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JEWEL MALACHEK SCOTT ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW II
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JEWELL MALECHEK SCOTT

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INTERVIEW II

DATE: May 30, 1990

INTERVIEWEE: JEWELL MALECHEK SCOTT

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: The LBJ Ranch, Johnson City, Texas

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

G: What I thought we could do is start today with a discussion of the President in retirement, because we have very little documentation of that in the oral histories and you're one of the best sources in the world on that.

Let's begin by talking about what sort of discussions, what sort of plans did he make for retirement while he was in the White House. Did he ever talk to you about coming back to the Ranch and when he would do so or anything of this nature?

S: I don't think really directly to me. Sometimes I guess maybe I was part of the group that--maybe he would talk to Dale about what he was going to do when he came home, about getting more involved in the ranching end of it. But as far as to me, no.

G: Did you have a sense that he was coming back in 1969 rather than running again?

S: No, I think we were very surprised when we saw him on television saying that he wasn't going to run, because we all thought that he probably would.

G: Did you talk to him after his decision?

S: Sure, because we were all shocked. We all thought he was great and we thought he was the ideal person to run. We couldn't really buy what he was saying on television. But we probably had a different opinion of him than maybe some of the others, too.

G: After his March 31 speech when he announced that he wasn't going to run, did he then talk to you and Dale about coming back to the Ranch and planning--?

S: I think he wanted everybody that hadn't been to the White House to be sure and come and get to see Washington, D.C. Those were some of the things that he said. In reference to coming home, I think that they were adding on to the house and Dale was sort of indirectly involved with that. I guess when they came home they spent more time with us visiting and telling us different things that they wanted done. I think when he first came home he sort of really didn't know what to do with himself. I think he was sort of at loose ends.

G: In terms of how active to be on the Ranch itself?

S: Right. I think he would come up here a lot, or he would pick up Dale and drive around. I think he hadn't decided exactly what he wanted to do with things.

G: After his March 31 speech, but before he left the presidency, do you think he ever considered actually running again in 1968 rather than staying with the decision he announced in March? Did he ever reconsider that?

S: I don't know.

G: Never talked to you about that.

S: No. I heard him talking later, after he retired, to various people. I think he didn't really plan on running. He really planned on quitting. I don't remember exactly who all he talked to or what they said, but I remember him discussing it at various times with different people that came to visit the Ranch.

G: His decision not to run again?

S: Right, his decision not to run.

G: Any specifics about that that he talked about?

S: No, I think he always regretted that he couldn't end the war in Vietnam. I think he was always talking with some of his staff and some of the visitors that came to the Ranch about what might have been, or what he could have done, or--you know, should he have been more informed about certain things.

G: Did he become a more active rancher then, when he did come home?

S: Oh yes, much to the chagrin, I think, of the ranch hands, because they said they were never safe again, they really had to watch what they were doing. When he came home he sort of eliminated a lot of things, like he didn't like to see two men driving around in the pickup, keeping company. He wanted to use the manpower more efficiently, I guess is what he was trying to get at. He tried, I think, to incorporate a lot of the things that he had used in his office in Washington here at the Ranch that really didn't work too well, like memos. Cowboys aren't very good at writing memos. (Laughter) I think he got Dale to do it at times, but when you're really busy it's kind of hard to come in at night--like you get in after ten o'clock at night and write out a memo to President Johnson about what you're going to do the next day when sometimes the weather dictates [what you do]. I think farming is something that you do just sort of day by day--certain things are planned, like combining and planting and things like that.

G: Did he make any changes in the Ranch in terms of, let's say, the stock or the use of the land or cattle, anything that was substantial?

S: One of the first things he did was to send Dale out to buy a new herd bull, because they

decided if he was going to go into ranching, he was really going to go into it in a big way and have the best. They went to Manning, Iowa, eventually and bought a new bull from Wiese and Son. They also built their own feed and fertilizer plant here at the Ranch during those years, and we sold fertilizer to other people as well as liquid feed. It was one of the first in this area and I think there weren't more than two or three other ones in the whole state probably at that time, liquid fertilizer. [It was] sort of a new concept.

G: Did the President start right away planning for what would happen to the Ranch after his death, or was this something that came later?

