INTERVIEW I

DATE: March 31, l987

INTERVIEWEE: BESS WHITEHEAD SCOTT

INTERVIEWER: Christie L. Bourgeois

PLACE: Mrs. Scott's apartment, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

B: I want to begin by asking you to talk about your own background for a moment.

S: Well, I was born on a farm in central West Texas near a small town called Blanket, and Blanket is about midway between Brownwood and Comanche. They have an old joke up there they still tell: "Why are Brownwood and Comanche so cold? They just have one blanket between them, you know." That old joke is still going around up there.

I was the baby of nine children, and across the railroad track adjoining our farm was the farm of my uncle, Uncle Dick Whitehead. My father's brother married my mother's sister, so they settled there in central Texas on adjoining farms. They had nine children, too, so I had nine double cousins.

You may have read recently--this is off the subject--but about a little girl, a baby girl, that was kidnapped up here on the lakes. I think it was Johnson Lake, and they finally got her back all right. The parents were named Bill and Leigh Whitehead, and when I saw it in the paper and saw a mention of Brady, where their kinfolks were, then I knew they were my kinfolks because Brady is only about fifty miles from Brownwood. So I found

their address and wrote to them, and the other day I had a lovely letter from her, Leigh Whitehead--she spells it L-E-I-G-H--and some pictures of the baby and the little boy and everything else I was glad to have. I don't often find kinfolks now. I usually know them all, but that was from Uncle Dick's family, you see. And we have a saying in our family, "When you meet a Whitehead, always say 'Hello, cousin.'" There's so many of us.

There's a northern branch of the Whiteheads, too. Alfred North Whitehead, who is a philosopher and a well-known writer and so forth. He's from the Yankee side, but he's kin to us. We all came from Birmingham, England, over here. Just to go back a little bit, I found something in looking this up which interested me and I didn't know. I have a little bit of Italian in me. You wouldn't know it looking at me or think that was true. There were two--three--Italian men, brothers, and two of them stayed in Italy, and the third one--up at the State Archives I found this--the third one went to far places. He went to Wales and to England, and then from there to Virginia, and Virginia is where the Whiteheads, my family, come from. My father was born in Virginia. And so I have a little bit of Taliaferro. That was my father's mother's name. And the English call it "Toliver." That's "Taliaferro." At any rate, that's my background there.

When I was six years old, measles settled in my ears, and I've never known what it was to hear normally. I wear a hearing aid now, and when I was little, of course, being the baby and the first after four little boys, why somebody said to me, "I bet you were a brat." I said, "Well, I would have been only my mother didn't allow brats."

I had a wonderful mother. My father died when I was two years old. I don't know him, except through the family, but my mother was a wonderful woman, and my father was

a very gentle Englishman, a reader, and left all the disciplining of the children to my mother. He would say, so my oldest sister used to tell me, he'd sometimes say to Mother when we would misbehave, "Carrie, you ought to whip that child." But he never did. And so that's the kind of family that I grew up in.

I was a loved child, and I had a happy childhood except that all that time I suffered with an ear infection and under many doctors. I had two mastoid operations and so forth. I was nearly fifty years old when the good hearing aids came in. See, I'm ninety-six.

B: You never would think that!

S: I was born in l890. When the hearing aids came in, I bought one, a bone conductor, and tried to use it. I was a reporter then on the *Post*, and it did help, but it had static in it like the first radios. The minute I could get away from my meeting or something, I'd take it off immediately because it just worried me to death.

B: Did you learn to read lips?

S: Yes, I did, pretty well. I didn't take any lessons. I just learned it, you know. I still do to a good extent. But I did go through school. I went through Baylor Female College at Belton, which is now Mary Hardin Baylor University, and when it was a junior college, and the scholarship from there to Baylor University. I finished in Baylor University in 1912.

The other day, Monday of last week, I went up to Baylor. They have a Heritage Club, and the members are those who have graduated from Baylor fifty years ago or more, and at that banquet that night, they presented me with my diamond anniversary diploma. Seventy-five years ago next June I graduated from Baylor University!

B: That's marvelous!

S: So I enjoyed all that meeting up there. Back to when I was growing up, our school in Blanket was not accredited, just went through about the ninth or tenth grade, and so I wanted to go to college, but my family had grown up and scattered and so forth. My mother was not able to send me to college, and I just didn't know what I was going to do there in that little old town, no jobs or anything like that, and one day I made a little trip out in West Texas with my brothers, and, coming back in a hotel at Midland, Texas, in a lobby, I saw a brochure on the table, and big headlines said, "YOU CAN GO TO COLLEGE!" So I picked it up and read it.

My oldest sister, Beatrice, was with me, and I took it to her, and I said, "Sister, do you think that we could raise $l08.00?" That's what it cost to go one year down to Baylor Female College. She was a practical nurse. She said, "Well, I couldn't pay it all at one time, but I could pay it in installments." I said, "No, it says cash." And she says, "Well, wait until Jess comes down." Jess was upstairs with his family getting a hot bath.

B: And Jess was--?

S: My oldest brother. You see, we were out there in a covered wagon, and we stopped every once in a while at hotels to take a room and get a bath on the way back. We were way out in Gaines County near El Paso. So she says, "Wait until Jess comes downstairs, and we'll ask him." Jess usually found a way. And I asked him, and he said, "Well, I'll tell you, I have a pair of mules at home that I don't need. If I can sell those mules, you can have the money." I often told my children that my brother sent me to college on a pair of mules, which he really did.

So I went down to Baylor, and the way I could go for that money was to work two

hours a day for my room and board in the Cottage Home Dormitories, and I did. I went three years down there. Then I got the scholarship to Baylor University and went on up there, and then when I went to Baylor University, I couldn't work for my room and board up there, so I borrowed money from Jess and another one of my brothers, so I taught a couple of years just to pay them back.

But that wasn't what I wanted to do, and I knew it. From the time I was little, I knew I wanted to write in some way or other, and when I was in college, I knew I wanted to be a newspaper reporter. So I had to teach two years, and I taught in high school one place, and then I taught in Howard Payne College in Brownwood near my home one year. That was the year that we went to war in the first World War, so the college almost closed. They couldn't pay the teachers, and they left. I was there, I guess, about four months, maybe a little more, with no salary, but I lived in the dormitory, and my brother, Jess, had a big ranch out near Brownwood, and I grew up there.

Anyway, after that, I went to Houston, and my dear friend that I'd met in school, in Baylor, Lila Danforth, and her father lived there, and I went down with them to see what I could do about getting in newspaper work. Well, when I went to see Mr. Harry Warner who was the managing editor of the *Post*, he said, "We have a society editor and a woman's club editor and a music editor, and that's all the women we use. We don't use women on the city side." Now, I said, "Well, that's not what I want to do. I want to be on the"--I didn't know what he meant by "city side" but I said, "I want to write news stories and features," and at first he wasn't going to consider it at all. I said, "I'd like to work through the summer for nothing if you'll just let me work here and learn it. I know this is what I want to do!"

