

AMONG FRIENDS *of LBJ*

Issue Number LVII April 1, 1994



Ambassador Jones Speaks at Library

U.S. Ambassador to Mexico James R. Jones gave Friends of the LBJ Library a comprehensive report on Mexico and its relationship with this country in the wake of the passage of

NAFTA and a shattering assassination. Jones served as special assistant to President Johnson in the White House and later as Congressman from Oklahoma, and chairman of the

board and chief executive officer of the American Stock Exchange. (For other programs at the Library, see pages 2, 3, 4.)

A Library Evening. . .



. . . At the Theater

For its Christmas program, the Library presented Karen Kuykendall and Standish Meachem in "Love Letters," a two-character play by A. R. Gurney.



. . . With Martin Blumenson

Martin Blumenson, military historian, outlined the problems and tensions that prevented Eisenhower, Montgomery, and Bradley from closing a gap in Normandy in the early months of the allied invasion of Europe, as detailed in his recently published *The Battle of the Generals*.



. . . With Two Authors



Moderated by U.T. Professor Betty Sue Flowers, authors Elizabeth Crook and Janice Woods-Windle discussed their recent novels, both based on chapters of Texas history.

Ms. Crook's *The Promised Lands* takes place at the time of Texas' fight for independence from Mexico. *True Women* is based on the lives of three of Ms. Windle's ancestors.

Michael Beschloss Assesses Presidential Greatness

Historian Michael Beschloss gave a penetrating insight into presidential reputations—"how they rise and fall after a president leaves office."

Historians, he said, "tend to wait 30 years or more to really begin to draw definitive judgments of a president."

Five factors, he maintained, influence the way historians view presidential greatness:

1. "Are the president's policies justified by history with hindsight and with decades of perspective?"
2. "Reputations are much influenced by the release of private papers that we would not have had access to during the president's administration."
3. "A presidential reputation is helped considerably by a congenial era."
4. "I think we now have to say that a reputation is helped by a campaign by the ex-president, should he wish to wager one."
5. "A president is always helped if for some reason he is turned into a folk hero."

He gave this assessment of recent U.S. presidents:

Franklin Roosevelt: "Pretty uniformly seen as a great President. There has been less fluctuation than almost any other case we can think of."

Harry Truman: "Very few people, even those who in 1948 would have voted Republican, doubt that this was one of our great figures. Yet at the time Truman left the White House in 1953 his public approval ratings were something above 27%, sometimes hovering up to 32. [His] reputation was in the deep freeze for about 20 years. . . The most important thing about Truman was not that he became a folk hero, as he did in the early 1970s, but by the early 70s, enough time had passed that historians were able to conclude that his policies were right. . . They began to look at [his] private papers and see that. . . this was a very serious, literate, resolved man who was a very estimable president. As a result, since

1973, roughly, Truman's reputation has been very high. . ."

Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Very popular but many people who liked [him] felt that this was not a very serious man, not terribly much on top of his job; he allowed things to drift for eight years, and therefore should not be considered very seriously by historians. That reputation tended to take hold for the next, roughly, 15 years. Then in the late 1970s you see scholars getting into Eisenhower's private papers—the record of what he said behind the scenes that we didn't know about in the 1950s. You find that in private, Eisenhower, was a very commanding, articulate, intelligent man. Also, [historians] began to conclude that at least some of what he did and was criticized for in the 1950s proved to be very well considered. More than anything else, Eisenhower. . . was able to keep down inflation and thus helped the country in a way that probably anyone else who might have been president in the late 1950s would not have been able to do."

John F. Kennedy: "When he was tragically removed from his office in 1963, he tended to be seen in a very uncritical way, roughly, for the next 10 years. . . Then in the mid-1970s you saw an almost equal over-reaction in the opposite direction. . . Only now, after enough time has passed, are historians beginning to find their sea legs on Kennedy

On the telephone tapes:

I live in Washington, and talk to a lot of scholars and journalists. [When the LBJ telephone tapes were released], I cannot tell you the number of times I heard from people, especially journalists, and in some cases people who were too young to remember that period, how absolutely taken aback they were, floored, by his enormous skill, especially in dealing with Congress.



again and treat him with some dispassion.

