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SHARON FRANCIS ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW III

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Signed by Sharon Francis on September 5, 1980

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ACCESSION NUMBER 81-70

INTERVIEW III

DATE: JUNE 27, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: SHARON FRANCIS

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE McSWEENEY

PLACE: Mrs. Francis' offices in Washington D.C. at Pennsylvania Avenue

Tape 1 of 2

M: Mrs. Francis, when we stopped on our last session we were in March of 1968, and you had been discussing the Women's Speakers Bureau and the involvement of some members of the administration as far as nonpolitical activities in speechmaking around the country. I'd like to turn this back over to you with your journal and continue as we had, with you progressing chronologically and my inserting questions every now and then when it's necessary, which isn't very often.

F: All right. In April of 1968 Mrs. Johnson took thirty-eight foreign correspondents from Western European countries on a Discover America trip to Texas. Did we mention this last time at all?

M: Yes, we did.

F: Yes. I think I felt then that the press coverage was so extensive of the trip that there was no particular need to rehearse where we went or what we did. If I'm repeating, we can take care of it later. One of my principal roles on the trip was to spend time talking with the journalists, finding out what questions were in their minds and attempt to answer them and generally help with their stories. This was a pleasing assignment for me, and it meant lots and lots of conversation sitting on the airplanes and the buses and every spare moment as we proceeded on the trip.

The question that I found hardest to cope with which a number of them asked me was, "Why is the First Lady of the land laying on such an enormous effort for us? It's very nice, but she's giving five days of her time, a number of staff members. It definitely is an impressive operation." Most of them were incredulous to be beneficiaries. While they loved it and they enjoyed it, it was tourism on a scale totally unfamiliar to them and unprecedented anywhere, where the First Lady of the land, the equivalent of the queen or ruling consort, would devote so much time and thought and effort essentially to publicity. She came off with very high marks, as one would expect, from the journalists.

Without question, those who spoke with her were enormously impressed by her quality and depth of interest in them and her ability to interpret history, local events, the stories behind the landscapes that we passed through in Texas.

M: I believe you told me that that trip was a little bit overshadowed by some national events at the time.

F: Yes. The death of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the subsequent riots in the nation's capital were beaming in to us from telephone calls and from news accounts and messages all along the way. Daily Mrs. Johnson was in contact with the President and daily considered the option of our having to turn around and go back to Washington. Fortunately we did not have to break the appointments that had been made for the trip, and he advised her that Washington was no place to be at the moment. When we arrived back, being people so intimately involved with the city itself and the people of the city and finding the pins had been knocked out from under so much of the city, morale was ghastly. There were troops all over the city; an enormous encampment of the National Guard on Hains Point, a phalanx of troops surrounding the White House. Everybody began wearing their security badges around their necks at all times, a lot of security checking, a slight air and feeling that people must have experienced who've experienced military occupation.

For a few days Washington was like that. Everyone had their stories of encountering tear gas or some form of violence or the reaction to violence. We in the beautification program were vitally concerned about the projects we had worked on and how they might have fared. The day I returned I took a White House car to look at the riot damaged areas and also to look at some of our parks and playgrounds. I told my husband I was going to do so on the telephone. He said, "Is anyone going to go with you?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, wait, I'll come over." Because he, who had lived through the last four days that I hadn't lived through, was sufficiently concerned that there still could be trouble. He didn't feel I should be out, even with a good driver in a White House car.

So the two of us spent a couple of hours in the morning on 14th Street, H Street, 8th, and the other areas seeing a proportion of the pattern of damage, the looting, the destruction. The hostility, as was well reported I think in the press at the time, was selective. It was aimed at pawn shops. It was aimed at high priced grocers. It was timed at clothing stores and liquor stores where either people had been gouged or where looting was going to be attractive. The most impressive thing to me was that the Giant food store up on 14th Street that had done extensive not only landscaping and beautification outside, which had been maintained by local teenagers and then by Pride, Incorporated, but also

had a consumer consultant service for shoppers who were trying to get maximum nutrition on a minimum budget--Giant had had these two definite community benefits at that store--wasn't harmed, nothing phased or touched.

I called the public relations director of Giant that afternoon to ask, since everything had been devastated around it, what had happened. "Well," he said, "not only does the community like us, and not only do we have a black manager in that store, and he comes out of the neighborhood, but during the riots some of the local people set up coffee right in the parking lot of the store and fed coffee and donuts around the clock. The manager was out, store employees were out full time during the nights of rioting and didn't discriminate about whether they were giving coffee and donuts to rioters or nonrioters, but just reminded everyone that this was a place that belonged to the community and that cared about the community." He said, "We weren't touched at all."

Then I went and looked at parks, playgrounds, all the other areas adjacent to riot damaged areas to see if there had been any damage. There wasn't a speck. One would like to assume that these beautified spots meant so much that people didn't want to harm them, and that can be at least in part true. I think also more of the benefit to them came from negative sources than positive. Those places hadn't hurt the people of the neighborhoods. Also, there was nothing that would give them any material benefit to steal. As I said before, the rioting and the damage was quite conscious and quite selective. It just wasn't indiscriminate blitzing.

Well, I came back to the White House and spoke with Mrs. Johnson on the telephone, telling her what I had observed. So then she and I went out in the afternoon and went over much of the same area, particularly looking at the parks and playgrounds. We did not go on 14th or 8th Street. But she then felt comfortable about going out and was most desirous and anxious to do so. I'm sure the President had, of course, been having firsthand reports all along of what had been going on, but she was able to and pleased to report to him that evening that her particular projects and the beautified areas hadn't been phased or damaged.

Being April we were again having the annual thank you luncheon or donors to beautification, a luncheon we had each year that Mary Lasker most generously helped Mrs. Johnson provide and [to which] all the friends of beautification were invited. It was a beautiful, gala, gala occasion. We planned a bus tour again of course, in this instance having to and wanting to stay away from the damaged parts of the city but wanting to look at Buchanan playground, even though it was not completed, to see the progress under way, and also the daffodils on Columbia Island. Liz, Nash Castro, Rex Scouten, Bess, Mrs.

Johnson and I all went out in cars to preview the bus tour. I think again this reflects her degree of detailed interest, that she would go out and join us on an expedition like that.

Diana MacArthur called and said she had an indication from Henry Diamond that Laurance Rockefeller and Brooke Astor both might want to do something quite generous for the riot areas in the city. I called Tom Appleby, who was head of the Redevelopment Land Agency, who in my opinion was the city establishment member most with it in terms of communicating with the grassroots needs for ideas. Then Liz and I met with Henry Diamond and got on the phone to Walter Washington. There's an excruciatingly funny conversation between Henry and Walter, where Henry was bridging just the incredible gap between Rockefellerdom and what you could say the cats on the street. And [Henry] calling Walter "baby" and saying "Brooke and Laurance want to do something maybe like Paley [?] Plaza. You know Paley Plaza on 58th Street? How about a Paley Plaza on 7th Street?" And there were just guffaws from Walter.

Then the next day we sent Polly Shackleton out to look at a couple of playground sites in the Shaw area and to discuss with neighborhood leaders where something in the magnitude of fifty thousand dollars might be spent. Well, she came back with the report that neighborhood leaders were saying, "If these rich people want to give us something, give us something like a real swimming pool which this area needs badly. But don't give us a splash pool that's going to break down and no one's going to be able to swim in," which is the typical Recreation Department provision. A full-scale pool is a two hundred to two hundred fifty thousand dollar item, and fifty thousand dollars is a lot of money but it doesn't buy a real pool. They said, "Don't sweet us up with parks. We want housing." So Polly couldn't get any major support for a park as a first blush of restoration in the riot areas.