So he looked at me over his glasses and said, "I won't have anybody working for me for nothing. I'll pay you six dollars a week for two weeks, and that will buy your streetcar fares," which was five cents, "and a sandwich for lunch. And if you're not worth that to me at the end of two weeks, out you go!" That's the way I started newspaper work.

B: Apparently you were worth it.

S: Oh, yes, and he says, "I don't have any assignments for you. I have no runs for you on the paper. You'll have to get your own stories, and don't ask me any fool questions."

B: How did you do it? How did you get your stories, do you remember?

S: Well, another thing he said to me, he says, "Can you use a mill?" I didn't know what he meant, and he pointed at the typewriter. I said, "No." All old newspaper people call their typewriter a mill, but I didn't know it.

B: Mill? M-I-L-L?

S: Yes, and I said, "No, I can't." And he said, "Well, now, isn't that something?" And he handed me a letter and a proof of a graduating class of Huntsville High School. He says, "Now, here they are in four rows from left to right, and this letter tell their names from left to right. Now you sit down at that table over there in the corner and write me a cut line." I didn't know what a cut line was. He saw that I didn't, so he showed me on the paper what he meant, and he said, "I'll see what kind of a handwriting you have." And I did. That's the first thing I ever did for a newspaper. I wrote the cut line for that graduating class, and when I handed it to him, he--"Hand me that big, black pencil that we use in the newspaper offices," and I handed it to him. He just glanced at it and put it over on his desk, and that's when he said, "All right, now. Two weeks, and don't ask my any fool questions."

So I was not far from the Carnegie Library. In those days--that's 1915--and Carnegie Library was the only library in Houston, and it wasn't very far from the *Post* Building, so I walked up to the library thinking "What will I do?" And I went in there and ran into the children's department, and they were telling the children stories, and so I wrote a little article about that, and then coming back towards the *Post* Building, there was a sensation down on the corner of Main Street and Texas. It was right in the middle of Houston. I could see a crowd gather, so I went down there to see what it was, and it was an old darky driving his cart. When he got there, the mule balked, and everybody was telling him, you know, "Build a fire under him, Uncle," and this and that, telling him what to do. The poor old man was out there, and about that time the mule decided he had had enough, and he sat down right in the middle of the street, and finally a policeman came by and made the crowd go on and so forth. Just a little old something, but I wrote that.

I went back to the *Post* to Mr. Warner's office. He said, "Since you don't use a typewriter, sit at this table in my office over here." So I went back there, and I wrote those little stories, using longhand, and put them on his desk. He didn't look at me; he didn't look at the stories while I was there. But he had a sticker on one side of him, and a sticker on the other side of him, left and right, and I learned pretty soon, if you put anything on the left sticker, it would go in the paper. If he put it on the right sticker, I didn't know where it went. I learned afterwards he sent it to some department that might be able to use it, some columnist that might be able to use it somewhere.

But that's the way I started, and within about two weeks, the Southern Baptist Convention met in Houston for the first time in twenty-five years, and he, Mr. Warner,

assigned one of the reporters to cover it, and it was Ray Dudley. Now Ray Dudley was in Baylor when I was. He was a junior when I was a senior, and at this time he was in Houston, and later on, he owned the Gulf Publishing Company and the *Oil Weekly* and was a millionaire with a home in River Oaks and everything like that, but at that time he was a twenty-five dollar a week reporter on the *Post*. So he said, "Now, Ray, you're going to have to have somebody help you. Tell Charlie Mays[?], the city editor, to get somebody to help you with this." And I spoke up. I said, "Mr. Warner, let me help him." He looked at me over his glasses, and he said, "What do you know about the Baptists?" I said, "I was born and bred a Baptist." So that reassured him that I could do it.

I helped him on that Baptist Convention for five days, writing every line of my copy in longhand, helping him with the main and doing the women's meetings and everything like that. At the end of the week, I had eighteen dollars in my check instead of six.

B: That must have told you something.

S: And so on, and that's the way I started newspapers. Mr. Warner turned out to be a very wonderful friend, business friend. I know he ran interference for me several times, and I didn't know it then, but, afterwards, I knew he did.

B: And this was the *Houston Press*?

S: *Houston Post*.

B: Okay.

S: And the *Press* was there, too, but the *Press* was a Scripps-Howard paper, which was a six-day a week paper, and it folded after a while. But the *Post* and the *Chronicle* were local, and I was with the *Post*. And I stayed with the *Post*, I guess, a little bit more than a

year. Before the end of that year, he had me writing promotions for the paper--I was so inexperienced that I didn't know that that's what they were--to advertise the paper and advertise the theatre, that they went together, and they had kid matinees, moving pictures, Mary Pickford and the Keystone Cops and everything like that on Saturday mornings. Kid matinees. And I wrote all the stories for that. Well, it was very successful, and we had to start two on Saturday mornings instead of one after a week or two.

So one day Mr. Warner called me. By that time I was in the city room because I went down every morning and practiced on one of those old beat-up typewriters till I typed everything. He never did say a word about it, but I knew he knew it, and he called me in one morning, and he said, "I want you to be here at one o'clock, and we're going to the Rice Roof for lunch." Well, that was a very swanky place, I knew, and so he said, "When I said one o'clock, I mean one o'clock!" That's the way he was. I didn't say a word, and I didn't ask him any fool questions. I was just there at one o'clock. And we went up on the Rice Roof, and as we were going over from the *Post* Building, which was downtown Houston then, over to the Rice, about four blocks--he told me that a man who owned the Queen Theatre and the Zoe in Houston and owned a chain of theatres was going to meet us for lunch from Dallas, had headquarters in Dallas, and he says, "He's going to offer you a job." I was stunned. I didn't want to leave the *Post*. I stood there a minute, and he said, "Well, you don't have to go. But he's probably going to offer you a good job. But you don't have to go." So we went on up there. Sure enough, Mr. Hulsey offered me a job with his chain of theatres to go to Dallas, which was the headquarters, and I went. I left the *Post*, and I went up there, and for three-and-a-half years, I worked for the Hulsey Theatres.

B: What did you do?

S: Well, I edited a little magazine called *Movieland*, that we gave away at the old Mayo Theatre, which was the largest one. We just put it out at the beginning of the week when a new picture came on. We put them out every week, and it was free to the public, and then I helped with the advertising, the publicity and advertising. And, oh yes, I started kid matinees. He sent me to Galveston, to Fort Worth, to Oklahoma, and to Arkansas and had me start matinees where he had theatres, kid matinees, and we got the club women of each town to go in with us and recommend these things as a good, wholesome thing for children on Saturday mornings, and so forth. And then when I got through with that on the whole chain, then I went into the Dallas office and started this magazine.