Richard Nixon: "At the time [he] left office in 1974, he rated, along with Warren Harding, at the bottom of [a poll of historians on presidential greatness]. But this is a president who has tenaciously, since the moment he left office, campaigned for his reputation. Nixon's efforts to talk to both historians and journalists, in some cases to release papers selectively, to write books which attract attention to the areas of his administration that he feels deserve worthy attention—this has helped to cause the scholarship on Nixon to be a lot more favorable than anyone might have expected in 1974. . . This is a very rare case, but it really does show how much impact an ex-president who desires to fight for his reputation can have."

Gerald Ford: "A very difficult case, because Ford has tended to be ignored by historians. . . To some extent he has somewhat the opposite effect on his reputation that Nixon has, in that he has been involved with things not particularly related to the press or scholarship, and therefore his inactivity has deprived him of the boost in his reputation that might have come had he made more of an effort to show [historians] the better side of that period. . . This may change, however, because a new life of Gerald Ford has just been written which puts a very positive light on
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An Evening in Old Austin



Five long-time residents of Austin came together to talk about what life was like there in the years between the two world wars.

For those who shared that experience, it was an evening of nostalgic return. But even for those whose memories are rooted elsewhere, or those too young to have memories of that period at all, it was an evocation of a time and place and part of the American past.

The panelists were Liz Carpenter, Sue Brant McBee, Cactus Pryor, Emmett Shelton, and Texana Faulk Conn.

George Christian, moderator for the discussion, set the stage: "In 1920, Austin had a population of 35,000, making it smaller than Beaumont, Galveston, Waco and Wichita Falls. . . It was sharply divided north and south by the Colorado River, especially during the flood season; and east and west by racial desegregation. It was a small town with street cars, tower lights, and big ideas. It was also one step removed from real country, which helped make it a great place to grow up."

He described the panel as "distinctly middle class white people," and from that perspective, glimpses of Old Austin emerged.

Texana Faulk Conn, whose family lived in the house that is now Green Pastures restaurant, talked about growing up in South Austin. "We lived out in the country. Daddy wanted to move so far out in the country that the city limits would never get to our house. And sure enough, two months after he passed away, they did move the city limits out there.

"Our friends were made up of a lot of black kids because a lot of black folks lived out there. We usually went to school barefooted. We had lice and itch. We went to school with the cedar choppers out in what is now known as West Lake Hills. . . It was a lot of fun living in South Austin, and still is."

Emmett Shelton grew up in the same neighborhood. "I was the fifth in a family of six boys, and we lived in a four-room house. It did have a roof on it—that was about the only thing that made it look like a house. We had advantage of having a two-hole outhouse. I think we would be classified as lower middle class, which meant, in common sense terms, poor. Each year when the first norther hit we would have a hog killing, and that was a big day. We got the old hog up and had old Tom Stanley, he was a black man, to come over and do the killing for us. We'd get enough pork to do us all year [and enough] chitlins for three or four days. And if you don't know what chitlins is, you ain't et yet."

Entertainment in Austin, said Cactus Pryor, centered around Barton Springs. "In the summer everybody went [there]. Dad would take the Pryor kids out at three

o'clock every afternoon and we would go swimming. Dad had natural buoyance and he would swim up and down the length of the pool about two and a half times and then would roll over on his back and would literally go to sleep floating in the water. Sometimes Dad would take a nip before taking a dip. And when it was time to go back, we would swim out and grab him by the toe and literally tow him into port. . . Mama would usually come and bring food and we would have dinner underneath the pecan trees."

"When we moved here in 1927 [from Salado], it was like the pattern for so many families in Texas," Liz Carpenter remembered. "When the oldest child was ready for the university, your mother picked everybody up and you came down here. And so for 20 years we rented houses on the fringes of the University of Texas. For \$12.50 you could enroll. For us, that meant at our house lots of cousins moving in with army cots. We educated a lot of people. . . It was a grand time because Austin was the Athens of Texas. You were exposed to intellectual talk. We had pork and beans and meatloaf, biscuits and really good talk. We talked about every single thing that Franklin Roosevelt did and we talked about it favorably."

