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

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This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available to all researchers.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to all researchers.

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

(4) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be provided by the library to researchers upon request.

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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 XXI covering 1947-1948

DATE: August 10-11, 1981

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas

Tape 1 of 4

G: Let's start with the circumstances of Luci's birth.

J: Actually, for me, that summer was a sort of a sweet valley of contentment. I was feeling fine. I was still doing a lot of interesting things. I remember it wasn't too long before she was born that I went to the annual party at the British Embassy in honor of the Queen's birthday. Not actually her birthday, but just chosen always in June because that's when you can rely upon pretty weather in England I'm told. They always flew over the most fantastic Devon cream and strawberries as big as a baby's fist. It was a very glamorous occasion. Well, my eyes were out on stems for many years at the variety and the excitement of Washington parties. That one at the British Embassy was one of the top ones. I don't know that Lyndon ever went with me. I'd usually just get the wife of some other member of the House, maybe particularly from Texas.

And then Lyndon, from his vantage point on the Naval Affairs Committee, had become quite close to, and quite admiring of, Secretary [James] Forrestal, and we would go out on the *Sequoia* with the Secretary and a small group at night down the Potomac.

Loved it then, loved it later. One of the most beautiful things that ever happened was the rides on the *Sequoia* about sunset and getting down to Mount Vernon and stopping and everybody on deck being very quiet. It used to be a voice--first I think when we were on it it was a voice, later it became a tape--that was a brief salute to the first president.

But big things were building up on the national scene, to which I actually paid little attention, but they were very important to Lyndon. His position on a strong national defense was becoming firmer all the time. The Truman Doctrine was coming into being and the Marshall Plan for economic recovery in Europe was on track and was being evolved by Secretary of State [George] Marshall and pushed by [President Harry] Truman.

On the other hand, Truman vetoed the Taft-Hartley Act. Lyndon had voted for it. There were lots of big things going that we were to hear a lot about in a build-up over the years. The Supreme Court passed a ruling that the offshore lands belonged to the federal government and not to the state off whose shores they were. From then on for many years "tidelands" was a household word.

G: We'll talk more about that I hope when we get to the 1950s.

J: The Soviet build-up of a cold war feeling with them was emerging.

G: Was there a change in the President's attitude toward the Soviet Union? During the war so many people, since they were allies, perhaps felt that they were less of a threat than they were perceived after the war.

J: Well, I can't honestly answer that question. I think he welcomed them as allies. They needed to save their skin; we needed to save our skin. And I think he was hopeful--

Lyndon was always a very optimistic person--but guarded. From the beginning, he looked at them with a wary eye, and of course they gave us good reason to, in Hungary that summer, I think it was. And so his feeling that we must remain strong grew with every year.

I was looking for the baby the last week in June. Actually, as that week wore on and she wasn't born, like everybody, it's a pretty tiring time. Finally, dear Dr. Radford Brown says, "There might be some complications here. We'd better go on and induce this child." So he put me in the hospital, I think it was on the night of July 1. I remember walking the hospital corridors and going through the ritual of having the castor oil and all that, and then Luci was born uneventfully the next morning about dawn sometime. As I began to come to, I said something hazily about how is he, because it was firmly rooted in my mind that we were going to have a boy. I think Lyndon had included words about baby brother when he'd be writing the family and telling how Lynda was responding to the prospect. And the doctors came in and said, "You have another fine little girl." Well, there was about one moment when the bottom dropped out of the world. But nature is wonderful; it was with me just about one moment.

G: Did you want a boy as much as he did, or did you want one just because you knew that he wanted one so badly?

J: Well, I think it was just because he did and because it was sort of a natural, rounded, fulfillment. It is a long-term matter of sadness to me that there is nobody really to carry on the Johnson name, since it goes through the male line. Nor is there to carry on the Taylor name, because--yes and no, I have a nephew as you know, but he's in his fifties by

now and he has only girls. So really there is no one of either.

But, in any case, Luci was pretty from the beginning, and made her place so readily in our hearts and lives. I remember at that time, when I took her home, I believe I put her in the front room--we had just three bedrooms at that dear old house on Thirtieth Place, on the second floor, all small. Ours was the largest, and then there were two that shared a bath. I think Luci [was] first in the familiar wicker basket that Governor [Jimmie] Allred had given us for Lynda and then later on in a baby bed which we still have. It was a very placid addition to the house, a much gentler addition than Lynda Bird had been. It was really a happy summer.

G: What was Lynda Bird's reaction to the baby sister?

J: Curious, interested. I think she was secure enough never to imagine that this child could threaten her, and she didn't. I have, to me, delightful pictures, taken with that camera that got so much use, of Lynda Bird carefully inspecting this little creature curled up in a blanket in my arms. I think Ruth Taylor came up and spent a while, and I can remember sitting on that screened porch, which was such a part of our lives on Thirtieth Place, looking out at the succession of summer flowers, and at the victory garden, and letting Luci have some fresh air and later taking her out in the baby carriage.

We were dedicated to going to Texas as soon as I was up to it, which we expected to be about six weeks after the baby was born, if Congress was adjourned about that time. (Interruption)

And, as my six weeks appointment with the doctor approached and we were getting ready to go to Texas, we got another invitation from Secretary Forrestal to go out

to dinner with him on the *Sequoia*. Lyndon of course accepted immediately. For once, I wasn't eager to go, because a move is always a trauma to a woman, especially with two small children, one of them just six weeks old. I was in the throes of packing and I think we were actually going to leave the next day, or maybe it was two or three days off. But, we went. We got there, and got out of the car and started up the gangplank at the *Sequoia*, didn't see the Secretary. That's not surprising. He was often delayed. But we noticed a sort of startled expression on the face of one of the congressmen--or was it somebody high in the navy, I can't remember for sure--and [he] said, "Well, hello, Lyndon, glad to see you." But you could tell that we weren't expected, and it was a very odd feeling. After a few minutes when the Secretary didn't come, Lyndon said, "Look, we had an invitation from the Secretary to come to dinner. I wonder if there could have been some mix-up." This man said, "Well, we'd love to have you. Please go on with us. But the Secretary had told me several days ago I could use the boat tonight."

So we didn't go, and we got off. We felt sort of silly. We went home. And the next day we had a very prescient sort of a letter hand delivered from Forrestal, handwritten, in which he said, "Dear Lyndon, I'm sorry about the mix-up last night, and I can't blame it on the staff. It was complete aberration at the top. Maybe I'd better get the hell out of here. Maybe I'm breaking up. Love to Lady Bird, and I'll ring you before you go. As ever, Jim." He made quite an impression on me. He was such a hard-driving, determined, intense man, I thought an extremely intelligent and gifted public servant, but high-strung. I don't know how long after that it was when he went to the hospital; maybe it was months. But we all know the sad way in which he departed.

So, we went to Texas, and by that time, we were living at 1901 Dillman. I had achieved my goal of having enough sheets and dishes and silver, of a sort, plate I'm sure, in two houses so that moving wasn't quite the chore that it had been for so many years. The backyard at Dillman was one of the experiences of my life, great big, half a city block, with lots of trees on it, wonderful place for children to run wild and play. It had a barbecue pit, practically never used, and about the story of which I'm sure I've told you long ago in the course of this.

G: That's the one you built, isn't it?

J: Yes, that Lyndon had to have built by Saturday night, and this was on a Tuesday or something like that. But we kept the yard full of deck chairs and had lights strung, and there were many happy summer gatherings out there, and a telephone placed handy in a tree.

G: Now were there three units there then, or just two?

J: There were two units. I forget at exactly what time we enlarged--I don't know quite how we did it, but anyhow, there were two little servants' rooms downstairs, and servants were even then not quite as plentiful as they'd been. We did enlarge the upstairs for the benefit of somebody, I think maybe it was Warren Woodward. And the long succession, the roster of people who had lived in Dillman, would be a star-studded list. Lots of our best friends of course, beginning with John and Nellie [Connally] and somewhere along the way Walter Jenkins, just an endless number of them. And those that didn't live there used it as their voting address so they could vote in Texas.

G: Well now, during this summer when you moved back, did the Connallys live in the other

side when you lived in the one side? Do you recall who your neighbors were in this particular summer?

J: In the summer of 1947 by that time John had, I really frankly think, bought another house in Austin, and it was another of the long roster of people. At one time the Walter Jenkins lived over there I know.