And so from that and as the war came along, the first World War, my friend, a boy that I was raised with when we were very small, but I hadn't seen in twelve years, came up there. He was a Marine and had been badly wounded, and he had gotten a medical discharge. So he came up to Dallas, and he called me one night. He said, "I saw your mother and sister in Brownwood, and they told me to be sure to call you." Last time he had seen me I was about ten years old with a bandage around my head from a mastoid operation. I said, "Why don't you come out to see me?" It was about nine o'clock in the evening. He said, "Well, it's late, child," and I said, "Well, if you call me a child you'd better come out and see me." I was about twenty some-odd years, early twenties, you know, and I was a buxom blond and a pretty good-looking girl. So when he came out, he was really surprised to see me so well and everything, and we sat out on the porch and talked that night, and he said, "Well, meet me at the Adolphus Hotel in the morning for

breakfast." I said, "Okay," and I did, and for three weeks, I went down and had breakfast with him, and I had dinner with him, and at the end of three weeks, I married him.

B: Whirlwind short courtship!

S: Well, I was rebounding from another romance and there was the hysteria and excitement of the war and everything. And so I married him. We left the state the first of January, 1919, and he traveled through Missouri and then Kansas and then Colorado, and we stopped in Colorado, and we stayed there. And my little girl was born in Colorado, Denver, and eighteen months later, my little boy was born in Colorado Springs.

I settled down. Although he said that he wanted to get married and settle down--he'd been to South America and Mexico and all this time when he was away and wandering around, and he was tired and settle down and have a family--I soon found that he'd never settle down. From Colorado, Denver, we went to Colorado Springs, and then after Scotty was born in Colorado Springs, we went to California, and I just followed him around with two kids for a long time, and finally back to Texas. He was a super-salesman, and a very intelligent and suave kind of man-of-the-world and so forth, but he loved his kids and he loved me, but he loved his bottle, too, so that finally caused the break-up of our marriage. My little girl was six and little boy five when finally our marriage broke up, and I went back to Houston. I went back to Houston and went to work on the *Houston Press*.

B: I see.

S: I couldn't get on the *Post*, and I was on the *Press* when I interviewed Clark Gable, you were talking about. He came there with a stock company and was the leading man of that stock company for two years, and he was young, awkward, just beginning to be known, not too

well, and he loved a good time. He got in with the society set there, and he wouldn't learn his lines. They would open every Sunday night with a new play and all during that week they would be rehearsing another one to open the next Sunday night. He'd run around with what we would now call the jet set and wouldn't learn his lines, and his leading lady was little Nancy Duncan. She was an experienced actress, about ten years older than he was, and she and the whole cast would get very out with him, because he wouldn't know his lines and would have to ad lib. That's when I interviewed him, and she was so little she could walk under his arm, and he stood there with his legs apart and his arm around her so awkward, and I said, "They made love like a bird [bull?] in the china shop."

B: You wrote that?

S: Yes, I wrote that, and he came up to see me, and I hadn't met him then. He came over in a corner of the big city room where I was. He leaned over very differential, and he said, "Mrs. Scott? I'm Clark Gable." I said, "Yes, I recognized you as you came across." He said, "So I don't know how to make love. Will you teach me?" I was a lot older than he was; it was just funny. I said, "Well, let's go. Touché!" I said, "Touché! Let's go across to the Crittenden and have a cup of coffee, and we'll talk about it." We got to be very good friends. He was there two years, and he finally married the little widow that he'd been going with there, and fifteen years later--she had a little girl, five years old--and when that girl married when she was about twenty, he came back to Houston, and he was famous then, and gave her away as her father, and I saw him at that time.

B: Did you get to talk to him?

S: Yes, I talked to him a few minutes. That was the last time I saw him. But he was a very

charming person and a very friendly person and anybody would love him. Although of course, he had many faults.

B: That's a great story.

S: Yes. Then from the *Press*--while I was on the *Press* the 1928 Democratic Convention came to Houston, first time it was ever in Texas. They built a special coliseum to have that. I was assigned among others, not for any special story about the convention, but just on the sidelines to pick up little features from the famous people that I could, and I always told my children I interviewed Franklin Roosevelt. They would say, "You did!" and their eyes would open. I said, "Well, in a way." I went backstage one day, and he was there, and he was crippled even then, and his son, James, was with him, and I went up on the side of James, and I said, "I am a reporter from one of the papers here, and I would like to talk to your father just a few minutes." He said, "Oh, I don't think so." I said, "Just a few minutes. I just want just a few words," and about that time Franklin looked around his son at me and said, "Good luck, honey," and waved at me and so that's the interview I got with him.

B: That was his--

S: He had to go then out and nominate Al Smith as president.

B: Do you remember any other stories about that convention?

S: No. Well, yes, like I was in the library on the way down to the coliseum one morning, and I knew all the librarians. One of them said to me, "If you want a story, that's Will Durant sitting over there." So I went over to him, and I told him I was a reporter, and he moved over--there was a little bench--and he moved over for me to sit down. He talked to me about thirty minutes. I got a nice interview with Will Durant. That was before he was as

famous as he became later, but he was well-known then. The thing I remembered that he said was, "Al Smith was a fine man, but he would never be elected because he was a Catholic," and that was true. That was one of the things that defeated him, and it was thirty-some-odd years later when Kennedy, a Catholic, was elected, the first Catholic.

B: Did you know that Lyndon Johnson was at that convention?

S: No.

B: He was going to school in San Marcos, and he and some friends drove over there.

S: That's right. It was 1928.

B: 1928, yes.

S: And I met Lyndon--I think I have that in this article. I met him when--I was a school editor among other things. I guess in the years I was on the *Post*--at two different times I was on the *Post*--and I guess in that time I did almost every run except the police and criminal courts, and I didn't hear well enough to do criminal courts. I did city courts and a lot of things like that, but I just couldn't do some things. And I was in the city room at the *Post*--it was after I left the *Press*; I went back back to the *Post* you see, and this was when I was back on the *Post* the second time--and Lyndon came in, and as I say in this article, you know, "Lyndon never walked; he loped!" And he loped across that big room--I didn't know him--and I was sitting way over in the corner, and he came over there and bowed and introduced himself, and he said, "You're the school editor?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "I've come to teach public speaking and debate in Sam Houston High School." There were only two high schools in Houston at that time. One of them was right downtown, the Sam Houston High School, and the other one was out in the Heights and was a black

school, and, at that time, they were segregated.

He said, "I'm going to teach my boys and girls in debate. I'm going to take my boys' team and my girls' team up to Austin next spring and win the state championship." And so I said, "Just like that!" And he said, "Yes, with your help." And reporters were always on the lookout for publicity people, so I said, "Well, Mr. Johnson, I'll tell you, if you make news"--he said, "I want stories in the paper"--I said, "If you make news, we'll give you stories in the paper but not just publicity," and he said, "I'll make news. You watch me." And he did, of course.

B: A lot more than you thought he would.

S: That's right. That's right. I got to know him real well. He was a very high-strung, nervous man.

B: Was he?

S: He would call me every once in a while and want me to go with him to hear his children debate, and sometimes early in the morning he'd pick me up before school opened. He had them up there debating.

B: He had them practicing, or--? Early in the morning?

S: Yes, practicing, before their school opened. And at seven o'clock he would pick me up sometimes and take me out there.

B: And it's amazing that he could get those kids to get up and get there at seven.

