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

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This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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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 IX covering 1938

DATE: January 24, 1979

INTERVIEWEE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Casa Leonor, Acapulco, Mexico

Tape 1 of 1

G: Mrs. Johnson, we're going to talk today about 1938. Do you recall the beginning of that year?

J: I am almost sure that that was the year we drove, taking Mrs. Sam Johnson back with us, because her husband had just died in October and we wanted to give her a change of scene and relief from the surrounding sadness. She had all of her life a great curiosity and interest. So we set out in the car, and as I recall, Rebekah--Mrs. Johnson, Lyndon and I made the trip, stopping the first night at Daddy's and then we usually made it a three-day trip. Lyndon was always impatient, hurrying, striving to get there to get things lined up before Congress began. I always wanted to stop and see all the sights. I particularly wanted to show them to Mrs. Johnson. I lost; we hurried. I think we did stop at the Natural Bridge of Virginia for maybe a meal. If that is close to Bristol we may have spent the night over there. Bristol was a place right at the line of Tennessee and Virginia where we usually spent the last night.

In those days there were guest homes along the way. That perhaps was one of the

evidences of the Depression. There would be a pretty, nice-looking old house with a sign out front, "Guest Home," or "Overnight Guests." I had some charming encounters that way. I know we did stay in at least a couple of those.

We arrived to the apartment that we had rented. I'm almost sure it was this year, 1938, that we I'm stayed at an apartment on Columbia Road, right out beyond where 18th and Columbia intersect, close to where the Mormon Temple now is. It was a pleasant apartment, roomy, comfortable, several bedrooms, and sort of a shabby elegance, a warmth to it. It had a long living room with ever so many windows that opened out to look down toward Rock Creek Park, down into a lot of greenery. Rock Creek Park early established a place in my heart and in my mind in connection with Washington. I think maybe Sam Houston [Johnson] lived with us that year, too. I'm not sure. He lived with us, anyhow, many years, if not for the whole time, for weeks and months at a stretch.

Early in the year there took place the annual congressional reception given by the President and Mrs. Roosevelt. They always invited all the members of Congress, the House and the Senate and their spouses, in one big evening affair. It began at nine o'clock. Women wore their very best long dresses and the men went out and rented white tie and tails and top hats. Some of them probably had their own. It's my recollection Lyndon didn't ever get that until he went to the Senate. Except I, ridiculously enough, went out and bought him a silk top hat as a Christmas present after one or two or three years up there. I don't think I had it then. But the high point of that reception was that they included Mrs. Johnson in the invitation. We were so proud and happy to take her. I remember standing in line and approaching the President. It was always surprising to see

that he was leaning on somebody, even a little. He was so vigorous and forceful. Mrs. Roosevelt, she had a splendid posture. She really looked quite regal.

G: Was this the first time you had met President Roosevelt, do you recall?

J: Goodness, I'm sure it was.

G: What did he say to you? Do you remember?

J: He said just, "How do you do?" or something, nothing memorable. He did, I remember, sort of a--his eyes lit up and he sort of clapped Lyndon on the shoulder or made some gesture more than just a hello.

So the high points of that year--I suppose Lyndon's campaign for the Austin Public Housing Project has got to be one of the big interesting accomplishments of that year. He was just fresh from the experience of touring East Austin and counting all the outdoor toilets. So he introduced--he began to take measures to get it for Austin and predictably, encountered a good deal of opposition. The businessmen had said that they didn't want to go into competition with the government. They believed it would take Austin fifteen years to grow to adjust itself to two hundred fifty house vacancies that would be caused by building two hundred fifty units of housing. Lyndon went on the radio and made a speech about conditions in Austin that Austin people themselves wouldn't know because one doesn't look for that. He called his speech, "The Sorrows Under the Violet Crown." We always spoke of the city as "the city under the violet crown." I think that was an O. Henry description of it years ago.

G: Did you listen to that radio speech, do you remember? Did you hear it being broadcast?

J: Oh, gee. I'm sure I did. Because I just remember him talking about it and working on it.

He said he was going to take his listeners on a tour of the Austin slums. People were a little mad because they didn't want to admit they had slums, you know. But he had really taken out some marvelous insurance by having persuaded Mr. E. H. Perry to be chairman of the Housing Commission. He was just a man of unimpeachable integrity and a *good* man, and wealthy. So that made people look at it as, "Maybe this is all right [if] a man of that importance interests himself in it."

