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CLAUDIA "LADY BIRD" JOHNSON ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW VII
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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 VII covering 1937

DATE: October 9, 1978

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: The LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: Let me ask you first of all, why did he decide to announce his candidacy on the front porch in the home in Johnson City when he ran for Congress?

J: Because I think it was the most--

(Interruption)

G: Do you remember that occasion?

J: Frankly, I can't say that I do. Because it's just become sort of a montage in my mind. It's also melted into the time that we started running for the Senate in 1941, when I remember clearly pictures of us on that front porch. But I think it is the Senate that I am remembering.

G: The President made his initial speech in San Marcos at the college.

J: Yes.

G: Were you there?

J: Oh, you bet. I wish I could sharpen my memory against somebody else's. No doubt you have or will. I think the gym was decorated in part by Mrs. Ed Cape and some of her

teacher friends. I just know that every member of the White Stars had been alerted to it. That was the group, that sort of a fraternity of debaters and writers that he had belonged to when he was in school. I'm sure that Bill Deason and Dr. [C. E.] Evans and everybody who was a part of his life was around. I cannot say that I clearly remember the figures on the stage. I've got a memory of the governor of the state being in the front row. But that has got to be 1941, don't you think?

G: Well, I'll check it. I'll make sure.

J: Jimmy Allred, with Mrs. Allred. Lyndon was just so pleased and impressed. But you know, the more I think about it the more I do think that this was the race for the House in 1937 when Jimmy Allred was there. I do remember that in 1937 Lyndon went charging into Jimmy Allred's office, and told him he was going to run for the Congress; what did he think of that? And that Jimmy Allred said something to him sort of half joking and half sincere, "You never will get elected in that city boy hat. Here, take my hat." It was a typical western Stetson, light-colored, and [he] put it on, and Lyndon's been wearing that type of hat since then, forever.

G: Was there a tendency, do you think, on Governor Allred's part, initially, to support [James P.] Buchanan's widow if she decided to run? Do you remember anything about that?

J: I do not know. I know that the possibility of Mrs. Buchanan running was much discussed and debated by us in that little apartment out there at Number Four, Happy Hollow Lane. Or was it Number Three, Happy Hollow Lane?

C: Four, I think.

J: Number Four, Happy Hollow Lane. We did not believe she would, because she was an extremely shy woman, certainly not given to the combat of active political life. But we also felt that we just couldn't wait and wait and wait until she made up her mind. So Lyndon did go on and announce.

G: Did anyone in your camp talk to her about her intentions, do you think?

J: I think it's quite likely, but I cannot honestly say that I remember that somebody did and who it was.

G: I gather that the next phase was some notion that people would support whoever she endorsed, even if she herself did not decide to run. Do you remember if this was a factor, and if various candidates tried to get her to endorse them? She ultimately refused. She didn't endorse anyone, to my knowledge. Do you remember any efforts there?

J: No, I can't honestly say that I do. I know that Mr. Avery, who was one of our opponents, C. N. Avery, had been a friend of Congressman Buchanan's and gave the impression that he would have had the approval and support of Congressman Buchanan.

G: Was there ever any fear that Pa Ferguson might enter that race as a candidate?

J: Never that I know of. I certainly don't think so.

G: You know you have to touch all these bases here, regardless of how [unlikely]. How about Tom Miller? Do you remember what role he played? He was for the court-packing bill. Did he come out and support you in that race?

J: I know that Tom Miller early became a good and close friend of Lyndon's. Actually, when Lyndon began this campaign he was doing it in the very brash and youthful manner, because he did not know the important people that he should have known, really.

I'm not sure that he knew Tom Miller.

G: This is a special election, and it's a winner-take-all proposition. There's no run-off. I'm wondering if there are some rules of politics that don't apply to an election like this, if there were some special considerations in your strategy that you remember, or anything that distinguished this from any other campaign strategy. For example, let's say if you had a man in the race that was an anti-court-packing bill candidate, would it help to have another one in the race who was an anti-court-packing bill candidate?

J: Yes, I think it would have. I think Lyndon early--well, you certainly couldn't say that he got a monopoly on the field of being a Roosevelt man and a liberal, but he early came out strong saying that he was that. Whereas there were several people who, my impression is, they were considerably more conservative or standoffish or, "Let's wait and see." To some extent, Lyndon pre-empted the field of the aggressive, young liberal.

