

## INTERVIEW VII

DATE: September 21, 1988

INTERVIEWEE: MARY MARGARET VALENTI

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mrs. Valenti's residence in Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

V: I see—here it says, “To Middleburg with President and Mrs. Kennedy.” Do the diaries say it reads that way?

G: You don't remember it that way? It could be incorrect.

V: I have no memory that he went to Middleburg with them. I remember being at George Brown's house, once, and that Vice President Johnson knew that the Kennedys were over at their—the place that they rented. And my memory of it is that on a Sunday, perhaps, when we were there, that—I remember we were all out around the pool and he said something about maybe wanting to call the President and see if we could all drop over. I remember Bill White, and his wife June were with us, and that he called and talked to somebody, President or Mrs. Kennedy, I don't know. And so anyway, I don't know what he said, but apparently he said, “We'd like to come over.” So sometime that afternoon, we all went over there. And I remember we were outside, sitting around the pool, and it seemed to me, as I recall, Mrs. Kennedy had—I don't know whether she was riding, but I remember Caroline was on her little horse, or maybe on her cart, I can't remember that—anyway, I just remember something about horses there. And I remember we were just

Valenti -- VII -- 2

over there for forty-five minutes or something like that. But I don't have a recollection that he ever went with them to Middleburg.

We came back to George Brown's house; at that particular trip he did not spend the night with them, at Glen Ora, I guess it was called. The twelfth of March would have been maybe a little early for the weekend that I am recalling, because we were all sitting around outside. I guess it's possible.

G: Look at April 23, I think that's probably the weekend you're referring to. Page 5.

V: That could be.

G: Then two trips: one to Louisville, and one to Nashville, March 25.

V: I don't have any memory of that.

G: What were these speeches generally like, these Jefferson-Jackson Day affairs?

V: I'm not sure what you're asking me. It was just—

G: Well, were they informal or were they formal dinners, and would he give a prepared speech, or would he talk off the cuff?

V: No, no, I think always a prepared speech. And I guess it's possible for some of them to have been black tie, but that doesn't mean the tone was formal.

G: He was presented with a Tennessee walking horse, in Tennessee. Any recollection of that?

V: No. Where are you reading?

G: It's April 8.

V: I don't remember that.

G: Anything on the trip to Senegal?

V: Nothing that I can [inaudible]—not really.

Valenti -- VII -- 3

G: How about the trip to Geneva and Paris? I guess it was the continuation of the Senegal trip. Had dinner at Maxim's.

V: I sort of remember another time when we went to Paris, right after the election. I don't remember that, sorry.

G: Okay, the next item is Adenauer's visit to the United States, in mid-April, and then he visits the Ranch. There's a reception in Fredericksburg.

V: Lynda crowned Azalea Queen, it says.

Oh sorry, I'm just trying to remember anything that would be descriptive at all.

G: Did he get along well with Adenauer, do you recall?

V: I don't remember that. I mean, I vaguely remember his being there and I can remember seeing he signed his name in one of those—

G: Okay, and then May [April?] 25 he went out to Kansas City to see Truman, and then on to New York to see “Advise and Consent.”

V: I didn't see that though. It says here, I notice where it says something about—he went with the Weisls. At least I don't think I—I'm sorry, what day are you looking at?

G: This April 25.

V: At least I don't remember seeing “Advise and Consent.” You know my memory is just so bad on all of this, perhaps it's just better for me to go over it and if I see anything or can remember anything—

G: Okay.

(Interruption)

V: I just remember going to Nehru's house for dinner, and out in the back in his garden he had, I guess, two tigers, perhaps, or two lions, I can't remember, in cages in his garden.

Valenti -- VII -- 4

And Mrs. Johnson sat next to Prime Minister Nehru, and then there was another man here, some Indian official, and then me. And I remember saying to her later on, "Did you find this man difficult to talk to, the man on my left?" And she said, "Not as difficult as the man on *my* left."

G: Why? Was that simply the language barrier?

V: No, I just think he wasn't forthcoming or warm.

G: How did LBJ get along with Nehru?

V: I can only speculate, I don't know. I just think they were so dissimilar that—

G: Tell me about the South Vietnamese portion of the trip, where he went to Saigon.

V: You'll have to let me think about that. I really don't have any vivid memories of that. I'm sorry, I just don't—

(Interruption)

V: My memory is that Bob Waldron is the one who was responsible for this Dr. Eisen coming in, trying to help him.

G: I think he has talked about that.

V: I remember he didn't ever seem to ever be able to find any that were comfortable.

G: Now, how about the Berlin trip?

V: If you don't mind, what I'd rather do—

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview VII

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