S: I think that was something that came later. I don't remember exactly how much later. I think when they--at one time they sold some land to Fuqua Industries, and then at that time is when they really started to think they might give the Ranch house and some acreage to the park service. He thought that he could better deal with selling off land than Mrs. Johnson could and could probably get a better price for it. I think he knew then too that her interests probably were with beautification and wildflowers, because they always had been, and he thought the park service could have some cattle. I think originally they got fifty head and now I think our herd is about a hundred and forty.

G: How much did he know about cattle? Was he a good rancher in terms of understanding--?

S: I think he was a good rancher, but he said many times when we'd be driving around--and every morning we did, after we went through the mail at the main house. Then we'd get in the car and we'd drive around and look at everything. We would drive through the cattle and look, and I think he was good although he said many times, "You and I can

drive through here all day long and we probably won't see anything. Dale can just zip through here on his way to get a cup of coffee at Stonewall and he can probably tell us more than you and I could sitting out here half a day."

G: Did the press continue to have an interest in him out here once he was no longer president?

S: I think so because--he decided that he was going to have his own milk and eggs here on the Ranch. We were carrying the excess into Austin and selling it at the station there. They got hold of it and made a big deal out of it, and that upset him. He said he couldn't even sell milk and eggs without making the headlines. Actually it was butter and eggs.

But he decided he wanted the Ranch to be self-sufficient and to furnish all the employees that lived on the Ranch with food. He would even let the staff off down there if they would go home and put up vegetables when there were a lot of things in the garden, like beans or something like that, if they'd go home and put it up, freeze it or can it for their families' use later. Mrs. Johnson then and now either cans or freezes a lot of food that they use at the Ranch and then they also gave it away to guests that come.

But he had some cartons made, with "LBJ Ranch" on them, for eggs that he gave away. He would give people pounds of butter that had been molded with various designs when they came to the Ranch.

G: What kind of designs would they have?

S: You can get butter molds. I was the one who did the milk and eggs when they first came home. In fact, he made a deal with my oldest daughter, that if she would take care of the chickens--and we bought two hundred White Leghorn chickens, and they put the chicken

house over by Lupe Bravo's house--that he would give her a car. So he gave Luci a new Lincoln and he gave Clarie, my oldest daughter, her Corvette, and the deal was that she was supposed to take care of the chickens. Well, she didn't take care of them too well. She enjoyed the car more, I think.

G: The President seems to have had a real interest in Mexico during this time.

S: Yes, he did. We had a place called Las Pampas.

G: Tell me about that. When did he first start going there?

S: I think they went there some during the presidency but more so during those retirement years. The house I think reminded him of the house at the King Ranch. He said it looked very much like it. It was a white stucco house, a beautiful house. It was in a--probably countryside that was very much like that at the King Ranch. It had an airstrip on it so we usually flew in, and even that probably was pretty dangerous because we really didn't have anything there as far as lights or mechanics or whatever you needed. He put in a whole new system, as far as water was concerned, there at the ranch house and he took down ice makers, washing machines, dryers, refrigerators, stoves. And then when we went we took most of our own food here from the Ranch. One of the things he was very much interested in was how the people lived and their hygiene there, because it was completely different than ours. So he'd have little training sessions for them.

G: Did he conduct those sessions himself?

S: Well, he would pretty much ad-lib from the sidelines. He would have someone--he invited Taylor Bradell, who does all the well work here at the Ranch, to go down and he would explain to them about the necessity for having cleaner water. And then he invited

a doctor to go along--or he invited a doctor to come out from Camargo, I think--to tell the women how to use the pill so that they wouldn't have so many children. Then he had the doctor explain to him--then he asked the doctor how many children he had, and I think he had nine. (Laughter) He said he wasn't a very good example.

He was always very interested in the children on the Ranch here as well as those in Mexico. And before we would go down there he would send me to Austin to buy clothes for them. We took clothes down there, we took milk and vitamins. He took their schoolroom and painted it, and he bought all sorts of new books. I think at that time Lyn was reading Richard Scarry books, and he thought if that was good for Lyn it would be good for them too. So he bought stacks of those and took [them] down there. Crayons, color books. But mainly he stressed to their teacher that they should have vitamins and a break in the morning where they'd have cookies and chocolate milk or something. Then he took down a lot of this for them.

G: It seems almost like a Head Start program.

