

INTERVIEW II

DATE: January 16, 1980

INTERVIEWEE: EMILY CROW SELDEN

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: The Beverly Sheffield residence, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: Before I turned on the tape, you were talking about where you ate your meals.

S: We used to eat at Wukasch's. We ate there most of the time. It was very handy to the campus, and the food was delicious and very reasonable. Their pies were especially delicious. We got to know and like Isabelle Wukasch there, I think.

G: And you mentioned that you ate at another place when--

S: Oh, we used to go to Luke's when we felt we could afford to splurge a little bit. What I remember about Luke's was their lamb chops. I almost always ordered them; so did Bird. We both like Luke's, the Driskill, too.

G: Yes. I gather that Mrs. Johnson had plenty of money.

S: She had plenty of money, but she never spent it lavishly. I think that was because of her upbringing. Her father didn't believe in spending money needlessly. Oh, she could have bought all of her clothes at Neiman-Marcus, which then was the store. And I'm sure her father would have let her have a new car, but she drove an old Buick. And she behaved as though she didn't have much money, but I knew she had plenty. Lyndon had to sort of make her spend money on her clothes

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after they got married. But when she was at the University she never spent much on anything for herself. She never wanted to seem to have more money than most of her friends had.

G: She attended St. David's Episcopal Church there.

S: In Austin, yes. That's where we [went].

G: Do you recall who the minister was there?

S: No, I don't. I think he had a beautiful voice, that's about all I remember about him, and I remember saying to Bird I wasn't sure just how sincere he was because he sounded so great, as though he were performing, in a sense. But I don't remember who he was. I remember the one that was here for a long time and just recently died, Charles Sumners, because he married Sam and me, and I had known his sister in Dallas. She was with the Episcopal youth group there.

But she is a staunch Episcopalian, Bird is. I am, too.

G: Anything on going to the theater at the University?

S: Well, we went to everything that was on. I really and truly don't remember a single play we saw, but we went to everything. But I don't remember the names of any plays. I can't remember even which shows I saw in Dallas and which shows I saw in Austin. I know Helen Hayes toured in Queen Victoria. I don't remember whether I saw that in Dallas or Austin. I think Katherine Cornell toured, and I saw her, I know, in Dallas, not Austin.

G: Did she herself ever act in any plays?

S: No. Now that, I think, does show that she was shy, but then that was true of most of us at that time, because the Curtain Club had excellent

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actors. Zachary Scott was one, you know. He was the pre-eminent actor on campus. It didn't even occur to Bird or me to try out, and I doubt, frankly, that we would have gotten any part.

G: There's some indication that she really enjoyed listening to classical music.

S: Now that's a point I'm glad you brought up. Yes, it is true. My father was an opera buff, particularly of Verdi's operas, but of the Italian operas in general. He said Wagner was all sound and fury. We had a whole lot of records. Father was crazy about Caruso, so we had a lot of Caruso records. Bird thought Caruso was great, too. And the first time that I went to the Ranch before it was really a ranch--they had just bought the old Johnson home, you know--on the phonograph, if I remember correctly, was a Caruso record, either on it or laid just by the side of the phonograph. So I think Bird grew up with good music. Our liking for music was one of the things we had in common.

Oh, and I want to put in here, too, something I had forgotten to tell you last time. When we were still at St. Mary's, Bird often took me home with her for the weekend. One time she told me that her mother had gotten her a harp. And she said when Bird was just a little teeny tiny girl, but her mother was crazy about music and could see Bird as playing the harp. I've never forgotten that. Bird never did play the harp, insofar as I know, but she remembered fondly that her mother had wanted her to make sweet music on the harp.

G: Did her courses come easy for her?

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S: I think they came easy, but she studied hard anyway. As I say, when she had an exam or a paper to write she would come home early from a date to work on it, or she would stay at the library and work. You know, she graduated cum laude.

G: Yes. Did she normally study in her room or in the library?

