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CLAUDIA "LADY BIRD" JOHNSON ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW XXXI
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Transcript, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson Oral History Interview XXXI, 3/29/82, 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
Sharon 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 XXXI covering October - December 1952

DATE: March 29, 1982

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mrs. Johnson's apartment, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

J: October of 1952 saw the campaign, such as it was, get into full sway. There were Texans who just couldn't take Truman's stand on tidelands, on FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Commission], on Taft-Hartley. There was a strong tide running for [Dwight] Eisenhower. You were really bucking it when you went against it. However, there were those who bucked it. Lyndon, with the Speaker [Sam Rayburn] and Wright Patman, are the main three that I remember that put together on a shoestring an organization and covered as much ground as they could. Eisenhower made a statement on one of his swings through, I think, Wisconsin, up in that area, that certainly did fuel Speaker Rayburn's anger. He endorsed [Joseph] McCarthy, and said they were engaged in the same purpose, seeking to purge the subversives and the disloyal from the government, and he allegedly took out of his speech a sentence praising General [George] Marshall, and if he took it out, it was at the request of McCarthy, so the story goes. Anyhow, that earned him the Speaker's anger.

Lyndon went through the ritual of going to the State Fair in Dallas, a project much softened by the kind presence of Bob Clark and Albert Jackson, those loyal gentlefolk.

He talked to his usual constituency like the Farm Home Administration about the programs on REA [Rural Electrification Administration] and agricultural loans and soil conservation. And he talked with the Rio Grande Electric Co-op and the postmasters-- postmasters were always a big part of our political life. Then he spoke over the Texas State Network, where he came out loud and strong: "I will support the entire Democratic ticket in this election. I believe in rural electricity, soil conservation, flood control, farm price supports"--all the things the party had been supporting for years, and particularly heavily underlined a strong defense.

He covered East Texas with Wright. They went to Paris and the Lone Star Steel Plant and Hughes Springs, Linden, Atlanta, Texarkana, Jefferson.

Meanwhile, Lyndon talked on the phone with [Richard] Russell trying his best to get Russell to come out for Stevenson. He finally did. It was a beautiful statement, lost in the Texas papers to some degree. Somebody finally took out an ad about it.

G: What arguments did he use with Russell, do you know? What selling points did he [use]?

J: I don't remember, but I feel sure it was unity, and, "The Democratic Party from the White House to the courthouse is more important than any one man, and all the programs you and I have jointly stood for together through the years will be gutted, undermined; at least they'll suffer from a Republican victory."

Another kind of a thorn in Lyndon's side, as I remember, was that he wasn't really simpatico with the new head of the Democratic National Committee. I believe it was Steve Mitchell. They were just on different wavelengths.

When Lyndon got word that Adlai was coming to Texas, he met him, traveled

pretty much across the state with him, in Fort Worth and Dallas and San Antonio at the Alamo, which is sort of a ritual, as was going to Uvalde to see the old former vice president [John Nance] Garner. That is a meeting I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall listening to.

G: Did he talk about that visit in retrospect or did you ever hear stories of the meeting?

J: If I did, I'm not--I really missed a lot of opportunities by not being as interested in the inner machinations of politics as I should have been. The main thing I remember about it, about that fall--and perhaps I've already told you this--was that it cost us the friendship of somebody that mattered to us, and that was Amon Carter of Fort Worth. Have I discussed that?

G: Yes. Well now, he went to San Antonio, LBJ did not go to Houston with Mr. Stevenson.

J: Did not go to Houston. Something else--I forget what--was going on. But I think that was the only major place that he didn't go to. He was also campaigning for Stuart Symington at this same time, wasn't he? In Missouri?

J: Yes. He went up to Missouri and made a couple of speeches for Stu and stayed with Tony Buford.

G: Well, let me ask you, do you feel that he was reluctant to follow Stevenson around, or go around with Stevenson? Did he feel that it was a liability to him?