S: It was, sort of on his own ranch there. He also would talk to all of his friends; he would tell them if they had clothes their children had outgrown, if they would give them to him he would give them new clothes in return, if they'd give him those clothes to take to his children in Mexico. So a lot of his friends would bring boxes or send boxes of beautiful clothes that we took down there, and he took a lot of his own clothes down there. We hung them up on lines on the porch there at the house and these people would come up and get them. We would see them later with his [LBJ's] shoes on with the toes all cut out because they couldn't get their feet in them otherwise. When we drove around he'd say

that was a better use for them than leaving them sitting in his closet with no one using them.

G: Did he have a business interest in the ranch, in Las Pampas?

S: Yes, I think he wanted to see if he could make money with the cattle there. He had Dale down there to work the cattle and he would take Russell Thomas, who was the vet that we used here at the Ranch. He would go down too.

G: Did he bring his cattle down there or did he raise Mexican cattle?

S: No, he raised those down there. We did bring some steers out once and we had them here that last year, and we put them on the fields between our house and the Johnsons' house and fattened them up and then sold them.

G: From Mexico.

S: Yes.

G: Las Pampas must have been a huge ranch. I hear it was one of the big--

S: It was. I think it was something like sixty-seven miles from one end to the other, one way, it was big. I don't remember how many acres, but it was a lot.

G: Did he have Mexican partners in that business?

S: At one time the ranch belonged to President [Miguel] Alemán and I don't know how--I think he just was leasing it.

G: What happened to it?

S: I think after he died Mrs. Johnson just let it go. Because he was the one who was having the most fun going down there. He would invite other people to meet him there and he'd send his plane after them. We would go down for weekends or sometimes spend as much

as a week there at one time. He took Wilbur Early, the man that was doing all of the roadwork here on the Ranch, he took him down there and they took an old Caterpillar and fixed it up to do roadwork down there. Dale, my husband, took an old John Deere tractor--took everything off of it, right down to--the whole motor off, and put it all back together again and it worked. You know, the kind with the metal wheels.

G: Yes.

S: They did all sorts of repairs down there. And I guess they just went off and left it again. But it was sort of fun to do, I guess for him, and to see if he could do it.

G: Did he make money out of it?

S: Oh, I'm sure he did.

G: Any other memories of Las Pampas?

S: I think he [had] a lot of fun down there. Mrs. Johnson decorated the house. It was completely furnished when we moved in, something like a 1940 movie, satin drapes and stuff in the bedrooms. The rooms were huge, and huge bathrooms and dressing rooms. He always invited at least five or six couples to go along and then while he was there, if he was going to be there for a week or so, people would keep coming in the whole time you were there. So it was a place for him to go and have fun and sort of be away from--the reporters didn't come down there.

G: It was very private.

S: Right.

G: Well, he also went to Acapulco a lot.

S: Yes, and that house also belonged to Alemán.

G: This was the one on the beach.

S: It had its own bay. It was kind of secluded.

G: And he would go what, once a year?

S: Once a year, usually in February, and stay a month. But before he went they would send a plane down and he would send Lawrence Klein from the Ranch and some of the others to completely go over the house, fix all the showers [so that] the water would flow really well, fix all the air conditioners. And then also this plane would take everybody's clothes down there, so that when you went, everything was there.

Mrs. Johnson would work out the guest list with him. Usually once a week the guests would change. They had people like Mollie Parnis, Jeanne Vanderbilt. Most of his staff came down there, like Donald Thomas and Tom Johnson and his wife, [and] Harry Middleton. So it was a way to have fun with people and still get work done.

G: Would he have Mexican visitors there as well?

S: Yes.

G: President Alemán?

S: Yes. He came and played golf with him. Also--I can't remember the man's name. He was head of the visitors bureau there in Mexico. I'll think of it after while, but there was a couple that came all the time.

G: [The] Guajardos. Mike and Marian Guajardo.

S: Yes, Mike and Marian Guajardo. They made a lot of arrangements for things, like if we wanted to go out and go to a club or something. Bob Hope was there and we went over there one night to their--and I believe they were at Tres Vidas. I can't remember. If there

was anything that was going on that was real exciting, usually Mike and Marian would set it up, and then a lot of times they would come by and pick everybody up, or go with us, and we'd go out to some restaurant like where they jump off the cliff there. I don't remember the name of that. But that was one of his favorites, because I think they had that forty years ago when he first went to Acapulco.

Also I think Mike Guajardo owned the El Presidente, one of the hotels. I believe that was the one he owned.

