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CLAUDIA "LADY BIRD" JOHNSON ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW XI
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CLAUDIA TAYLOR JOHNSON

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This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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

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Claudia Taylor Johnson 6/20/02

Claudia Taylor Johnson Date

by Patti Howell

Allison Fawcett 5-10-2011

~~Archivist of the United States~~ Date

Assistant Archivist
For Presidential Libraries

Appendix A

Attached to and forming part of the instrument of gift of oral history interviews, executed by Claudia Taylor Johnson, and accepted by the ~~Archivist of the United States~~ Assistant Archivist For Presidential Libraries on 5-10-2011.

Mrs. Johnson's Oral History Interviews:

May 26, 1975, with Merle Miller
June 25, 1976, with Merle Miller
June 29, 1976, with Merle Miller
January 30, 1977, with Merle Miller
February 14, 1977, with Merle Miller
August 12, 1977, with Michael Gillette
August 13, 1977, with Michael Gillette
August 14, 1977, with Michael Gillette
February 4, 1978, with Michael Gillette
April 1, 1978, with Michael Gillette
August 6, 1978, with Michael Gillette
October 9, 1978, with Michael Gillette
January 23, 1979, with Michael Gillette
January 24, 1979, with Michael Gillette
January 25-26, 1979, with Michael Gillette
February 27-28, 1979, with Michael Gillette
August 19, 1979, with Michael Gillette
September 2-3, 1979, with Michael Gillette
September 9, 1979, with Michael Gillette
November 13, 1979, with Anthony Champagne
January 4-5, 1980, with Michael Gillette
January 29-30, with Michael Gillette
September 20, 1980, with Michael Gillette
September 26-27, 1980, with Michael Gillette
February 6-7, 1981, with Michael Gillette
February 20-21, 1981, with Michael Gillette
August 10, 1981, with Michael Gillette
August 23, 1981, with Michael Gillette
September 5, 1981, with Michael Gillette
November 15, 1981, with Michael Gillette
January 2-3, 1982, with Michael Gillette
January 10, 1982, with Michael Gillette
January 30, 1982, with Michael Gillette
March 15, 1982, with Michael Gillette
March 19-20, 1982, with Michael Gillette
March 22, 1982, with Michael Gillette

March 29, 1982, with Michael Gillette
August 3-4, 1982, with Michael Gillette
September 4, 1983, with Michael Gillette
December 30, 1984, video and audio interview with Michael Gillette
January 4, 1985, video and audio interview with Michael Gillette
February 23, 1991, with Michael Gillette
March 4, 1991, with W. C. Trueheart
March 8, 1991, with Michael Gillette
August 1994, with Harry Middleton (six interviews)
November 5, 1994, with Harry Middleton
January 23, 1987, with Nancy Smith
August 18, 1987, with Lou Rudolph, Jim Henderson, and John and Sandy Brice
August 19, 1987, with Lou Rudolph, Jim Henderson, and John and Sandy Brice
August 20, 1987, with Lou Rudolph, and John and Sandy Brice
August 1994, with S. Douglass Cater
March 22, 1985, with Louis S. Gomolak
July 16, 1996, with Jan Jarboe Russell
July 17, 1996, with Jan Jarboe Russell

INTERVIEW XI covering 1940

DATE: January 27-28, 1979

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Casa Leonor, Acapulco, Mexico

Tape 1 of 1

G: Well, shall we start with 1940 now?

J: The two things that I remember best about 1940 were the gathering clouds of war in Europe, and the continuing question, which indeed had begun in 1939, "Is [President Franklin] Roosevelt going to run for a third term? Nobody's ever done it. Is he going to? And if he runs, can he win?" Because we think of him now--at least it's easy to think of his time as a long, continuing honeymoon. It wasn't. There were rising tides of dissension and anger from a lot of groups, from the doctors, and the conservatives, and the people bent on peace, and the people bent on involvement in the war.

