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

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Transcript, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson Oral History Interview XXXVII, August 1994,
by Harry Middleton, Internet Copy, LBJ Library.

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Transcript, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson Oral History Interview XXXVII, August 1994,
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CLAUDIA TAYLOR JOHNSON

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This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The transcripts shall be available to all researchers.
- (2) The tape recordings shall be available to all researchers.
- (3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.
- (4) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be provided by the library to researchers upon request.
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Claudia Taylor Johnson 6/20/02
Claudia Taylor Johnson Date

by Patti Decker
Aaron Swett 5-10-2011
Archivist of the United States Date

Assistant Archivist
For Presidential Libraries

Appendix A

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

Mrs. Johnson's Oral History Interviews:

**Assistant Archivist
For Presidential Libraries**

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

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

Lyndon's life. He was not thinking that fall, as some of the papers suggested, and as I think you asked me whether he had his eye at a distance the presidency. In my opinion he emphatically didn't. He had it on, "Am I able to carry this load? Can I go back and say, 'Yes, I want to be majority leader.?' " Or should he in all honesty say, "I just don't feel strong enough."

Oh yes, there was a great outpouring, both at the time and when he returned in January, of affection and of comradeship for him. I just sort of breathed a sigh of relief because I thought he was good for the Democratic leadership for goodly more span of time, that he would be failing to take the jump if he didn't.

So the year began as it always began, with Scooter Miller's party, birthday party for the Speaker [Sam Rayburn], sometime in the first week or two. It was--just a minute maybe better scratch that.

M: I have the feeling--

J: That was the year Mrs. Lou [Sam Rayburn's sister] died.

M: I don't see it in here either. What I do see--there isn't any mention of it in this chronology, but in January it shows that you were off to Florida for a vacation with the [Homer] Thornberrys.

J: Yes, we saw a good deal, in those days, of Senator George Smathers. And we went down to Florida with the Thornberrys and Mary Rather to go to a dinner in his honor.

And then [Dwight] Eisenhower, in his path, was doing some of the same things we were in our lesser path. He was evaluating, I believe, whether he should go ahead for a second term. And the doctors agreed he'd made a good recovery.

And our business at home, our radio and television station which was KTBC, was still at the edge of our thinking. Mr. Kellam at the helm, we could just let that sort of handle itself because Jesse, who had more integrity than nearly any man I ever knew, real tight fisted with somebody else's dollar as well as with his own. And it was just how good the Lord was to us to have given us Jesse Kellam from 1945 to his death in 1977. [Inaudible] enabled Lyndon to say in public office.

M: How did he come into your life?

J: Lyndon had known him in Southwest Texas, in San Marcos, Teacher's College. Jesse was a little bit ahead of him. And Jesse was president of the Black Stars, which was the fraternity there. And Lyndon was not in the Black Stars even because he wasn't an athlete. And so he started his own organization. I think they called themselves the White Stars. (Laughter) And they did things like debate, succeed in debating, or in writing essays, or in academic contests as opposed to athletic. Nevertheless, these two men became good friends. And I used to say if anybody asked me what a political machine was, it was what you--the men and some women that you met at college. And the young men and the fewer women who worked for you in the National Youth Administration.

M: Even though you say the President was not an athlete, he was a good horseman wasn't he?

J: Yes, good enough horseman. He could pretty well do anything that he liked to do, but he just wasn't terribly good at it. And he liked to play baseball with the young, growing-up boys in Johnson City. But he never tried out for football so far as I know. And football was the end all, be all in college in those days.

M: How about you? Where you ever very athletic?

J: I was awful. (Laughter) It was really funny. And Lyndon used to take me to great big games. And I like to go because I liked to be at the edge of the group and listen to Dick Russell and George Smathers, or Wright Patman, or any--it was always a select and interesting group of senators and sometimes Texas delegation people. And we always bought popcorn. And it was at such a game that I met for the first time Billy Graham. And I liked to go but I couldn't even tell who won. So it was best for me to keep my mouth shut from beginning to end, just smile--if they were clapping, I clapped.

M: Another digression before we get back to the chronology on athleticism. You bowled.

J: Oh, yes. Because when you find that you--in those years, when you find that you had extended, stressful mental activity you just yearned to do something that stretched muscles. And so I swam at the swimming pool or at the bowling alley, which ever I could, as soon as I could, on returning from a trip.

M: How about horsemanship, did you like to ride?

J: Funny thing, in the University of Texas for four years I did ride a good deal. And liked it, and fancied that I could do fine. Then I decided I should learn an Eastern saddle. Got on that little flat postage stamp, had a sort of a skittish horse, the horse tossed me off, it scared me. I got back on again, but I remained scared. I didn't like it. And I finally decided what have I got conquer? If I don't like it, I don't have to do it, so I didn't, quit doing it.

Pardon me while I chew up some of these things.

There goes a colored sail. I just love them.

M: Well, we were back here with the KTBC board meeting in February. By this time KTBC

was a thriving business, wasn't it.

J: Absolutely, doing well. It was safely ensconced on the highest hill in Austin. Three licenses had been granted at the same time. But you had to just bet everything you had, financially, to build a station and there was a big argument going on as between AM and FM. And you had to be pretty daring, and daring Lyndon was, so the other two did not hit the cold water and build; we did. We also, because of Roy Hofheinz, and just because of him, did what was necessary in a mechanical way to have FM because everybody had AM. But Roy Hofheinz said, "FM is going to be the thing of the future; you must get it." And it was just like someone would say to you now, "We've just got to take stock in a shuttle to moon." It would be a daring thing now, that was then, but we did it. And proved to be very good.

M: Did you have much hand yourself in the management of KTBC at this time?

J: Early on I did. And I received, and I have, somewhere in storage, stacks of weekly reports of every salesman's calls on every merchant and of the income for AM, the income for FM by the week and in comparison to the two previous years. But as far as really doing the day to day management, the hiring, the firing and all of that, I didn't. I knew, I talked, I didn't run.

M: But you were conversant with the business of the--

J: Yes, yes. I had evaluations of all the people. Crazy about some, didn't like others so well.

And in those days, seems to me that the natural gas bill and offshore drilling, tide water it was called, tide water lands. Who owned the tide water? And Texas was quite

sure that we did because of the way we had entered the Union as a separate republic. We were quite sure we did, and it was a big battle, which Texas finally lost.