And so the question of our "vacation," in quotes, came to a head, and I've already told you I had all these lovely visions of some glamorous foreign travel. It turned out that we got in the car, John and Nellie--Lyndon and John in the front seat, Nellie and I in the back seat--and what we actually did was ride all over South Texas (laughter), stopping to visit a whole roster of people who naturally were the *jefes* in any presumed political future. We were really testing the waters for 1948. Lyndon, as soon as we would get in the car, he would turn the radio on to KTBC and the volume as high as it would go, and I would stick my fingers in my ears and away we would go. He wanted to see how far it would reach. Unfortunately, it reached an awful long ways. (Laughter) He was impervious to loud noises, if he was interested in them. I was irritated by loud noises always, whether they were something I really wanted very much to hear or not. He and John would talk politics, individuals and issues, and Nellie and I would sit in the back seat and laugh and laugh, with a certain wry note to our laughter, because we both had the same sort of ideas of an elegant vacation.

I think that may have been the time--no, I can't remember, I'd have to verify it with some pictures. At least at one time we did have a few self-indulgent beautiful days on a beach at St. Joe's Island. It is now called San Jose, I think. It belonged to Sid

Richardson, and had a beautiful long, low-slung house on it which was full of marvelous western art. It had been visited by [Franklin] Roosevelt as I recall when he was on a fishing trip off the coast. After Sid's death, it became his nephew, Perry Bass', property, and he and his darling wife, Nancy, vacationed there, and we had the pleasure of having been there hosted by both of those, first by Sid, and then later by the Basses. I don't know whether this, quote, "wonderful" vacation trip included those few days, sunning, but I have some youthful pictures of Nellie and me hamming it up on the beach, posed like movie stars. I think perhaps it was later, because I think I saw some little children in the pictures that were somewhat older. I believe Nellie was the one who arranged to get a practical nurse to take care of her current small child and Luci. In any case, this trip probably lasted around ten days.

One of the things I do remember we did, was to go down to Houston, and we must have seen--perhaps we stayed with Wesley and Neva [West], but I know we went to see his brother, Jim West's, garage. And if you think that is a funny destination for a vacation, it was not; it was absolutely unique. A great big garage, all underground. It would make a fantastically wonderful retreat against bombs in case of a war, and I rather think that's what he had planned it for, I don't know. Clean as any bathroom I had, but lots of vehicles in it, and lots of things stored: groceries, equipment, supplies of all sorts. I think it may have been the first bomb shelter that I ever experienced.

G: Probably the first one built.

J: I've seen a few others. But anyhow, he liked gadgets and he built his own in an altercation with a local power and light company. He got mad at them, told them to cut

off the service, and built his own in the backyard. I don't know whether that lasted months or years. He also had a communications system at his ranches, which was extremely sophisticated and advanced for those times. He could just talk to oil rigs all over.

And I do believe we also visited with Cecil Burney and lots of Lyndon's old friends in the Fourteenth District, Mr. Kleberg's district, which always was close to his heart.

G: How about Sam Fore? Did you stop and see him?

J: That's probably the time we stopped by and saw Sam Fore and she [Mrs. Fore] gave me the wonderful recipe for Wheaties macaroons that became a part of our family table for many years. They were, of course, our forever friends until his death, and I kept up with Mrs. Fore even later in occasional correspondence. I remember distinctly visiting in their home, but it is hard to pinpoint what years.

G: Did this trip yield any conclusion with regard to the President's future in politics, or whether or not he should run in 1948?

J: I would say only a tentative conclusion and a rising interest in it. It was my general feeling that after a goodly number of years in a job, Lyndon always began to be a little restive, and looked and thought, "I have sucked this orange dry; I have gotten all I can. I've learned all I can." And I think perhaps--he was moving in that direction. Certainly he hated to hit the cold water; it would mean so much hard work for all his friends. Money was by no means the big horror that it has now become for a politician, but it was certainly a great big obstacle.

G: Was part of the purpose of this trip to determine whether or not he could get the backing?

J: Sure, sure. It was testing the water. And I'm also sure, at least I think, it's my feeling, that John was a moving force in pushing him, in a number of these elections, forward. I know that I was not scared; I could take it or leave it. But I had a certain, more than willingness, a certain eagerness.

G: You know, you often wonder about 1948. With 1941, he still had a seat in Congress. But here in 1948 he was running against a well-known state-wide figure. I'm just wondering if he ever thought about getting out of politics, and if he lost, of course, he was out. Do you think that in the back of his mind he may have said it's either the Senate or re-establish another life outside of politics?

J: I would say probably so, because business was a siren song to him always. It was a magnet that drew him, but not so strongly as public service. He admired a lot of businessmen and he admired what a successful economy could do for the country. He never looked on them as--well, what is the word?

G: Robber barons.

J: Robber barons or malefactors of great wealth.

So, we had our vacation and we laughed a lot about it. It drew us closer I think to the eventual decision, although over and over when Lyndon covered the district--and believe me, he never failed to cover the district--he was asked that question at every turn. And at every one he sort of kept his own counsel and said he'd cross that bridge when he came to it.

A great burden of his speeches in reporting to the district was on atomic control,

atomic energy. He had been placed on a committee to oversee the control of atomic energy. He was, in my opinion, deeply hopeful about the good it could do for humankind, and deeply fearful of its power for evil, and just real dedicated to getting a firm grip on it and not letting it get loose.

G: He seems to have also favored a civilian control.

J: Absolutely. He always had a lot of respect for the military, but he really came from that old-time school that wanted the civilian to be looking down the throats of [the military].

G: Anything on his association with David Lilienthal? Did he have much contact with Lilienthal during this period?

J: Yes, he did. I remember, he was very much of a name that figured in our lives then. I don't think there was any personal closeness, but I would say there was a professional closeness.

The same folks peopled our Washington life, Speaker Rayburn at the head. The Jim Rowes were in and out. Besides Forrestal, whom I've mentioned, he saw a good bit of Secretary [Robert] Patterson, and admired him very much, and admired General Marshall so very much.

G: Did they have much contact with each other?

J: I don't think anybody had much contact with General Marshall. I think he just lived on a sort of a frosty mountain. But I'm sure glad he lived, and I'm sure glad he had the part in the life of those decades. He's a great--to my feeling--general and a great and rare human being in his patriotism and his rigid sense of integrity. I may have mentioned that sitting next to him at dinner one time, through some gorgeous fluke, because I wasn't that sort of

a ranking person, the subject of the income tax came up. I don't know quite why, except that President Truman was at that point, there was big talk about an income tax reduction, and I think he was vetoing it actually. Congress was trying to pass it and my recollection is that he was vetoing it. General Marshall was talking about the French people and how they didn't pay their taxes, what the tax bill said; they just got together with the tax collector and sort of bargained out the matter. You could see--at least I thought I could see--a sort of disdain in his face. He would believe in what your country says do, you do. (Interruption)

So the fall proceeded in Washington [Austin], living at Dillman, Lyndon covering the district. The main burden of his message to every Kiwanis Club and service group and veterans group, all the speeches that he made, was on strong national defense, particularly on atomic control. He could put it into very simple memorable language, "We've got to use it to make men live, better than they've ever lived before. But if we're not successful, then we better fear it more than anything in the world, because there will be only one casualty list in the next war: the first one." That was kind of a theme that ran through his life for quite a few years from then on. And on this Joint Committee on Atomic Energy he made trips to Los Alamos and out to California, wherever the work was going on, to try to educate himself. I remember Liz Carpenter was a part of our lives then. She was representing a number of [Texas] papers in Washington, particularly the [*Austin*] *American-Statesman*, our main paper in our district. She interviewed him on atomic energy and he said something like, "It's going to take a lot of prayer and a lot of work to control it." She said, "All right, I'll do the praying; you do the working."

Another question that was to concern us for all the decades since it raised its head along about then, and that was the Middle East, with the U.S. endorsing a UN plan to partition the Holy Land into Jewish and Arab states. We had a lot of very good friends who were Jews in our district and across the country. They were, from the beginning, very articulate in trying to make a champion out of Lyndon. And indeed, he had a lot of sympathy and caring for them and a lot of concern.

G: Was there anyone who was especially persuasive in pointing out the plight of the Jewish people in this connection?

Tape 2 of 4

J: Certainly champions of the Jewish side in that would have been the two Novy brothers, Jim and Dave, our long time friends and supporters in the Tenth District. And I think the whole Jewish community were our friends, in our district. A strong figure in Lyndon's life for years was Ed Weisl. I cannot remember particularly conversations he may have had with Lyndon on this score.

The main passions of that fall were preparedness and the control of atomic energy. But he always had time for dams on the Lower Colorado River and getting together with the LCRA [Lower Colorado River Authority] and the other authority, Guadalupe-Blanco, I think it was, River Authority. I remember we went once more--through the years this was a constant thread--to his old alma mater, San Marcos. This time it was to homecoming festivities, a very picturesque campus. I've always approached it with a lot of warmth, that old Gothic building on the top of the hill, and the way men no longer quite so young spoke with nostalgic memories about their escapades

there.

G: He always had a very fond memory of San Marcos, didn't he?

