LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

LBJ Library
2313 Red River Street
Austin, Texas 78705

http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/biopage.asp

CLAUDIA "LADY BIRD" JOHNSON ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW III
PREFERRED CITATION

For Internet Copy:
Transcript, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson Oral History Interview III, 8/14/77, by Michael L. Gillette, Internet Copy, LBJ Library.

For Electronic Copy on Compact Disc from the LBJ Library:
Transcript, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson Oral History Interview III, 8/14/77, by Michael L. Gillette, Electronic Copy, LBJ Library.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

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.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to other institutions.

Claudia Taylor Johnson 6/20/02

Claudia Taylor Johnson Date

by Patti Howell

Allison Fawcett 5-10-2011

~~Archivist of the United States~~ Date

Assistant Archivist
For Presidential Libraries

Appendix A

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

Mrs. Johnson's Oral History Interviews:

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

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

INTERVIEW III

DATE: August 14, 1977

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: The LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas

Tape 1 of 3

G: When we stopped yesterday, I was going to ask you a little about your social life prior to going to St. Mary's. Would you have dates in Marshall and Jefferson? Say, go to a movie in Marshall?

J: In Jefferson I was very young and also very young for my age. I started there, I think I was eleven, in September of, I think it was 1924, and left there in May or June of 1926, at which time I was only thirteen. So no, I didn't have any dates, but I went to parties at which both boys and girls were. I remember watching the bigger girls do the Charleston. I never learned how. Oh, I may have tried, but I'm sure I was pretty inept. I had a number of friends, who we'd spend the night at their house or they would come to the country with me, because I went home every weekend. I think I mentioned to you one time when Nellie Ford [?] and I and various others dressed up in all these costumes that we found and took a lot of pictures. One of the favorite things that I always did was to go down to the lake exploring and taking picnics and paddling those little bateaus, they were called. There were a lot of French words that crept in. It was pretty much Cajun country.

(Interruption)

G: You were talking about the French words that had gotten in and the little boats.

J: Bateaus, which probably was spelled B-A-T-E-A-U, and it just meant a very small rowboat, better handled by one person, in which you could just ply your way around in those narrow stump-filled, vine-overgrown waterways. Caddo Lake was a good deal like the Everglades in portions.

Games like Parcheesi were very much a part of the life of young folks, and all sorts of very juvenile games; I dare say we probably still played Old Maid.

G: Do you recall having any particular ambition at that time as to what you wanted to be, or what you wanted to do for a career?

J: No. I think the first time I began to think about that, actually, I was already in the University [of Texas], at which time I certainly did hone a lot of tools against that future prospect. But I guess we'll get to that a little bit later.

Jefferson I just remember as sort of a romantic old town, and, as I said, quite a patrician town. But it was dying on the vine. The revival which the women brought about had not begun then; it was still in the grip of the Depression. Actually, it was one of those towns that after the period of its vitality and success and growth, which was, I think, the 1870s, 1880s, 1890s, along then, around about the turn of the century when the railroad really got to going, it dried up.

There was a local story that Jay Gould tried to make arrangements with the city fathers that would be advantageous to his railroad and to putting the railroad through there, and that they didn't have the vision to see that the railroad might some day

supersede the transportation they already enjoyed in such a flourishing fashion, that is, the steamboats coming up the bayou. So they wouldn't deal with him, and he said, "I'll see grass growing in the streets of Jefferson." He stormed out and put his railroad through Marshall, and Marshall became a railroad center and did indeed grow, and Jefferson dried up. When I visited Jay Gould's home on the Hudson many, many years later, I saw a picture of his own personal railroad car there, and I got a picture of it myself and took it down to them. Somehow or other the city did acquire the car itself, I don't know at what period. Or at least either his or one that was the luxury executive car of the time.

Of course, in Jefferson I did see a good bit of my brother Tommy, who was very kind to me and always solicitous and just did everything he could for me. But as far as having any set, patterned social life, I can't say that I did. I remember once when I went out to see this friend, Nellie Ford, I made my one and only attempt at riding bicycles. See, growing up in the country at Karnack there were no highways, there were no paved roads even, so I never had met up with a bicycle. Around Jefferson there were some sidewalks and certainly there were streets, and lots of the youngsters did have bicycles. So I managed to stay on, but I discovered myself going downhill and I didn't know how to stop, much less slow up. I finally headed straight for a mailbox on the side of the road and did indeed stop with a loud crescendo and got tossed over the bars and into the ditch, not much damage except a little bruised and scratched.

G: Is there anything else that you want to mention in regard to Marshall or Jefferson, in terms of your life there, before we get to St. Mary's?

J: Well, perhaps, I'm not sure that I have talked much about Marshall. Yes, I did a little bit. One small facet: I did decide I would like to be on the school newspaper, which was called the *Parrot*. I did write some articles for it which appeared. I think they had bylines. Anyhow, a time or two through the years people have sent me a copy of an old *Parrot*, the *Marshall Parrot*. I don't know whether they ever made their ways into the Library or not.

G: That's a new one on me. Let's see if I can find some. Was that the last year you were there?

J: Probably so, because actually I was only there two years.

G: Any other activities in Marshall High School that you recall?

J: No, I don't believe so.

G: Did you have any contact with either of the two black colleges there in Marshall, Wiley and Bishop, which were there then?

J: A little yes. Certainly we have through the years. We had a great deal more when Lyndon was director of the National Youth Administration. He had a lot of contact with all the black educational institutions throughout the state, and had lots of friends in them, and had the respect and friendship--and did indeed have it for them in return--of the leaders.

I remember sort of a funny vignette. There was a time when the president of, I think it was Wiley College, was the only resident of Marshall who had a Ph.D. At least that is my recollection. I remember a vice president of the bank saying, "When he comes into the bank, I just call him Dr. So-and-so." You know, as strange as this may seem

today, there was a little problem then. One found it difficult to call blacks Mr. or Mrs. Smith or Jones. You had no hesitance at all if they were old and respected and long-time friends of your family in calling them Uncle Sam or Aunt Sarah, or something like that, but you couldn't quite bring yourself to call them Mr. Jones or Mrs. Jones, which is laughable now, but a little sad. But this person was explaining that she always called him Dr. whatever it was; indeed he was a doctor.

G: Those were two fine black schools. I guess Wiley was probably the best in the state. Let me ask you about your decision to go to St. Mary's.

J: Well, it was purely by chance. Helen Bird, as the daughter of an Episcopal minister, could, I'm sure, get a very favorable rate there. I don't know what they did for daughters of ministers; I hope to heavens they let them in free. The tuition, however, was fairly high. It was a school at one time the rival of, and comparable to, a very well-known and splendid school which is still going.

G: Hockaday.

J: Hockaday, yes. However, I don't know for what reasons, maybe no longer having innovative management, [but] for some reason it was already descending when I got there, and came to an end a year after I left I think, closed its doors. Let's see, I left there in 1930, so perhaps the Depression may have been having an effect. In any case, I did decide to go. My daddy made one of his rather unusual explorations to see what he thought of my decision. He drove up there and drove around the campus and stopped and talked to the headmistress and some of the people, as I recall, and came back and delivered a very negative view and said he just thought I would do a lot better to go to the

University or someplace else, which only sealed my determination to go. He said, "All right, you absolutely can do what you want to."

G: Why was he opposed to it?