Liz and I decided to go over and talk to Tom Appleby and just see what he might have in his hip pocket. It was very funny. His office was two blocks away on New York Avenue, but we had called the garage for a car to take us over there. Well, the garage cars were all out, so we waited ten or fifteen minutes sort of standing out on the curb cooling our heels. Then when we finally did get in a car the driver couldn't figure out how to get to something two blocks away. He was in the wrong lane, and so he had to go around the block. Then had had to make a U-turn in the midst of New York Avenue and nearly got hit, and then had us getting out the wrong side of the car. Liz said, "We might as well use these fringe benefits while we have them." So we arrived twenty minutes late, hot and mad. While Tom Appleby had a lot of ideas, we really discovered that if we were true to our own commitment that what had to be done had to be done

with community participation and support, that there was nothing that could be done very fast. So, figuratively, we put the fifty thousand dollars back in our pocket and in a state of considerable frustration went off.

Liz and I worked with Mrs. Johnson upstairs in her room on her remarks for the luncheon. This was on the sixteenth of April. I'd drafted something which was really sort of sober, I guess reflecting my own awareness of the riots and what the city had gone through. We all read it and felt it sounded like somebody's funeral oration. This was when Mrs. Johnson read it aloud, as she usually did, and Liz and I went back down to her office and redid the whole thing. Mrs. Johnson was very amusing that day because she'd gone to Jean-Louis to have her hair cut, and then she'd gone over to Pierre in Georgetown to have a permanent. I said, "You mean Jean-Louis couldn't give you the permanent?" Well, it was more complicated than that. The two are such prima donnas that she had to patronize them both. They'd be at each others' throats and at her throat if she cut one off. So she always juggled this way, sometimes one, sometimes the other. That particular day she was juggling them both on the same day.

Mrs. Johnson asked whether the Park Service was starting design work for Kingman Lake in Anacostia. I said I didn't think they had the money budgeted for it, and she said, "Would it be too hard to get the planning started?" So I called Sam Hughes at the Bureau of the Budget to find out what their budget situation was and whether about three hundred thousand dollars could be made available for the planning studies. He indicated he'd get going with it and see what could be found.

The next day Secretary Udall called a meeting in his office of Park Service people and Larry Halprin to see if we wouldn't kick the Kingman Lake and Kenilworth dump area planning off and get it going. We called Sam Hughes from Udall's office. I told him that Mrs. Johnson was going to be giving remarks that afternoon at the beautification luncheon, and if she could say in her remarks that planning was beginning it would be great. He said, "Tell her to say it. We'll find the money."

We had the bus tour. Went out to Buchanan Plaza, watched the construction, took everyone on a walking tour through the area to see what it was going to be like. Earlier we'd been on the second floor with Mrs. Johnson. She'd been rehearsing her remarks for the luncheon, and the President called from Honolulu. She wrinkled up her nose as if how dare he interrupt her when she was busy rehearsing something, and then she skipped off to talk to him. Unfortunately, at the luncheon or on the bus tour we went out to Columbia Island. Well, most of the daffodils' bloom had peaked several days before, so

they were less than their best. But still we saw the extensiveness of the planting.

Not only did Mrs. Johnson speak at lunch, but also Walter Washington did. Mrs. Johnson announced the Kingman Lake planning was beginning, the Anacostia Park project would get underway. She also praised Wolf von Eckhardt's Washington Post editorial on Mission '76 making 1976 the Bicentennial, making the celebration the achievement of all the many plans on our drawing boards and on our agenda. Walter Washington did his charismatic kind of performance where he started out with tears coming down his face and saying, "I'm a bit emotional. I can't really see the text that they wrote for me, so I just won't use it," and then went on praising everybody in the room, Mrs. Johnson most particularly, over and over again saying, "These things that she's doing are not cosmetics, but they're the renewal of the city." He is particularly gifted at that kind of thing.

A few days later Liz was in a swivet about the Poor People's March for two reasons. Were they going to step on our daffodils? And would they interfere with the planned dedication of Buchanan Plaza on the fourteenth of May? We tried to reach the Mayor, and we tried to reach Tom Fletcher and we tried to reach Public Safety Director Murphy. We really had to know. So I finally got Murphy's assistant, who was a very, very cagey man. He wasn't going to tell me anything about the Poor People's March, and when they were coming and where they were going and where they were going to be, because he hadn't checked out my phone number as to who I was. Then he finally said that a confidential report about the Poor People's March had gone to Joe Califano. Liz sort of pulled her hair because she figured she wouldn't be able to get anything out of Joe Califano.

The twenty-fifth of April I had a confirmation from the Department of the Interior Budget Director that three hundred thousand dollars of planning money had been found. Interestingly, how budgets work, it was money that had been authorized in 1961 to study parking problems in the vicinity of D.C. Stadium. Somehow the kitty had been sitting there, and George Hartzog had decided that Kingman Lake was in the vicinity of D.C. Stadium and once he checked it out on the Hill with the Appropriations and Interior Committee people that it could be freed for this other purpose.

On the twenty-fifth of April the executive board of the American Society of Landscape Architects came in to give Mrs. Johnson a very nice tribute, which they read to her downstairs in the Library, and they presented her with an honorary membership. She took them out and showed them the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden and was sort of at her modest best saying, "Well, I'm not an

architect or a landscape architect, but I react to what's pleasing to the eye." Then she asked them about who was doing good work on shopping centers and who was doing good work on filling stations and visited over iced tea for a while. Then I escorted them out the Southwest Gate. It was sort of a lovely, sunny, windy afternoon.

One of the landscape architects, Mead Palmer from I think Winchester, somewhere in Fauquier County in Virginia, asked about the landscape design of the White House grounds, knowing that Jefferson had designed the mounds, knowing that [Daniel Hudson] Burnham and [Frederick Law] Olmstead had in some way contributed to the layout of the grounds and the planning arrangements. But he asked if we knew who had thought out the plans of the grounds, and he said if it hadn't been published it would make a fascinating publication. Yuki had come out with me jingle, jingle, jingle, to the gate, and then after they left, Yuki and I went back up to the Mansion. Then I went upstairs and called Mr. Williams, the gardener, and asked him what he knew about the history of the grounds. Well, he dug out material he had, which really just indicated that we didn't have records. He had nothing before 1900.

In the next few days I talked to several people in the Planning Commission and the Park Service and thought that if we could find someone with time and inclination to do a little study that it would be a nice surprise and present for Mrs. Johnson. It would be a nice gift to posterity, too, under her, when she was there and so enormously interested in the subject. Well, Rex Scouten had someone in the Park Service-- I guess I sent a memo to Nash asking if there were anyone who could spend time on it, and Rex responded and did have someone who potentially had the time to work on it. But it just turned out the man never did. It never did work out. So this is still a project to be done some summer by an intern or a graduate student. Much of the material is up at Harvard in papers that have been left there, the School of Landscape Architecture in the Library. I hope it will be done sometime. It's an important part of history that ought to be filled in, and I think it would make a very good publication as well.

