularly with relation to things that were political. He could astound you at the knowledge he would have that he gained out of conversation.

H: In one of your other interviews, I think you mentioned the Congressional Record and that someone in Johnson City received the Congressional Record and perhaps he read that as a youth, too.

R: I think he might have read it some. If he did, I imagine it was in connection with things he had in his classes at school. I think it was Fritz Koeniger whose family that got the Congressional Record that just continued to come after his father, who was an attorney, had died. But certainly there was one in the community, and it was at school from time to time and used by my brothers and by Lyndon on occasions. I wouldn't say that indicated a regular reading of it. It was a source available for Mr. Klett's use.

G: I see. Let me ask you a little about the courthouse. Was this a gathering place in the community?

R: No. People came to the courthouse that had business there and that was about all. The only gathering place in the community other than churches and schools was the street, the one-block street where all the stores were, and there'd be some benches sitting out in front of the stores, and people would congregate there and on Saturday afternoons mill around and meet everybody on the street. And in the stores and post office, too, insofar as they happened to meet there.

G: Do you remember any trials of significance?

R: I don't remember but one clearly myself, and Lyndon would have probably been too little to have remembered it.

G: Which one was that?

R: This was a trial of somebody for speeding, and he wouldn't pay his fine, went to court and was acquitted.

G: Is that right?

R: But I don't remember any other one particularly.

G: As you look back, can you imagine Sam Ealy Johnson in coming to town in Johnson City and what he might do, where you might see him, what he was like?

R: I guess he had an office somewhere, but he was on the streets of Johnson City every day, you'd see him frequently as you did other people that moved from place to place. He spent a good deal of time just talking to people.

G: How did you get along with him?

R: Why, I didn't have any reason to get along or not get along with him; I didn't see him very often. He was friendly. He would--particularly after I'd started going to college. But I didn't see him very often. I remember the first man that I saw die, that Sam Johnson and I were on opposite sides of the bed trying to keep his circulation going, because the man's wife had come out in the yard and shouted for help and we were there. That of course is very vivid in my memory because I wasn't but about seventeen years old or maybe younger.

I can remember that Sam Johnson, as I say, liked to talk to people. He liked to tell me about two things that he'd done: one was to sign the bill for restoration or the purchase or something of the Alamo [the Alamo Purchase Bill], and another [he] signed a bill for the first Blue Sky Law passed in Texas. My grandfather was very fond of Sam Johnson, because Mr. Johnson would sit down on a bench and talk to him whereas most other men would

pass him by because he was old and his hearing was bad. And despite the fact that my grandfather was a minister and a prohibitionist, he was always very fond of Mr. Johnson. So, from my experience and my grandfather's experience, I gather the fact that Mr. Johnson liked to talk to people, as a politician naturally would, particularly one that didn't have much else to do.

G: How do you think he was regarded by the people in Johnson City?

R: I don't know how to answer the question of how a body of people regarded any individual in town. So I can't answer that question very definitely. I think in a rural community, there is a spirit of interest and concern and friendship, normally, between all people in the community. Oh, it might be broken up by occasional disputes. These may be temporary or remembered. But in general, they're part of a kind of an in group.

Now, I wrote [Robert] Caro a letter--which I didn't mail, but I wish I had mailed--telling him that I thought his statement that Lyndon did not have the respect of people in the community because his family was despised--I believe those were the words that were used in that Atlantic Monthly article about Lyndon's boyhood. What I said to Caro in the unmailed letter was that he'd failed to understand rural psychology. The people in the little community don't despise other people in the community. You see them every day, you speak to them every day, and so on. Some of them you have a different feeling than you do others, and there is a difference in the amount of respect you give to the people like the Goars, whose

children are going to college, or the people like the Kletts, than you do to the two people in the community that were illiterate. But I never was conscious of anybody despising anybody else. And despising a family would be even more unthinkable, I think. Nobody despised the Johnson family. All the mothers in town loved the Johnson children just like they loved the children in my family--that's just part of the feeling, the mutual feeling you have among people.

Now, the Johnson larger family in the community included Mr. Johnson's two first cousins--Mrs. Stubbs, wife of a former district judge and Mrs. Fawcett, wife of the druggist. He [Sam Ealy Johnson] had a brother in town that was a rancher and a respected man in the community--he and his wife both. So you wouldn't say there was any disrespect for the family in the broader sense or the narrower sense either. I wondered how Mr. Johnson made a living, and I heard reports from children of merchants that he didn't pay his bills, but that's about all.

G: The two elements, I guess, that seemed to point to the conclusion that at least one biographer has reached is that the debt issue, the notion that he didn't pay his debts and the other that he was a hard drinker and that some people resented this or perhaps--

R: Perhaps because he was a poor provider might have been reasons for some people feeling differently toward him, say, than they would the people who were good providers for their family.