S: I remember her studying in her room more, but that's because I was there. But I'm fairly sure she studied more in the library. Bird kept up with all her courses--unlike Cecille [Harrison] Marshall. We would often wait until the last minute. And as far as I know, Bird never cut a class, and Cecille and I did. I had a B average, and you could have so many cuts, so it didn't matter. But I don't remember Bird's ever cutting a class.

G: Anything else on her favorite courses there?

S: Well, I know journalism and history. English history was her favorite. I wish I could remember her professor's name, he was very well known, I remember the anecdote she said that he told all of his students the first day of the class. I think he said something like, "Anne Boleyn wasn't really beautiful, but oh, those eyes!" And with his hands outlined a woman's body.

G: Well, let's talk about some other activities here at the university.

S: Okay.

G: I gather that she was on a council of the UT sports association or an association for intramural sports. Do you remember that or anything about it?

S: I'm sorry I don't.

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G: And that she was secretary of Theta Sigma Phi.

S: Yes, I did know that, yes.

G: What did she do in that connection, do you remember?

S: I don't know. I think I am right in remembering that DeWitt Reddick and somebody Thompson were her two favorite professors in journalism.

G: Didn't she return to UT for an additional year in order to get another degree?

S: Yes. She got her first degree in journalism, I'm almost positive, and her second degree in history.

G: Do you recall why she did that?

S: Well, for one thing, she did it because she really wanted to get the second degree; she was interested in history. The other reason is that she loved being at the University of Texas and hated to leave. I had hoped to stay on. I finished in mid-term and then came back to get my degree officially, a diploma. I had hoped that my father would say, "Just go on and finish out the year," but he didn't, so I never did say anything more about it. But I felt the same, I didn't want to leave either. Later I went to UNC and got my master's degree in drama with a minor in English--my B.A. major had been in English. Bird said that she wished that she had gotten a master's instead of a second bachelor's--well, I don't know instead of, but she wished at that time she had gotten her master's and maybe not gotten a second degree. But what she would have gotten a master's in I don't know. I know that she now says she regrets that she didn't go on and get a master's.

G: Did she talk about her plans for the future at this point?

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S: No, not much. I think like all of us at that time, she was just thinking that she would get a job. Frankly what I thought she was going to do was to get a newspaper job, first on the Austin newspaper. She was good enough, but at that time it wasn't easy to get a job, and I'm not even sure she tried to get one on the Austin paper. But I had just assumed, and I think she did, too, she would get a job somewhere on a newspaper. As you say, you were talking about her being a drama critic. Bird was too sensible to think that she could just go from Austin to New York and get a job immediately as a drama critic, but I'm sure that was a goal.

G: Well, I gather that she did return to Karnack and planned to spend that year remodeling the Brick House after she got her second degree. Did she talk about that at all?

S: Not very much. I know that she said she was going to do that but I think it was to keep her occupied. She missed her life at the University of Texas and the variety of acquaintances she could make there and just a different, more abundant life you might say. Bird came to see us after graduation. I guess it would have been from Karnack, but I was thinking it was from Austin, before she and Lyndon were married. And she brought this big photograph of Lyndon to show us.

G: You were in Dallas then?

S: Yes, I was in Dallas.

G: She came up for the OU game.

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S: Maybe so, I don't remember that. Anyway, she came up to Dallas and stayed with us and brought us this photograph of Lyndon and said what did we think of it. She pointed out his good features, his bad. She said, "He doesn't take a good picture." Which is certainly true, he never did take a good picture. But she said, "This is as good as I've seen." Then she pointed out "well, his ears are a little too long," she said. And she said, "But you know he's tall, he's big, he's the only man I've ever met who is taller than my daddy." And she had always--you know, her daddy was in some ways a model, as my father was with my husband. And she said that Lyndon was a big, tall man and taller than her father, and really very exciting and quite good looking and energetic and ambitious. Then she asked us what we thought. So [what] we all said was, well, he was a very nice looking man. That's about all we could tell from his photograph. I don't remember whether she mentioned to anybody but me that she might possibly marry him.

G: Do you recall her talking to you about it?

