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CLAUDIA "LADY BIRD" JOHNSON ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW XXVII  
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Transcript, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson Oral History Interview XXVII, 1/30/82, by Michael L. Gillette, Internet Copy, LBJ Library.

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CLAUDIA TAYLOR JOHNSON

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, I, Claudia Taylor Johnson of Austin, Texas, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted with me and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. A list of the interviews is attached.

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 Decker  
Aaron Swett      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~~ on 5-10-2011.

Mrs. Johnson's Oral History Interviews:

**Assistant Archivist  
For Presidential Libraries**

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 XXVII covering 1950-1951

DATE: January 30, 1982

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas

Tape 1 of 2

J: You asked me a minute ago about whether Lyndon was interested in the publicity that came with the Subcommittee on Preparedness. I guess he must have been in that it was a tool to accomplish a cure of the ills that he was attacking. I remember he used the phrase about wanting to "turn the spotlight on profiteers." He was very much concerned about the rising prices on our defense, the items that we brought, the engines of war. He said the prices were getting so much out of hand that they just made any cost calculations an empty, tentative guess. I think what he was trying to do was to get them to clean their own house, the makers of planes, tanks, munitions, all those things, just hold them down by letting them know that out there there was somebody looking.

He was a great admirer of [George] Marshall, the secretary of defense. In general, he admired, liked, and went along with Truman. Sometimes they would have a pretty tough exchange of letters when they disagreed.

G: Do you recall Marshall's reaction to the investigations? Was Marshall supportive of the subcommittee?

J: He testified before them, as did [General Dwight] Eisenhower. I don't know whether it

was in 1950 or when, but I remember, I can see in my mind's eye both of their faces testifying before those committees.

September always ushered in one of those periods of, "Shall I go to Texas? How much of the fall will I spend there?" It was a divided life. I can't say that it wrecked any great damage on our family, though. I did go to Texas, I forget just when, and Congress adjourned in late September and Lyndon came on down. But it met again in late November.

If 1949 was a period that for us, and in retrospect it seems to me for the country, was a sort of happy time, in 1950, particularly as the year wore on, there were rising clouds and frustration. The war was continuing in Korea and getting more and more painful. President Truman was talking about universal military training, the draft. People were mad--particularly Texans, I think--at [Dean] Acheson. They were concerned about the takeover of communism in China. "Who lost China?" was a phrase you heard a lot, and Russia was always looming in the background.

So I went home sometime that fall, early I think, and put Lynda Bird in Miss Hubrick's [?] school, which was just about a block and a half down the street from 1901 Dillman. Community children in kindergarten I suppose it was. No, by that time, by 1950 she was six, so she must have been in the first grade there. Miss Hubrick was a born teacher, very much a lady. I still see people who Lynda will remember having met in those times.

G: Why did you select that school, do you recall?

J: Because it was close and because friends whose opinion I valued recommended it.

I began my household life of making little lists and crossing them out, getting Mr. Erb to work on the trees at Thirtieth Place [Dillman Street?] and repairing the roof and laying a concrete slab behind the garage. The children could enjoy wheel toys there, because there were no sidewalks in those days. There may not even be still. Looking back on it I'm sure my children would laugh if they knew some of the saving measures that I did. But the country did them. For instance, you would collect old wool, absolutely unusable old coats or rugs or things, and sell them by the pound to something called the Olson Rug Company. They would wash them and weave them and you would get back, for a very modest price, a new rug. I did a lot of painting and hopefully making Dillman more attractive. Mrs. Ferris worked on it with me. I put Lynda and Luci in a dancing school; I cannot remember the lady's name now. She taught dancing on the second floor of a downtown building; I believe it was on Congress Avenue [in Austin]. Annette Duval, that was her name, and she taught dancing for many years.

The people that I would see and go to lunch with were my old school friend, Bess Jones, and my campaign friend, Jerry Wilke, and Anne Bird Nalle and the folks from--we were always ones to spend time with our staff, the wives of our staff, like Nellie Connally and Mary Rather and Dorothy Plyler, old friends like Jeanne Deason, Delle Birdwell, and Sugar Pickle, the lively, cute, funny wife of Jake Pickle. Eloise Thornberry, and Margaret Mayer from the newspaper world.

When Lyndon came down, he began covering the state, speaking to his usual constituency, associations of postmasters and REA [Rural Electrification Administration] co-ops. Now that he represented the whole state, adding on a lot, he would go to



universities outside the ones that the Tenth District had made his chief objectives, like Southwestern and San Marcos. He would go to Lubbock, to Texas Tech, and to--gee, I think there was one in San Angelo.

G: Angelo State I guess it was.

Well, did you find that since he did have a much larger constituency to cover that he spent less time at home in Austin?

J: Yes. It seemed like traveling was inevitably revved up. And Texas was growing up around us. I think by late 1950 we were seven million or so. We were already changing from the agricultural, rural world that we had represented from 1937 on, into--it was becoming much more urban and we were becoming necessarily more involved and concerned with industries, like the petrochemical industries along the Gulf Coast, and the oil industries. Lyndon spoke to the Independent Natural Gas Association. He never was much at home with the fraternity of oilmen. He had some good friends among the independents, and they were--it's an industry in which there are mavericks. He had some good friends among them and represented them, to my thinking, well, because already the 27 ½ per cent depletion allowable was beginning to be nipped at.

That fall I got Lynda and Luci all dressed up and took them down to Mrs. Virginia Leberman's studio for another one of those pictures. I remember how wistful Lynda Bird looked in her little velvet dress, and her funny little Dutch bangs and how pretty and affable and gentle Luci looked.

We saw a good deal of our clients at KTBC. Jesse [Kellam] was gently and effectively pushing on that. He would arrange for tickets to the football games for the

out-of-town agency people and get us to go to dinner with them after the game; we'd all go to the game together.

My own social life in Austin, which I always regarded really as home-- Washington was an adventure; Texas was home--but my own social life was not as exciting to me in Austin as it was in Washington, although we did some interesting things. The Shivers had us to dinner at the [Governor's] Mansion. I remember they came out to the Ranch a time or two. Jean [Mrs. Price] Daniel invited me to--the state officials have a ladies club to which every last one of them seemed to belong.

One of the most memorable events of that fall was to go out to see C. T. McLaughlin, of Snyder, who was one of those members of the oil fraternity who always liked Lyndon. They were side by side in a good many fights. Lyndon spoke to a large group at the Diamond M Ranch, where there were oil wells almost in the yard. You could see them from the house. Houston Harte, I think, introduced him. C. T. McLaughlin was an imposing figure, a very big man, very assured, one of those builders of his community. You would say "C. T. McLaughlin," and in the next breath "Snyder," because his hometown, he was so closely affiliated with it.

G: Synonymous with his town, I guess.

J: Yes.

G: Was there any, do you think, common denominator among these independent oilmen that led them to be attracted to LBJ? Why did some seem attracted to him and friendly toward him, and others hostile?

J: I'd say in general his friends were among the independents and not among the big oil

companies. He always recognized the fact that the independents were the wildcatters, the fellows who took the chance, who went out and dug holes in new fields, new prospects so to speak, and came up with a lot of dry holes and lost millions and finally hit something and made lots. I don't know, but I know that the people that were his friends, I would class them as the independents, Wesley West and. . . .

G: Could they be considered more liberal than your average independent oilman?

J: Hardy, hardly. I don't know. They were colorful, much more gamblers. At any rate, he was fortunate enough to have a number of friends in that group.

He, somehow or another, made the acquaintance of Bernard Baruch, I don't know quite how, but he saw him a bit. They had a good deal of exchange of letters. He would talk about what Bernard Baruch had told him, and he took him very seriously and gave him advice on economics. Lyndon was a natural born--he desired to learn, and he desired to grow, and he was very impressed with what Bernard Baruch told him about the two biggest enemies on the horizon, at that time, were inflation and the cost of arming--rearming rather. Absolutely necessary, must be done, but it cost so much and it was getting out of control.

We began to be of more interest to the newspapers. There was a family picture, one of the first, in the *Washington Post*.

As November came along, the ugly mood of the country manifested itself in the election. There was a general distrust of Congress and government, especially against Acheson and the State Department. In that election, Republicans won a lot. Scott Lucas, the majority leader of the Democratic side, was defeated. So was Francis Myers, the

whip. The most spectacular election, probably, was an ugly one, in which Richard Nixon defeated our old friend, Helen Gahagan Douglas. That was when he--it was my first memory of him. It was the first time that I remember ugly tactics, like cutting pictures and pasting them together, that was used also against [Millard] Tydings of Maryland. A picture came out purporting to be of him in conversation with Earl Browder, who was the head of the Communist Party. Wasn't that the election in which he was also defeated, do you recall?

G: Yes. He was.

Let's talk some more about the California election. Did LBJ do anything to help Helen Gahagan Douglas get elected, do you recall? Raising money, or speaking, or trying to influence votes or anything like that? Of course, it was a Democratic versus Republican race.

J: I don't remember. Later, he did, of course, become much involved in the whole national field. At this point, I don't think he was, and I don't remember him doing it. She was just a good friend that we were distressed about, particularly the way in which it happened.

G: Did he see this, do you think, as a sign of things to come in terms of--?

J: Yes, I think he did, a manifestation of an ugly mood in the country.

