

INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: DOROTHY TERRITO

INTERVIEWER: Claudia W. Anderson

PLACE: The LBJ Library, Austin, Texas

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A: Mrs. Territo, when did you begin working in Senator Johnson's office?

T: In the spring of 1958 I was asked if I would be willing to take a leave of absence from the Library of Congress and work for a year in Senator Johnson's office. Incidentally, my name was Dorothy Springer at that time.

A: So when you went to his office you were actually working for the Library of Congress?

T: No, I was on leave from the Library of Congress.

A: Was this a service that the Library of Congress normally provided for members of Congress?

T: Mildred Portner was the secretary of the Library of Congress, and one of her functions in addition to many others was to provide, as requested, service to members of the Congress in the paperwork management area. This would involve new members in the House and Senate or older members whose systems were not adequate and they were breaking down on handling current correspondence and current mail.

A: And that's the situation that Johnson was in?

T: The situation in the Lyndon Johnson office was a breaking down of the current mail. He was receiving--I forget at the moment how many pieces of mail a day, but more than could be processed. Senator Johnson liked the mail to be answered within a day or two days and

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they were unable to meet what he considered this appropriate deadline.

I heard a story later that the Majority Leader had asked for a file and Bruce Thomas, who was in charge of the mail room and the file room, was unable to find the file. Senator Johnson asked Bruce Thomas to meet him one Sunday at the Senate and take him on a tour of all of the areas where his records were stored. After visiting the attic of the Old Senate Office Building and viewing the deplorable conditions--they actually had established, with chicken wire and padlocks, storerooms for senators' material that was being retired from current use. It was cold in the winter, hot in the summer and everything was covered with soot.

A: Where were these rooms?

T: In the attic.

Lyndon Johnson happened to have three rooms, three separate little compartments with chicken wire around them and the top of an elevator shaft. The elevator was no longer running. And the files dated from the beginning of his service as senator.

A: As senator or in the House?

T: No, there might have been some House records, but House records, as I understood it, many of them I guess were screened and destroyed. But some House records were brought over and they were in that attic storage area.

A: Had you worked in any other congressional offices before you came to Johnson's office?

T: Yes. When Mrs. Portner received requests from other offices on the Hill, I was the person--she would make the initial visit, discuss the problems with the administrative assistant or whoever was designated to speak with her and then I would be the one who

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would follow through on her visit and do the consultant work. I never worked on the House side; I only worked on the Senate side. And I would go back maybe once a month and check the offices, and if they had problems, and invariably they did, we would discuss what should be done. The preferable way, of course, would be to establish the system when someone came into office, but that rarely happened, at least not in those days.

A: When you first arrived in Johnson's office, who did you work with?

T: Well, as I said, Mrs. Portner came to me one day and asked if I would be willing to go on a year's leave of absence from the Library of Congress and work for Senator Johnson, actually transfer to his payroll. This was agreeable with me, and we had lunch with Juanita Roberts, who had been designated to be the liaison on this program, to sort of oversee it and be liaison on the program with the rest of Senator Johnson's staff. So we had lunch and the three of us seemed to be very compatible. I worked--

A: Who did you work with then?

T: Well, primarily with Juanita, who I must say the success of the program--Juanita was responsible for the success of the program as it related to Senator Johnson's office. I worked in the professional way with Mildred Portner, the two of us worked on what to do and how to do it, but Juanita was the one who opened the doors with the people that worked for Senator Johnson.

A: When you first arrived in his office, how did you begin to tackle the problems and what were your priorities?

T: Well, I think that when I first arrived in the office, the first week was a round of introductions, always explaining to everyone that this was a program that the Majority

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Leader wished full cooperation in, that Juanita was acting on his behalf, and meeting everyone and learning really what they did for the Senator, what their specific task was. Once I had the notes on what they did, you more or less could tell what kind of records they were creating. So far as establishing priorities, a lot of attention was given to the current record situation.

The mail would come into one room that belonged to Bruce Thomas, who had maybe one assistant and then part-time helpers. They were the ones that would be folding the mail and mailing it at night. But Bruce--that's Bruce Thomas--with his helper, they would open the mail and if it was case mail, meaning a constituent from Texas who wanted to have something taken care of by a government agency, they would pull the file, attach it to the incoming letter and have it ready to go to the person who was going to take care of that particular subject. They were divided. Arthur Perry and Glynn Stegall handled most of the case mail. As a matter of fact, they handled all of the case mail, and I think they divided--remembering--they divided government agencies between them, the ones that were referred to Social Security and those that were referred to Agriculture, *et cetera*.

So priority was given, of course, to the current records. We didn't try immediately to install what we considered the most satisfactory system, which was the subject approach. They were using generally an alphabetical, which when they needed a subject file, they couldn't find it in the alphabetical file, which was slowing down processing the mail.

A: So what was your approach to cure the problem?

T: Well, I would go to the Library of Congress once in the beginning, once or twice a week I'd walk over. And we'd discuss where Bruce was in the handling of current mail and what we

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could do to help. Ultimately we did install a subject system with a case system that was still alphabetical by individual or by organization. A subject system I recommended that someone in Mrs. Portner's office design some functional equipment and we installed functional equipment that would permit--it was a long, long table the right height for someone not to tire during the day and they could spread all of the incoming mail out and start working faster. It did seem to alleviate some of the initial problems.

My days were generally divided in trying to get to really know the overall picture, at the same time working with Bruce and sometimes working up in the attic to try to discover what files were there.

A: I understand when you came, there was a tremendous backlog just in filing.

T: There was, and Senator Johnson was also receiving.

A: What was Bruce like to work with?