S: I think I do. Now you see, this is where your memory can go wrong. I know I remember her talking a whole lot about him, particularly after we'd gone to bed, chatting at night about Lyndon. I think she did say that to me, and possibly she said it to my mother and father, because she felt very close to them. I think she did, but I wouldn't swear to it.

G: Did she seem at that point that she was going to do it?

S: I wouldn't say that she seemed at all definite that she would do it, but it seemed a definite possibility. But one thing when she was

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there--and I don't know if it was that time or not--my sister remembers, which I didn't, that while she was at our house she got several long distance calls from Lyndon. And Lois said she thought that was the most romantic thing she'd ever heard of, a man calling his girl long distance. Lois thought he called from Washington or Austin, but anyway, wherever he was, he did call her, and Lois, my sister, said, well, somebody like that who calls you long distance is somebody who's crazy about you. And that you'd be almost bound to be crazy about him.

And I do remember when Bird did get married, which was the only time I know she did anything suddenly and somewhat impulsively, if you could call it impulsive after she'd thought about it, because she was thinking about it certainly when she was at our house. But my mother and father who were very conservative, and believed that you should know each other a long time before you got married, weren't worried about Bird's marrying like that. Now if it had been me for certain, or anybody else, they would have been really upset. But they weren't, because it was Bird. But even so it was hard for any of us to imagine Bird's doing anything that quickly. It seemed to me it was only three weeks or so she had known him. I know that she met him through Gene, Gene Lasseter.

G: Well, I think, let's see, they met on September 5 and were married on I think November 17.

S: Well, it was more than three weeks. It was more than three weeks, but it sure wasn't very long.

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G: Well, you weren't there when they met, but have you heard any of the details of--

S: Of the courtship?

G: Yes.

S: All I know is that he kept calling her and sending her flowers and writing to her and doing everything he could while he was away, and he was away a good part of the time. And I think he said as soon as he met her, whether he said it to her or not, that she was the one he was going to marry. I think he said it right to her. And sure enough, he did. Marry her, I mean.

G: Did what you'd heard about him through her seem to fit in with what you knew about him later on directly?

S: Yes, it did, except that I didn't realize then the extent of his ambition or his abilities, really. He was, as far as I was concerned, a nice man and by that time I was in favor of Roosevelt and I approved of Lyndon's support of FDR and Bird seemed happy. But no, I wouldn't say I knew he'd become a real political power.

G: Do you think she realized the extent of his ambition?

S: I know that she did know that he was going to get somewhere.

G: Why? Did she say so?

S: I don't know that she said so but all the time we were at the University she made it clear that two qualities she respected were ambition, the desire to succeed, and the ability to keep after something. That's the reason somebody like Vic McCrea, she couldn't take seriously. He was lazy. She thought he was plain lazy. And some of

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the other boys, I remember one, Wayne Livergood, I mentioned that she was very fond of who was just as sweet as he could be, showed no signs of ambition either. I don't think she ever said Wayne could never amount to anything, because that isn't true, but he had inherited a lot of money from his father who had invented something for an oil well, I think, so he didn't have to work. But she was never serious about him, and really never serious about anybody who she thought wouldn't amount to something, wouldn't work hard and get there. And Lyndon, I could tell as soon as I met him, was going to get somewhere.

G: How was this manifest?

S: Well, you've met Lyndon so you know it was because--how can I express it? He was always doing something and excited about it and energetic and he worked hard. And if you do that you usually do get somewhere, that's the only thing I can say.

One thing very sweet he did for me, it was nothing to do with ambition, I can't remember whether it was the first or second [time I met him]. I must have met him before. I don't remember when I first met him. He and Bird came to Dallas and I was working temporarily at Titcher-Goettinger. I was called Base Utility, because I was supposed to go anywhere over the whole basement and help somebody out. If there was a crowd in one place, then I could go there and help that person, supposedly, but when it came to corsets and materials, I had to get someone else.

