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

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

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Claudia Taylor Johnson 6/20/02

Claudia Taylor Johnson Date

by Patti Howell

Allison Fawcett 5-10-2011

~~Archivist of the United States~~ Date

Assistant Archivist
For Presidential Libraries

Appendix A

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

Mrs. Johnson's Oral History Interviews:

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

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

INTERVIEW XLII covering 1960

DATE: November 5, 1994

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: Harry Middleton

PLACE: LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas

Tape 1 of 2, Side 1

J: My overall remembrance of the year 1960 is one of total confusion, travel all over the United States, going too far, staying too short a time, rush, rush, rush. I was not happily in tune. However, early in April I did have a little taste of [how] maybe I could get in tune. I went to what was billed as a "celebrity breakfast," in quotes, given by Theta Sigma Phi, which is an honor journalism sorority to which I had belonged in the University of Texas. This was a question-and-answer; the victim--the speaker--was asked questions by all the members of the sorority. This was in Fort Worth. I found it rather exciting. I was not scared of them; I could think of fairly sensible answers, I thought afterward. [It was] a little taste of what was to come, maybe, a sort of a primer in the school of learning how to fill this role.

There began, somewhere along about that time, the Ladies for Lyndon movement. Predictably, Marietta Brooks was a big factor in it, and a lady named Mrs. W. A. Griffis, from, I believe, San Angelo. Later on they wore darling little red, white, and blue costumes, girlish straw hats; they threaded through all the days of 1960 and through the

inaugural of 1961, and I still remember them with a smile and affection, and I think there's one of those costumes in the LBJ Library. At any rate, they did many, many things for Lyndon for the campaign.

The routine things of life did go on to some extent. Lynda was learning to drive; I took her every now and then. She appeared in Mrs.--I believe it was Gladstone Williams' style show. As I look back, I don't expect I got very high marks as a mother. I tried to do things with, and for, the girls. Were they sensible, helpful? Mrs. Gladstone Williams' class was in manners and in dancing, and in learning how to introduce and be introduced. I think in the dancing class it seems to me that the little girls had to wear white gloves, and the little boys just had to be hog-tied to go. (Laughter)

I think that most of that took place from [ages] ten through fourteen. And now that Lynda was sixteen, she just did some things, like this time appear in a style show. She also rode on the Texas float in the Cherry Blossom Parade, which was always chilly and you felt sorry for the queen because she was up there shivering in early cold April. Cherry blossoms blooming seldom coincided with the great big festivities, but it was a prime festival of Washington.

(Interruption)

J: And back home one weekend Luci was confirmed at Saint David's Episcopal Church. She would have been--let's see, born in 1947, she was just about turning thirteen.

M: Was she as devote Episcopalian as she is a Catholic?

J: She has always been a seeking child, somebody who was looking for the anchor of religion, for a close relation to spiritual things, to whatever was right, and whatever her role ought to be with her fellow man. She's been, since her earliest days, a dear,

delightful, different sort of person. I remember one time when she was a little bitty girl she looked up at me--I may have used this before, but I like it--it was a period of time when I was having a series of health problems, and did not go to church very much, just couldn't get myself up, get dressed, and go. And it was always sort of a matter that the woman of the family takes the lead. She gets the husband up, usually, and makes him go, and the children. Well, I wasn't playing that role to Luci's satisfaction, and she looked up at me and she said, "Mother, don't you think it'd be more deasable [desirable?] if you and Daddy and Lynda and I went to church every Sunday together?" (Laughter) How about that for a put-down?

We began to make forays out into the country, sort of dipping our toes into the water, into, "Are we going to launch into this full scale? Here it is April. Is Lyndon running for the presidency, or isn't he?" One time I went to Dallas to a coffee where there were all sorts of miscellaneous civic leaders, PTA [Parent Teacher Association], BNBW[?], Civil Defense, a cross section of the country, farmers' wives from Grand Prairie and Cedar Hill, the sort of people whom we hoped would be our supporters. We were trying to get people, encouraging them to go into the precincts and be workers for us.

M: As you did that, was your own attitude changing a little bit? Because the last time we talked about it, you were not in any way hopeful that he would make the race. Had you begun to change a little bit in that regard?

J: I was more caught up in a tide that I could not control, than anything else. And no, I didn't really want to; I had no hunger for the job and I had all of Lyndon's ambivalence about, "Is this too hard a job?" At any rate, I was not enthusiastic, but as I said in that

little two hours spent with the Theta Sigma Phis, I felt a certain excitement, and challenge. It began to be a prickle.

But the things at home still went on: a national luncheon which took place, a big one once a year, and meetings, practically monthly during, from January to June. And this one was at Helga Krapf's house. She was the young, bright, outgoing wife of the number-two man in the German Embassy. I had several friends in there, one from Pakistan, and Germany with whom I maintained contact, and Austria, a darling woman from Austria, with whom I kept in contact for years and years and still have Christmas cards from. And my speech club luncheons went right on. Mrs. [Hester Beall] Provenson was a figure in my life. I'm glad, and I think I owe this to Scooter, as I do many things. She forced me into it--(Laughter)--in the way that Scooter had; a very social way, pretty soon you'd find yourself boxed in, and you wouldn't mind. Every one of us had to stand on our feet and make a little talk, three minutes, five minutes, something. This one--and why, heavens knows; this must have been a subject given to me--was a three-minute speech on why Texas is the Lone Star State. (Laughter)

Well, it would be fun to go back and see what on earth I said. All I know is that those were good hours, learning various facets of the world with the International Group, with the speaker's club.

In those days I used to give up something for Lent every year: candy very often, wine, desserts. As I recall, I always stuck to it, but I always had a hard time doing it, and I was perfectly glad to welcome feast days. And the Texans were always trying to convince each other that April the twenty-first and March the second were certainly feast days. We got our patriotism and our religious feeling sometimes mixed up.

One second back to Luci: even now, when I walk into Saint David's I have a wave of nostalgia. It's one of the oldest churches in Texas; it's a big monolithic, sort of, I suppose one would call it Norman church. And it had, for probably thirty years, Reverend Charles Sumners, dear man. He did many things with and for us. He confirmed me; he confirmed my two children; he baptized my two children. And he made a prayer--a very old man by then--when Lyndon lay in state at the LBJ Library. Perhaps I ought to look this up, but I'm almost certain that he was still alive and that I asked him to give us a prayer.

There were a lot of travels in 1960, innumerable Jackson Day dinners, and speaking to state conventions of this, that and the other, the Jaycees [U.S. Junior Chamber] in Houston, and receptions galore.

I think you could honestly say John and others had a right to be angry at Lyndon for his continued ambivalence about running. There was a time when headquarters were set up--

(Interruption)

--I do not remember when it was--and he went down and demanded that they be--they were rather flamboyant headquarters, I think somewhere on Lafayette Square. And he said he just wanted it operated out of one little room in a hotel, like I think he said Truman had done.

Ed Johnson, predictably called Big Ed, senator from Colorado, had us out to his state for a meeting of Democratic leaders, which Lyndon addressed. And I think it was called the national--it was somehow a part of the National Western Mining Conference. And we went to Wyoming to a breakfast with the delegates to the State Democratic

Convention in Cheyenne. Travel, travel, travel, hurry; there was precious little relaxation in that whole year.

Salt Lake City, and that was a place that made a deep impression on Lyndon. He liked the Mormons. He thought they did what they said they were going to do. There was another Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner. I cannot imagine that the Mormons had much natural affiliation, party-wise, with Lyndon, but person-to-person he liked those leaders in that church.

And we went to parts of the country that were totally unknown to me before. In retrospect, I learned a lot about this vast United States. Nebraska was another state we went to. I forget what time of the year it was, but I remember something called a bean feed, which we would call a barbecue in Texas. Beans figured largely in what you got to eat. But it was huge meeting of mostly rural people; it was a tractor show, also. Lots of people milling around out in a field with tents, and tractors, and a table full of food, and hopeful candidates, and at brief times of each one getting to speak. It was sort of a *Saturday Evening Post* cover, a little bit of Americana.

And there were the lively spots too, like the Dale Millers had a party for Mrs. [Perle] Mesta at the Mayflower [Hotel]. They had a suite in the Mayflower where they gave marvelous and frequent parties, Dale and Scooter did, specializing very much on the Texas delegation but including others. And Nellie often had grander parties down in the public rooms. And as I look back, it is interesting that I went to a party for Perle Mesta in April of 1960, and then a year later we would be negotiating to buy her house.

M: Did you like her?

J: Yes. I liked her, very much. She's interesting, assertive, with her own and very positive sense of values, and a great many of them were social. She was also quite capable of true friendships, and Harry Truman was one of them.