T: Very willing, delighted to have any help that he could possibly have. He was never negative in approach to any change that he felt would be beneficial, and he thought our suggestions were well taken. I worked very closely with Bruce, and gradually began to visit the other offices.

Lyndon Johnson had at that time his state office, the Texas office, that was in the Old Senate Office Building. His office was P-38 in the Capitol which was in the north wing of the Capitol, very close to the floor of the Senate just across the hall. George Reedy's office was in a much lower level in the south wing on the west side of the Capitol. Those were the three offices that were Lyndon Johnson's office. They all worked for Lyndon Johnson. Then there was a Democratic Policy Committee.

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I was also introduced to people in the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, and I think that was Bobby Baker at that time. I met staff from the Subcommittee on Preparedness of the Armed Services Committee, staff of the Space and Aeronautical Sciences Committee. But these were the committees, the first three mentioned really were his immediate office, although they were physically separated.

My office was down in the basement just off of the subway, where the subway terminated--

(Laughter)

--in the Old Senate Office Building.

There also was a room--in 1958 in the Senate they were using what they called robotypewriters, and these would change from day to day and there was a woman who operated them. This is what we really designated later as pressure mail. These were letters from people that wrote in making comments and inquiring about legislation that either had been introduced or was going to be, and the letters really would be a form letter that would be geared to their inquiry. Those who were opposed would get one letter; those who were for would get one. But it would have to change day by day as amendments to the legislation were introduced or if the legislation went into conference and then came back on the floor again. So there was a constant changing of this form-response type of mail, and the rooms for this were in the basement also.

A: How was correspondence handled through his various offices? Did it all come in to the Texas office?

T: All mail was received in the office occupied by Bruce Thomas. Most all mail was opened

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unless it was marked very personal.

Walter Jenkins was Senator Johnson's administrative assistant. Walter ran the Texas office, but Walter was really in charge of all offices. Lyndon Johnson, as I understood it, talked to Walter Jenkins just constantly through day and night, and Walter was truly briefed on everything.

A: Did he separate the mail then?

T: Bruce would separate the mail, and I don't remember--they must have had someone who carried the mail between the offices. If it was on--I'm trying to remember the name of the lady--if it was on legislation, it went to a certain individual who handled it and separated it and who wrote the letters of response for the pressure-type mail or legislative mail. If it was case mail, then it was directed to Mr. Perry and Glynn Stegall. Some mail went directly to Walter Jenkins. And mail that asked for Senator Johnson to make a speech or an appearance, Juanita Roberts handled it later; maybe she handled it in those days, I don't remember. Lloyd Hand was handling the military appointments. Those were the appointments to the military academies that the Senator has, you know, so many a year. There was a newsletter prepared and sent, and there was a weekly television--was it a weekly or a monthly television broadcast? I don't know. I don't remember at this moment.

A: I'm not sure.

Was some of the correspondence sent to the Policy Committee to answer then? I've had the impression that a lot of mail that came from out of state was not answered in Johnson's Texas office, but was actually answered through one of the other offices.

T: Out-of-state mail would not have been answered in the Texas office. I think the Texas

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office was indeed what it says; it handled the mail from the constituency in Texas.

A: So if someone like George Meany wrote him, who would answer that correspondence?

T: If George Meany wrote him, I think Walter Jenkins would probably see that letter, or it might go to George Reedy. Or it might go directly to the Senator. But usually mail would not go directly to Lyndon Johnson. Mail would go through Walter or George Reedy before it would go to the Senator. Or a letter would be prepared for the Senator's signature and then he would review it and decide if this is what his response should be.

A: What I'm trying to establish is where that letter would have ended up in the overall filing system, because if you look at Johnson's Senate records, there aren't very many letters from people who were outside of Texas and if you look at what we'll discuss later as the LBJA Files, you do find it there, but it has the red markings on the side like it was answered by the Policy Committee. Isn't that how they filed material?

T: Well, until we started getting to know one another and I recommended they stop because of autograph value, that they stop writing with red pencil all the way down one side, yes, this mail did go to the Democratic Policy Committee.

A: And would end up in their files.

T: And would end up in their files. And there was debate whether this mail appropriately should end up in their files. My position was if it was addressed to Lyndon Johnson as majority leader, yes, but that it belonged to him. Now, there were letters from various senators asking for committee assignments and things that have to do directly with the Democratic Policy Committee's authority. Now, I'm not certain I won the debate on that, because Pauline Moore and some of the rest of them felt that those files properly belonged

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with the Policy Committee, and in retrospect this is probably true. But the letters that came to Lyndon Johnson that had to do with wanting him as majority leader to do certain things, I felt belonged to Lyndon Johnson's files. After all, he wasn't only the senator from Texas, he was the majority leader, and through very cautious, slow-moving, gaining respect and confidence in what we were trying to do, gradually we did acquire some of that correspondence.

A: Did you work very much with Pauline Moore?

T: I got to know Pauline very well, and of course Pauline adored Lyndon Johnson and had worked in the Policy Committee a long time. She became a lawyer in her own right. And she had systematically clipped from the *Congressional Record* all the statements Lyndon Johnson had ever made on the floor, or that went into the *Congressional Record*, and grouped them under subjects, and these were kept in Walter Jenkins' office, and Pauline would gradually add to them. That was the only systematic effort made at keeping Lyndon Johnson's speeches, utterances. You know the speeches he made in Texas and elsewhere were just part of the file.

A: Can you explain who Pauline Moore was?

T: I don't remember her title. I don't remember whether she was secretary to the Democratic Policy Committee, but she had a position of authority.

A: Did she work with the files a lot?