G: But the President did do some work down there as well.

S: Yes, I think he always worked. He always--his play was always work too, because he could get--he could talk to them and he knew their--he knew how to--I think he learned how to get what he wanted out of somebody by visiting with them when they were sort of off guard, like on a vacation.

G: Was he working on *The Vantage Point*?

S: Yes, and he would go over chapters, in the morning especially. Like at breakfast he would have Bob Hardesty and Harry Middleton and Tommy Corcoran and Mary Rather and Tom Johnson, just lots of them, in and out and they would go over and over different things in the book. And he would go through those chapters and write all--I hope they-- I'm sure they did--saved all of those, didn't they?

G: They had his handwriting on them?

S: Right.

G: Yes. What would he do? Would he edit them or would he rewrite them?

S: Right. He would go over them, and he did it around the swimming pool here at the

Ranch; he did in the car. He read excerpts of that book to everybody, and get everybody's opinion on different things.

G: Would he ever tell them, the writers, how it happened and sort of give them the--?

S: I don't know. Sometimes when he would read something he would go into a story about it that seems like to me would have been a lot more fun reading than what he actually ended up writing. If you knew some of those little funny things that went with the book it would have made it a lot better than--to me it's kind of hard to read. It's kind of--I think it would have been more exciting if he had written it like he talked.

G: Why do you think he didn't do that?

S: I think he felt like it wouldn't have been professional. I think he was always worried about the fact that he didn't come off as professional as he wanted to. I think he worried about the fact that--like you are a Ph.D. and he wasn't. I think sometimes that's why he wouldn't--because he was so much better, I think, when he was talking, like one on one, than he was when he made these speeches; I don't care where he went.

G: Did he keep up with events in Washington when he was here?

S: Yes, I think so. He took all the newspapers--every day they would bring them in [and] just lay them on the bed. It was like all the--it was fun to always have every newspaper you wanted to look at every day.

G: Every morning.

S: Right.

G: Briefings from the White House? Would he get weekly briefings or something like that?

S: Yes, they came here to the Ranch.

- G: How much communication do you think he had with the White House and, let's say, his friends in Congress during this period, friends in Washington?
- S: I don't know. Probably his staff in Austin could better answer that. I know he was on the phone a lot all the time, but it was mostly with friends. But then most of his friends were politicians, and the staff.
- G: You were describing a typical day earlier where he would get up and after breakfast you'd ride around and look at the cattle. He would read the newspapers first off?
- S: Usually when he woke up, he stayed in bed until about--he did all of his mail mainly in bed. And he would read everything and then as he handed you each thing he'd tell you what to do with it. With each piece of mail we had a little piece of paper at the top and we would have things typed on there like, "What should we do? Should we answer this? Should we ignore it?" He would check on there what [he wanted] or he would say something. After he'd looked at all the mail and watched all the news in the morning--and he watched all three stations while he was talking to you, reading the mail, and watching the news and sometimes talking to Jockey Wade, who managed the house and worked with Dale outside. He might be carrying on two or three conversations at one time while he was watching the news and looking at his mail, which I could never figure out how he did. Then he would dress usually and we would drive around the Ranch. If guests were there he'd sometimes have breakfast with them and then they too would drive around. They would hash over maybe something that happened during the presidency, depending on who it was that was visiting.
- G: Then would he normally come back and have lunch at the--?

S: Yes. He liked to have lunch at the Ranch house. And he liked to invite Dale to come in in his work clothes and quiz him about what was going on on the Ranch, especially if he had visitors.

G: Really?

S: Right. He would sort of give them a lesson in how to run a ranch.

G: Then in the afternoons--

S: He usually took a nap after lunch. Usually in the mornings too he would try to work in a--maybe go swimming, especially if it was warm. For a while they had a bubble over the pool, but that was really hard to put up. I don't know why he didn't build Mrs. Johnson an indoor pool while he was living because he certainly loved to swim, and that bubble they had was really something else to try to put that thing on. Everybody hated it when he said he was going to--because it really was hard to get up. Did you ever see it?

G: No.

S: Well, this big bubble they'd put over--and it was held up by air. Then when they took it down they had to lay it out on the airstrip to put it up. It was really a booger to put up and to take down. Everybody on the Ranch hated it because it was really a big project.

G: Was it effective?