But at least it began, 1940, with a happy note, with the official appointment of Senator [Alvin] Wirtz, and that meant he and Kittie Mae were coming to Washington and taking up residence, and we would have more of the close ones at home. Of course Welly and Alice Hopkins were two of their oldest friends, and so we all saw a lot of each other. Welly and Alice lived in--I believe by that time, had that beautiful old house out in Alexandria with a lot of antiques, really a distinguished house. We, that year, were living

at the Kennedy-Warren in a small apartment, our return to the Kennedy-Warren actually, because it had been our first, brief home after Lyndon came to Congress. Lyndon had had, for a few weeks, a little apartment over there the summer before in my absence, and he had taken the notion that we ought to live there.

Early in the year there was a real setback when the Marshall Ford Dam was omitted from the budget, but I don't remember the details. I just remember Lyndon took a deep breath and went back to work on it and eventually everything worked out. There were the usual things, the congressional reception at the White House, and once more the best dress and the white tie and tails. I wish I could remember when I bought Lyndon that silk top hat for Christmas! He always wanted to take any member of his family that was in town, and the President was very kind, and Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt, about including family members. Lyndon's sister, Rebekah, of course was in town working at the congressional library. Sam Houston was there; I think he was still in Mr. [Richard] Kleberg's office.

Among the other social things we did, we always participated in the Texas State Society, which had a party about once a month. All the Texans got together. They set a lot of store by their annual summer barbeque, or their dances, or their camaraderie.

G: You were elected vice president of the UT [University of Texas] Ex-Students Association in Washington that year.

J: That was something else, a much smaller and less active group. Gee, I'm sorry; I don't even have a memory of it.

G: It was that spring that Uncle George Johnson, George Desha Johnson, died, and President

Johnson flew down to Houston before his death.

J: Yes, Uncle George had a heart attack in early March. They knew that it was quite serious. Uncle George had been a great contributor to his [Lyndon's] life. He *believed* in him and he just made Lyndon believe in himself. Also, he was always trying to make Lyndon study more, and he himself was quite a student of history. He taught American history and government in the schools of Houston for a long, long time, and he had opened his home to Lyndon when Lyndon taught school down there. Lyndon had lived with him and Aunt Jessie [Hatcher] and Aunt Jessie's child in that rather crowded household where none of them knew that they were underprivileged just to have one bath shared by five or six people. But he'd given him just about everything he'd saved up when Lyndon ran for Congress, and I'm glad he got to share a little piece of Lyndon's being in Congress. I know it was a great justification of his faith in him. At any rate, Lyndon did get to see him before he died and that was a source of solace to them both, I know.

G: Do you recall any of the details of him visiting Uncle George in the hospital?

J: No, I don't, and I wasn't there. You know, life is made up of a whole series of aren't-you-glad-thats and don't-you-wish-you-hads. I wish I, too, had gone down there because Uncle George, among all of Lyndon's family except for his mother, he was one that I had a particular affection for. Uncle George was only sixty or thereabouts when he died. That, too, was something that Lyndon never forgot and never let me forget, because he always felt that heart trouble ran in his family and his own days were limited and he'd probably go like the other male members of his family.

G: Mrs. Rebekah Baines Johnson came back to Washington to spend the spring with you.

J: Yes, and that's always something that I enjoyed. We'd take her to just as many of the events as we could. It was hard to do anything for Mrs. Johnson, because if you gave her any money, there would always be a need greater than her own, she felt, with one of the other four children. So it sort of became a habit of ours that I would take her downtown and we would find just the prettiest outfit we could. I think this was the spring that I bought her a sort of a mauve or lavender suit and a *lovely* hat with flowers on it. She had an extremely feminine face and manner and the hat was just perfect. So was the color of the suit, although it was not Lyndon's favorite color by a long shot. But I remember how pretty she looked in it and how cool the spring was. So although she was there during the increasingly warm months of April and May, she got to wear that suit just the same.