T: Pauline Moore worked with everything that had to do with the Democratic Policy Committee. I don't know who took the minutes of the Policy Committee, but the Policy Committee minutes that we have in the Lyndon Johnson Library at this time were sent to us

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later by Pauline Moore.

A: During the presidential period.

T: Was it a gift during the presidential period?

A: I believe so.

T: All right, I didn't know whether it was during the presidential period or whether they had come down here. It was during the presidential period, right.

A: Let's go back to the situation in Johnson's office when you arrived. You developed a filing system, a subject file system that you mentioned with a separate file for case mail. Was this a system that you developed or was it one that the Library of Congress ordinarily recommended for senators?

T: This is one that we developed for all congressional offices. We would alter it sometimes to meet specific requests of a Senate office. But the one we installed in Lyndon Johnson's office was the same as the one we felt that worked the best on the Hill. And this was developed by Mrs. Portner's office, those of us that were involved with the Hill. Mrs. Portner guided all programs that had to do with paperwork management programs in the offices on the Hill.

A: You set up another file that was referred to as the LBJA file, which I believe stood for Lyndon Baines Johnson Archives file.

T: Well, among the things that were discussed at lunch that day in March with Juanita Roberts was--President Johnson did not at that time know he was going to have a presidential library. He knew that he had a great deal of mail that he thought was not important enough to be saved for a library, so he wanted professional help because he knew his files were too

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valuable to be just gone through and disposed of. So I was not from Texas. The staff all combined and put together a list of people who were Texans, whose correspondence should never be disposed of even if it was a pressure mail. Now, we never--I know we will get into this later, but in records disposition we never did any mass disposing of records; we never just went through and tossed a box. We looked at every piece of paper. And if someone--you know, if in the real early days Alvin Wirtz had written something to Lyndon Johnson, that letter would be retained, because he was an important man from Texas in Lyndon Johnson's life. And there were others. And we established a famous name file, a congressional file, recognizing that we would refine these files at a later time, but for the moment there was too much overlapping. Someone could be very famous and at one time in their life have been a congressman and was no longer a congressman, so all this--we thought time would give us time that we could refine it.

So there were three categories that were strictly alphabetical. We planned to cross reference into subjects from these files, also. But then there was another category of record that was called LBJA, which meant permanent Lyndon Johnson Archives. Permanent, never, never any records disposition at all. But we had only begun this program. I was there only a year. Actually I left in June of 1959. I think we accomplished a great deal in the time we had, but we certainly didn't meet all our goals, not as a library is able to do, and the archivists.

You see, the problem with Lyndon Johnson's office was twofold. We had a current problem and we had an archival problem. On the one side we had to get the office moving. This mail had to be handled. It had to be handled quickly, and the people that had to

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respond to the incoming correspondence had to have these letters on the desk. In the meantime, here was this large body of records that was valuable, that was self-destructing in the attic. So, say, half of the time would be spent with current, or maybe three-quarters at the beginning, but gradually as the system was installed on the subject basis, Bruce took more and more of that. I mean, I would help classify myself at times to help him. I think in the very beginning Mildred Portner even came over and helped. We really wanted to make this a successful undertaking, and it was. But I really, in order to help Bruce in another way, had to discover what years of records were where, and this they never had had, just a basic inventory.

In the summer of 1958 a delightful thing happened. A young man who had just graduated from high school who was going to the University of Texas in the fall named Shannon Ratliff, who is now a very successful lawyer in Austin, Texas, came to work for Lyndon Johnson for the summer. And he was detailed to me. I learned more about Texas politics and Texas in that one summer from Shannon Ratliff than, well, I knew probably the first year I was there. But Shannon and I would go up and we would work, sometimes all day. We started in the elevator shaft, because it had no control on it and anyone could have taken--and most of it was pressure mail. Shannon and I would go through it and every once in a while he would say, "Here is a letter from So-and-so," and then he would tell me why that particular individual was so important in Lyndon Johnson's career. You learn a great deal that way.

A: It must have been very interesting.

T: It was interesting, and we cleaned out the elevator shaft. I must say when we disposed of a

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lot of this pressure mail that I keep referring to. We sampled, you know, we would keep so many folders of pro and con, so that for his future library at least it would reflect that he had received this kind of mail. Oh, and all disposition was subject to Walter Jenkins' approval, and Walter--and Mildred Portner. Mildred Portner, I would first submit a category of material for disposition and explain it to Mildred Portner, and then I would submit it to Walter Jenkins, explain it to him and if he approves, why then we went ahead with it. All disposition ceased at the end of the Senate when Lyndon Johnson became vice president. No longer was there disposition.

A: So it continued through 1960 then?

T: I would assume. It continued from the time I was there, and then 1960 became a campaign year and I don't know how much--they were very busy with the photograph archives and some other things, and I don't know how much disposition was accomplished during that time.

A: Now, when you are talking about disposition, you are referring only to Senate records?

T: Yes.

A: Because a lot of House records had been lost earlier. I think we've mentioned that.

T: That's my understanding. I never knew. I asked Mary Rather one time, but Mary, she didn't seem to remember what had happened. They were just gone; they just weren't there. But some were.

A: I know in the famous and selected names files we have a lot of early correspondence.

T: Yes.

A: So I assume that when you found early correspondence, you would move it in to the LBJA

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file.

T: Yes, absolutely.

A: So that's how some of those files go back to 1937.

T: Like the copy of the--well, there's a letter from Lyndon Johnson to Sam Rayburn remembering when he walked him down the aisle to take the oath as a young congressman from Texas.

A: There's a letter in the LBJA that even predates the House period. It's recommending to Kleberg that he take this young boy on his staff.