J: Oh, of course he did. He knew what it cost him. On the other hand, he just could not go fishing, or find it inconvenient, and remain, in his own feeling, a good staunch Democrat with a Democratic future. Loyalty was spelled in capital letters in Lyndon's life from beginning to end, and loyalty demanded that he stay with Stevenson, although they were

very different. Lyndon respected him and liked him, but he was just a world apart.

G: Did he and Speaker Rayburn try to get Stevenson not to come out so vocally against the tidelands here in Texas? Or in favor of the Court's position on--

J: I don't know. I would certainly think that they did. However, when Stevenson did, Lyndon put the best face on it and described it in a way that would appeal to Texans by saying, "He's a straight-shooter who tells you what he thinks and puts all his cards on the table."

It was really both a bitter and an interesting fall, because he got some of the meanest letters you have ever read: "I will give you two weeks to send me a satisfactory answer," and, "We sent you there to do," so and so and so, and, "You can be sure we'll get you next time if you don't do what we say." It's just amazing to read the self-assurance and to assume that they were undoubtedly forever and always right, some of these people. On the other hand, there were lots of folks who felt just as intensely about tidelands, and FEPC and other things, who just would calmly tell him that it was their judgment that it would hurt his future career, but wouldn't get mad at him, and I can just hear some of them saying, "Well, you know, that's old Lyndon. He has to be with the party." And he had quite a cadre of friends who would just follow him through thick and thin, and it's amazing that he really was successful in Texas over such a long period of time. As I think I've already told you, I think it's got something to do with him being six feet three, looking like a Texan, and, undoubtedly, loving his state as much as any man they could find.

The Democratic Party got a very uncertain blessing at that time. Wayne Morse,

who had been a Republican, left the Republican Party, vocally. I don't know whether he joined us then, or just that he was going to be an independent.

G: I think he was an independent for a year or two before he actually [joined the Democratic Party].

J: And Lyndon went out to campaign for [Ernest] McFarland in Arizona at Phoenix and Yuma.

G: That was his first experience with Barry Goldwater, I guess, wasn't it?

J: I guess it was.

G: Goldwater would ultimately defeat McFarland in that election. Did he report back anything of the opposition?

J: No, no. I don't remember. The only thing I remember about Senator Goldwater from the very early years was that at one of our ladies gatherings, where the chairwoman in charge of the event always got some goodies from her own state. We'd get pralines from Texas. In this case, the Goldwater department store sent a charming scarf to every one of the members of the club through this congressman's wife that was in charge of the event. That was my first introduction to Goldwater.

Lyndon harped on the economic issues, and on peace and preparedness, and talked about what it would mean to Texas to lose Rayburn as speaker and have a lot of good old southern committee chairmen, like Senator [Walter] George and Senator Russell and Senator [John] McClellan, replaced by Yankees. He quoted the price of Texas cotton and calves and agricultural products in all the Republican administrations, winding up with poor old [Herbert] Hoover invoking the Depression, whose ghost was still--you

could always get a response from an audience in those days. And he spoke of [Richard] Nixon presiding over the Senate.

Well, as far as my life goes, I didn't see an awful lot of Lyndon that fall and after the flood was over, the drought took up again. Oh, we had several years of a wretched drought. The ground cracked open. And sometime that fall I had a miscarriage. I'm not sure whether it was October or into November.

G: Were you in Austin at the time or were you at the Ranch?

J: My memory is very fragile on that. I know that the doctor that I had in Austin when I began to feel that I was going to have a miscarriage--it was a Saturday; at least it was one of those episodes--I called him and he was out of town at a football game, and I tried to call anybody in his office and couldn't get a soul. I finally in almost laughing dismay said I guess I'd look in the yellow pages of the telephone book and find somebody. Well at any case, it couldn't have been prevented, and I think I finally wound up in the hospital in Austin and whoever could took care of me. Later on I did go to Scott & White and have some further work done. Scott & White was the landing place for us when we didn't go to Mayo's.