J: Oh, yes. It was a place he loved, it was his political friend throughout. It was one of the first gifts to his life, an education, not an Ivy League education, but a tool for a young man to do the best he could with.

G: When he would go back, as he did on this occasion, who would he look up? Who would he want to see while he was in town?

J: Well, of course Dr. [Cecil] Evans first and foremost as long as he lived. And then there was a Dr. [A. H.] Nolle there, I think I remember. The one who was an inspiration to him was Professor [H. N.] Greene, but I think he died rather early on. I don't remember just when he did die.

Our friend Jim Forrestal became secretary of defense when they finally got the legislation worked out to put together the armed services. A great figure on the scene, Bob Taft, announced his candidacy for running for the presidential nomination on the Republican ticket. Of course there were questions every day put to [Dwight] Eisenhower: was he going to run? And a lot of our friends were for him.

G: Really?

J: Oh, yes. Sid Richardson, I think, had known him a long time, made a special trip to go and see him on the subject. I'm trying to remember whether Amon Carter did or not.

Another ugly ghost began to raise its head on the scene, and that is the House Un-American Activities Committee began looking for communists, and questioning all sorts of people in the entertainment world and in the intellectual [world], campuses, writers,

professors. The film industry sort of bore the brunt of their speculations early on. I have a memory of our good friend Helen Gahagan Douglas getting tarred with that brush, *most undeservedly*. She was a spirited fighter for all the New Deal legislation and the things that later made up Lyndon's Great Society legislation. But she was a patriotic person through and through.

G: What was President Johnson's reaction to the rise of this?

J: Sort of like his thinking about a former phenomenon, the Ku Klux Klan: against it, scared of it, not personally, but as it might affect the minds of people and cause them to do unfair things and injure folks. And of course one of our really very close people got in serious trouble, and that was Virginia Durr. But I think perhaps that that came along a few years later. Of course, that reached its peak when Senator [Joseph] McCarthy--that's a later story I believe.

G: John Henry Faulk got into trouble also with this.

J: Yes.

Congress did go back into session in November, but to move back would have meant that we'd have to move again to come home for Christmas, or spend Christmas in Washington. And Christmas was always terribly special to Lyndon and to me, and so I made the decision to stay down there with the two little children. After all, it wouldn't be more than five weeks or so.

So President Truman had his special session. The economy was on the forefront of everybody's thinking, too, right then, because an anti-inflation program and price and wage controls, Truman was pushing them. But I can remember mostly 1947 as a

peaceful valley between the turmoil of the war years and the personal turmoil in our own lives of the *long* campaign of 1948 for the Senate.

We had Christmas in Austin, and as always, it was a custom from the beginning of the time that Mrs. Johnson had the house on Harris Boulevard, all of her children, and, when they came along, grandchildren, gathered there on Christmas Eve and opened presents and she served fruitcake and coffee or punch. *Never* anything alcoholic, not even a glass of wine. We had what also became a family tradition, we had the first--no, not the first surely, but anyhow, one of the early parties for everybody that worked at KTBC. We had this out at 1901 Dillman, which was a very expansive house, as all our houses had to be expansive. We had it after Lyndon came back from that special session, real close to Christmas time. KTBC was a real cohesive group in those days.

I went through the laborious process of getting the children both dressed up and looking as pretty as they could, and me in an evening dress and going down to Christianson-Leberman for a formal posed photograph, which I later had made into a miniature on ivory for Lyndon's desk. That was my Christmas present to him that year, and it stayed on his desk I think until he died.

And at Mrs. Johnson's that year--it was a good year in the family life of the Johnsons, and they were not always good, as we all so sadly know. Sam Houston was doing well. He was helping Lyndon out some. He had been with us part of the year in Washington and I really don't know what his full time employment was, don't remember, but he was certainly helping us out some. Bobbitt was, by that time, working at--gee, after he got out of the service he worked in real estate for a while, but I think perhaps by

1947 he was with us at KTBC in the sales department. So the family would have been Lyndon and I and our, by then, two children, and Rebekah and Bobbitt and their one son, and Josefa and Lucia and her husband and their darling daughter. Aunt Lucy and Uncle Sterling were still alive. It was Aunt Lucy for whom we had named the baby of course, and we named her L-U-C-Y, which, as we all know, she later changed.

And we had another party at 1901 Dillman. This was for her christening, which took place at St. David's [Episcopal Church in Austin], where I had been confirmed and where Lynda had earlier been christened. Charles Sumners performed the ceremony, and it was on the 27th of December. We had asked Daddy's wife, Ruth, to be a godmother along with Mary Rather, hoping that that would make Daddy feel good. Our always loved Senator Wirtz was godfather. And incidentally, he had sent her something charming when she had been born and we'd told him that we were going to ask him to be godfather, this pretty little angel, a little china angel, an exquisite little piece. I wish I could find it. And incidentally, back to her birth for one moment, the first flowers I received were from Mayor Tom Miller, followed by a nice letter. In fact, I don't remember ever being in the hospital but what his flowers were the first ones that I received.

Anyhow, at the christening there was all the family and such old-timers as Bess Beeman and her husband, and Sherman and Delle Birdwell, and Paul and Dolly Bolton. Paul was with us at KTBC.

(Interruption)

Max and Marietta Brooks and Herman Brown. From the business community, which we

were never in those early days terribly close to, but those that we were remained our friends as long as they lived, Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Perry and Jim and Ann Nash, and of course, Herman Brown. And Lib and Cootz [?] Covert. And then longtime friends like John and Nellie, and Ann and Ed Clark, and Bill and Jeanne Deason, Gordon and Ruth Fulcher. And from my own university days, Charlie and Floy Green. We couldn't have had it without Jesse and Louise Kellam. Lyndon's newspaper friends were represented by Margaret Mayer. I don't know where Ray Lee was, but Kathleen was there. Bob and Betty Long, and the Odoms, old Mrs. Odom herself, and Vola Mae and Elizabeth. Will Edward and Jamie must have been out of town. Jake and Sugar Pickle, and Judge and Mrs. Ben Powell, bringing Mary, of course. Aunt Lucy, after whom Luci was named. Incidentally, she gave Luci a three thousand dollar government bond, which represented a very sizeable amount for her. I'm not sure whether it was in her will, but at any rate, it occurred at some time. My old school friends Beverly and Lois Sheffield. Ruth was one of the sponsors, as was Mary and Senator Wirtz. It was a sweet occasion. St. David's has held a lot of my life, from my confirmation in the Episcopal Church back in about 1930 or 1931, when I first started the University, then the baptism of both of the children, and the confirmation of both of the children.

Then we went on out to 1901 Dillman, and had simple refreshments and just a good time.

(Interruption)

Charles Sumners with his beautiful organ voice, the presiding churchman, has been present at all those functions, and then he remained in our life long enough to make

a prayer when Lyndon's body lay in state at the LBJ Library. He, too, is gone now, but he was a loveable part of my life.

(Interruption)

G: Okay. 1948.

J: Somehow we didn't get back to Washington as early as usual. I think it was the middle of January when we returned. Lyndon was still covering his district and making speeches to civic clubs. One of the issues that would be a passionate one with him for some time to come was raised early in January, and that is, in regard to a 70-group air force, to be accomplished by the end of 1949. There was a Finletter Commission, a commission on air policy [report], "Survival in the Air Age," which he felt was terribly essential and important, and his friend Stu Symington was, by that time, secretary for the air force. That was an important thread in our lives for the next few years.

G: They really worked together on that I gather.

J: Yes, they did. There was quite a closeness between us and Symington for a good many years.

G: Was his espousal of 70-group air force, do you think, rooted in his World War II experience, the fact that he saw a lot of outmoded aircraft and felt that the Japanese had had superior planes?

J: I think it must have been, and then it was a part naturally of his feeling for a strong defense. He thought that it was the first arm of a strong defense.

It was really a tremendous year in our lives, 1948. Early in that year another issue that was to be a continuing thread began to surface more and more. Attorney General

Price Daniel, Texas attorney general, was in Washington, and he and Tom Connally were asking Truman to support the tidelands legislation. "Tidelands" became a household word, one that you were hotly concerned about for some time. And yet I remember sitting in the Supreme Court and watching--here I don't know whether it was Robert Lee Bobbitt or Price Daniel or who was espousing our side of the tidelands before the Supreme Court. I remember Hugo Black, who was then, and became more, our close friend, lean over and say something to the effect that the attorney on the opposite side had said that it just must belong to the nation. Black said to us something like it belonged to the United States, because it *was* the *United* States. I wish I could remember the exact language, which of course was much more appropriate.