T: Yes, yes. But some of those things--you know, this is a case once again when as the staff began to have confidence, and I might even say pride in this program as it moved ahead, service was better, things were being protected. Any piece of paper with Lyndon Johnson's handwriting on it, we immediately preserved: autograph value. Then people would suddenly turn over to me something they had been holding for a long time, and most of the staff with Senator Johnson had been with him a long time. So not all of these pieces of early correspondence came from any storage room, they came from people who turned them over so they could be a part of this archive we were putting together.

A: So as you gained people's confidence, they became more and more cooperative.

T: Yes, yes, you have to remember Lyndon Johnson's staff were all very talented people. They were all hard-working; they worked until late in the evening, and most of them were prima donnas. They protected very jealously what belonged to them. This was their little corner of interest and they were going to keep their own files. Probably my worst--I won't [say] worst--my most difficult problem was getting George Reedy to turn loose of anything.

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Reedy would simply not; he wanted to maintain his records in his office, and he did. And I did not get access to them for a long time.

A: Did he eventually turn over some to you, because there are some Reedy carbon memo files in the Senate papers?

T: Yes, eventually, but that really came during the vice presidential period.

A: Much later then.

T: That came much later. In the year plus that I was there, I did not get the Reedy files. But I did have, as I say, long conversations with Pauline Moore, and I don't remember the name of the other lady that was working with her.

A: Now, did she gradually begin to turn over some material to you?

T: Well, I would go and work maybe an hour a day in the Policy Committee. This is the way I would spread my time, work an hour a day in the Policy Committee and go through the Policy Committee files and say, "This little stack, I feel, belongs to Lyndon Johnson's archives, and this stack from members of the Senate asking for certain committee assignments probably should stay with the Policy Committee." Now, that did not always happen, because I believe you've come across some where senators have asked for certain committee assignments.

A: Yes, that's true. Yes.

T: You know, they couldn't find things. The Congress, at least in those days--they are more aware now of record-keeping--but they were delighted if they could turn something over to someone that could find it for them later. So you sort of sold them, "Do you want to keep these things where you can't find anything? But if you just give it to me, I'll guarantee that

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any time you need it, we'll find it for you." And we were able to keep our word.

A: You were able to get letters through the Policy Committee that way? That's very interesting.

How much thought had been given to a depository for the Johnson papers when you came to his office?

T: That Sunday when Lyndon Johnson took a walk with Bruce Thomas, it must have been in his mind at that time. And his mother, I understood then later, had been talking about a--they had a boyhood home in Johnson City that Lyndon Johnson's aunt had lived in, but the Johnsons were thinking of something that could be a combination library and a small community center for the people of Johnson City or around that part of the Hill Country. I met President Johnson's mother in August of 1958 when she had come to visit her--Sam Houston had broken his leg or his hip and it wasn't healing properly. So President Johnson's mother made the trip to Austin. She was a rather frail-looking woman, although a large woman, she wasn't--

A: In 1958 she must have been ill herself at the time then.

T: She died in September of 1958 and this was August of 1958, but she had had cancer for some time, lymphatic kind of cancer.

Juanita Roberts and I in the Majority Leader's limousine went to visit Mrs. Rebekah Johnson and we spent an afternoon with her. I had urged, and I urged immediately, when I had heard about Mrs. Johnson, even before I met her, I urged that the station in Austin immediately provide her with recording equipment so that whenever she felt like talking, she could reminisce and they would have it on tape. Unfortunately, she died before that

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was instituted. But she talked that afternoon about this place where she hoped that people in Johnson City could gather and use it, as a, for recreation or just to feel comfortable there. She wanted the papers of all her children there, of her son Lyndon and her son Sam Houston and anything that her daughters wanted to give. She didn't think of just her famous son Lyndon Johnson, but she always talked of all--she talked at least that day of all her children.

A: She must have thought that the genealogical records she was accumulating would end up there, too.

T: Well, you know, the *Family Album* she made for Lyndon Johnson, she made one--it was my understanding--for each of her children and geared it to their photographs until she got to the back and then that would of course always be the same; the history of the Johnson brothers and their ranch in Johnson City and this and that. But she had great family pride. She was very much a southern lady. She was articulate. She often would read a speech that he was going to give and make some changes. We have a speech somewhere in the files that she wrote the last paragraph, she rewrote it in her handwriting. It was a great privilege to be with her that afternoon. And she must have given a lot of strength to her children.

A: I noticed a memo in the file one time that described Johnson directing that an Eisenhower letter be sent to his mother for safekeeping, and then later we did in fact find an Eisenhower letter in her papers. Do you know if Johnson did things like that very often?

T: I imagine he did it more than once. I don't know how often it happened, but I am quite certain he did. I also think he probably wanted his mother to know about the letters from

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President Eisenhower.

(Laughter)

A: How involved was Mrs. Lady Bird Johnson in planning a library at that time?

T: Not at all. Mrs. Johnson wasn't--this was a--you have to remember it started out as a breakdown of the system, and we were planning a library but it was a subconscious kind of planning. We really didn't know what we were aiming for.

I found a letter from Jack Maguire when he was with the [University of Texas] Ex-Students urging Lyndon Johnson to give his papers to the University of Texas. Now that was dated I thought in 1956 or sometime. I found it in 1958. I don't know whether you have come across it or not, but--

A: I haven't seen it.

T: And of course the Library of Congress asked for Lyndon Johnson's papers and Syracuse University, as I remember, asked for his papers.

A: Was Jack Maguire asking for U.T. or Southwest [Texas State University]?