But, the election came, and with its landslide for Eisenhower and Nixon, carrying many southern states, including Texas. One big impact for us was that McFarland lost to Barry Goldwater, and that was a personal sadness and an opportunity for a forward step for Lyndon.

And, going against the tide, Henry Cabot Lodge was defeated by Kennedy--young Jack Kennedy. Price Daniel was elected handily and also somebody who was to play a

part in a long, many years with us--Henry Jackson. There was a lot of talk about [Allan] Shivers running against Lyndon. I don't think we ever feared it or took it for a real threat. We would have--he would have been a sizeable opponent, no doubt, but we just didn't think he was going to run.

G: There's one letter in this file from Jim Cain to LBJ, and he says that Dick Russell has told him that Shivers will definitely not run in 1954. How did Russell know, I wonder? Do you have any insight into that?

J: No. Well, through us and through--I think Russell must have gone occasionally to Mayo's, because you know he had this long history of throat and chest problems. And he knew all the conservative Democrats around over the country, and, yes, he certainly would have known and been quite compatible with Shivers, but I don't know when and how he told him.

G: Of course we've talked about this before, the Shivers relationship and the Shivers role in 1952, so I won't go into that, but let me ask you a little bit more about the 1952 election itself. Do you recall where you were when you got the returns that Eisenhower was winning and McFarland was being defeated and all of this, where you spent election day and the following night?

J: I have a long montage of election nights, but I don't--many of them took place in the Driskill Hotel in the Jim Hogg Suite, or in some big room there where we'd have a blackboard, and Walter Jenkins would be as busy as a one-arm paperhanger writing up the reports from everywhere, and phones would be ringing, and district managers would be calling in to say how it was going in their part of the state.

G: Was this even when LBJ was not running? Would you do this, too?

J: There would not be that much interest when he was not running, and I do not precisely remember where we were. Probably Mary Rather or Walter Jenkins would remember.

G: Can you recall how he reacted to word of McFarland's defeat and whether or not he moved right away to get support for the majority leadership himself?

J: I know that it began to be talked about right afterward, and I believe it was Russell who first came out for him and told him--and I don't know whether Russell called him or he called Russell. And I remember one of the southern senators advised him to touch base with Senator [James] Eastland. Jim Rowe just said--Jim Rowe was kind of our pipeline to another segment of the philosophy of the Democratic Party. He said, "I want you to know the liberals are going to get the knife out for you."

Now, Lyndon was awfully proud and spoke many times of the folks who nominated him for majority leader. I don't remember about minority leader except Russell.

G: Let's see, I think it was Russell, [Senator Theodore] Green and--

J: Oh, I know it was Green in one of them. I was thinking that that was majority.

G: I think that was 1953 when he was Democratic leader.

J: Maybe it was both times.

G: There was a third--

J: Was it [John] Pastore?

G: I want to say Pastore. But I'm not sure.

J: And a likely one would have been [Warren] Magnuson. I don't know, but--no, no,

Magnuson didn't get elected himself--when did Magnuson go to the Senate?

G: Gee, I don't know.

J: Well, at any case, Lyndon was interested in it early, but he was also, as in so many steps upward, he was skittish, and uncertain, and would go hot and cold on it.

G: Do you think that he felt that the position itself was precarious? I mean, here, what, Scott Lucas had been defeated and then now Ernest McFarland.

J: Well you would have to observe the short tenure of several of the former leaders, majority and minority. But also, there were forty-seven Democrats and a very mixed-up bag they were. There were New Dealers and Fair Dealers and a particular little group of southerners who had been New Dealers in large per cent, but in some strongly not, like [Lister] Hill and [John] Sparkman, and I think [Russell] Long might fit into that. Then there were the old-line conservatives, led, I guess by [Harry] Byrd, or perhaps, I guess, the spokesman would have to be Russell. Then there were the northern liberals, so it was a very diverse group to try to ride herd on. And Lyndon early came to the conclusion that he was going to cooperate with the Republicans on foreign policy, and support Eisenhower when he could, and not just oppose for the sake of opposition.