S: Oh, yes. I said--one here; I would just like to see if I could find it--"Take me out there," and we'd listen to them, and then they'd go on to school at eight o'clock. Well, of course, I worked on a morning paper, and I didn't have to go down that early unless I had an early

appointment or something, but I worked at night. He learned that my mother lived with me and took care of my children. And they were in school at that time, of course, that old, and he genuinely loved old people, and he got to love my mother and called her "Grandma" all the time. He'd come and open the screen and holler there and said, "Grandma, you got anything in the icebox?" She always had something for him, of course, and he'd come by and take her and the children out to the park and fried chicken and so forth, and I'd be at work. And then he'd call me sometimes and have me come down to the little hotel where he lived and listen to him because he had written something or he'd found something about a Senator [Joseph Weldon] Bailey, that he so admired, and he'd read to me and so forth. Later on, Mrs. Johnson told me one time that she understood that, because, she said, the first thing that he wanted her to do after they were married, he wanted her to read things he had about Senator Bailey.

B: Really? He really admired his style or his politics?

S: Politics and personal, too, and he would say to me--read to me something. He'd say, "Now, see. He didn't aim at the mind. He aimed at the heart!"

B: Really?

S: And so forth.

B: So he was learning his political techniques?

S: That's right. He was. He wasn't in politics at the time, but he was certainly learning it. And I wanted to tell you this that my work and my--I'll read you a little bit.

B: Okay.

S: "And my family responsibilities made my social life almost nil. Being a personable widow

of forty, even some of my friends in the media thought that I was fair prey for adventures in which I had no interest. Just then social friendships were a small part of my life. Lyndon understood this, and sometimes he tried to fill the void. We enjoyed an occasional dinner together in elegant surroundings with a name band, but Lyndon found it hard to unwind," and the music was a--and he was an indifferent dancer--"so invariably our conversation turned to politics. As he would twirl his glass of wine that lasted the whole evening"--he never did drink--"he found me a tolerant and uncontentious listener, and I found him a charming and ambitious young man. My private opinion of him was that he would go far or would burn himself out prematurely, but I appreciated beyond words his courtesy to me and his genuine affection for my little family."

He would take my son, who was just eight years old, and teach him public speaking. When Scotty was going to make this speech for the junior boys of the summer camp, YMCA camp, at the banquet, Lyndon took him in hand and taught him what to say and how to say it and went with him as his father, so he was really a genuine friend, and our whole family loved him.

Years later when my son's--this was Scotty, when he was a little boy--when he got older, he had a daughter named Denise, and Lyndon was then probably a senator or vice president. Denise, when she was about fourteen, she had pictures of the boys all over her bedroom wall and her girlfriends and boyfriends and everything, so she got a picture from Lyndon one time. He sent her a picture, autographed it: "To Denise, affectionately," and so forth, and she took that picture and took the picture down in the middle of her wall and put it right in the middle and put a little border around it like this to separate it from all the

others. So I made a picture of it and sent it to him when he was in the White House. He was the vice president, and I sent the picture to him, and I said, "You see how you rate." So he wrote her a real nice letter. We had many personal contacts with him like that. But after he went to Washington, I didn't really know him too well. I was just one of the public little people then, and he was--

But I'll tell you what. My daughter, who married a career man in the air force, was living in Germany, Bitburg, Germany, and had two children. She had a miscarriage there, and one weekend at one of those hospitals in Bitburg--and all the American doctors had gone for a hunt in the Belleau Woods, and they just left one German doctor in the hospital. Well, she'd been having trouble before and had been in the hospital and out, and they knew it, but they left her. And so he had so many patients, that one doctor there, that he couldn't be with her all the time, and he put her in a room and would go and see her every once in a while and somebody else every once in a while, and she was five months pregnant, and she lost that baby all by herself in that hospital.

When she called me and told me about it, wrote me about it, I was so indignant I wrote Lyndon in Washington. You know, he never wrote a letter if he could use the telephone, so he called me about it. He says, "You have Lila Bess and George write me a letter and sign it about this, and I'll do something about it because--" he said he had heard stories like that before about the overseas neglect. I told Lila Bess that I wrote them that, and she called me, and she said, "George is in line for a promotion from captain to major, and he feels like he can't do that," and so they let it go, but he would have done something.

B: He would have done something.

S: Yes, you know, he was that way. Of course, he had a lot of enemies. A lot of people didn't like him, and I'm sure he was harsh and crude and all of that. He was. But the Lyndon I knew was not like that.

B: You say that he liked to talk politics back in those early days when you knew him.

S: Not for himself.

B: No. What kind of politics did he talk? Do you recall what--besides Joe Bailey, do you recall any of his political opinions, or--?

S: No, but he was a Democrat, and he was looking at Washington. He was not in Texas politics. He didn't care anything about that.

B: Is that right?

S: No, he had his eye on Washington all the time. And he did say to me one time--he was talking about Bailey, he says, "I'm going to be a senator some day."

B: He did.

S: Yes. Pointed just right at me. "I'm going to be a senator some day." And I think that he enjoyed being a senator more than anything else. I think the vice president and the presidency was not what he desired so much. I firmly believe that. And then after he was retired, he wrote me these letters. In that trunk I have ever so many letters from him. They're all short, but he did write.

B: After he retired?

S: He was retired most of the time. He wrote me some from Washington but not many. He was too busy then, but it was after he was retired, and I went down to the Ranch a time or two.

B: Did you?

S: And I had written him in 1934, November, regarding a threatened political stew that the *Post* political writer gave me, but it flickered out, but I wrote him about it. And he said: "Dear Bess, A letter from you is always a choice morsel, and the one that I have before me is no exception to that rule. However, when news breaks of the magnitude of what you imparted to me, I feel that maybe I have a right to know something about it, too. You scared me out of a day's growth! I pride myself on keeping up with things, but, for a minute, I thought I'd been scooped. Now write me. You are a busy person, but busy persons are the ones who know things and write letters. Affectionately, Lyndon"

Another time he said: "Dear Bess, The minute I read your letter I got on the telephone to E. W. Brisbane, District Director of the National Youth Association in Waco. He said he would take care of Lila Bess. I told him the mother of Lila Bess had been another mother to me, and something had to be done for her." So he put her on the payroll at Baylor.

B: What year was that, that letter?

S: That was in November of 1934, and then in December, some plans had gone awry they had made, and he said:

"The receipt of your letter today made me feel like a chap who received a letter on the gallows saying it was a big mistake. Two other guys were to blame." He says, "To fail is a thorn in my side, and of course that's true. And then in December of 1939, he said, "Don't let your schedule get so crammed that you can't write me." I always want to hear from you, of course, if there is a hole to get out of, but I also want to hear if there are no

holes. May Santa Claus fill your sack so full it falls off the mantle."