(Interruption)

In between these forays out into the country, this series of Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners, there was this stuff of Washington life from my side, the wives' side. The wives of the cabinet had tea honoring the ladies of Congress. It was at the officer's club in the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda. Teas were a prominent part of life in those days; they have pretty much disappeared from everybody's calendar. And on the same day, this was in April, one of the most glittery of state dinners with a lofty and important Charles de Gaulle, and Mrs. de Gaulle, having a party at the French Embassy in honor of President and Mrs. [Dwight] Eisenhower, to which, by reasons of position, Lyndon and I went, with my eyes out on stems and taking it all in. And the Woman's National Democratic Club--

M: Do you remember much about de Gaulle?

J: Only what everybody else knows: that formidable height, the nose, and really quite a sense of self-importance. But Lyndon had a lot of respect for him because he carried France at a time when France was down, and he lifted it up and made it a self-respecting nation again, at least that was Lyndon's idea about him. Personally, there was no warmth. I don't suppose de Gaulle ever really much noticed Lyndon, and maybe even resented his presence as the sudden president of the United States after he had perhaps come to like Kennedy, or at least Jacqueline Kennedy. But Lyndon only regarded him because of his relation to his people, was my impression. And he used to just say, "Don't you do it," to

members of his staff who would take little jabs at de Gaulle. He was like a pebble in the shoe of many other chiefs of state, including Lyndon. But Lyndon felt he was good for his country, and that was their problem, not his.

M: Your mention of the White House makes me realize this: you haven't commented on Mrs. [Mamie] Eisenhower during this period. Did you have a real liking for her?

J: Yes. She was sweet and outgoing, kind of a woman's woman, and remembered people's names. And I liked her because every time she came back to the White House she would remember the names of all of the staff, and she would say, "Is Johnny still here? How about German, is he around?" And she would speak to them. She was popular, mostly among the women, I think. In a sort of a giddy way, everybody was talking about "Mamie pink," and wearing pink when they went to the--the Senate wives would have a party for the wife of the president every year, and then she would have a party at the White House, a luncheon, in return. All these took place on a Tuesday because they related to the Senate wives. And then the Congressional Club would have a party for the first lady once a year. So on such official occasions I would see her, and then they were most generous about asking us to White House parties, I think the most of any administration that I remember, perhaps. I didn't have much to talk to her about, but because she was just so socially outgoing it was easy to like her.

M: For years there was a rumor that she had a drinking problem, and then it was finally revealed that indeed she was suffering from something called in Mènière's disease, which is an imbalance of the inner ear. Did that kind of rumor ever circulate in--?

J: The first part of what you said, that she had a drinking problem, yes. I never saw it. The Mènière's disease, no; I didn't know anything about that. If it is kind of a vertigo--is it?

M: I think it is. It is an imbalance that makes you teeter around a lot, and I think that at some point it was revealed that was what she had that had given rise, presumably, to all of these rumors.

J: And she did something, she was first woman I ever knew who regularly had massage as a part of her life, once a week.

M: You've since got to know many of those women.

J: Oh, boy, was that something that caught on with me. (Laughter)

She also went to a spa at least once a year. She was emphatically not one for exercise, and someone rather cruelly remarked that they supposed the only exercise she ever got was at the spas and such. But she was the sort of person who, because she was gentle, inoffensive, and outgoing, would naturally be popular with the women of that day. She wore a lot of flowers on her hats; she had a slightly coquettish look. It's easy to imagine her young, courting days, and her popularity as a young woman. One of the most interesting things in the Eisenhower Library, to me, was the electric car which her mother owned at the--

M: Denver.

J: Well, anyhow, whenever they were courting, and it was said that the General would be asked to drive it when they went out on dates. I mean, he was no general then--

M: Lieutenant.

J: So they were part, just a very typical part of America. And another thing that was liked about her was that when he was off in Europe, in that magnificent, one-of-a-kind job, combining all those forces, she didn't throw weight around at all in trying to get, for

instance, telephone service to talk to him, or so it was said. She lived, I believe, at Wardman Park Hotel, in a reasonably modest suite, not in a flamboyant style.

One of my favorite pictures is of our table, when I would be at her table in her return engagement with the Senate ladies at the luncheon; Mrs. [Everett] Dirksen, pretty Senate wife, Republican; Mrs. [Thomas] Kuchel from California, and me, and Mrs. Lister Hill, I think, from Alabama. Protocol still, in spite of the Second World War, did exist when it came to seating such tables as that.

M: You think it still does, or has that been gone?

J: I imagine it still does, in the rarified atmosphere of such things.

M: Did that ever trouble you at the White House?

J: No, it gives you some rules. It just makes life a little simpler. On the other hand, Lyndon used to object mightily, saying, "*Why* do you always seat me by the oldest woman in the room--(Laughter)--who can't speak English, either?" Because the wife of the chief of state was usually was a man of some years, and so was his wife. And he wanted a light-hearted, pretty lady who would make him laugh.

There is a name that appears quite a few times during here, and that's Genevieve Hendricks. And I don't know if I've ever talked about her or not.

M: I don't think so.

J: She was a decorator that I had come to know--gee, [from the] middle forties on. And she was both a friend and a creator of whatever beauty I had in my little house on 4921 Thirtieth Place, Northwest. And then later on in the next year, after this one that we are talking about, in 1961 in The Elms. But I was always going to see her and buying some

new thing, a carpet, a sofa, a handsome *étagère* or something from her house, because gradually, gradually I was wanting to make home a more beautiful place.

One of the fantastic dinners at the White House they had us to was the King and Queen of Nepal with unpronounceable names, and a fantastic, exotic part of the world. So the days of the Eisenhowers, and our relation, both business-wise, *vis-á-vis* the Senate Majority Leader, a Democrat, and the leader of the whole country, the President, a Republican, was a good relationship; so was our social relationship.

And there would always be some good friends coming from Texas, which would mean both Zephyr [Wright] and I would try to put together some good dinners out at home, and a not-quite-exact number of people would come in, senators, newspaper people--there were days when we got along much better with the press than in the later years of the presidency--and Texans. Among them there was Albert Jackson, who actually ran the *Dallas Times Herald*. Mr. [Tom] Gooch--it was their family newspaper, I think; at any rate he was the *papasito*. But Albert Jackson was his number-one man; good, good friend all the years of his life. I go back through the house now and I see a piece of copper, because that was something that he collected with pleasure. And when he would come down here to the Ranch, he would think copper would be nice in this house and he would buy me a piece.

And one of those glittering parts of my life was to go to the annual garden party given by Mrs. Marjorie Merriweather Post, whom we knew first as Mrs. Joseph Davies, and then, as far as I was concerned it seems fairly briefly, as Mrs. Herbert May. Wasn't that the name of her last husband?

M: I don't know.

J: At any rate, she was a woman of fabulous wealth and taste and looked like a duchess. And I was always anxious to get some [wife of a] House member or a Senate member, or somebody, to go along with me to her daytime parties. Naturally I couldn't go out to a dinner party without Lyndon, and he was not bent in that direction.

M: Did you not go out to dinner parties alone?

J: No. Except, oddly enough, during the year of 1942 when he was overseas.

(Interruption)

And always within a couple of days after a chief of state had been entertained at the White House, he would return the party either at his own embassy or at a hotel. And King Mahendra and Queen Ratna of Nepal--that's my best try at their names--had a return party to which Lyndon and I went--no, I dare say it was just I who went. I had a taste for the exotic, far-away places with the strange-sounding names. I was curious about what they ate, what they wore, and what their country was like and so I always wanted to go to these. I'd come away with some little nugget of impression, feeling, but very seldom with the company of my husband.

M: His taste did not extend to the exotic of--?

J: No, he [did the] business end at hand; that really absorbed him. He really enjoyed it, to the fullest; there was no room left over for what he thought--well, he didn't accord it its due, I think.

Diana MacArthur, my niece, I think of her as that, but at that time she was still, Diana Tschursin, was quite a part of our lives in those days, a very bright woman, always having a good job and loving it. Her children were, to a considerable extent, raised by her

father and stepmother--my brother, Tony, in Santa Fe, which filled his heart with pleasure.

We still did the same sort of small-town things, like help out on certain parties, like I'd bake a double batch of Wheatie[s] macaroons, which were my big kitchen triumph at that particular period, and take them to whatever club I belonged to that was having a party. Small-town customs were still a part of life in Washington at the beginning of the sixties.

M: Was cooking ever one of your interests and specialties?

J: Never, never, alas. I had the idea that anybody that could read could cook. And I did indeed cook everything for the first two years that we were married, and then, somewhere along the line, we acquired a cook. Help was cheap in those days. There were always black people coming up from North Carolina, principally. We would never had called them "black" people, at least I wouldn't have. I guess at the most you would have called them "colored" people.