G: Do you recall him talking to you about any of this, and did he outline this strategy?

J: I recall very much him talking about it, and I was present, but there would be staff and other folks there. And I remember Russell came to see us along about Thanksgiving. I'm trying to think who he brought with him, because he came to see us several times. Several Georgia friends came to see us. He may have had young Carl Sanders and J. B. Fuqua, who was a state senator. Or he may have had his own nephew, Bobby Russell.

At different times, all of those came--I can't quite remember when.

It was the first and only time we ever lit the fire in that den at the Ranch. It had some kind of a gadget in it that proved far too effective, and Senator Russell was sitting rather close to the fire, the fire *boomed* out, and the heat just encompassed the room. He had had a nice, hearty old fashioned, I think. And he got up and excused himself for a cooler place. I think we all probably moved into the big, old living room at that time. Really, how Lyndon put up with me, I can't quite see, and I give him great credit for it, because he was a man who liked to get everything done *quick*, and it took me a long time to furnish that big living room, but that's because I was only there in fits and spurts. And it was going to cost a lot of money, and I wanted to choose carefully and slowly, so at least that fall, and possibly even the next fall, we just had Chinese peel furniture in it and odds and ends of things that should have gone to the Goodwill.

Anyhow, it was a tremendously big fall in many ways, in spite of losing the election. KTBC-TV went on the air on Thanksgiving Day. Senator Russell was there with us. We drove up that precipitous mountain path to the top of Mount Larson and looked out on our beloved city of Austin and the river down below us, and at that time it was wilderness out there. It was a tense time, of course, to see if everything was going to work, if it was going on the air on time and in good shape.

G: Well, did you have a monitor up there that you could look at?

J: Yes, we did. We had a very small building, and we had a set up there. It's my recollection that a bunch of us crowded around it and saw it up there.

G: What was the first program you watched?

J: I don't remember. Isn't that ridiculous?

G: Do you recall who else was there? Senator Russell--

J: Jesse Kellam, of course, and I think maybe Paul Bolton might have been.

G: Why did you go to the transmitter instead of down to the--

J: Studio?

G: Yes.

J: I don't know. The transmitter was sort of a very dramatic site, and we put an awful lot of money into it, and it was a dominating place. That's my memory, though, is that we went up there.

There was a football game, and for that reason, instead of having Thanksgiving dinner at the Ranch, I think we had it at Dillman. At any rate, we had a very illustrious bunch of folks. We had, besides Senator Russell, both George and Herman Brown, who had with them Dave Frame [?], and Wesley West came up, too, and Melvin [Winters] and A. W. [Moursund] came from Johnson City.

So we sort of lived in--there was drama on all sides in that year, and I'm afraid a rather short shift [shrif] for the children. Lynda, of course, was going to school in Johnson City. I would take her down in the almost dark, very early in the morning the school bus would go by, and I would drive her down across the river to where it stopped on the highway. She would get in, and then it would bring her back to the same place in the afternoon. Occasionally, I would go in to some, whatever qualified as a PTA meeting. I began to notice kind of with dismay that nobody asked her to stay and play after school, or she didn't really seem to make many friends. We had, as we always had

had, heavens knows, a Halloween party, but we had to import all the children. I mean, just put together a list and call them up. I can't think it was one of the happiest years for the children. Lynda Bird used to tell me funny little stories, though, about a boy sitting behind her on the school bus who would put some of the girls who wore pigtails, dip their hair in an inkwell that he had with him, and play all sorts of ridiculous, rowdy little pranks on the school bus.

G: Now, didn't you also buy a television station, or have an interest in one, in Waco that year, too, or was that--

J: You know, I don't remember. We very certainly did buy one. I don't remember what year that was. I'll just have to check back through my--

G: That was KANG or something?

J: Yes!