J: I think he sensed the fact that it was a sort of a dying institution, and maybe, it was also one of these excessively full-of-rules-and-regulations institutions. I expect that girls' schools everywhere were pretty rule ridden. You just had to be chaperoned whenever you went anywhere, even downtown shopping. You could go across the street to the drugstore; they called that "our privilege." You were required to go to chapel every morning unless you were sick. They made no effort to make you become an Episcopalian, but it was a pretty hidebound school.

On the other hand, there were many good things that I got there. I got to see many other sides of life. One lived in a dormitory. I had as a roommate Helen Bird. I forget whether we were together both years, but I know we were part of the time. Many of the girls that went there were the girls of wealth, whose families had had social standing throughout the state. There were a lot of debutantes. When they'd finish with St. Mary's, they'd make their debut. All of that had never been a part of my life at all, and I can't say that it made me yearn for it to be. But anyhow, I observed it; I saw that side of life.

G: Did your father go up there and see it before you did, or had you already gone up?

J: Yes. I don't think I had been; I'm not sure. But at any rate, I had announced my desire to go, and he went up. It was really one of the few times that he made an effort to discover what I was doing, and also one of the few times he gave a positive advice against doing

it, and I didn't take it. Usually he was very much hands off, and in this case, having expressed himself, he then was hands off.

I found myself exposed to several good teachers. I think I have talked about them to some others, and you may have come across some references. There were two ladies named Boyce [?]--big Miss Boyce and little Miss Boyce, which was a sort of a misnomer because big Miss Boyce was quite thin. But she was tall and thin and had a great presence; you knew at once that she was somebody. She had a beautiful command of the English language and intense passion about the use of it and about training people to use words in the most effective way. She was always having us write themes. We just wrote themes all the time, and I think that is a dreadful loss in today's education, as far as I can observe. I think from her I learned a love of the English language and the right words. Little Miss Boyce taught Latin.

I did take some domestic science and cooking and sewing, as I may have mentioned to you earlier. [I] liked cooking all right, came to the conclusion that anybody who could read could learn to cook. [I] didn't like sewing at all, *never* knew what I was sewing on. They finally just gave up and just said, "Sew from here to here." (Laughter) I didn't know whether it was the hem or the sleeve, or care, and I always wanted to find somebody else who could do it. After that course was over and out in the big world outside I was going to find somebody else to do that for me.

G: You took French, too, there?

J: Yes, I did. I think a foreign language was required, and that, too, I think is a good thing. But one of the interesting experiences I had there with teachers was of different

viewpoints. The world wasn't black and white with absolute truths and absolute rules, and oddly enough I came across that in Bible class. You were supposed to take Bible, but the teacher was an interesting woman who taught it from a rather unexpected vantage point in a church school, perhaps. I thought it was good, because you emerged with just as much reverence and devotion for the Lord, but you also had a different viewpoint.

For instance, she described the people in the Old Testament as being a nomadic, agricultural tribe in search of the reasons for life and death and the things that happened to them. You got the idea that God was their invention, their way to figure out why sometimes it was famine and sometimes prosperity. At any rate, it was a different approach from the fundamental Baptist teachings that I had discovered in Alabama, where everything that it said in the Bible was absolutely pat. Incidentally, that fundamental Baptist teaching was on the side of my father's family and not on the side of my mother's family, who were much more exploratory and willing to look at religion in many forms.

G: Did you accept these new ideas readily?

J: Well I found them interesting, and yes, I was glad to make them a part of my life. I wasn't sure what I thought. I was shopping around, so to speak. But I certainly wasn't appalled or offended. I was interested.

G: With regard to your English courses, do you feel like it was this English class or the several classes at St. Mary's that taught you to write well or to express yourself?

J: I think it certainly was a help; I'll always be grateful for being exposed to it. It also shows me what a really talented teacher, what kind of a ripple effect she can have.

Because I was there only two years, but I have remembered it ever since. Perhaps it was Miss Boyce, perhaps it was a later course in the University, but I remember in talking about the use of language, this teacher said, "Don't just say a man is cruel; walk him onto the stage and have him do a cruel thing. And be very sparse in the use of the verb 'to be.' Instead of saying, 'It was stormy,' saying, 'Thunder rolled across the heavens and crashed through the mountains,'" or anyhow, some much more colorful language than the constant use of the verb "to be." I'm sure those same teachers would be horrified at our use of the phrases now--"you mean," "you know," "I mean." (Laughter)

G: Did you participate in any student newspaper there?

J: No, we didn't have one. But I did discover the drama, and that, too, was a great addition to my life. We had some plays, and everybody pretty much had to be in them. I found myself playing the part in a Shakespearean play of Falstaff? Is that the character or the name of the play? Anyhow, a jovial, fat, philosophic character in a Shakespearean play. Falstaff is the name that comes to mind.

G: There was a character by that name. I don't know whether it was also a [play].

J: And [I] liked it because I was in costume and nobody knew who I was, so I could be completely somebody else. I was in several plays and like it *fine* and just thought maybe sometimes I would try to go on and be in some more.

G: Your shyness didn't bother you here?

J: No, because you didn't have to be yourself, you know; you were immediately somebody else, and often you had on makeup and certainly you had on a costume.

G: Were you in any other plays?

J: Yes. I remember being in something, at least one other, whose name I can't think of. But in another way I discovered the theater, too. The Dallas Little Theater has a long history of excellence, and the school would take us in a group to see some plays. I sometimes puzzle over their choices, but I remember seeing--it was later revived as *Carousel* [Ferenc Molnár's *Liliom*]. I can't think of the name of it. And there was one, *They Knew What They Wanted*, good play, and *Rossum's Universal Robots*, kind of a science fiction thing. I saw at least a half a dozen plays a year. It whetted my appetite for them, and it has been a great resource for pleasure ever since.

G: Did you feel like this was a big step in your life? Although you had lived away from home before, here you were really away.

J: Yes, it was a big step, because it was so much more into the outside world. But it was just the same a walled world, very, very, lonesome and very little contact with boys or men. You were eternally grateful to those few friends who would come and take you out to dinner. And believe me, they had to come highly recommended by your family and with a letter or at least a phone call from your parent or guardian authorizing it. I mentioned Gene Boehringer to you. Her sister Marie had married a big, jovial, kind man--I can't remember his first name right now because we called him Johnny Johnson, Johnson was his last name--and they took us out to dinner a few times. Then, delightfully enough, Emily Crow became a friend of mine. She was a day student, and she lived about two blocks from the school in a big, rambling, old house with a sister and two brothers and an absolutely pixie, delightful family. The house was full of books and old family possessions, and it was just the sort of family you could write a play about. They

had a rich intellectual life, but their sense of values, let me say, was just different from lots of folks. The household would be a little higgledy-piggledy, but interesting things would be going on in it.

G: She remained a close friend.

J: Oh, yes, till this day. I just went to dinner with them last month. She and her husband came down from North Carolina to visit her sister who lives in Austin, and I went over and had dinner with them. One of the nicest things about them, they were so generous, so free and easy, about having us boarding students over for dinner or to spend the night or just for anything. Because they were quite respectable Episcopalians, the school thought that was fine.

G: Aunt Effie lived there in a nursing home?

J: Well, she came up for a fairly lengthy period and stayed in a hospital there.

B: Oh, I see. Did she come up because you were there?

J: She felt the need to go to a hospital somewhere, and then she, no doubt, probably chose that one because it would enable us to see each other several times a week. I'm not sure whether I went over every day; anyhow, we were together a good bit.