G: A lot of people in tracing his rivalry with President Nixon have seen this as one of the earliest seeds of disagreement among the two, or competition, the fact that he ran that campaign against Helen Gahagan Douglas, and that this sort of marked him in LBJ's eyes as the sort of man that ought to be opposed, that ought to be challenged, and perhaps one of the reasons he accepted the vice presidential nomination. Is this something that stayed

with him over the years, do you think? Did he hold that against Nixon, do you recall?

J: I can't answer that substantively, because I know his affection for Helen remained. She was with us in the White House and spent the night with us once. I also know that he tried to respect and make friends with every last person who was the choice of the voters from wherever they came from or however he may have disagreed with the voters' judgment. I expect he put it down in his memory, but I don't think it ever sparked any feeling of, "I will get even with you."

(Interruption)

One of the interesting new friendships of that fall came about when Anna Rosenberg [Hoffman] was nominated by [George] Marshall to be his assistant. She was immediately jumped on by the communist scare folks as having been a member of the Communist Party. Lyndon espoused her cause. I don't know quite why in the first place; I think because of General Marshall. Then when he met her he became a great admirer of hers, and I remember him saying that there were fourteen Anna Rosenbergs in the New York telephone book, where she lived, and there was no proof in the world which one of those Anna Rosenbergs had attended the communist meetings. Somebody had. Anyhow, she was one of the smartest, toughest, most interesting people who crossed our path and remained a lifelong friend. He skillfully handled the investigation, knowing how not to rile or put off southern senators or extremely conservative senators who might be against her before she ever walked in the room. She herself--she really won him over.

G: What was it about her that he liked? Did he regard her as a formidable--

J: He liked ability, and patriotism, and she had both of those, in my opinion, in high degree.

And she was tough. He really always felt that lots of women were smart as lots of men. He did not labor under any delusions that they were necessarily gentle, velvet creatures.

So, that fall he covered Texas, enlarging his constituency as best he could. You always try to make all the festivals, most politicians did, like the peanut festival at Floresville and the watermelon one somewhere, and our old Tenth District, Elgin I think it was, the Goat Raisers Association, speaking to them.

But Congress went back into session in late fall, and he returned to Washington, and I was backwards and forwards. I'm not sure whether that early in life I had gotten Willie Day [Taylor] to come and stay when I left. I think perhaps I did, because I don't think I took the children out of school. Yes, maybe I did take them back with me because we did spend Christmas in Washington.

Sid Richardson by this time was someone who came to our house whenever he was in town, and bringing Perry Bass with him.

I think one of the first weddings of the daughter of a good friend that I can remember was Clark Clifford's daughter got married that fall in a lovely ceremony. Our own social life was enlivened as Lyndon went up the ladder in the Senate. We began going to Mrs. [Gwendolyn] Cafritz', at my urgent insistence, because she was one of the hostesses with brilliant parties, and fun to go to. She had a dinner for Tom Clark. That sort of reminds me of the recipe for a Washington party, you know, is first, you catch your lion, and then you send the invitations out that you're having it in honor of so and so and so, and then all of so and so's friends will want to go, because it is who it is. The [Stuart] Symingtons' home was one I always took great pleasure in going to, although

most of their entertaining was likely to be at the F Street Club. But their home was full of interesting old antiques. Eve's family--she'd been a Wadsworth of New York, and her father [James W. Wadsworth] had had an unusual career of being first in the Senate, and then, when he was defeated, he came back to the House. And Lyndon had admired him, from a distance, as a young clerk to a congressman, and then as a young congressman. Let's see, he had passed, Wadsworth had, some very important legislation long ago, I can't remember what it was.

G: He was New England, is that right?

J: New York, upper state New York, the Geneseo Valley. One of her ancestors had been named Hay, and the family home had been on the grounds of what is now the Hay-Adams house. I think that Mr. Hay was a private secretary and close friend to President Lincoln. Does that ring any bell with you?

G: John Hay, yes. That's right.

(Interruption)

J: I remember with what interest and admiration I looked at old family portraits and the furniture. It seems to me that some of it was sort of small scale. Could it have been--was he a man of small stature?

G: I don't know.

J: You know, all of these are sort of figments. It is all so long ago now. . . .

G: People were smaller in those [days].

J: --but so vivid then.

General Lauris Norstad was a friend of Symingtons'. We went to a party for him

that they gave.

[We had] dinner at the Corcorans, where Tom was an ebullient host and still getting out his accordion from time to time and playing. [He] had two pianos in his living room, one at each end. Music fed him; he loved it. It was always fun to go.

Some ominous things happened that fall. For one thing, the Puerto Rican nationalists attempted to assassinate President Truman, going up the steps of Blair House. They certainly didn't injure him. I have the feeling they may have killed a Secret Service man. Do you recall that?

G: Yes, I think so.

J: Then, the most ominous one was that the Chinese communists entered the war in Korea and [General Douglas] MacArthur sent out headlines that, "It's a new war." Truman declared a state of emergency. Lyndon's committee went into more high gear than ever and he was calling on us to end the circle of confusion. We'd been selling plants at a very small amount on the dollar, and then buying them back at a high price. It appeared that the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing in the military establishment, at times.

There began to be talk of Lyndon as whip after the November elections.

We spent Christmas in Washington.

And then the year 1951 came in with a little gathering that became a part of a succession of years. We went to the Hornadays. He was a newspaperman, Walter and Ann Hornaday. [I] think he was head of the Dallas News Bureau [Hornaday was a writer for the *Dallas Morning News*]. They always had black-eyed peas on New Year's Day,



and a whole lot of Texans gathered there.

Congress met early in those days. It just went right straight to work, within the first week. [It is a] much later practice now. Lyndon was elected whip. Senator [Ernest] McFarland of Arizona was elected majority leader.

The Speaker's sixty-ninth birthday really ushered in the year. We had our usual party with the children, three little Worleys and three Bartleys--that's the Speaker's own nephews and nieces--two [Lloyd] Bentsens and two Johnsons, plus little Rodney--Josefa was living in Washington at that time, and I think taking courses at a business school--two [Homer] Thornberrys, who had become very much a part of our lives. Our sessions with the Thornberrys and the [Walter] Jenkinses, where we would have a sort of a simple, covered dish dinner and then get right down to the canasta table, one of the escape valves of those years and very pleasant.

G: Let me ask you about his election as whip. Do you recall how that happened? I assume that it was in some way related to Senator McFarland, that he more or less designated LBJ for that position. Did he ever talk about it in later years, how he was chosen as whip?

J: Oddly, I don't remember. I can distinctly remember later when he became majority leader and what pride he took in the diversity of people who nominated him, such as Dick Russell of Georgia, Theodore Francis Green of Rhode Island, but no, I don't remember.

G: Someone else had recalled that he and Bob Kerr were both sort of being considered for the whip position, and they both went into McFarland's office together. When they came out, LBJ was to be designated the whip. Have you ever heard that story? Or does it

sound plausible?

J: Sounds plausible, and Bob Kerr was a man of *enormous* ability, and Lyndon was his good friend from the earliest time he knew him, that I can recall. I can remember very well--I think I may have mentioned it--at Roosevelt's last inaugural--I think I told you that--being with--

G: In the car.

J: Yes. But no, I think the reason would have been that Senator Kerr could cut a person up, so skillfully and with so much biting sarcasm, and I expect a good deal of truth in it, that they would never really forgive him. Lyndon didn't do that. He always thought there would be another day and he would need every last one of them, and he didn't want to accumulate enemies. He made them, indeed, but he really tried to be respectful and soft-spoken, whatever he might think of his fellow senators. So that might have entered their thinking, that Lyndon might be able to win more people than Kerr could.

G: The whip's job I guess was largely lining up support on the floor and counting votes and making sure that the. . . .

J: Yes.

G: In retrospect, do you have any insights in what he learned from holding this position and whether or not he enjoyed it? Was this sort of a prelude to his becoming majority leader?

J: I think indeed it was. It was a learning process, just like being a congressman's secretary was a learning process to being later on a congressman. He didn't miss a point of it. He tried to know just as much about everybody, their personality, their record, their prejudices, their regional bent.

G: Of course, this had him, in some respects, representing an administration that was very unpopular.

J: Yes, it was, and a lot of Texans thought that it meant he would just be an arm of Truman and took a very dim view of that, because Truman had plenty of detractors in Texas.

This was only a little over two years after he had won, but he had plenty of people biting at him, and he bit right back. (Laughter)

(Interruption)

1951 was a very busy year for Lyndon. Being chairman of that subcommittee just increased his business enormously. I think we had about fifteen secretaries at that time and there would be hundreds of letters, because there were so many subjects of contention. The draft was up before his subcommittee, and the drafting of eighteen-year-olds would just bring in baskets full of letters. Also, being whip increased the hours and the strain. It brought some new figures into his life, at least in more common daily contact: Les Biffle, who was secretary to the Senate, and Felton Johnston, whom he called Skeeter--everybody did--who was secretary to the majority.

Besides the draft, and particularly the aspect regarding eighteen-year-olds, another measure that increased his mail and added to the bad humor of the country was the wage-price freeze. Tempers flared. There was a lot of biting at the President, at all of government. Various people were making calls on Eisenhower, would he run for the presidency as a Democrat? Would he run for the presidency as a Republican? Could he be persuaded to run anyhow by anybody? Our friend Sid Richardson was one of those who urged him.