G: Can you recall the circumstances of that and why you--

J: Yes, to some extent I can. A good friend of mine from University days, Clyde Weatherby, had been successful in another line of business--was it car dealerships or real estate? One or both. In any case, he had some money to invest, he invested it in a TV station in Waco, he couldn't make it go, it was having a lot of trouble, he needed bailing out--I'm not quite sure how we got together, but I'm sure who would remember--well, Jesse is no longer around to tell us. But I think Don Thomas would remember.

G: Well, did you have to spend time on this one as well as the--

J: No, never a lick, and of course at some point--and I do not remember whether we bought the whole thing or just bought a part of it. I know that either we only bought a part of it

or later on we sold all, we retained only. . . . I think there were two stations over there.

They were highly competitive, and I think we finally wound up by selling KANG to the other station, and getting 27 ½ per cent of the stock. But surely that must have transpired in another year, not so much could happen in one or did it?

G: I think it was 1952 that KANG--

J: One of the nice letters that we got after the campaign was from Charles Marsh. [It was] very short, just said, "I know what the pressure's been, and I salute you for standing up to it," and a nice reference to me, something about, "Give my affection to your wife and partner. The bald-headed man who likes your children, Charles E. Marsh."

Lyndon always went down to Brackettville for a session with George--or in Herman's lifetime, with Herman--deer hunting, or bird hunting, or both.

And, as the first Christmas approached at the Ranch, gee, it was wonderful in a way, but in a way I look back on it, and we were so--we really hadn't gotten the house fixed up very much, but we put a wreath on the front gate and we had a photographer out, and we had all the family. And Lyndon sort of assumed the role of *paterfamilias*. In fact, I guess maybe it was just a few days before Christmas that we got *everybody* out there. Of course, the queen of the occasion--for Lyndon and for me, too--was his mama, but from the remaining children of Lyndon's father's siblings, all of those that were still living were there. And we had a picture of them in front of the fireplace and that was Aunt Frank and Uncle Tom and Aunt Jessie and Aunt Ava, I believe. Yes sir, Aunt Ava must have still been living. Then the only two men of that generation, of course, would be Uncle Tom and Aunt Ava's husband, Uncle John Harvey Bright. Then there was

Cousin Oriole from right down the road, for whom Lyndon had a lifelong affection and kind of joking relationship. She was deaf all the years that I can remember, and hollered in a loud voice, and when Lyndon teased her, she would give him just as good as she took. I mean, she treated him like he was about eighteen years old. And there was Uncle Tom and Aunt Kittie's daughter, who was Lyndon's very special buddy, sort of.

G: Margaret?

J: Margaret.

G: Kimball.

J: Kimball. Margaret Ann Kimball. And then her sister, Ava, who was a schoolteacher-- gosh, wound up being a schoolteacher for lots more than forty years.

G: Whose idea was it to do this, do you recall?

J: Oh, it was Lyndon's idea, I am quite sure. But I took great pleasure in it, and everybody. There was at least three generations there. The oldest, let's see, I guess would have been Aunt Ava, probably, or would it have been Aunt Frank? I'm not quite sure. And then the youngest was one of Aunt Jessie's grandchildren. She had two little grandsons; we had our two daughters. The prettiest, no doubt, was Margaret Ann Kimball, who was just courting a young man named [?] Zimmerman. That was the middle generation, there.

I think there were twenty-one of us in all. Lyndon sat at the big table that I've already told you had arrived. All the leaves were put in. They were never taken out all during our years--well, until Lyndon returned from Washington in 1969, and even then they often went back in. All that could get around that table got around it with Lyndon and his mother, and I took Uncle Tom and we presided at a kind of a rickety table in the

big room with the fireplace and all the rest of the folks. And we had, oh, just rolls of pictures made. Especially, we had this deer that A. W. gave us, one of the first presents that was given to us when we moved into the house and the first thing that I hung. We hung it up in the entrance of the den, and everybody put their hats on his horns. We hung a wreath of holly and mistletoe and greenery around his neck and put a big red bow on it and put some red velvet on his nose--at least we began doing that the year that "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" came out, that year or soon thereafter. And we had Cousin Ava's picture taken under there with her little schoolchild, Lynda. She taught Lynda. They had a special fondness.