G: Did you see much of Dallas? I realize that you were sort of walled off.

J: A little bit, yes. With a teacher as a chaperone we'd go down and shop, but I had absolutely no sense about clothes. I guess it's fortunate that we wore uniforms, because you couldn't vary from that. But when you did have a few clothes to come and go in, and maybe if you went out to dinner. I think we didn't have to wear a uniform then.

G: I guess on holidays you would go home.

J: Oh, yes. I am trying to remember whether I took a car to St. Mary's or not, because, you see, I had already owned one for two years and was used to the freedom of having one. I don't think we were allowed to have one the first year there, and I am not sure whether I had one the second year or not. I remember the subject coming up and me trying to bring it, but I have the feeling that the teachers said no.

I must say the church did have an effect on me, although they made no attempt to proselytize, as it were. They didn't try to convince you that it was better to be an Episcopalian than to be a Methodist, which I was. But when I left there and went to the University of Texas, I found myself missing it, and I did just seek it out and start going to an Episcopal church. And I did join about a year after I left there.

G: That was St. David's, I guess, wasn't it?

J: Yes.

G: In addition to the curriculum, and of course the religious change that you just mentioned, is there any other way that St. Mary's changed your life? Did it open any other new doors?

J: Not any doors that I walked through. I took a look at a lot of girls who, when they would leave there, would go home to houses where there were a good many parties and where they were going to make their debuts or where their older sister had. I sort of took a look at that world, but I really wasn't ever a part of it. I did have an interesting door open to me in April of my last year. I decided to go take a look at the University, and I decided I would ride a plane down there. Commercial planes were pretty much in their infancy then. Nevertheless, I got on one in early April and went down to Austin. I was going to

be met by, and visit, my friend, Gene Boehringer, whom I have mentioned to you. She was working for Mr. C. V. Terrell of the Railroad Commission. Well, I just got just as sick as I could be.

G: Oh, on the plane? Did you?

J: It was an experience, alas, that was oft repeated through the years. Airsickness is not uncommon, but all I can say is, it's awful. One eventually gets over it, but it took me many years.

G: Why did you select a plane?

J: Well, I had heard about them, and I wanted to explore them. But then I had already been up in one, but you have no doubt seen a picture of that. There is a hilarious picture of me, age eleven I expect, in a field in Battle Creek, Michigan, standing by the side of--what do you call it when they have two wings joined together?

G: An old biplane.

J: An old biplane. It was a sort of barnstorming thing that would come to a town and land in a cow pasture and take people up for two dollars, or three or four dollars. Anyhow, I did that when I was at Battle Creek, Michigan, and Aunt Effie either didn't know or thought it was all right. In that instance there was a grown person with me, a woman who became a friend of Aunt Effie's and sort of took me around. I can't remember her name now, but she was very nice.

But I rode down to Austin on this plane and arrived so nauseated I could hardly get off the plane. But there opened up there one of the most delightful weekends in my life.

G: It was a great time to be in Austin.

J: April is a divine month. The countryside was at its best, and Gene took me around to lots of places. I was just seventeen and the world was just beginning to open up to me, and she got me a date with a newspaperman, Dawson Duncan. He was really very good looking and sort of filled a lot of the pictures of the romantic newspaperman. He was an excellent letter writer. I don't know whether I ever kept his letters or not. We did ride around and see the bluebonnets, and I am reasonably sure we must have gone on some picnics. I made up my mind right then I wanted to come to the University to school and never changed it.

Then we made plans for them to come back to Dallas and see me. "Them" consisted of Gene and Dawson, whom we called Dunc, and another man, I think. I don't know whether we had anyone else along; I think there were three of them. And so they did, having a misadventure on the way by hitting a mule; I think they did. Anyhow, they finally made it, and then, by some rules, certainly not approved by the school, I got out and did go and join them for dinner. (Laughter) I'm sure I must have said I was visiting somebody else.

G: You went back to Karnack that summer, or maybe in Alabama? I guess you were in Alabama.

J: I am sure I would have made a trip to Alabama. Let's see, that would have been the summer of 1930, wasn't it? Yes, and that was also one of the summers when we went up to Rabun Gap [Georgia], as you will see in those old pictures. There were lots of those pictures that were dated 1929 and 1930.

G: There was a big flood in Marshall that spring, in the spring of 1930. Do you remember that? Of course, you would have been [in Dallas].

J: Was it 1929 or 1930? In any case, in one of those pictures there was one of Caddo Lake, and it said, "During the Big Flood," and it had either one of those dates on it.

G: I get the impression that your father was against the idea of your going to UT, that he--

J: No, I don't think so. I don't remember that. Do you remember anything about that?

G: I have a note on it, and the indication is that he would have preferred you to go to the University of Alabama instead.

J: It's a funny thing. I don't have any recollection of that. How did you locate that?

G: I don't know, maybe in an old article.

J: It may indeed have been my Aunt Effie's preference, because Aunt Effie was always fearful of me getting completely away from us sharing our life, and all the time, of course, it was heading more and more in that direction. Although in the University of Texas, some of her Jefferson friends had a relative, a sister I think, there who Aunt Effie went down and stayed with for lengthy periods of, say, a month or so, and I would be in their home a great deal.

G: She always found a way, it seems, to [be near you].

J: Yes, she did. And also she always found many friends along the way, people who remained friends.

G: Now you stayed at Mrs. [Felix S.] Matthews' boarding house.

J: Yes. How I found it, I do not recall, but there were a number of boarding houses. At this time, dormitories were few. There was Scottish Rite Dormitory; there was Grace Hall for

Episcopal girls, and by that time I had had my fill of anything that sounded like a girl's school. Of course this wasn't a girl's school, but I never made an attempt to get in. Anyhow, the boarding houses would have a limited number of girls, say from eight to twenty depending on the space they had, and Miss Matthews' was one of the very smallest. It was a big old white frame house at 301 West 21st, which I later was told had been the home of the Palm family--Swante Palm, one of the Palms; I don't know whether it was Mr. Swante. Anyhow, it was one of the early Austin residents of considerable prominence. Mrs. Matthews and her husband were doing it to help make their living during the Depression.

G: There were about six girls?

J: I think so, that's my recollection. Roommates were absolutely just a matter of chance, and by great good fortune, I soon became crazy about my roommate, Nell Coggin [?] was her name. I think Nell was my first roommate. And there was a Florence Bammet [?] from Port Arthur, and Cecille Harrison became--I think Cecille was my second or third roommate. She was somewhere along the way. I was just crazy about every roommate I had. There was one that was, perhaps, not as congenial with, but liked fine.

G: Were these people that you roomed with and that lived there at Mrs. Matthews' also the people that you ran around with?

J: Yes. Pleasantly enough, it turned out that way. I somehow or another felt it was better just to take a chance than to make arrangements to try to get so-and-so to come live with me. Because if a good friend rooms with you it would be very hard to attempt to change and get another roommate somewhere along the way, whereas if an absolute stranger

[when] you started out, within a short while you would have no difficulty in trying to shift your plans. But as it turned out I never needed to shift mine, because I liked them all.

G: Did your dad ever come up to Austin while you were there and visit?

J: I don't recall that he ever did, but he was a pretty good correspondent. He wrote me just about every week, and I would go home at least once a month. I did have a car, and I soon had that road memorized.

G: There's a very, very minor inconsistency here, and I hate to even bring it up, but I've heard your car described as an old Buick on one occasion and a new Buick on another occasion.