S: Yes, he used it, I think, a couple of years.

G: Then after his nap he would ride around again or what would he do? Swim?

S: He would often ride around or he'd swim. He liked to play golf too. He played a lot of golf. We played--he didn't play golf like everybody else. He had his own rules.

G: Which were?

S: He'd take a club and just build a little mound up to put his ball on, and he'd do that for me too or for whoever else was playing with him. Of course people that really play golf well, they would just look at him in amazement when he would do this.

G: Sort of an earthen tee.

S: Yes. Or he would just pick up a ball and move it where he wanted it. He could play and play well, but I think he did this for effect, maybe. I don't know. But he didn't play like other people did, and he played with people like Darrell Royal, who let him do this, and Bob Hope and Alemán. Here at the Ranch we'd go into Fredericksburg and he would get the banker there, Harold Stehling, and we'd go out to the local golf course and play out there. A lot of times Darrell Royal would come out here and bring a friend from Austin. I know Jack Crosby came once, different people. The Rockefellers were here once, and I know Happy Rockefeller thought we were going to play here on the Ranch. She didn't realize that she was really going to be in Fredericksburg where we would be out in the public. She thought we had a golf course right here on the Ranch. She was really amazed when we drove eight miles to the golf course, because she thought she was just going to go out here and play.

G: Then in the evenings would he normally stay here? Would he go into Austin?

S: If Mrs. Johnson was gone he stayed here at our house a lot at night. In the beginning we had four bedrooms and two baths, and then after he stayed here the first time Mrs. Johnson went someplace--because he didn't like to stay by himself down there--Dale and I would often go down there and spend the night or he would come up here. After the first morning that he stayed here he said he either had to get up at five o'clock or stay in

bed until after eight because our children would get in the bathroom and shut the door and they wouldn't let him in until they got through, because they all had to go to school. So he decided to add another room and a bath to our house and that would be his room.

Also at that same time I was fixing milk and eggs and butter and stuff like that for everybody here on the Ranch, and putting in a walk-in cooler down there. So he decided he would call that the milk room and he also could store all this equipment out there. So it was a room for him, a place to put all this equipment. However, this milking thing didn't last but about two years because it was really a lot of work, and I didn't have that much time to do it, and nobody else wanted to do it. So we finally quit. But it was something he really liked and really wanted somebody to do. It would have taken one person, really, all the time to do it. You wouldn't have time to do anything else.

But after he had the--who's the architect from San Antonio who did--?

G: O'Neil Ford.

S: O'Neil Ford. He had O'Neil Ford come out and look--in fact, we went into his office in San Antonio to have him get the tile for the floor out there, and the Mexican tile for the bath he had Mrs. Johnson's brother send out from Santa Fe. He had Bob [Robert E.] Waldron come down and go with him to Austin to Louis Shanks to pick out the furniture and stuff for it.

G: For this bedroom and--

S: Right.

G: Then did he use it after--?

S: Yes. When anyone would come, well, he would bring them up and show them where he

stayed. Then he would sit in Dale's chair--Dale had a chair--but when Dale would come in he'd give him his chair. He liked it so well that he had--Dorothy Territo came out and measured it. I can't remember who came with her; somebody came with her, and they measured that chair, and he had one made exactly like it, but he had it covered in sort of a white, real soft fabric.

G: And is that at the Ranch now?

S: That's at the Ranch house in the living room.

G: How much time did he spend here as opposed to, say, in his office in Austin at the Federal Building or at the Library?

S: I would say he spent at least 80 per cent or more of the time here at the Ranch. I don't think he stayed--he just would go in and go by there and that was it. Maybe go in and go to the Library when he went to get a haircut--and usually he would do that out here. But if he had to go in to the Library for something, he'd just be there for maybe an hour or two and then back to the Ranch again.

G: And you really served as his secretary during this period, is that right?

S: Right. And then Mary Rather would often come out too, or Yolanda Boozer.

G: I assume that people would call you from Austin to find out what his reactions to certain things were, what he wanted to do and what kind of mood he was in, is that right?

S: At times. Well, a lot of times they would call before they approached him about something or told him something, because they wanted him to be in the best mood possible, sometimes.

G: What was his frame of mind generally during this period?

S: I never found him to be the tyrant that a lot of people did, although I did witness some times when he would get very mad. And when he got really mad at someone he usually made up in a real big way. He'd do something really nice for them so that they would forget that he was mad at them. And usually when he did get mad it was for a good reason.