Nevertheless, Bird and Lyndon came to pick me up after work one night. They were in town--I don't know what the occasion was, whether

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they were coming to town to see us or what. Anyway, they came to pick me up at Titcher's to go to our house, I think. I'm pretty sure we went to our house first and then went together. But anyway, Lyndon came to pick me up. Bird was driving around the block, and Lyndon came in. Well, I must have met him before because I recognized [him] as soon as he came in. I was struggling trying to get my sales slips to match, you know, what I had written down here and what I had written down there, and I was going crazy because my writing is messy anyway, and I knew they were probably waiting for me, and here I was not getting the damn thing straight. Lyndon came in and he took a look at my messy slips. I told him what I was trying to do, and so Lyndon just took over. I've never forgotten that. In just a few minutes he had them all straight and so I could leave, punch the time clock and go out. That is one of my very fond memories of Lyndon.

G: Do you think there was a point though where she realized that the extent of his ambition and the extent of what he could accomplish?

S: I think she certainly began to think that at the time that he was [Richard] Kleberg's secretary. And when he was running the NYA, boy, he did a terrific job with that. I know the first time he ran for Congress, she wasn't at all sure he'd win. Well, I don't know what she said, but I know that she thought he would become a congressman, because he wanted to and he was qualified. And after that he did so well I knew that she knew that he would continue. Yes, I don't think there's any doubt about that.

G: Well, when did you find out that they were married?

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S: Right afterwards.

G: She called, or. . . ?

S: I don't remember whether she called or wired or what, but anyway I found out right soon. Cecille was there, because it was in San Antonio. I can't remember just how I heard, all I remember is the fact that he had trouble with the rings, and I think he got some at the ten-cent store.

G: How did they happen to get married in San Antonio rather than Austin?

S: I don't know except maybe he had a--I don't know how they happened to, unless Cecille was over there and it was just like this, I understand, that they decided. So maybe they went because Bird had a real good friend over there. I never did think to ask her. And I imagine Lyndon had some friends over there, too, but I never thought to ask about that. It just happened like that.

Now let's see, well, I remember one thing about a campaign I did help Lyndon on. Help, I mean I sent out--you know, worked at the office. And that's the one he lost, so it must have been pretty early on. And Bird said that if Lyndon wins, she and I were going to take a trip through New England. That didn't make me work any harder, but anyway, I kept on and he didn't win. So we've never made the trip together to New England. I've been there and she's been there, but we've never made the trip together.

G: That would have been 1941, I guess.

S: I told you, I don't know anything about dates.

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G: Okay. They lived in Corpus [Christi] for a short time after they got married. Did you see them before they moved to Washington?

S: No. I didn't see them, I certainly didn't see her when she was at Corpus, no. If I did, I don't remember.

G: She moved to Washington.

S: From Corpus?

G: Well, of course Congress was out of session and they were just staying there for I think it was a period of weeks or months. Did you see them any in Washington while he was working for Kleberg?

S: No. I saw him when he was a congressman, but not when he was working for Kleberg.

G: Well, when he was head of the NYA here, you lived in Austin somewhere, didn't you?

S: Yes, and they had this house, a duplex on Dillman. Was that when it was that they had that duplex on Dillman with John and Nellie Connally?

G: That was later. I think here he was living in Dr. Montgomery's house over on San Gabriel [Pedro?].

S: No, that must have been when I was in Dallas, because I didn't [go there]. The first house I remember was the duplex on Dillman. And I saw a lot more of Bird than I did Lyndon then, because he was always busy, and I saw almost nothing of John Connally. I did see quite a bit of Nellie, and at that time she had this cutest little girl Kathleen whom we just all--Bird and I--adored. Well, you know what happened to Kathleen. It's one of those things that's hard to imagine, to realize could happen to that adorable little Kathleen.

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G: Now, the year that she bought the station and came back and spent a great deal of 1943 in Austin running the station, did you see much of her then? Was that the [time]?