I think we got back [to Washington] about the middle of the month, thereby missing one of the annual high points of the year, that is, the Speaker's birthday. Every year the Speaker's birthday elicited a whole coterie of parties, and early on one became a party that Dale and Scooter Miller hosted for many years at the Democratic Club, the Women's National Democratic Club on New Hampshire. A great gathering of the clan, lots of Texans, lots of other congressmen, and just all the family of the Rayburns that could be present. It was a much-looked forward to, and very special, time. I have mentioned to you that we always had a birthday party for him just with children, for instance.

Lyndon was on another special subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, on petroleum. Naturally being from Texas, oil was a major interest, and although he was curiously unloved by most oil people, he had his friends among the group and he

represented a constituency where it was a major industry. So he was always trying to foresee the long-run rights and wrongs of the industry as it related to government.

G: Why do you think he was unloved by a lot of the oil industry in Texas?

J: I really think you had to be for them 100 per cent of the time and couldn't deviate at all, or else they were totally against you. I think maybe when he arrived at a position of more power, they began to have a more tolerant attitude.

G: But Rayburn had the same problem, didn't he?

J: Oh, you bet he did!

People were already making their intentions known about the Senate race. Former Governor Coke Stevenson had announced practically on New Year's Day, I think, and there was talk about George Peddy running. And talk about Jimmie Allred running, too, although we felt that he had shot his bow in 1942, and this would be--whether we would decide to run was, I'm sure, never far from Lyndon's mind in those early months. Of course the one that was *really* being courted high and wide for the biggest job was General Eisenhower.

G: Did the President have a position on that?

J: I don't know that he did, because he just didn't meddle in Republican affairs.

G: This was Democrat--

J: When a lot of folks that were close to us were petitioning him to run, they were wanting and seeking and expecting that he might run on the Democratic ticket. It was really a quandary: one, whether he'd run on anything; two, which ticket he'd run on.

We did all the usual annual things, like go to the army-navy-air force reception at

the White House. In those days there were a lot of stag dinners, one for Jim Forrestal that Lyndon went to, I believe, and another for Stu Symington at the F Street Club, which was always Stu's great favorite *and mine*, the elegant, intimate club that was difficult to get into and much sought, on F Street.

As always in those years the Congressional Club took up a good bit of my time. I shared it with all the constituents I could, and we had an annual tea there for the President and Mrs. Truman.

And it was in this spring that a very divisive and difficult thing was put forward by President Truman: a special civil rights message to Congress to establish a commission on civil rights, and also a civil rights division in the Justice Department, and to provide federal protection against lynching and a more adequate right to vote, and--this was the sticky one, in the South particularly--a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission, FEPC, to prohibit discrimination in interstate--no, that's something else. This was just relating to--

G: Employment problems.

J: --employment. There was a great hue and cry in the South. Lyndon was against the FEPC, and felt that it violated the constitutional rights of just folks to hire whom they want to, and to work for whom they wanted to. He came, and the country came, a long way from 1948 to 1965. He wrote some quite lucid and persuasive letters to constituents on the subject. He was against the poll tax; he did not think there ought to be a poll tax. But he was also in favor of states being able to set their own standards for voting, and he thought states ought to abolish the poll tax and not have it shoved down their throat by

the federal government.

It was really a transition year. There was lots going on in Europe and in Asia, although somehow or another we didn't pay much attention to Asia in those days.

G: Now China was about to fall or Chiang Kai-Shek--this was the year that Mao was taking over.

J: Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed. And we were somehow insulated, or ignorant, of the full importance of that.

The year went on with its usual milestones of the White House congressional reception. [It] usually takes place in about February. All the wives looked forward to it happily (laughter), and all the men looked forward to it with a grimace, I expect. At least that was the case in our household. I guess Lyndon was still renting white tie and tails, I don't remember. It was years and years before we ever bought one. Then, another annual event, one that he relished much more and participated in very actively, was the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner. This year it took place at the Mayflower Hotel. President Truman criticized the reactionary response to his State of the Union Message. He had pushed the Marshall Plan vigorously. Lyndon was very much for the Marshall Plan. But the Marshall Plan--I think in general we're terribly proud of it now, but it sure did have a struggle getting through.

(Interruption)

We had Zephyr [Wright] ensconced in the kitchen putting good meals on the table for us at very late hours, and we had a very sweet little maid who took care of the children, someone I think from North Carolina, who had moved to Washington. That

was quite an influx of black people from North Carolina in those days. It was before Helen Williams joined us.

We'd have small dinners with awfully good talk. I remember my favorite was to get about eight people together, and if I could have Speaker Rayburn it was always just real special, as I frequently did. And Bill Douglas--I remember one time Bill and Mildred were there, and Mr. Sam brought his date, the attractive woman Mrs. Davis, a widow. He kind of specialized in widows. And Marietta Brooks was visiting me, and I believe Houston Harte was in town.

G: Did the President usually plan these dinner parties or did you plan them?

J: He would tell me who he wanted to have and then I would fill in sort of. He was the instigator of most of our life, both business and social, but I also urged and slipped in my own plans.

We would go to dinner at the Tom Clarks and at the George McGhees. And the Clark Thompsons always had one big marvelous cocktail party, every year, which I looked forward to, very much. Old friends from New York like Ed Weisl would come down, or from Texas; Ed Clark was a frequent visitor and the Browns. And of course the Mayor [Tom Miller] was on the phone to us all the time.

The Texas Ladies Luncheon was a big part of my life. We would go to some big hotel--the Shoreham was a great favorite--and I would have my visitors from home, carefully passing out those opportunities, sometimes having such elegant people really as Madame Henri [Hellé] Bonnet, who was the wife of the longtime ambassador from France. I still remember a toast that Clark Clifford made at his home--he and Marny had

some of the nicest parties we ever went to--and it was for the Bonnets, who had by that time been there, oh, ten or twelve years, long service for an ambassador. He was the quintessential ambassador. Clark said something like, "Whatever goes on in foreign policy, and sometimes we have our difficulties with the feelings of the French toward some of our policies, but just so they never change their ambassador, and here is to Henri Bonnet."

Ladies luncheons. Somehow people had more time in those days, women did. I guess it was the fact they had servants and they did not need to work outside the home so much. But women's luncheons were a big part of life. My preference was a small group and a talkative group, and I always had that when I had Virginia Durr, as I did every now and then, and Mrs. Tex Goldschmidt, Wicky [Elizabeth], and Kittie Mae [Wirtz]. This was a year--I don't know whether he was up there two years or what, but it was far too brief a time--Senator Wirtz being under secretary.

G: This would have been a little after that.

J: If it was after, he would come back to town still, and when he would come back I'd have a party for Kittie Mae.

Dr. Washington was our children's doctor. Isn't that a nice name? And I do believe he was a descendant of the President--Dr. John Washington. From the very day Lynda was born on for about the next thirteen years he was our children's doctor and such a dear man. I remember all those times I had to call him in the middle of the night and say one of them has got fever, 105°, what do I do? He was always reachable and always very interested. And yet he was beanpole thin and looked like *he* needed a transfusion

and not the patient.

G: Were the children relatively healthy during this period?

J: Essentially, yes, but both very subject to respiratory ailments like having a sore throat or tonsillitis.

G: Did they get this from their father?

J: I don't know. But indeed, they did have colds quite a lot, and earaches and the sort of thing that go with bad Washington winters. It was snowsuit time, and it seemed like you could hardly bundle them into one of those cumbersome snowsuits and pull on those rubber boots, and they'd run out--at least Lynda at this time, Luci was too little--and play a while and in no time at all she'd be in and you'd have to take it off again and then go back through the whole process a little bit later.

Dr. Radford Brown was my gynecologist and one of the finest human beings I ever knew. I'm very grateful for having him be a part of my life. He was the best kind of a mixture of intensely interested and personal and compassionate, and yet utterly remote and professional. We never really knew him socially, but I felt, I'm sure as so many women do, that I knew him very well indeed, in a professional capacity, and I had the feeling that he just personally considered it a real coup when I finally had a first child and then a second child, and also [felt] sorry when other pregnancies didn't work out.

Chief Justice [Fred] Vinson and Roberta were a part of our lives then, a great friend of Lyndon's, marvelous Kentucky stories, good salty conversationalist, and good judgment, and a great friend of Truman's. Roberta was a marvelous storyteller herself, stories just a little bit on the risqué side, and much prized by all the women who got to

join.

The 75th Club was flourishing, and once a month I just wouldn't miss a meeting of it if I could *possibly* help it.

Abe and Carol Fortas and Paul Porter and Bess Porter we saw a lot of. It was a very bad winter, and as the winter wore off, and turned into spring we had a birthday party for Lynda Bird. Big doings. I took my trusty movie camera and recorded it duly, and somewhere in the files I'm sure we have it, and we'll see Patty Nichols--that's Dorothy's little girl--and Lera Thomas--Albert and Lera Thomas' daughter--and the two little next door children, Jackie and Lucy Ann Reed--dear Dr. O. E. Reed's [grand]children who had come home to live during the war years when their father went into the service and they weren't quite moved back into their later habitat. Scooter and Dale had a couple of children who were close enough in age, Dale and Marta. And then Alice and Welly Hopkins' little girl, Kennon, and a little neighbor boy.