J: By me?

G: No, these are people who have written about you at the University. Was it an old car or a new car, do you remember?

J: My feeling is that I would have a new car, and it would more likely be a Chevrolet, a Ford, or some small car. Now Aunt Effie once in her lifetime did own a car, and it was a Buick, and she never learned to drive it. I drove it, and I think she did make some attempts and plan to, but I think it just turned out to be more than she could manage, really. I did indeed drive her car, and I'm sure it was bought new and did become old, because I dare say she would have kept it a good long while.

G: You took your meals at--is it Wukasch's?

J: Wukasch's, which was on the Drag. One bought a meal ticket, and each meal was thirty-five cents. You'd come in and they'd punch your meal ticket. You'd buy, say, a five-

dollar meal ticket, and I expect you would get fifteen meals. What is that, fifteen?

G: I guess that would be close.

J: Thirty-five cents apiece if you bought them separately.

G: You pledged Alpha Phi sorority, is that right?

J: Yes, but only briefly. It was sort of a chapter I don't really like to remember very well, because I wasn't really much of a joiner. I did get asked by a number of them to [join].

G: Did you have friends who were Alpha Phis?

J: No, not particularly. When you first get there, you get asked. If any of them think they might like you, you get asked. At any rate, I went to several parties--Chi Omega, Alpha Phi, Tri Delt, maybe a few Kappa, I don't know. There comes a time when if they decide that they want you, they all begin to congregate and give you the hot-box technique. They were very nice girls and very studious and all had good records, and perhaps that's one reason why they wanted me, because my high school records were good. As I recall, this didn't begin until after you'd been there four-and-a-half months or your second term, or something like that.

In any case I did pledge it, but when I told my daddy about it, he said, "You mean it costs three hundred dollars?" or whatever it was, and this was the depths of the Depression. He said, "I think it's the biggest fool thing I ever heard of. Are you sure you want to?" And I said, "Well, not if you think not," or something. Anyhow, there's a period in which you are a pledge, and then you get initiated. I decided this was one time there was no need in telling him yes, that was one of the things I was going to do.

G: Doubtlessly, the Alpha Phis to this day regret it.

J: Well, I feel bad about it. I should never have done it, unless I was willing to, with determination, stick to my [decision]. He would have given in, but he thought it was foolish.

G: I have a note here that says that he thought sororities and fraternities were not democratic.

J: I'm not at all sure about that. That may be; I just don't know. He may have, but we may also be putting words in his mouth.

G: You don't remember him using that argument at all?

J: No, I don't.

G: Were most of your friends independents, as opposed to sorority?

J: No, I had a lots of sorority friends. I soon discovered though, that although it was a help, and undoubtedly it was, oh gosh, you could have just as much fun as you wanted without it. Nell Coggin was a Pi Phi, and I guess Nell was possibly my best friend for that first year. I'm trying to think of some of the other girls. Oh, yes, one of the other girls there was a Chi Omega at Miss Matthews' and did make an earnest attempt to get me into that later. But I knew if I had said no to the Alpha Phis it wouldn't make any sense to bring up the issue again, so I didn't. Another one was a Tri Delt, and she was very nice to me, too, but once that bridge was crossed there's no need in going back over it.

G: You were active in the honorary journalism fraternity, Delta Sigma Phi. You were secretary of that, I guess.

J: Probably. It was a matter of no importance. But I did decide that I liked the idea of taking journalism. Actually, I majored in history and minored, of all things, in philosophy. I was very fortunate in both courses to have some extremely good

professors. One was Dr. Hackett. I think his name was Francis Hackett, and he, too, was a passionate teacher. He loved his subject, and his subject was principally the history of South America and Mexico. He used to just really get mad that the histories of the United States were written as though they all began at Plymouth Rock and up there and the Anglo-Saxons coming to this country, when indeed Spaniards were here very early in Mexico and in St. Augustine, Florida. Well, we had a lot of folks besides Anglo-Saxons on the rock-bound coast of New England and Virginia.

G: Did you ever have Dr. [Walter Prescott] Webb?

J: No, I didn't, and I will always be sorry I didn't know to do that. I did hear a great deal about Dr. Bob Montgomery, because he was one of the wonderful, controversial, exciting, stimulating people on the campus that you just had to hear about. I went to at least one of his lectures, although I never had classes with him.

G: Do you remember any of your other professors in the History Department?

J: No, I don't.

[Tape 2 of 3]

G: I wanted to ask you about any other teachers or professors that you remember as being particularly inspiring or important to you.

J: DeWitt Reddick certainly, who had great enthusiasm for his subject and for young people, and made you want to write about the things around your hometown, the things that were a part of your life. I feel sure these suggestions that I have here must have come from him. I know I did write about, or certainly explore, Captain [Roy Wilkinson] Aldrich and Daddy Walsh [?] and Saengerrunde Hall and Hamilton Pool, although that's

not marked here. I certainly did see East Sixth and think it compares very well, or that was my judgment in 1934, with Elmer Rice's much better-known *Street Scene*. I don't remember studying the origin of Texas cattle brands, but it would have been a very good story to have done.

You know, this says that this is October 1932, so I was already taking journalism then apparently--

G: I noticed that.

J: --although I didn't get a degree in journalism until [1934]. That means, I presume, I was taking some courses the last two years instead of just the last year. I made a decision, having graduated with a major in history and a minor in philosophy in June of 1933, to continue on for another year, because I didn't have anything pressing that I needed to go home and do, and because I just loved the University and had a lot of fun there.

G: I'm wondering why your first degree was in history rather than English, given your love of poetry and writing.

J: I really can't say. History had a great appeal to me. I just don't know.

G: Was it primarily--you mentioned Dr. Hackett's course, but were most of your other courses British history or European history as opposed to American?

J: I think I had American history and British history over and over from high school to St. Mary's through the University of Texas, and, oddly enough, the continent of Asia didn't exist, hardly, after you got past the period way back there in ancient history of civilization being born, so to speak, between the Tigris and the Euphrates [pronounced EU-phra-TES]. Do you pronounce it Euphrates [pronounce Eu-PHRA-tes]? I never have

known.

G: Well, my teachers always pronounced it Euphrates [Eu-PHRA-tes], but that doesn't mean . . .

J: Euphrates [Eu-PHRA-tes], Euphrates [Eu-PHRA-tes]. I remember and studied Greece and Egypt and Persia a little bit, but from then on Asia dropped out of existence in the school curriculum. I don't know why. And Africa, with the exception of Egypt, never made it in. That kind of ignorance is vast and very bad. It was only by chance that I stumbled into taking history of Mexico and South America. I was just looking through the catalog, and they were well presented and sounded enticing. And after all, Mexico was our neighbor, and this was our part of the world, so I just decided I'd specialize in that.

G: Did you ever have Dr. [Eugene C.] Barker or Dr. [Charles William] Ramsdell, or any of the prominent American historians?

J: No, I wasn't nearly as knowledgeable as I should have been about trying to choose my courses, although I surely did have some good ones, and I'll always be grateful for those I had. But how I missed [J. Frank] Dobie and Webb I don't know. Are we sure that they were there and teaching from 1930 to 1934?

G: They would have been.

J: I know there was a period when Dobie at least went to England.

G: And when he was fired, also. (Laughter)

J: Really?

G: Oh, yes. He had a run-in with the Board of Regents.

J: (Laughter) Dobie?