Sue McBee went to school at St. Mary's Academy, "probably the only private school in Austin during the depression. We used to have all these secret clubs and we'd meet behind a big statue of Jesus where the nuns didn't know where we were operating. We hid our secret codes there. In the afternoons after school we'd play Tarzan and Jane on the grounds. The prettiest girl in the school was named Jenelle Johnson. I liked her a lot but I always got sort of mad at her because I always had to be Tarzan and she always got to be Jane. Later she went to Hollywood to get into the movies and made a couple of short features, married an actor named George Dolance and became the mother of one of the four Monkeys.



George Christian

Lady Bird Johnson Endows Lectureship in Middleton's Name

A lectureship at the Library bearing the name of the Library Director, Harry Middleton, has been established by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson.

The lectureship, endowed at \$250,000, will be administered through the LBJ Foundation.

"It is high time I got down to doing something I have long meant

to do," Mrs. Johnson said in a letter to fellow members of the foundation board. "My appreciation for the outstanding contribution Harry has made to the Library and to our lives knows no bounds."

Middleton has been asked to develop guidelines for the lecture series.



A Day of Song

Music filled the Great Hall of the Library one Sunday afternoon in February as several local choirs gathered to sing. Their program, titled, "The Sacred Music of Black Americans," included various singing styles of African-American religious music from the traditional to the contemporary.



Rostows Named Austinites of the Year



Walt and Elspeth Rostow were recently honored by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce as the 1993 Austinites of the Year for their "vision and invaluable contributions to the local community."

Walt Rostow, who was national security advisor during the Johnson Administration and now professor emeritus of political economy at the University of Texas, and Elspeth Rostow, former dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and now a professor of government, formed the Austin Project, in a cooperative effort with the local community.

The Rostows "could have rested on their academic accomplishments after long and highly acclaimed careers," the *Austin American-Statesman* said in an editorial. "They chose instead to



bring their considerable knowledge and experience to the community in a cooperative effort to seek solutions to underlying social problems."

Research Grants Awarded to Twelve Scholars

Following the LBJ Foundation's new policy of giving grants twice a year, the university selection committee met recently to determine grant winners for the second half of the 1993-1994 period. The funds, which total \$25,000, result from a grant from the Moody Foundation to help defray travel and living expenses for researchers using the Library's resources. The selection committee is composed of Bruce Buchanan, Government Department; Robert Divine, History Department; and Richard Schott, LBJ School.

Those receiving grants-in-aid and the titles of their proposed topics are: David Armstrong, "The True Believer: The Stages of Growth of Walt Whitman Rostow"; Donna Marie Binkiewicz, "Painting, Politics, and Culture: US Arts Policy and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1969-1970"; Robert Collins, "The Forgotten Economic Crisis of

1968"; Edward Cray, "The Chief Justice"; Vanessa Davis, "Sisters and Brothers All: Gender and Race in Community Organizing in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party"; Barbara Farnham, "Escalating Commitment in International Conflict: The American Experience in Indochina"; Deborah Gershenowitz, "The Other Side of Protest: Opposition to the Anti-Vietnam War Movement"; Robert Herzstein, "Henry R. Luce and the American Experience in Asia, 1948-1967"; Robert Johnson, "Ernest Gruening and the American Dissenting Tradition"; David Kaiser, "The American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson and the Vietnam War"; Timothy Thurber, "The Politics of Equality: Hubert Humphrey and the Quest for Racial Justice"; and Gil Troy, "Co-Presidency? The Emergence of the Presidential Couple in the Postwar United States."



Library Registrar Goes to Bush Library

Patricia Burchfield, longtime registrar at the LBJ Library and Museum, was recently appointed curator of the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Texas. It is scheduled, along with a graduate school in government and public service, to open in early 1997. It will be the tenth presidential library maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration and the second one to be located in Texas.

Ms. Burchfield is a graduate of the University of Texas and is finishing her master's thesis at the University of Oklahoma.



A gift to President and Mrs. Johnson was a large watercolor landscape by Ran Inting, given in 1967 by H. E. Yen Chia-Kan, vice president and prime minister of the Republic of China, and Mrs.