Then that was a year of vital statistics. A lot of getting marrieds and some dyings, too. Dorothy Jackson, Lyndon's secretary, married Philip Nichols in our little apartment. At least the reception or the party was there; I'm not sure about the wedding. But that was very much in keeping with our lives. Lyndon was always close to his staff and they were top-notch people through the years.

There was this rising third-term issue which was sort of the two strains that played right under all the headlines and events of the year: the war, and will Roosevelt run again?

G: How did you feel about the third term? Did you want President Roosevelt to run again?

J: Well, I guess I'm naturally pretty much of a conservative, and I was concerned about doing something that never had been done before. But on the other hand, I have an

overweening admiration and attachment to him and I never considered myself wise, particularly politically. So since Lyndon was very much in favor of it, I was, too.

It was quite a thing to work out that Texas situation where [John Nance] Garner really aspired to the presidency. It was always Lyndon's desire to effect a compromise and not a fight. He used to say to newspapermen, "You all want to stir up a fight. I want to stop one." It finally was worked out, at least where there was no ugly confrontation, and Texas did vote at least once for Garner for their favorite son and then were committed to Roosevelt from there on. Wasn't that it?

G: I believe so.

The other major issue that you talked about was the coming of the war and the war clouds in Europe. Of course that spring you had the fall of France. When did you yourself feel that the international situation was really deteriorating and the U.S. would be drawn into the conflict? Can you recall a progression in your own thinking here?

J: I remember getting chills down my spine when Charles Marsh on our weekends down at Longlea would describe it, would describe Hitler's charismatic hold on those people and the fact that he had done things to make them proud of themselves and to make them a cohesive nation. Whereas before they had been not only weak, but looked upon themselves as--well, they did not have national pride in that interim before he came to power in Germany, apparently. He [Marsh] saw the international danger certainly a good deal before most of the people I knew did, and he could describe it in the sort of terms that would make it personal and frightening and chilling.

G: Do you think he had a similar effect on President Johnson?

J: Oh, I know he did! He just opened his eyes to--well he just--not opened his eyes; he turned his eyes in the direction of the outside world.

Of course, I do remember a lovely spring trip into New England with Lera Thomas. We were looking for antiques. Lera bought a lot of antiques, loved it, and knew a lot about it. I just loved the countryside and traveling. Every morning we would pick up the paper and read about the invasion of--was it the Lowlands? There was some hideous step going on in May of 1940. It wasn't too long before France collapsed, was it? At any rate, it was heating up in a frightening fashion.

Meanwhile, on our own personal lives, something happened that was quite a step to a good friend of ours. Welly Hopkins was asked to become general counsel of the United Mine Workers. John L. Lewis' name was just like that of the devil himself to many Texans, and Welly had been a conservative Texas state senator in many ways. It was hard for us to understand, hard for us to swallow, except that it was a prestigious job and Welly, conservative though I just said he was, he was also a man of great heart, and he had been down into Kentucky and seen something about what a miner's life was like. Also it offered, apparently, security, and he was going to do it. At least he sounded like he was going to do it. We spent all one Sunday riding around with him while Lyndon painted all the pictures of both sides of it, everything that could happen to him, and how his old friends back in Gonzales, when he went home, would they speak to him? I can't really say whether Lyndon wanted him to take it or not. I think he didn't want him to take it, but he could understand the reasons why.

G: Do you think in retrospect it was a wise decision for Welly Hopkins to take that job?

J: I don't know. It meant a new departure. His life then was committed forever to Washington and to a new set of friends. It was a good life, but it was certainly a break with the old one.

1940 was a year that was increasingly dominated by politics for Lyndon, and also his interest in the Naval Affairs Committee involved more of his hours and his concern and his interest. We saw a lot of the members of that committee, a little get-together at night, and, ah, that sage, old Carl Vinson, the old fox.

The Texas state convention, I guess I don't know when I remember, at least not in the first [years]. Many years of Lyndon's life were years so packed with the opportunities for political learning. This Texas state convention made [Sam] Rayburn the head and Lyndon the vice chairman. Myron Blalock from my home town of Marshall was the national committeeman.