G: Are there any other courses? Did you take any other languages while you were at the University?

J: No. I persevered in French, but I can't say it was very fruitful, because it never was conversational, and it just has to be that way. I think the least fruitful course I ever took was chemistry. That seems a shame, too, because there's got to be something about chemistry that touches our daily lives and that is important to a homemaker or just somebody who's going to eat always. I mean, chemistry must be more important than it ever was made to seem to me. It was the hardest course. It was the only thing, I think, in which I ever made a D. I did not flunk, because I don't think that was a permanent term grade. It may have been, but if so, I'd gotten a C+ one other time, and so I squeaked through. I did have two friends who were terribly good at it, and they would help me--a boy and a girl.

I remember one time when we were supposed to prepare for a final or write a paper or something terribly important, I was hurrying to find this girl, and I saw her on the campus, just about as far as my eyes could see. I was just running after her, but she reached the box, dropped the paper in, and from then on it was just whatever remained in her head, so I didn't get all the help I was looking for.

G: I guess most students at that university are sort of torn between the inclination to study and the inclination to pursue other activities. Did you feel like there were other things, plays that you wanted to go to, or concerts that you wanted to go to, on the one hand, and courses that you had to prepare for on the other? Did you feel pressed?

J: No, not really pressed, because I always liked what I was studying, with the exception of chemistry and maybe of one or two things. So I really did them because I liked them.

But I felt, the first time in my life I began to get a more balanced life of sparkling, entertaining things and dates, and a wide variety of friends, and all sorts of funny little moments. Like somebody calls you up and asks you for a blind date, and he's a friend of your good friend so-and-so. So you say quickly to your roommate over your shoulder, "Get out the *Cactus* and look his picture up in the book." And she comes back and she says, "He looks like he's about five feet high and kind of fat," or maybe she comes back and says, "He's real good looking, and he's into everything." You would just sort of talk along until you could get a little input from whether you better say yes or no to a blind date, and of course sometimes they were very funny, and sometimes very, very nice.

G: Did you study quite a bit?

J: Yes.

G: Did you need to, did you feel like?

J: I was certainly not brilliant, but I found it easy to master most of the things I was working on. I think I made *cum laude* most terms, and one term I made, not *summa cum laude*, but what's the middle one? *Magna*, I think, or something like that.

G: Was your group of friends motivated similarly? Did they study as much as you did?

J: Not necessarily. Nell just didn't study [but] just as much as she had to to get along; that was all, is my recollection of it. She was an absolutely delightful girl and very zany. For instance, we were talking about our fathers one time, and I mentioned that my father was a very strong man and that one time he had lifted a bale of cotton. She looked at me with

her big, round eyes and said, "Oh, but cotton is so light." (Laughter) But a bale is five hundred pounds no matter what way you look at it.

G: I get the impression that Cecille also had other interests, too.

J: Yes, she, too, was quite a zany character. For instance, her mother would send her a check, and she would say, "I'm sure you need some clothes. Go down and get what you need." Cecille went down and got a riding jacket, some boots, and a derby and quite a fancy, nice ring, none of which things did she need terribly much.

We had lots of just good fun. There was a place called Dillingham's Pasture that all the young people used to go to on picnics. I remember that was one of my first discoveries when I got here, that if three boys and three girls went off for a picnic in Dillingham's, there wasn't necessarily anything to eat, which was a great disappointment to me, because it was likely to be a tub full of beer iced down, or there might, at most, be some cheese and crackers. But my idea of a picnic was more like fried chicken and sandwiches.

G: You would rent horses at Steiner's and go horseback riding quite a bit.

J: Yes, for several years during our life there that was something we did a great deal and enjoyed. It was the only time in my life I was really proficient in riding a horse, and [I] enjoyed it and got a lot of *pleasure* from it. I can remember watching the spring change to summer, and the cornfields that we'd go by grow, come out of the ground and grow up tall.

Gene Lasseter, once more Gene Boehringer, who sometime along the way married a man named Lasseter, had a wide acquaintance in the Texas legislature, and in

the lobbyists as well. One of her friends, Mr. Hiram King, was a lobbyist for Sinclair Oil. He used to take her to dinner, and he got into the habit of taking her young school friends. He was a nice man, and he liked to ride. Sometimes he'd rent horses and ask us young folks if we'd like to go with him, which we just about always did.

I had some zany friends, too, young men. I wouldn't say I had dates with them because they were quite companionable, more like brothers--F. D. Brown and Gordon Abney. They were the sort of people you would call if your car was broken down and you wanted to go out to Anderson's Mill and look for bluebonnets, or see if you could find an old log cabin, or just explore. I really did have quite a range of friends, and just about every spring there would be a new special one. Dawson Duncan didn't last very long in my life. I guess he was really probably more sophisticated than I was.

G: He was an AP reporter, wasn't he?

J: Yes. I suppose he soon decided that I was too young and childish for his interests.

G: Is there anyone else that you want to talk about here as far as your social life is concerned?

J: Each spring there would be some new young man that I would see a lot of and be terribly interested in, but they really never amounted to much. My cousin, Winston Taylor, would always have me over to his fraternity house, the ATO's, for Sunday dinner once or twice a year. I would go to plays. I would go down and watch the legislature a lot with Gene. I became very much a frequenter of that old Capitol building, beautiful old building, and very interested in it.

She had friends who stayed at a marvelous old house which looked like a castle,

which is now the Austin Woman's Club. It was then, I think, the property of the Austin Woman's Club, but they took in business and professional women and gave them a room there. I don't think they boarded, but they had rooms there. She had an occasional friend who stayed there, and maybe Gene herself may have had a room there for some time. In any case, I was there as a visitor a good many times, and it is a very romantic old house.

G: How would you describe your political beliefs at the time? Were you for one faction or the other? Were you for Ma Ferguson?

J: Not terribly. Gene knew Ma Ferguson and was a very close friend to one of her secretaries. She called her Poquita; her name was Miss Little, so therefore the Poquita. I can't remember what her first name was; it may have been Gladys. At any rate, I certainly didn't know her, except from a distance, like everybody knew her at that time. I did later on with Lyndon come to know her.

G: Do you recall being actively involved in any political issue on behalf of any candidate during this period?

J: No, not really. One of the young men that I went with and had liked very much was studying pre-med, and he was a younger brother of Senator [Earle] Mayfield. His name was Jack Mayfield, and I used to hear him talk about it a good deal. I became mildly interested, therefore.

This was the Depression, you know, and I remember we were assigned in some class--could it have been journalism? When was the Minnesota mortgage moratorium? Farms and ranches all over the country were being taken over by banks, and people were being expelled from property that they had worked on for years because they couldn't

continue their payments. It was a pretty frightening period, and the state of Minnesota passed a mortgage moratorium. I think it said you couldn't foreclose anymore. You had to just stand still for six months, even if they weren't paying you. This was addressed, I presume, to banks who held the mortgages. We were asked in this class to write how we felt about it one way or the other and I remember taking the side that I thought it was a good thing, because I just felt that the unrest and anger and bitterness might well up into something that would be serious business for all the rest of us, no matter whether we had a mortgage on our place or not, and also because it was cruel hard on a lot of those folks.

G: Being in Marshall part of this time, I guess on holidays, you were awfully close to Louisiana. I'm wondering if you have any recollections of the [Huey] Long era there?