I think the only time that I can remember that he--when we first moved to the Ranch we had a big hailstorm, and the news media called--that's when he was vice president--and they wanted to know about the hailstorm. So I just proceeded to tell them everything I knew about it. We lived on the river bottom at that time and I had five windows that all the panes were broken because of the hail. So I told them that and I told them all the trees had been stripped, the Ranch looked bare and it looked terrible. Well, of course this came over the radio then, all day long that day my voice saying this, and I had no idea they would do that. I didn't even think they could without my permission.

So we had been planning to go to Washington, D.C. with President Johnson, and Dale and Ernest Hodges drove up there in a truck and carried a horse that was given to him by Buford Ellington, a Tennessee walker, that they were leaving in Tennessee and then driving on up to Washington. We were going to stay at The Elms and then I was coming back with them. I flew up with President Johnson. So all the way up there he kept telling everybody on the plane that I was the press secretary and if they had anything they wanted to get into the papers to tell me because I knew exactly how to do it. By the time he finished all this ribbing--on the way back, I don't care where we stopped or when people asked me where I was from or who he worked for, we never told them anything.

After that--it was a big lesson--I never talked to anybody.

G: He didn't like his staff people to talk to the press?

S: No. And at that time when they called I had no idea that you shouldn't tell them about a hailstorm. I had no idea that it would go any further than to the person I was talking to. And I don't think he really cared about the hailstorm. I think the reason he did that was for things that may have happened later, if you would have talked about something you weren't really--that you didn't know enough about to be talking.

G: There was a rupture in his friendship and partnership with A. W. Moursund during this period. Do you recall that and what happened there between them?

S: All I know is that he decided that he would end their partnership and divide things up before something happened to him, because he felt like he could do it better than Mrs. Johnson could.

G: Do you think it was just a business disagreement over whether to retain the bank or to sell it, or was it more of a personal friction, do you think?

S: I don't know. I know when it was over with he ended up with the bank in Johnson City and A. W. Moursund ended up with Moore State Bank in Llano. Then they also settled some of their other projects that they had together; they divided [them] up. But not what it was about, I don't know. But Mrs. Johnson is very--she I don't think has the same feeling.

G: About--?

S: The Moursunds. They come over to the Ranch quite often.

G: Did LBJ and A. W. Moursund ever get back together in the latter years?

S: I don't think so, because this was just like the summer before he died.

G: I see. Do you think bad health may have been part of it?

S: Probably. I think he felt a need to get rid of some of the ranch land and things like that before he died, because I think he felt like he could sell it at a better price than Mrs. Johnson could. I think that's one of the reasons he sold part of the Ranch to Frates. A year or two after that they went broke and the Johnsons got all of that land back.

G: In general what was his health like during this time?

S: Well, I guess it wasn't good at all after he went to Virginia and he had that heart attack and he came back. But when you're around somebody all the time, you don't notice them changing as much as if you haven't seen them in two or three months and they walk in the room and you can really see this change. Since I was around the gradual change in him, I really didn't know. And you don't really think that a man that's that dynamic--that anything could ever happen to them. But I do know that looking back now in the pictures and the things that happened, like he walked slower and he didn't do as much, didn't drive at all hardly that last year. I drove him everywhere he went. He didn't climb stairs. He had to watch the type of food [that] he ate and most of the time he did, but not all the time.

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G: He did start smoking again.

S: Yes, he did. I think at that point he decided that you could have quality or quantity in your life and he decided to live and to do whatever he wanted to do because he didn't think he had that much time left.

G: This was before his heart attack or after his heart attack?

S: He started smoking in Acapulco in February and he died the next January. And when he started he smoked like two or three packs a day.

G: Is that right? So he really did--

S: Yes.

G: Did he smoke at all before that?

S: I never saw him.

G: You never saw him. Did he generally rethink some of the decisions of his presidency or did he talk about how he might have done things differently? Or did he change his mind about things?

S: I don't know. Mainly here at the Ranch when guests came--like J. B. Fuqua came quite a bit, that was one of his good friends--they would talk about things. Darrell Royal came out quite a bit. And he got real interested in football, and I think he was trying to get a hobby that would be fun that he could also take Mr. Kellam and Dale and they could go out and enjoy themselves. Also he could do business at the same time when he had them all together. But as far as hashing over political things, he didn't do that as much that last year, I don't think.