G: Do you think that's why he won?

J: I don't know. I have the feeling that he probably won because he covered more miles, shook more hands, spent more time, impressed some strategic people, perhaps who were the country editors, the educators. He really started from way out back as far as knowing the businessmen, but he always had respect and interest and determination to get to know them. I'm trying to remember the names of the very few whom we did know in Austin. I think one had a Johnson City background, a furniture man named Brown, and a hardware man named Davis. Oh, gee.

G: Here's a list of contributors, if you can read that messy handwriting.

J: Oh, how nice. I see kinfolks: my brother, Tony Taylor, seventy-five dollars; L. E.

Jones, not quite kinfolks, but almost; Cousin Margaret Kimball, twenty-five; G. D. Johnson--that's Uncle George Desha--four-hundred and two dollars and seventy-four cents. My recollection is that he practically just wound up by giving Lyndon, or offering him, everything that he had in his bank account. Oh, Mr. A. J. Eilers, he was a businessman in Austin.

G: How about Mr. [Percy] Brigham? Do you remember him?

J: Oh, indeed I do remember him, in Blanco. He had two good friends in Blanco, Mr. Brigham and Mr. Charlie Crist. Mr. Charlie Crist was the banker. I think he was the banker. It could be that both he and Mr. Brigham were in that bank.

G: Who were the main strategists in that campaign? Do you remember who were the people that really did the planning and the scheduling and decided who should be talked to and who needed to be seen?

J: Mr. Claude Wild was the campaign manager. Senator [Alvin] Wirtz was a sort of a--that word has almost been ruined forever, but godfather, in that he cared greatly for Lyndon and guided him and gave him sage advice. Whenever we were weighing something, why, all big problems were likely to be run by Senator Wirtz.

G: I guess Ray Lee had a hand in that, too.

J: Oh yes, he did. Ray Lee was with the newspaper.

G: Let me ask you about the press in that campaign. He had, I guess, some good friends among the newspaper publishers. Do you remember any of them, and the reporters and the editors and publishers, Charles Marsh and Gordon Fulcher.

J: Ray Lee, of course, and I believe Gordon Fulcher, although the date at which people

entered our lives gets a little mixed when you're looking at it from the perspective of forty years ago. Charles Marsh we didn't know until later, until we were in Washington. He was a big man far away. Much of this, his help with the press, I daresay was an inheritance from his years with Mr. [Congressman Richard] Kleberg when he became such a dear friend of Mr. Sam Fore at Floresville, who was at one time president of the Texas Press Association, all of the Texas weeklies and small town papers. In fact, Lyndon's inheritance from the Kleberg years is just incalculable. It's big and continued to be big, on up into the Senate years. Mr. Fore called upon, I think personally and I daresay he would have written them on that old Oliver typewriter several times thereafter, every editor in the Tenth District. I think that there were others in the Tenth [Fourteenth] District who might have been, let us say, in the, oh, wholesale grocery, or mill and elevator, or grain businesses, in various other walks of life, who would have gotten in touch with the people that they had known in their own business connection in the Tenth District. So his Fourteenth District connections bore marvelous fruit in his Tenth District effort.

G: I guess most of the voters, or at least a large plurality of the voters, lived in Austin.

J: They did, and Austin was the hardest nut for us to crack. I think Lyndon was somewhat buffaloed by the big town in his district. He was early attacked--not attacked, but at least was pointed out, you know how campaigns are--as a newcomer to the district, so they said. As a matter of fact he had been born and raised in Blanco County, which was in the district all right, but it was way over in the corner of the district. It was the smallest county in the district and certainly a very small town. But believe me, it was very strong

for its native son. There was a considerable rivalry, a really bitter rivalry between the two major towns in Blanco County, Johnson City and Blanco. It was an old fight over who was going to get the court house. It had one time been in Blanco. In Johnson City, the county vote had wrested it loose and built a new one and established a new one around the turn of the century, I think, in Johnson City. Anyhow, a very old but still moldering feud.

But Lyndon managed to get the votes from both communities because, as he laughingly and very happily said, "They voted for me in Blanco" because he was Miss Rebekah's son, and they voted for him in Johnson City because he was old Sam's boy. His mother's friends, his father's friends--very especially his father's--were mighty helpful to him all his life. In fact, he used to have a saying that the richest inheritance of any son is his father's friends.