And then the liberals--this was a period of when the liberals were mad and madder at Lyndon. They thought he didn't espouse their side, whatever their side was, strong enough. And there was a woman of considerable wealth who was a maverick to her background and her--named Frankie Randolph who financed a magazine--gee, I never thought I'd forget the name of it but I have--devoted to liberal causes in Texas and--

M: Wasn't the *Texas Observer*?

J: Yes, that was it. And Lyndon was their target and they often took out after him. The trouble was--he was certainly a better bet for them than any other Texas politicians who had a chance of winning. And he was *sorry* that they felt that way about him, but there was just no--the only way you could satisfy them was to have been for them 100 per cent, and angrily so, and he did not think that was productive. And I didn't believe that way.

M: About this time in February, when you were again down there taking care of personal business, inspecting land you were interested in buying, and establishing--was this the beginning of what is known as the Family Foundation now?

J: Yes, it was. And to save my life, except for foresight, I don't know quite what was in Lyndon's mind. We were doing pretty well. He knew that sometime we would want to be able to contribute to a number of things. I began to know later on very well what he wanted, because he wanted by--in the early sixties we certainly knew he wanted to be able to buy the land around the nucleus of the LBJ Ranch and give it to one for the LBJ State Park and some, such as the land that the school house sat on for National Park Service,

but that was later on. I really don't remember. And so, not remembering, I guess this doesn't having place in here. We would have to go back through a bunch of--

M: While we are on it, let me interpose because it would be interesting to know the Family Foundation does exist to this day, and you and your daughters do use that foundation to make grants for educational purposes. Isn't that right?

J: Oh yes, for everything, all sorts of charitable, educational, health wise, cultural--you know, you get a mountain of mail, for good works. It is a small foundation. It only has three million in it to this day, and it has only been contributed to by four people: Lyndon, me, and I know Lynda Bird. Luci I don't know--she's done wonderful things with it, but I don't think she ever had the opportunity to contribute.

M: Well, here we are at the end of February and President Eisenhower now announces that he will seek reelection. Did that come as much of a surprise to you or to Senator Johnson as you remember?

J: Not a surprise. And we knew that that would set the pattern for Lyndon's autumn activities, trying to help get the Democratic nominee elected.

Dr. Frank Stanton, head of Columbia Broadcasting, came down to visit us. He was an important figure in our lives. We admired him so much and liked him so much. And he gave us something at the Ranch, an oak table that's a slab of wood cut from a tree that grew in Sherwood Forest for fourteen hundred years. And there is a little silver plaque on it that says that and it weighs like lead. And it arrived by freight, was brought in the house, but down in the den in front of the sofa and has never been moved and never will. We will leave it there for the people that go by in those buses now, because we want

the house to look like, to a considerable extent, like the way it was when we lived in it.

But anyhow that seasons the house, and that reminds and cements the friendship, and I just love having it there.

M: Frank Stanton and I--I want to stop here--I mean I want to ask some things about him because he was important. Do you think he was ever--it is said that the President offered him a job in the cabinet and that he declined. Do you have any knowledge of that at all?

J: I do not. I think it's quite possible; I think he would have been excellent. I do not think he would have done it. He was very, very devoted to his wife, Ruth. And Ruth would have not liked that public a life.

M: Did you know her, Ruth?

J: Yes.

M: She was not as much a part of your life as Frank Stanton was?

J: No. She was just not as public and outgoing; [she was] intelligent, devoted, but--her life wasn't there for all of the world to share in. And if you are in politics, as any kind of public servant, it has to be.

M: Is it your feeling that LBJ, through the years, called upon Frank Stanton for advice occasionally?

J: Yes it is. I'm sure, he liked and admired him very much. And when Lyndon died, as you and I will both remember, he only came to one more foundation meeting, that is, the big foundation, the one that supports the Library and the School, and then he left us. And I have always been sorry that he chose to do that because I would have liked to have had him on and on and on. I don't know why. I just hope it was not anything, any lack on our

part.

It was my custom in those years to--as it was all of my life--to get home to see Daddy in Karnack, out in the country at the old Brick House, several times a year. After the children were born I liked to go in the summer time for as long as a week, and take them. And it was--I would often just get off myself and go for two or three days. Daddy, who had been physically and mentally a very strong man for a very long time, was finally getting gnawed at by age and physical problems, and financial problems. To begin new endeavors when you are in your seventies and eighties is, I think, an unwise thing, and Daddy had made, actually, he had married a much, much younger woman in about, not too long after Lyndon and I married. And I think he was sort of--my departure increased his loneliness, and also freed him, should he--he didn't have to account for anybody for his actions, I suppose is what he thought.

M: Let's stop here.

(Interruption)

J: There were several strands running through our lives in the end of 1955, and in the years 1956 and 1957, and one was the strong sense of how good it is to be alive. There's nothing to increase the hot rush of pleasure in living like a close brush with death, which Lyndon certainly had experienced.

The other force was the battle between the liberal forces in Texas and the conservative forces, neither one of which Lyndon thoroughly satisfied because he was--I think his own life he was trending more toward establishing position on the path to a more liberal attitude, particularly toward civil rights. The Southern Manifesto was one

thing that was a sharp dividing line and a big controversy in the year 1956, when something called the Southern Manifesto was signed by a great many Southern senators and congressman. And it was criticizing the Supreme Court['s] desegregation decision and pledging to overturn it by lawful means. And Lyndon and Sam Rayburn both refused to sign it, and they both caught a lot of flak on account of it. And I think the Speaker had a wonderful ability to let it roll off of him, like water off a duck's back. Lyndon, who represented the whole state and not one wonderful highly personal, highly devoted district that Mr. Sam had, found it more difficult, but wasn't about to give in on it.

And one of the kind of shiny moments in the year, for me, was when Sir Lawrence Olivier was there putting on *Richard III*, and for some reason, the really important people in town must have been absent or something, because I was asked to go and greet him. And this was a benefit for the Washington Heart Association fund drive, in which I was associated. In fact, I was vice chairman of the premiere and I *love* the theater; I fed upon it. I really went to--there was not a great deal of theater in those days. There was always the National [Theatre]. And in the summer time out at, oh dear . . . Summer Playhouse; Olney. I just adored to go out to Olney and to stop at a old farmhouse that had been turned into a restaurant and have dinner first. This night, though, it was a great play and a very romantic and splendid actor. So I still have and cherish a picture of me and Sir Lawrence Olivier.