And then when Zephyr came into my life--well, first there were others, and in great--practically all of the ones that were dear to us and stayed a long time were from East Texas. I would go back and see the president of Wiley College and get his recommendations. That's how Zephyr came into our lives in about [the] early forties--1943, I think--and stayed until we left Washington in January 1969, and then only because of having a husband in Washington and a severe high blood pressure condition.

And also Helen Williams and her husband, Gene Williams, came to us from Austin. But almost everybody came from Texas, joined us, followed our lives for a very long time, twenty, thirty years.

I believe I'd been mentioning this, though, haven't I, about the regular things of life went on, like Lynda taking driving lessons, and being in Mrs. Gladstone Williams' flower show, and riding on the Cherry Blossom float. And I think I have gone over those events.

Tape 1 of 2, Side 2

M: --[P]art of 1960.

J: So against the background of the framework of the sort of social life I've been describing, and the home life, the wheels of the process of working up toward trying to become the nominee of the Democratic Party went on. But if I have not mentioned our Sunday trips down to Senator [Harry] Byrd's home--do you recall if I have?

M: Not since we've been talking, you have not.

J: I just loved them, and they were a piece of Americana. Senator Byrd, always to me the elder Senator Byrd: tall, commanding figure, white hair, patrician manner, *the* boss; whenever you walked in and he was there, you knew he was the head man. He had a tradition of having a Sunday lunch to which senators, a few House people, a few press, a few neighbors, an eclectic group, were invited. And if we hadn't had his crab dish we would have felt deprived, and also *wonderful* ham. Oh, the food was always so good. And it was a beautiful house at the very foothills of the mountains, and there were apple orchards all around, and it would be spring, and some seasons we were there when the apple blossoms were blooming.

Mrs. Byrd--I do not remember if I ever really got to know Mrs. Byrd, so she is a faint figure. I think she was an invalid in the latter years. But he would be there, and often with one or two of his sons. His brother had been Admiral [Richard Evelyn] Byrd,

and I think one of his sons was named after him. They were an important family in American history, to my thinking, whose roots went back a couple of hundred years. I think the very senior Byrd had one of the first libraries in this country.

M: You said that Senator Byrd was always the commanding figure, and you knew that he was the boss in whatever setting he was. What about when he and Senator Johnson were together?

J: Oh, he was the boss; Byrd was the boss, but Byrd--oddly enough, Johnson reached across party lines and had an affinity for, and they for him, some very sizable characters of conservative persuasion. I remember being met on the steps by Senator Byrd in what we all called at that time an "ice cream suit;" why, I don't know. It was white; he was immaculate, big. I thought he was wonderful. And he had made the comment, it was appropriate in the conversation, "I am a conservative, with no apologies." (Laughter) It was so clear and appropriate and suitable.

He loved Virginia. He used to give, for his own birthday, a present, I am told, to the Appalachian Trail, to the Park Service to establish a little camp house on the Appalachian Trail, just a shelter. Because the trail, as you know, ran from Maine down to Georgia, and a long space of it across the ridge of the mountains through Virginia. And people hiked, even in those days, although the wilderness was not--people had not yet discovered that as a great enthusiasm as they did during the later sixties and onward. And he'd give a little house where, if it got night, or there was a storm, or you needed shelter, you could stop in a Byrd house. And he gave several of those.

I remember one time him making sort of a grumbling remark about, "The bees aren't working." And I said, "What did you say, sir?" And he said, "We're getting so we

just don't have enough bees in Virginia now; I don't know why. And we rent bees." And it seemed that you would send down to Florida and get quite a few hives of bees sent up and put them out in your orchard, and they would pollinate the blossoms and you would have an apple crop. Because he had newspapers and land, and produce off the land, and apples were a big part of what he did, raised apples.

And one of the times going down there, and I may be repeating myself, in which since I only do this across a span of such years, I apologize. But I remember one time we were in a hurry; Lyndon often drove fast. He was exceeding the speed limit. A cop stopped him. And Lyndon couldn't have been more polite. And he was saying, "Oh, officer, I'm going down to Senator Byrd's for lunch, and we are late. And I just didn't want to be late for Senator Byrd, at Senator Byrd's home." And I could see Lyndon expecting to be let off with a warning ticket. Not so. The officer couldn't have been more polite either. But he said, "Senator, I'm afraid you're"--Lyndon had long ago introduced himself--"I'm afraid you'll have to follow me to the courthouse and the justice of the peace will assess the fine." Well, the justice of the peace had gone home to eat his lunch. (Laughter) And we had to cool our heels for quite a while. We did pay the fine and we did proceed to Senate Byrd's, with Lyndon kind of boiling--(Laughter)--inwardly, but knowing that it would only be a news story or it would only be unpleasant if he tried to do anything as crude as pull rank. And we went on and told the Senator why we were late, and everybody just laughed and laughed. But they had laws in Virginia and they enforced them. (Laughter)

And another person in our life in those days was Eisenhower's Secretary of the Treasury, Bob Anderson, who went back a long way in our life. He had been, many years

ago when Lyndon was head of the National Youth Administration, on the advisory board of businessmen who told him what those young men ought to be looking for as jobs when they got out of the NYA, and what they ought to prepare for, what kind of training the NYA ought to provide them. And so in Washington he would invite us to parties, and to what was one of the highlights of my life, which was to go out on the *Sequoia* on the Potomac, the President's boat, which the President also made available to favorite members of his administration. I suppose we were on that boat a great many times with different [cabinet members], from [James] Forrestal on.

M: You used it a lot in the White House, too, didn't you?

J: Oh boy, and I think it was a big mistake [to dispose of the *Sequoia*]. Economy can be achieved in larger gulps than just biting off that one little thing, and that was a great place to get business done. You somehow left your cares on shore. And you could go out with a foreign chief of state, or with any of his number-two, -three, -four men. Many stag parties were held there, and a goodly number of just convivial parties involving wives. But I think it was a working tool and a joyful, reviving resource for the President himself.

M: You talked about economy; it was not stopped during your administration?

J: Oh, heavens no.

M: Some future president.

J: Not in ours. I think it was stopped by President [Jimmy] Carter with the best of intentions and with the desire to use it as a personal symbol. "The country can do without certain things. I will do without this." I just took humble issue, from my standpoint.

Now when the Senate ladies had our parties for Mrs. Eisenhower, I think this of course would have been the last one, wouldn't it, in the spring of 1960. We had it in the

old Supreme Court Chamber, and that, of all the buildings in the Capitol, has for me some of the most symbolism. You feel reverence; it is a very special room. In those days, at least, it had in it still the raised place where the Court sat, and the chairs, and then there was the big open space out front where you could put your round tables and entertain the First Lady. This was really only for members of the Senate Ladies Club. Not every Senate wife joined; most did. For me it was the very essence of the Capitol building. There was one period of time when the Senate, in our own time, held sessions there. I think the Senate Chamber was under repair. Could it have been after that shooting incident--?

M: In the House? In the Senate? I don't know.

You said about the Senate Ladies Club, let me clarify that, was that Senate Ladies Club open to all wives of Senators, but some elected not to join? Is that correct?

J: Correct. Some people were just--more wives would join us, in quotes, "in those days" than now, because women have entered the labor force; women have entered all the ranks of the professions, and Lynda Byrd says to me that it is an entirely different thing now, of much less importance and interest, and I guess I steered her wrong in urging her to join. Besides, in those years there was always some recent war; the Red Cross was a big figure in our lives. We really did make bandages, layettes for the families of soldiers that needed them, knit afghans for soldiers--servicemen, I should say--in hospitals, sew all sorts of things, knit socks. Mostly it was a bonding place for the wives of your husband's colleagues, and a place to learn about the other forty-nine states, as they became forty-nine. It was forty-eight in the beginning, and then fifty when we left.

And there always would be a committee to prepare the luncheon for the first lady, and if the Maryland senator's wife was on it she'd no doubt have bushels of wonderful crabs brought in. From Texas we would have Mexican food or especially good beef or something sent up. We could usually sort of tap some kind, beneficent force back home to send us something free. There was typically--it spoke of your state, you know. I remember one time for favors Senator [Barry] Goldwater, whose family owned a big department store, sent scarves as presents for every guest. I wish to goodness I could find my scarf from the Senator, but it's long gone into the trough of time.

I know at some point we've spoken of Lyndon's office, P-48, I believe it was. Was that it? Do you remember P-48, P-38?

M: [P]-38.