Well, later that month we were planning the dedication ceremony of Buchanan School. I was called in by citizen groups in the Capital East area to review the Recreation Department's plans for the natatorium on North Carolina Avenue. The Fine Arts Commission had thrown out two previous sets of plans, and these were the third now, which I thought if they were carried out the way the artist had drawn them would probably be very good. They had good use of outdoor space and beautification elements, which was important to the neighborhood, to the citizenry. I found the architects really creepy and appalling and terribly uninformed, even though they were making a presentation of their

work. It was clear that someone else in their firm had done it, and they were just the front men who were coming up to make tile presentation.

Liz and I had done a joint memo to Mrs. Johnson about membership to fill vacant positions on Laurance Rockefeller's Citizen Advisory Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty. Three positions were open, and the President had delegated to Mrs. Johnson the selection of those to fill them. We had sent a memo to her some time ago recommending Irwin Miller of the Cummins Engine Company and Mike Brewer a conservationist and economist at Resources for the Future. I've forgotten the third one who we recommended. Matt Coffey, who handled these appointments for John Macy, had been bugging me and bugging me about any time Mrs. Johnson made up her mind, why, they'd begin to process the nominations. None of us had been able to get a peep out of her. Finally we did talk to her, and she thought John Ben Shepperd from Texas would be a good nomination and might be able to give Laurance Rockefeller some financial help, because he was putting some of his own money into sustaining the committee. But we still didn't have any definitive selection from Mrs. Johnson.

Then when I was in Liz's office--the humor I think is what kept us all alive there--Marta came roaring in. When Mrs. Johnson was going to be out of town and the President had to go to a return state dinner for the Tunisian head of state who was going to be coming, Liz had suggested that Lynda go escorted by the President. Lynda had announced to Marta that indeed she was going to go out with some of her friends. She certainly wasn't going to go to the Tunisian state dinner. Liz began roaring about having two prima donnas in the house, and Marta said, "You don't mean Mrs. Johnson?" Liz said, "No. She's the only normal one around here." So then Liz screamed for someone to dictate to, and one of the girls ran in and she began dictating a memo to Lynda from the President saying, "Honey, I'm counting on you to be my date for the Tunisian return dinner on May such-and-such. Your mother will be away on a trip. I want the company of my darling daughter. You're my one and only girl." Liz said, "I'm the only one who knows what to do around this family."

M: Do you know if that memo went on through?

F: No, I don't. Let's find out. I don't know. Well, let's see. Mary Lasker sent a note to Mrs. Johnson through Ashton Gonella recommending that Tom Airis, the director of the D.C. Highway Department, be invited to be a member of the Beautification Committee, maybe as unsympathetic a person as one could find in official Washington to beautification but someone who, a), needed education, and b), ought to help us even if he wasn't doing so very much. At the bottom of Mary's letter Mrs. Johnson had written, "Well, ask him to be an observer, not a

member." A number of other committee members, like Walter Washington, Polly Shackleton, were not pleased with the idea of having an enemy inside the tent, I guess. But be that as it may, I called Tom and invited him as an observer on the committee, and he said he was very honored. He said he hoped that Mrs. Johnson's request to him would come down through the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor because he needed their concurrence before he could accept an invitation like this.

Then I, to make conversation with him, said that we'd be dedicating Buchanan School next Tuesday and that would be the next item on the agenda. Well, said Mr. Airis, if Mrs. Johnson's invitation to him was a way of trying to get him to change his mind about the closing of 13th Street, which is the street in front of the school, between it and the playground of another school across the street from it, he just would have to stand on his principles. He wasn't going to be bribed. I said, "Oh, Mr. Airis, the two have nothing to do with each other." They didn't, but I began to think that maybe they ought to, since he suggested it. But I asked him for his views. I wanted to hear them and be able to convey them to Mrs. Johnson.

Well, he told me the whole story going back to Adam and Eve about highway problems in the District of Columbia. How there were traffic generators and Bolling Field and Union Station and the Navy Yard, and how Libby Rowe kept passing on new generators for the city but opposing the freeways that had to link them together. He went on and on and on, sort of weaving the freeway web across the city of Washington over the telephone. Then he came down to 13th Street, and how this was part of a vital pair of one-way streets which weren't necessarily needed for the next five years, but nevertheless in the overall wisdom of freeway engineers they would eventually be needed. Looking for a compromise, I asked if there were any opportunity for a temporary closing of 13th Street. "Well," he said, "once you do that you never get them open again." Which I thought was a good admission of--

M: Your effectiveness?

F: Well, of the fact that there were forces besides automobiles at work in the city. Then I said, "Could they be closed part of the day when the children were likely to be out? Not at rush hour." "Well," he said, "that's what Tom Fletcher wants," and they were going to work something out he guessed. But clearly over his dead body, and of course we did get the street closed. I predict it will never get opened again.

I had several meetings out at Buchanan with the principal and with various people to develop the program for the dedication of the school. The

Eastern High School band was asked to play. We suggested that "America the Beautiful" might be an appropriate item, and the band director sort of looked around. He needed two dollars and fifty cents to buy the score for the music for "America the Beautiful" because they didn't have it. So I opened my purse and I gave him two dollars and fifty cents for the score, and I said, "Could we have someone pick it up for you or can you get it?" "Oh," he said, "well, we can get it if we have the money."

Liz and I had a fascinating afternoon. Charlie Haar, assistant secretary of HUD, who had some money for grants for new and innovative kinds of things, had given Buckminster Fuller a grant to develop a concept and model of an offshore city, floating habitation. Bucky had done the model in terms of, I think, San Antonio. Am I right? Is that on the coast? No, no, Galveston. That's on the coast.

M: Yes.

F: Haar was intrigued by it, and he thought we'd be interested in seeing it. So over we went, and there was this great model in the hall. Mr. Fuller and Secretary Haar began explaining how it worked, and Liz looked at it and she looked at it. This was the latest and most advanced, most sophisticated concept of all integrated facilities and services and shops and schools and housing and residences and everything all piled in a great bundle out at sea where it didn't take any land, et cetera. She said it looked like a filing case, and what kind of people were going to live in a place like that? What was going to become of them if they lived in a place like that? She was shocked with Charles Haar. In fact she was going to turn the Sierra Club loose on him if he ever surfaced this proposal anywhere. People would turn into moles and be stunted if they had to live in a filing cabinet. She thought it violated everything we'd been standing for and working for.

Poor Fuller blinked, and I think that's one of the best things that ever happened to him. Because he's the kind of person who's a demigod among technocrats and innovators, and everyone pays tribute to his genius. But Liz Carpenter sure didn't. Liz just cut him down. He began talking about the mobility of people these days and how he lived out of a suitcase and went from hotel room to hotel room. He was always making speeches and consulting here and there, and people really just need a place to bathe and lie down for a while. This kind of facility was designed for the new mobile age. Liz said, "Well, if they don't stay home, it's because we haven't given them anything to stay home for."

Charlie began getting worried that his august consultant might be offended. Liz was so direct and so irrefutable and so to the point and so

insistent that they face up to the more basic question she was asking that Charlie finally sort of pulled her over under one side of the model, and I pulled Fuller over to the other side of the model to keep them away from each other. We temporized as hard as we could, and then we got Liz in an elevator and sent her down. I sort of patted Fuller on the back and said, "Now don't you worry, and don't you ever forget anything she said, because you know she's right. But don't let it get to you." Charlie and I rolled our eyes at each other and felt that one had distinctly backfired. I think it shows her extraordinary contribution, and I couldn't help but be glad that she'd done it.