J: Just to the extent that I drove across the state of Alabama [Louisiana?] from the time I was thirteen years old on until I was twenty-one. Some of those roads were the worst, most *primitive* roads you can imagine, and gradually they began to improve, and not so gradually either. I'd like to just reflect back when he became governor and when he really got into full swing. Do you remember when?

G: He was elected in 1928, and I guess he--

J: He probably really took charge then like about 1929, because he probably came on quick. Anyhow, suddenly the roads began to get better. Suddenly there were bridges, and big handsome bridges, where there had been creaky old wooden ones with maybe a little iron thing above it, or maybe even just a ferry. And they all had a plaque on the end of them saying, "Erected During the Governorship of Huey Long," which they certainly should have. Anyhow, I had the experience of traveling his state and his roads, and also we

would hear a lot of talk about him. Most of the talk in the areas where I was were angry, bitter talk, because it would come from folks whose toes he had either stepped on or might be fixing to step on, well-established business people. But when I met Lyndon he exposed me to another side of that.

Let's see there was something. Oh yes, you had asked me more about Marshall and the Ku Klux Klan, and I told you a little bit about my daddy and his fairly brief experience with them, He never was scared of them or terribly impressed with them, but Marshall had some *bad* episodes. In fact, one time when I was on the train going from Austin back to Marshall to visit, one of the few times when I didn't go in my car, I got into conversation with a man--I can't remember who he was, but we had some mutual friends; I wish I could remember--and I asked him if he knew Marshall very well. He sort of gave me a wry smile and said, "I've only been there twice. The first time I went. . . ." I can't reconstruct the story too well, but it went something like this: he was supposed to see a man, had a date with a man; that's why he went. And he got there and the man didn't keep the date. Then he read in the papers where the man had been tarred and feathered by the Ku Klux Klan and delivered to, I think, Dr. Jack Baldwin's office for treatment. And the other time was just as bad, really. There was sort of a war situation there between the Catholics and the Protestants. It was an ugly little time.

G: Any other political interests at this point? Did you have any contact with Wright Patman then?

J: No, I don't remember. I remember hearing my father talk about him, and I remember knowing about him and the general feeling of, "He's one of us" and respect and liking.

But I can't say exactly when it first came into my life. I think it was early. Let's see, I'm trying to remember. I met Lyndon in late August, the last week of August or the very first day or so of September. We never really could remember exactly which.

G: September 5th.

J: You think so? How do you know?

G: Well, I pinpointed it, because of when you were in Austin.

J: By golly, I don't know how you did it. Anyhow, in 1934--and I'm trying to remember. I was born in 1912, and so I became twenty-one in December of 1933, I think. I guess so. My recollection is that I had already voted once when I met Lyndon, and voted for Senator Tom Connally. Who else I don't remember, but I feel sure it must have been for Wright Patman.

G: Were you at all active in campus politics or student politics on campus?

J: Not really. I remember observing it, and I remember sometimes being pursued to vote for so-and-so and being mildly in favor of this one or that one, but I wasn't . . .

G: You didn't work in any campaigns that you remember?

J: No, I didn't.

(Interruption)

G: We've covered the political [life] on campus. I was going to ask you more about your general activities there in Austin while you were there, say, bull sessions, just discussions with your friends. What would you talk about when you would just sit down with Gene or Emily or whoever was there and discuss whatever college students talk about? Did you talk about literature? Did you talk about the current social scene? Do you recall

these conversations at all?

J: No, I don't specifically. It was a wide-ranging and very vocal group of friends I had, not just the local social scene.

G: Do you feel like it supplemented what you learned in the classroom in terms of discussions?

J: Oh, I think it did! I think it did, and particularly in experience. Also, my love of adventure in the outdoors was pretty much a part of my life there. This is beautiful country around here, and then it was, as I recall, a great deal more so. Out on Bull Creek Road and walking up Barton Springs Creek and out to Anderson's Mill there were *wonderful* things to explore, and Hamilton Pool was such fun. We went to all those places. Just about every weekend we'd find some new clear stream with the chalky cliffs and, if it was springtime, wildflowers around, and take off our shoes and go wading. This could be just three or four girls, or it could be dates, or it could be, as I mentioned, these two boys who were just sort of like fellow adventurers in the world.

G: This was an inexpensive date during the Depression, too, wasn't it?

J: Yes. I really became aware of it. It didn't come home to me, not in a frightening fashion, but I remember a phone call when the banks closed. I remember a phone call from my daddy, most unusual, and I remember getting a letter from him with a dollar bill enclosed, which was really fantastic. He just said, "The banks are closed. I don't know how long it's going to last. I think everything is going to be all right, but I just hope you have some money." Because he always made a habit of putting everything in the bank, practically day by day, and keeping a very small amount of money in the store.

That was an unheard of situation, not to be able to cash a check. Everybody there was in the same boat. I remember the Paramount Theatre did a very wise thing; they just said, "We're going to show the movies, and it's free. Everybody come." We all just felt so good toward them. It just happened that I had bought myself a meal ticket just a day or two before at Wukasch's, so at least I could eat for about fourteen more dinners. My recollection is that you probably got breakfast at Mrs. Matthews'.

I remember that there was an odd young man I used to have dates with named Wayne Livergood [?], who was a *darling* boy, blonde and also zany. He reminded me of one of the Marx brothers. But he was a gentle, sweet person. Nobody you could be serious about, but just one of those characters that you'll always remember. He had a car, a bright red touring car, at a time when his family--I don't know. He always seemed to have plenty of money, but he didn't seem to have much definite family. And he was very generous with it, and he would just help out all sorts of people.

One night I went out with him to Dillingham's Pasture and some more people, and something got the matter with his car. It apparently wasn't going to run, or we weren't going to be able to get back. So we looked and looked all over Dillingham's big old pasture and found another bunch of young people who had a car, but there were about six of them in it. They said, "Okay, we'll take the girls back. We'll crowd up, but we just can't carry more than eight or nine." We were all sitting on each other's laps and laughing fit to kill, and so we said, "Goodbye, you all. Spend the night." So Wayne and one or two other boys spent the night.

The next day, in the afternoon, Wayne came around to see me and said, "Okay,

come on. We're going back out to Dillingham's." I said, "What happened to you last night?" And he said, "Well, we woke up the next morning. We just lay down in the car and went to sleep. When we woke up the next morning we were hungry as bears, and we just didn't have a thing to eat. So we started walking and came to" what was sort of a tumble-down shack, where a bunch of people [had] just moved onto Mr. Dillingham's property. They were just living there, sort of squatters. They had a few mangy chickens, and they caught one and killed and cooked it and provided those boys some breakfast. So Wayne just loaded the car up with all sorts of groceries. I remember oatmeal and side bacon, which was fitting enough. I also remember snuff. He had noted that they used snuff, so he was taking them some of what they wanted. (Laughter)

So we went back out there and delivered it to them, and there was a real cute little girl, kind of a blonde little girl about eight, I guess. Wayne was just playing with her, and he said, "Let's adopt her." Cute, nice boy. He later--in any case, he died in the Philippines. I don't know whether he died on the march or in the camp; I've heard several stories in the camp.

G: What about the Curtain Club plays? Would you go to them?

J: Yes.

G: Was there much for quenching your interest in drama there in Austin?