M: When you went out to Olney, did you often go in the company of your husband? Would he go out, perhaps under some duress?

J: (Laughter) I don't think he *ever* went. I would go with other Senate or House wives or

with members of our staff. Lyndon went to very few plays or movies. I remember he did go to one and embarrassed me highly by crying. It was *Grapes of Wrath* by [John] Steinbeck and one of those highly graphic description of starving people. And about the Dust Bowl days in the depths of the Depression. And he had had a hands-on relation to some of that in South Texas as secretary to Congressman [Richard] Kleberg. And those things mark your life forever.

I got to share a little bit of them, only second hand, from listening to some of his constituents tell tales about what he did for them in those years. If there was any government help to be had, he got it to the Fourteenth District, which is Mr. Kleberg's district.

M: On LBJ and theater, I remember how affected he was by one play after he had went back to the Ranch from the White House, and it was a local production of *Raisin in the Sun*.

J: Yes, oh I do. And I loved *Raisin in the Sun*, and so did he.

M: About this time, it was in March, Senator Johnson announced that he has not yet made a decision on whether he will accept the suggestion that he go to the convention as favorite son. And he said, it was quoted in the paper, "The response from Texas on this has been almost entirely favorable. The response from Lady Bird has been much less enthusiastic." (Laughter) Do you think that was--was that an accurate assessment?

J: Well, I never thought I could really affect it, and I was not against it. It is just that I didn't want it to go any further. I didn't want him to be a candidate for president, or set his heart on it, or get too bound up in it. But to be a favorite son, you know, lots, and lots of states have favorite sons. They don't necessarily get very far. Was that the year in which we

had the real confrontation with Allan Shivers? What year was that?

M: He announced that he would not support Johnson as favorite son this year. I don't know how serious the confrontation was in 1952, but this was the second time that he bolted the party and endorsed the Republican slate. So I don't really know.

J: Well, at one time, you know, we had a real head on collision with him which was painful and wrenching to us and I think, possibly to him, but which was inevitable considering the digression of their philosophies. Frankly, I don't remember which year it was.

Anyhow, there was--something we used to do in those years was to have a meeting at the Ranch of the county men. When you run for the Senate, you have districts. And representing the different Senatorial districts, I think, of the state of Texas, and I mean that in terms of state Senators. Anyhow, the state is divided into a good many areas, and we did have a *good* man in nearly every area except some West Texas areas we were without support. But they were pretty sparse anyhow. Chilton O'Brien from Beaumont, I remember; and Bob Clark, brother to Tom, family of lawyers, good people, you will remember Tom was the attorney general and finally on the Supreme Court; and Cliff Carter, always one of the best, and Cliff was from A&M; Sam D. W. Low from Houston; and Doug Singleton also from down there; Warren Woodward, who was a part of our lives for years and years, but I think by that time he had gone to richer fields, gone to work for Mr. Sid Richardson in Fort Worth, as indeed--I don't know the periods of John's [Connally] governorship, but anyhow.

M: I think he was with Sid Richardson at this time.

J: And Paul Bolton, who worked for us, he was a sounding board, a newsman, a source of

good judgment, good advice; Mack DeGuerin, South Texas, used to be a secretary to Lyndon; Ray Buck from Fort Worth, close friend from--he'd come to us through Mr. Fort Worth himself--

M: Amon Carter.

J: Amon Carter; and Elmer Parish, I believe from Wichita Falls; Cecil Burney, and that was really a man and wife team, just from Corpus Christi, delightful people, lifelong friends until her too early death and later his; and J. C. Looney, of course, was a member of *the firm* in Austin, Ed Clark's firm [Clark, Thomas and Winters]; Jay Taylor from Amarillo, where I would say our support was highly personal and pretty sparse, but Jay against all his natural inclinations, cattleman, oil man, very conservative, *great* sponsor of ours now, was also our good friend; Adrian Spears of San Antonio; and Lloyd Croslin, now I forget--West Texas, Lubbock maybe.

So they would all come to the Ranch, and we would sit around under those oak tree and go from one to the next: What's the condition of your district? What have I done that is good for them or that makes them mad? What is your problems? And it was a good way to keep your finger on the pulse of the state.

M: Were you by this time, yourself, enjoying that kind of political talk?

J: I certainly didn't walk out on any of the sessions. I sat at the edge and listened and took it all in and enjoyed, had my own judgments. Would not have presumed to put them--well, I mostly went along with--there were occasions in our lives in which I had very strong opinions and voiced them. But I was a soldier in the ranks mostly.

But I remember there was one time, and this *really* happened, when those district

men were there when a *terrific* rain storm came up, and the river rose, and it became--at first, it was mostly a matter of laughter, if the river rises then we are all caught here, have we got enough beds? And I was busy counting all the beds in the house and in the guest house, and we did not at that time of course--we had the cedar house. So we had three houses in which we could have put people and I was--what you need most in a situation like that is an unlimited amount of coffee and drinks and the makings of say, at least a ham and a good deal of meat, and you can always get out of the deep freeze vegetables and things. And it was--just thinking that you were at the mercy of the weather was really exciting thing. And finally, my recollection is, that we got word that we--from the weathermen--Lyndon would call the Department of Public Transportation, the Highway Department who had their eyes on all the roads, whether you could cross or not, bridges. And they said, "You are going to have to get out there by five o'clock, or you may not be able to get out of there for the next twenty-four hours." I think some stayed; most went. But it made for a funny, exciting, kind of frontier-like meeting.

M: Mrs. Johnson, you said a minute ago that there were times when you had decided opinions on various matters political, and you expressed them. Do you have any in mind that you could tell us about?

J: Yes. The most positive and most sure one, I think, but comes later on in his life and I probably already have recited that in my White House things about after he--having taken over as President after the death of President [John F.] Kennedy--in August of 1964 was approaching the convention time. And he had to definitely make up his mind whether he was a candidate or not. And I wrote him a letter saying that I think he ought to be and all

the reasons why. But that letter exists somewhere and I also added, "And then when you finish, you will win, and at the end of that time the juices of life will be sufficiently used up, and I think you should announce at a reasonable time that you will not be a candidate for reelection again." At any rate, that letter which I remember that way was one of the positive times in my life. And I remember exactly Lynda and I walked around the White House grounds and sat under a great big tree. And I think we were both thinking our own thoughts, but I think our thoughts were running completely in tandem. And Lyndon was in bed, and wouldn't talk to us, and wouldn't talk to anybody. He was wrestling with his own demons, I guess. But I'd already written the letter and left it there for him to look at. That is the way it actually did turn out, and I think that is the best way for it to turn out.