Luci never was without a pet, or as many pets as she could get. She lavished her love on animals all of her life and later on on babies. And she had at that time two dogs of collie--or at least part collie--named Laddie, and another little dog, and she was always carrying them around.

G: Well, the little one was a beagle, wasn't it?

J: Yes, the little one was a beagle.

G: Was that--

J: My lord, let's see. We got her Beagle when she was--yes, she was five by that time. That had to Beagle--that was himself.

G: Little Beagle Johnson. Was that the one?

J: That was really not his name, but some--he did have papers, and he did have a name. I think it was Jeff--Jefferson. But--

G: Well, how did she acquire these dogs, do you know?

J Well, Beagle of course, I'm sure I've told you the occasion when Lyndon bought him for her, haven't I?

G: I'm not sure.

J: She must have been about three years old. I had just bought new rugs for the house at 4921 Thirtieth Place, N. W. Oh, I was so proud of them. I had dug my heels into the ground and resisted getting pets by that time for--Lynda must have been about six and Luci about two and a half or three. Anyhow, Luci wanted one so bad. And one day Lyndon went down into Virginia--I think it was a Sunday; maybe it was a Saturday--without us, and fortunately, for the outcome. He found this place that he had heard about that was a dog kennel where they had beagles. He went in and bought an adorable little beagle, put him in a box and brought him home and put him down in the middle of the living room and called Luci. And I remember to this day her opening up the box, big-eyed, and then looking up at her daddy with this worshipful look, and all the angels in heaven were never happier, or more ecstatic, than she was over that. So that dog has got to be Beagle himself, and Laddie, he was just somebody that she found down there.

Of course we had Mrs. Johnson's picture made with her two granddaughters and the dogs, and then just with the two grandchildren. Naturally, she would be reading to them, because that was her role in life with her children and her grandchildren.

G: I wonder if this family gathering reminded him of earlier ones when he was a youth growing up?

J: Oh, you know it had to be. And that is, I'm sure, exactly why he wanted to do it. He remembered all of those, and he wanted to assume the role and gather the clan and be

paterfamilias. I just wish I had done better by it, as I look back, and had had the house all aglow with flowers and fat, comfortable, furniture and our rather bedraggled-looking Christmas tree to the left of the fireplace, which we actually did decorate together--the children and I--and it didn't profit too much from our inexperienced fingers.

Then we took pictures by the front door, and it had a wreath on it, too. And out by the front gate--oh, it was a big picture-taking session, and I cherish every one.

We went in to Mrs. Johnson's for Christmas dinner. Later on it became the custom to always make it Christmas Eve. But every one of her children vied with trying to please her and sort of win her special affection, and she was very fair to all of them. I have no doubt that Lyndon she depended on first and foremost and always, and I think probably at some time it made him feel like a donkey, a workhorse, the one that had to carry all the problems if anybody got out of a job, or got into financial trouble, or any kind of trouble. And believe me, first and last, there were troubles as the years went along, particularly with Sam Houston, and some with Josefa. Everything that he was ever able to do for Rebekah was always--her life turned out constructive and happy, and so, indeed, did Lucia's.

G: Were you comfortable in these situations at this point?

J: Absolutely comfortable.

G: Were you? You got along well with--

J: Got along fine with them. I really felt more simpatico with Josefa, who was a warm, outgoing, welcoming person. Lucia was a very inward sort of person. You weren't sure whether she accepted you or not. It took her a long time, I think, to really accept me, but

by that time it had been a long time. And I think she finally did when she saw that I really did care a lot for her precious big brother. She was always playing the role of baby sister. He was the oldest; she was the youngest, and he did have a special regard for her.

Lyndon left for Washington right after Christmas. Obviously all of this was--a lot of medicine was being made, a lot of visits and discussions and hewing out of philosophy, and policy, and getting of promises. The children and I came later.