G: At this point in his career would he have any help on a speech like that or would he pretty much compose it himself? Do you know, if staff people helped him draft the speeches?

J: I believe from the beginning he had Herbert Henderson, who was a man of a very magnificent way with words. He was a newspaperman. They came into our lives I can't exactly remember when, Herbert and his brother, Charles Henderson. I believe they go back to NYA [National Youth Administration] days. He had talent and artistry. He had everything except just ordinary stability. I mean, sometimes he went off on a tangent, and sometimes he just left, or got drunk, or disappeared. But he was a marvelous friend and a highly talented man. We were very fortunate to have him.

So the bill passed. Lyndon had a picture that we kept on the office walls and were mighty proud of for years, with Nathan Straus and Lyndon behind him and John Nance Garner--I've just got to wonder what John Nance Garner was thinking about it--and a bunch of other congressmen.

What would you like to ask me about anything else?

G: Do you remember the Naval Expansion Bill? This may have been a little bit more technical.

J: I remember that Lyndon early became a staunch supporter of a strong defense. His being on the Naval Affairs Committee just committed him to learning about the Navy and to just delving into everything related with defense. To that extent I remember it. After his early fluke of thinking how he might vote for that referendum before you'd go to war, from then on, he became a staunch, strong defense man.

G: Another big issue that year was the reorganization of the executive. This is regarded as one of President Roosevelt's two or three major defeats. He lost by only four or five votes in the House in his attempt to reorganize the executive. President Johnson voted with him on that. Do you remember that issue?

J: No, I don't really, except that it engendered a lot of heat. I can't say that I understood it. It was pretty much down the line, more conservative people were against it and the more liberal ones supported the President on it.

The main thing that built up during that year, and the main thing that was closest to Lyndon's heart and became the work of our life for all of the years before the war got into gear, was the Lower Colorado River project, the series of dams on the Colorado River, the High Dam, the REA [Rural Electric Administration]. That was the year, the summer of 1938, when he secured the approval of Central Texas rural electric projects. Oh, that was just a time of real elation for him! He didn't have to take any tour to see what it was like on the farms. He knew all about men hauling up that water out of that well, bucket by bucket on a cold winter morning, and all about the women leaning over the wash pots, backbreaking work. It stemmed just right straight out of his life experience. A man named John Carmody was the Rural Electrification administrator.

Lyndon couldn't always get him to act as fast as he wanted him to. But they ended up by being good co-workers I think. Lyndon was always wanting to extend the lines. I think he sought and obtained the help of President Roosevelt in getting Carmody to give him more money and farther lines than Carmody had at first thought would be practical.

G: Perhaps one of the issues was whether or not the Hill Country land was populous enough to justify it.

J: Oh, yes. Lyndon had a tale about that, about how you were not supposed to have the lines unless you had five customers per mile or some such yardstick. The Hill Country did not, indeed, have that many. But he assured them that they soon would. (Laughter) In any case, it was a great victory and a high moment in his life when he was able to announce the approval of the PEC, the Pedernales Electric Co-op.

G: He had to deal with the existing private power companies, didn't he?

J: Yes, that was a *big* fight. One which in a way he relished, and he was determined to win it, and in a way he really did have such a deep-seated respect for big business. But he was determined to take them on, and in town by town, as I recall, there were votes on it. I think he went to each of the towns and campaigned for it vigorously. Most of them he won. There may have been some of them, do you recall, that he lost?

G: I think in every one of the sixteen counties in his district by the end of 1939 they had public power.

J: At one time there were thirteen thousand connected customers and we were then the largest REA in operation in the country. I'm sure that that was a brief thing because the density of population in other areas would have soon overtaken us. But at any rate, we

got into operation mighty fast.

G: Someone once said that it's difficult for us now in this day and age to realize how bitter that fight was.

J: Oh, yes! I think they probably called him a Communist and a few other things.

G: I understand that the power companies would use a lot of devices to sell their point of view, like paying everyone in silver dollars.

J: Yes. I've heard of that, too. I can't say that I saw it with my own eyes.

G: Also running through here you get the impression that Senator [Alvin] Wirtz was advising a little bit more moderate course and more compromise than President Johnson was. Do you remember them counseling on this together?