G: What was LBJ's opinion of this sort of attempt to draft President Eisenhower? Do you recall?

J: Well, he was unremittingly and forever a Democrat. He took no part in the attempt that I can recall.

G: Was he at all interested in having him run as a Democrat? There was some thought that he would.

J: If he made any efforts, I don't know about it. My feeling is he probably did not.

On the social front it was a very active year, too, because in Washington each new title brings new invitations, and some of the older ones were going on in very full scale. The Dale Millers, by that time their party for the Speaker--for his birthday--had become customary at the Woman's National Democratic Club, a heavy contingent of Texans, but a widely expanding group. You felt two things really marked the beginning of the year: the State of the Union speech and the Speaker's birthday and all the attendant celebrations thereof.

We saw a lot of our fellow senators. We went to dinner at the Lister Hills, cocktails at the [J. William] Fulbrights. And always our Texas delegation, Lyndon never lost contact with them. Lera [Mrs. Albert] Thomas was one of my good friends. We would go to dinner there occasionally. She was a great collector of antiques, one of those lively, undefeatable women. Her husband was such a tough, able man, and years later when he was ill, I'll always remember something that Jack Brooks said about him. And that is on his dying day he would be getting up, conducting a fight, which was a pretty good assessment of a very skilled man.

Old friends from home always came. Senator Wirtz and George Brown would be two occasions for especially good evenings of good talk. There was a rare man, Major J. R. Parten, whom I admired very much. He was the quintessential liberal. He never varied from the fold, tall, handsome, elegant man, and still living. I'd love to see him sometime. And always called on by every liberal branch of the party.

G: Was he a help to LBJ in this period?

J: Yes. He was a friend and a help. Never extremely close.

G: Was there another Texas political figure that he backed to a greater extent?

J: I would say probably as [Ralph] Yarborough was coming along he probably backed him more fully. You see, Lyndon was--I think he was a genuinely middle-of-the-road person and resisted being labeled on either one side completely.

President Truman was strongly in favor of the draft. Lyndon met with him on that at the White House and then at the dinners at the Clark Cliffords.

Cameron McElroy from my hometown would come up and come out to see us, or we'd go down to his hotel.

Miss Lou's [Rayburn] visit sparked an unusually rich round of gatherings this year. Everybody I know had a party for her. We had a dinner at our house for a small group: the Speaker and Miss Lou and Sid Richardson, and Eve and Stu [Symington] and Lloyd and B. A. [Bentsen]. Dorothy Davis, who was one of the Speaker's many lady friends, had a luncheon. Barbara Burriss had a tea. Barbara Burriss was the lovely daughter of a former governor, Beauford Jester. Minnie Lee Wire had a luncheon. She had a home called Wirelawn, and she was one of the younger set of Washington

hostesses with a long background with Texans. I think her father had been a congressman some years ago.

Mary Clark had a luncheon at the Supreme Court. I always loved to go there, and I usually took visitors and we would listen to the Court in session when it was. Tom Clark would send us out a small, handwritten message to the visitor, saying how glad he was that Miss Suzy Jones would come to see the Supreme Court. B. A. Bentsen had a luncheon for Miss Lou. But by all odds, the most important party was the one that the Speaker and all of his family gave together at the Carlton. The Speaker was not given to giving large parties. They were intimate gatherings in the Anchorage Hotel. But this time he did have a big party, a seated dinner, when he passed Henry Clay's record for serving as speaker. He was honored at the White House at that time, too.

It's funny to remember, as was sometimes the case, I would be the chairman in putting together the Texas Ladies Luncheon, that is choose the place, the menu, get out the notices, and always round up my own little group of ladies to take. But I started to say, it was funny to remember the prices we paid, like a dollar and a half? And we would have them in delightful places. I was always glad when I had visitors from home whose trip coincided with the Texas Ladies Luncheon, because I could go home and say that I met all the wives today. Mrs. Ray Lee was in town for one of those and Anne Bird Nalle. Josefa I always tried to include, as well as Marjorie [Jenkins] and Billie Norman, Mrs. O. L. Norman, with whose husband we had worked on the LCRA [Lower Colorado River Authority].

That's my first remembrance of Joe Alsop, about then. He became to me one of

the most fascinating people I knew, because he was so knowledgeable about household arts, antiques, porcelains, portraits, all the beautiful things that created a home. At the same time, politics was his dish. He wrote a conservative column that flourished for many years. A beautiful wordsmith, pretty strong conservative, always on the side of preparedness, as I remember, which thrust him and Lyndon into the same camp a great deal of the time. He actually came and talked to the Woman's National Democratic Club. That was one of the first times I was exposed to his very elegant style.

We had all of our office staff out for dinner with us from time to time. I began to get the names of the Texas girls who would be at school in Washington. There were a number of girls' schools. I particularly remember Mt. Vernon. And I would try to include them in some festivity or have a tea at my house. The Senate Ladies occupied nearly every Tuesday. I learned something about the great variety of our country nearly every time I went. I am sure that it was regarded as a dull thing to do by some of the younger Senate wives, but never by me. You'd hear some awfully good stories, too. Mrs. George of Georgia, Miss Lucy, could just--she was a marvelous raconteur. We all were likely to bring a treat from home, whatever we did best, brownies or--Miss Lucy always brought marvelous little cheese sort of biscuits. I would bring pralines. But I think I have gone into the Senate Ladies at great length with you before.

One of the small social aspects of Lyndon's having acquired a title in the Senate was that I would often be asked to pour at gatherings, at the house and embassy tours, or receptions given by the wife of a justice or just lots of places.

The winter always brought its quota of colds and bronchial conditions in our

household. The children would have an earache, and as soon as one of them got well the next one would get a throat infection. That particular year Zephyr [Wright] was in and out of the hospital. I'm trying to remember whether that was the time that she fell on the snow and broke her leg, walking between Connecticut Avenue, down Linnean to home, and one of the neighbors went out and put blankets over her and called an ambulance. And there was a bad little time when the ambulance--somehow or another the people said that this was a cook for one of their neighbors, and they asked if it was a black woman, and they wouldn't come and pick her up. Fortunately she was quite conscious. She told them who she worked for. We got up there as quick as we could. We did get an ambulance, but I just remember how startled and angry I was.

G: What was LBJ's reaction to that, do you recall?

J: Oh, his reaction was to get mad and to take just as good a care of her as he possibly could.

G: Did you end up getting another ambulance for her?

J: Yes, I forget how we worked it out, but we did get an ambulance. I don't know what it took to get it.

G: That's really a firsthand encounter with discrimination.

J: And really, 1951, that's just a third of a century ago, Winter was also a time when you had to just get those snowsuits on and those big boots, and as soon as the children had been out ten minutes [it] seemed like they wanted to come back in and you had to take them off. Putting the storm windows up was a big chore, as was taking them down in the spring. But nobody ever enjoyed their fireplace more than we did. We had wood stacked



up every fall and used the fire a lot, because, thank goodness, we had Lewis to take out the ashes.

I think I mentioned that Eisenhower testified before Lyndon's subcommittee in support of NATO and emphasized the need for troops to go to Europe. Later on I think he testified probably on the draft bill. Lyndon had very lengthy and full committee hearings and really tried to explore every aspect of it. There was a tendency developing for a congressional committee to have a kind of inquisitorial aspect to it; it became a thing of dread for a person to have to go before one. He really didn't want his to be like that because he wanted to get something really done about it and not just fry a lot of people.

Lyndon always had colds in winter and I don't remember whether this was the year that he went to a hospital or not, but it wasn't unusual for him to have a hospital stay sometime. I think he probably had pneumonia three or four times in the course of his life.

The defeat of Senator Tydings and [Joseph] McCarthy's involvement in it became a sort of a *cause célèbre* and occupied a lot of front-page news. The ugly mood in the country that I have mentioned boiled up, increased. 1950 and 1951 were contentious years, as you look back on them.

Sending more troops to Europe was a big question of the day. Lyndon made a speech on the floor in support of the draft.

Spring brought its quota of visitors, and they ranged all the way from my old high school friend, Elizabeth Dannelly of Jefferson, with members of her family, to Lady

Astor of Great Britain. That, by all odds, was the most brilliant part of the spring for me. I met her at a cocktail party, I believe, at Drew Pearson's, as I was later to meet another well-known person, Mr. [Aristotle] Onassis. Drew Pearson had an interesting salon. But by sheer chance, I'm sure, and somebody important dropping out at the last minute, I was invited to Mrs. Tydings' house for a small luncheon for Lady Astor. Mrs. [Woodrow] Wilson, the widow of the President, was there, a handsome woman, full-bosomed, feminine, likely to wear a big black velvet hat.

G: Had you met her before?

J: Mrs. Wilson? Yes, at things like Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners. But I had never sat down at a table of about eight or ten women before, with her. I sat there appropriately tongue-tied and listened to them, while Mrs. Wilson, at everybody's request, would talk about their trip through Europe right after the close of the war, and where Lady Astor would talk about campaigning in Great Britain. She was a member of Parliament. It was a rough game. As you know, she had quite a reputation for wit. She was asked while she was running for election, we would say it--she would say standing for election--she was making a speech. Some man in the crowd said, "My son's as good as your son." She looked at him and said, "Probably so. It depends on which one of my sons you mean. I've got three sons. If they were shipwrecked on a desert island inhabited only by savages, come back one year later, one of them would have been put in the pot and eaten for dinner, another one of them would have gotten himself elected big chief medicine man, and he'd be running the tribe. We're all different." I wish I could tell it like she did.