I think he was interested--like when Mrs. Johnson wrote her book, and we started a beautification committee here in Stonewall. So he helped us get that going and make money for it and do things in the community. When we needed a place to meet and somebody to help us get going we would meet in the hangar and then he would stand up and say, "Now if Simon Burg will come up with the land, I'll come up with the equipment

to do it," like we wanted a landfill. Whatever program we had, he would match somebody, but he would make sure that somebody in the community had a part of it so that they felt the necessity to help with it, and he didn't end up just having to do the whole thing. I think he was very interested in the parks, and he would drive through them daily to see what the visitation was, and drive down to see where the cars came from.

G: Did he visit with the tourists?

S: Yes. He would stop and visit with the tourists. Some days he didn't want people to recognize him and at other times he got really mad when they didn't, because sometimes they didn't recognize him, especially younger people. Older people nearly always recognized him, but not the younger ones.

G: Did he ever think about teaching?

S: I think he would have been a good teacher and I think he did. That was one of the things I noticed. We went to San Marcos, and one time especially I went with him with Walter Heller and he was going to speak to an economics class there at San Marcos. About halfway through the speech you could tell that everybody in the room was kind of puzzled. They understood, I'm sure, but it just wasn't interesting. He just stood up and said, "Walter, sit down. I'm going to tell them in words they can understand." So he started talking, and I mean those kids just went wild. He was speaking in terms of butter and eggs, and they were understanding his terminology.

G: Tell me about his interest in the LBJ School during this.

S: Well, I think that was one of his big interests. He was always talking about that, and

having a place where politicians could go--or people who aspired to be a politician--and learn as much as they could, I think that was something that he had been thinking of for his whole lifetime. Kind of like Mrs. Johnson's Wildflower Center is for her, I think the LBJ School was for him. I think that's one of the reasons why my daughter probably back--subconsciously I think she heard him talk so much about that and about what she could do or what the other children on the Ranch could do, the opportunities they were going to have when they grew up that were going to be so different from the type of opportunities that he had when he was growing up.

G: And the Library, his interest in the Library.

S: Yes. I think he was interested. I know he was always calling to find out how many people were coming through there, and wanting to know why the visitation wasn't more and what they could do to make it more. Especially the Library and here at the Ranch he was very much interested in. He said the numbers make a big difference in how much money is appropriated.

G: The whole initiative of having conferences, symposia, bringing together people to discuss problems, was this also his idea?

S: Yes, it was. But like when we'd drive down Ranch Road 1 and he would see people fishing, he would say, "That's what we want. We want people to *use* things here. We want them to come to the parks and use the facilities that we have. We want people that couldn't afford to go on a vacation otherwise to be able to come here, and to go fishing, and to eat in the picnic areas, and to go swimming in the pool. We want to put on some symposiums--"and they did it here in Stonewall at the state park. He had San Marcos

come out and put a play on there. They did--I think there was a symposium on banking. I can't remember what the other one was on. He said that we have all these beautiful facilities, that we should use them. And the Library, he just felt that to make it accessible to all the people so that they could--I guess that's why I was asking about the LBJ School. It just seemed like all that good information, if it is not used, is just stored away in some box.

G: He was interested in having it disseminated?

S: Yes. And he was always stopping by the little Head Start school over here. Any time somebody came to the Ranch that he thought--and three-, four-, and five-year-old children really probably aren't going to remember that, at least that was my thinking at the time. But now I'm not so sure. It would be interesting to find out what happened to all those little kids that were there at that time.

G: How about traveling? You've mentioned Mexico and his travel into Austin. Did he take many other trips during his retirement?

S: Well, mainly football games. We went to New Orleans for the Super Bowl and we'd go to Dallas for the Cotton Bowl. We followed all the games at the University of Texas. We went to some games at [Texas] A&M for Dale because he was an Aggie. So that entailed a lot of traveling. He would go to Washington, I think maybe--not any at all the last year. Mostly it was just funerals he attended. He went to New York a couple of times.

G: Where would he stay when he would go to Washington?

S: I don't know where he stayed when he went to Washington. I never went with him when

he went to Washington. I think he stayed with Lynda and Chuck the times that I knew about. When he went to New York he usually stayed at the Pierre.