T: Jack Maguire was asking--he was then I think head of the Ex-Students--no, he was asking for the University of Texas, for his papers to come to the University of Texas. Juanita was opposed to that idea, Juanita stayed opposed to that idea. She felt that Lyndon Johnson, who had never attended--she didn't see the logic of giving his papers to the University of Texas, that they were more properly given to Southwest Texas, to San Marcos, where he attended school, than to the University of Texas.

A: Was there much thought given to that?

T: Well, I think we should defer that conversation until we get to the White House time

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because, as you know, the decision was made in 1965 that the papers would come to the University of Texas.

A: So when Rebekah Johnson was thinking about a library, she was envisioning something in Johnson City that centered around the Boyhood Home.

T: She was envisioning something very modest, certainly not made of marble, but a very modest little community center, maybe with a wing that would house the Johnson papers. Mrs. Rebekah Johnson, however, had no concept of the magnitude of the Johnson papers and how many of them in truth would remain in LBJA, because they're a very unique body of material.

A: Let's go back to our discussion of the LBJA. We've talked about the famous and selected names and the congressional file. There's also a subject file that is part of the LBJA. Did you put that together?

T: Yes, in that small office just down the hall from where the subway ended I started building a subject file identical to the file that was being instituted for current mail. And in this, the three that stand out in my mind: one was the censure of Senator [Joseph] McCarthy, Rule 22, and then one that was more current was Senator [William] Proxmire's attack on Lyndon Johnson. But things that had been designated for permanent retention would be more or less, by me, subject classified. I had built maybe a three-, four-drawer system in my office down there, and as I came across things that I knew should be retained, you see, I was building a very small nucleus of what would be going into a library, but I was doing the subject classifying on it at the time I was building it.

In addition, we haven't mentioned the speech file, other than to mention that Pauline

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Moore had been clipping the statements on the floor. I was very diligent in searching for utterances by Lyndon Johnson and I built a speech file that was a chronological file, but I subject classified it, following as closely as possible--everything was--we tried to tie together the subjects that we were using in the subject files with the speech file.

A: That had the same systems.

T: So you'd have the same system for everything. This was not always possible in the speech file, because through the years I found files back in the 1948 campaign and the 1942 campaign. Incidentally, they became very valuable to the Democratic National Committee when Johnson was running for the presidency in 1964.

A: I'm sure that's true, yes.

T: Well, they came and they used the subject outline and--

A: Now, when you talk about the subject outline, are you referring--there's a card file that we have that each card has a subject and there are speeches listed on that.

T: And you also should have a rather thick blue--we ran it off on a--

A: Ditto?

T: Ditto or multilith.

A: Right.

T: It's by the page.

A: Yes.

T: And this was the subject outline for speeches, everything he had ever said on armed services, on civil rights, on agriculture, through the years.

A: It was a finding aid for finding the material by subject that was actually filed

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chronologically.

T: Right. And filed chronologically. And it existed this way right through the vice presidency and the White House, because all original speeches, even through the White House, his reading copies all came to my office. We also instituted that during the 1958 time. It was an interesting training time for some of the people who worked for Lyndon Johnson, that if you were with Lyndon Johnson and he was making a speech, some of the people that would be the advance men, or with him, they had little portable recorders and they would try to hold the microphone up to tape what he was saying, which was the first time we had made this effort. And also "get your hands on the reading copy as quickly as possible, save it and bring it back." And this way we started building this and going back to older records, we started building a speech file.

A: It's a pretty successful effort, it sounds like it.

T: I think it was. I think it was probably--we lost one speech, and that of course was during the White House, but the present Archivist of the United States was then at the University of Michigan and when Lyndon Johnson as president made his Great Society speech, Mr. [Robert] Warner, being an archivist, he obtained Lyndon Johnson's reading copy. I've tried to bribe him, but so far it's still at Michigan, not in our file.

(Laughter)

A: We have a copy, though.

T: I know, but imagine the Great Society speech being lost to our library, the original.

A: When did you leave Johnson's office?

T: I remarried in the spring of 1959 and I left Lyndon Johnson's office I guess the first of July.

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My husband was in the air force and I had a daughter that I felt would be better served in a close family atmosphere, so we went and lived on an air force base, unfortunately during the 1960 campaign when I would have liked to have been a part of everything.

I had an exit interview with the then-Majority Leader Senator Johnson, who was very complimentary of the work that Mildred Portner and Juanita Roberts and Dorothy Springer had done. And I think that we three ladies deserve a lot of credit. Juanita because she was tenacious and she kept after the people in President Johnson's office. Mildred Portner because she had all the professional know-how. And you have to remember this was a very unique experience in 1958. It had not been tried before. No one had been able to go into a senator's office and to institute a program. We always felt this was going to work, but every day became a challenge and every day we would take a step in a direction that would be new to us, but it worked. And now what we did, Mr. [William] Hopkins, who was the chief clerk at the White House made the statement that Lyndon Johnson was the first president ever to come to the White House with a records management program, and he was. They couldn't get over the fact that speeches immediately had to come into a certain place. Well, they came to my office, it so happened.

Now, I left in the spring of 1959. My husband had received orders to return to the Pentagon; he would be returning to the Pentagon in--well, after our daughter graduated from high school, so he would be returning to the Pentagon in about July. And in January of 1961 I had a call from the then-Vice President's office asking me would I please return to continue the program for the Vice President. And since my husband was going back to Washington and since this was very close to my heart, I went to work in July of 1961 for

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the Vice President.

A: How had the program proceeded while you were gone? They had continued it.