She spoke at our Congressional Club, Lady Astor did. In fact, we had a rich fare

that spring. Madame [Helle] Bonnet spoke later. She was our favorite ambassador's wife, as well as her husband being everybody's favorite ambassador, Very elegant and suave and knowledgeable. And Anna Rosenberg came and spoke to us. I was asked if I could get her to come, and of course I appealed to Lyndon, who I think sort of gently said it would mean a lot to him if she did, and she came. Because I cannot think that women's teas were exactly her natural habitat. On the other hand, she would put a judicious value on the good opinion of congressmen's wives, so it wasn't all that hard for her to come. I took Bess Beeman, who was in town, and Babs Janeway, an oddly assorted twosome. Bess's coming to town was always an occasion for me to try to roll out the red carpet the best I could, because the amount of time and effort and love she put in for Lyndon in his elections was endless and absolutely devoted.

Lyndon's committee was busier and busier. It was concerned with stockpiling, or the failure to stockpile, various strategic metals, like tin, and prices going sky high on everything we had to buy for the military, on passing the draft bill, on trying to find 4-F men or women who could replace men at desk jobs and free a lot of physically fit men for combat duty. A lot of grist came to his mill.

But, by all odds, the biggest donnybrook of the scene was boiling up between Truman and MacArthur. They were approaching a confrontation over the Korean War. Truman was talking about a truce. MacArthur was ignoring him. Somehow or another there was a letter from MacArthur criticizing Truman that became public. I don't remember now quite how.

G: Was MacArthur getting some support within the Congress, do you recall?

J: Oh, yes, he was a glamorous character. I don't know quite how to express it, but he was all in favor of the heaviest all-out war of calling on Chiang Kai-shek's troops.

(Interruption)

Then came the bombshell. Truman fired MacArthur, dismissed him from command in that field, recalled him. The country was in an uproar. Our mail was angry. Texans particularly can get more incensed than most people it seems, and MacArthur was at his height as a public hero, an idol to some, and poor Truman had hardly a defender at first. And up spoke Senator Kerr, who was afraid of nobody. It really was one of the bravest political actions I ever saw. MacArthur came home. He addressed a joint session of Congress. I have never sat through a more dramatic stage appearance; I was utterly thrilled. I wouldn't have given my seat to any constituent, no matter how big.

G: Do you recall LBJ's reaction to the firing first, and then the speech?

J: I think he felt that the President was within his rights all along, because this country does provide, in the Constitution onward, for control of the military by civil authorities, and the president is the commander-in-chief. However, anything that produced that much division in the country he deplored.

G: Did he have any advance warning, do you know, of the letter that Joe Martin released of the firing?

J: If he did, I don't know about it.

That was not the only fire building in the country. The hunt for spies was going on apace. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg's trial was going on and somewhere along that time they were sentenced to death.

Somewhere that spring Lyndon did go to Bethesda [Naval Hospital] with a bronchial condition. It was just one fire right after another that spring, the country in an uproar.

Then MacArthur testified before a joint committee hearing, which went into his activities at length. He testified that it would have been a 100 per cent different if the Chinese Nationalist troops had been used, and if they had used all-out air attacks. He denied that these all-out air attacks would have brought Russia into the war. At this point, the joint committee called on other great military figures, and General Marshall challenged MacArthur and said it would have put us in jeopardy of the third world war. General Omar Bradley, for whom the country always had a deep, warm respect, no idol, no flashy figure, but just a good human being that people believed in. Today's word would have been "credible," I guess; we didn't use that word then. General Bradley said MacArthur's plan would have put the United States in the wrong war, at the wrong time, with the wrong enemy.

Lyndon's feeling all along in handling his committee--the joint committee was House and Senate, not his. His is a subcommittee.

G: I thought it was two Senate committees, Foreign Relations and Armed Services.

J: Yes, I guess it was. I guess you're right. I guess that's what the joint committee was. But anyhow, it wasn't Lyndon's subcommittee. Anyhow, in his subcommittee he was still grinding away on his own problems and he summed it up by saying we have a nation to save, not an election to win, and let's strive for a bipartisan approach and unity and just not let this create another donnybrook.

G: Did you attend any of those hearings, do you recall?

J: Actually, I don't remember. I always knew that that's where the action was. I set my sights to go to see them, but very probably I went to the grocery store instead. Or took one of the children to the doctor.

G: Senator Russell has been given credit for a strategy of letting MacArthur air his side of it for the first couple of days and then gradually, as other views were heard and other witnesses testified, the public was able to gain the impression that MacArthur was not correct.

J: I think that's exactly the way it went. I think Russell--he was at that time, was he not, chairman of the committee?

G: Yes, I believe so, because Tydings had been defeated.

J: Armed Services. He very often wrote the script for the biggest action in the Senate and declined to get out front with the banner. He did not seek any limelight. So, the MacArthur debacle began to cool off and MacArthur toured around the country a good deal. But by the time he got to Texas, there was nobody ready to start following him on a march to run Truman out of office, at least not before the proper election time.

Important things that at least had a bearing on our own future were happening, too. The FCC [Federal Communications Commission] was about getting ready to release plans for the allocation of TV channels, but warned that the freeze was still on. We had made our decision to go into the television business when we could, but all the material that we would need to build was frozen and we didn't have a channel. But now at least we knew that they were going to start allotting channels pretty soon and we were ready to

jump when we could.

G: Had you already at this point made the decision of the choice between VHF or UHF or did this come later?

J: I think that it came when they told us what was going to be available for Austin, and I think what was available was one VHF and two Us, or something like that. At that point it was not really firmly fixed which one you ought to try for. Fortunately we tried for what turned out at least for the next twenty years to have been a very good choice.

G: As long as we're on that let me ask you, what was the basis of your decision?

J: That that was the next thing that was going to happen in communications. You know, there were a few stations already on the air. I think that Mrs. [Oveta Culp] Hobby's station in Houston was on the air before then, was it not?

G: I think so.

J: And those that were were doing mighty well.

G: But why did you decide for VHF instead of UHF?

J: I really don't know. I think it was very likely we took the guidance of our engineer, whom we got to know very well. We just saw him through the years. It's a Dallas firm; I'll think of his name in just a moment. He'd been guiding us ever since we got into radio. As a matter of fact, his firm still does, on big decisions. I can remember, on radio, how we happened to decide to try to get both AM and FM, when absolutely nobody was thinking about anything except AM, and that was just because of Roy Hofheinz. Roy Hofheinz kept on saying, a voice in the wilderness, that down the future it's going to be FM; that's what you want. We sort of smiled tolerantly and applied for FM just in case

he might be right.

G: Why did he say that? Did he use an argument?

J: He really was a man of vision, extraordinary person. I don't know whether he had any engineering knowledge or not.

G: It's amazing.

J: So, even with the MacArthur uproar on the decline, the country was still in a frustrated mood. There was only one person who was a shining knight, and that was Ike, and everybody was courting him.

There was a new rising star of undetermined brilliance on the scene and that was Estes Kefauver. He was also using a Senate investigating committee as a vehicle, and a very good one. He was investigating crime. A very engaging character with a lovely wife, Nancy. We went to their house a time or two. We were never close, but you had to like him. He was a warm, attractive, funny man.

As always we had the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner. I'm trying to remember whether it was that year or 1951 that I remember a picture, a sort of a close-up, where Lyndon is leaning over Truman's shoulder and Mrs. Wilson is sitting next to Truman. Such a picture is clear in my mind somewhere along right there. But always, year after year, the same two hard-working cohorts ran the dinner and that was Lindy Boggs and Carrie [Carolyn] Davis, the wife of a congressman from Tennessee. Lindy, a figure in political life from the moment she hit Washington, was so capable, so suave, she could get anybody to do anything, simply by being so nice. And you knew she would come back and do as much or more for you sometime.



Tony Buford was a good friend of those days. He worked for Budweiser-Busch and particularly for Mr. Gussie [Bush].

One of Lyndon's good friends, Senator Virgil Chapman of Kentucky, died, I think in an automobile accident. He was a true member of the club. Lyndon was pretty much a member of the club himself, but he was always--he was in it and not quite in it, in my opinion.

G: Why do you say he was not quite in it?

J: Well, I don't know. He was just--he could see it and understand it, but it wasn't the end-all and be-all to him. I don't know quite why I say that, but that's the way I felt about it.

G: Chapman was also on the Policy Committee, wasn't he?

J: I think so.

A characteristic shared by all the Kentuckians that we knew was the ability to tell stories most marvelously. That was true of Paul Porter in aces. And the Chief Justice, Mr. [Fred] Vinson, from Louisa, Kentucky, he could sure spin a yarn, and later on our dear friend Senator [Earle] Clements had that talent. And of course, the best of all was the Vice President.

G: [Alben] Barkley?

J: Barkley.

A number of rending things came up. You had to vote on sending troops to Europe. You had to vote on the draft. I forget just when it was that the draft--well, it certainly engaged us for several months that year. Lyndon saw an increasing good deal of President Truman. He'd go down there with Rayburn, McCormack and McFarland.