J: [P]-38. That's another place where I got Miss Hendricks to help us. We went through the bowels of the Capitol, where many rare and sometimes wonderful things are stored, trash and treasure. And our eyes would light on a coal bin that was brass and beautiful--a coal bucket, I guess--and she said, "That should be polished, and should be put on the edge of the fireplace and used." Actually, with permission of the architect of the Capitol, we finally got to having fires in the fireplace. And it became quite a little social scene.

The Congressional Club did a similar thing for the wife of the president. It was called a brunch; it really was a lunch. The chosen few gathered early, and had champagne or something. And to this--this was a different thing--you could always bring at least two, and maybe if you could swap with somebody, bring four or so of your most important constituents, giving them a great big thrill because they'd get to see the wives of

the Supreme Court, the president's wife, the vice president's--all the Senate--lots of the House members. This is a House deal; it was the Congressional Club.

And on the social scene, first you had to catch your lion and of course the biggest lion rolling around in those days was an unlikely but wonderful subject, the Speaker Sam Rayburn, very socially charming when he wanted to be. And he went to some of those parties and he *was* the lion at some of those parties; it all depended on how well he liked the host and hostess.

M: What would he do if he didn't like them?

J: He would just be busy. And a polite note would say it's unfortunate he couldn't come. But to Scooter's house, to Scooter's party, he always went every year; to my little birthday party for *his* birthday, but it was the children of his favorite friends who were the guests. Embassy parties, not many. Mrs. Clark Thomson's, rather frequently. People made a lot over him, and that was easy to do because of his lofty position, and because he was a gentleman. He was pretty choosy and there wouldn't be many of these a year, but everybody who got one of the invitations would usually try to go.

I remember going to the embassy of Brazil one time when he was the guest of honor. And gee, I think maybe to the embassy of Peru, which was just right down the street from my house, at 4921 30th Place, Northwest. And during that busy spring when we went home sometime in May, where there was a party for me, I think it was even called Lady Bird Johnson Day.

M: Why was this given for you at that time? Do you remember?

J: Oh, folks were just trying to get Lyndon and me better known. I suppose this was the effort of our friends to prepare the way for a considerable effort in August to get the

nomination for him. One of the ways in those days for a hopeful aspirant would be to accept, or maybe arrange, or somehow become the speaker at a Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner, and I don't know how many of them we went to that spring, but it was a lot. And one was in Ohio.

M: During this busy summer there was also some important things taking place on the world stage, and mainly at that point the downing of the U-2 pilot, which was the occasion for a confrontation between [Nikita] Khrushchev and President Eisenhower. Do you recall anything of that incident?

J: Oh yes, I do. It was a downer in the career--no pun intended--it was a downer in the illustrious career of Eisenhower, just as he was sort of, by his own earnest wish, phasing out. But this pilot, [Francis] Gary Powers, I think he was an acknowledged spy, and we were taking photographs--is that what we were doing--from very high levels? We were doing something to gather information about the buildup of the Soviet war machine, and it was something against the rules, and unfortunately he was shot down, and amazingly, I guess he must have gone out on his parachute, but he was alive and--

M: --and did not chomp on the pill that he was given, as I recall.

J: Oh! I didn't even know he was given a pill to kill himself.

M: I think that is correct. Yes.

J: Well, at any rate, it was a downer for us on the international scene. It would have been impossible to pull Eisenhower down in the polls in his popularity much, but this was a rocky moment.

In May was the primary election. Lyndon was nominated, once more, for the Senate. His three elections were 1948, 1954, and 1960. I think [John] Tower won the

Republican nomination, whenever that took place. And sometime during that year, a remarkable bill was passed in the Texas legislature. It was D. B. Hardeman, a senator from West Texas--wait a minute, pardon me, not D. B.--

M: Dorsey.

J: Dorsey Hardeman. They were two different people. Senator Dorsey Hardeman, who was himself a character. I was crazy about him. He knew more about Texas history than any man I personally knew, wonderful little stories and vignettes. He was a conservative to his bones. He liked Lyndon very much. There was an interchange between him and people of all philosophic backgrounds. Dorsey spearheaded--there somehow passed--a bill which would allow a person's name to appear for two offices so that it was hoped that Lyndon would remain senator--there was no doubt that he could be elected senator--and yet have the opportunity to run for the Democratic nomination for the presidency, although you had to look at that as a way-off chance, at least I felt so, and I thought Lyndon felt so. Some of our stout believers--

M: The one person in Texas today who is very pleased that that law is still on the books is Senator [Phil] Gramm.

J: Ouch! (Laughter) No good deed goes unpunished. (Laughter)

And the roll of Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners went on in West Virginia. And there was a sort of a--the Democratic women's part of the party which was headed at that time, I believe by Katie [Katherine] Louchheim, is that correct? That is what my memory brings forth.

M: That's right.

J: She was smart, and savvy, and active, and very much in favor of Lyndon.

As I mentioned a while back, Mrs. Clark Thompson, wife of a congressman from Galveston, and herself the member of a fabulous Texas family--gosh, why doesn't the name surface? [Moody] But you must know it, and I'll think of it sometime. Anyhow, that was one place to which the Speaker would accept invitations. And every two or three years they would have a party in his honor, and we would *all* go because it would be a very festive, very beautiful occasion in their red brick house on Massachusetts Avenue, just two houses removed from the papal delegates, and at the very nicest part of Embassy Row, right very close to the British Embassy. That house, incidentally, has been bought by the Finnish embassy, demolished, no sign left of the Clark Thompsons in that city, where they were for so long, and it has been turned into the most modern piece of architecture I have practically ever seen, and is now the Finnish embassy.

Well, the present ambassador and his wife recently gave a beautiful party for the benefit of the [Lady Bird Johnson] Wildflower Center, but [also] to say goodbye to Congressman Jake Pickle, and Congressman Mike Andrews, both members of the Wildflower [Center] trustees who are leaving Washington. Gosh, what a lot of change I have seen.

M: You had trouble a minute ago recalling a name. In my experience with you that is very uncharacteristic.

J: Alas, becoming more and more frequent.

M: But through the years you have had almost a politician's uncanny ability to remember names. Did you have to train yourself to do that or did it always come reasonably naturally to you?

J: No, I had to try. And I usually tried as soon as I was introduced, at a suitable moment, soon, to repeat that person's name and maybe to use it two or three times in the course of the evening. It somehow fixes the name. There is nothing unusual about that; it's just one of the things you get told.

It still gnaws at me. They are a great philanthropic family, having made a vast fortune in insurance, hotels, many things, and then having the misfortune in the course of time to have members of the family fall out irrevocably, lawyer's paradise.

M: In what city?

J: Galveston.

M: Of course. It's . . . we got a grant from them.

J: Oh, you bet. Everybody has either gotten one or has tried to get one. (Laughter)

M: It's on the tip of my tongue, too.

J: They had two daughters: Libbie [Moody Thompson], who became the wife of a local congressman; and Mary [Moody Northen], the older, who--I can't think of her married name right now, but anyhow. It's not necessary to our narrative.

M: Our grants-in-aid program is funded by that.

It was about this time in May, and you are looking at May in that book right there, that Senator [John] Kennedy defeated Senator [Hubert] Humphrey in West Virginia.

J: Yes, and that, too, was sort of a watershed. We just *loved* Hubert. I did and I think Lyndon did, although, he used to say, rather caustically he wished he could--oh, what did he wish? Anyhow, he wished he wouldn't talk so long.

M: He wanted to marry him . . . with [Calvin] Coolidge. (Laughter) That's right.

J: Oh dear. And our hearts went out--my heart went out--to Hubert, but also it was a sort of a David-and-Goliath deal because the Kennedys were enormously well-organized, and young and vital, and well financed. And [West] Virginia just naturally sits there as one of those states, where those things--West Virginia is a poor state, and it is a state where the application of a considerable amount of money and energy can bring results.

We went to the Women's National Press Club. Lyndon had a hard time getting out of going to some of those things, and this year he did more of them than ever. We were the guests of May Craig who was a fixture, an icon around Washington in those days. A very competent newswoman who had been there since time began. Styles in styles out, she always wore a flowered hat and had a very composed face. May Craig was just a memorable feature of Washington life for a long time. And she was the president of the club, I think, at that time. Anyhow, we were her guests. Good places to learn what's going on and to say what you wanted to yourself. If you had anything you were pushing, [it was a] good place to push it.

(Long pause) Time ground out yet another Jefferson-Jackson Day speaking in Indianapolis, Indiana. At those things you are also likely to go to a press club to meet with them. It was a year of change and a year of sort of discomfort, for me at least, because I just didn't know--I wasn't quite in tune, I didn't know [if] I was going to like what was going to be happening.