G: How about Hays County? He must have done very well in San Marcos.

J: Yes, he felt secure in San Marcos. At any rate, he knew a lot of people there. A lot of them thought he was a comer, thought he was congressional material. That was a strong place for him, I would say.

G: Now, of course in Austin you had not only the opposition of one or two other local people, but--

J: Yes, Senator Houghton Brownlee, very respected old Austin family, and a state senator who had a political following and wide range of supporters, and Polk Shelton, who was a marvelous criminal lawyer, kin to everybody on one side of town and was just a man who knew his way around and knew the political milieu.

G: Was Senator Brownlee your landlord at this time?

J: You know, it's dim after forty years, but I believe it was his brother.

G: Oh, it was.

J: I think so. The family certainly, but I do not think it was the very man we were running against.

G: I notice that the President had the endorsement of old Albert Sidney Burleson.

J: Yes.

G: You remember that?

J: Oh, I couldn't possibly forget it. That was a big day; I've forgotten just exactly how it happened. I think he ventured to call upon him and had a lengthy conversation in which he impressed the old gentleman. But Lyndon always had a lot of respect for older men, successful men in the field in which he was interested. He wanted to learn from them, and he got along well with them. I think he just asked if he could call on him and did. I remember the old house that Burleson lived in. Too bad it was torn down, a great old Victorian place.

G: How about Bastrop County? Do you remember anything in particular about his campaigning there or formula for success in that area?

J: No, I'm sorry. The names of the Tenth District counties--there were ten actually, I think--were very clear in my mind then. They're much dimmed now. I remember a general picture, and I remember some specifics. For one thing, one specific is the first time I really encountered the fact that we, the United States, and Texas very especially, is made up of diverse ethnic groups. I came from a part of Texas which was either Anglo-Saxon

or black. People were all English, Scotch-Irish ancestry or black, colored folks as we certainly called them. Nobody said Negro, hardly anybody. You certainly didn't call them blacks.

G: That was derogatory.

J: In this district where we were there was a very heavy strain of Germans down in Washington County around Brenham, of Czechs and Poles in I think both Washington and Lee Counties, and around La Grange. Where is La Grange, what county?

G: That's in Fayette?

J: Yes, that's an adjoining county. I made the discovery that they were likely to vote pretty much in blocs. If the leaders were impressed by somebody, they were somewhat more able to pass on that influence than we individual Anglo-Saxons were.

G: Would the President start out in a car in the morning, say, and just make a swing through one county and work his way back to Austin at night?

J: Yes, he would. He would hit the courthouse square, so to speak, and just go from store to store and go in, stick out his hand and say, "I'm Lyndon Johnson, and I want very much to be your congressman. I hope you will listen to me and decide you like me," or something like that. Unfortunately, and I'll always be sorry about this, I did not go along with him on any of these. Actually, I think at that time it would have been an unusual thing and probably not a well-accepted thing if I had. At a formal meeting the wives did indeed go and sit on the platform with folded hands and look interested and howdy and shake afterwards. But that was the extent of their activity, except of course I'm sure even in those days we did a bunch of licking stamps and folding envelopes. We happened to

have a manager, Claude Wild, who was very good, but he also didn't believe in women messing in campaigns. He made that clear in a joking but positive manner. That suited me *fine* because I was retiring, and I guess shy is actually an accurate word. I certainly didn't yearn to do it. But believe me, I was not pushed to do it.

G: So he would start out in the morning. Did he have someone to drive him? Who would go with him? When he left, would he go with, say, Carroll Keach, or do you not remember how he would get around?

J: Well, since we were coming straight from the NYA [National Youth Administration] days, I am sure whenever any of them could get off from work they might well have been with him. I cannot actually say now.

G: Did he talk about the day's campaigning when he got home?

J: Yes, he did. He was likely to be very exhausted, leave early and return late, and there were always phone calls to make. But, yes, he did talk about it. My role, actually, was to keep a lot of clothes clean, and to give him a good, hot meal whenever I could get him home, and to take messages during the day and transmit them, and to thank, thank, thank because, well, a great many people give you an awful lot of time and love and effort in a campaign. The wife really always had the opportunity to express appreciation for that. I remember I used to ask him what he had eaten and where he had been. He was likely to have stopped at some country store and opened a can of wienies and had a slab of cheese and some crackers and gulped them all down. I wasn't there, but I could just see him doing it in ten minutes while he listened and maybe even talked. I daresay that campaign had a sizable little something to do with the later stomach trouble, because he did eat in

such a hurry and such unbalanced meals.