T: A lady named Claire Foley from Mrs. Portner's office had been assigned to work in Lyndon Johnson's office. I understand--well, I happen to know when I came back, one of the things I did notice during the campaign, they wanted a lot of photographs, so a great thrust was made on going through old records and current records and with the family and everyone to get all the photographs they could get to be used in publications and things that would be part of the 1960 campaign.

A: Did she remain after you returned?

T: No, she was already gone when I returned.

A: There is a question I wanted to ask you about the period of time you were with Johnson. Did you really become a part of his staff, or did you sort of maintain your independence, and--?

T: Well, right or wrong, I made the decision when I first went there that I would not be a part of his staff. I was invited. They were a very close-knit group of people. They cooperated with one another. They got along beautifully, they really did. And I was welcomed and invited to parties, *et cetera*, but I really didn't--I felt that I could achieve more for the purpose I was there for to remain a bit apart from this family group and be a bit of an outsider. It was a strength, really. Later on when I went back in during the vice presidential period, I didn't maintain that. I then became closer with people and they knew me, welcomed me back. But I really do think it was the proper decision to make in the 1958 time.

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- A: Did you have the feeling during that time that you would be going back eventually to the Library of Congress, or did you sort of envision yourself staying on?
- T: Well, until I remarried, I hadn't envisioned--no, I already knew before I left that they were going to want me for a longer time. There were already feelers out: "Dorothy, will you stay?" But my future husband and I knew that I was not going to stay. And Senator Johnson asked me to stay, but he understood when I told him that I felt with a teenager of Pamela's age, we really needed to be together for this time in a closer unit.
- A: While you were working for Senator Johnson, did you have much contact with the committees that he was on, the standing committees in the Senate, the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee? You mentioned that you went around and met the staffs.
- T: Well, Glen Wilson, for instance, was with a subcommittee on preparedness. I didn't meet all of the staff. And I'm trying so hard to remember the man, and I don't remember his name right now, that was on the staff of one of the committees.

In that exit interview with President Johnson, he said, "I know many of the suggestions you've made, and Juanita has briefed me on certain things that are being done." And periodically memos would be written that Lyndon Johnson would have a copy of, and reports always funneled, always written from Mildred Portner to Walter although I would help with the writing of them. But he asked--I did tell him that I felt that classified material was not being handled perhaps in the appropriate manner. Because with the physical offices being physically removed from one another, they needed to be a little more careful, I remember. It was a very interesting interview really.

- A: Did you make much attempt to get records from the committees?

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- T: I don't remember whether this was during the 1958 time or the early part of the 1961 time. I have the feeling it probably was 1958. I had a long discussion with one of the people that I had met in the Aeronautics and Space Committee. And I was hoping that the records of Lyndon Johnson as chairman of that committee would be given to Senator Johnson for a part of his archives. I thought I was being successful, but a legal counsel of some kind decided the committee records belonged to committees, no matter who was the chairman of them, and they would retain them. We were discussing this, but we never reached any conclusion. And the Preparedness Subcommittee, I think, was probably the same way.
- A: Yes. Their papers would have been part of the Armed Services Committee papers.
- T: Yes, I think so. And of course standing committees of the Congress now, as I understand it, transfer their papers to the National Archives. They're being more careful. Everyone's aware now of the value of these historic records, but back in 1958 they simply were not. We had a record found among old papers, and I don't know where I found it, as a matter of fact, of a mission that Lyndon Johnson had gone to Europe when he was a member of the Naval Affairs Committee and Carl Vinson was the chairman, that the old Naval Affairs Committee of the House, they went back and looked in their records and they had no record that Lyndon Johnson ever was in the European Theater. And he visited with General Eisenhower and others. He wasn't only in the Pacific; he had made this other journey.
- A: So, hopefully, those records did end up in the National Archives?
- T: I don't know. They never could find them. Hopefully, if they have assigned someone to search, they did.
- A: So, when you returned during the vice presidential period, what was your job like then?

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Were you more busy than you had been?

T: Well, Lyndon Johnson at some time in this, the Texas office moved to the New Senate Office Building. And we picked right up from the vice presidential time with a system already installed and working. Before I left, we also--and Mrs. Portner was very proud of this one--we started what we hoped was the Daily Diary. At that time it had a back copy of it where they could keep the list of traveling expenses and lunches and this kind of thing, which were important. But it was kept, I am afraid, more as a log, but nonetheless the Diary had been installed and it was moving along.

A: It was installed while you were still in his Senate office?

T: Yes, I think it was installed in about January of 1958. Isn't that about right, at the beginning of the year?

A: A little bit later than that. It might have been late 1958 or early 1959.

T: Well, anyway, we worked on it before I left. And when I came back during the vice presidency, it was being used.

A: With virtually the same format.

T: Virtually the same format. And, as a matter of fact, with some modification we gave the same--with modification I had the same form run for Luci, Lynda and Mrs. Johnson when they went to the White House so they would all start keeping daily diaries. Mrs. Johnson of course talked into her record player, but Lynda and Luci kept diaries. I don't know how--every day, but they kept diaries.

A: When you returned during the vice presidential period, things were in much better order than when you had come initially.

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T: Well, yes, they were in better order, in that I didn't have to become so concerned with current records. That phase of it--I hope I'm accurate in this--it seems to me that the current records, Lyndon Johnson was no longer senator and I don't think he was receiving the amount of mail that he was as the senior senator from Texas on legislative issues. Of course the machines had improved and they were more modern. I don't remember how much legislative mail he was receiving. Do you?

A: Just judging from the volume of the VP papers, I would say it was much less.

T: That's what I'm remembering. I was able in the vice presidential time to return to the dirty attic and, with labor assistance, rearrange the records so that I knew that cubicle A had records from a certain year to a certain year. Cubicle B had them for the next time. So we only had to go one place. Then, *et cetera*.