And I had similar letters like that through the years, and then in l965, I had a letter from Lady Bird, and she says--he had been in the hospital--:

"What a dear, sweet letter. Lyndon just beamed when I read it to him. He particularly got a laugh over the picture you gave of his reading about Senator Joseph Bailey. The Texas sunshine has indeed been a good tonic for him. Thank you for taking time to write. It is good to have a friend like you." And she signed it, and then a postscript:

"P.S. I, too, have a memory about Senator Bailey. One of the first books he suggested I read after we married was about Senator Bailey."

B: Is that right? That's great.

S: Then my son died. This is Scotty that he had always known. He died with cancer, and he went through the second World War four-and-a-half years and not a scratch. The Atlantic and Pacific. And twelve years later, he died with cancer. So he wrote me. He said:

"Dear Bess, I was so very, very sorry to learn of the ordeal that you and Scotty and his family went through. I know you have had many lonely and troubled days these past two years, and my heart is heavy to think of them. I'm glad you found the strength and the courage to try to bridge a deep void in your life. Know that I will be thinking of you and hoping to hear from you."

And then in 1942 after a dinner at the Ranch when I was down there, and Lady Bird, watching his diet, tried to get him to eat jello instead of peach cobbler with whipped cream, and he wouldn't do it. He said:

"Dear Bess: Retirement and birthdays are more fun with notes like yours, and,

frankly, they're more fun with peach cobbler and whipped cream."

B: What year was that that she was trying to get him to--?

S: What?

B: What year was that?

S: That was in 1972.

B: Oh, l972. Okay.

S: He says, "I know your advice is good though, and I approve of your politics, too."

Then on May 2 in 1972 I had the last letter from my great and loyal friend before he died from a massive heart attack:

"Dear, dear Bess: I think so much of you and your family and always will, so, of course, it pleased me that you thought of me during this particular time." He had been in this hospital again.

"I, too, am grateful that I'm better and back home, blessed by such wonderful friends. Affectionately, Lyndon"

B: That's about eight months or so?

S: Yes.

Tape 1 of 2, Side 2

B: Back in the year that you knew him in Houston, did you know any of his friends? Did you ever know who he--

S: Yes. A young man about his age, who taught in Sam Houston High School, too, taught something else, was a very good friend. At the moment, I can't think of his name. I knew him well. He was a good dancer, and he loved to go out and have a good meal and where

the good bands were and everything like that, and Lyndon didn't care much for that.

B: Really?

S: He liked to talk and didn't care much for it. But the three of us would go together some time, and then this young man got to going with a reporter on the *Press*, a young woman, and the four of us would go around some. But, outside of that, I never knew many of his friends. He didn't have much of a social life when he was in Houston. Day and night, he worked with these kids, and somewhere in this article I say, he pushed them and didn't exactly scold them, but he pushed them to the very limit of their abilities. He sent his boys to the state, sent them both to the state, and the boys got first place, and his girls got second.

B: Were you there at state?

S: No, I wasn't in Austin. I knew it at the time, and we used a story about it in the *Post*, but I wasn't up here.

B: Did you ever go visit him at home? He was living with Uncle George, his Uncle George. Did you ever know Uncle George?

S: No, he spoke of Uncle George, and Uncle George also was a teacher in Sam Houston High School, many years. And I knew him before I knew Lyndon, but just casually. As a school reporter, I knew him as a teacher like I did a lot of the teachers.

B: What was he like? And how did Lyndon feel about him, or did he talk about him?

S: He didn't talk about him, but I could just see that his--of course, Uncle George was a good deal older than Lyndon, and I don't think that they agreed very much in politics or anything else.

B: Is that right? They argued a lot?

S: I got that impression. He never spoke of him very much. Uncle George was an old bachelor, and he was really an old bachelor.

B: Kind of crusty?

S: And he wasn't in our little social group at all. He was a very good-looking man. I remember him quite well and he taught history, I believe, and he was a good teacher. He was liked. He was there for years, but Lyndon never talked to him very much, and when he did, I think it was more thinking of him as one of the older members of the family that he owed loyalty to and respected, but other than that, he wasn't with him very much.

B: You don't remember any specific things they disagreed on?

S: No, I don't. I don't. I'm sorry.

I did a lot of interviews along in those years. Helen Hayes and Katherine Cornell and Richard Harrison [Rex Ingram], who was a black actor, the Lord in *Green Pastures*. He was the first black man that ever occupied the dressing room at the Majestic Theatre there.

B: Is that right?

S: Any of the first-run theatres. And I interviewed him. And I interviewed Charles Ray, who at that time was a movie star, and Hobart Bosworth, who was a movie star. The Majestic had a program like many of the theatres did at that time. They had Pathe Newsreel and then four acts of vaudeville, and the first act, the big act, of that vaudeville was always the best one, and the others were dogs or something like that. Didn't amount to much, the vaudeville. But Bosworth was one of the first acts of vaudeville at one of them. He was a character actor in plays at the time, and I remember that--I think that later this became

rather common, but at that time it was new to all of us--when he came on the stage, he had a horse that he brought on the stage with him. It was a beautiful horse, and he had a monologue, and he would talk, and then he would turn around and talk to the horse, and the horse would nod his head, and things like that. And he was always dressed in jodhpurs like going on a hunt, and he had his wife with him, and she was a charming person, and they always were there a week, and so while she was there, she had me and the girl reporter, theatre editor on the *Chronicle*, who was a woman--she had us over to lunch with her at the Rice Hotel.

And then I went out in the country for features a lot, and I went down to Brazoria, where there's a historical part of the state, and I went with the county editor, who had a car and was also a photographer, so we took her with us on one of those trips down there, Mrs. Bosworth. Those were nice days, and nothing spectacular, but then just nice days.

Charles Ray had played in a play called *The Coward*, and Frank--I can't remember his last name--quite a well-known player. He was really the star, and Ray was a young man, and this older man was an officer during the Civil War. He was a southern officer. The boy didn't want to go to war, and his father just was--you know, he had to go to war, but he didn't. I remember in one place he ran away. He tried to hide from them. He wouldn't go, and at one time, I remember, when he knew his father was coming home he went up and crawled under the bed. It was a good play, and Charles Ray was a really fine actor, and he was the main one at the program that week.

But he wasn't very nice to the reporters. A lot of them weren't. They felt--some of them felt like they were doing us a favor to come out in the country like that and put on

plays, and he had that attitude at first, but after a few days, he changed his attitude toward us, and he got very friendly with the reporters, and then one day when I was down at the theatre--I would go by there every day as one of my runs--and Mike Kelley was the publicity man, and he said, "Come on in. Ray's in the office." So I went in there, and we all got to talking. I asked him, I said, "Why are you on a vaudeville circuit when you're getting to be famous in Hollywood?" And he said, "Well, I'll tell you. You know, it's not good policy to put all your eggs in one basket." And he says, "I'm learning all sides of this thing, but when I go back, I get through with this run, I'm going back to Hollywood, and I expect to be a director." So he was training himself.

He was the one that in that talk that day, he said, "I will say I think that within five years we'll have movies in our homes." Television. We didn't even know the word, and he prophesied the television.

B: That's vision.