M: Fortunately, that letter survived, and it's a memorable document. As a matter of fact, it is on exhibit in the Library.

J: Prominent figures in our life at that time were Mayor Tom Miller, an amazing figure, a sort of a big, overweight, intellectual man who loved his city of Austin, who quoted Shakespeare, who had a running argument with Lyndon, always, which Lyndon never won. The argument was that Lyndon, one of the proudest things in his whole life was the accomplishment of the dams along the lower Colorado River and the bringing into existence of the rural electrification and the production of a lot of power by the use of the water on the river, and promising everybody cheap power. Well, cheap power really didn't come about. He couldn't make the city, who bought the power, he couldn't make them set a cheap rate. And the Mayor set a rate which would give him a little margin with which to build parks. (Laughter) He'd say, "Now, Lyndon, you know the people of

Austin wouldn't stand for a"--what do you call it when you undertake to raise money by--
bond issue--"they wouldn't stand for a bond issue to build parks. But they *need* parks.
And they are going to need parks more and more. And all these young families here
having children. And this is the only way we are going to get them, and this is the way
we are going to do it, Lyndon." (Laughter)

Tape 1 of 2, Side 2

M: This is side two of Lady Bird Johnson oral history interview [regarding] 1956.

Okay Tom Miller. I'm sorry we had to turn the tape over there because that was a
fascinating story. Tom Miller was the one who gave you the flag pole for the LBJ Ranch,
wasn't he?

J: He was one. But there were about six names on that. I wish now I could remember. I
think, very likely, one of them was a man from--who had a nursery, and whose land we
eventually bought--we had at some time bought--to put the tower for the radio station that
we use now, the radio station, not the television. It was land along the Colorado River
that he used to have for his nursery. And his mother-in-law was one of those wonderful
volunteers that sometimes politicians of those years would be so lucky to have. I mean,
from dawn till dark she would give her work and her voice and they were--she was a
member of lots of clubs. She was a staunch believer in Lyndon. This is a name I will
really have to fill in later for you.

In other words on that flag pole there are three or four quite revealing names. And
every now and then I pause and look at them and smile.

And another member of our elder statesmen, so to speak who was our staunch

friend from 1937 when we first ran, until still yet 1956, was Edgar Perry. An unlikely friend for Lyndon because he was a very rich man, and older, and marvelously respected. He had his hand in so many good things in Austin. One of them, the symphony. There wouldn't have been a symphony in Austin without Edgar Perry. He had a home that looked like a villa on the Mediterranean in the South of France. And he took us through there, and my eyes were out on stems. And it is very hard to establish a dynasty, and it did not turn out that his was a dynasty. He had one or more sons. Anyhow, I have not kept up with his family, but he was still our dear friend and helper in 1956.

So, that year proceeded along with a confrontation coming up in which Lyndon was going to be favorite son. It had an ugly side to it. Texas *is* a very conservative state. It is an odd thing that Lyndon not only survived, but prospered so long in representing Texas. And I think, actually, the happenstance that he was about six feet four and look liked people's idea of a Texan had something to do with it. And folks would say, "Oh, Lyndon, I don't go along with a lot of his ideas, but he sure does love Texas." And for that they forgave him much.

We got some bad telephone calls, both Lyndon and me. And it is unsettling and unpleasant, but you can't die but once.

M: What were you doing on Dave Garroway's T.V. program?

J: Can't image. (Laughter) Don't remember it. And I wonder how I fared. I imagine Lyndon was really on it and Luci and I were there just to show sort of the family flag, and this was the first summer--let's see Luci would have been . . .

M: Nine?

J: She was born in 1957.

M: 1947.

J: She would have been nine. And already by that time she was going, both she and Lynda, were going to Camp Mystic, which became a summer ritual followed ever since. I believe perhaps their first year--I really don't remember what was the first year. This could have been it. But it was a beautiful place on the clear, cool Guadalupe River where you meet a lot of young girls from all over Texas and, indeed, a smattering of other states. And you were exposed to all sorts of sport activities and drama. It was a great, fun place and a big part of their lives and a big part of mine, too. I guess every summer--I bet I've been there fifteen summers, at least, for a final ceremonies which used to have a bonfire, until we got scared of setting fire to the countryside. And certainly always involved a bunch of girls going around hugging each other and crying and promising to always be friends and exchanging address. And really and truly, that, too, would have to join my list of, if you were thinking of a political machine, for a family, particularly for a woman who might someday be in politics, you'd have to include, in our lives, Camp Mystic. It was a bonding place.

M: Do you think Luci should have gone into politics?

J: I think Luci would have been a natural. Yes, I think she missed something, and her community missed something. But she is in it up to her ears now without holding any public office. She is doing such things as through the little family foundation of renting a bus and taking black children up to Dallas to see the African-American Museum. I think she plans to do the same sort of thing going down to Houston to see the--with a different

cast of characters, and I hope it is a very mixed cast--to see the Holocaust Museum.

She participates in something called Believe In Us which is an East Austin, principally, collection of youngsters who are interested in dance and who really turned out a marvelous performance just by the dint of enormous practice, exertion, devotion to dancing, and some training. And it takes place every year, the last three or four years in the Bass Performing Arts Center. And it is just a way to success, a way to wholesome activity for East Austin young folks. And she works--and had me going out there with her. I really do believe in it a lot.

Too, Habitat for Humanity she was crawling around under the house wrapping the pipes with tape. You do that to keep them from freezing. They can build a house for forty thousand, they say.

M: Luci and Ian [Turpin] are very active in the whole campaign against AIDS in Austin, too.

J: Yes. They are *good* citizens. And she has a good life, and she is training her children up to start doing it, which is an *enormous* satisfaction and achievement.

M: Mrs. Johnson, while we are on this digression, Lynda has proved to be a very good politician's wife, and perhaps even a very good politician herself, which is a surprise to a good many people. Because it did appear at one point, a generation ago, that she was not going to be all that comfort with the press, but she seems to be--it's a transformation, don't you think?