But there were lots of people in the community that you could wonder about how they made a living.

G: Do you recall what your mother's attitude was towards him, for example?

R: I don't recall my mother ever criticizing anybody in the community. She saw Mrs. Johnson very infrequently because my mother was confined to the post office, and Mrs. Johnson was confined to her house with her children. She and Mr. Johnson had very friendly relations, and I don't know anybody in the community that she didn't have friendly relations with. You don't stay postmaster thirty-one years in a community under administrations starting with Taft and coming out with Roosevelt without having pretty good community relations. (Laughter) I don't know of any exceptions in the community that existed. I think my mother would have had a considerable amount of respect for Mr. Johnson. I know she regarded him with friendship. She didn't condone drinking, and she was on a different side of the political fence, usually, from him.

G: How about Mrs. Johnson--Rebekah Baines Johnson--did you have enough association with her to know what she was like?

R: No.

G: Really?

R: Not in my childhood. I saw her on very few occasions. They lived only two blocks from us, and Lyndon was at our house more than he was at home when he wasn't asleep or eating, but I saw Mrs. Johnson on very few occasions.

G: What would he do at your house?

R: Well, he was about the same age as my two brothers. We had vacant lots around our place; enough vacant space we could lay out a baseball field--smaller than normal, but nevertheless we could lay out one. We had an abandoned barn, we had stacks and stacks of cedar logs up for sale and vacant lots around, and we could build forts and everything else with them, you see. It was a natural place to congregate, particularly since my mother held a tight rein on her boys and kept them at home, and Lyndon had free run of the community except at mealtime and sleeping time. The lots around our place tended to be the point where the kids'd get together. When school's out, there are not a lot of boys left in town to play with anyway.

G: You mentioned, I think yesterday before we turned on the tape, that your brother had seen a violin at Lyndon's house or something of that nature. Do you recall that?

R: Well, I just recall my brother telling me. I was telling my brother I thought that Doris Kearns' statement that Lyndon took dancing and violin lessons was absurd, and my brother said, "Well, he did have a violin. I saw it."

G: Another episode that I was going to ask you to elaborate on was one regarding herding cattle that I think Tom Johnson had, and perhaps some of the Redford boys and LBJ--

R: Oh, that was just a one-day event. Some way or other the three Tom Johnson children, who were efficient young ranch hands, and the three Redford boys and Lyndon took a bunch of cattle from the

Tom Johnson town place to the Tom Johnson ranch six miles away. And I'm sure that the Redford boys and Lyndon Johnson didn't contribute anything to making it an efficient enterprise. In fact, I recall one of the Tom Johnson children getting angry with Lyndon because they thought he had done something which aggravated the difficulty in getting those cattle down through there anyway. That's just a day's event; nothing unusual about it.

G: He didn't do that as a matter of day-to-day work?

R: Oh, no. He wouldn't have known any more about what to do than I did, which was nothing.

G: Did the boys ride horses often, though, in Johnson City?

R: Very few people in town had any horses. We didn't, Lyndon didn't. If he rode horses it was when he was at the Tom Johnson place.

G What was your normal means of transportation?

R: Around the town? Walk.

G: Do you recall when LBJ broke his leg?

R: I remember when he had a broken leg. I was not, as the [Merle] Miller book says, present when he broke his leg. I was not the one who ran for a doctor as Miller says. But I can remember he had a broken leg. But there's nothing unusual about that, either. In fact, what I'm saying is that there's little that's distinctive about Lyndon Johnson's boyhood that was any different from a boy growing up in any other rural community of the time.

G: You did say, though, that he climbed a pole or something even while he had the cast--

R: Oh, he kept--my mother was always worried that Lyndon was going to fall and break that leg again because he was so active, climbed posts or whatever he wanted to do, which worried her and I guess the other women in the community.

G: Now you knew Tom Martin, I understand, when you were young as well.

R: I saw Tom Martin a few times in my life, but that's all.

G: What was he like?

R: Handsome. Handsome man. Good speaker. And that's all I know. I heard him make a speech one time.

G: Do you think he influenced LBJ at all?

R: I wouldn't think so. Not in any permanent way. Fritz Koeniger can tell you about his and Lyndon Johnson's associations with Tom Martin in California. Might have helped develop Lyndon's interest in politics, but Lyndon already had the interest.

G: How did LBJ get along with his peers, then, in Johnson City as a youngster?

R: I don't know any difference in the way he got along than anybody else.

G: Did you like him?

R: Yes. I don't know but one boy when I was growing up that I didn't like. Sure, I liked him.

G: Was he personable? Was he outgoing?