S: That's right. And then Lou Tellegen--I have all that in my book, too--Lou Tellagen. He was a very sad thing. Lou Tellegen was a Shakespearean actor, a stage actor, and very fine, but he married Geraldine Ferrar, the opera singer, and they were married for about five or six years. They were separated when he came to Houston. He was the first act on that vaudeville circuit, and he did Shakespearean plays, scenes from the plays, very fine. Mike Kelley said to me one day, "I don't know how in the world he can go out there, and four times a day just be a fine actor in that, and then in between times he's drunk as a lord."

B: Is that right?

S: "Stays drunk all the time." And he said, "I don't know whether you could interview him or

not, Bess. He probably wouldn't talk to you." I said, "Well, let's try," so we went into his dressing room. He was sitting in a big, old chair over in the corner, and he looked at me when I came in, and he said, "So you're from the newspaper. Well, let me tell you something. The newspapers can't make me, and they can't break me." I just laughed at him, and I tried to get him to talk about his past, and his experiences and so forth. I couldn't get him to stay on the subject. He wouldn't talk very much. He was very surly, and, finally Mike, who had stayed out in the corridor waiting to see how I got along, came to the door and called me, and I went on with him. And so, when I left, Tellegen was saying to me, "The newspapers can't make me--"

[Laughter]

And not very long after that, while he was still on that vaudeville circuit in some other city, I don't know where, he killed himself. And one biographer said, "He stabbed himself with a rusty scissors." I don't know if that was true, but that was written in the paper. That was a sad case, for he was a very talented man and a good-looking man. And not very old: between fifty and sixty or something like that at that time.

I had a lot of experiences. Helen Hayes made three different appointments with us for me--for the papers to come and see her, and when we'd get there, she wasn't there. She didn't show.

B: Really?

S: And we found one time that she had been down at Galveston all day at the beach. So she finally told Mike Kelley that--not Mike. I've forgotten this boy's name, but he was the publicity man at the theatre; his name was Kelley. She told him that she would talk to us,

she would see us, right after the play that night. She was just putting on one performance, and it was *Mary, Queen of Scots*, a beautiful play. Right after the play that night, she said she'd come down to the footlights, for us to come down there, and she'd talk to us a little while. So, after twice standing us up, why, we all went down there, and it was a beautiful play, and she did, of course, a beautiful job. She is a wonderful actress. It was nice, and so when we went down to the footlights, we waited for a minutes, and a young woman came out on the stage and looked down at us down there, and she says, "You may each ask Miss Hayes one question." We stood there for a minute, and I said, "You mean we have to interview Miss Hayes through you?" And she said, "Yes, and you can ask one question."

Well, the man on the *Press* was a man. He didn't say anything; he just turned and walked away. I said, "I don't think I have any questions for Miss Hayes." But the *Chronicle* reporter, a woman, stayed because she had a young cub reporter with her from Huntsville, and she was so thrilled to meet Helen Hayes that Ann Mary from the *Chronicle*--she just couldn't turn her down so she stayed, and they talked to Miss Hayes through this girl for a few minutes. Mary didn't write up the interview, but she was there. And I went on back because I was working on a morning paper. After every one of these things, I had to go back that night and write my story that night, and so I went on back after that and wrote the review of the play, and when I turned it in to my City Editor, Max Jacobs, I said, "Jake, I have a little story here that you'll probably throw in the wastebasket." I just handed it to him with the review. I had written a little story. You know reporters don't write headlines, but I wrote the headline on this. I said, "Ladies in Waiting."

[Laughter]

And I'll tell you just exactly what happened. The next morning when the review came out, why this little story led it, with a black border all around, boxed, you know, right by the story in the paper. As I said in my book, I know that Miss Hayes, if she ever knew about that, she'd laugh with me about it because she's still a great actress, still a great woman, still working.

B: Yes. That's great.

S: Some of them--now Eddie Cantor. Oh, he was nothing.

B: Really?

S: Yes. And you know at that time he was a musical comedy star, one of the top ones, and he came to Houston with just a small group, and with the exception of himself and one young girl, the show they put on could have been put on by any high school.

B: Is that right?

S: Yes. And he was very arrogant with the reporters. We went up to the Rice to meet him, but we just left in a few minutes and didn't write a thing about it. And then a lot of them are like that. I guess they still are. But I had a lot of friends, too, among them, so fine experiences.

I had one experience. Eleanor Roosevelt I interviewed two different times.

B: Did you?

S: Charming person. Just a charming person.

B: How did you get to interview her?

S: Well, she came there sponsoring--wanting to organize a local group that would sponsor a work training center for young people. This was during the recession. So many people

were out of work, especially young people, and she was very concerned about the young people, and she was at the Rice Hotel, and we all went down there, the three reporters from the three papers. We'd go down there for an interview, and, when we got down there, there were reporters from the high school papers.

She had a suite, and she was back in her bedroom, and we came in this little sitting room and were standing there waiting. She came in in just a few minutes, and she looked around, and she said, "What a nice welcome!" And she said, "Now, I'll take this big chair over here, and that will be my throne," and she said, "Now, all you children sit right around here at my feet in a semi-circle, right in front of me. We'll let the reporters sit where they can." So she paid a special attention to these young people.

She was a very considerate and kind person. And, you know, she was very homely, her features, and her pictures showed her so very homely, and she did not have a good speaking voice. It was too high and squeaked a little bit. We had radio in those days, and she would make radio addresses. And so I was prepared not to like her very much, but I went away from there just loving her because she was so kind and so considerate in every way and so devoted and dedicated to the thing she was trying to do. Then the next time she came through, it was for one of the feminine causes that she worked for quite a bit; I've forgotten just which one. She was down here only a short time, and none of the other papers interviewed her, but through a friend, I knew she was there, and I called her. They were going to Galveston, and they asked me to go with them. I sat in the back seat of a car with her all the way to Galveston and all the way back and visited with her and talked to her. She was just a charming person.

B: Do you remember what you talked about? Do you remember what you interviewed her about?

S: Well, some about the work that she was there to do, and then she asked me as many questions as I asked her.

B: Is that right?

S: And when she found out I had a boy and a girl, why she talked a lot about my children, and then she talked about young children as a whole. She asked me what ambition I had for them, what I wanted them to do, and were they old enough to know what they wanted to do. So we talked a good deal of just personal things about our families, and I said, "Well, I don't have as big a family as you do. I just have one son." And she said, "Yes, I know. Sometimes, when they're young, it's quite a hardship to have a big family." But she says, "Mine are all grown now and can take care of themselves, and they're a joy to me," and things like that. We didn't have any particular--

B: What year was that approximately?

S: I would say it was between 1938 and 1941 or 1942. Right in there. It was before the war was over, but it was still in the end of the depression. The depression started in 1929 and all through the 1930s. And this was probably around 1938 or 1939. Right in there.

B: Do you remember when LBJ decided to take that job as secretary [with Richard] Kleberg?

S: Well, he first had--let's see--

B: I mean, do you recall--

S: I knew he was a secretary, yes. The first time he went to Washington.

B: Right. And he was in Houston teaching when he got that job.