Oh, yes. Buchanan School dedication, the seventh of May. I drafted Mrs. Johnson's remarks, which really had a good ring to them. She was very pleased with them, and they came over extremely well about the role of play in people's lives. I'd had a terrible time in setting up the program with a little petty autocrat in the neighborhood, a local lady named Mrs. Sarah Montgomery, who was black, a minority socially in that black neighborhood. Somehow she wanted her civic association president to sit up on the platform and to speak. I'd said no, because if he spoke everyone would have to speak. So she'd been playing local neighborhood spite and had decided that she would have her own program, not the program we arranged. So she invited sixty neighborhood children to do African dances, and they had their costumes all ready and were going to dance and perform, and not told anyone. Mrs. White, who was the school principal, and I had to disinvite these children, which was torture for us. But the woman had achieved what she wanted, which was to put a monkey wrench in our stew.

Then I began getting rumblings in the morning that Mrs. Montgomery was calling out the militants, including [Stokely] Carmichael, to give us some trouble. So I called Jerry Kivett, Mrs. Johnson's agent, and tipped him off, and he appreciated it. About an hour before the beginning of the program I arrived on the site, and there were at least a dozen enormous D.C. policemen, the biggest, burliest, whitest, toughest, meanest looking policemen you can imagine, and agents all over the place, very conspicuous agents. It was thick with them already. So I don't know whether we had more protection than we had guests. We had a lot of guests, but we were very well protected.

Brooke Astor spoke, as did Mrs. Johnson, as did Mayor Washington. Outside of my own tension and looking back over my shoulder to see if anything untoward was happening and people were misbehaving, and no one was, it was a lovely, attractive program, climaxed by turning on of the water jets in the plaza. The children who'd been sitting down in the lower area moved out, and these jets of water turned on. It was just a flamboyant moment of "Ah" when they saw this great amount of water spraying up into the air. Then there was a lot of picture taking in the playground equipment. The pictures came out very well.

M: Was there any adverse publicity to the effect that there was a large contingency of police there?

F: No, no. One of the local Capitol Hill newspapers picked up Mrs. Montgomery's complaints, but she's notorious. So if she complains and is dissatisfied by anything that goes on in the neighborhood public opinion is all for it, because that's just her role as a hair shirt.

Henry Kimelman, who was Secretary Udall's right-hand assistant at Interior, had been, in the Secretary's behalf, working with the Park Service and the Budget Bureau putting together the Kingman Lake planning project. Larry Halprin came to town the eighth of May, and he and Henry Kimelman and a couple of Park Service people and I went out to look at the Kenilworth dump site and look at the sanitary land fill. We got a considerable briefing by the sanitary land fill administrators on the change, the transformation that had taken place since open burning had been closed down.

Mrs. Johnson was having the President of Texaco sit at her table at dinner that night and called to find out what they'd done for beautification lately. I made some calls and wracked the files and sort of discovered they really hadn't quite done anything lately, although two years ago they had.

Then I'd been working very hard during this period of time on a major speech for her, which was to be a lecture at the American Institute of Architects convention out in Portland in June, I'd really pulled together a mountain of material and sorted and sifted and weeded and worked and drafted. On the seventh of June we worked for the first time, together out in the arbor, on the draft of the speech. Of course, it was two days after Robert Kennedy had been assassinated. Mrs. Johnson commented the events of the last twenty-four hours almost seemed like a national death wish transmitted through television. Our tolerance for this sort of thing has gone too high. Her face was very sad, and she and the President later in the day were making plans for the funeral. The President had offered all forms of assistance possible to the Kennedys. Five airplanes [and a] full communications net had been turned over to them. Tom Johnson sort of wryly noted that we weren't getting any kind of credit for any of that. The President just gestured; he didn't make any comment.

M: Were you together when this was happening?

F: Yes. He talked with us a little bit about some things in Texas that were on his mind. He thought Liz ought to get herself a holiday and go out on his boat for a couple of days so she could get away. He said, "Just make sure that A. B. [A. W.] Moursund knows you're going to go down, because he tends to think the

boat is his. If you don't let him know you're coming--" And [he] talked about having the mosquito netting.

M: Why was he particularly discussing working with you all on this occasion?

F: Oh, I think he just came in. He and Tom Johnson and Joe Califano came in when we were sitting there working. Mrs. Johnson commented to the President about the fact that the trip with the journalists had been my first trip to Texas, and that she thought I'd--I don't have her words here, but it was short of falling in love with it--had a feel for it and had enjoyed it. She hoped that in the time to come I could be down again. We'd have a much more leisurely time and could explore the river banks and some of the places they were particularly fond of. Then Lynda came bouncing in with a whole set of photographs that Chuck had taken of Pat in Vietnam, and Lynda was ribbing over the fact that Pat's tummy was sticking out. Mrs. Johnson said, "Now don't you tease about Patrick. He probably wouldn't be there if it weren't for who his father-in-law is."

I was also having trouble with the supporters of the Highway Beautification Act, typically. The California Roadside Council, which was the best and strongest roadside council in the country, was about ready to pull out from support of Title I, the most controversial title of the act. While, substantively there wasn't much to argue in its behalf, politically it would be pretty disastrous, because if they went there'd be a domino effect and everyone else would go. So I called Helen Reynolds, the president of the California Roadside Council, for whom I had enormous respect, and had a long conversation, asking her if she was really sure this was what she wanted to do and would she and her board reconsider before doing so. Because her board had voted to do so. She was most agreeable and most attentive and said, yes, they would reconsider. She herself would recommend that they take a constructive forward position, if they had to recommend modification do so, but at least not withdraw from support. That was one of those necessary and arduous negotiations that I just won by the skin of my teeth.

M: Sharon, have we passed over the point where Mrs. Johnson went on Discover America tour of the Hudson?

F: Yes, we have.

M: Did you have any activity in that?

F: No. No, other than some of the briefing for her on the trip. But I was--I've forgotten. I was working on something else simultaneously. I guess maybe the Texas trip. I just don't remember what it was.

M: Perhaps it was this draft of the speech.

F: Yes, it might have been.

The eleventh of June was the annual beautification awards ceremony. It was usually held out in the garden, but this was one of those soggy, humid, hair straightening kinds of days, and we decided to hold it indoors in the East Room. Two people were given special commendation just for their wide ranging efforts and leadership. One was Sylvia Shugrue, a science teacher in D.C. schools; another was Lucille Johnson, a woman in the Department of Education who had put together and administered Project Pride. Children were inevitably very neat, very well dressed, often very poor, and did a clean-up at the cookie table. Extra cake was brought out from goodness knows where, and that, too, disappeared as fast as possible.

I find myself making a note of some certain amount of criticism about Katie Louchheim, who had wanted all the credit, jumped to get in the photographs with Mrs. Johnson and hadn't, even though she'd been chairman of the awards program, done any of the work until suddenly it came time for the kudos. Then she was right there in the front row. It's interesting, when you're working for people, that those who will work themselves you respect, and those who consider themselves superior to working you can't help but feel it.

That evening my husband and I went to the black tie dinner for the Shah of Iran, a very attractive and warm and lovely occasion. As usual [there were] a number of conversations all around the room with the Rostows, with Nat and Margaret Owings, with Maxwell Taylor, with the Carters, he being the Negro mayor of Montclair, New Jersey, that has a strong beautification program. I noticed, or made note I guess in my journal, that while a number of people were wonderfully dressed, like Mrs. Lucius Battle, many were very tacky and in poor taste, too, which seemed to reflect the democratic cross section that the Johnsons strove for. Rather than parties of beautiful people, although once or twice they had parties of beautiful people, they were usually looking for the good people in their guest lists. But it was not a swinging party, particularly, it was just a nice, comfortable party.