(Interruption)

So from the spring on through the fall general election it was a year of staccato politics, and I saw less of Lyndon. We did less personal things together. I remember the Two-Ocean Navy Bill was an important milestone. "Two-Ocean Navy" was a term that everybody came to use. Then I remember the fall of France and the darkening clouds. The Democratic National Convention, which was going to take place in Chicago, was much of the talk of the day and much of what Lyndon did, and lived, and breathed, during that summer. I did not go to Chicago with him. In fact, I never wanted to go to any political convention until finally in 1956 I went. I think Lyndon went to every one from the time that [they nominated], oh, the governor of New York who was the

Catholic--

G: Al Smith.

J: Al Smith. That convention was held in Houston, Texas, and Lyndon was a very young man. He went with his eyes out on stems, so to speak, just as an onlooker. He went to every one, I think then, until I presume it was the one of 1972, or 1968--no, the one of 1968.

There was one trip, one little respite, during the summer down to White Sulphur Springs with Charles and Alice. I believe that was the time when Charles talked to Lyndon about selling him, at a very moderate price, some of his oil properties in which he was involved with Sid Richardson. It was a big block of property. It was lots more money than we had to buy anything with. It was just no way we could buy it. Charles was determined to sell it to us at a price that amounted to so much of a gift that it was just no way we could accept it. My feeling about that was that Charles just sort of felt like a doge of Venice or a great manipulator, you know. He saw a person that he considered a terrifically bright young man who might or might not dedicate his long life to politics, whom he thought was extremely fitted to be in politics and would go far. But he thought he had to have a living, and it was pretty apparent you couldn't live very comfortably on, I believe it was still the ten thousand dollars a year that we got. So I think he just presumed to think that he could make it possible for him to do that, that he, Charles, could. He had a sort of a kingly attitude.

To my feeling I do not think he wanted to manipulate him, or have his vote in his pocket, or give him any directions on how to expend whatever power came his way. He

was an eccentric man, Mr. Marsh, and I think he was entirely capable of doing it on just that basis. But Lyndon was an extremely practical man, and he just knew there was no way he could do that. He finally got mad. He and Charles were arguing about this in pretty heated words, and finally Lyndon told me to pack our suitcase; we were leaving. By that time it was getting dark, and that was the most winding, mountainous road you ever set foot to between White Sulphur Springs and Washington. We had come in our car, a convertible. Well, we did; we loaded our suitcases in that convertible and said goodbye to Charles and Alice. Alice, of course, was trying to placate everybody, and so indeed was I. It really was a hilarious scene. I remember Lyndon and Charles leaning over the hood of the car, just talking, and still one determined to do it and the other determined not to do it. We got in and drove home and I think we got in at some preposterous hour like 2:00 a.m.

G: Did the two men stay mad at each other for any length of time?

J: Oh, no. I don't remember the next meeting, but Lyndon had made his point, and made it stick, and so far as I know, Charles never mentioned it again. No, they were not mad. Lyndon just had to turn away quick and firm and make Charles know that he couldn't and wouldn't.

G: Perhaps one of Mr. Marsh's motives was to make President Johnson financially independent, rather than dependent, on people so that he could vote his own conscience, so that he wouldn't have to rely on fund raising from particular people.

J: Well, that's just exactly what I've been saying. Charles was the eccentric sort of person who figured that he could do that, and that's what I think he was trying to do. Oh, I think

Lyndon believed that, too. Maybe he might have had a niggling doubt in the back of his mind, "Is this man trying to buy me?" But I think he had too much confidence and affection in Charles to really believe that. I think he thought Charles was indeed trying to make him financially independent. But he also thought that the public wouldn't buy that. The newspapers wouldn't buy that. Everything becomes known. Nobody would believe it, and he would be trapped into a very hazardous political situation.

G: In August of 1940 you went to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a few weeks. Do you remember that experience?