S: Well, he didn't teach there but one year, so it was evidently right after that. I can't--it's hard for me to say by years, but I'll say this. He was only twenty-three years old when he taught there. So if you want to look that up--

B: No, but I just was wondering if you remember; did he talk to you about that?

S: No. No. He did not. He became the Texas Director of the Youth Administration, and I saw him, and he talked to me a good deal about that. But he was not teaching at that time, and I didn't see him in person very much. He'd come to Houston once in a while. He got this job for Lila Bess in Baylor, my daughter, and then when Scotty went to A&M [Texas A&M University], why he got the same kind of work for him. They were paid $35.00 a month, and I told the kids, I said, "That's your spending money, now. Lyndon's giving you your spending money."

B: So he got them jobs with the National Youth Administration?

S: Yes. Right. It was for college--needy college students, and Lila Bess worked in the office. She typed. She had taken a typing course, so she typed and worked in the office. Scotty--let's see--what did he do? He worked with the band, the director of the band, in some way. I don't remember just what he did, but Scotty wasn't in A&M very long.

I've often told people that I worked my children's way through school. They did a little bit like this, you know. But I went to these schools, and I went to the presidents, and I told them my situation and what I could do, and I said, "I can do publicity for your school if I can get the names of every student that has any kind of an honor or whatever that you'd like to have in the paper. You give me the name of the students, their parents' names, and the newspaper in their hometowns." I got the whole list, and when they'd let me know, I

would send stories to the newspaper in their hometowns, you know.

I put them in San Marcos Academy because when they were thirteen and twelve, my mother was getting too old to be with them, and she had to go back to my brother's ranch where she had her apartment. I worked at night, and I couldn't let them run on the streets, so I put them in San Marcos Academy, and I wrote brochures and catalogues and publicity and things like that for their schooling.

And they helped me, too. Now Scotty, when he was in San Marcos, he was a waiter in the junior boys' dining room, and when he was a senior, he was a waiter in the senior boys' dining room, and that helped to pay for his uniform and things like that. Both of them helped me. But Scotty--I told him when I put him in A&M--and he played in the band down at San Marcos, and he played many band instruments. I said, "Now, Scotty, you cannot belong to the A&M band." He wanted to take a chemical engineering course. I said, "You're going to have labs, and it's going to be a hard course, and they're out of town every weekend in the football season," and his lab was on a Saturday morning. So I said, "You cannot join that band!" "Okay."

So he went down there, hadn't been there but about a week, and leaving with a class one day, the building was over here, and he had to go catty-cornered across the campus over here to the dining room, and the band played right out in the middle of the campus every day. He passed by there, and they were not playing at the time, and he picked up one instrument and played a little bit, picked up another and played a little bit. The band director heard him, so he came over there, and he says, "Well, which one do you like?" He said, "I like the trombone." He said, "Well, play me something," so he played the *St. Louis*

Woman on the trombone. The band director took him right over there and signed him up for the band, and he let him do it. Scotty let him do it. He flunked out. He missed all of his labs, you know, and he flunked out. Well, when he did, he couldn't go back the last half of the year. They won't let them come back that half. They have to wait for the next year. You know how it is. And so he couldn't go back.

Well, before that, Lila Bess was older than he was, so Lila Bess had married. She married while she was still in school. She married the son of two of the professors who taught in Baylor, but I kept her in school. She lived in their home. They had a great big house and a daughter just Lila Bess' age, and so they were all in school, and the parents taught in Baylor, so they were just all a Baylor family. But I paid all of her school expenses, and she helped me, as I told you, with this. So she had graduated in 1940, but Scotty--he went down there, and then he flunked out.

Well, he came back to Houston. I had a home in Houston, and I said, "Well, I've done all I can do for you, Scotty. I've worked all through San Marcos and now, and you disobeyed me when you went and took the band. Now you're going to have to go work this half a year." I said, "If you want to go to work and save your money, then I'll help you go back to A&M next fall." "Okay." So in just a little while, he had a job, and he worked from four o'clock in the afternoon to midnight, and it was in a machine shop where he worked a machine. He had never done that in his life. I was scared to death because I was afraid he was going to cut a finger off or a hand off or something, but I didn't say a word. And that's where he worked, and he'd get up in the morning, and he'd have a lot of time during the day. After he had had the job a little while, he called me one day, and I was

working. He called me at the *Post*. He said, "Mother, I'm out at the University of Houston, and I'm in Dr. Miller's office." Dr. Miller was one of the professors, and I knew him and Scotty knew him. And he says, "I can take two courses out here and still hold my job. I have plenty of time. I can take two courses and make up some work," and so forth. He says, "Will you pay for it?" I said, "No." That's the hardest thing I ever did.

B: I bet.

S: But I said, "No. I won't pay for it. You're working. You don't have to pay any room and board at home, so if you want to save your money and you can work it out, why you can take the courses, but I won't pay for it." So Dr. Miller got on the phone. He says, "Mrs. Scott, I think he's ready to do this. I think he will really do well at it," and so forth. I told Dr. Miller then. Scotty had not told him why he wasn't in A&M, and I told Dr. Miller. And I said, "Now I've been working his way through school for four years, and I'm not going to do it. If he wants to do it bad enough, why he can do it."

Well, he did. He did it, and so next fall, I helped him; he went back in A&M. But on December 7, that same fall--it was 1941--Pearl Harbor. He called me at the *Post*. He said, "Mother, if I stay here, they'll get me in the army. I don't want in the army. I want in the navy. Will you sign my papers?" He was nineteen, but a boy in those days was not an adult until they were twenty-one. Well, when I got his letter--he didn't call me; it was in a letter--I was standing there in the managing editor's office at the *Post*, Lloyd Gregory, and I held it up, and I said, "I know what that is." He said, "Let him go, Bess." He had a son just the same age, and I said, "You going to let Lloyd go?" And he said, "Yes, I am. It's his life." Well, that one thing that Lloyd said to me settled things right there for me, "It's his

life." And I hadn't been thinking of it that way, so I told Scotttie, "Yes, come home," I'd sign his papers. Within a week he was in San Diego in boot camp. He was in the war four-and-a-half years. The Navy Twelve had a program in those days--am I making this too long for you?

B: No, no! No.

S: The navy had a program called the V-l2. About in the middle of Scotty's career in the navy, on the recommendation of his officers and on the basis of an examination that they would give them, two boys were selected from each ship to come home and go to college, and the time that they would go to college was in accordance with how much they had had before. So he came back, and they sent him over to Louisiana, Southwestern Louisiana Institute--it's now a university--for twelve months. On the train from San Diego over to Lafayette, I believe it is--Louisiana--there were several of navy boys on. They were horsing around, and somehow, he caught his leg under his seat, and a boy fell on it and broke his leg. They wired ahead, and they met him, the ambulance, and took him to a hospital there and put a cast on his leg. With the crutches, he went on to his classes, and the girls were all signing his cast, so he wrote me, "They think I'm a war casualty, and I just let them think it." Oh, Scotty could get by anywhere. He had that kind of a personality.