(Interruption)

G: Are you thinking of something in particular about them?

J: Just that they've been supporters ever since and became a part of our lives. Gee, this would have been a good thing to have looked over. But let's just go on, because a general impression is really about all I'm able to give you.

G: We were talking about how he'd have to eat a quick bite here and there and didn't really have time during the campaign to sit down for normal meals. I'm interested in what he said about the campaign when he got home in the evening. Did you feel, for example, that he enjoyed campaigning, that it was stimulating for him?

J: I felt that he was excited, that it was stimulating, that he was determined to win. I don't know whether enjoyment is quite the right word or not. Exhilarated would be one.

G: I guess after he got home he would place calls to lieutenants and aides and friends and plan the next day's work and one thing and another.

J: Yes. Saturdays, of course, were the big day. The courthouse square was the scene on Saturdays. Everybody came to town to "trade." He would have as many set up meetings as he could. Mostly you'd just have to get your own crowd by starting speaking in a courthouse square and hope people would stop and listen. There were strong figures in each community, of course, just as there had been in the Fourteenth. The barber was somebody you sure wanted to know, because he was a communicator. The blacksmiths' shops were a center where people came and went, and that's something that's passed so totally from the scene now it sounds like you're antediluvian. But I remember several

pictures in blacksmiths' shops. Posters, of course, [were] a part of the scene. You'd get little boys to go out and tack them up on trees.

G: You mentioned the county agent, too.

J: Oh, yes, the county agent. He saw a lot of people. You hoped that you could become friends with and sell and imbue with a sense of wanting to help you, the communicators: the ministers, the county agents, possibly the school superintendent, and yes, indeed, the barber. It was a much more personal thing than it is now.

G: Did he think he was going to win?

J: Yes, I think he always thought he was going to win. At the same time he was very clear-headed about the fact that it was a field of ten and that he was the youngest, and yes, probably the least important of the ten candidates, and from the smallest of the ten counties. So the obstacles were big, and he saw them clearly. But I think that just caused him to renew his effort.

G: Did you think he could win?

J: Yes, I thought he could. I sure didn't think he would in that I certainly didn't take it for granted. I guess what I mean is I thought he had a good chance to win. Once more, if anybody asked me what a political machine was, I would have to say in this campaign and certainly in later campaigns for him it was the people that he went to school with at San Marcos, the people that he worked with in the National Youth Administration, and a goodly sprinkling of his father's friends, and his inheritance from working in the Fourteenth District.

G: How much do you think his NYA experience and the reputation that he made there as a

hard-working NYA director helped him in that 1937 campaign?

J: Quite a lot.

(Interruption)

G: I was going to ask you if he'd had any appendicitis symptoms earlier in the campaign or any that spring at all.

J: None that I was aware of. As I just mentioned earlier, it was a time of intense hurrying, of tensions, of big meals that were gulped and a whole day long of having nothing, and repeated pick-up foods at a country general store that were likely to be soda pop and sardines, and cheese and crackers, wolfed down.

G: I believe it was the Thursday before the election that he was stricken with this appendicitis attack. It was April 8. Do you remember the chronology, what happened here? Was he standing in a receiving line?

J: Yes, I do a bit. This was a very important meeting, crucial, right at the end of the campaign. We had hoped that it would be one of the biggest ones we'd have. It was in some public building in Austin, and what comes to my mind is the courthouse. I just do not recall exactly, but it was a big public building. He was in the receiving line, and people were coming by. You know, you always hope that there are lots and lots of people, and indeed there were. I looked down the line two or three people, and saw a familiar couple to me, somebody I was quite fond of. I had roomed at their house for three and a half years when I was in the University of Texas, Mr. and Mrs. Felix Matthews.