The first staging area for the retirement of current records--for instance, they kept two years in Bruce Thomas' office. It was still Bruce who was handling the mail and correspondence room. He would keep two years of records there. It was too much to run back and forth, because they were still getting some case mail. They would retire, then, the year before that to a record storage area in the New Senate Office Building. That was where we knew records from a certain year, *et cetera*. Then over to the attic again, but at least this time now we had an inventory. We had moved the files, we had straightened and stamped and--

A: And that happened during the vice presidential period?

T: This happened during the vice presidential years. As I said, with Shannon, he and I cleaned up the elevator shaft and we tried to do some work, but it wasn't until the vice presidential

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time that we really got into those attic storage areas and inventoried them and straightened them. Of course, it made Bruce's work a lot easier. He only had to go one place to look for something.

Work continued on the speech file, on reviewing older records. The photograph file was becoming very important with the vice president. Lyndon Johnson during the vice presidency had been on a mission to the Middle East before he went to Vietnam and that part of the world for President Kennedy. He went to the Benelux countries.

A: To Rome, I believe.

T: And then he went to Rome for Pope John's funeral, for [German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer's funeral, I believe. Anyway, there were--

A: To Germany.

T: To Germany. And on these trips President Johnson was covered by a USIA [United States Information Agency] photographer by the name of [Yoiki] Okamoto, who later became a White House photographer, you know, during the White House days. And our photographic coverage was so wonderful that we really were able to start what we called our photo archive. We had the early part of it, but now we had these magnificent day-by-day chronology of what the vice president was doing.

Then, interestingly, during this time Lyndon Johnson asked me to work a half a day in his P-38 office. I don't know why. We had a young man who was on the payroll, a part-time doorkeeper, *et cetera*, Chuck Zuver, who used to give tours of the ceremonial office of the vice president, which was just across the hall from P-38 and off of the Cloak Room--well, it's in that corridor, I can't describe it. And President Johnson asked me to

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start giving those tours to people that requested them or someone else made the request to his office. So I had a cram course one night of Chuck talking into a tape recorder and I memorized the tape so I could give my first tour the next day. This is the way it always happened, of course. So I would work--I gave some tours of the ceremonial office--and then I would work in the afternoon in the Vice President's office. As I said, he was gone a lot during that time.

And that office had changed. Mary Margaret Wiley, who became Mary Margaret Valenti, had left, and Juanita Roberts had moved over from the Texas office. She moved over to the Vice President's office and became Lyndon Johnson's personal secretary and assistant.

A: The office that he still had on Capitol Hill, was he able to maintain that because he was president of the Senate?

T: Lyndon Johnson retained P-38. Whether he gave a reason for why he retained it, I don't know, but anyway--
(Laughter)

A: He was president of the Senate.

T: He was, and as one of his duties as vice president, of course, is the president of the Senate. And he maintained his P-38 office. He also had an office in the Executive Office Building across the little closed street from West Executive Avenue from the west wing of the White House.

A: So during the VP period, he had two offices.

T: Yes.

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A: Getting logistics mixed up here a little bit. (Laughter)

T: I know. Liz Carpenter came to work for him during the vice presidency. You remember the camel driver in Pakistan, I'm certain, and he visited the United States. Lyndon Johnson also had military aides; Howard Burris was his air force aide and seemed to be the one who accompanied him more on national security meetings and those that the Vice President participated in with the President of the United States. He had a military aide and I don't think--I'm trying to remember, he did have a navy aide for a while.

A: I don't remember.

T: His name began with an F, but I don't remember either. We'll have to check that. And I don't remember the army aide's name.

A: Did you ever travel with him when he was vice president?

T: No, no. I came to work in--the trip to Vietnam, Pakistan I think took place in the spring of 1961 and I arrived in July, although Walter Jenkins had tried in April to convince me that I needed to come right away. You always did everything right away. But since our daughter was graduating, it was not possible. So it was July by the time I got there. And trying to catch up on trip files and we had instructions whoever traveled with him, Marie Fehmer was working for him then and she really traveled more than anyone else did, although Juanita Roberts went on one of the trips. I don't know whether that was the--I think that was the Mideast trip. But anyway, I didn't start working half-time in his P-38 office until about a year before he left the presidency, which would have made it in 1962?

A: The vice presidency.

T: The vice presidency, yes.

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A: Did the people who traveled with him give information back to you when they came back, documents and--?

T: Oh yes, on our trip files we developed a form that was to be attached to all gifts, the name of the donor and, you know, this was the secretary or the second secretary. Someone was designated on every trip to handle all gifts and to record them and of course thank yous needed to be written, but it also helped us as now we were starting--we had gone back also and found museum items like gavels, a lot of gavels he had, commendation plaques that were given to him constantly. So we were beginning also in the Senate days to build the museum part of the library. But on the trips, head of state gifts were always turned over. Some of them we knew exactly where they were--they were at The Elms being used by the family--but all gifts given on trips were recorded on this special form. And ultimately that form along with the gift would come to me, and it was a little difficult to find places where to put all these things, to tell you the truth. I finally had a corner room where I could keep them.

A: Was there much thought given during that period to a library?

T: Well, things changed. This was a time of--Mildred Portner and I agreed there would be no disposition. You are not a heartbeat away from the presidency and continue to dispose of records. We even said at that time we regretted there had been any disposition. There wasn't any more--we were all certain in our mind that there would be a library someplace, somewhere. We didn't know how large or where it would be, although we were pretty certain it was going to be Texas. We constantly worked toward a library, but I do think subconsciously we were thinking of something a little more grand than a little community

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center in Johnson City.