Diana MacArthur asked me in June what I planned to do in January, and I said I was hanging loose and seeing where I could do the most good. She asked me to consider joining her in her own consulting firm that she was setting up, and later I discussed this with Mrs. Johnson. Eventually, of course, I decided not to join Diana. I have very considerable respect for her. I also find she's much more of an arm twister than I am, and that I was pretty sure that in close proximity with her I wouldn't approve of her tactics. I'd just find it hard to

work that closely with her, though at a distance I could work very well with her.

On the eighteenth of June I went over and spent an hour with Tom Fletcher on a variety of beautification matters. I was very concerned about the weak administration of the D.C. beautification program within the Recreation Department, within the School Department. Parks, of course, were no problem with Nash and Rex and Elmer Atkins in the Park Service. They had outstanding people. But within the District as a whole, not only was it lacking in leadership, but also any ability to continue and carry through once we left. I wanted to alert Fletcher at this time and see if appropriate administrative arrangements could be developed to sustain the program at some kind of quality level after Mrs. Johnson and her committee left. Fletcher was fully understanding, highly sympathetic, quite agreed that something ought to be done. He said he was going to have some pretty topflight interns in the fall from local universities, Howard, American, Georgetown, G.W. [George Washington University] and that he would assign one of those interns to evaluate and analyze and make recommendations.

He did. The guy was a black law student from Howard. In my assessment he should not have been allowed to go through law school, but really had bullied his way through just because he wasn't going to be turned down. He was so pathetically incompetent, very aggressive and assertive and swung himself around a good deal, but hopelessly unable to carry through the task that the city had assigned to him. He pushed me hard about wanting to interview Mrs. Johnson or attend some of her committee meetings, which he was not allowed to do. He finally turned out a report, a lot of which was direct cribbing from material I'd loaned him but without quotations. He quoted me out of context, and generally the whole thing was just absolutely worthless and lousy. It took from September until December for him to disgorge this absolutely worthless piece of work. I wrote Fletcher a polite memo in which I indicated its inadequacies, but, bang, that was the District's effort to cope with reassigning personnel and just setting up the lines of authority and responsibility to carry on some of this work. I suppose in microcosm that's what it's like to deal with the cities.

M: Sharon, throughout this period, of course, is the time of which Resurrection City was in Washington.

F: That's right.

M: You have not brought it up yet, so I just thought I'd insert it, if you had any conversations with Mrs. Johnson or did any work on it yourself.

F: The items that come to mind about it were: one, in that conversation with Fletcher--they had had a command center meeting every morning at I think seven-thirty or eight o'clock involving the principal officials who were on top of the situation--. Fletcher praised Nash Castro particularly in the way he was staying on top of everything and how he was handling it. Also, Fletcher joked and said that if each public agency took their informers out of the camp there wouldn't be very many people left. He also diagnosed the trouble that they expected, not in the march particularly, which they had very tightly channeled and contained, but in the confrontation that would take place when the permit expired and the poor people had to leave town.

Ervin Duggan and I at one moment talked about going down to Resurrection City and just asking questions and wandering around and what have you. We decided not to. The idea was somewhat appealing, but the potential of getting bruised or bumped or anything else didn't appeal to us. We didn't want to run the risk mostly. Not personally, I think personally we wouldn't have cared particularly, in fact we would have done it. But we just didn't want the White House personnel involved in any kind of mess. At an information level, daily I heard about it and all the activity that was going on. Incidentally, I hope someone writes a book about it. I know too little about it to know if there were writers and poets in residence, but, boy, I hope there were. Because just the dynamics of what it was, and all the idealism and frustration and exploitation and larceny and rape and good motives and bad all tied up in a bundle, who coped with whom and how, would make just a magnificent story. It's one of just the unusual events in our history, and I do hope that some great book does come out of it.

M: Did you get any kickbacks on the use of public parks for the city, and what was happening in the parks?

F: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. A lot of people wrote in. In fact on our trip to Texas a lot of people in crowds and townspeople and women--I remember a woman in Gonzales talking to me about it considerably: "Why does the President let the parks be used for these people? Why, why, why?" Oh yes, that was a strong feeling throughout the country.

I think Mrs. Johnson felt on that trip to Texas that one of our purposes to be there was to not only convey to the journalists the great, warm, peaceful, generous part of America's heartland, relatively untroubled, but also to convey to the heartland some of the great frustrations and anguish going on in the cities. She saw herself as a bridge between the two. Yes, she and I had one conversation that I recall. Let's see, it was when we were driving out to Friendship Airport before flying out to Portland for the AIA convention, and we

passed the Resurrection City site. She said she wished she could be inside those people to know what they were thinking and how they felt and what their images of themselves were and what their images of us were. She just wanted to have an empathy with them, and didn't know them well enough, realized she didn't. If I come across in my notes anything more, I'll of course put it in the record.

Now, one of the items I'd been working on at the White House was to secure the administration's support of a recommendation which had come from Laurance Rockefeller's Citizen Advisory Committee, which was that the Vice President should be chairman of the President's Council on Recreation and Natural Beauty, not have a chairmanship rotate among the cabinet officers. The rotating chairmanship had produced a situation where none of them would dare raise an issue in anyone else's department, sort of a rules of the road. They didn't show each other's corns in public. The committee was impotent because there was no one knocking heads together. The chairman was not someone that anyone else looked up to, but rather everybody was at a coequal standoff with everybody else. So with the Bureau of the Budget and then through Joe Califano the President had signed an order establishing the Vice President as chairman of the council.

On the twenty-first of June we had the one and only joint meeting of the council, with Hubert Humphrey blowing in from somewhere, fresh and bright, to preside. It was held over in the federal office building on Lafayette Square. I sat beside Sam Hughes, who attended for the Budget Bureau. The Vice President turned on hard and strong. It amused me; at one point he said, "We wouldn't be here where we are today if it weren't for this team of Johnson and Rockefeller." Of course, as the campaign was going on everyone in the room sort of looked around, and he said, "That is, Mrs. Johnson and Laurance Rockefeller." Also he said, "I'm not against engineers, we just have to interbreed them with people who have some aesthetic sense." Then he told of everywhere, travelling throughout the United States, seeing the results of Mrs. Johnson's wonderful work. "Up in Waverly, Minnesota," he said, "I stopped and asked the people why they were cleaning up and putting out those trash baskets, and they said, 'Well, for Mrs. Johnson. She was here and she asked us to do it.'" He said, "Even Joe Alsop was impressed, and you know that's pretty good for a Georgetown man."

Then someone surfaced, actually one of the members of the Citizens Advisory Committee, a memo from the Bureau of Public Roads Director to the field requiring for safety reasons the cutting of all trees within thirty feet of roadsides. This was something that ricocheted around in the press for a few days, and the Vice President announced to the Department of Transportation

representative who was sitting there that, "If you do that up in my county, I'll tar and feather you all!" The Transportation man had in his hand a draft of a memo that was potentially to resolve the situation, and he began to read it aloud. The Vice President said, "That isn't strong enough. I want you to draft something that says what it says. No more cutting of trees thirty feet from the roadsides." And [he] announced when he wanted to see the redraft, in a couple of days' time.