In Europe, there was plenty of trouble, in Czechoslovakia. The communists were just making countries bow to them and producing a great feeling in our country of concern about what was coming next. Jan Masaryk, the foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, fell, or was pushed out of the window, to his death. The official announcement said it was suicide, and what were you going to believe?

Meanwhile, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee went on to authorize about five billion dollars for the first year of the Marshall Plan and the Senate began to debate it. It was having hard going. The armed services was doing their own internecine warfare. Forrestal was trying to ride herd on them and get [Admiral William] Leahy and

[General Omar] Bradley and [Admiral Lewis] Denfeld and [General Carl] Spaatz, and all of them to divide up their fiefdoms, but unite, make it all one Defense Department.

The Women's Army Corps, which had just been a temporary measure during wartime and was going to expire right away, a bill was introduced to perpetuate it and Lyndon was on the side of it, and pushed it hard. As I remember, it too had a hard time. He wrote one of his constituents that "it will have rough sailing in the House. I don't think that anything will change this, except modernizing a lot of fellows who think the only place for a woman is barefooted and in the kitchen." He dictated a lot of his letters and used his own highly informal, but very colorful, phrases.

G: That was really women's lib before it was fashionable.

J: Yes, it was. Actually the armed services were entering wedges, both for black people to get equal treatment in the army, and for women to prove that they could handle jobs in the army, indeed as they had in defense plants during wartime. Curiously, war has some good side effects.

The Marshall Plan finally passed. Lyndon was making speeches about strengthening air power. Whenever he was at home in the district he was speaking out on it. Truman addressed a joint session of Congress on the threat to the freedom of Europe and recommended the Marshall Plan and universal military--

Tape 3 of 4

Another thing the President recommended was universal military training, and selective service legislation.

Somewhere along in that spring there was another question that Lyndon was quite

passionate about. I think this was the timing. It was the return of the synthetic rubber plants that the government had made such an achievement in building during the war years to supply the necessary rubber when we were cut off from the East, Malaysia I guess. Lyndon felt that they were being too hastily disposed of by the government at too low a figure. I can't quite be sure about his arguments across the chasm of time. My memory is not that good, except that he thought the government ought to retain a hold on them in case it ever needed them again, and also get more money out of them if it was going to dispose of them to the regular established rubber companies. Somewhere in the course of that he developed quite a respect and liking for the Firestone family, who approached it in patriotic fashion and not at all a greedy fashion. Oh, there's so much that I wish that I had shared more or remembered more, participated in more, but I did as much as I could with my hours and my brains.

One of the real happy events of the last part of March was a visit from some of Lyndon's favorite kinfolks: his cousin, Margaret Kimball, and her daughter, Margaret Ann, and Leila Clark, Ed [Clark's] daughter. They were going to come along toward the end of March and we had planned some parties in Washington and a trip to the big city of New York with them. The cherry blossoms were in bloom and the visit was all it promised to be. I have pictures of them on the Capitol steps and at the Tidal Basin under the branches of the cherry trees, and on top of the Empire State Building I think it is in New York. Lyndon wrote his friend [Bernard] Toots Shor and asked him to get us tickets to some of the good plays, and I think we saw *Finian's Rainbow* and *Born Yesterday*, oh, and just loved *Born Yesterday* and still do. Then we went to Toots Shor's for a meal.

G: Did LBJ go along on this trip?

J: I think he did go along for part of that. He had to be in committee hearings for a big part of the time. It was right around Easter, so he did have a little time off. But I think he was in New York with us for at least a part of the time.

He always loved providing excitement and pleasure for people whom he loved and who had been good to him, as indeed he thought Margaret had in their growing up years. She was his favorite cousin, maybe a little bit older, but very lively and pretty, and they always had a simpatico relation. She's married to a rancher in Cotulla, and their daughter was at Stephens College. Leila Clark was going to school--gee, I don't know whether it was a girls' school in Mississippi or where. I think later on Leila went to Smith. Anyhow, having company, sharing our home, was a big part of our life. (Interruption)

Sometime in early March there was a couple additions to our staff, and staff was almost family with us. That was Warren Woodward, young, outgoing, laughing, the sort of person who could walk in and meet anybody and be good friends the next day. And Horace Busby, who was on the way to becoming a definite intellectual and an excellent speech writer. They joined us, I think, in early March, and as always there was a period when a staff member or both staff members would stay in our house with us until they got happily placed. I know I remember Woody being in the kitchen in the morning when I would be fixing Luci's bottle and putting the coffee pot on and getting Lyndon's breakfast tray ready, because he *always* had breakfast in bed. Actually it was a very satisfactory relation; it kept me from having to go through the three fried eggs routine

[original egg story is in Interview VI]. I'd take it up and if he didn't eat it, that was his problem. If the phone rang, he didn't get called away from the table. So he would have his long session with newspapers and telephone at the same time that he drank lots of coffee it was in those days, and ate the rest of his breakfast. Later in life it changed to tea for a while, I think maybe Sanka for a while.

Woody and Buzz quickly fitted in and became a part of the team. I really don't know whether Lyndon was consciously getting ready to positively go for the Senate, or whether he was just testing the water and dipping in a foot into the cold water tentatively. I suppose he deep inside had made up his mind.

G: Did he discuss it with you ahead of time, do you recall?

J: Yes, but never with any--and I really don't think he knew until the final moment that he made the plunge.

(Interruption)

The spring of 1948 was an exceedingly active time for us. Lyndon had made a radio speech on the situation of America in the world today, and it got quite a flood of letters in response, nearly all favorable. Of course, what he was addressing himself to was the need for preparedness, for strength in order to insure peace.

It was in that spring also that the Soviets made their next move, refusing to permit passage of U.S. and British military trains through the occupation zone in Germany to Berlin, therefore sort of sealing it off. I've mentioned that Stu Symington, who was then secretary of the air force, and Lyndon--their friendship had deepened that year. Stu was frequently in our house. They would sit around our dining room table after dinner and

plan the next move. Stu was dedicated to the 70-group air force. So, very soon, was Lyndon, and this Berlin action made it apparent that we had to get food and supplies and a lifeline with the outside world into Berlin. How? It would be the air lift. Lyndon made a number of speeches on the floor that spring. He was not a big speechmaker. He'd usually rather get something all planned and then get it introduced by one or several other House members with their names attached to it, and then he would kind of maneuver it through and grease the path. But this spring he made several very forthright and tough speeches himself. One was on the Marshall Plan favoring funding it amply. Another was on the 70-group air force, and then at one point he talked on television. He wrote Mrs. Johnson that he'd made his debut on a local station interviewed by one of the news commentators. Unfortunately, I don't think in the ensuing twenty years he really made friends with the instrument.

G: Have you ever thought about why?

J: Because he couldn't see those people out there.

G: Is that right?

J: Oh, yes. He liked to look at the audience out in front of him. He used to always fuss at the advance men if, in setting up a speech for him, he was on a platform and the audience was way out across the street. He wanted them right up where he could look in the eyes of the front row.

It was a big year for company. Besides taking our visitors Margaret Ann and Margaret and Leila on all the trips I've mentioned, there was my usual beat, which included one big deal was always lunch at the Capitol with Lyndon. And then going to

the White House on one of those congressional tours, and then to the Arlington National Cemetery and the Custis-Lee Mansion, which was one of my favorites always, particularly the children's room up there on the second floor. And the memories of Robert E. Lee walking that hall after midnight trying to make up his mind whether to stay with the Union or go with the South.

And of course, I always took folks to Mount Vernon. We'd try to stop and have lunch at one of those delightful tea houses. There was one called Collinwood, a big white-columned mansion on the side close to the river with ground sloping down to the river. I guess it must have become a tea room perhaps in Depression times. At any rate, it had certainly been built for an ample and wealthy family.

The Supreme Court on Mondays was always a destination, and Grace Stewart, who was Tom Clark's assistant, would get us a good seat and shepherd us through. Tom would always handwrite us a delightful little note on his little cards, which were about, oh, three inches by two inches. I have many of those souvenirs, and so do my many constituents. I'd take some of them to the Folger Library. In fact, I enjoyed the visits in exact proportion to how much the visitor liked them, and I liked the visitors who wanted to go to all the art galleries, to the National Art Gallery and the Corcoran. Then, if there were children, I always took them to the Department of Justice and went through the FBI. Every citizen really thought he got his money's worth out of the FBI in those days and a great national hero was J. Edgar Hoover. We often saw that paper outline of a man which was moved down the gallery for X number of feet, and then one of the agents would give a demonstration of firing. It was marvelous art.