M: You were by this time--felt very comfortable as the wife of a senator, and in particularly--

J: Just loved it; just loved it. That and the National Youth Administration were, I suppose, the period of the greatest joy in what you're doing, the greatest joy in your husband's job. I felt it in him, and I enjoyed it for him, and I enjoyed it for myself.

He made the commencement talk in his own little hometown of Johnson City. We would still always get back to the Ranch just as often as we could.

He received a number of honorary doctorates. Do you have a list anywhere at the Library of all of them?

M: Oh, I'm sure we do.

J: And so do I, have a list, not such a lengthy one, beginning with Johns Hopkins, of which I am particularly proud. I think I have one from there. I know that I have some sort of honorary--I know it must be a degree.

M: Can I be wrong? I have the feeling that you have got more honorary degrees than he did.

J: Really? (Laughter) I'll doubt it. But mine were certainly very varied in their quality.

In our international group, Abigail McCarthy, the wife of that Senator--

M: Gene.

J: Gene--was one of the leading figures and made it go, and she was also a friend of mine and a most--she was an admirable woman. I just wish that life could have been more warm and smooth for her. There were a good many people for whom--[Frank] Church for instance, I was just crazy about his wife, Bethine. Lyndon was very crossways with him in the end of his service, in the end of Lyndon's presidency. I'm glad it did not interfere with my liking, companionship, and enjoyment of Bethine. He made a remark about her that I thought for a political wife, what could be a nicer complement? He said, "We can go to a county fair, and start in at the front gate, and walk through together and howdy and shake with everybody on the way, and Bethine can walk out the other side with twice as many friends as I do." He himself was a very likeable man, so that was a compliment.

I don't know quite what it was that led us to so many western states. I guess it's because Lyndon was less known in that part of the world. But we did that spring go to Idaho, and to Spokane, Washington, and to a dam dedication in Pierre, South Dakota. My geographical knowledge of the United States is pretty much a gift from the campaign of 1960 and of 1964, and in my own little sack of treasures, it's important. I just loved getting to know this country. I did not like the way in which it was done: hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry, trivial remarks to people and then go on. I would have like to have had some smaller, more substantive meetings, and seen more scenery and less folks, maybe, but this was not cut out for my education; it was the political process.

Tape 2 of 2, side 1

M: There are notes in the material we've been given on this about some of the people that were traveling with you at that time, and I note that Horace Busby was on some of these trips, and Bob Waldron. Bob Waldron didn't work for the President, though, did he? He worked for Homer Thornberry?

J: Yes, I'm pretty sure he was working for Homer at that time. But Bob had a sense of adventure. He could also take shorthand lickety split, and he didn't mind doing it at eleven o'clock at night, or twelve o'clock at night. He was a very delightful companion and a very useful person on things like this. And Homer would sort of lend him to us. A lot of people have done things that are not money, but are just great gifts to Lyndon. Wesley West used to lend him his plane. George Brown actually lent him one of his wonderful, good, household staff, and I will think of his name later, to go along and take over *my* job, packing and unpacking the suitcase, lay out the clothes, make sure they got pressed, so Lyndon could get into them, jump into them in five minutes' time instead of

fifteen minutes' time. There were ever so many people who built Lyndon, who contributed to him in ways beyond money and beyond being actually paid staff members. He was a montage of much love and caring, and I think he knew it all, reciprocated it all, tried to let them all know how important they were to him; and yes, Bob was along with us on times of hard work and times of just fun. I do not know whenever he was on a paid basis. Have we got an oral history from Bob?

M: I don't know that for sure.

J: I suggest you ask him. He is most articulate, remembers well, shared a lot of our lives, and he's getting the point in his own life when he is no longer quite well.

M: I will be surprised if we don't have one, but I'll certainly find out. [The Library has two interviews with Waldron.]

J: Yes. I cannot say enough good about the people that surrounded Lyndon. There were perhaps a few that I was less fond of than others, but most of them were just forever keepers. By keepers, I mean folks that you'd want to cling to all of your life.

In my recollections--I think I'm approaching the end of May of 1960--and it was about that time [of] my first real memory of being around Governor Pat Brown of California and his wife, Bernice, our first entrance into what has become a sort of a dynasty, a mixed dynasty. Couldn't be more unlike, in my opinion, than father and son--than parents, both parents and son. Pat Brown was enormously popular in his state; his wife was a beauty and popular, too. And we sought their help, and I think attained their friendship. I remember him talking to me about the park system of the state of California, and showing me the first redwood I ever saw. And telling me that William Randolph Hearst's great house, which had come under the wing of the California park service, made

enough money at the gate to support itself and a sizable part of the rest of the state park system. He was very buoyant, outgoing, likable person.

Also about that time, Lyndon met a foreign chief of state to whom he became really attached and greatly admiring [of], and that was Prime Minister [Robert] Menzies [of Australia] and his wife, Dame Patty, and he thought he was the second best orator to Winston Churchill that he'd ever met.

(Interruption)

M: I think you alluded to this earlier, about the setting up of the committee headquarters, and President Johnson was not much for it; he wanted it out of a hotel room. But one of the people who was involved in this was India Edwards. How did she enter your life?

J: India was a sizable figure in the women's division of the Democratic Party. And I remember the feeling of elation that Lyndon expressed coming home one night, when he said, "India Edwards has come out for me!" She was not somebody whom I saw a great deal of, but recognized as an articulate, powerful force and somebody of substance. Lyndon knew her a lot better than I did.

We went to so many states that spring and summer. New Jersey was one, where the governor was named [Robert B.] Meyner, and he really became a friend and participated in our campaign. Now I have to ask you a question. Am I getting mixed up? Do you remember Governor Meyner's wife?

M: Sure. Oh, wife, no. I remember Governor Meyner of New Jersey, but I don't remember his wife.

J: Zenda Pipkin was one of the Texas folks who was a part of our lives then. Her husband--I think perhaps he was already dead. But she was a widow most of the many years I've

known her, sprightly, and active, and fun. I especially remember her in tandem with Mary Clark, Mrs. Tom Clark, who was one of those forever friends, she and Tom.

Maurine Neuberger, her husband, Senator [Richard] Neuberger, of, I believe it was Washington, or was it--?

M: Oregon.

J: Those two states are inextricably linked in my mind, for whatever reason. It seems to me, he was one of the earliest people who thought we ought to preserve the rights-of-way of the highways for the good of the country and not for billboards, and dared to raise a flag to that purpose. And I think she followed him. Anyhow, a good bit later on it certainly became one of my hopes that certainly on potentially scenic highways which the federal government had helped fund, or had entirely funded, we could look at the country. And they were a couple that I liked and admired without being close to. The Senate in those days--I wonder if old people always look back upon the past as the time of giants, the big important--that people were more able then? I think it is perhaps true. But I really do think you could make a case for the Senate having been a powerful and able body in the government of this country during those years, more so than now.

M: Surely, the country had much more faith in the legislative body.

J: Absolutely.

Back home in Austin, because of Mayor Tom Miller, there was a big stirring of interest for Lyndon and his possible candidacy. There had been, earlier, a party for me. Now there was one for Lyndon, in June, a dinner. I am sure many times I have taken my text on Tom Miller, and if I ever look through this and find out that I haven't, I'm going to ask for a little time to go back and do it.

M: Well, do you want to do it right now? Do you have it?

J: I can't believe that we haven't done it, have we?

M: I feel certain that you must have in one of the earlier years. You haven't within the time--

J: He was just a man who *loved* his city, without limits, believed in it. He was very erudite; he quoted Shakespeare. He had his eccentricities. He loved to eat ice cream, preferably after having "put the paper to bed," as he would say. He would go down to see the offices of the newspaper about ten o'clock at night, just to see what all the stories said, and I expect speak his mind if they didn't suit him. And then he'd go out and have large amounts of ice cream. Often Lyndon was with him, but I would say the Mayor was the larger figure of the two. (Laughter) And he'd say, "I'm a man of an evening nature." (Laughter)

He loved Roosevelt, and Roosevelt was coming through town. This was in an earlier day, of course. It would not be some six-year-old smiling girl with blond curls who'd present him with a bouquet of roses; it would be Tom Miller himself.

He and Lyndon had a lifelong battle over the charges of the Lower Colorado River Authority, which Lyndon had really created, with much help. But the city of Austin operated its own power system. It bought it from the Lower Colorado; it resold it to the populous, or something like that. I cannot recall the exact arrangement now. But it charged a large price, which made Lyndon mad. He thought that we had promised cheap electricity to the people and this was too high. And Mayor Miller would just look at him with a beatific smile and say, "You know, Lyndon, this city's not ready to pass a bond issue to build parks. And I'm going to have a park in every new section of Austin." And he did build innumerable parks.