And busy as we were, and hard-pressed as that year was, we lost Walter, at least for the time being. He decided that the time had come for him to strike out and run for office himself, and when Ed Gossett of Wichita Falls resigned to take a place in private employment, he resigned as Lyndon's executive assistant and announced for that place. So, all summer and fall we didn't have him. It turned out that [Frank] Ikard won. It was a special election, took place in September. Walter would have been so well-fitted for it, but he had some strikes against him. He was married to a Catholic and he had become, by that time, I think, himself a Catholic, having been raised a real staunch Methodist. And that was not an area for Catholics, Wichita Falls.

G: Did he think he had a pretty good chance to win, do you think?

J: Oh, yes, he did, and he had some staunch friends up there, and deserved them, because in serving Lyndon, ever so many people were well aware who worked so hard on all of those things, and that was Walter.

Another it seems like endless dividing issue was tidelands, which finally came up to the Congress for a vote and *passed* in a way that was pleasing to Texans and Louisianans and people from Florida. I think we got about what we wanted out of it. But Truman vetoed it, to the rage of Texans, and somehow it didn't come up again. I suppose it was just too obvious that he couldn't pass it over his veto.

Lyndon and Senator Connally labored along, dividing their opportunities for appointments. They never had a confrontation, but they were always--it was sort of like the old bull and the new young bull. And also, you had to observe that there was a rising feeling in Texas that Connally had not been home in a long time, that is with regularity,

and that he was belonging too much to the national scene. In other words, I forget just when he decided to retire, but it was during that year you could see his position eroding.

Truman asked for both the draft and universal military training. A big group of fighter planes came back from Korea and came to Bergstrom [Air Force Base].

Bergstrom was a big part of Austin's life. In fact, the whole state of Texas was just growing up after the end of World War II and into the Korean war.

I remember in Lynda's birthday pictures in 1951, by now she was seven, she's getting fat, alas, and I was not a smart enough mother to just impose a diet, find a diet, and make her stick to it. Now she laughs at it and she speaks of having had an awkward age from five to twenty-five, which of course is a ridiculous exaggeration. But she was a fat little girl for quite a number of years and I'm afraid I'm the one who gets the black marks for that.

Betty Ann West came to visit us. I gathered my young friends, the Paul Porters' daughter, Betsy Goodloe, and Mary Clark's daughter, Mimi, and Joyce Clifford and Congressman [Paul] Kilday's daughter, as many pretty young, I think perhaps high school, sixteen-year-olds, something like that, eighteen-year-olds.

G: Was this Wesley West's daughter?

J: Yes, I had a luncheon for them in the Blue Room at the Shoreham. I remember to this day we had small sort of cloisonné boxes for favors. A party usually had favors in those days. The Blue Room was a pretty place and just felt like you were very special walking into it. I did. Because I guess I never lost my country girl approach. We played a ridiculous game, which I almost blush to think of it. The one. . . .

Tape 2 of 2

J: I added all of my little lists of treasures to take Betty Ann to. I think we went to the Botanical Gardens and certainly around Hains Point and the Tidal Basin to see all the blooms, and Kenwood and down to the FBI. The FBI was where citizens always sort of beamed when they got there because they felt they got their money's worth, and those were the saviors of law and order. They were efficient, with a capital "E." J. Edgar Hoover was one of the country's heroes.

I went a bit off the beaten path to the Folger Art Museum and to the all-time old favorites like the Supreme Court and the Senate Dining Room. Diana [Taylor] came to visit me, too. Diana went to Miss Shipley's, close to Bryn Mawr, for several years, then went on to Vassar. I forget just when she graduated from one and went on to the other. At any rate, she was up in those parts for about five or six years.

G: I wanted to ask you, you were talking about Walter Jenkins, did that create a void in the office when he left?

J: It did. Everybody had to--Warren Woodward was one of our stalwarts in those days. I really just don't know how we got along. We got some new people and we were writing everybody we knew to ask them if they knew of any top-notch folks to hire. Mary was of course a top hand. But it was hard going.

G: Now, did LBJ take any role in the campaign that you recall?

J: Of Walter's campaign?

G: Yes.

J: No. He loved Walter, but he felt that he had to live with whoever won that, and he also

felt that--forever he felt that everybody ought to stay out of Democratic primaries who were themselves in office and then wait until there was a race between the Democrat and the Republican.

G: Was it difficult for Walter to come back after this, since he had lost and his opponent was now in the Congress?

J: It certainly wasn't difficult for us, because he was so good and so able. I remember it was something that Lyndon did think about, but he never thought about it as something he might or might not do. He thought of it as something that he sure was going to do, if Walter would do it. And he was at the same time going to explain to Ikard that he was prepared to be his friend and work with him, and wanted to. I am really quite sure that Ikard himself knew Walter as a gentleman and respected him and wouldn't have put anything in the path of his return. It was a sad episode though. It really pointed up that the time was not yet for Catholics in Texas, in a part of Texas. Of course, down in the Valley it would have been a different story, I guess.

G: That was the wrong place to run as a [Catholic].

J: Yes.

I believe that was the year we had a storm and it blew down my apple tree. I think I've told you about having--gradually I would plant a new tree in the backyard almost every year until we had four trees. The apple tree, which was there when we bought the place in 1942, and then as years passed a weeping cherry, which by the time Luci was five was already a big tree, most gracefully spreading its pink blossoms in a shower downward, and then a white dogwood and a pink dogwood. Well, the apple tree

blew down, but I was determined to prop that tree back up again. (Laughter) It was flat on the ground. I called a nursery, got them out there. They looked at me like they thought I was crazy, but if I was prepared to spend the amount of money--which wasn't huge, but to me it was sizeable. So we just dug a big hole, replanted that tree and firmly put stockings on it and supports on it. And I lived to see it there until I left the place in 1961. But I had such an affection for that backyard.

During Bess Beeman's visit I had the good fortune for that to include the date when we had the Congressional Club breakfast for Mrs. Truman. So it was always a big deal for me to give a happy experience to the kind of constituents who enjoyed that experience.

We had news from home that Mr. E. H. Perry had had a stroke. He was Lyndon's first friend in the community of big business in Austin--well, certainly one of the first two or three--so we felt especially close to him.

There was the usual influx of the DARs [Daughters of the American Revolution] and the spring invasion of the chamber of commerce. But the visitor that I'll always be glad made it to Washington was Uncle John Will Pattillo from Billingsley, Alabama, who had handled my business back there since Uncle Claud's death in 1941. I must say, he might as well have been in Persia, or on the moon, so different was Washington.

G: How so?

J: Well, Billingsley is a very backwoods part of the world. But it's dear and warm and I respect and love it. But Washington is tall cotton. And so I had such a good time showing Uncle John Will around, and I still somewhere have a picture of him under the

cherry trees down on the banks of the Potomac.

And working on the income tax had gradually over the years become an annual spring chore demanding many hours from me. I was a bookkeeper from--well, actually from the time I went off to school, when I began writing my own checks when I was fifteen, and then when I began running a house when I was almost twenty-two, until sometime during the days of the vice presidency I quit it, and turned it over to Bess Abell, the writing of the checks to some extent, and largely to Mildred Stegall. Once weaned, I haven't been able to take it back up again. But I would prepare all of the information on Alabama income and a whole lot about the radio station and all about our personal expenditures, for Walter, and we'd get together for lots of hours in the early spring.

G: Walter generally did a lot of the financial work, too, in those days?

J: Yes. I think I have mentioned the social prestige of becoming someone who poured at the teas. So different are the social pages these days. Even in sophisticated Washington, they would always recount who poured at the teas and now I don't think anybody cares, or notices.

Besides the F Street Club, I guess the Chevy Chase Club was the most elegant place we went. And the Sulgrave Club. But some of the most good talk would take place at the homes of friends. I liked the small dinners best. The Bill Whites always had interesting people; they would be likely to have Acheson for instance, and there would always be--I would come home remembering a lot of interesting vignettes from a party at the Bill Whites.

G: Was he close to [Robert] Taft in those years?

J: Yes! At least I think he considered himself close. He did a Pulitzer Prize-winning book on him, which to my utter amazement did not please the Taft family, because I asked Bill one time. I told him, "I think this is a wonderful book; I suppose the Taft family must have liked it very much." He looked at me kind of wryly and said something like, "Not unless I would have sainted him." (Laughter)

The Fortases and the Janeways were a couple of frequent visitors to our house, and Ed Weisl whenever he came to town. But by all odds, the most cherished of the visits that year was Mrs. Johnson, Lyndon's mother. She came about every other year, and had a rather prolonged visit. I used to particularly love it when Aunt Effie and Mrs. Johnson were both there together. Of course, Aunt Effie died January of 1947 and Mrs. Johnson continued to visit us all of her life.

Lyndon used to always want to do things for his mother and he would have a hard time doing it, because just as sure as he'd give her a check for a couple of hundred dollars, she would very soon hear a need on the part, or observe a need on the part, of Sam Houston or Josefa, particularly. I don't think she was ever able to give away any of that money to Lucia, because Lucia was both too proud and too--well, she wanted her mother to spend it on her mother's own needs. In any case, Lyndon would contrive to try to give it to her in some fashion that she couldn't give away. So he would say, "Now you go downtown and buy mother a suit and a hat." I'd say, "Honey, you can't buy a suit and a hat for a woman. She might not like it, and it certainly wouldn't fit her." (Laughter) He saw no reason why I couldn't.