We'd go through the Bureau of Printing and Engraving--the more thorough tourists, the ones who really stayed quite a good while--and watch them make money and stamps. And of course the Smithsonian was always a delight, and naturally you went to the Jefferson Memorial and the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. If it was springtime you walked around the Tidal Basin and took innumerable pictures.

In this spring of 1948 one of the next visitors we had was Marietta Brooks, whose appetite for all of this was quite keen. She liked best the real political conversations around the dining room table, but she liked all the sightseeing, too. And we did it all. Then we went into the vast grandeur of the congressional library and looked up at that domed ceiling.

The big social events of the season in the life of a congressman's wife, I've talked about them over and over, but they were stated affairs and they rolled around every year except in real wartime. The Congressional Club brunch honoring the wife of the president was in those days tops, because not until I reached the Senate was it surpassed, and of course by the time the Senate Ladies [Club] came along, that was my forever love.

G: I noticed that this year you went to the Congressional Club quite often. Was this a regular activity for you? Was this a club to which you belonged?

J: Oh, sure. The 75th and the Congressional Club and, to a much less extent, the Women's National Democratic Club. But the Congressional Club always tried to provide some mental fodder for us simple congressional wives, and they would have an ambassador talk about the art of diplomacy or their foreign country, or an artist, or someone from the local--the National was our only theater then as I recall, but we had quite a number of

people who were doing plays there. I remember Gloria Swanson was there telling us how to stay young and make the most of ourselves physically.

Then they had a course on interior decoration. That was right down my alley; I was a regular and thorough participant. It was taught by Miss Genevieve Hendricks with whom I've already mentioned that by that time I was becoming--we just always had something going. I was filling out slowly my Chippendale chairs for the dining room, or buying a handsome secretary desk for the living room, a couple of more pull up chairs for the living room. Just as fast as Alabama would yield a little money, from timber or cotton, I would go down and place it in furniture.

We had lots of dinner parties. Those were Marietta's favorites. The Paul Porters and the Mike Monroneys and the Jim Rowes and Chief Justice Vinson and Roberta and the Bill Douglases, always the Speaker. Almost always somebody from the Texas delegation, likely to be the Poages, the Thomases, or the George Mahons.

Of course there was always the Congressional Club's annual tea honoring whoever was speaker. Speaker [Joseph] Martin, we got along real well with. We liked him fine, although we never could come to think of him as by any means filling the shoes of Speaker Rayburn.

Lyndon took issue with President Truman on the surplus property act and said it didn't really make it possible for the government to reclaim those properties, specifically the synthetic rubber plants, in time of emergency. I think that he won that fight. I think that the President reviewed it and came over more to his side. I don't remember for sure, but I remember it was one of his passions of the spring, along with the Marshall Plan and

the 70-group air force, and, to a lesser extent, the firm establishment of the Women's Army Corps--I mean, one for every one of the services.

Meanwhile, the situation was of course--the time was drawing near in Texas when we had to make a decision. Bill Deason wrote us and said that Claude Wild said we just better go ahead, announce immediately, and he didn't think [W. Lee] O'Daniel would run. Of course, that was one of the big ifs in the situation.

G: Was there a formula there, for example--of course, LBJ announced before O'Daniel did, so presumably he didn't know whether O'Daniel was going to run or not.

J: It's my memory that O'Daniel didn't announce that time. This was 1948. Wasn't it just Coke and Lyndon and Peddy?

G: Right. Well no, he didn't enter the race, but no one knew whether he would or not.

J: That's it. Yes.

G: Do you think that President Johnson's decision to run was based at all on what he thought O'Daniel would do in that?

J: Well, it would have made it harder if O'Daniel had run, and I think he was mighty glad he didn't have to face him as well as Coke Stevenson, and perhaps he did announce when he did to preempt--to head off any other people. Maury Maverick, our zany and always delightful friend, who had been defeated for Congress some time before, but was I think being mayor of San Antonio at that time, he wrote us and said that we sure better go on and announce, because Peddy was making progress.

And, as a member of the Armed Services [Committee], Lyndon went around and looked at demonstrations of helicopters. It's interesting to speculate on whether at that

time seeds were planted in his mind about what he would do later.

The 70-group air force had a stormy time getting through. Even Forrestal and President Truman were for lesser ones, although Forrestal at the same time was warning that the Soviet Union possessed the secret of the atomic bomb, though it couldn't use it.

Spring was also the season for visitors in groups. The newspaper editors convention and the publishers convention always came in April, as did the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution], and also, as did the chambers of commerce and delegations from various chambers. One, Washington is beautiful in the spring. Well, they were just customs. I don't know whether they still take place or not. But for years we always spent a good deal of time with the editors and publishers, and the Texas portion of the chamber of commerce delegations. We would go to their parties and Lyndon would invite groups of them out to our house on Thirtieth Place.

An interesting thing that happened then is President Truman's discovery--I believe it was that spring--that the White House was in such bad shape, the timbers of it, the supports of it, that it was becoming dangerous. And you know the well-known story about Margaret's piano tipping out of balance with one leg almost through the floor. President Truman was a man of action. He called in a bunch of people the next day to do a lot of testing and he asked Congress for a modest amount of money to investigate it. One of the minor results of that--because it took about four years to achieve the finished product, maybe five, because it was really a very thorough dismantling of the White House that ensued. But they took out a lot of materials, pine paneling, marble, nails, which had been put in after the 1812 fire and after various renovations, and they offered

them to the public at three dollars a package, as I recall, and bricks. All these things had little tiny bronze plaques available that you could stick on them. You were only allowed to buy I think one or two packages. So I went around all through my office distributing three dollars, as I recall it was, to everybody in the office and saying, "Now you send in and get it, and I want it." So I acquired myself quite a little . . .

G: What did you do with them?

J: Oh, I forget whether the marble and the nails came already encased in a little lucite thing that you could keep on your desk for a paperweight. At least, I had them made into that, if they didn't come that way. And the wood, I had several gavels, made of pine paneling, and put the little plaque on them, and gave them to terribly special occasions and people, and still have at least one or more around the house, and got just as many bricks as I could get. One of them rests here in this house, probably covered with fig ivy vine now, on what [became] Lyndon's office, which was really not built until I think 1956 or 1957. But even in 1948 and 1949, or whenever that dismantling began to take place, I knew that there would be a future use for some of that, and I loved that old house.

So big delegations came and went, and also the things like the Texas Ladies luncheon.

President Truman's stand on civil rights was really raising the roof in Texas. Governor [Beauford] Jester addressed a Texas Democratic barbecue and urged them not to bolt the party, but he did urge that the state delegation to the national convention be uninstructed as to candidates. He also scored Truman's civil rights program. There was a not so well attended picnic of the most loyalists Democrats.

All of Lyndon's activities of the spring caused the *American-Statesman* to have an editorial saying that he was the liveliest live wire in the House.

The battle over tidelands continued. The House passed a bill to establish the states' title to submerged lands and their natural resources up to a three-mile offshore limit. That would have overturned the Supreme Court decision about the California lands, which had taken place just the year before. Lyndon voted for keeping the tidelands belonging to the states. I guess that issue--gosh, it consumed a lot of time, energy and talk for five, six, seven years, didn't it?

Everybody was wooing Eisenhower. He never had said which he was, a Democrat or a Republican, so there were just as many Democrats trying to get him as Republicans.

(Interruption)

Meanwhile Lyndon's own hour of decision couldn't be postponed much longer, and he wrote Senator Wirtz that he was going to come to Texas any day--and this was early in May--and he sure did want to talk with him and decide which course to follow. But at the same time he had Warren Woodward already going around to helicopter firms talking about how you would rent one and on their safety. He told John Connally he wanted to see him, too.

Of course, there were things that he had to stay there for. The 70-group air force was making considerable progress right then, as I remember. I think he went to Texas probably the first week in May sometime. I guess he must have [gone]--I don't know whether by plane or train, but anyhow, there was a railroad strike going on at that time

and mediation and efforts to reach a peace with the unions. Finally President Truman--and the more you look back upon him, the larger he looms to all of us, certainly to me--but he made the decision to just move the army in, and tell them to operate the railroads and order the unions to quit striking.

(Interruption)

A decision as important to this, how one wishes across the gap of years that you could remember exactly how it happened. I don't. I've heard Lyndon tell this story since then, that he went down there very undecided, very much aware of how difficult it would be to raise the money, particularly since if he lost this one, it was out, gone, no House job to go back to. Not like in the campaign of 1941, which was a special election and no need to resign.