J: (Laughter) Wrought by love and discipline: love of Chuck, and discipline not to jump and bite the press. (Laughter) Yes, she is, she's excellent.

And she has her own fields of endeavor, too; Reading is Fundamental is one of

them. It is a great source of satisfaction in her life to be able to read. And she enjoys books, and she wants to pass it on to all the children of the country. That was started by Mrs. Bob McNamara back in the sixties, and she asked me to sort of head it up. And I got Lynda, sort of asked her if she would be interested, and she was, and she did.

And another thing she does with *so* much skill and devotion--she worked in a presidential commission called Infant Mortality to try to lower the rate of infant mortality in the United States, which is about number eighteen down the line with surprising countries ahead of us. No surprise that all the Scandinavian countries are, or England, France, Germany. But it kind of makes you feel uncomfortable to have some of the scarcely developed countries have a better handle on infant mortality than the great and glorious U.S.A. She even made a date with the Cardinal in New York to go to see him. And all she wanted to ask him was if he would help to get some of the good Catholic members--to support her program to get Catholic women to be surrogate mothers and just teach young teenage girls, who were pregnant, how to--not to take dope, not to smoke, to have a balanced a diet as their home would make possible when they were having babies. Of course, I guess for a gentleman, I don't know how it turned out exactly. I hope that he did consent to be of help because it's absolutely innocent and those children were not going to get aborted. They were going to get born, for better or worse, to either more health hazards or less health hazards.

Anyhow, this was a year of mounting confrontation with [Allan] Shivers having come out, as he was heading all along and we felt he would, for Eisenhower. And Lyndon going to be nominated as favorite son.

M: What do you remember about Shivers as governor? What stands out in your mind as the mark of his governorship?

J: Able man, great friend of the University of Texas, conservative, a precise action I can't say I remember. I admired him. And I was sorry to see a rift between them. And it was later healed, in my opinion.

M: Oh, I know it was.

J: And I guess I remember most about his relation to the university and how he was always supportive. One of the threads that ran through all of the fifties, in fact ran through our lives, when the first time we began to know Speaker Rayburn were his sisters, who would come to Washington every year and that was a very special social season. But I have talked about that on other tapes. And Miss Lou, the oldest of the sisters, and his great favorite, to whom he looked up to. And she was a very patrician--she was a gentle but forceful lady, and she, like Sam, had never married. There were seven or eight siblings. The rest of them all married and he had numerous nephews and nieces. Well, it's not true to say he never married, but only briefly and no children. At any rate, she died that year and that put an end to one of the seasonal--well you felt so sorry about Mr. Sam. And it was just an ending to one of the parts of life. And--

M: Was she--I'm sorry--

J: And I think we made one more trip to Mayo that year. Lord, we were--Lyndon was dogged with so many things. But this time they told him his condition was excellent.

Shivers was saying that he could not support a Stevenson-Johnson ticket. So we were headed for a clash.

This was the first convention I ever went to. Lyndon had been to every convention, I think, since 1928. Is that the one when [Alfred E.] Smith, New Yorker--

M: In Houston.

J: --in Houston, had the Democratic nomination.

M: Right.

J: That was his first one. And he went to everyone since until 1968.

M: It turned a little bit serious there, apparently, LBJ at the convention announced that he was a serious candidate for nomination. That may have been just an effort to exert his influence. But there were a lot of folks behind him at that point.

J: Well, I can only give you some vignettes from that thing. It was so crowded, so confusing, so much running to and fro. Conventions, I could do without forever. And I pretty nearly did. Small points that I remember about this one: we had a box in which I sat with Mrs. Sam Johnson, Lyndon's mother; Lyndon was up on the stage most of the time. His sisters were marching in that wild bedlam of people marching with banners and bands and great cacophony of sound on the floor. And then somebody said, "Over there is the Kennedy family." And there was--this closer to the stage--was a large box of *vast* multiple of family members in it. And he [John F. Kennedy] was, I believe, the favorite son from Massachusetts? Was that the convention where Senator Russell was favorite son from Georgia?

M: I have the feeling that was when [Harry] Truman was running. I think that was earlier.

J: At any rate he was there, Senator Russell was. And there was an awful lot of conferring. People would--and always in and out, in and out, was Senator [Al, Sr.] Gore among

others. And I remember coming in one night terribly late to our hotel room and Lyndon was not with me. Somebody else was with me though, because you just didn't want to walk around in that place by yourself. And there was, sound asleep across the threshold of the door, a newspaper man who had been trying to get to Lyndon all day long.

(Laughter) This person, whoever was accompanying me, leaned over, unlocked the door, shoved it open, I stepped over him gingerly, and we shut the door. (Laughter)

Well, conventions, it's amazing that anything purposeful and wise ever comes out of them. And there was a beautiful Alabama woman who was year after year the Democratic--and I cannot remember her title; you must remember it--but she was the one who stood by the lectern with the Speaker who was year after year the--he ran the show. What do you call that? What was Speaker Sam Rayburn's role, which he did with consummate skill and a quick gavel.

M: Well, all I can think of is chairman.

J: Chairman, I guess he was. And she, she may have had the title of secretary. And she would make the announcements.

M: Was that Indiana Edwards?

J: No. Beautiful Alabama woman. Family connected with the timber interests of south Alabama.

M: I don't know.

J: And she did it for so many years you just got to thinking that she was eternal.

M: But the panoply and the excitement, the noise and fervor, did that convention, and all conventions, eventually get to you?

J: It got to me, not eventually, but immediately, and I just did not like the atmosphere, then or ever.

M: Do you think you will ever go to another convention?

J: Oh, I know I will not.

And back home in Texas, on the Texas scene, Price Daniel and W. Lee O'Daniel and Ralph Yarborough were contesting it. It's interesting to see how many votes Ralph Yarborough got. But W. Lee O'Daniel got so many it was obvious there had to be a runoff. And in the runoff Price Daniel did win.

Among the many vignettes, there was one of the staff, the office, the place where the work took place, supporting Lyndon. And we had a slogan, "We love Lyndon." And that was--naturally, what else? Red, white, and blue all over everything, and stickers. And in a way, it was the nicest convention I was every around in terms of people who cared about you without any ifs, ands, or buts, and great enthusiasm and youth. Not us so much because we were, by that time,--how old was Lyndon? Forty-seven? Born in--

M: Forty-eight, wasn't he?

J: --in 1908.