Then he called for more beautification in ghetto areas. He asked for action committees to report before the first of the year on undergrounding of utilities, on scenic roads, on federal construction, and on ghettos. He sort of looked around the room and he said, "I want you to put people with good glands on these committees. We want reports to say something." Mrs. Johnson came in toward the end of the meeting looking very much like a little girl, really, and made a few gracious remarks and was photographed and sat and listened. Then I spent the rest of the day working on the AIA speech.

Marcia and Marta went out to Portland to plan Mrs. Johnson's trip. I had hoped to go out, either on advance or with Mrs. Johnson. One reason I wanted to go was that my parents were in Seattle, and I wanted to get up over the weekend and see them. Liz told Mrs. Johnson that, and she said, absolutely, I should go, and that Liz's own schedule was packed up so I ought to go and take Mrs. Johnson out.

The twenty-fifth of June I spent most of the day preparing a final itinerary for Mrs. Johnson for the trip, based on phone conversations back and forth with Marcia. There were the usual range of problems: a local lady calling up and wearing my ear out over the fact that Montgomery County, or Montgomery local court, had approved a freeway through Rock Creek Park and what could we do about it. I had to call Henry Diamond to see if Spencer Smith, the sort of citizen lobbyist on the highway bill, could get five thousand dollars to send a mass mailing out to rouse up the House. Someone else called and wanted a commemorative postage stamp, and two Philippine governors' wives came in to learn about beautification, very nice ladies who wanted to do some beautification in the Philippines. Rex came in and described the enormous amount of abandoned clothing at Resurrection City. The white people all over had just given so much to the poor people, and of course most of them when they left just left with what was in their hands and didn't begin to take all that was there.

Then that afternoon Mrs. Johnson and I left. On the way out to the airport we discussed the future of beautification. A variety of people had suggested she establish some kind of continuing institutional committee or what have you. Her comments in the car were that she hoped very much that other people would

pick up the torch and carry it, that she could and would not do anything to bind a future administration, that they of themselves must decide what projects they wanted to sponsor. As far as she herself was concerned, she needed to spend most of her time with her family and with the Library. She said perhaps she could just be a member of some group or some committee. She certainly could go to a few meetings every now and then, give a speech or two, but, she said, "As for organizing, I don't have the skills nor the time, and it should be hard, full time work."

On the plane we worked on scripts of the monthly films. Out in the Seattle-Tacoma Airport where the plane set down we got out and got a candy bar and walked around and ate it. I told her a little about Seattle and about the Northwest and what it had been like to grow up there in sight of the mountains all the time. We were in the restroom, and there were three nice, middle-aged, middle class kinds of ladies who looked at her as she went in. Then they went through the recognition of who she was, and as she was washing her hands they just were all warm and began to talk to her and tell her one had a son in Vietnam, one had a son-in-law in Vietnam. It was almost like a woman's sewing circle. She talked about hers, and they were so sympathetic with what she, not as the wife of the President making the decisions but as the mother-in-law of the young men, must be feeling. They identified with her so easily. It was a lovely little moment. Then as she went out the door she said, "Well, may the Good Lord care for them all." And the women sort of glowed.

As we flew out we passed close by Mount Rainier, and Mrs. Johnson popped off to the other side of the plane and looked out at it. I showed her, because we flew right around the side of the mountain, the route that one climbs up, and where you go, and where you camp, and where the snow is soft, and where you just slide down in a fast glissade, and where you come to crevasses, and a great big brown patch where there'd been an earthslide about three years ago. We had a wonderful view of it, and she was exhilarated to hear about it.

M: Sharon, you mentioned the monthly movies. Were these the ones that she was doing on the President?

F: Yes.

M: Did you become involved in those at all?

F: Very occasionally, such as at that point working with her on the script.

M: These were going to be for the Library, weren't they? Were there some done for AID, or anything like that?

F: That I don't know. She began reviewing the scripts quite early on, because the initial ones, the films that she saw, she found the scripts overtheatrical and overwritten and editorializing and glorifying too much about the President, and justifying. She wanted them to be straighter and less editorial and more factual. It was a case where overeager scriptwriters were turning on the thickest embellishments you can imagine, and she just wasn't going to have his, should I say staff prepared record, be in such honorific form. So she reviewed them monthly, not only the scripts but the films, and I think her contribution was one of objectifying rather than subjectifying him and the material about him. A couple of times I was over with her at the Navy photo lab, went over with her to look at them. I always found it interesting that she was the person who stepped in to soften the record about him, soften the enthusiasm. I think it shows her objective capabilities, really.

M: Do you know how these had come about? The decision to do these?

F: No, I don't.

Well, let's see. In Portland, in the hotel where we were staying, while her hair was being done Mrs. Johnson read over her speech, rehearsing it, tightening it up the final time. Secretary Freeman met her in the lobby and escorted her over to the Civic Center. There were, oh, I'm not good on the size of crowds, but the Civic Center was absolutely full of people, a couple of thousand I would guess. It was a very enthusiastically received speech. Then after the speech Mrs. Johnson hoped there would be time to drive around Portland a little bit to see the fountain that Larry Halprin had designed there and the new Portland Plaza area. But there really wasn't time to do that after the reception that the AIA had had for her, so we went up to Mount Hood, which Marta and Marcia had arranged, stopping at just a lovely forest campground alongside the road by the river, and had a grilled salmon lunch.

Then we stayed up at Timberline Lodge, which is a great, old-fashioned, handmade, hand-hewn kind of place that was built during CCC days that no one would build now. But as you come down the stairs, the stairpost when you turn down to go to the next floor was carved in the shape of an animal, a bear or a wildcat or something. We changed into outdoor clothes. The weather was cloudy and sort of blowy and not very attractive, but we got into snowcats and rode up from the lodge onto the snowfields and got out and walked around in the snow and took pictures. After which Mrs. Johnson retired for a nap, and I went out for a long walk around some of the moraines from the old glaciers. Then they had arranged a beef fondue supper with a number of people from Portland coming up and entertainment around the fireside, singers and someone who was trying to give the local Indian lore. It had been Liz's very good idea that we have

someone who could tell the tales and enchantment, and the guy who did it was just awful. He was a professor, just about as entertaining as the worst professor you can imagine.

Well, the next day we were going to have a five-mile hike. The next morning Marcia and Marta and I woke up in the wee hours and stuck our noses out, and it was raining buckets, just buckets. So that was the end of the five-mile hike through the lovely forest. So, the alternative plan was to have a local Forest Service ranger demonstrate inside the lodge backpacking, all the equipment, all the lightweight equipment and freeze-dried foods and everything one carries. So he had his darling wife there with a pack on, and then he showed everything that she carried. It was fine and entertaining.

Then we drove on down the Columbia River Gorge, stopping at the fish ladders at Bonneville Dam, and then had a buffet lunch at a lovely little inn by Moltnoma [?] Falls. Inevitably, a lot of people recognized Mrs. Johnson; a lot of people didn't recognize her. This was sort of spontaneous and unrehearsed. That is, while Marta and Marcia had been over the route, we travelled leisurely and stopped and looked at things along the way when we wanted to do so. Then we loaded Mrs. Johnson into a plane, the Jetstar, at the Portland Airport, and then sort of stayed and sorted out the equipment and the cars and the advance men and the walkie-talkies and what had to go where and who had to do what.