S: Well, you see, I don't remember any dates. I can tell you that I do remember that I was teaching my first job I got, and it seems to me I got it in 1939, the middle of the year. The only job I could get was at Luling. Bird came over to see me there, and the way I remember it is that that's when we went [to Stonewall], that same time, it must have been a weekend. I'm not sure, though, because she came over twice. Anyway, one of the times is when she took me to see the LBJ home place, and she was talking about Lyndon's wanting to buy it so bad, wanting to have his old home. She and I drove down there and she was telling me on the way about the fact that, well, one thing she thought they could do something with there was the peaches, because Stonewall peaches were famous. She said, "I don't know what else we can do, but I know there's some good peaches there." And that's when first I went and saw the phonograph and the old house.

G: This was back in the 1930s?

S: I can't tell you whether this was back in the thirties. I can't tell you any dates except I think it was when I was teaching at Luling, but it may not have been.

G: Because see, they didn't buy the Ranch until 1951 or 1952, I guess.

S: That doesn't seem [right]. The house?

G: Yes.

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S: Well, it seems to me it was way back then when I was in Luling, but don't trust me with any dates at all. But I remember driving down there, and it seems to me more recent. I do remember when she got the station--maybe that was earlier or soon after she'd gotten the station, the KTBC station--Lyndon's calling her. It seemed to me that that was then. She must have had the Ranch fixed up; anyway the phones were connected. And if I remember correctly he called her at the Ranch because there had been so much made in the paper about the station, and I remember Bird's saying to Lyndon, "Well, why can't I just say that I inherited this money?" She told me when she inherited it, and I knew that was the truth. And I was so angry I could have just spit, because here there were all these allegations, you know, Lyndon using his influence buying this station. I remembered when Bird told me about the money that she'd gotten and then about her buying the station. I thought that was earlier, whether that was early or late, I don't know.

G: That would have been 1943 to 1946, probably.

S: Well, whenever it was. See my family moved back to Austin. That's when I was at Luling after they moved to Austin, I think. So I was here part of the time when I wasn't teaching. I was in Luling two years.

G: Did she devote quite a bit of time to that station?

S: Yes, she sure did. She sure did. I think she got it [cheap]. You know, it was practically dying, that's the reason she could buy it cheap. But I knew Bird was good at business, good at managing.

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G: Did she enjoy working at the station?

S: Oh I think so, oh yes.

G: Anything else on the Johnsons during these years?

S: Well, if you don't mind my just--[let's] see, I told you about the fact that of seeing Lyndon's picture, and his coming to Titcher's, and the campaigns. Then I visited them when he was a congressman and a senator, and not when he was vice president. I saw her at the Ranch off and on during those years. Let's see. New York trip, no. Let's see if I can find--I've got something about Mrs. Johnson, Lyndon's mother, Lynda Bird, bluebonnets with Bird, I have most of my notes concerning Bird. If you could ask me some questions I could tell you some things I forgot last time.

G: Well, why don't you just go over it?

S: All right, I'll see if there's anything I haven't told you about. I think I've covered the quick wedding, that Bird called Aunt Effie "Weh," about Bird and my swimming at midnight at Barton Springs after we'd graduated, and about the oil, working on Lyndon's campaign, Bird's. . . .

G: I don't think we've put the bit about the oil on tape.

S: Oh, that's important. Well, one time while we were still at St. Mary's, I went to Karnack to see Bird and we were walking around the grounds and Bird pointed over the fields and said, "They say there's a possibility that they'll discover oil here on Daddy's property." And she said, "I hope to heaven they don't." She said, "It would just ruin everything, all these growing things. And then you see there's a

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lake. That's liable to be ruined. Everything that I love will be gone, and I just hope to heaven they don't discover it." And that's the way she's felt all of her life, that natural beauty is something that must be preserved.

Every spring when we were in school, we'd drive all around and look at the bluebonnets and the Indian blanket and the Drummond phlox, you know. And the drive to Luling was beautiful. I remember doing that in the spring when I was teaching there, and by that road instead of Indian blankets there were Drummond phlox growing with the bluebonnets, and I remember Bird's commenting on that, too. But always, as soon as the bluebonnets started blooming, she and I would go around and look at bluebonnets and lie in them or whatever. And the time Texas had the drought, you probably remember that, she collected bluebonnet seeds, and she reseeded all over I know the Ranch grounds and anywhere else that she could with the bluebonnet seeds, because she was afraid after the drought that they wouldn't come back.