M: And this was 1956, so he was forty-eight years old.

J: Forty-eight, so you'd hardly call him young, but he had a whole lot of young supporters. Across the board, we had a great sampling of Texas, and I do enjoy looking back on those pictures and it brings to mind so many vivid vignettes.

M: John Connally placed LBJ's name in nomination. Reading this, it comes as something of surprise to me, because John Connally was not then, not yet, a national name. He had

been an aide to LBJ and then was a private citizen working for Sid Richardson. But is your memory of him that he had any kind of political clout at that time?

J: Oh, yes. You always knew John was going some place high. I think he had that aura. He had that look. Let's see, he was actually, I guess, was his first political job being secretary of the navy under Kennedy?

M: Yes, that's right his first political job was.

J: And that was at the request of Rayburn and Johnson. And then he resigned that after about a year and a half, as I recall, to run for governor of Texas.

M: Right.

J: But you always knew he was a force. And I don't know how you'd say you knew it, but you did.

And the Wests were there. And you know, the list of our friends--how we wended our way through the life of Texas is really quite a saga. The Wests were wealthy, lived very private lives, and were very conservative. And yet they gave themselves, their help, their plane, their suite at this and many other big meetings, for gatherings. It was a real belief on both sides that these were good people aimed to do good things for the state of Texas.

M: I don't know whether we are on the same page or not, but when Adlai Stevenson got the nomination and announced the convention was free to vote for the vice president, and LBJ made it clear that he did not want it, he used all of his influence to persuade the Texas Delegation to vote for Jack Kennedy. This is, I think, the first time that Senator Kennedy's name has appeared in this chronology. I know what the relationship was later,

but at that time what are first memories of him in the Senate.

J: Of Kennedy? My first memory, and I cannot tell you the year, but Lyndon had an absolutely marvelous office, Majority Leadership Office, which I had a hand in decorating by the simple matter of going down into the bowels of that vast building, the Capitol, along with a decorator who had worked for me at my little ordinary house at 4921 30th Place, Northwest, and finding some old discarded, handsome things of another era. For instance, a really handsome set of--a fender to go around a fireplace, I think that's what it's called, brass, could be shined up with great effort to be quite beautiful. And andirons and fire tools, and there was a fireplace in this marvelous office and we asked if it were possible and safe to use the fireplace and got the word yes. It was just too much trouble; nobody had done it in years and years. So I said, "Let's just on occasion do it when we have a sort of a social gathering there." You stay down there so late, you do have people drop over for drinks and serious conversation. It would be nice if Zephyr [Wright] would bring down some good little nibbles and we could have a fire. My decorator found a few handsome pieces here and there. And it gave that office the look of distinction.

I hope it still has them. I wonder if it still has Lyndon's name? It was right off of the lobby where any constituent can come up and say, "I want to see my Senator," and a note would be taken to him by a page. And he'd send back word that, "An important vote is coming up; I can't see you until X o'clock," or, "So sorry, busy all day," or whatever word he would send back. But that was called the lobby and it really was.

And ours was a door off of that. And it was really two rooms. An outer room in

which for several years there would sit Bill Moyers just, he was able to just draw a circle of concentration around himself and type out beautiful letters or documents of whatever sort, while utter confusion went past him. And some got into Lyndon's office and the keeper of the door--well, I should have thought it would have been--I just really don't--I'm not sure right now. Could it have been Mary, or would it have been Juanita Roberts? I really don't know. But I am digressing.

Back to my first memory of Jack Kennedy. A decision was made by the Senate to fill some niches that had been left in the wall for the statues, the busts rather, of future great senators. And so Lyndon, as Majority Leader, had the job of choosing a committee and getting a chair for it, to search back through our history and choose X number--either five or six, I think--outstanding Senators over our history of however many years it had been since 1789. Was that when it started, when the Senate began its life?

M: Yes.

J: And I think JFK had just come out with *Profiles in Courage* and had a reputation for being scholarly, among other things. So Lyndon asked him to head that committee and he got a group. Either he himself or Lyndon appointed several other senators, and they did dredge through our history and appointed some of them, you would know they had to be. Now let's see, Webster-- I can't at this moment remember them. Can you?

M: Daniel Webster was certainly one. John Calhoun--

J: I think maybe [Robert] LaFollette was one.

M: LaFollette would have been one, probably Calhoun.

J: I don't know. Calhoun, he would have raised a lot of hackles. I really don't remember.

But when you saw them you thought to yourself, how else? Good choices. I'm going back there, the next time in the Capital I'm going to look at them.

And I remember this very clearly. The first time, and I think it was before 1956, I remember this young man stepping up on, we had a slightly raised podium, tiny stage in one corner and assembled senators, guests, historians, just there for the dedication. And we filled up some of those plaques, some of those holes in the wall, those niches left by the architects at the White House. And he spoke very well, the aura of history surrounding all that he said. And I for one, was impressed. And my memory is that that was prior to the summer of 1956. Must have been, because after then, his ascendancy was pretty much established.

I do think that Lyndon got 186 votes and that I actually did take a certain pride in it. [Averell] Harriman got 210, Adlai Stevenson a resounding win with 905. I think we really ought to--I really would like to mention how many Lyndon got and the fact that Lyndon did--he and Rayburn did get the Texas delegation to vote for JFK. Okay I don't know what kind of question you want to trigger it with.

M: Back up to that. LBJ--his way of announcing that he was not interested in the vice presidential nomination himself was that he was quoted in the paper saying he was going to go home to hunt jackrabbits. Do you remember anything like that at all?

J: I don't actually. And as--for all of my disclaimers that I didn't want him to get the nomination, I must say that I took a sort of a pride in the fact that he did get 186 votes. It was a smashing victory for Adlai Stevenson who got over 900, and Harriman got 210. And then Lyndon got 186 and I remember that flashing up on the big screen in there. I

have to say it did give me a sense of pride that [there were] that many of the delegates that wanted him.

He was not interested in the vice presidential nomination. And I don't think there would have ever been a chance of Governor Stevenson wanting him to take it. So we went home and--but not until Lyndon had joined Rayburn in persuading the Texas delegates to vote for JFK, for vice president. But Estes Kefauver won it. And so we left for home, and, of course, on the other side, on the western edge of the country, in San Francisco, Eisenhower and [Richard] Nixon were nominated easily by unanimous vote.