His administration, which was long--and then at his choice he finally got out of office for about two or four years. And people urged him to get back and the old lure was still upon him, so he went back in for a term or two. And then I think he got too worn out and too sick. I can't believe he was ever defeated; I'm sure he must have retired again.

But Lyndon always lost that battle, always got mad at it. I could always see Tom Miller's side of it, so long as the people--you have to have electricity, and you will pay what you have to for it. And you really don't have to have parks, but gee, they were so nice to have.

I wish I could remember the exact year when Luci made the change from Ben Murch [Elementary] School. She went on to another junior high for one or two years and then I *finally* got her into National Cathedral, which was a triumph for me, and it was somewhere along about that time, and I'm sure it was earlier because in 1960 she was thirteen years old. And I think this had happened a year or two earlier. It was a great thing that happened in her life. She had long had an eye condition, now the well-known name for it is dyslexia. But there are many, many forms of that, where what you see doesn't get translated to the brain in quite the way it should. It used to be a puzzle to her teachers and to us, that this child that we thought was so bright would not make good grades. And the teachers would talk to me about it and I would take her to the best eye doctors that I could, according to what my peers, the wives of other congressmen and senators, told me was the best eye doctor they'd found. And they'd say, "Nothing the matter." Finally--no, this was even after this time--she fell into the hands of the doctor who finally discovered her ailment, was maybe after Lyndon became vice president. So it

may have been still a year in the future. But it's something that I want to tell a little bit about, because that lady doctor who took care of Kennedy--

M: Travail. Was it Janet Travail, or something like that.

J: Janet Travail directed her, I think, as I recall, to a doctor, and his name I will too remember in a few minutes, because he has remained our lifelong friend. [He] figured out what it was, gave her a series of eye exercises that changed her whole life and personality, because she became an achiever up to her mental capacity, her very remarkable mental capacity, whereas before, because of this eye problem, she had just kind of been stunted, and frustrated, and angry. It changed her personality, her rate of performance; it was a wonderful blessing.

M: Was it eye exercises only that changed it?

J: Dr. [Robert] Kraskin. I do not know what. It was treatments; a large part of it were eye exercises, I think. And whatever he did, it was a boon, principally to Luci, but just as much, almost, to her mother and the rest of the family. And that is a digression. But--

M: Well, it's a good one.

J: --in our life it was an important one.

M: Well, I see something that comes up on the twenty-seventh of June that I want to ask you about.

J: All right.

We saw a good deal of Abe and Carol Fortas. Carol was our tax lawyer at several periods of our life. We had known them since the late thirties, true intellectuals, gentle, loving, wonderful people, the sort of arrangement where--well, when Justice Bill Douglas and Mildred, his wife, got a divorce, he represented Bill, I think, but he was caring and

concerned about Mildred. Incidentally, another good friend of ours represented Mildred; I think that Tommy Corcoran did.

But Abe was a philosopher and a reader and a scholar, and also a great dinner companion and a wonderful friend. Their house in Georgetown was the scene of lots of good parties, very different from the Texas milieu, more of I guess what you would call the Georgetown set, in a way, but there was a mixture of international, too.

M: Was Carol the first woman you ever knew to smoke cigars?

J: (Laughter) Probably so. Carol was somebody who was not bound by convention in her language, her habits. She was a free spirit, and one of the smart women that Lyndon experienced in his life; and he experienced a lot of them, and tapped their strength, wisdom, work, everything he could for his own purposes, and learned from them and grew from them, and she was one. And Oveta Culp Hobby was another. Oveta was not for him; I mean she didn't come out for him. And I guess by this time Oveta must have been a real Republican, because she was in Eisenhower's cabinet, was she not?

M: Yes, she was the first secretary of HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare].

J: Was she the first secretary of HEW?

M: She was.

J: She was, and remained our friend, always. But, it was clear-cut for her; she could not come out for us.

M: She still is living.

J: She's living, but entirely a recluse, and I don't know why. It could be because she's such a proud woman, and when one gets very old and loses any of your capacity--for instance, I think, maybe, she is in a wheelchair now; I do not know. But the world's not going to see

her in a wheelchair, or in any less--she was always a dominant person. And in the advanced eighties she isn't, quite, so she lives apart from the world.

M: On the twenty-seventh of June, the note says that you and the Connallys went to hear Billy Graham. I don't know if this is the first time that his name has come into your life in this chronology, but I'm curious about it. I know that he was personal friend.

J: Twenty-seventh of June?

M: Yes.

J: I am thinking about it was--no, I know this was not the first; I do not think so. My first memory was at a ball game. Lyndon loved to go to baseball games. I only went along for the companionship and the peanuts. (Laughter) And I would be sitting there with Dick Russell and Lyndon and two or three other senators, and wondering who won, and all such things. (Laughter) It entirely didn't interest me, but the excitement did.

And yes, coming out, is my memory, we ran into Billy Graham and a group, and [it] seems like [Stuart] Symington was one of us. I cannot remember who introduced us, but he became close to us. We liked him, and I am grateful to say, he liked us. I think we have to have met him, and listened to him, at least I would have, at some Senate prayer breakfast earlier, because prayer breakfasts in the fifties became a part of the Washington life. They still exist. They were instigated, I feel pretty sure, by the wives of a group of southern senators. But they were attended by as many of the members of the--well, women were the machine behind getting them going. But I think that all presidents were expected to attend once a year, in January at the opening of the Congress, or thereabouts, sometime along earlier in the year. And I have been to many, many, and I've got to believe that Billy Graham would have been at one of those.

M: I know that he was a friend of yours through life, and indeed it was through you that I met him, and I consider him a friend of mine. But were you attuned to him religiously?

J: Yes. I just think it takes all sorts to get to heaven. (Laughter) And I think he--he's a true religious man, and he's a diplomat. And he doesn't fly in the face of any sect or national religion, and he doesn't go to a place to have one of these great religious--not campaigns, but what are they called?

M: Revivals?

J: Well, revivals, in my notion of the old-time South, is what they are, but--crusades, is the name. But he must be asked by several of the local ministers of churches, and it is as close to--I would guess he is Baptist, but I don't even know. He makes the most of being Christian. I do not remember him talking much about any particular church. Now, his wife is, really and truly, a Presbyterian, and her father was a Presbyterian medical missionary, living in China, when she, Ruth Graham, was born. And what church does he belong to? I'm going to bet on Baptist.

M: I think his ministry is nondenominational, I think.

J: It is nondenominational.

M: So I don't think he has a church affiliation.

J: But I bet he's got one in the beginning.

M: Oh, I don't know.

J: But I don't know. But it is nondenominational, you're quite right. Lyndon had a great curiosity, interest, and sort of yearning, not unlike Luci's. But it took the form of having considerable admiration for the pope, and for the hierarchy of the Mormon Church, because he thought they did what they said they were going to do. There was one Pope

he was particularly crazy about, as was the world, a man of brief tenure, and it must have been hard for the Catholic Church to swallow after they really realized what he was doing. I think he must have gotten in there without too deep an exploration by the cardinals.

M: John the XXIII.

J: Yes. (Laughter)

(Interruption)

M: I know that the President's, and not only interest, but deep interest in religion was catholic, with a small "C," eclectic, maybe, too. But the reason I ask was, I've never been sure about yours. You seem much more Episcopalian than he ever was.

J: Oh yes, he went to the Episcopal church with me, many, many times, but he used to sort of lovingly laugh at me. And he said, "Y'all are the dressed-up folks," or make some reference to the fact that it was likely to be the wealthy parts of society that were Episcopal. It was not his favorite group.

I became one for the very good reason that if you are exposed to something repeatedly at a young age, it's likely to take, and I went to Saint Mary's School for girls, in Dallas, Texas, which was Episcopal. And every morning for thirty minutes we had to go to chapel. And they didn't proselytize, whatever we came there as--Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalians--I do not think there was a Catholic there. I think there *were* one or two Jews. I don't think they proselytized among us to join. They did mention it, talk about the church, invite you, but they never pushed. I remember going to the University of Texas in September after getting out Saint Mary's in June, and I kind of missed something. There was some kind of a vacant spot, a vacuum, and I finally decided it

really was that going to chapel. So I started going to St. David's. And I don't know whether this was in 1931, or whether it took it until 1932 for me to find out where the vacuum was. So I went down to St. David's and it suited me fine.

M: That experience at Saint Mary's also gave you a very--as I recall from some of the things that you have written in the past, a very broad outlook on religion, a very liberal outlook on religion.

J: Yes, you can dare to question without the sky falling, question and explore without being expelled from society.

M: So that when you were first were exposed to the concept that the God of the Old Testament, or the religion of the Old Testament, might well have been the manufacture of a nomadic tribe, this didn't shock you. It might have shocked you, but you were able to accommodate yourself to it.