J: Yes. I'm sure I must have been staying with my brother, who lived there. But I also remember being with Alice and Margaret Brown at Bishop's Lodge, and on the way out, stopping at the Prude Ranch [near Fort Davis, Texas], which was a dude ranch where Alice had gone with her children every summer for a good many years and where they had learned to ride horses and rough it.

Alice and Margaret were people I was most congenial with, cared a great deal about. Margaret was a very stimulating, intellectual, independent woman. That was Herman's wife. They had a lovely home in Austin at the corner--I think it's Niles Road. We were invited there early in Lyndon's time as congressman. Wherever Margaret was there were always firecrackers going off of intellect. There was one desperately wrong thing: she was not well, not during the whole time that I knew her. She has respiratory ailments, I do not know what the name is, but I expect it was emphysema, because as years went on it was harder and harder for her to breathe and she spent a good deal of time in . . . Well, I'm sure that this trip out to New Mexico was because that dry climate

was supposed to have been better for her.

At any case, it was a pleasant, personal little interlude.

(Interruption)

G: In this year President Roosevelt inaugurated the Lend-Lease Program. Do you have any recollection of that and President Johnson's attitude toward Lend-Lease?

J: Nothing specific, except that he was for it, and he was committed to national defense, strong national defense and looked upon Great Britain as an important bulwark in the world.

G: Now Sam Rayburn that fall became speaker of the House, I think in September, and Congressman Johnson was placed in charge of the Democratic congressional campaigns for the fall election. Do you want to talk about these events?

J: Oh, yes. I remember a lot about the latter especially. And as for Sam Rayburn becoming speaker, how I could not remember it is astounding. I guess the only way is that he had been in the ladder of ascent so long and so assuredly that we all just sort of took it for granted when Speaker [William] Bankhead of Alabama died. So that was a natural result.

As for Lyndon taking part in the elections in the fall of 1940, that, I guess, was one of the most intense periods of his life. As the elections approached he began to evaluate past elections and he could always just rattle off how many congressmen were defeated in 1938 and 1936 and 1934 and just way on back. He saw the rather considerable amount of erosion in the strength of FDR. Then it was obvious that FDR was not going to go out around the country, at least it didn't seem like he was, and

campaign in such a vigorous manner that people would have a better chance to go in on his own coattails. And Lyndon was always, if not an alarmist, at least somebody who tensed up and tightened up around election time, and didn't want to leave a job undone, a person uncalled on, anything that could insure an election. I think it could really be said that he thought this up and initiated it himself. Anyhow, there was a good deal of exchange of letters between him and Rayburn and [Edward Joseph] Flynn, I think it was. Was [James] Farley out by then?

G: Yes.

J: And ultimately with the President and the head of the Democratic National Committee, [who] was a venerable and very nice old gentleman, but I don't think he was very active--was that Drury [Flynn]?

G: It may have been.

J: It resulted in Lyndon being asked to take over [the campaign committee], trying to insure the election of as many Democratic House members as he could. When it finally got going, when he finally got the go-ahead to do the job, time had lessened to about three weeks before the election, and I guess I saw less of him in those three weeks than just about ever. I remember at one point I was in Texas and I got the word [to] come on back, and it would be nice if I could bring Nellie Brill--she and John Connally were courting then--and Sugar. I'm sorry, I don't remember whether she was already Sugar Pickle, Mrs. Jake Pickle. I think she was Sugar Critz, and that she, too, was courting Jake, and they were thinking about getting married.

They were going to work in this committee that Lyndon had hurriedly set up,

almost overnight, in a downtown building in Washington where they worked practically around the clock, tabulating the congressmen in each state who were in the most trouble, who had won last time by the narrowest margin. A wire was sent to every one of them, "What are your problems? What would give you the most help? Wire immediately." Of course, it did involve some fund raising, but it involved also efficient spending of what they could get: send it to the people who had a chance; send a speaker to a district. Say you had a congressman in trouble in a district where it was heavily Polish, send him a Pole of considerable strength to make a speech for him. It was just like playing on a vast keyboard and knowing the notes to play. Lyndon, I think, grew a lot, learned a lot, certainly made another step forward toward the center of the stage at that time. It was a short, triumphant, terribly interesting period.