But this particular year I took her down shopping with me. She was hard to get to go shopping because she always protested that she didn't need to spend the money. But we found a particularly lovely lavender tweed suit and a lavender hat loaded with flowers, just the perfect color for her, and with her white hair she looked beautiful in them. The only trouble is it was already early May, and getting late in the year for tweed. But I decided, [it was an] expensive suit on sale--we'll just throw our hats over the windmill and get this one. It turned out to be a very chilly spring, so she wore the suit over and over and everybody just exclaimed about how beautiful she looked.

I believe that was the year perhaps that Liz [Carpenter] had a nice party for her. Liz recognized in Mrs. Johnson all of the good qualities and was very admiring of her. She wrote a lovely story about her.

We used to do some unusual sightseeing, Mrs. Johnson and I, off the path that I've described to you so many times. Or have I told you about her ancestor hunting?

G: Well, you mentioned that she'd started it during this period or beforehand.

J: Well, we pursued it because she would have a lead on some ancestor who had lived in a county in Virginia. We'd go down to the county courthouse and look in the deed records and the marriage and wills and all sorts of things. We'd go to the cemetery. I had no interest whatsoever in ancestors, but I did in scenery, and I became interested just because it gave her so much pleasure, and you could see it, whenever she could track down for sure the fact that some ancestor received X hundred acres of land for his service in the Revolutionary War, or left a will where all the names fit and where you could really trace him down as being a part of the line, because she was very careful about

being exact and not just taking the tales told at family reunions by old Cousin Suzy.

G: Why was she doing this? Did she ever say what her purpose was in assembling this data?

J: Well, she had a lively intelligence and idleness was not for her. She had finished the big jobs of her life, taking care of her husband and raising her children, and they were all out in the world. What she liked to do was to read, to meet interesting people. This just became a hobby, this and hunting for antiques, Early American pressed glass or antique furniture for her apartment. And it had to be a very great bargain, but in those days they were to be had.

I remember one absolutely hysterically funny time when we went antique hunting in Maryland, on a beautiful sunny afternoon and I was enjoying the scenery and her companionship and everything. We bought a sizeable chest of drawers, a sizeable mirror with gilt frame, a number of other objects, and I kept on saying, "But Mrs. Johnson, how are you going to get these things to Texas? It will cost you three times as much to get them to Texas as it will"--well, we could get one of them in the back of the car and then we'd go back the next day and get another, and store them in the basement. But it's quite a different thing from getting them all the way to Texas. Well, she sort of had the idea that the Lord would provide, and sure enough, he did. Lyndon at that time had a number of secretaries who traveled in their cars and he would just portion out a piece to each one of them, or friends. We delighted in each other's companionship, and she delighted in the children, particularly in Lynda. I think perhaps she must have seen something of Lyndon in Lynda.

Lynda Bird used to say to me, and she would do it with sort of a sad little smile,

"Mama, Washington is made for congressmen and their wives, but it sure isn't made for their children." And that's true, because nobody ever included the children in invitations, that is until, I think, dear Hubert and Muriel [Humphrey] finally asked us to come out and bring both the children, which we did with delight.

G: Was that during this period or was that later?

J: A little bit later.

G: Well, they had children, also, didn't they?

J: Oh, yes.

G: But older.

J: No, they were, seemed like, Lynda's age certainly. However, there was occasionally an event, the mamas would make an effort at this and the Congressional Club would have a children's party, which I do not think they enjoyed one little bit, because they had to get all dressed up, and the little boys were supposed to dance with the little girls. I don't remember any glee on the part of the children whenever they had to go to those affairs, but we mothers thought we were doing our best.

That was the spring I think when I had--Luci had a birthmark on her arm which the doctors had told me all along to just watch a bit, and if it began to grow or thicken or get blacker, that I had better have it removed, because it could already be, or could become, a tumor and possibly cancerous. So we did notice it doing that. We did take her to the hospital and have it off. I remember it as a somewhat frightening time, although I just steadfastly knew that everything was going to be all right, and everything was all right. Luci was a good little patient.

Mrs. Johnson really liked to hear the substantive events going around there. I would take her to the 81<sup>st</sup> Club luncheon or someone was speaking on United Nations, Senator Warren Austin. Or maybe that was at the Congressional Club tea. But we'd also go to the 81<sup>st</sup> and the Senate Dining Room and the whole routine.

This was the year for the beginning of weddings of my friends' children. Virginia Durr's daughter got married. Betsy Goodloe Porter got married.

G: Paul Porter's daughter?

J: Yes. Paul Porter used to call our house his favorite saloon between the Capitol and home. He'd stop by and have a drink with us a great many evenings, always with a good story.

G: Did LBJ get home earlier in the evenings than he did after he became Democratic leader? Was he able to get home from the Senate at a reasonable time?

J: No, it seemed like he came home almost always at an unpredictable and late hour. He also went to work on Saturday mornings. He didn't work on Saturday afternoons frequently. Frequently he would come home and maybe play golf out at Burning Tree [Country Club], and that was one of the luxuries of life that he permitted himself occasionally. I was very sad when he finally separated from that club, because I think--well, it was just one of those little notations they sort of like to keep behind your name. But it was really a benchmark in our lives when he quit working on Sunday and another one when he quit working on Saturday. I don't suppose he--his most predictable hours were actually after he was in the White House, because then it was so easy to bring work and staff home with him. It was just right across the hall.

My idea of a good weekend in the spring or fall was to go driving over Skyline Drive, in fact, to go anywhere down into Virginia looking for scenery and antiques or to the homes of friends. Senator [Harry] Byrd's, year after year, was my happiest destination.

Ewing Thomason was about to become a judge; he was about to retire from Congress. We had a whole social season for Ewing and Abbie, who were truly beloved, one of our staunchest friends and the sort of person that Lyndon's father used to say about him, "Son, if you get in that House and you don't know which way to vote, just get up and walk down the aisle following Ewing Thomason," and he'd say that same thing about Judge Marvin Jones.

G: I've heard it about Wright Patman, too, for some. . . .

J: You have?

G: Yes.

J: So everybody in town had a party for Ewing and Abbie. We had a dinner at our house, at the Symingtons and Fortases. The Partens were in town and the Speaker and the Bill Whites and Senator Russell, and the Kildays had a cocktail party for them, and the Texas State Society honored them in a coffee. Then there was a dining room which practically belonged to the Speaker, Sam Rayburn, for all those years and was called the Speaker's dining room, but it was in reference to Speaker Rayburn. I've wondered since then if every speaker has it. I guess they do. In any case, there was a party for them there. I think what I had was not the dinner; I had a luncheon for Abbie with all of the Texas women I could gather. And the Worleys [had] a party in their backyard. So, finally

when they left to go home to El Paso to be a judge they really must have been worn out.

Another annual event on the social calendar, which I always was impressed by unfailingly, year after year, was at the British Embassy to celebrate first the King's birthday, and as time went on, the Queen's birthday. They always had enormous strawberries, so ripe and ready to eat, and Devon cream, thick as--it wouldn't pour, you'd put a spoon, just eat it with a spoon. The wide, wide world of diplomatic service and ambassadors and particularly those who came in foreign dress, fascinated me. I, of course, began to see more of it with Lyndon in the Senate and particularly with him after he became whip and later on majority leader.

I believe that summer at the end of Mrs. Johnson's visit that she took Lynda Bird home on the train with her. I know there were several years when Lynda spent a little more time in Texas than--I would follow later with Luci. Lynda spent a little time at my daddy's and some time with Mrs. Johnson.

G: That's right. I think there's a letter that indicates that you and Helen [Williams] and Mrs. Odom and Luci all drove down, so that would sure fit.

J: Girls kept on getting married. Maybe I've mentioned that Mimi Clark, the Tom Clarks' daughter, got married. Senator McFarland's daughter married in a very big wedding.

Then we went into the summer phase in Washington, which was a quite different feel from the hectic pace of spring. June just sort of ushered in the feeling of relaxation and take it easy. It was backyard living. It was going down to the big market, sort of a farmers' market where there would be just huge baskets of vegetables and peaches, and that would last June, July, August. I would go down and get things and bring them home

and Zephyr would can them. We would make freezers of homemade peach ice cream on the back porch. I worked in my garden a lot. It was a whole different feel, and you'd make up your mind on the spur of the moment to go down to Watergate and watch a ballet or a concert, and occasionally something from an opera.

Watergate meant a very different thing then. Right down there on the Potomac, close to one of the bridges, there was a semicircle, sort of an outdoor amphitheater of seats, probably still there, and a big barge would come pulling up to that place, and moor for the summer time, and that would be the stage. Events would take place out there and we would sit on these stone seats under the stars. Gene Lasseter came to visit. That's one of the places I took her. And we would go out to Olney to the theater and maybe stopping at the way at Olney Farms to have dinner. I have had a long love affair with the theater, and fare in those days was not so plentiful as it is now by any means. You had the National [Theater] and you had the Olney and that's about all I can remember. But I patronized both of them fully.

(Interruption)

July was always one of my favorite months. It was the one in which I would fill up the photo album, work on my projects on chronological books of photographs that went back to the year of our marriage, also on a bunch of framed photographs that we had lining the stairsteps to the third floor. Those followed us to the White House and there, they were in the hall leading up to the solarium room on the top floor, and to save my life I can't think where they are now. It was also the month for lazy living and for casual people dropping over for dinner, invited about five or six o'clock.