The fifties were so much a kind of a settle down--it was a comfortable quality about the fifties, and Eisenhower contributed to that. It was just a very wide trust and affection across the country for him. Price Daniel won, but it was narrow; it was real narrow, with Ralph Yarborough right at his heels.

This was the first--summer was the first time, and I think right before we went to Chicago, that I saw evidence that Mrs. Sam Johnson was coping with a physical problem that worried me. There were underneath her exceedingly fair soft skin there were a number of little pellets or--I do not know how to describe them. What it turned out--and she just refused--all of her daughters asked her to go to the doctor; I did too. She [said], "I will later." Mrs. Johnson always wanted to put off her own--anything related to herself. I don't know whether she was afraid of what she would find, or whether it was just a part of a whole lifetime of putting herself last. But it was a manifestation of lymphoma, which was the cause of her death, but not until over a year later. And Lyndon went back by Scott & White, he was very fond of Scott & White Clinic and they gave him a good

normal physical condition check-out. And I do not know at quite what stage in our lives, because he died fairly early on, but the last of the doctors, Scott, was a very good friend of ours and a very charming man. And I remember him sitting in a chair, on the front lawn.

That front lawn, if it could talk, it could relay a great many Texas, and national, characters, having interesting conversations, arriving at decisions as unimportant as "Let's go drive and see the deer," and as important as . . . well, something affecting the whole country.

Grace Tulley was still with us, and she was very much a part of our life and I take pleasure in remembering that. And that fall--Marietta Brooks, too, she was vice chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee and in charge of women's activities. And Mrs. Silas Grant of Whitney, oh she was a character. She was a "can-do" woman, as Lyndon would say, and one of the people who had lured Lyndon out of his somber 1955 doing-nothing condition to go and make the first speech, which had been at *Whitney* of all places, where there was a great new dam. Well, anyhow, we had a little group of women, Grace--

Tape 2 of 2 Side 1

M: Side three Lady Bird Johnson oral history interview [regarding] 1956. (Inaudible) was just coming on to the scene.

J: --and gives JFK a sombrero, and it was real funny. A person under those circumstances, the person who receives these hats, normally, puts them on. JFK sort of trod a very-- (Laughter)--knife-edge bath by not putting those hats. I don't think he ever put on a single

one of them, but thanking them fulsomely for them and saying something so amusing that the giver forgave him for not putting on the hat.

This was toward the end of October, toward the end of the campaign, and a world event was turning the spotlight clear across to the Suez Channel where the Israel and Egypt were coming to war. And Britain and France were demanding the withdrawal of everybody. And things were heating up, and that naturally made the presidency-- Eisenhower, who could do something about that international situation, who *had* to, turned the focus away from the campaign, and certainly had a good deal to do in dulling the Democratic attack and making it a greater victory for Eisenhower.

Eisenhower cancelled a whole bunch of his trips for campaigning and notified Rayburn, as speaker, and Lyndon as majority leader, that there might have to be a possible White House conference. So an event far away just took the limelight away from the election. No doubt it would have gone the same in any case. But it went--a greater majority went to Eisenhower, I think, than would have otherwise.

And we spent election day in Austin at Lyndon's office there and voted in Johnson City late in the afternoon. And Lyndon, and I think I did, watched returns at the Democratic headquarters. And so it was kind of a let down to the build up of work, excitement, to all the Democratic efforts. How else could it be with on the international scene something that important happening?

So now we were going to have a vacancy in the Senate because Daniel had to resign to take up his role as Governor. And the big news was who would Shivers appoint? The Senate was evenly divided, and Vice President Nixon could break a tie

vote. (Laughter) And who was going to organize the Senate?

At the same time poor Eisenhower was having his other troubles too, because Secretary of State [John Foster] Dulles had cancer surgery and he was in Walter Reed [Army Medical Center]. Lyndon went to see him. As it turns out, later on his son taught at the University of Texas, and because of that, we have there Secretary Dulles' whole living room, the furniture, a reproduction of the room was installed in the Humanities Research Center, I believe it is, at the University of Texas. He was a big part of the scene in the eight Eisenhower years.

But, now here toward the end of November of 1956 comes something that was very, very important to me. All these years I'd been hearing these marvelous stories from fellow wives of senators and congressmen who would go on trips to Europe, to far away places with strange-sounding names. And me, a natural born adventurer and traveler in books and in desires, but really never having gone anywhere outside the boundaries of this country, except to Mexico. I got my first trip in mid-November after the election of 1956. Lyndon decided, I think it was sort of caused by the heart attack in 1955 in which his philosophy changed that you must grab the day as it passes and wrench from it all the pleasure that you can, not just all the hours of work. So he built the swimming pool. That was manifestation of his change in attitude. He took me to Europe the next year and that was certainly a result of his change in philosophy, and a very dear thing for him to do for me. Because I don't think he was enormously interested in this, I guess this was a NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] parliamentary conference.

M: Was this your first trip to Paris?

J: My first trip *anywhere*, except to Mexico.

M: And what do you remember about Paris?

J: Lots and lots and lots. The high elation of thinking, "Oh, I'm going to get to go." And he asked the Thornberrys and the Jenkins. In his own right, Senator Dick Russell was going and several more senators. But Dick Russell sort of teamed up with us. And in Paris the men would work, in the daytime, at their conference. And Eloise and I would do things like go to the flea market and we--I have a bed warmer, brass, with an elaborate design of holes in it on a long wooden stick that was used in some French household and now just stands as a decoration by the fireplace at the Ranch house. But we both bought some very difficult to carry home things. We went on a military plane, as did everybody else in those days, and they still may for all I know. And we had the most wonderful military escort, an attractive man that Eloise and I were crazy about. And he later on became the commander of the forces in Omaha, which is, you know, that's the "get there quick with the bomb" unit, I think.

M: It is.

J: But he was equal to every demand.

And I went to a number of art galleries and museums. But we also went down into what was called a store house of silver, which was for sale. And it was underground. And I don't quite understand it, but I did buy a bunch of things there: serving spoons, all sorts of serving pieces, which through the years I gave away as wedding presents or kept for myself. They were antiques. They were more interesting than I could have gotten at home. I think they were probably something of a bargain.