J: No, I can't say that I actually do. But Senator Wirtz was a corporation lawyer of very considerable experience and success. He would have--oh, yes, I do remember a great story, which you have no doubt heard a jillion times. But let me see if I can remember just how it went.

Senator Wirtz was trying to set up just a meeting at which they would discuss the options, because he felt that there was room to arrive at an amicable solution, a division of the areas between--which would receive REA power and others which would just retain private companies that they had had before. He did get a meeting set up between Lyndon and Mr.--oh, what was that old gentleman's name who was head of one of the biggest private power companies and a man of very great prestige?

G: John Carpenter?

J: Yes, Mr. Carpenter. [He] got a meeting set up with him that took place. Well, they

talked and talked, and tried and tried, and couldn't budge Mr. Carpenter an inch. Apparently Lyndon got up and just told him off in loud rude terms and stalked out of the meeting. I think [he] perhaps told him to go to hell or something like that.

Later on, a few hours later, Lyndon went, feeling not quite as sure of himself as he had been, to see Senator Wirtz and said, "Well, Senator, what do you think about what I told him?" And Senator Wirtz said, "Son, it took me three months to get this as far along as getting Mr. Carpenter to agree to sit down and talk to you. Now you have broken it all up. Just remember, you can tell a man to go to hell, but you can't make him go." That made a great impression on Lyndon and I think it moderated all of his arguments from then on, to some extent. He knew he couldn't win it, particularly against a strong, entrenched opponent, on that basis. I think maybe that was the beginning of where he remembered that verse from the Bible, "Now come let us reason together." So he was a learner. He lost that round, but he did not lose the eventual battle.

G: Was there any evidence, as a result of this fight, that the power companies tried to defeat him in his re-election efforts?

J: I cannot say. You'd have to ask somebody else about that, because we did not really have an opponent that summer. Perhaps it was too far along into the summer, I guess it was, by the time they saw the caliber of person he was. But we did get a free ride, so to speak, that summer. And indeed, we got three free rides: 1938 and 1940--

G: 1942.

J: --and then after the run for the Senate and the defeat of 1941, we got another free ride for the House in 1942.

G: As long as we're talking about re-election, I notice a lot of the newspaper publishers ran editorials suggesting that he shouldn't have opposition. Of course, he had just gone through an election the year before. Do you know whose idea that was originally to promote that?

J: I'm sure that all of Lyndon's close friends hoped that it could be promoted. I must say, in those days Lyndon had good press relations. He worked at good press relations. He had many friends in the press: Charlie Green, Buck Hood, Lorraine Barnes, Gordon Fulcher in Austin. He and the Mayor, Tom Miller, would often go together to put the paper to bed--I think that was the Mayor's expression--and stop by someplace afterwards at an ice cream store or Dairy Queen, if they had them in those days. Anyhow, [they each would] get a great big, double-dip cone. They outdid each other in their liking of ice cream. And whenever he went to country towns, he would make a respectful call on the newspaper editor. So he worked at it and he enjoyed their friendship pretty much.

G: He did travel the district, though, a lot even though he didn't have opposition.

J: Oh, absolutely. Going to every post office was a lifelong, rather a twelve-year long, aim and reality, I think, in his twelve years in the House.

G: One of his friends remembered that he, in a non-election, non-campaign situation, made seventeen speeches in one day all in different precincts. (Laughter) Could he do that?

J: Yes. I remember that in campaign years. I didn't know that it was quite that much in non-campaign [years], but that must have been a three-shirt day, I would say.

Our personal life, our social life, extended about as it had before. I kept on getting a lot of pleasure out of being in the Congressional Club and a member of the 75th

Club and knowing the wives of our fellow congressmen, Lera Thomas especially. One of the most fun things that we ever did was the monthly meeting of the delegation. I could always take constituents. Constituents threaded through all of my life, as the most important thing. Lyndon and I did not go out a great deal to things that were unrelated to business. But there was so much--everything was related to business. If the Speaker invited us down to his apartment, as he came to do--I'm not sure it began as early as 1938, I believe it did--he had a delightful manner as a host. He would have a meal sent over from across the street, an adjoining cafe, a very good place, and he would have three or four congressmen, his favorite folks, which Lyndon desired very much to be, and I think became. Tom Corcoran was often there, and Ben Cohen, and people from the administration.