One time when I came down, I think it was to Austin from Chapel Hill, we went out to the Ranch to spend the whole day with somebody who was an authority on wildflowers to have that woman tell Bird the names of all of those wildflowers, the ones the names of which she didn't know. And we spent it seems to me a whole day, a good part of the day anyway, walking all over the grounds and the Ranch. I was her secretary. I sure was a bad choice, because my writing is so bad anyway, writing down the names, the usual names and the botanical names, of all the wildflowers.

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G: It's no surprise, then, that she espoused beautification when she was first lady.

S: Oh, no. That I think is completely natural, and something that she would have done anyway probably, whoever she had married.

And last Sunday, Bev [Beverly Sheffield] and Lois and I drove around Town Lake and Bev was telling me how much was due to Bird, of what had been done there. Bev had started the hike and bike trail way back when he was first head of the recreation department. But he showed me how far--in fact we walked on part of it--the trail goes now by the lake and how beautiful it is with all the plantings. He said that it wasn't the best time of year to see things, but I have seen it in the spring when things are blooming, and in the summer, too.

I'd like for them to plant some altheas there because they bloom so well in the summer.

G: Is there anything else there that we haven't covered?

S: Yes, I want to tell about Bird's taking my little sister, Lois, at the University of Texas and asked her to go horseback riding. And Lois said that Bird took her horseback riding all around, and she thought it was one of the nicest things that a friend of her sister's, her oldest sister, could do for anybody. Because to Bird she'd always been my little sister.

I think I talked about Mr. King and about his taking us horseback riding, and about when he was in Washington later on when Bird was there, she said he was the one that started the Easter egg rolls on the White House grounds, I'm not sure. But he had a lot to do with

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the Easter egg hunts with the children because he was very fond of children. And he was just like an uncle to us, and as I say, crazy about children.

I remember when Bird and I--this is going backwards--were with little Kathleen [Connally], and Bird at that time was just dying to have a baby, too. You know it took a long time before she could have one, but she wanted very much to have some children.

G: Let's see, Lynda Bird was born in 1944, March of 1944.

S: Well, I don't know when she was born, I just know she was born!

G: Was there anything else?

S: Yes. I told you how much Bird and I liked to go on picnics. That's one of my fondest recollections of all our times together is our going picnicking together. Bird's birthday and my mother's birthday came very close together, and often we would celebrate if we were all in [town], if Mother was in town and Bird was in town, their birthdays together. Not necessarily on either one of them's birthday, but anyway, a time they could celebrate their joint birthdays. We would go on cookouts, and Bev would do the cooking; he's a terrific cook indoors or out--particularly outdoors. And we went several times together for the cookouts in the hills, and just Bev and Lois and my mother and Bird to celebrate their birthdays. Usually we went in the hills or to Bull Creek. But one time we went to Rob Roy Ranch, I remember, and had a cookout there. But that's one of the things--those joint birthday cookouts--that I remember very well, and Mother loved it and Bird loved it; we all loved it.

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When I married my husband--we got married here--I said, "Sam, the first thing I want you to do is to go on a cookout in the hills." Lois said, "Do you want any parties?" I said, "I don't want any parties, I'd just like for Sam, the first thing he does in Texas, the first big thing he'll do is go with us on a cookout in the hills. Which we did. But now you can't do that very easily.

And Bird had the rehearsal dinner for Sam and me since Sam's mother and father were dead.

Let's see now, is there anything else? Oh, yes! Well, this has a lot to do with Bird, I guess. I told you about her seeing The Lost Colony when I was in it, and how much she liked it. That was in Manteo, North Carolina on Roanoke Island. Then when Sam was directing The Confederacy at Virginia Beach, Bird came down there and stayed at the motel on the beach. And Bird saw The Confederacy and liked it very much. It was one of Paul Green's better shows. But it was a terrible spot to have it because the planes came over. It was during the Lebanese crisis, and Virginia Beach was a naval base, and the planes came over usually at the wrong time. There would be a battle scene with Lee fighting in the army, and they would fly over--you know how they sound--and drown out the actors and ruin the mood of the show.