Nellie and Sugar and I had a wonderful ride up together. The leaves were already beginning to turn. It was into October so you can see what a short time it was until the November election. Sugar Pickle--Sugar Critz--was one of the liveliest, funniest people I ever knew. She began talking at the edge of wherever we left, whether it was from Austin or from my home town of Karnack, and hardly stopped till we drove up to the House Office Building in Washington. Nellie was a little more quiet. I think Nellie was pondering her future; should it be John? And I was just relishing the whole thing because I loved seeing countryside, and I enjoyed the company of those two women. They both became very good friends. So it was an intense and important fall with a triumphant conclusion at which the Democrats, instead of losing as they'd feared, actually gained eight seats.

G: President Roosevelt called LBJ at the end of that, on election day I think, to congratulate him.

J: Yes, yes.

G: Were you there then? Do you remember that?

J: I can't say that I was. I just remember the way Lyndon always would [be] when he would come home after he had been to see the President or had a call from the President. The glow lingered. The aura of excitement was there. There was a funny story about a dear, wonderful man, Glynn Stegall, who worked for him as secretary. One time President Roosevelt called; it was President Roosevelt's own voice on the phone. I don't know why it wasn't a secretary. Glynn was on the end of the line and the President said, "This is President Roosevelt. May I speak to Lyndon?" And Glynn's hands began to shake so much, he said, "Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes, sir," and he dropped the phone! (Laughter)

But there were two important facets of Lyndon's office in those years of 1937-1938-1939-1940 that I don't think I've talked about, and I want to. One was that he early began sending out what I would call the "State of the District" letter. The Department of Agriculture issued a lot of little bulletins, a couple of hundred as I remember, and a citizen could send in and check the list and get I believe it was five of them free. If you wanted any more, they cost you ten cents apiece or something like that. It was all sorts of useful information: how to cure your hogs of cholera and how to put up jelly. Then there was one that always made us break up in laughter: what to do about mountain lions if they were catching your stock.

In any case, there was a poll tax list in those days. Everybody had to pay a poll

tax to vote. So we would take the poll tax list from each of the ten counties of the Tenth District, and we would address an envelope to each one of these and insert one of these folders from the Department of Agriculture, on the back of which Lyndon would have written a letter explaining what all had gone on in his district that year, what he had achieved, what he had worked for, but hadn't been able to put over, the general tenor of the country and especially of the district, and asking them if they wouldn't like to send in and get some of this information furnished by the Department of Agriculture. And to do that vast job he would enlist all of the free help he could get, the wives of his secretaries and me, of course, and anybody else that would work for free. Because they worked such late hours at night we often found ourselves up there--we, the wives--addressing envelopes. I'd bring a great big plate of cookies; somebody would put on a coffee pot, or maybe we would come up and work an hour or two before dinner. Then we'd all go out to some cafe and we'd return and work two or three more hours.

That was a learning experience for me, because I had grown to adulthood and gone to the University really thinking of this country, and especially thinking of Texas, as white Anglo. Of course there were plenty of black people where I was born and raised, and yes, I knew of their presence, but they weren't big voters. A few, to my earliest memory, voted--don't ask me how--but not many. But then I was just totally unaware that there was such big blocs of Germans, Poles, Czechs, Lithuanians, all sorts of people, Lebanese. There would be in the Tenth District whole communities where they wouldn't be any Marys or Johns; they would be Ladislau and Ladislaua or something like that. I didn't even know how to pronounce the names, and a whole lot of them had more Ws and

Xs and Zs than they had consonants [vowels].

It was a great learning experience, as was traveling the district, an absolutely marvelous experience. So all of these were years of growth for Lyndon and me both. But in political progress and learning the art, I expect none was more intense and productive than those three weeks between October 15 and November 7, or whatever it was, when the election took place.

G: I understand that he would write the high school graduates every year, too.