J: Yes. There are many things that I must bless about Saint Mary's, and the daring to question and explore is one of them. But I am comfortable in the low-church part of the Episcopal Church, and the person that best expressed my feeling was a minister we had for about ten years, Dean Pratt. He held no office as a dean; that was just his honest-to-goodness name, like Dean Rusk. He said, "I am a struggling Christian; we are a struggling congregation." I took it to mean that he thought we are not there yet, but we want to be, and we are heading in that direction, and we are accommodating our lives to it, as much as we can learn to do, and sacrifice to do, and work to do.

No, I do think I had known Billy Graham earlier, and I do think it was at a baseball game that I met him, but anytime I met him it was good news to us, especially

after Lyndon got into the White House, but that's a story later on, was he [a] needed part of our life.

(Interruption)

Tape 2 of 2, Side 2

M: This is side four of part two of 1960.

J: And so the days ground on toward the big date of the convention in July. The activities of the wife of a senator pretty much for me remained the same: going to a whole lot of social events. We also had good friends among the newspaper people, headed of course by Bill White. In June--we were frequently in their home where they would have such people as the [former] secretary of state, Dean Acheson.

We also had our pictures made together as a family, Lyndon and I and the two girls, the sort of thing that, in any campaign, people are going to ask you for.

The birthday party for Luci went on as usual, for some reason on Friday, the first; her birthday is Saturday, July 2. Children of the delegation and school friends [came].

Mr. Per continued a stable figure in my life, and still is. He's my beauty parlor man, and he is really a friend of long standing. Per--and I do not mean Pierre; this man is a Norwegian. He had been in the Norwegian underground as a very, very young man during the war, and very occasionally he would tell me a few stories about it. It's amazing what human beings can live through. Much that you read about the last world war, horrible as it was, it gives you strength about the human spirit and the ability to survive.

I hope you will ask me any questions you want to, because my absolutely factual notes about that time are scattered.

M: The main thing we're leading up to here now is the convention. And of course the big thing that will go onto this tape, the most important thing will be your memory of how LBJ was offered the vice presidential spot and your own feelings about it. But anything that leads up to that will be important. For instance, after you got to Los Angeles--are you there yet in your notes?

J: I am not. What day do we get there?

M: The eighth of July.

J: I did not record one single word on the eighth, and on the ninth I just have that we went to a dinner dance given by Governor and Mrs. Pat Brown, and the Ed [Edwin] Pauleys were there. I remember Ed Pauley as a sizable figure on the political and business scene. This was in honor of President and Mrs. Truman, this party was; we were guests. My memories are practically nonexistent, except that I was very impressed. I truly like the Browns.

And then on Sunday, July the tenth, Katie [Katherine] Louchheim, as women's head of the Democratic Party--I believe that was her title--they had arranged an informal conversation between the press and the candidates' wives. I really didn't have any trouble in participating with the press, because I wasn't scared of them. They could do something to hurt Lyndon, and therefore, I couldn't be as open and as at ease as would have been my natural desire, and I was aware of that. And the good relationship, that as a member of the House and mostly as a member of the Senate, when he finally began some of the hardest times of being leader of the Senate, his good relation with the press began to erode, I guess because they kept on nibbling at and trying to find out things that he

thought that if he told them would put in jeopardy what he wanted to get done. At any rate--

M: But you, yourself, have always had a good association with the press, even--

J: I have, and better than I deserve. Part of it I must credit to Liz [Carpenter]; part of it [is] I just have no reason to be afraid of them. They can't take away anything from me that I value. They can hurt my husband; there I am vulnerable. Mostly I feel about them like I first thought about them when I took that course in the university in the early 1930s: this is where things are happening. I would sort of like to be in there myself, learning about being a press person, being the one asking the questions.

On Sunday, we had a hospitality suite; we stayed at the Biltmore, I think. And there were people streaming in and out of there, huddling in corners, making plans. The Charles Engelhards had a party for the Speaker that night, Charles and Jane.

M: Is this where they first entered your life?

J: No. They--if I haven't talked about them before, I am much remiss. They had entered our lives at least two or three years before. And when they came to Texas, visited us at the Ranch, we went to at least two *fabulous* Texas parties. But I'm sure we will find that recorded in the years 1958 and 1959 or thereabouts. If not I want to back up and tell about them because they are a piece of Americana, those parties were.

M: We did not cover them. We did those years in Martha's Vineyard, and we didn't cover the Engelhards, so we must not have covered those parties.

J: By gosh, give me a chance to go and stick them in those years.

M: Okay. All right, let's do that then the next time we record this.

J: All right, then at some point I really would like to see what I did say in each of these years since then.

M: Okay, we'll have all that ready for you the next time.

J: But by this time they were staunch friends, and this, too, was in evidence of--Lyndon used to always say, "I want to be president of *all* the people." And his "all" was not just the folks to whom Medicare, and education bills, and all the mass of legislation would apply so much, that is, the people who didn't have money to get it for themselves, [but also] rich people, moderately rich people. But middle--I hate the word class--middle- and lower-salaried, lower-worker people. The Engelhards were extremely wealthy, and although they were Democrats, I fully believe they were *plenty* conservative. But they were truly Lyndon's friends.

And the next day there was a reception, given by the California Federation of Young Democrats, and the Women's California Central Committee, honoring candidates' wives. There were things to go to all the time; hurry, hurry, hurry, go from frantic event to frantic event. I wish I could say that I knew what was happening at each of these. I couldn't.

The next day, which was the twelfth, Perle Mesta had a brunch honoring the delegates' wives, that is, the delegates to the convention, and the cabinet--no, just the delegates' wives. I just went to everything there was that I was told to go to.

M: Now, on that day, on the twelfth, that was the day that LBJ debated Kennedy on television.

J: Yes, and I never remember a more tense time. You just felt like you were in the arena where one of the great big contests of history was taking place. I think I knew from the

outset that Kennedy had caught the fancy, the fever was up for him. He *was* young, and younger-looking than his years, and very articulate, and--that word "charismatic," yes. I came to dislike that word, but I think it fits. And I did not feel hopeful about that; neither, I think, did Lyndon. I cannot say that he came out of it the winner. And it really had nothing to do with the substance of the beliefs of one man, the substance of the other man. It was a matter of electric response of a crowd to a person, to two people. As I said, the whole year was not my favorite year. And all the things, and that this was something to be gotten through, as far as I was concerned.

M: And probably feel the same way about the interview, but we do need to concentrate on this now for a minute. On the next day, Kennedy got the nomination. It is sort of an accepted truism by political scientists and reporters that one flaw in LBJ's quest for the presidency was that he relied too heavily on what he felt was the clout of the Senate, and did not take his case--he felt that the power of the Senate would work in his favor, and did not take his case, as Kennedy had, to the country as extensively. Is that something that you relate to at all? Does that make any sense to you?

J: There is always in the back of my thinking that he was a reluctant candidate and not a 100-per-cent-believe-in-himself candidate, in his desire to get it and his capability to get it. And he took his case to the country by going to innumerable Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners, gatherings of Democrats, but he did not, as I recall, on television, on big rallies of people. Back in the Senate days, we would have rallies of massive numbers of people [inaudible] around the courthouse steps in the very early days, or, as time passed, in other situations. No, there was not as much mass contact, meetings, and addresses. No, I guess it wasn't handled as well as it should be.

Let me back up one minute. July twelfth was the debate. I remember it, of course, and I remember the tenseness, and the feeling, and the desire, to support and say you are so much better than, and all that. I couldn't honestly say it. And I think I could see the delegates being drawn to liking better our opponent. And that was a Tuesday, and then Wednesday, the thirteenth--well, as far as the actual convention, it's just like being in the biggest circus tent that ever was. Groups from all fifty states huddled together in their separate corners, or front stances, or somewhere in the middle, with state flags and placards and banners, and it's a great show. It is total confusion.

This was the Speaker's last chairmanship, right?

M: It would have been, yes.

J: The hammer, his gavel falling, anybody who's been around on those occasions will remember that, and his looking out at the crowd, and his ability to finally get order. And there was a very pretty Alabama woman who, since time began, as far as my personal experience [goes], had been the, I don't know what the title is--secretary, maybe--anyhow, she was the one that would call the roll, in a loud, clear voice, beginning with Alabama. "Alabama votes its favorite son, So-and-so." Or, "Alabama casts its X votes for"--. Well, anyhow, it is a *big* show, followed by great roars of approval, or gasps of despair, or sometimes by anger. It's a good show to watch, but it sure is better to be detached than involved.

M: Who was there with you watching it?