You always hope that the candidate, be he your friend or indeed your husband, is

in fine fettle when he meets people that you've been talking to about him, trying to tell them what a very special, wonderful person he is. Well, just as the Matthews were about to get up there, I saw his face cloud up and a dreadful, pained look come on him, a kind of a stricken look. I thought, "Oh, my Lord, what is the matter? I hope he can hold out." Which is a terribly selfish thing to think, just hoping that somebody will stand there and look good for your purposes. But I'm sure it's something that everybody who is helping the campaign has thought. Well, he leaned over in just a second or two and whispered to me, "I've got to get out of this." And my heart sank. He hurriedly shook the hands of a few people, and then he sort of stumbled out of the line. I don't remember the exact chronology then. I don't think we finished the whole receiving line. I think somebody quickly took over for him, but you'd have to check that with others. We left to go where he could lie down and where we could get a doctor.

Once more, I do not remember exactly how quickly we got to the hospital, but indeed we did, to Seton Hospital. We called one or two doctors, and Lyndon I remember was insistent, as soon as it was diagnosed as an appendix that ought to be operated on right then, on getting the opinions of at least two doctors. One, he just hated to have to stop. He thought it might even lose him the election to be out of it for the last thirty-six hours. And then, two, it may have been in the back of his mind, I know that it was voiced by some people, that really this was just a play for sympathy. In any case, he was insistent on having a couple of opinions. Joe Thorne Gilbert, I think, is the man who did the operation. I know he was in the picture.

G: Yes, I have him, and I think it was Claude Martin.

J: Yes. Dr. Claude Martin was a doctor that the family had had in Johnson City. He had attended Lyndon's father, I think, during his last illness.

G: There was one other, I guess, a third doctor.

This could have spelled defeat for him, really, couldn't it?

J: It was very much in his mind that it could have. But there was absolutely nothing else to be done. He could not hold up his head. He could not put one foot in front of the other. It was excruciating. I do not know whether it ruptured, but it was certainly on the point of rupture. You probably have that information somewhere.

G: I think he was scheduled to speak at Wooldridge Park that night and over radio. Do you remember having to cancel those or have Claude Wild make the radio speech for him?

J: No, I don't remember it. You mean on the very last night, on Friday night?

G: No. I'm still thinking of Thursday night.

J: Well, we were in the receiving line. The event was a reception, as I recall. If he was going to speak it was just one of these informal things, not on the stand and not over radio, so far as I remember.

G: Presumably he was operated on that day or the next day, right away I guess, wasn't he?

J: By the time we got to the hospital, as I recall, it was something like nine o'clock at night. All the diagnoses were made during the nighttime, and I believe it was very early the next morning, like six or seven o'clock, when he was operated on.

G: Then of course the next day was the election.

J: He was just coming out of the effects of it on the afternoon of the last day. So I don't know who took over, and there was nothing he could do.

G: Did your role in the campaign increase then?

J: No, my role was to stay right there in the hospital and see people who came and answer calls. Of course, some of that was related to the campaign, but I wasn't managing any strategy.

G: That was a role that you played more than once, wasn't it?

J: Yes, in fact, many times.

G: Was he eager to learn more and more about the campaign?

J: When he began to come to, yes, indeed. I'm sure he's one of the worst patients they ever had. If the election had been a few days later he probably wouldn't have carried that hospital. I mean, because he was impatient and hurting and letting it be known that he was hurt, and he was just wanting everything to be different.

G: Do you recall how he learned the news that he had won, or when he learned it? Or for that matter how you learned it?

J: I'm trying to remember which campaign I'm having these memories of. I think perhaps it was this one, the 1937. By Saturday morning, when the polls opened, he was recuperating. I mean he was out from under the operation. It had been a success; the crisis was over. My recollection is that I got on the phone, and took to the polls, just group after group of old ladies, friends that didn't have cars, people that asked me to get them to the polls. That was a sizable job connected with campaigns, then and always, getting to the polls your friends who needed transportation, and also reminding people. Because people who are quite strongly for you, it's not the most important thing in their lives, after all, they just might get busy and not go. It's a good idea to remind them

between about seven-thirty and--well, all day long.

I think that I worked doing that until the polls closed, about seven-thirty in the evening. Then I think I was at the hospital for a while, and then I think Senator Wirtz and Kitty Mae and one or two other people picked me up, and we went out to a friend's sort of lodge house out on the hills, out of Austin, and had some drinks and some refreshments, just something like cheese and crackers and peanuts and things like that. I found myself just eating vast quantities of it. It suddenly dawned on me that I hadn't had lunch and I hadn't had dinner, and so I came to and realized I was hungry. That should have given me more understanding of Lyndon and his campaigning habits.