J: It continued, and I did see plays. I'm trying to recall whether--you see, there wasn't too long an interval before I was back there, married, and in the National Youth Administration. I got out in 1934, and by, I guess, the late summer of 1935 I was back living there. So I'm not sure at quite what period, but there was a star named Zachary

Scott, of plays, who married--they weren't married then, but before long they did marry--a girl who played leading parts, Elaine Anderson was her name, and they went to New York after that some time. His star rose in ascendancy, and she would do things like she handled all the costumes or the stage management or something of *Oklahoma*. At any rate, she was very much a part of it along with him. Then finally that marriage broke up, and later on she married John Steinbeck. That's when I knew her, really knew her. Before I had known her, I had met her, but it was a tenuous relationship.

G: What about your experiences writing for the *Daily Texan*? Did you do this when you were in the journalism school?

J: Yes, and it was in old B. [Brackenridge] Hall, which was a great big old gothic, sort of bat-ridden building, full of legends, much remembered by all the old news hands around the state. You see, when I first got there, the old Main Building was still standing. I think geology was taught there, and there was a museum of geological items, artifacts. I think there were a lot of classes taught there, but it was ancient, somewhat crumbling, and it really did have bats in it. It was torn down while I was there. A number of the old buildings were torn down, and they were soon engaged in this huge building program, and the campus became, in winter-time, a sea of mud with plank walks across it. There were lots of open spaces where there were wildflowers in the spring; it was much more open than it has become. Buildings have sprouted up on practically every available square foot, but there were lots of open spaces then.

G: Now that journalism building was just opened while you were there, not the brand new one, but the one that is now considered the old journalism building.

J: Well, old B Hall was probably torn down shortly after I left. I can't tell you just when, but I know it was in existence when I was first there.

G: What kind of stories did you do for the *Texan*?

J: Feature stories. I did all sorts of assignments, but I preferred the feature stories because I would get to go and meet interesting characters.

G: I understand that you were sort of interested in becoming a drama critic.

J: You have discovered something about me that I didn't remember.

G: Let me check. Yes, drama critic on a New York newspaper, that that was one of your ambitions in life.

J: Really. When did I ever say that?

G: I think it appeared in an *Alcalde* article years ago. That doesn't ring a bell?

J: No. But it would have suited me admirably, because I was just really quite crazy about the theater and I'd like to write. As for what I expected to do with my future as a way of making a living, I began to think seriously about it about my third year there. I did get [what] I think it's called a second grade teaching certificate, which means that you would have to go back in the summer and have additional education courses. I never intended to teach in the small town nearby. I was going to apply to places like Hawaii or Alaska or some adventurous place. I even went so far as to find the name of the delegate from Alaska; I think his name was [Anthony J.] Dimond, but I never really wrote and applied for a job.

I took a course in typing and shorthand, which I had a moderate capability in. I was never really good. But I must say that the shorthand has served me well throughout

life, because I could at least make a brief resume of a telephone conversation, or of a happening, and tell Lyndon about it later on when it became useful, or make that kind of notes in my own date book for myself. Particularly when I was doing my White House diary and I'd have some fascinating encounters at a state dinner and I was too tired to talk into my machine for forty-five minutes or an hour, I could at least jot down three interesting things that happened, in my date book.

G: Was the decision to return to the University for a following year to pursue a journalism degree a difficult decision? Was it one that your father influenced you one way or another? How did you arrive at it?

J: Not at all. It was a very relaxed approach to life. I was at a very happy time in my life, enjoying it, and I wasn't pressed financially, or I was not pursued by ambition. I knew I was going to buckle down to some kind of way of making a living, although I always eventually thought I'd get married, just assumed I would. But I rather liked the idea of doing something for a living for a brief time, five years or so. And so, besides the teacher certificate and the course in typing and shorthand, I did study enough journalism so I could sensibly apply for a job. Because through Gene Lasseter principally, and earlier on through Dawson Duncan, and then just in various ways, I met a lot of newspaper people. I found that they were plunged into the happenings of the day. They met the actors of the day. They really saw what was going on, and I liked the opportunities. I just thought I would like to sample that.

G: Did you enjoy the journalism curriculum?

J: Yes, I did. I don't remember too much about it except Dewitt Reddick and the who,

when, where, why, what. I do remember Dr. J. Paul Thompson, and I liked him. I even remember, it seems to me I had a course in advertising from him. I had several courses. It was advertising that he taught, wasn't it?

G: I don't know. He was dean of the department. I guess you had three courses from him.

J: I'm pretty sure he taught that; maybe he taught several things. But I even remember one of the ads that I wrote. It went something like this: "Behind every product, a man," and I had Mr. Buick who was making Buick automobiles, and wrote a lot of fine fiction about him. (Laughter)

G: After this, when you were in journalism, could you see yourself as a journalist? Is this what you intended to do after you got out?

J: Among those three things, teaching or being a secretary or being a journalist, I just in a sort of a dilatory fashion thought I would make a choice and just sort of see where fate led me. I was not dedicated to anything or driven by anything, and I did always intend to get married sometime. That was just sort of what happened to people. I also intended to spend a year at home, or most of a year, working on our old house, for which I had a great deal of respect and affection, in trying to establish a somewhat more comfortable and orderly home life for my daddy.

G: That must have been a big project, the renovation of that house.

J: Yes, it was, and I approached it in ignorance. I'd give anything if I had known more.

G: Is there anything else at the University that you want to talk about that we've left out? Going to football games, or dances?

J: Oh yes, I went to a lot of the Germans and sometimes had a real good time and

sometimes I was horrified to look around the room and not see anybody I knew and be gripped in this feeling of, "Will anybody ever break?" and, "Am I going to have to dance all night with this one young man?" and, "What will he think?" So I can't say that I was ever an extraordinarily popular girl; I wasn't. But I had lots of friends and lots of fun.

G: I think you're quoted as saying that, "All the doors of the world were suddenly swung open to me" as a result of the University, or at the University. Any other feelings that would sort of sum up your attitude toward the school, or your experiences here?

J: I was very grateful to it and for the chance of going there. It did indeed *enlarge* my life in every way--the variety of people and the regular feast of knowledge [that] was open to you. I can't say that I profited from it all as much as I should. I enjoyed my courses in philosophy. I learned something there that has since entirely deserted me, I'm afraid, and that is the kind of discipline that will keep you reading and concentrating on a purely intellectual sort of a subject. Now my mind just wanders if it is not an exciting whodunit, and that's bad.

G: How did the University change you as a person? For example, did it help you overcome some of your shyness?

J: It certainly did, and it made me much more outgoing. I can't say that it completely rid me of it, but it certainly made me more assured, more aggressive in tackling the world and trying to find out just what my thing is, just what can I do.

G: Do you think you felt more confident after you went there?

J: Oh, yes, lots more, lots more. I had lots of interesting trips, too, particularly Gene and I did, and this boy I was talking about, Wayne. We were always doing something, sort of

making a wacky trip of some sort. There would always be a group of people. We'd go down to the border, maybe, and spend the night and walk the streets of Nuevo Laredo and of Laredo. I remember one time Gene Lasseter and I went to [Longhorn Cavern].

Tape 3 of 3

G: Okay, you were going to talk about Longhorn Cavern.

J: Longhorn Cavern. I'm not even sure it was named at that time. It was certainly not open to the public, and it was just at a point of being explored. I presume it was being explored by the Parks Department of the state of Texas. In any case, through Gene and with some of her friends, we went to Burnet and out to the Cavern and went through it, sometimes on our hands and knees and sometimes standing up. It's quite a big cavern and has its store of legends about bandits hiding out in it or being a place where Indians used to live there, or retreat there in warfare. There was one or several men with us, I forget what. They would have somebody with a lantern would be in front, because of course there was no such thing as steps or electric lights or anything. It was quite an adventurous, interesting time. This went on for several hours. We did take a picture, and it appeared later on in the brochures of the Park Service as "Burnet High School Girls Exploring Cavern." Gene and I got a big laugh out of that.