R: Oh, yes. He was personable, he was outgoing. Very active.

G: What do you mean by active? Do you mean hard-working or highly motivated?

R: Well, I don't think of Lyndon as being a hard worker in his youth. I said to Lyndon one time after he was in the Senate that I was surprised at how he had developed into the kind of worker he was.

G: What was his response?

R: He said, "Why, Emmette, I worked for Uncle Walter, too." That was my uncle, but he didn't work long for my Uncle Walter. But that was his way of saying, "Like you, I learned how to work when I was a boy."

G: Was Uncle Walter a taskmaster?

R: Well, you did a day's work for him when you got paid for a day's work.

G: What sort of work did he do?

R: He was a farmer.

G: So it would be largely picking cotton and things like that?

R: I don't know what he would have done.

G: What did you do for Uncle Walter?

R: Oh, I chopped cotton, picked cotton, shocked grain, followed the reaper, followed the thresher. I did everything there was to do on a farm that was a diversified farm.

Lyndon didn't do much farm work. And I don't think of Lyndon as a boy in his youth who worked persistently day after day at some job like I did, and I did it because it was a necessity if I was going to have good clothes and do the other things that I wanted

to do. I think he did it for spending money, though I might be wrong. His family might have needed his earnings, too.

G: Do you recall him shining shoes at a barber shop?

R: Oh, yes, he shined shoes at the barber shop. That was not any arduous task and he was getting the benefit of hearing all the conversation that was going on in the community while he was shining shoes. I'm sure he had a lot of pleasure out of barber shop associations. You see what I'm saying is, there's nothing in Lyndon's boyhood to indicate what was going to be an attribute later on and it was this workaholic situation--

G: Where do you think he acquired that tremendous motivation?

R: I don't know. Well, his motivations developed sometime when he was in San Marcos, either then or after he went to work for Congressman [Richard] Kleberg. I just don't know when the motivation occurred. Of course, he did write to Ben Crider and tell him he wanted to withdraw from school in San Marcos, wouldn't have stayed if Ben hadn't sent him money to stay. So this motivation came sometime after he got to San Marcos.

One thing I think about Lyndon that was a bit unusual, I think, you ask these questions about how the Johnson family was thought of, and we referred to Caro's article. Lyndon was outgoing and friendly with everybody, could not therefore have been despised. When he was in school at San Marcos, I felt ashamed of myself because I hadn't done the same kind of thing that he did. He would come home every few weeks and go home and see his mother, then he'd go

see Grandma Chaplan, Grandma Gore or Grandma Gallaway--the other elderly ladies in the community. My mother, probably, too, though she was younger.

G: How did you know that he did all this?

R: Well, everybody knew it.

G: Would your mother say, "Lyndon came by to see me" or "somebody came by?"

R: Oh, no. Lyndon was in and out enough that she didn't need to say it. My mother was very fond of Lyndon, when he was a boy and he was there a lot. I'll tell you one story of why people liked Lyndon. Sometime when I was about fourteen or fifteen years old--Lyndon would have been about ten or eleven, you see, and my younger brother the same age--I came home from somewhere and they were fighting. If I'd left them alone, of course, they'd have been playing ten minutes later, but I was protective of my brother, so I pulled Lyndon off the top of my brother. There was a little shovel there about that wide and handle about two feet long, and I just pulled Lyndon over my lap and gave him a spanking with that shovel. For a long, long time I've been the only person in the country who's spanked a senator and a president, or that spanked that one anyway.

My mother came to the door, and I remember she had just had her afternoon rest and had on a clean, white starched dress, and she called us in. We didn't have any grass on our yard, it was just dirt, and Lyndon was dirty and my brother was dirty. I remember

distinctly that one of his knee pants was still at his knee, and the other one down at his ankle. And she called us to the door, and she said, "Lyndon, I think you better go home for the rest of the day." While I was waiting to see what punishment she was going to give my brother, Lyndon steps up and puts his arm around her, kisses her on the cheek and says, "Oh, Mrs. Redford, we didn't mean any harm. Why don't you let us play?" She said, "Oh, go on." Well, that's--I'll stop there for your next question.

These few stories I'm telling are probably over there somewhere.

G: That's a good story. I've heard you tell it, but never on tape and never that detailed, so I'm glad to have it.

R: I have in my home a considerable file of correspondence between Lyndon and my mother.

G: Oh, do you?

R: When he became congressman, he instituted the practice of getting his postmasters together from his district in periodical meetings. And the first one he went to, he had Mama sitting next to him and gave her all the attentions he could, introduced her as "my postmaster", and he gave her similar attentions at larger meetings. So that fondness she had as a child for him was increased, you see, as she got older and he gave her these attentions.

G: Well, I don't want to hold you up any more today.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview III]

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