Oh, I had two interns over the summer; a Mount Holyoke College political science intern who came for free and a girl that I'd had the summer before who was on Park Service payroll for the summer, both very valuable and helpful people. The project I had them work on primarily was putting together a chronology of the beautification program, just in order, everything that happened. I gave them all the scrapbooks of press clippings. I guess I had to have one really bring the scrapbooks up to date, even, before that could be done. We just had stacks of clippings, and they hadn't been glued or cut out. So they did that for us. Then they began developing this chronology, which I considered an important reference material for historians, or anyone in the future. Between the two of them they did a very good job with it. Cynthia and I spent a lot of time reviewing it, making sure everything was in it that we could possibly remember or think of.

Then President and Mrs. Johnson and Liz and Simone had been down in Central America on that trip, and while they were gone the House had pretty well gutted highway beautification on the floor. So I called Barefoot Sanders and said, "What on earth can Mrs. Johnson do to help?" He suggested she talk with both Alan Boyd and Jennings Randolph. Lorraine Cooper, a couple of days

later, called me and said Liz had talked with her, asking that her husband hold firm on the Highway Bill in the conference committee. She said, "He's going to, but he just wants you to know that 'Your problem is not with me, it's with the Democrats. They're the ones who are going to scuttle it.'"

Liz and I were both frustrated and impatient with Barefoot Sanders and DeVier Pierson, because we were much more emotionally involved with the highway bill. And, "Who were the conferees?" Well, they didn't exactly know, nor were they really exactly up on things, not that they maybe didn't have any other assignments from the President and things to watch out for, too. While we were busy trying to find out who the conferees were so we could make contact with them before the conference committee met, [we] learned from either Barefoot or DeVier that, "As soon as we know who they are and when the meeting is scheduled," they'd let us know. Well, this was at three-fifteen on the twelfth of July, and a few hours later I learned that the conference committee had met at two-thirty.

M: Was this a lack of feeling for this bill on the part of the West Wing?

F: I think Liz would accuse them of that. I don't feel so. I think people in a congressional liaison job have so many, so many things that they have to juggle and pace, we were just worrying about one. They were worrying about a great number. Frankly, I think that they were probably spread too thin and didn't have as good an intelligence network as maybe they should have had. I didn't ever detect any cynicism or indication of, well, they were humoring us. I think I would've caught on to that if that had been their attitude. No, I found both DeVier and Barefoot fully well intentioned and probably spread too thin themselves. Not emotionally involved like we were, but I don't fault them for that. I think it's probably healthy.

Well, I called Barefoot and I told him that his conferees had already met, and he said, all right, he and Mike Manatos would call them all anyway. He said that one of our problems was Representative Cramer of Florida, on the House Public Works Committee, who wanted three thousand miles added to the interstate program as the price for supporting any highway beautification. Barefoot felt that the White House shouldn't be party to that kind of a deal, and I said, "Boy, I don't think we should either. If we're going to spend that much money we ought to be spending it on Redwoods and not on the interstate program anyway." Mrs. Johnson talked with Jennings Randolph, with Birch Bayh, with Jim Wright, with Ed Edmondson.

M: She made personal phone calls?

F: Personal phone calls to them, and they were all involved in the conference committee. I talked with John Sweeney in Department of Transportation, who in the last few days in a Drew Pearson column had been prominently described as "undercutting Alan Boyd by. . .

Tape 2 of 2

F: Well, I spent two days on the phone revving up lobbyists, both within federal agencies and garden clubbers and conservationists, to pull out all the stops on the highway bill.

The sixteenth of July Liz said that Henry Diamond had spoken with her about the problem of whether Genevieve Gillette, one of the members of the Citizen Advisory Committee and the weakest who pulled her weight the least, should be replaced or whether she should be continued. Because two members were retiring, and if she were put off she would be the only active one who would be leaving. He thought that might be hurtful of her. Then I relayed to Liz conversations I had had with Matt Coffey and Mrs. Johnson about membership of the committee. Well, Liz didn't realize that Mrs. Johnson and I, nor that Matt and I, had been discussing the committee. She thought she and Henry were working on it. She glared at me, and she said, "We can't have eighty-six thousand people getting involved in all these things. I'll call Matt Coffey." So she grabbed the phone, and I felt suitably squelched and stamped upon.

Then Matt told both of us that Mrs. Johnson had mentioned a couple more people as possible new members of the committee. One was a young man who had spoken out in Portland, following her on the podium, a Seattle lawyer named Marvin Durning. He was a lovely personality and in the forefront of the environmental quality movement in Washington State, now is chairman of the Mayor's Committee on Civic Design in Seattle. The other person Mrs. Johnson had suggested was Anna Rosenberg Hoffmann. It turned out as time went on that Durning was appointed, to my great pleasure.

The President was staging a press conference in which Udall was to come over and report to him on all the conservation accomplishments of the administration, and DeVier sent over the press list that had been suggested. I added a number of names to it. Liz said that the President was disappointed. Last Monday there had been a land and water conservation signing ceremony that hadn't really been played up very much, and she said he was disappointed. Then Liz for some reason thought that the oil industry were supporters and ought to be invited.

I explained to her that they had been fighting us tooth and nail and claw,

and they might pay lip service on their filling stations because they could afford to do that, but they desperately opposed the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act because it was taking offshore oil revenues. [She replied,] "Oh, is that true?" She sort of didn't believe it.

The twenty-sixth of July the President held the ceremony in his office and had a set of fifty pens framed and inscribed for Secretary Udall. To everyone's surprise he brought out another one, or DeVier put it in his hand and he held it up, and the inscription read, "To Lady Bird, Who has inspired me and millions of Americans to try preserve our land and to beautify our nation. With love from Lyndon." I hadn't known he was going to do this. She hadn't known he was going to do it, and he was obviously very pleased with himself. Now, I'm trying--yes there was coverage, and yes there was I have forgotten whether the picture was of Mrs. Johnson receiving hers or of both Udall and Mrs. Johnson. But the questioning of Udall by the press was absolutely inane; [it was] not on the big accomplishments. But everyone wanted him to talk about how many people in the department were writing up history of the Johnson era and how much salary time was going into it.

Oh! Someone ought to do a book about Carpenteritis or Carpenterisms, because if Liz boiled people over at times or stepped on them she well made up for it in the levity she provided. She had been up at Marjorie Merriweather Post's place in the Adirondacks. Congressman Bob Gray had been there, and he and Liz had a thing going of teasing each other. He had entered her room when she wasn't present, and he had put Nixon posters and Nixon buttons all over her room. There was a Nixon button in her girdle; when she ate there was her finger bowl, and there was a Nixon button in it.

So Liz decided to get even. She knew that Bob Gray lived in Arlington near where the Three Sisters bridge connection will be constructed, if it is constructed. Gray had been fighting the highway bill tooth and nail, largely because of his opposition to the Three Sisters, although there were other reasons too. So Liz discovered that he was out of town. She got a number of stakes, put red plastic flags on them, scribbled Three Sisters on them, and she and Sandy Kunial [?], who was an intern working for her, got in the car, went over to Bob Gray's house and drove these stakes around through his yard right up past his front door!

M: Was there any response to that?

F: Oh, I can't remember.