G: Did he reminisce a lot during his retirement about his earlier life?

S: He reminisced a lot about growing up in the Hill Country, and I think he was always comparing what it was like to grow up when he did and all the opportunities you have today that they didn't have then. And he was always telling this, I know, to my children. In fact, they really didn't appreciate the fact that he was here telling them about what they could do and what they should be doing, and the opportunity they had living here to watch their dad here on the Ranch and learn ranching, and then they could go off to college. In fact, my oldest son walked up to him one day and said, "Well, I don't know about you, and I don't care who you are, I'm not going to college. I'm not going to go at all." President Johnson said, "Well, that's probably a good idea. I don't think I would if I were you either. If I were you, I would stay here and help your dad and send your brother off to college." Well, I guess Kevin thought about that because he's now getting his Ph.D. (Laughter) He felt that President Johnson was probably telling him he wasn't smart enough to go to college so I guess he went to prove it.

G: One of the interesting elements about his reminiscing out here at the Ranch is, on the one hand, he seems to be describing a life that was fairly harsh and difficult. On the other hand, he seems to have been very attracted to the Hill Country and returning to his roots. How do you sort that out? Was it something that--?

S: I think he enjoyed it maybe when he was growing up. And I heard him say this later, he didn't realize he was poor until he grew up and they told him that he was. Everyone else

in the area lived pretty much the same way he did, so he really didn't feel-- When you grow up in the country you really don't have all the amenities that you do in town, like the museums and the movie theaters close by and the restaurants and things like that, but neither do your friends. And I don't think it bothers you that much until you maybe grow up and move away and you do have all these things available, and then maybe to move back to the country it might be kind of hard. But I don't think he felt that, because with travel the way it is today and with planes and helicopters and cars and everything he still had everything he wanted. He could go in and do all of this. It didn't take very long to get from here to Austin in a helicopter or plane--fifteen minutes. So life was different here. When he came back to retire here it was much easier.

G: He still had relatives in the area also, did he not?

S: Lela Martin was still living here, and Oreole Bailey; Eva Cox in Johnson City and his brother was living in Johnson City for a while, Sam Houston. And when he first retired I guess Rebekah Bobbitt was still living in Austin.

G: Would he get together much with family members?

S: Every Thanksgiving and Christmas the families all came out. And Mrs. Johnson was doing that. I don't think there's too many of them left. Lucia doesn't come out any more--that's President Johnson's youngest sister.

(Interruption)

G: There were a lot of funerals during this period.

S: I think one of them that I really remember was--I don't remember what he said, but I remember the fact that it was a real experience and it was something that I should

remember. Speaker of the House [John] McCormack's wife died, and we went to the funeral and we went to his apartment later. There were a lot of ex-politicians, I guess, there as well as friends. President Johnson reminisced a lot with McCormack. We probably stayed there for a couple of hours before we left. Then he came to the Ranch and [inaudible] interviewed McCormack.

G: With Tommy Corcoran?

S: With Tommy Corcoran.

G: Senator Dick Russell died in January 1971.

S: I don't remember much about that.

G: I understand President Johnson couldn't go to the funeral. The weather was bad, or something like that. Do you remember?

S: That may have been, because I don't remember the funeral.

G: Any recollections of your last conversations with President Johnson before he died?

S: Gosh, that's been so long ago. He was getting ready to go to Acapulco again, and we were getting all of our clothes packed and ready to go because we were going to go within a week or two, I think. It was just really imminent. He hadn't been feeling good, and I know we'd been with Mr. Kellam a day or two before that and he had told him that he just really didn't feel good. The day that he died we had been driving around the Ranch, I remember that. He was having a cattle guard put in up there by what Mrs. Johnson calls her sunset house, northwest of the Ranch house. We drove up there to look at that and Lyle, my youngest son, was working with Neil [inaudible] putting that cattle guard in and also put up a lot of the deer-proof fencing. So he was kidding Lyle about

being a fence builder and all that. Then we decided to go eat lunch, and my grandmother was staying here with me. He asked if I wanted to stop and pick her up. I said, "No, she would probably lay down and take a nap after she ate. We might wait and do it later in the afternoon." So we went and ate and then he went to take a nap. While he was taking a nap I went to Fredericksburg and when I came back--I just drove in the gate when I heard them talking about it and ran to the house. I went with them then on the plane to San Antonio, but he was really already dead.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I