Then sometime we would go out, the Speaker and Wright Patman and Lyndon and I, and how I happened to get to go along I don't know, because it was a very masculine-oriented thing and I seldom had anything to say. But Lyndon was always taking me places where necessarily the other wives didn't go. We would go to a seafood place, named Hall's, down close to the river, where they had absolutely marvelous lobster and beer in pitchers. I wish that I had been a recording machine for all the interesting stories that I heard. And it was always a big time when Senator Wirtz would come to town and take us out to dinner. We would be likely to go to the Mayflower. More often we would be up in his suite than downstairs.

Then Congressman [Charles L.] South lived right up a block above us on Columbia Road. He was a tall, lanky, philosophic, mild-mannered man and taught

Lyndon a good deal. They were good friends. He had a sweet, gentle, quiet wife. We'd go up and have supper with them sometime or they would come down with us.

One of the big events of the year was for me to take Mrs. Johnson, Lyndon's mother, to as many of these things where I could take a guest. Also, she was very interested in genealogy. She, like I always did, loved sightseeing and traveling. So we would combine her love of genealogy with a marvelous day in the Virginia countryside by going to look at old county courthouses, look at the records in them, old cemeteries, look at the tombstones and try to figure out what relatives were buried where. DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] headquarters, both the big one in Washington and I think there were others scattered around. Anyhow, we had lots of trips around Virginia which I greatly enjoyed. She also loved antiques. She did not have much money to spend, but in those days you could get antiques for modest amounts. I remember loading ponderous things into our car and saying to Mrs. Johnson, sometimes with a little impatience, "How will you ever get this home? You can't possibly put it in your suitcase or carry it on the train. The rest of us can't load it in the car." Well, somehow or another she always managed to get it home. I have in the house now, at the Ranch, a mirror that she and I bought on one of our trips that she left me in her will, and a chest of drawers is upstairs in the purple bedroom. We had a lot of fun times together.

G: Do you remember this trip back to Texas from Washington? I think you stopped at Monticello and the Hermitage.

J: Yes. It became my custom, even as early as our first year in 1935, to leave Washington a week or two before Congress was estimated to adjourn, and drive, taking with me

whoever I could, maybe some of the secretaries' wives or maybe a secretary, to open the office in Austin, and this time certainly Mrs. Johnson. This time we got to do what we hadn't gotten to do coming up. We stopped and explored every inch of Monticello, which was at that time much less restored than it is now. We stopped by the Hermitage. In fact, we took it leisurely and saw a lot, and had a great time. She was a good companion for me.

G: Well, now, when you would get back, would you stop in Austin or Johnson City?

J: Well, of course we would first stop and stay a while with my daddy. In this particular year I don't quite remember whether Mrs. Johnson stayed with me or whether she then caught the train on. Because I always tried to stay at least a week with Daddy. I cannot remember where we stayed that year in Austin. I know that we spent one fall at a hotel, at *the* hotel, in Johnson City and established the office there. But I expect that that is the fall of 1939. Perhaps we can both look it up.

(Interruption)

G: Let me ask you about the economic conditions which seemed to have been very much on President Johnson's mind in 1938, the depressed state of agriculture and the farm tenancy situation.

J: Parity, it seems, came up just about every year, voting on parity. It's my recollection that he always earnestly voted for cotton parity and parity on all the crops that affected his district. And something that was a lasting interest with him began about that year, I think, and that was a report on the economic conditions of the South in which Clark Foreman and Lowell Mellett were major economists and writers. It wasn't a thing of just

one year with Lyndon. I mean, he referred to it all of his life, ever since. He was passionate about it, that the South should have been--well, if not victimized, at least a sort of a stepchild, for so long, ever since the Civil War. Freight rates was one instance, the discrimination in freight rates, if I can recall rightly. Then the whole banking system seemed to have favored the East. Although he was truly from the Southwest, still there was an affection and a caring about the South that was very much a part of him. He was intensely interested in this report, worked on it real hard, referred to it many times since in his life. It's a great story, what has happened since then. That's 1938. That's only what?--forty years ago.

G: Walter Webb wrote a book about this time [in] which he described the South as actually a colony of the Northeast. Was this notion pretty much in President Johnson's thinking, too, that the South had really been reduced to the state of being economically, at least, a colony of the Northeast?

J: I don't know that he would have described it as that, but he always felt that the South had not had a fair shake, and that it was going to be one of his life's aims to remedy that as far as one man could from his vantage point. Lowell Mellett was someone that he knew in relation to the [Clifford and Virginia] Durrs and a couple his name was Bill Douglas, too.