Also, he was aware of what a cruel, demanding schedule you have to keep up, day after day, across this huge state, and how physically draining that would be. And also what you have to ask of your friends, many of whom just don't want to be called on to do so much. You feel like a dog when you ask them to do it, and you feel worse when some of them say, well, they'd planned a vacation then in some other place--anyhow, when they don't do it. So he was far from straining at the bit to run.

Somehow, he found himself in a hotel room with a group of young men--this is the way Lyndon has told it to me in the years since, and I'd love to be able to remember every last person he said was there--John Connally was, and I'm sure he was the ringleader and had called the meeting. Joe Kilgore. I think Posh Oltorf. I don't remember who all, but it could hardly have taken place without Bill Deason, and

Sherman Birdwell was probably there. Anyhow, a whole lot of his comrades in arms through the years, so to speak. Lyndon raised all these objections, and they knocked them down something like this: "We've just gone through a war where everybody was demanded to give his all. How have you got the right to say you won't endure all this and make all this effort? You're the best we've got. This is what you do well. You can win, or you can spend everything you've got trying, and face up to losing."

In a manner, they sort of shamed him into being willing to undertake no matter how heavy a load. And he said he picked up the phone to try to call me and tell me that he was going to walk out of the room and announce, because he wanted to share it with me and didn't want for me to just hear it on the radio. But I wasn't at home, and he accused me, as he was wont to do always, of probably being out at the Safeway trying to save ten cents on a can of beans. I very likely may have been at the Safeway, because I certainly did all the shopping for the house all those years, actually until we were in the vice presidency. But I have a memory that maybe I was over going through the vast and beautiful possessions of Mrs. Evelyn Walsh McLean, who had died, one of the great hostesses of Washington forever. Her possessions were going to be auctioned. The auction was going to take place in a few days and for a fee you could have the privilege of walking through the house and seeing the things you wanted and kind of making up your mind on how much you would be willing to pay for them. Always I was timorous, too timorous. If I had my life to live over I would be more daring. But Lera Thomas was a great acquisitor; I mean she just got stuff by the scads, as much money as she could possibly afford, and later on she would sell some of it. I'm sure she always sold it at a

good profit. Her house was full of silver and antiques. So she and I did go to this pre-auction review, and I think maybe that's where I was. And when I got home I got the message to try to get in touch with Lyndon immediately, and I don't really remember whether I got to talk to him and hear it from his own voice, or whether I heard it first from some of his staff. At any rate, he had hit the cold water, and he asked me to load up the children and join him as soon as I could. This was May 12, I believe. Is that right? Was it May 12?

G: Yes. I think that was the anniversary of his swearing-in in Congress, or his first day as a congressman.

J: So I began to shift gears into moving two children and such household as I could back to 1901 Dillman. Naturally it required a few trips to the various doctors and lots of decisions.

G: I noticed that former Governor Miriam Ferguson endorsed LBJ this time.

J: Absolutely, came right out for him, and that to me is an interesting little postscript to their actions in 1941--not so little, an interesting sizeable postscript--and to the fact that not too long after that 1941 election their daughter, Ouida Ferguson Nalle, had brought me that beautiful piece of needlepoint, and that story I've told you before.

G: Well now, one of the reasons that was cited for this endorsement was that LBJ had really been good to Jim Ferguson in his last years, that he had gone by to see him in Austin and visit with him and things of this nature. Do you recall this?

J: I wish I could say that I did precisely. Vaguely I do, but it's entirely in keeping. Lyndon had, all of his life, a peculiar respectful and compassionate regard for old people, old men

and old women, particularly if they had spent very vigorous, useful lives. I think he actually learned a lot with them, from them. And he treated them with deference, and he was kind to them, from the highest to the lowest.

Our campaign headquarters were opened by John and Charlie Herring in the old Hancock Building, and Claude Wild was the official campaign manager and Marietta Brooks, no surprise, was named to head the women's division. Walter Jenkins, who had remained in Washington running the office, was sending Lyndon constant reports on how his friends in the press were reacting.

Meanwhile something very momentous was happening on the world scene. The state of Israel was born just a couple of days after that, May 14, and President Truman recognized it, which was a big boost to them, and a big flag of anger was raised by the Arab League.

It took us until the 20th--I'm really surprised that it took us eight days, but I guess two of them were consumed on the trip down. I guess we left the 18th, six days later, because in those days you went by train and it was two full days. Maybe we left the 19th. I loved those train rides. We'd get a stateroom or at least two little bedroomettes and make ourselves quite cozy. Lynda, who was old enough then, would run up and down the aisle of the plane [train]. Luci would very peaceably lie on the bed. Let's see, by that time she was getting on to being a year old, about eleven months old. She was probably staggering around. She was not quite as quick as Lynda, as I recall, in all of her growing up, but so lovable and placid to live with and beguiling.

So I knew pretty much what we faced, and I was sort of eager for it and got off

the train with those two children ready to hit the ground running.

G: Do you recall the campaign organizational structure? You had John Connally and Charles Herring and Claude Wild, and I suppose Senator Wirtz and Ed Clark, people like that were involved, and Marietta Brooks. How would they divide up the work? Do you have any idea who handled what?

J: I must say men were pretty much in charge. There was a good deal of--women were always relegated to getting out the campaign literature and addressing the envelopes and licking the stamp, so to speak, and putting on the teas. But Marietta was a good leader and she had been active in so many club groups, and she did know a lot of people around over the state in women's organizations to appeal to, and to haul me around to, to attend teas. She was not a bit timorous. She'd just as soon talk to a bunch of men, labor leaders, as not. We were making our steps into active participation.

As I remember, the Hancock Building was an old Victorian edifice of some faded magnificence. There have been so many campaigns in so many years, I may get them mixed up. But I think that it was a fine old house that was almost at the stage of being condemned. No people had lived in it; it had been turned into sort of second-rate office structures, and at that point, I think, was almost abandoned, for rent cheap. But it had been a great house in its day. The busiest place was the switchboard, and I believe Sarah Wade was in charge of that. I think that was the year that Willie Day Taylor began working for us. I don't know. Do you have any evidence of all that? And of course Mildred Stegall had been a friend since year one. She and Glynn had come to work in our office not too long after their--

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J: One piece of good news. Right after I got down there Senator W. Lee O'Daniel announced that he would not seek re-election, so that was a long sigh of relief for us. Lyndon opened his campaign--no surprise--in Wooldridge Park with a big rally. The campaign in a nutshell was peace, preparedness and progress. Walter Jenkins began to get poll tax lists from members of the Texas delegation, and we began to get our campaign literature printed. Lyndon was trying to pin down a whole lot of key leaders as best he could, and of course a whole lot of them were cagey about, "I'm for you, but you can't use my name." Senator Tom Connally told Arthur Perry that he was for Lyndon, but he was only telling his close friends. Gene Lasseter took the leadership of the women's group in Rusk County. I expect this was probably the last time she was really for us, certainly, because by 1954, Republicans were in, and I think she had joined the swing in that direction.

Then came one of those desperately painful events in our life. Lyndon had kidney stones, which plagued him for decades of his life. He started off to Amarillo on the train. First he went up to Amarillo and made a speech and then he started on the train to Dallas. He had Warren Woodward with him. Woody reports that he had one tremendous chill, and he was just shaking the berth down, and saying, "You got to get me warm; pile on more blankets. Get in close to me and rub me." He could have some of the most frightening chills in which you'd almost think he was going to shake the bed down. Then he would rise from that couch of pain and get up and go do what he had to do, for a while.

The next day, Wednesday, which was the 26th of May, he was going to meet with

Stu Symington in Dallas. There was an air force ceremony there; an award was going to be given to Jackie Cochran. Perhaps Stu also received one. Or maybe he was just as secretary awarding it to Jackie. Jackie was very much a part of our life in that time. I remember we had been to a glittering cocktail party that she had given in her suite in one of the Washington hotels earlier that spring. She always had some powerful men around her, and she was just as capable, and just as tough, as about any of them, a woman of great energy and lots of records in flying. [She was] either the first woman to fly a certain kind of aircraft or the first one to break a record, and always striving for one more achievement in that field.

That morning, Wednesday morning, I was not there. I was in Austin. Lyndon was just in too gruesome of pain to go on. He had fever of 104° and severe abdominal pain. They took him to the hospital, in Dallas, and Claude Wild announced that he was in the hospital suffering with kidney stones, and that he'd had it for several days. I shiver to think how long he may have had it and endured it. I wasn't with him for those few days preceding it. He was supposed to make a speech in Wichita Falls. Paul Bolton made it for him. I took a flight up to Dallas to join him as soon as I could, walked into the hospital just as tense as could be. There was the sweet and calming presence there of our dear friend, the editor of the Wichita Falls paper--

G: Rhea Howard.