Yen. A grandson of the artist, Gu-Hwai Hsu, who has been studying mechanical engineering in the United States, recently visited the Library to see the painting, and make record photographs for his

mother, the artist's daughter. This painting was last on display in the museum during the exhibition *Head of State Gifts: Symbols of Diplomacy* in 1990.



The Library and Museum's volunteer program completed its 14th year with volunteers working as docents and in all other areas of the building. At their annual lun-

cheon, ten volunteers were recognized for their ten-year service. Standing with Mrs. Johnson are: Helen Henion, Vicki Bickford, Enge Meier, Judy Hocott, Camille

Lynch, Lenore Weinberg, Janet Huss, Carole Buckman, Margaret Ruska, and Elizabeth Seuffer.



Since its beginning, Mrs. Johnson has been intimately involved in the activities of the Library and annually hosts the Library supervisors at the Ranch to discuss Library projects. In the above photo, Mrs. Johnson holds a stuffed donkey, as Museum Store Supervisor Walt Roberts discusses this new addition to his inventory. Flanking Mrs. Johnson are Museum Curator Gary Yarrington, Library Director Harry Middleton, Supervisory Archivist Tina Houston, and Library Assistant Director Charles Corkran. With backs to camera are Marge Morton and Frank Wolfe, who is in charge of technical services.

In Memoriam

LBJ Foundation Board Member Mary Woodward Lasker, promoter of medical research and driving force behind the National Cancer Institute, died recently at her home in Connecticut. A longtime friend and associate of President and Mrs. Johnson, she worked with the president on health projects and with Mrs. Johnson on beautification programs. In this 1968 photo, she visits with LBJ and Senator Lister Hill of Alabama in the Oval Office.



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the Ford Administration. [It] may attract other scholars to not only pay attention to the Ford Presidency as something important in our history, but also to see Gerald Ford in a favorable light."

Jimmy Carter: "Popularly viewed as a failed president at the time he was turned out of office in 1980. [But] Jimmy Carter is commonly thought of as probably the most successful ex-president in recent years; he has been able to be involved in issues of importance and to take the side of the angels. . . I think to some extent the fact that people hold Jimmy Carter in very high esteem as an ex-president could influence the way scholars write about him in the future, and also the way the public begins to view that presidency."

Ronald Reagan: "A president who was brought to office by two landslides in the 1980s, who left

office more popular than he was when he came in. [But] during the last five years Reagan's reputation among historians and to some extent among the American people has gone into a little bit of a free fall. One [reason for this] is that Reagan was very much helped while in office by the force of his personality. . . It tended to buffer him from some of the bumps another president might have suffered from. . . Another thing that has helped to damage Ronald Reagan's reputation was the size of the federal deficit after 1989. [Also] the fact that the 1980s are viewed in a harsher light during the 1990s than they were during the period itself. . . If I had to predict, however, I think that what will happen with Reagan's reputation is that it will go through some of the same fluctuations that I have described. During the next 10 or 20 years, as people see the private papers and see this in longer perspective, they will see

Ronald Reagan as a somewhat more serious figure than many scholars do today.

George Bush: "Seen as a president who was not able to stay in the White House, very much criticized for his policies. I think it will take some time before there will be a more three-dimensional look at the Bush presidency. . ."

Beschloss saved **LBJ** for last: "As more and more of his papers are released in the 1990s, and with 30 years of hindsight, I think if I had to bet on a growth stock in the history business, it would be the stock of Lyndon Baines Johnson. Historians don't like to make predictions, but I think that ten years from now we will look back and see that one enormously interesting and important development in the history of American presidents during the 1990s was a very great surge in the reputation of Lyndon Johnson as we historians see it."

Coming Events

April 25—"An Evening With Historian Shelby Foote"

Late May (Date to be determined)

Opening of the new exhibition on the 1960s
(work in process—photo right)

June 15—"An evening With Jane Alexander,"

Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.



AMONG FRIENDS OF LBJ is a publication of the Friends of the LBJ Library

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The LBJ Library is one of nine presidential libraries administered by the National Archives and Records Administration.