Luci's birthday was one of the good times. I had lots of mothers, more than I had for Lynda's, I guess because she was little. We would have tiny little homemade hamburgers about the size of a biscuit--I mean the rolls were homemade and the hamburgers hot and delicious. Zephyr was such a good cook. We'd have homemade peach ice cream.

It was also about the time that I would begin to go over the inventory again to see if it had changed any since last year. We rented our house whenever we expected to be gone longer than, say, two months. It was never hard. There was always somebody in the military or somebody in the Foreign Service who would be in between houses. I'd put an ad in the *Star*. It worked well. I'd interview the people. Never had any unhappy experience. One funny experience in which all the wine glasses got broken. (Laughter)

We'd long ago turned the garage into a playroom, I suppose perhaps very early in the children's life, and it too was lined with pictures. But they were mostly of the children, and they were matted in a calico wallpaper that matched some of the couch covers in the room, the fabric of the couch covers, and those very pictures now line the hallway here at the Ranch going down to the children's room.

I put in air conditioners--well, perhaps we had already done it before 1951, but I think we put a second one in in 1951, one in the living room, which we did I think right after a visit from Gene Autry in which we nearly burned up it was such a hot July day. You couldn't get them during the war. But they were becoming quite prevalent by that time, and Lyndon bought one for his mother. As soon as he got something good for our house, he always thought about her, so he got her one.



My sister-in-law, Sarah Taylor, and Susan, her little girl, arrived for a visit that summer, with a nurse, a totally unexpected nurse to me, a nice black woman whom I still see. I had a canasta luncheon for Sarah--she was a big card player--and had Bess Porter and her sister Dita, and Eloise Thornberry and Mary Clark and Torey Wozencraft and B. A. Bentsen.

We had all the office force for a picnic in Rock Creek Park. There was a delightful ambience about summertime in Washington for me, totally different from the push and strain of spring and winter. I suppose it was not any different for Lyndon. It was a really--I cannot overemphasize--first and last a very unfair division of labor.

Then, in middle or late July, I drove to Texas with Luci and Liz Odom, the most delightful traveling companion you could possibly want, because she's ready for anything, had a great taste for sightseeing. We all enjoyed great old houses and marvelous scenic spots. As we approached Abingdon we saw a sign that said the Barter Theatre had on a certain play we wanted to see. Without a word, I looked at her and she looked at me, and we nodded and Abingdon, which is only about four hours down the road from Washington, no place to stay the night, we just blithely decided we would spend the night. So we did some sightseeing around and went to the show. They asked us, the people in the audience, the ones that they thought they might be from the farthest away to hold up their hands and say what state they were from. We held up our hands. We got a prize for being the farthest away; that was a pair of silk stockings. Silk stockings were still--really good stockings, you were glad to have them at that time.

That summer I began to get swimming lessons for both children. I think I must

surely have begun earlier with Lynda. I took them out to Deep Eddy. The Crenshaws were the teachers, and they, too, were legends around Austin. Generations of children were taught to swim by the Crenshaws. And these days I was having the luxury of a massage with a wonderful old lady named Mrs. Nelson, to whom Liz introduced me. She had a little grey house tucked away off of West 6<sup>th</sup> a couple of blocks, and she was the most cheerful little woman, and a wonderful masseuse. I spent many a luxurious hour curled up under the covers on her table.

We began our routine with the customers of KTBC and worked on the house and the radio station. Mr. Perry had recovered enough for us to go and have dinner with him. I forget at just what point his wife died, but I think I've told you about the marvelous, elegant Italian-villa sort of home they had built and lived in really a very short time. After her death he moved to the penthouse on top of the Driskill [Hotel].

With Walter gone our office was desperately short and Lyndon was writing people back home where could they find him some top-notch help. He was straining for it, Warren and Mary, most of all I'm sure.

Senator Wirtz and Kitty Mae had gone on a cruise to South America, a most unusual thing for him to do because work was the name of his life. As I think back on it, I believe that that was preceded by a trip to see their daughter and son-in-law at Mayo's, and that it was probably the doctors' advice that he get some rest, and that probably at that time he was told he had a heart condition.

Stu Symington had become the head of the RFC by this time. He announced the hope to turn over the synthetic rubber plants to private industry next year, maybe, if it

could be worked out. Lyndon was hotly against it. He had fought it being done two years before, and he wrote his strong objections to Stu. He was back and forth between Washington and Texas. The Preparedness Subcommittee was grinding out its work, getting in behind rent-gouging homeowners who were overcharging servicemen for bad housing, and a lot of talk about have a chicken coop and put a door on it and call it a house.

Jake [Pickle] then had a public relations firm, Syers-Pickle & Winn, and he was working for Lyndon, as he was all his life really. He and Bess Beeman were a team in starting to get all key women, men and women from our friendly list--every time we got a thank-you letter for some favor Lyndon had tried to do for a constituent we'd make a little card, and those were called favorable cards. Then you'd mine that load for help when you needed help. Lyndon was already anxious to--and this was only 1951, and it seems to me he must have been planning a long way ahead because we wouldn't come up for re-election until 1954. But he was reminding Jake that we needed to have a county man in each county and we didn't have more than four-fifths of the counties filled and some of them weren't real workers, and why didn't he and Charlie Herring and Joe Sheehy and Jay Taylor and a few more folks get together and have a session on making a list of people that they thought would fill those jobs.

He took another step up in the Senate ladder, in a manner of speaking. He was appointed to the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee for 1952 elections. [Clinton] Anderson was the chairman, and Ed Johnson and Russell Long and Paul Douglas, a very varied team, were on it with him.

We kept on being anxious for Lyndon to get there for his birthday in August. It was always a very important event. I can't for the life of me remember whether he made it this year. He was back and forth a lot.

I always went to East Texas to see Daddy for a week or two during these trips to Texas, and of course, these days I would take the children, and there were several summers later when Luci got bigger when she would go alone, and then I think at this time Lynda may have gone alone for a while.

Emily Crow was in Austin with big news. She was going to get married to Sam Selden, who was head of the drama department at Chapel Hill. It was an absolutely ideal match. He was a widower, some years older. She'd known him--in fact, he'd taught her, I think. His wife had died, leaving two children, a boy and a girl. I think they were, oh, some eight or ten years old. So her friends were having parties for her. But my favorite idea of an Emily Crow/Sheffield party was to go out in the hills and cook steaks with them, and that's exactly what we did one lovely--I guess it was early autumn.

G: Where would you go?

J: What now would no doubt be full of houses. We would go out on the road that led to the Rob Roy Ranch, which was--you could get lost and stay lost till they found your bones out there in those days. In our days at the University of Texas we had done that often, just take a picnic out. She was a friend of mine from St. Mary's days, which goes back to 1928 to 1930, and still is.

Leila Clark was getting married I believe that--at any rate, I seem to remember a flurry of parties for her.

G: That's Ed Clark's oldest daughter, is that right?

J: Yes, only daughter.

Dinners for our clients would include such people as Theo Davis and the Ox Higgins and the Dunning Brights, the Buster Novys and the Earl Podolnicks and the Chester Snyders and Murray Ramseys and H. M. Oettings, and of course always a quota of old political friends and fellow workers like the Phinneys and the Deasons.

Somewhere, it must have been late that summer, Lyndon did get home and did go out to Stonewall to see his Aunt Frank. Here something happened that became a very important change in our life, in fact two very important things happened that fall. One was buying the Ranch house; the other was a sad thing, and I'll talk about it later. At any rate, before late September we had bought the Ranch house from Aunt Frank. We traded her Mrs. Johnson's house in Johnson City. By that time Lyndon had paid all that was due on that house and the other heirs--at any rate, by that time it was his house. He traded her that and how much money I do not remember, but that enabled her to go in and live close to a doctor and a hospital and friends, and she was really getting old and was so--the house was in absolutely falling down condition, I thought. I described it as a [Charles] John Adams haunted house. There were cartoons in the *New Yorker* of those days of a haunted house with bats flying out of it and a witch in the door and such things, and really, this did have the bats. I remember going by there with Stu Symington one day and the dismay with which he looked at it, too polite to say so.

G: Well now, had you been out here before he bought it? Had you ever come out here with him to see her or just to look around?

J: Oh, yes, he had brought me out here as a bride back in 1935, but here it is 1951, and I doubt we had been out more than twice in the intervening sixteen years. Uncle Clarence had died long, long ago, and as a widow she neither had the management capability or the money to keep it up, run it, maintain it. The house was run down; the ranch lands were eroded or ill-used.

G: Had he talked about buying it for any length of time do you recall before he did it?

J: No, he hadn't! It was a blockbuster! I am not even sure that he talked to me and said would you mind, shall we, I want to so much. I think maybe he'd made his arrangements and then told me about them, but he told me with his heart so much in it, and so happy about it, and obviously it was such a fulfillment to him, that I would feel like slapping a small and defenseless child for doing what it thought was a good act. So I, fortunately, held my tongue, and it wasn't long before I, too, fell in love with the idea. I guess it was probably six months or so before I could really be enthusiastic about it at all. We brought the Wests over here, and I remember Neva said, "Well, it *is* is lovely view, and the trees are wonderful, but I think you had better bulldoze down the house and just use that as your house site."