J: Rhea Howard, R-H-E-A Howard, who was our friend for decades until his death just, I think, this very year or last year, at a great old age.

G: Let me ask you, how did you get word that he was ill and in the hospital?

J: Oh, they called me, they called me to come. I don't remember who called me, but I think it was Woody.

G: Now at this point I understand that one of the problems was the question of whether or not to release this illness to the press.

J: Yes, it was, and Lyndon always just gritted his teeth and hated like--he just was against releasing that sort of thing to the press. It had to be told. I think maybe Claude Wild asked Lyndon whether he could or not. At any rate, it always made Lyndon mad, and he was always wrong about it, in my opinion. I mean, everything gets known.

G: Well, the story that others tell was that then he was upset because his people had gone ahead and released this in spite of his orders not to and that he was threatening to resign from the race.

J: I think all of that is quite likely. Oh, yes, he was, he was at that point I remember. He talked that part of it over with me as soon as I got there. He just said, "I can't go on like this. I might as well resign now, because the doctors tell me that I have got to have an operation and that I will be out of commission for at least six weeks. By that time it will be into July and the campaign will be lost." They really hung by a thread. You remember that--was it Shakespeare or what English poet--a message was sent by a soldier on horseback. The horse lost a shoe, the horse couldn't run very fast or not run at all. The man didn't get there in time to deliver the message. The battle was lost, the war was lost, the kingdom was lost. So it really just hung on a thread.

By the merest chance, Stu Symington called the hospital to talk to Lyndon, got me. I believe it was Stu and I who first talked about this. Do you have any records?

G: I don't know. No. I know he was there.

J: At any rate, what he said was, "Jackie Cochran is here. She has a plane." He told me the kind. "She flies it. She knows Mayo's inside out, and her good friend is Dr. Gerst Thompson [?] there, who does kidney stone operations, a very new technique where they don't cut you open. They just insert some long calipers way up inside and [he] crushes the stone and pulls it out and has you up in a week's time. You've got to call Jackie. You've got to put Lyndon on that plane. You've got to make him go."

Well, that was not as easy as it sounded. First place, the doctors there were pretty stiff-necked and unfriendly about it when the suggestion was first made. That is sort of a trait of the profession. However, I really don't remember how we worked it out, but I think maybe it was through the kind offices of one of our good friends at Scott and White, one of the doctors there, to whom we explained the situation and sort of got his help in getting--I don't really know whether we were released, so called, from the hospital or whether we just simply ordered a stretcher and ordered a car up to the back door and just walked out. But I remember something about the palliative efforts of a good friend from Scott and White. I'm going to look up, see if I can find anything in the correspondence or anything in my own recesses of my memory about that. At any rate, I did call Jackie; I asked her if she could call Gerst Thompson. She was a woman of action. She said, "I will call him immediately. He can do this. He has done this on--" and I think she said on her husband, who was incidentally a very outstanding man in the financial world, [Floyd] Odlum, O-D-L-U-M, of the Atlas Corporation I think was the name of it. A very considerable figure.

So, she was both a salesman and a pilot and a registered nurse and all sorts of things. So she said, "We will be there," within the hour or something. Anyhow, they gave us a short deadline. Then I had to go in and talk Lyndon into doing this. I never tried so hard for anything in my life. But I just thought to stay there was hopeless and he was utterly miserable, and we would indeed, whether we resigned or just petered out, lose the race if we couldn't get back into it quicker than six weeks plus a little.

G: Was he reluctant to do it?

J: He was in such misery, he didn't know what he wanted to do. He just wanted to be released from that misery.

G: Was there a conspiracy among you and Warren Woodward and people like that to keep the press away from him, to keep him from resigning from the race in despair or something like that?

J: Yes. We just didn't want him to talk about what he was going to do. We certainly didn't want him to cross that bridge before we had to.

G: So what did you have to do to do this?

J: We got out quick, is my memory, and we got out through the back door. It seems to me there were some personal friends who carried the stretcher out. We went to the airport, and I remember there was no room I think maybe for me in the ambulance or whatever conveyance he was in, and I really don't--I'd like to remember the characters in that drama. Woody would no doubt remember. Have you ever talked to Woody?

G: Yes.

J: What did he say?

G: Well, of course, he describes the same thing you've described, but I don't recall who else he said was there.

What about telephone calls? How did you keep reporters or people from calling his room and that sort of thing?

J: Well, in a hospital room it is possible just to hold off calls. We really just got out of there with such speed that I think maybe before they were hot on the trail. Jackie was at the controls and she was loving it. Woody--I think Woody had flown during the war, I'm sure he had, and he was just admiring the plane. His eyes were standing out on stems admiring the adventure of the whole thing, and the plane. Lyndon was pretty heavily sedated by that time and every now and then Jackie would come back and leave Woody or her co-pilot or somebody at the controls, and do something to alleviate the pain. Isn't it amazing that she was a nurse among other things?

G: How large a plane was it, do you recall?

J: Big enough to have a very comfortable berth-type arrangement, maybe sort of a double seat that had sheets and everything on it for Lyndon. And a fast plane. And she had some medical equipment on there, too. I do not know how long it took us to get to Mayo's, but not long. Gerst Thompson himself--and he was a very top doctor--was at the foot of the steps to meet us. I think she had been very helpful to him in many ways, and of course, gee, Jim Cain has got to have been back from the service by that time. I'm sure that Jim Cain was there, but this was not his field, of course. He was not a surgeon. You must ask Jim what his recollections of that [are]. Have you ever interviewed Jim?

G: No. We have one; I didn't do it.

Wasn't Judge Powell up there during this period, too, at Mayo's, Ben Powell?

J: I don't remember.

G: So what did you do when he arrived? Did you go to the hospital with him and stay there while they performed the [surgery]?

J: Oh, yes, and I actually issued a statement, from the Mayo Clinic, saying that he was making satisfactory progress but it was unsure when he would be released from the hospital. That was after he had gone into surgery, which was, as I recall, almost immediately. We flew up there on the 27th. I don't know how quickly they did it, but just as quickly as hospital routines and tests and all that would permit. And then it was on Saturday when I issued that statement. That was two days later, the 29th of May.

Meanwhile, back on the Texas field of operation there had been rallies planned for him in Longview and Marshall, and they were cancelled. Then in hot haste Claude Wild forwarded us the filing forms air mail to me in Rochester so Lyndon could [officially file], because you had to do all this in writing and send in your check, and we had made the announcement but we hadn't filed the written forms, and the deadline was June 7. In those days the mails were so reliable that you could be pretty sure of getting a round trip between the 31st of May and the 7th of June, but just can you imagine doing that these days? Somebody would sure jump on the plane and bring them up there and wait while you did it.

G: Well now, one news story indicated that you were serving as secretary, as you had done in 1942.

J: Well, to the extent of answering the phone and keeping in touch with all of the folks at

home and receiving whatever messages or flowers, and then finally what to me was a big thing, of making that statement. And I guess we could have had it made by Woody, or somebody else, because I think Woody stayed there with us. It's my recollection that he did.

G: But he was a pretty junior staff member.

J: He was quite a junior staff man, and I think it was felt that it would be more intimate, personal, elicit more sympathy and it would be more straight from the family for me to do it, the next best thing to Lyndon doing it. I didn't mind, because I just wanted to tell them exactly how it was. Because I really had enough faith in Dr. Gerst Thompson. It was our only hope anyhow, so you might as well settle for your only hope and then . . .

G: What was LBJ's frame of mind after the operation, do you recall?

J: Yes, as soon as the pain ceased, as soon as the stone was crushed and removed, I think he just bounced back with [an] enormous sense of revival, and partly just in admiration of this doctor who had done something in a brief matter of minutes or hours with the prospect of being released from the hospital in five or seven days, and being on his feet and ready to re-enter the arena. It was just like a gift of five weeks of life, say, or even six or more. I won't say he was euphoric, but it may actually have been. I know that I felt like a thousand pounds had been lifted off of my shoulders, and I was pretty euphoric.

G: The story has been told that he and John Connally were at odds with each other during this period because of the release to the press initially that he was ill. While they stayed mad at each other for the next, oh, four or five days I guess, they always communicated through intermediaries.

(Laughter)

J: I don't remember exactly how they communicated. In almost every serious and terrible campaign, there was a time when Lyndon would think, "This is hopeless and I want to get out of it." John never wanted him to get out of it and was always impatient with him for considering it. And yes, they would get mad at each other, because John wasn't carrying the load and didn't suffer quite as heavily as Lyndon did. My sympathies were with Lyndon. At the same time, I just did not think there was any sense in belaboring the press or anybody else.

G: Did you serve as a go-between here at all, between the two of them?

J: I can't say that I remember it.

End of Tape 4 of 4 and Interview XXI