G: We've seen a familiar picture of the two of you in the hospital room, and he is unshaven and is holding a newspaper. You're standing next to him. Do you remember how that fit into this chronology? Did you go the next morning? Let's see, conceivably the returns could have made the Sunday paper.

J: Oh, I'm sure they did. Oh, goodness, I'm sure. My recollection is that we were feeling awfully good by ten o'clock that night about what was coming in. My feeling is that when we were sitting at these people's house--and we stayed there and listened to reports quite a long time--I remember a general feeling of optimism, even elation. I can't tell you, though, exactly what time it was when we heard the news. I remember that picture. I should have looked at it before we started talking.

G: Did he himself get a chance to vote? He would have been pretty much incapacitated.

J: No, I don't think he voted! My recollection is that he did not get to vote, because you have to apply for absentee voting about three days before the voting day. I don't think he

voted.

G: That must have been a source of frustration. (Laughter)

J: Later on, of course, a source of laughter, but it was certainly a source of frustration at the time. It caused me to go to all sorts of lengths to vote absentee in later campaigns, that and another event or two. I've done an awful lot of absentee voting.

G: He stayed in the hospital, I guess, a good while after that, maybe ten days or something like that.

J: It was certainly longer than the usual stay because he was completely exhausted. I don't know whether it had ruptured or not, but anyhow, it was just on the point of it. He was a very sick young man.

G: Were there any problems with that operation that you know of, or was it just his general fatigue and the fact that it was serious? There weren't any complications or anything that required extra hospitalization?

J: No, I don't think so. But he was exhausted and tense.

G: I've heard that he made lifelong friends of the nuns there.

J: I'd like to believe that. (Laughter) He could be both extremely appreciative and very impatient.

G: You didn't see any firsthand evidence?

J: I saw lots of evidence of both.

G: Really? Well, would you like to stop here then? Anything else in this connection? We can just use this as a bridge.

J: I do remember something that I was later to learn was typical of politics. He was barely

out from under the ether before he began to get requests from people to do things that a congressman was connected with. Of course this is the Democratic primary, but in those days nobody paid much attention to the general election.

G: Well, no, this would have been the special. He was the whole thing.

J: Oh, you're right. You're right. This one was a general election, wasn't it?

G: You have a story, though, I think in this connection.

J: Just that we had somebody [who] came and wanted to get his help just hours after he was out from under the ether. I didn't like that, and yet since then, I have learned how one's own needs can be so pressing and you cannot think too much about the other person. That happens in politics on both sides. You ask when you shouldn't when you're the candidate, and you ask when you shouldn't when you're the constituent.

G: My impression is that because Buchanan died suddenly, that he had a lot of things pending, appointments and things like that, and the President honored a whole lot of these that Buchanan had promised. Do you remember that?

J: It would have been his tendency to. I cannot remember that precisely, but he had a great deal of respect for the rights of the man in a job. Buchanan was a senior statesman of considerable importance, and although I don't even know whether they knew [each other]--I'm sure he knew him because of having been up there with Mr. Kleberg, but not closely--but it would have been his tendency, I know that, to have respected what he might think of as his wishes.

G: Did you enjoy this first run at elective office yourself, even though you stayed in the background?

J: I was a highly interested observer. As I said, I wasn't really an active helper, except to back it financially, and to thank, and to be on the other end of the phone line. It was a learning experience. I was curious, and I was excited. I can't say that I really enjoyed it, because I wasn't enough of a participant.

G: What effect did this have on him, running for elective office for the first time? Did it change him?

J: No, I don't think so. I think he became the congressman instead of the congressman's secretary. He became the one whose obligation it was to vote and to learn how to vote and to get the job done for the people of his district, rather than just for the boss who was the congressman.

G: You often hear that the process of running for office gives a politician a much closer feel for the people than he's had before, or a much stronger appreciation. Could you sense any of this? In other words, did the process of running for office have any impact on him that you noticed this time?

J: I think it heightened tendencies already there. But you see, he had been exposed to that, and a part of that, in trying to get Mr. Kleberg elected, and indeed, in following around in his daddy's footsteps when his daddy was working for a candidate. So this time it was just he was speaking for himself. Yes, it was an exhilarating thing, something to be proud about, something also to be humble about.

I guess that's probably time to end.

G: Do you want to stop? Okay.

End of Tape 1of 1 and Interview VII