J: Oh, yes. That was the other thing I was going to tell you about. He'd get a list of all the graduates from every high school in his district and write them a letter congratulating them on completing their education and what a lot he thought that ought to mean to them. Then he would ask if there was anything he could do to help them out, and to be sure and write him if he could. To this day, I always encounter somebody in a big crowd who tells me that they received such a letter long, long ago.

G: Do you think this reflected his high regard for education?

J: Oh, yes, always. He was a believer. He came up at a time--here I am looking at it in retrospect now from 1979 when maybe something of the bloom is off the rose, but America had a huge commitment to education from America's inception, and Lyndon was a real believer.

G: There is one other thing in connection with his experience during that fall heading the congressional campaigns. Here for the first time, I suppose, he was involved in a truly national outlet in that he was helping congressmen from various regions of the country. Do you recall how he would reflect on this experience in later years? How would he talk

about it? What lessons would he draw from it? What did it mean to him in later years?

J: Well, these men had indeed been his colleagues for some three years now, so the broadening process had already proceeded a good deal, but this achieved much more intimacy with them and he knew their problems better. There was a degree of appreciation from a lot of them for his help. This just propelled him into a broader stage, and, yes, he often referred to that time. I'm sure he reaped many benefits, as they did, indeed.

G: Well, John Connally got married.

J: Yes. I went to the wedding. Oh, I loved it, wouldn't have missed it! I remember I wore what I considered a glamorous, red dress, and it was a festive, beautiful affair. Sadly, sadly, Lyndon wasn't there. I'm trying to figure out what kept him, and I know it must have been something terribly important to keep him in Washington.

He came down on the train with Rayburn. Rayburn was a great man to ride the trains and even after everybody else had forsaken the trains and was riding on planes, he would still ride them, I think until they stopped coming. It was always an excellent time for Lyndon or a small group of people to be with him and have long conversations, and Lyndon sought out those times. One stopped and changed and spent a while in St. Louis, and they early had good friends there who would come join them at the station.

G: Also that winter, Sam Houston married Albertine Summers.

J: Yes, [he] married Albertine Summers, a fine young woman, and I guess that began a number of good years in his life.

G: Did you go to that wedding? I think it was in Illinois.

J: No, no.

G: Then I gather you and the President spent Christmas in Johnson City and Austin that year. Then he headed back to Washington before New Year's. There are indications that he was feeling already very weak and, of course, he would have pneumonia in January the next year. I wonder if this was an overexertion due to the role in the campaigns or was this just typical of the way he drove himself?

J: He had repeatedly bad colds and bad respiratory troubles and he had pneumonia three or four times in his life. Also when he was deep into something he spent himself into exhaustion. So I can't answer that question at this particular time, but I do know it was his habit to spend himself into just literal exhaustion without quite knowing when to stop.

G: Did you attempt to insure that he got--

J: Oh, yes, always, always. I expect I made myself pretty boring on that score sometimes. I was always trying to get him to eat more slowly. I lost that battle from the beginning, but I didn't stop trying for about twenty-five years, because he literally ate as though he had to be away from the table in five minutes. He said that it came from the fact that when he was in school he had about three jobs as well as carrying a full course and he just had about ten or fifteen minutes to eat.

G: Is there anything else about 1940 that we haven't talked about?

J: Oh, I'm sure there will be many things, but maybe when I look back on some old letters or something, they will call them to mind. Oh, yes, perhaps there is one thing to mention. We, in those days, saw a good deal of the press: Tex Easley, who covered a lot of the Texas papers; Drew Pearson, who was, I think, friend, sometimes formidable enemy, but

a highly interesting man; Robert S. Allen, his partner; George Stimpson, who was, as I recall, a more philosophic and old school type of newsman. Of course, there was Bascom Timmons; we didn't see as much of him. But our life was divided between old friends from home and Lyndon's colleagues, particularly those in the Texas delegation and on the Naval Affairs Committee, and the press, and the young New Dealers who were the real excitement to me.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview XI