B: It sounds like it.

S: [He was] a good-looking man. He just let them think it.

B: Why not? Get the advantages.

S: Well, he stayed there twelve months, and then he was sent to Ithaca, New York, to midshipman's school, and he came out lieutenant, junior grade, in the navy, and he'd been in

the Atlantic all that before. He went to Murmansk, Russia, in destroyers, convoys. So when they put him back in, they sent him to the Pacific and on a destroyer, doing the same thing but in the Pacific, and so he was in Tokyo Bay when Japan surrendered, in his ship, and four-and-a-half years altogether. But, in the meantime, he had married a girl that he met in Louisiana when he was going to school there. Also on the ship, he transferred, in just a little while after he got on the ship, to the engine room. When he wrote me that, I wrote him back, and I said, "That distresses me. You wouldn't have a chance if a bomb hit you and you're in the engine room." He said, "Well, I wouldn't have a chance anyway."

He was given college credits for the work he did in the engine room in the navy, and when he came out, he could have finished in A&M in one year, but he had married. As soon as he got to Houston, why he found him work immediately, and he said, "Why should I go down and study theory of what I'm doing?" He never did go back, but he was a very successful man. Sales engineer. Mechanical engineer. And was just in the prime of his life and his career, forty-eight, when he died of cancer.

B: Right.

S: But like Eleanor Roosevelt said, "They were not too much fun when they were little." I had two babies, you know, just eighteen months apart. But they were a joy when they were older.

B: So when LBJ was National Youth Administration director you say he would sometimes come through Houston.

S: Yes--

B: And would he see you?

S: --once in a great while, and when he did, he always called me. Always called me. I always saw him some way or other. Either I went down to the hotel, or he came out to the *Post* or something. Maybe we had a lunch together or something. Just a short time I'd see him, and he was always interested in Scotty and mother especially.

B: Did he talk to you about the National Youth Administration?

S: Not much. Not much. He was very busy and liked it. Was that--I'm not sure--was that after he was Kleberg's secretary?

B: Yes. He was Kleberg's secretary.

S: Well, when he finished that, he went on, I guess, to the Senate, or was he a representative? I've forgotten.

B: In the House.

S: He was in the House first. Yes. That's where he went. From there he went to that, so he was in Washington most all the time and most of the contacts I had with him after that was by telephone.

B: Was it?

S: Yes, and usually that was just a personal call. And then I called him about Lila Bess' experiences in Germany, and then he always tried to keep up with Scotty. He was very fond of Scotty. Scotty was very fond of him. They were a lot alike. They were a lot alike in that outgoing personality and never saw a stranger, made friends so easily. Scotty was black-eyed and black-haired like Lyndon was, you know, and Lila Bess, my daughter, was very blond, and Lyndon and Scotty were just a lot alike. A lot alike. So, I enjoyed Lyndon. I loved him.

B: You knew Mrs. Johnson too, didn't you? When did you meet her?

S: Well, I guess the first time I met her was when I was telling you about when Lyndon and Albert Thomas were there, and they had both spoken to a group at the Rice Hotel, and afterwards, they just had a sort of an informal reception for them all; everybody went up to speak to them. I met her, and Luci was only about twelve years old, but I didn't see her very much. She didn't live in Houston, and it was after he had left Houston that he came back, that she was with him. So I didn't see her very much. But after they were on the Ranch. I remember one Sunday morning I was across at a neighbor's, having a cup of coffee with her, and they called me back to the house and said Mrs. Johnson was on the telephone.

B: Oh, really?

S: And she wanted me to come up there. It was one Saturday morning. She wanted me to come up for Sunday dinner. I had a granddaughter who lived here, and, of course, I drove then, so I drove up here and went on out there for Sunday dinner, and we went to the lake in the afternoon. There was a group with us. Jack Valenti--I knew him in Houston, you see, and he was there at that dinner. Lyndon's business manager who stayed at the Ranch all the time--I don't remember his name--he was with us. And Mrs. Johnson. And one or two others that I met when I was there; I didn't know them until I went up there. We went out there. A lot of them went in the boat, and Mrs. Johnson went with them in the boat. I just never did visit with her very much. I didn't have the opportunity. She was always real nice to me. When I first went there that Sunday morning, she had gone to church, and Lyndon had--a deer had run into the wire fence way off somewhere, and one of the men had come

for him, and they went up there to try to get that deer out of the barbed wire fence. I was just settled down at the house, right in the library just reading, when Lady Bird came in from church, and she apologized. She thought Lyndon would be with me, you know, and so forth. Then she said, "Well, come on, and let's take a drive around the Ranch." That was the first time I was ever down there. So I got in the car with her, and we drove around, and she drove up in that area where they were, and Lyndon got out of that car and came over and got in ours and drove ours, and we drove around for quite a while on the Ranch. And then in the afternoon we went to the lake.

And another time when I was up there, in the afternoon, he took us down to his childhood home, you know, and so forth, and she was with us. But otherwise, I never was with her very much. Very charming person, and she's another one that the pictures don't do her justice.

B: Yes, that's true.

S: Yes. She's a beautiful woman and such a charming woman, you know, and to see her picture, you don't think that so much. And I met the girls. I met Luci--the last time I saw her was about three or four years ago, since I've been here, and she was at a little program over at the LBJ Library. We were outdoors, up on that little hill where there are benches and so forth, and it was a poetry reading program. She read two or three of her verses. Some others read some verses, and that's the last time I saw her. But I never did know the girls very well, just met them.

[Interruption]

L.E. Jones and Gene Latimer were the boys, and Margaret Epley and Evelyn Leigh were

the girls, and they were second in the state.

B: You don't happen to know what those girls' married names are?

S: I don't know. You want me to say that again?

B: Yes.

S: "The Lyndon I knew was a driving, intensely ambitious man. He was a sensitive, complex man, giving freely of himself to those he trusted, a man with an infinite capacity for loyalty. He was a self-promoting man with many faults. Like all persons of vast achievements, he had bitter enemies. In his heart he deplored this. It was his nature to crave appreciation and affection. He thirsted for knowledge, welcomed competition, and gloried in victories, but he was generous in heart and spirit and, above all, he never forgot a friend." That's what I think of him.

End of Tape I and Interview I

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

BESS WHITEHEAD SCOTT

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Gary Whitehead, of San Angelo, Texas, co-executor of the estate of Bess Whitehead Scott, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interview conducted with Bess Whitehead Scott, on March 31, 1997, in Austin, Texas, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcript shall be available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recording may be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Gary Whitehead — 2-4-08

Donor — Date

Sharon Fawcett — 4-15-2008

Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries — Date

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

BESS WHITEHEAD SCOTT

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Elaine Davenport, of Dripping Springs, Texas, co-executor of the estate of Bess Whitehead Scott, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interview conducted with Bess Whitehead Scott, on March 31, 1997, in Austin, Texas, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

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Elaine Davenport — Donor — February 19, 2008 — Date

Sharon Fawcett — Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries — 4-15-2008 — Date