Clark Foreman, the mention of his name reminds me of a facet of life in Washington of that day that affected just the wives, just me, but it's interesting to recall. I met Mrs. Clark Foreman on one of my formal calls. It was the custom of that day that a new congressman's wife called on all those who preceded her, all the members of her own delegation especially. Presumably you'd call on all the rest of them, but I don't think

you carried it that far, really. But you sure did call on the wife of the chairman of your husband's committee, and you called on the wives of the cabinet and the Court. It was also expected that you called on the embassies, all the new wives. What that meant is that on a certain day, and each group had its day--gee, let me see if I can pull it out of the well of memory what the days were. I think Tuesday was the House, and Thursday, the Senate, and Friday, the embassies. Monday may have been the Court, and Wednesday, the cabinet.

Actually, those poor cabinet wives, for instance, were really expected to be at home from four to six and have some tea and cookies and all sorts of goodies laid out for Lord knows who might call on them. Now on the White House you certainly called, but it was not expected that Mrs. Roosevelt would be at home. You simply went up there and handed your cards to the butler. At other places you would knock on the door--usually a bunch of us would get in the car, sort of car pool it, each of us taking our cards and wearing our white gloves and big smiles. Somebody would drive, and we would go up to the Senate wives or whoever we were going to call on that day, and leave our cards. You left your husband's and your card, Mr. and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson. I cannot remember the routine, but women did not call on men. Women called on the women. If they had daughters of an age above eighteen you would leave a card on them. It was quite a complicated and funny little thing and it came to an end with the war. It killed it off as it did so much of protocol. But in those days you did it, and then people returned your calls.

G: I see. The ones that had been called on--

J: Yes. Returned them. And I had some interesting encounters in that fashion. People would most often be out. There was nothing that compelled the wives of the House and Senate to be in. But I met a lot of interesting people that way. For instance, I dared to drive up that imposing driveway to Tregaron, where the wife of Lyndon's committee chairman, Senator Millard Tydings, was married to the daughter of Mr. [Joseph Edward] Davies, who was currently living at Tregaron. They were living at Tregaron and I went there to call on them. That was my first sight of that magnificent house. Mr. Davies, you will remember, at that time was married to Marjorie Merriweather Post. Tregaron was one of the great houses of the town and she was the great hostess of the town. After a while, I don't know just when, I had the good fortune to get invited to her annual spring garden parties, which were beautiful. Everybody wore their most beautiful hat and sat under umbrellas on the lawn and had delicious little things and looked at the scene that is a period piece [that] no longer exists. There would be quite a few hundred guests. I remember meeting Mrs. Bill Douglas that way, but I think that must have been the next year. You know, times fade into each other. The war was sort of the big dividing line. I remember the years 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, and 1941. Those five years all melt into a montage and then there is the violent break of the war. Everything changes and you remember the next years.

G: Did you have any minor catastrophes at any of these occasions where you would call on someone?

J: Oh, no, I enjoyed them tremendously. I got started on this by mentioning that that's how I met Mrs. Clark Foreman. She was at home. She said, "Come right in." We had a very

interesting time. He was one of the more liberal, rather, exceedingly liberal members of the New Deal group.

G: On race, too, wasn't he?

J: Yes, I think. I vaguely remember that he was, although he was a southerner and I'm sure must have been considered a renegade at home perhaps.

G: What was she like?

J: [She was] more interested in intellectual pursuits than most of the women that I knew, and bright. Others who peopled our life were Tex and Wicky Goldschmidt, for whom I had a great fondness. One of the first Georgetown houses that I became acquainted with was theirs, with those narrow little staircases and the straight-up-and-down houses, and the aura of age. That was before Georgetown really became fashionable as it later was. It emerged sometime in the Roosevelt years. I don't know just when. But it didn't put on that patina of elegance for quite some while. It was a little down at--it wasn't all painted up and pretty.

C: You know, one can almost envision a social gathering made up of eastern liberal New Deal intellectuals and southern and southwestern liberal congressmen, like Maury Maverick, Lyndon Johnson . . .

J: Well, we were a pretty sparse breed, I expect.

G: Was there a real affinity here between these two groups? I know that there was a lot of socializing there.