Then at one time much, much later--thirty, Lord knows how many years later--when Will Edward Odom was one of the Parks Department--at that point there were three men who [were] on the civilian board that directs it, and Will Edward Odom was one of them. He was a friend of mine, and I said, "Will, could you possibly locate one of those old brochures? I'd love to have it as a keepsake." He did, and I'm afraid that I lost it

again. It is conceivable it got into the Library; I don't know.

But when we finished with the cave, we went, of all places, to a road gang, a "chain gang," is what the old expression used to be. I'm not sure whether they had on chains; I don't think they did. Anyhow, [they were] convicts who were at that time working on the roads of Texas. I really think it must have been somebody connected with Texas highways who took us through on this adventure. We went and had dinner with all the convicts and the one or two men who had taken us on this trip. It was all very cheerful and convivial. We'd all line up right along with them and get our plates. Everybody was laughing. (Laughter)

G: That's an unorthodox way to spend a [day]. (Laughter)

J: There were a lot of unorthodox things we did.

G: There was one other note that I had on your activities, that you were also on the executive council of the UT sports association, intramural sports. What did you do here?

J: I expect very little. I forget quite why I was asked to do that, but I considered it something that was sort of a duty, so I did it. I was never very good in organized sports, but I always took them. I guess that was one of the carryovers from my Uncle Claud, who was a great believer in exercise. Really and truly he did give me a legacy of liking some exercise, swimming and walking and exploring.

G: How about Captain Aldrich? You haven't talked about him yet.

J: A very interesting man and another one of the unorthodox adventures in my life. Gene knew him, just like she knew all sorts of diverse people, politicians, business people, and journalists. He was an old man, but he was a character. He'd been a Texas Ranger. He

was not married. He had been married. I do not know--I expect probably it was a divorce. I don't know. Anyhow, it was long in the past. He had a big old rambling house and enough animals that it amounted to a zoo. It was not a huge zoo by any means, but a couple of dozen, among them some wolves, I remember. I wonder now whether they were Texas wolves, which as a matter of fact have almost disappeared from the scene. He also had some of the prettiest countryside--rolling hills, huge live oaks, lots of bluebonnets on them, a stream. It was great walking country and exploring country. And he had a library full of books. Lots of them were history books, and a lot of Texana, and a whole shelf full of erotica. I remember coming along there and getting one of these books out and looking through it with my eyes out on stems. He came around the corner--he had stacks almost like in a regular library--and he took the book out of my hand and smiled and closed it up and said, "That one's not for you." (Laughter)

G: That's a combination, Texana and erotica.

J: Can you imagine? A former Texas Ranger, and all that interest in the wild animals--a very unusual person.

G: Are there any of these people that you knew then, or had some association with then, who later became significant in your life? I am thinking of people like maybe Colonel E. H. Perry. Did you know any of these people back then?

J: I expect I knew Mr. E. H. Perry as just one of the big men in Austin. I came to know him, and well, and devotedly, with Lyndon, but I doubt if I knew him in those days.

G: What I'm asking really, is there anyone in your University experience who later became--

J: Went on and on in my life?

G: Yes. Not necessarily as just a friend, like so many of your friends did, but someone who went on in your political life, let's say.

J: Oh, I'm sure that in Lyndon's early race I probably got back to everybody I'd ever known, although I distinctly remember that his manager took a dim view of women in politics and let it be known. I was not aggressive enough. I was a fairly newly married young person and didn't know anything, really, about politics, so it was easy to get me to stay home.

G: Okay. Is there anything else at UT that you want to talk about, or shall we take a break?

J: I think we better close up for the day. Except I do want to say one slight thing. I don't think in discussing life around the Brick House that I ever mentioned a place called The Haggerty, did I?

G: No. No. The old Haggerty house?

J: Well, the house was no longer in existence, but The Haggerty was always sort of spelled in capitals in my childhood day. When my father began to finally make money, he always wanted to buy more and more land, and he did. A piece of land came up for sale because the owners had long since moved away. Their descendents, I don't know where they lived then, but in any case it was for sale, and he bought it. I remember seeing a piece in the paper, [the] *Marshall News Messenger*, about the sale of it and how he had come prepared to the sale with all the money in cash. It was quite a large acreage, a large part of it heavily wooded with a creek running through it and huge old hardwood trees. Then there was a lot of open pasture land. It had belonged, obviously, to the Haggerty family. The legend was that there had been a great fine house there and a wealthy family.

The house had later on burned, and there still was when I was a child and we used to go over there--most often on horseback or in a wagon on very primitive roads, but sometimes walking, because I was a big walker--there still was an old family cemetery.

There were huge magnolia trees at the site of the house and some crepe myrtles, and underneath them a great expanse in the springtime of daffodils and jonquils and all sort of bulb flowers, just a whole carpet of them. It was a miracle to me. I wish I were enough of a botanist, because I never expected bulbs that were naturalized just to go on for decades. I don't know how long that house had been burned down and those owners had moved away, but those flowers just went on and on and on. We used to go over there with tubs or wheelbarrows and dig up bulbs and bring them home and plant them in the front yard at the Brick House. Flags and daffodils were the two principal ones, jonquils.

G: Was there any evidence of the old house, in terms of the foundation?

J: There was some foundation logs, yes. My first memory is of just some outline of logs and foundation, and you could tell between the trees where it had stood. Then some of the old tombstones were quite nice and were marble and had a little angel or a lamb or a something on top. The names were barely discernible; they were pretty much covered with moss. It was a fascinating thing to my brother Tony to take a brush and go there and try to brush them off and see who they were. I have a vague memory of some of the descendants of those people coming to see Daddy at the store one time. Also, there was a legend that the last Mrs. Haggerty was part Indian. In any case, it was sort of a romantic part of my childhood and my brother Tony's, too. We used to love to go over there. Also, it was a pleasant part of my daddy's life, because it represented a period of success

to him, sort of the ascendancy of his vigorous young days.

G: Could you estimate when it was that he bought that place?

J: Yes, I could, because I think my mother was still living. I think it was probably around 1917 or something like that, somewhere between 1914 and 1918 I would say. In the last few years of his life he did open up some roads through there, and planted some native grass seeds and improved the pastures to some extent and grazed a number of cattle there. When I would drive him around--

(Interruption)

G: You were saying during the latter part of his life he--

J: Yes. One of his pleasures was to have me drive him through there about an hour before sunset whenever I would go to visit him. Whether I was coming from Washington or down from Austin, I would say, "Daddy, let's drive around The Haggerty." That always gave him pleasure. He liked to look at the cows; he always liked having cows, and he liked looking at The Haggerty. We'd always drive past also an oil well which didn't turn out to be a producer, but I mean a well was drilled there. It did not come in oil, but it came in with a great gush of water and that was also a nice thing for a farmer to have. Sort of an artesian spring, I guess you'd call it. So he had the people fix it up with troughs and pipes and a valve or something so that you could always have water there for the cattle.

G: Is there anything else today?

J: I think not. I expect we better call it a day.

[End of Tape 3 of 3 and of Interview III]