That was not all that was happening that fall, either. We were really operating on a lot of cylinders. The television game was the bigger game than radio, and we were meeting people through Ed Weisl--bless his heart forever. And Walter Jenkins was meeting and in correspondence--and of course, Jesse Kellam--with a lot of people from all the networks and agencies. I remember early on meeting Stew Kelly [?], who became one of our best friends among the agencies.

There was a Texas poll sometime after the election that showed how Lyndon stood, and actually we could take considerable heart from it, because there were a large number of people who supported Eisenhower who were still supporting us, the poll showed. And nearly everybody who supported Stevenson was supporting us, although there would be a small little fringe that thought we didn't struggle hard enough.

Eisenhower made a trip to Korea shortly after the election. He early acquired--and it seems to have lasted marvelously--this image of being the man who could fix everything, the sort of Daddy Warbucks father image.

As Lyndon began to approach more closely to the possibility of becoming minority leader, he, I think, formed his philosophy of it, and that is that he would unite

the Democrats in the Senate--all those forty-seven fractious people--on common ground just as much as he could. Give everybody a chance to speak out, be the loyal opposition, but not just oppose for opposition's sake, stick with Eisenhower on foreign policy and strong defense.

G: I notice that he wrote to Houston Harte saying that he still hadn't decided on the leadership, and it seems to get more confusing each day. I wonder what he meant by that. Do you. . . . ?

J: In my opinion this was it, as to whether he could satisfy all of that wide range of philosophies, bind them together, make a team that could do a good job out of those forty-seven highly individual, "every man's a king" senators.

Somebody told him--I wouldn't be surprised if it were Russell--"Just talk as little as you can. Just don't have something to say on absolutely every issue, particularly not something in opposition to the administration," and, "Lay your ground on economic issues and on the good things, good achievements of the past of the Democratic Party"--like REA and soil conservation. I know that that philosophy, as he carried it out, gave him a lot of satisfaction, and he's often looked back on it, as it developed, as one of the best times of his life. He said it was easier to get a minority to work together than it was to get a satisfied majority.

Now, can you think of any other things about that period of time? Isn't it odd that I should completely have forgotten KANG?

G: Yes.

J: I'll wonder if we'll find out it turned out to be another year, but we'll see.

G: Could be. I think it's 1952, but I could be wrong.

One thing: a lot of his, well, some of his critics have charged that in 1952 he was really appeasing Shivers by not challenging Shivers more in terms of the delegation, opposing the seating of Shivers at the convention, things of this nature and meeting Shivers when he came to Washington and taking him around. How would you explain this attitude?

J: Because he just didn't naturally seek a fight; he naturally sought to avoid one. That was something he used to say to newspapermen: "Your job is to start a fight; my job is to stop them." He didn't want to exacerbate wounds, or to pick a fight, or to--if it came to the point where he had to, he had plenty of courage and strength and would, but he didn't go around seeking them. And he liked Shivers.

G: Did he feel like he could get Shivers to stay with the Democratic Party, or did he feel like Shivers would support Eisenhower, would not support--

J: Oh, I think he early on knew, because wasn't it quite fairly--for a long time I think he thought he would try and try and try. But he wasn't successful in that, and Shivers did come out rather early on--did he not?--as saying that he was going to support Eisenhower? He was not going to prevent the Democratic ticket, the names of the nominees, from being on the ballot, but he wasn't going to urge people to vote for them. He himself was going to vote for Eisenhower.

G: Did LBJ have a good relationship with President Eisenhower at this point?

J: Yes, excellent. I think he always had a very good relationship with him. You know, Eisenhower had appeared before his committee, at least once and, I think, more than

once.

G: Did he have any foresight on what an Eisenhower Administration would be like? Other than his own response strategy, did he anticipate one thing or another, do you recall, after this election, after the November election?

J: No, I don't. I don't recall him saying anything specific, and it may be that just looking at it in hindsight, we all remember it as a time of relative tranquility. At least a much less fractious, tempestuous time than the preceding years.

G: Okay, well, I think that's it.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview XXXI]