J: Well, people with common interests naturally did get together. Gee, it's hard for me to remember where we were all from. Tex Goldschmidt actually was from Fredericksburg,

Texas. Abe Fortas had a Tennessee beginning, Memphis I think it was. Of course, Tom Corcoran was a hardy Irish Rhode Islander, wasn't he?

G: Yes. By 1938, of course, the international situation was becoming more and more an important part of the picture. President Johnson, I understand, made it part of his business to help get Jewish people out of Germany and help them get settled, particularly I guess if they were relatives of constituents in the Tenth District. Do you want to talk about that and then talk about the case of Erich Leinsdorf, whom he also helped get established?

J: I just remember that from our earliest days he had a lot of good Jewish friends, particularly the Novys in Austin. They went to bat for him, asked or unasked, and he for them. Yes. It began to get frightening and terrible in Germany. There were lots of people in our district who had relatives over there who were trying to get them out. He did work with great sympathy and determination on that.

Now, as to how he met Erich Leinsdorf, that was not in that fashion. That was through Charles Marsh. I think it must have been by 1938 that we were going out to Longlea, which I have mentioned earlier, this lovely home out in Culpeper, Virginia, Alice Maffet Glass Manners' [later Marsh] home. There we met Erich Leinsdorf. Charles took a lot of interest in him and Alice did, too, as they did in a lot of people, a lot of artists. Writers, musicians, composers, they had many friends, and creative friends like that. Erich Leinsdorf was about to come to the end of his stay in the United States which I guess was a visitor's permit. Going back to Germany was just a horror. Lyndon tried to enable him to stay here. As I recall, it meant something like going to Cuba and

staying six weeks and then coming back in. Because Cuba at that time was a peaceful little island that was an easy entry into the United States. I don't know quite how.

G: Was that maybe through the Immigration [Service]? Would he work with Immigration on that or would he work with a higher level?

J: Frankly I don't know. I just know he worked persistently. Whatever was the way to do it, he was likely to find out that way and just have at it.

G: I wonder if he ever dealt with the German ambassador in helping some of these relatives of constituents get out of Germany? Would he ever be that direct?

J: Not that I--I would doubt it. In fact, our association with the embassies was very limited and it would just likely be me making those Friday afternoon calls, which I enjoyed very much. Because the faraway places with the strange sounding names always had an allure for me although we didn't get to experience many of them for many years.

G: Now also in 1938 Maury Maverick was defeated for re-election.

J: That was a real blow. He and [William D.] McFarlane were both defeated. I know Lyndon felt that sting, because he and Maury and McFarlane were the only three in the Texas delegation who had voted for minimum wage. I suppose they were the three probably most liberal members of the House. And the other two were defeated. I guess Lyndon was not defeated just by more constant and determined work. I think he had learned his lesson from Senator Wirtz about, "Don't tell folks to go to hell. You can't make them do it. Try and work it out on a more reasoning basis."

G: I came across this anecdote in the scrapbooks regarding a house that was burning in December the end of the year in Austin. As you were driving by you saw it and jumped

out and ran in and got the kids out.

J: Yes. It really wasn't a perilous situation, as I remember, but it was just a scene when somebody needed help and quick action and so we did take the children out and called the fire department. I think that I took the children on home and just gave them some milk and cookies or something while Lyndon made sure the fire department got there. It was not a life and death situation, but it could have been scary.

G: Was that typical of him in terms of . . .

J: He was certainly decisive and fast-acting, yes. No surprise about that.

(Interruption)

A thread that kept on running through our lives in 1938 was the NYA and its activities. One of the things that the NYA engaged in in 1938 was to work on the construction of an administration building at Buchanan Dam. That later became, was the scene of so many fun times that we had. Jesse Kellam, of course, had been named head of the NYA and Bill Deason, number-two man. We still kept up a close relation with all the old NYA boys. The NYA worked on a fish hatchery up near Roy Inks Dam, one of the lovely scenic spots of the Hill Country. When you look at it in hindsight you wonder, with all the marvelous things that that series of dams did on the Colorado River for soil conservation and flood control and cheap power, we didn't really think about recreation. We really didn't think about saving out a piece of it for the general public for camping and hike-and-bike and picnicking and all like that. However, this fish hatchery near Roy Inks Dam was just such a scenic spot. Because it was built by the NYA it sort of has a fond memory in my mind.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview IX