On a later trip, I did buy four little rush bottom, primitive chairs probably used in the kitchen of some French farmhouse. We drove one day way out in the country, and we stopped at antique shops and I bet we saw fifty armoires, any one of which if we could have bought it and carried it home, we would have had a lifetime treasure. But I'm not a big buyer, and not a big spender in any way. And I didn't know exactly what I'd do with it. I wish I had been more daring, and I'm glad I got at least those four chairs.

Night was a big time because the men would come home and take us to some fabulous place. And they took us to one naughty sort of place where the menus were something we took home and framed and put up in the bathroom of a hunting lodge that we had on a place called the Scharnhorst. And incidentally, Lyndon told me about--I think I had twenty-four or forty-eight hours' notice that we were going on this trip to France. (Laughter) And I was trying to get that particular hunting lodge ready for hunting season, which was just upon us. But it just had to be postponed for about a week or so while we went over to Paris. But youth is absolutely wonderful. And I didn't know the meaning of the word tired. So I got ready with no trouble. And I got the house, the last details in getting it ready for hunting season pretty much done, too.

One night we went to Maxim's, which was at that time *the* place for food. And we--and I still have somewhere a picture, including Dick Russell, and therefore treasured by me. And something he said was, "When you are visiting a different country, eat the favorite food of that country. Drink the wine of that country. Don't try to duplicate whatever you are used to at home." Good advice. Both my stomach and my daring could stand it at that time. And yet quintessential Georgian that he was, I find it interesting

coming from him. He was a marvelous companion. He always knew so much history and he--well more nationally than internationally, but a good deal on that side, too. His conversation would be filled with interesting vignettes.

And it was cold. This business of the Suez Channel had disrupted the oil flow. Had angered the Egyptians and the Arabs. And the oil was not arriving in Paris enough to keep the hotel rooms warm. Once more we were young and we could just pile on another blanket on the bed and put on a coat and we got along all right. But I remember how very gray it was, and how dirty the city was, alas, in the year 1956. And graffiti, usually slogans. Sometimes rather amazing slogans.

And we went to the, where probably all Americans went to, the *Folies Bergère*. I even got to use the little bit of French that I could remember from Mademoiselle, that's all the name she ever had, teaching us at Saint Mary's back in from 1928 to 1930.

It was a thoroughly delightful time, and then when the conference was ended, Lyndon *really* went the extra mile by renting a sort of a van and our marvelous military escort was tapped to drive it, and we went down to the south of France, seeing the countryside go by. And it was quite a long trip. We laughed all the way, saw a good deal. I think we even, I'm trying to remember if we--I know we went to either Cannes or Nice. I'm trying to remember if we went by Monaco; we may have. In which case the men would have gambled and we would not have.

M: On occasions like that, with the press of business over, was he a good traveling companion?

J: Yes. At least sometimes he was. And he really gave himself up to this because he was at

sort of--politics were all over for the moment. And his job was there waiting for him when he returned in January, maybe. Because the Senate was knife edge at that time with the resignation of Daniel, a Democrat, and it was at such, you know, evenly divided.

But it was a time of high elation, and high excitement, and I loved every minute of it. Particularly loved flying in that plane over the great cities of the world and seeing all the lights of London and Paris. And there were still scars from the war. We went, of course, I keep on saying Paris, but we went to London. Did I say that?

M: You did not say that. No.

J: I did not say that?

M: The parliamentary conference was in Paris.

J: Yes.

M: And then you went down to the south of France.

J: But, well, we came again the next year and maybe, I would have to research my own books to see which time we went--we certainly went to London one of those times. And there were still scars in both cities. And particularly in Paris it looked like no shutter had been painted in twenty years. And no building had been cleaned in that long. It looked pretty shabby. But it had romance. It had all the allure it's always lead, in books you've imaged it to be, all it was glittering things. And we got home in late November.

M: And then in early December you had another visit to Karnack.

J: And we had a visit from the Phil Grahams. Lyndon had a closeness to Phil, and, indeed, to Kay. More I think to Phil. He was a terribly interesting man. And a few years later, I personally am very much indebted to him for having bought for us--Lyndon had given

him a sort of, but not complete, *carte blanche* to select us a house to live in as vice president, because we did need a bigger house and we had gone on a trip. But that is another story in another year.

M: Did you see any evidence of the mental disturbance that eventually manifested itself in Mr. Graham?

J: No, we didn't. I think it could be said that Lyndon did and that he was distressed by what he saw, later. And I don't know just when it was, but it must have been after the spring of 1961. When did Phil kill himself?

M: It probably was--it would be early in your vice presidency.

J: Yes, but it was certainly was not until after he had bought--he just practically signed our name with our--Lyndon had given him a request to find him a place. I think he went a little bit farther than Lyndon had thought he would go, and I was just so glad I cannot tell you how delighted I was.

M: Kay Graham has emerged in the intervening years into what has been called, by some, the most powerful woman in American. That may have been more true a couple of years ago than it is now, but nonetheless, in 1956 did you see any evidence in the Kay Graham then of the woman that was likely to be so powerful?

J: I didn't, because she lived in a household where her mother was a dominating character and her father was a very strong figure. And interestingly enough, they had in their wills placed the major newspaper in--I don't know the ownership, I don't know about that--but the management of their son-in-law, not their daughter.

All right, so the year winds up. The years always ended with going to Mrs. Sam

Johnson's house for a Christmas Eve gathering. I must look on the tombstone and see whether this would have been the last one. Because she died in October of 1957 or 1958.

At this moment I don't remember which.

M: It will show up in the future chronologies.

J: At any rate, they were all precious times. And every one of those children sort of fought for their position with her.

M: And was she equally a mother to all of them?

J: God knows she was. And understood their faults, but was always hopeful that their faults would be mended. And always loading Lyndon up with too many responsibilities for them. And loving him and believing in him.

And one of the best things we ever did--he ever did--was to buy that little house for her. Because he recognized that she had spent the years of her life in Johnson City, which would not have been her choice, because of her husband. It was his choice, his milieu, and except for demanding, and this she did have the strength to achieve, moving him to San Marcos and renting a house and renting the house out in Johnson City. I don't know many years they lived in San Marcos, but long enough to get Rebekah through college. And a part of Lyndon's time was spent over there, maybe, but he was in boarding houses early on, and I don't think she rented houses and moved over there until it came time for one or two more children to go to school. But every one of them sooner or later had a college degree.

M: Okay, we have now we have reached the end of 1956 and the end of this tape.

End of Interview XXXVII