G: Did he buy it with the intention of restoring it or rebuilding it and using it as his main residence?

J: Absolutely. No doubt about that. It was going to be his seat, so to speak, the way the English speak of that. It was going to be home.

G: Did you have misgivings about leaving Austin, moving from Austin to here?

J: Yes, I did, but I was born and raised in the country, loved the country. I had misgivings

about the children and schools, but our life at that point was already so divided. School went on in Texas from early September until Christmas. Sometimes we even took them out--or no, I don't think we ever took them out before Christmas. At the earliest, at the Christmas vacation we would go up there. January first always found us in Washington. So I was going to give the Johnson City schools a chance.

So I don't remember the exact date. Sometimes, I'm going to look up the deed and see. But I do know that he immediately, the first thing he did was to get Senator Wirtz to come out with him and go down to the river and talk about building a dam, because Senator Wirtz, although by profession a lawyer, had a lot of the instincts of an engineer and he'd poured out his life's blood on those dams along the river. So Lyndon just thought sure he could give him good advice on where to put a dam. They got horses and rode down to the river, through weeds and brambles that came well above the stirrups. All you could see was them seated on the horses. There were many handsome, big trees on this side, the north side of the river at that time, pecan trees, there may have been some more live oaks than there are now. I think so. At any rate, you could scarcely see the highway on the other side, so thick were the trees, and also very much the brush. And he and the Senator enthusiastically chose a place, and that is really my last memory of the Senator and Lyndon doing something of a working nature together, their last project.

G: Why did he want to build a dam?

J: Well, he wanted to impound some water and have a place where the children could swim and we could swim and where he could pump out of it for the cattle to drink, because he

was immediately going to buy some cattle. This was by no means a large piece of land.

Gee, I don't remember what it was, but it wasn't more than three hundred acres.

G: Two-forty or something--

J: We'll have to look it up and see sometime. But also, at this point, we were already seeing a good deal of Melvin Winters and A. W. Moursund, and Melvin was one of the genial, wonderful citizens of the community who could be called on to do anything for the community and a good friend, a very kind person. And [he] knew a good deal about ranching, knew a good deal about building roads. Lyndon immediately enlisted his help in finding him a foreman. The first thing I can personally pinpoint is that I came out to Johnson City to Melvin's place of business on September 27 to interview a man named Matus that he was recommending for a foreman.

G: He was hired, is that right?

J: Yes, he was.

G: Julius Matus, is that right?

J: Yes. Yes.

G: M-A-T-U-S.

J: I think that was his first name.

The first thing I did was to bring Mr. Erb out here. Mr. Erb and I were close friends by this time. He had been working on the place at 1901 Dillman ever since we bought it in--what was that?--about 1943 or 1944. So we had had six or seven years of mutual work together.

G: Well, how about architects? Did you bring any architects out early on to discuss the--



J: Yes, Max Brooks certainly, and I forget exactly when. Fortunately, Max took some pictures of the house in its earliest stages and I wouldn't take a pretty for them.

Anyhow, Mr. Erb came out and I said, "I really would love to work on these trees; they're so fine, in the yard and in the graveyard." Especially in the graveyard they were heavily loaded with grapevines and there must have been many, many, many truckloads of dead wood to take out of the trees in both places. So that was the first thing we set about doing. I'm not sure whether it was that fall; I think very likely it was that fall. Max came out--I expect it was Max initially perhaps for the first couple of years, but he turned it over as his own business--he was head of the firm and he was taking the bigger jobs, and this household job soon fell to Roy White, where began a happy lifelong friendship and working relationship.

There was a dinner for Emily. I took the children to the circus. That began to be a lifelong habit. At seven and four they were ripe for it, and so was I, and I liked it just as well as they did. I went to tea at Betty Long's and was in the house party. I thought about another tea I had been to at her house that had been given in honor of Mrs. Coke Stevenson, who was then the Governor's wife. Lynda Bird had her Halloween party. Costumes for them were always a matter of great interest. They were always made by some dressmaker with a good deal of imagination. We didn't go down to the dime store and get any quickly run-up plastic thing. They'd either be a devil with a long forked tail or a monkey, an angel.

Early in October, Lyndon spoke to the opening banquet of the Dallas State Fair, and we met all of the big brass of Dallas. We also went to a civic club luncheon and he

made a TV speech, the first time I can think of him being on TV. He may very well have been on it a good many times. They had a tea for me at the Dallas Woman's Club given by Mrs. Bob Thornton. Bob Thornton was one of the giants on the local scene, and I remember him being a master of ceremonies and perhaps it was at this very banquet. But I remember he could just herd people with the most efficient manner. To line up a large group of people who may themselves be somewhat prima donnas and people of sizeable standing, and to get them all to do something at precisely the right moment is an art. But he would give us the signals and whatever he said to, we'd do, quick.

I remember the substance of his [Lyndon's] speech had a lot about communism in it and it was much on his mind. He thought Korea was just a detail in the overall design, just one step. That was a feeling that he really never varied from. Of course, as a country we waxed hot and cold, and hot and cold on the subject of Russia and communism. We'd worry about it and then we'd forget it, and we'd worry some more.

Secretary Marshall had retired as head of Defense and Bob Lovett had taken over, an impressive and big figure. We kept on getting the word that Senator Connally was in trouble, threatened by Shivers. Lyndon did a lot of covering of the state. There was a Lyndon B. Johnson Day in Brownwood, put on, I'm sure, by J. Ed Johnson, although he himself had moved to Dallas. Then there was another equally big affair in Brady, where Earl Rudder was the district chairman. He had been one of our district men. Then we went to San Angelo to some service club and to see Houston Harte.

And importantly and happily, in just a warm personal way, I went to Emily Crow's wedding to Sam Selden and the reception at the Sheffields, and that sort of

marked a big day in a friendship that has covered a good deal more than half a century by now.

Then, on October 26 we went to two parties. One was a chuck wagon supper at Dewey Bradford's for somebody named Anderson who later became--he was a newspaperman; he was a friend of Lyndon's. He later went to edit a paper in Florida and I think he had the first big spread about Lyndon as a presidential candidate, and I cannot remember his first name, can you?

G: Martin.

J: Martin Anderson? Two things about it I remember. First, Dewey Bradford was about the only person who had moved out into the hills that are now so heavily populated. He had a beautiful view of the Capitol, the river, the whole city, spread out, and the Main Building of the University. It was really just a jewel of a place. And he had a swimming pool. He was a very picturesque man, a marvelous talker, should have been on the stage, had written a play even about East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, which I thought had considerable merit. He was the originator of the Country Store here in Austin which you may know.

This party was very colorful. It was called a chuck wagon supper and it was full of props from the old West, real chuck wagons, real country music. People wore western clothes. It was a delicious party. I would have liked to have stayed all night, but we only stayed a relatively short time because we went on to a party given by Senator Wirtz and Kitty Mae as I recall, and really, I don't remember much about that party. Later I wish that I had. They were just back from their--hadn't been back long from their trip to South America, and everybody was talking about how well the Senator looked and he was

talking about how much they had enjoyed the trip. That much I remember. But otherwise, it's Dewey's party, the chuck wagon supper, that stands out in my mind.

But the next day we went to a football game, and somewhere in the course of the game I saw some confusion down on almost a front row, down close to--we were up high, and this was down low--and an ambulance drive up and take somebody out. But we were much too far to see who it was. That was not so unusual, a player or sometimes somebody in the audience left by ambulance. There was no announcement over the loudspeaker. As we went down the ramp leaving the game, somebody brushed against me and said, "Well, you all sure did lose a good friend today." I said, "What do you mean?" And this person said--and I can't remember who it was--"Senator Wirtz had a heart attack, and they think he's dead." My reaction--and it's strange how selfish one is--my reaction was anger: "No, no! He can't! We need him! He can't leave us!" Then of course immediately that changes and you begin to think, we must get on out there; we must see if this is so. You have a wave of sympathy for the family. We went through all of that. I'm sure perhaps Lyndon never had that initial feeling that I did, but I remember distinctly that I did, just as I did years later when Lyndon himself had a heart attack, the first one.

So we drove on out to his house immediately, the house we had frequented so many times and sat around for so many good dinners and so much good talk and long philosophical advice and political planning, and we were met at the door by Olga Bredt, his secretary, and immediately the look on her face confirmed it. He was dead. I don't know whether he was dead before they got him to the hospital, perhaps immediately and

perhaps within minutes after getting to the hospital. At any rate, it was very quick. It was a devastating blow. He was buried in the State Cemetery, which is a tremendously dignified and interesting old place, and a fitting place. That wound up a chapter.

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

J: Just--all his life he was desperately moved by a funeral of anybody close to him, the death of anybody close to him, and so this was very, very hard. But I also remember how grateful he was, how impressed he was, when it came out in the Senator's will that he had been asked to be one of the executors. I think perhaps that he and the Senator's son-in-law were joint executors. But at any rate, it was a position of trust and confidence that Lyndon was proud that he felt that close to him.

G: Had Wirtz by the time of his death ceased to be as important an adviser as he had been in the early years?

J: No, he was just as important, to my thinking, and he was the first person Lyndon went to when he made up his mind to buy this house. He wanted him in on the personal planning of where are we going to put the dam.

And now I think we had better stop for a while.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview XXVII]