J: I'm sure that whatever of Lyndon's family could be there. His mother was already dead. She had attended the one in 1956. Frankly, and sadly, I can't say that I remember who I was right around. I feel sure that Marietta Brooks was on the floor, Mrs. [Rose Jean

Rodgers?] Griffith, both in the Texas delegation. No, I have no clear picture. To prepare myself for this, I should have gone through whatever pictures we have. I apologize to the Library for that omission. I shall try to get better prepared for the next. But this, it was on July the thirteenth, that Kennedy was nominated.

M: Right. Now, that night after his nomination--

J: That's when my memory does click in.

M: This is a critical night.

(Interruption)

J: That night there was great discussion about whether Lyndon might be offered the vice presidency. He didn't believe he would be offered it, and did not want to accept it. He resisted. There was just an in and out, just a-coming and going, of the Speaker, John Connally, of course at all times Walter Jenkins. I'm sure that Mary Rather--I'm sure that the Wests were not far away; the Engelhards. What I really remember is--and [Robert] Kerr expressed himself as against Lyndon's, in case lightening should strike and he should be offered it--against accepting it. John Connally was irrevocability against it. The Speaker, at first, the Speaker was [against it]. Finally--I do believe I think sometime in the course of events, the younger Kennedy--

M: Robert.

J: Robert came down to see us. Can that be a fact?

M: The chronology is, I think, that he came down after the nomination had been offered to Senator Johnson and Johnson accepted. And then Robert Kennedy came down to try to talk him out of accepting it, and to retract.

J: That would have been better. That was one of the first incorrect moves then, let me say, on their part; all the other moves were good. At some point, and I think maybe it was the next morning--I wonder if we ever really went to sleep that night?

M: I wonder.

J: I think we did, and I think I remember Senator Kennedy, as he still was, nominee Kennedy, calling at some time and asking to speak to Lyndon, and I said, "He's asleep, Senator." And Lyndon sort of roused himself and said, "Who's that?" I told him and he said, "I'll talk." I will tell you frankly, the whole thing is such a crescendo of comings and goings and telephone calls and emotions, that I cannot remember very little of this. I *do* remember the Speaker calling back, and I think he came down to see us and to talk to us. And some of these conferences took place in the bathroom--(Laughter)--they would leave even me, and retreat to the bathroom and talk. And the Speaker, urging him, retracting his own earlier statement and urging him to take it. And some press man asked him why was he doing that? And he said, "Because I am a smarter man this morning than I was last night." The Speaker very often had a good way of succinctly putting any position he took.

M: Do you remember what your own feelings were about whether he should accept?

J: A feeling of--a certain amount of dismay, and sadness, and reluctance, and also a feeling that, "This is not mine. I will not be anything in this except 'the wife of,' and that will be the same. And I must not try to affect the outcome." I do remember, and sadly, when Lyndon called for John Connally the next morning, and they said, "Oh, he's gone." He had packed up and left, and I think started driving home. Do you have any convincing--?

I know that his anger was such that he didn't even want to talk it over with Lyndon, after Lyndon accepted.

M: No. The President did not comment on that part of it at all in his book, and I've never heard that before. That's interesting.

J: Well, his time of departure would not have been the next morning, because Lyndon didn't really accept until some time the next morning or next day, right?

M: It was in the morning, that's right.

J: At any rate, John left without saying goodbye.

M: What do you think his resistance stemmed from, Connally's resistance?

J: Because he'd pinned his all, he'd pledged his all, to Lyndon to fight to the last gasp. And I think this was what he, John, felt was kind of a betrayal, dismissal, a goodbye to Texas. I think he thought they were two entirely different, disparate people.

M: Interesting that the Speaker didn't feel that way, however. That's interesting.

J: The Speaker, upon reflection, did not feel that. I guess the Speaker was building on his sixty or seventy--I don't know his age; I know he was getting on, and he'd been in the Congress longer than anybody ever had, and had mounted up a whole lot of experience and wisdom. And so the Speaker was ready for him to do it wholeheartedly. And John left without saying goodbye.

I have a feeling, and I don't think this could be possibly be so, that he took Walter Jenkins with him. I don't think Walter could've gone. He took somebody else that was very dear to Lyndon. I think even Liz and her husband, Les, who were there--if they waited for Lyndon's acceptance, they left five minutes thereafter. In all the confusion of that time, I wonder if there is anybody with accurate notes?

M: The notes--you assume accuracy. There have been different accounts of that experience. The ones that the President relied on, mostly, when he was doing the *Vantage Point* were his own memory and the notes that we have that Phil Graham had made.

J: Phil Graham? (Laughter) I know Phil Graham was present a good deal of that time; he helped Lyndon with some absolutely very important speeches. Phil Graham was one of the most interesting characters I ever knew, and a sort of a sad character; [he had] so much, and yet somewhere something came loose.

M: It hadn't by this time, I think.

J: I don't think it had come loose.

M: He was very much involved in all this, and the President did rely on those notes--I mean he referred to them a lot. I can't say that he relied on them, but he referred to them, because I worked with him on that chapter a great deal. But his own memory was at play. But there are lots of different memories of this, and I don't know--

J: It's like what is an elephant like? A blind man can only feel one part of it and say. I do not claim any clarity whatever about that. It was just like being inside a rapidly rotating machine.

M: Once the decision was made, though, that would be on the morning of the fourteenth, and then that night he was nominated for the vice presidency.

J: On the fourteenth?

M: Yes. And then on the fifteenth, he made his acceptance speech. Now, this was a couple of years before my entry into the Johnson orbit, so I was a reader of the *Washington Post* at that time, and I just remember a delightful story that came out about Lynda--

J: Oh, yes, I can tell you that story. (Laughter)

M: All right, let's hear it.

J: After--I think it happened the day that--it seems like it happened right after Kennedy was nominated, which would have been on Wednesday the thirteenth, and she came out of the hall, with Kennedy the new candidate, and she had some friends around, and they said let's all go to Disneyland, and she said, "Oh, goodie, let's." So was it that day or was it the next day when Lyndon was nominated as vice president?

M: I associate it with his nomination as vice president, but I'm not sure.

J: And they looked around for all the family members to get a picture together, and she was not to be found anywhere. And then somehow or another they located her out at Disneyland. (Laughter) That's where she found it out. So it must have been on the Thursday that he was nominated.

M: The quote that I remember reading in the *Washington Post* was something like, "Tonight I was not Daddy's little darling." Something like, "Usually I'm Daddy's little darling, but tonight I was not Daddy's little darling." (Laughter)

J: One of my main feelings was being forlorn and bereft, and the world that was so familiar to me had suddenly cracked and broken--fallen apart--and the Senate I had known and loved--we were not going to be in the Senate any more, especially not majority leader. And so I was very far from elated, but as I say, it was not my decision to make.

I think I understood it. I wouldn't be surprised of it wasn't old Mr. Kennedy that had a good deal to do with this, Papa, looking to the South, looking to Texas, adding up feelings of people, wondering what it would take to put his son over the top, and thinking that Lyndon might very well be the one that could make the difference. I also know that that was in Lyndon's mind, too. He owed everything that he had achieved in life to the

Democratic Party. This might be its greatest time of need. He *might*, if he put in everything he had, make the difference. Also, as I think I just said the other day, didn't I, that he thought his time in the Senate, his time being majority leader, he had sucked that orange dry. He had given it everything he had; he'd gotten everything out if he could. That was finished. Anyhow, I know there was some of that in him, his reasoning for accepting it.

M: He did not himself reflect on that in his memoirs, and it might well have been there. But you did indeed express it that way, and I've heard it put that way by others, too. But what he talked about mostly was his real belief that he could make a difference in the election.

J: Oh yes, that was very strong and very real, and his obligation to the Democratic Party, to the democratic process, and *no* hatred for Nixon but just a feeling that the Democratic Party and Kennedy-Johnson would be better for the country than the Republican Party and Nixon.

M: But in the Speaker's mind, whatever his--how could anybody explore the mind of someone who has been this long gone from the scene, but apparently there was in his mind a real reluctance to see Nixon president because of an animosity.

J: *Whoo* boy, you bet! Ever since Nixon said--Oh, now let's see--no, that was McCarthy that had called him a traitor--

M: No, no, it was Nixon.

J: Was it?

M: Yes, Nixon called Truman and Rayburn--whatever he said, it was tantamount to calling them traitors. And that was what--

J: Oh, that would have been, for the Speaker, *unforgivable* and unerasable, and he just couldn't have stood for that man to run *his* country.

M: We've now come to the end of that convention, and either that's a good place to stop, or we can go ahead through the rest of the month of July. What would you like to do? It's two o'clock, or almost two o'clock.

End of Tape 2 of 2, and Interview XLII