A: Was any thought given to having something on the order of the Sam Rayburn Library, or did that ever occur to anyone?

T: Probably. That's probably more the way our thoughts were running. Now I'm not speaking for President and Mrs. Johnson; I'm just speaking for Mildred Portner and Dorothy Territo, and maybe Juanita--of course Juanita. She wrote a memo to him during the White House days and she put my name on it too, and I never agreed; I didn't feel as strongly about it as she did. She thought maybe the library should be in Johnson City. Wouldn't you have loved that? [Inaudible]
(Laughter)

But I didn't feel that way; I really didn't. But we knew that we had a body of records; we knew how valuable it was. Here was the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee that Hobart Taylor was involved in, and Ed Welsh was down with the Space Council, and Lyndon Johnson was just really about the first person at the time of Sputnik to be aware of the value of a space program. He was the perfect person to head the space program and have the council under him, reporting to President Kennedy, of course.

So the vice presidency was a time also for us to continue moving with this program, getting to know Hobart Taylor, getting to know Ed Welsh, getting to impress upon them what our programs were within the confines of the Johnson office but still tentacles to these committees.

A: How did you learn of the assassination?

T: President Johnson was in Texas with President Kennedy. The Kennedys were to spend the

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night Friday night at the LBJ Ranch and great preparations were going on. Bess Abell, who was Mrs. Johnson's social secretary, or was the social secretary for the Johnsons, was in Texas. I had been over in P-38 all morning. Juanita Roberts and Ruth Prokop and I went to lunch in the Senate Dining Room. I left them to go back to the office and as I got on an elevator Senator [William] Fulbright's A.A. [administrative assistant] was on the same elevator, and the elevator boy turned to me and said, "Do you know that President Kennedy's been shot in Dallas?" I informed him I didn't think that was funny; it was sick. And Senator Fulbright's A.A. said, "Dorothy, it's truth." And I said, "Well, if it is the truth, please take me right back down." Here I was on this crowded elevator, "Take me right back down to that dining room level." The elevator operator did, and I skidded across the marble and grabbed Juanita by one arm and Ruth Prokop by the other and told them. We ran across and went back to P-38, and by the time we got there they had already assigned two Capitol policemen to the doors of the office. It was a very traumatic afternoon naturally, but made more traumatic by the fact that Lyndon Johnson's television set had not been working; the Vice President's had not been working in his office, and they had taken it out for repairs. And we had no television and we had no radio. The army liaison officer brought us, or we found one of these little teeny transistor radios and set it on the desk and then huddled to hear what was going on in Dallas. We tried to get Secret Service; we couldn't get Secret Service to answer any of the lines. We had some on the big call directors in the office. And we were virtually isolated except when someone would knock at the door. However, we did learn from the transistor radio that President Kennedy had died and that Lyndon Johnson was now president of the United States.

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I don't know what time it was; I was trying to remember the time, but I don't remember, Secret Service finally called in and said that President Johnson was going to go from Andrews directly to his office in the Executive Office Building and would Juanita please be there to meet him and I think Yolanda Boozer went down also. I think two of them went down. It was agreed I would stay and cover the Capitol office, and it was good that I did. By that time, I had a couple of young ladies that worked for me part-time.

But it was a Friday. *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* and all of these weeklies had been put to bed, so to speak, and now they had to completely re-do them and they needed access frantically into our photo file. So all night, or at least until two in the morning, we worked with George Reedy's office to furnish photographs, which were duplicated by the navy photo lab, so that George could distribute them to the press. There was other press of course, but Reedy was handling all that over in his office in the Capitol. This was in the Capitol; this was not down at the Executive Office Building. So we were able to meet the requirements. People saw baby pictures of Lyndon Johnson and got to know the new president rather quickly because of our photo file. Some of the achievements you don't think of it that way at that time, but it was a very handy tool to have right [then], that photo file archive.

I stayed in that office on the Hill until December, and I would have to look up the date that I finally--and I was becoming alarmed because President Johnson was working now in the Executive Office Building. And then he moved over into the Oval Office, and Juanita, I'm certain her tape will tell when that happened. But we had no hold on what was happening to these very historic files that were being created at the White House, and there

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were a lot of new people that didn't know our system. So Mrs. Portner and I were very concerned about this. I finally wrote a memo to Walter Jenkins pointing out to him I thought every day was a day throwing us behind on what we were trying to accomplish. And now we knew we were going to have a library, and these first days were very, very important--first months rather.

I received a request to--finally I was told I was to come to the White House and I was also asked to clean out Lyndon Johnson's desk in P-38 and to clean out the office. I was very reluctant. Gene Williams came and he took care of a lot of things for me. Gene and I worked together. But when it came to Lyndon Johnson's desk, I opened the safe and cleaned the safe out that he kept in his office. But I had already worked with this safe before. But when it came to cleaning up President Johnson's desk, I really didn't want to do that by myself. I at least wanted someone there and I asked Mildred Portner if she would come over, just to be with me at the time I did this. I felt that it was important to have someone; I just felt more protected. His desk was something people just didn't go into. At least I felt very responsible for this, and I did box up the things in the desk. And of course that was the desk that was moved to the White House and became his presidential desk. And I moved to the White House.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

DOROTHY TERRITO

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, Pamela Hamerski, of North Attleboro, Massachusetts, 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 my mother, Dorothy Territo, on November 1, 1983, 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 shall be 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.
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Pamela J Hamerski February 2, 2007
Donor Date

Alicia Territo 3-7-2007
Archivist of the United States Date

Assistant Archivist
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