Nevertheless, what I was going to say is while Bird was there, somebody from the television station asked her for an interview. She said she'd be glad to, and she and I went to the TV station. But what Bird talked about then was not about her station, it was about The Confederacy, which I thought was very nice. Because she had liked it

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and she remembered The Lost Colony and she did think The Confederacy was a good show and so that's what she spent her time talking about. She just mentioned KTBC in passing.

G: Did you see her at all during that campaign train trip through the South, the Lady Bird Special?

S: Yes. No, I didn't see her during the trip through the South, and I can't tell you why, but I'm sure there was a pretty good reason I couldn't. She didn't of course get to Chapel Hill. Anyway, for some reason I couldn't get over to Raleigh. The time I saw her was . . . when Lyndon was running for vice president, I saw her then. We were in California then. I talked to her the day after the nomination of Kennedy and Johnson.

G: How did she feel about his having accepted the vice presidential nomination?

S: Well, she didn't say and I didn't say, so that I think she was--I think she was pleased--after the initial shock. Because that is the second-most important position in the government, and of course, as they say, just one breath away from the presidency. Frankly, I think she was surprised. I don't know, I can't say that as a fact, but I was surprised, and a lot of people were surprised, and whether he talked it over with Bird beforehand I can't tell you. This is just an impression; I may be wrong.

G: Anything else that we need to cover?

S: Well, let's see. I saw Lyndon when we were at UCLA, and Lynda Bird came out one time. Let's see.

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Oh, I didn't tell you about Bird's having [our rehearsal dinner], too, back far in the past when Bird had the rehearsal dinner for Sam and me, because Sam had no family here, so Bird had the rehearsal dinner for us which was--

G: When was this? What year?

S: Now that I should remember. That was 1951. In 1976 we had our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, and Bird gave a party for us and had all the [family], not just--she had envisioned just my immediate family, but to my surprise, people came from all over the country. It is all over the country because then we had relatives in California and some in Ohio and a cousin in Pennsylvania, relatives and close friends, and since they'd come all this way that we could not go out to dinner without them, so Bird had to change her plans from having just my immediate family, the Crows and their spouses, you know, to include all these extra people. I felt bad about asking her, I felt that I couldn't have these, Sam's sister, for instance, and her husband and a niece, and, well, friends of mine and his and so on, who had come so far not be invited if it were possible. So Bird went all out to do as I wished. It was a big group. Everybody had a good time, and I certainly did appreciate all Bird did.

G: This was held. . . ?

S: At the Ranch.

G: At the Ranch.

S: She knows both my brothers and of course my sister, until our twenty-

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fifth wedding anniversary she hadn't met my oldest brother's wife, but she'd met all the others.

G: Anything else that we. . . ?

S: Well, I want to talk about Mrs. [Sam] Johnson. I didn't see her as often as now I wish I had, but I want to say that she was to me as sweet as she could possibly be. She was a cultured, well-read southern lady. And I couldn't tell at all that she seemed overly ambitious for Lyndon. She certainly talked about him most of the time. Well, she talked about him quite a bit to me because I knew her and Lyndon. But she did not come across as "pushing" him. She was really charming and sweet and somewhat retiring. We usually talked about books. We both liked to read and Bird liked to read, so our conversations were usually about novels or biographies or the arts, with just maybe a casual mention of Lyndon. She'd frequently say how fond she was of Bird, but that was all there was to it.

One time after I was married, I came down here from Chapel Hill to visit Lois. Mother joined us. Bird had said earlier that she wasn't going to be in Texas then, but we could get the keys to the Ranch house from Mrs. Johnson, Lyndon's mother. So I called Lyndon's mother and said I was Emily Selden and at first she didn't know who I was but then she apologized for not [remembering]. She said, "I can't remember your married name," and so on, but she was very sweet. Then we got the keys, and that's the last time I saw her, and I'll regret all my life that I didn't go back to see her. Because we did stay several days just by ourselves, Mother and Lois and me at the Ranch,

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had a wonderful, relaxing time. But I never did go back to see Mrs. Johnson, I felt shy about it, you know. I didn't go back to see her. I wish I had.

G: What sort of books did she read?

S: I can't tell you because I don't remember, but she read all kinds, and would recommend some books that I hadn't read. I was reading chiefly fiction and plays then, and she was reading all good non-fiction or old novels, and I'd know it was something I'd probably like.

G: Do you think Mrs. Johnson, LBJ's mother, Rebekah Johnson, served to help hold the family together, LBJ and his brothers and sisters?

S: I think so, I think also that a lot of it was Lyndon. When I knew him anyway, he took over the family responsibilities. The only one of his family that I met--was it Jorita? His sister?

G: Josefa.

S: Josefa. I didn't meet any of his brothers, but I met Josefa several times. I got to know her fairly well. But I do know that when I knew them that it was Lyndon who took care of them. And I think even when I knew Mrs. Johnson, which, you know, was fairly late, that Lyndon was taking care of the family to a great extent. But going back to what I surmise, I surmise that yes, Mrs. Johnson was the one who held the family together in the early days. And Bird used to say, "If you want to please Lyndon, say something nice or be nice to his mama." I remember her saying that. And certainly he was a devoted son, and I think she was a good mother to all her children.

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Let's see. Oh, I do want to say something, too, about what Bird said when I visited here at the Ranch when Lyndon was vice president. Lyndon and she always called Jack Kennedy "Mr. Kennedy." He was the president, and she never said anything to indicate that there was ever any problem with him and [said] that she was very fond of Jackie Kennedy because Jackie Kennedy had been so sweet to Lynda Bird and Luci, and that President Kennedy told Lynda Bird one time, stopped her in the hall and said, "You're going to be president, maybe the first woman president, but you're going to be president some day." That's how much he respected Lynda Bird. I think that's possible, too, that Lynda Bird may be president. But not the first woman president, because there's giong to be one before too long, I think.

G: Was LBJ happy as vice president?

S: I doubt it.

G: Why do you say that?

S: I don't think anybody who has drive and energy and the qualifications that he had, or anybody even without very many qualifications or drive is going to be happy in a position in which he isn't able to do much, but every single damn president says ahead of time that he's going to give the vice president all these duties to perform that will be so helpful, and he will really be up there doing a whole lot of important things that the president wants done and can't do himself. And instead, as always, it seems to me what Kennedy did to Johnson was to have him just take over some of the social jobs and the travel and some of the tedious things like that. But now I didn't get this

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directly from Lyndon or Bird, of course. I do remember, if this is all right, maybe you better--this may be off the record, what I want to talk next about the election.

G: Sure.

(Interruption)

G: This is LBJ coming to UCLA, right?

S: Yes. And there was a big dinner for him. He made a speech.

G: Was he vice president at that time?

S: I think he was vice president; Sam kept saying he was president then, but I'm sure he was vice president. And we went to the campus, saw him land in the helicopter and later went to dinner. Then afterwards I went up to speak to him, and I told people around him that I knew him but not pushing at all. Then Lyndon saw me, and ran and threw his arms around me, and he said, "Emily, I'm glad to see you," or something like that, which was a very sweet thing, since he was just absolutely surrounded. He was like that.

That's all, I think. This has nothing to do [with anything, but] when we came through here and we went to the Ranch, Bird wasn't there. We went to the Ranch then, Sam, Sammy and I, and what impressed my son were all the television sets, because we didn't have even one television set in Chapel Hill. So that's what he remembered the most vividly, that there were so many TVs at the Ranch. That has nothing to do with anything.

G: Well, I certainly do thank you, and if you think of anything else, you can just add it to the transcript when we type it up.

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S: I've enjoyed our chat. Thank you.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]

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