Well, I discovered from Charles Conrad, thirtieth of July, what had

happened in the conference committee on the D.C. highway program. Mr. Rivard [?] from the District Highway Department, sort of number two person or in charge of planning or something for the Highway Department, had sub rosa taken up to the Public Works Committee staff the old drawings and plans before Halprin began working on the east leg of the Interloop, and in some other instances, too. So when the Public Works Committee wrote up the bill, they wrote in the engineering specifications of what was to be done; i.e., filling in Kingman Lake with concrete, their old plan of a year ago, putting a double-deck monster along the Georgetown waterfront.

I called Udall and told him about it. He said he was going to recommend a veto to the President on the highway bill, largely because of what was being done in the District of Columbia. I have a note here, "I will try to get the Mayor to do the same thing." I didn't establish contact with the Mayor. I told Liz that Udall was going to recommend a veto, and she said, "But we've worked so hard for this bill. How can he recommend a veto?" I said, "Yes, but what came out wasn't what we wanted. It wasn't worth working for." I didn't agree with her on it. She felt it shouldn't be vetoed, that she'd made some calls, Mrs. Johnson had made some calls, we know the President made one call and that was to Jim Wright, and, you know, she just said it shouldn't be vetoed. Meanwhile, the Bureau of the Budget and the Mayor and Alan Boyd and others were meeting, trying to see what kind of accomodation could be worked, if any.

M: May we cut here?

F: Yes.

(Interruption)

F: The second of August Secretary Udall called. He was just on his way out west on a trip. He said he wanted to recommend that Mrs. Johnson take one last trip, which Liz and I began euphemistically to call the Last Hurrah. His orientation was that she could do a great deal to help some Democrats who were going to need help in the election, and it would have a conservation, beautification orientation. I told him that Mrs. Johnson was long anxious to see the Redwoods, also that Liz and I had been collecting information on all of the President's programs that might lend themselves to a trip or an inspection by Mrs. Johnson. But I knew that Mrs. Johnson was thinking that if she did it at all it would be in November and December after the election, not beforehand and not as part of any campaigning. He said that he would talk with Liz about it.

M: Did you have some direction from the West Wing as to the fact that you must maintain a sort of apolitical stance during this period?

F: I can't think of specific direction, other than from Mrs. Johnson, the up-wing.

Matt Nimetz of Joe Califano's staff told me a wonderful story of how they tried to get the D.C. city revenue bill signed. Someone discovered it had to be signed on August 2 in order to be effective the first of September. If not signed by August 2, it would not go into effect until October 1, and then 1.2 million dollars worth of revenue would be lost and unexpendable. "So," he said, "we choreographed the whole thing. We had to have couriers get it up to the Hill to get the signature of the Speaker at eleven o'clock when Congress convened in the morning. Then it had to be carried over to the Senate for signature. Then it had to be brought down to the White House."

"Well, the President was just leaving for Texas. We raced the bill out to the airport, but the plane was taxiing away. So we shoved it just into someone's hand in the back-up press plane saying, 'For goodness sakes, he has to sign this' and urgently telephoned to the other end." But it turned out that the press plane landed at San Antonio, not at the Ranch, so they had to get a car to San Antonio to get it to the Ranch. They had to get his signature before midnight. Well, they got his signature before midnight, but no one ever quite figured out whether it had to be midnight Washington, D.C. time or Texas time. Fortunately, they were never called on the point!

On the nineteenth of August Mrs. Johnson had a little reception in the afternoon for friends of beautification--the Shackletons, the Washingtons, the Hartzogs, the Castros, MacArthurs, Jake Pickle, Mrs. Henry Fowler, Lindy Boggs and Mrs. Johnson's staff. It was just a warm and sociable occasion. Mrs. Johnson gave each one of us a seedling magnolia tree, either from the tree at The Elms or the Andrew Jackson magnolia outside the White House. She'd had these potted and cared for for several years, and now she wanted her closest friends in beautification to take them and be able to plant them and enjoy them. I very sadly have to report that my own has died. Others have told me the same thing. They are very, very hard to get through the winter, and if there is a lot of freezing and thawing, as there was this last winter--ours just plain didn't make it, which I won't get over, I guess. I would have treasured that.

I went over to the City Council Chamber the thirtieth of August for the award ceremony culminating the summer Trailblazers program. The boys were all clean and neat and gotten up, and some of their mothers came, and the Mayor came and spoke. I spoke a minute or two, and I said Mrs. Johnson counted on them. A great bunch of kids, it sort of wrung me out inside to know that there wasn't money to continue the program next year, and there wouldn't be, because the city just wasn't up to finding it.

Well, the third of September, after the Democratic Convention in Chicago, we had a birthday party for Liz down in the theater. A number of us began to razz her about her announced support for Mayor Daley. "Well," she said, "I want to take a public opinion survey, I want everyone who is pro-Daley to raise their hands." There were about seventy-five people in the room. The secretaries and the older, less educated people raised their hands, pro-Daley. She said, "All right, anti-Daley." About 40 per cent of the room, the educated, the people in their, say, twenty five to forty span, were anti-Daley. Doug Cater took her over in a corner and gave her a real lecture about getting out on the end of the Daley limb. We gave her all kinds of funny presents, as well as a very nice handbag.

M: Did you have any indication that the Johnsons might be going out to the Democratic convention?

F: Sure didn't. No.

Meryle Secrest of the Washington Post had said she would like to interview Mrs. Johnson on the overall beautification accomplishments. I did a memo, a three-page memo to Mrs. Johnson on things we had learned and things we had accomplished, and sort of thinking out myself some evaluation. Then Mrs. Johnson and I sat up in the Lincoln Sitting Room before Meryle came in and talked. Mrs. Johnson liked the memo and agreed with the pluses and minuses that I had recorded. She and I talked about the highway bill. Now I don't have all of this in my notes here, but the President in the eleventh hour did sign the highway bill because Joe Califano had found a legal interpretation which the President felt gave him an out on the District of Columbia freeway program.

Essentially, the Highway Act called for public hearings and public participation, and even though Congress specified exactly which routes had to be built in the District of Columbia the President felt that that requirement of public hearings still was applicable. He emphasized that in his remarks, and this was the first time Mrs. Johnson and I had had a chance to talk about it since he had signed the bill. She wanted to reassure me that all the editorials and material that I had sent up to her, really of opposition to the bill, she had conveyed to him. And she, while not trying to make the decision for him, had been sympathetic toward those people who were urging him to veto it until this legalism was found that she and he both felt got around the biggest problem, which was the District of Columbia problem.

Barbara Keehn who had worked long and hard and loyally for Bess, left on the ninth of September to go over to the Kennedy Center. She was the first of us to lodge herself somewhere else, but with a child to support she couldn't

face potential financial insecurity of just waiting until January 20. So we had a party in Bess' office for her and gave her a ninety-six dollar Tiffany silver box. We had a great deal of champagne. Then that afternoon there was the country fair on the White House grounds, huge affair, some fifteen hundred people, because all of EOB was invited as White House staff. There were barbecued ribs on the tennis court. I noticed they were much less greasy than those that we had eaten in Texas!

Liz had had a funny time with Fran Lewine and Helen Thomas, who were of course always constantly perpetual trouble to her. The country fair hadn't been announced, and press coverage had not been invited. Fran and Helen had called Liz and said, "What's cooking on the White House grounds? We smell something." Liz had sort of indicated that maybe Lynda was cooking hot dogs, and they had said, "Something's still cooking, and it doesn't smell like hot dogs to us."

But it was one of those beautiful, wonderful times that one would always remember--the balloons rising, the ferris wheel spinning, the rock music of the Fuzzy Bunnies. Word went around through everyone that the President had ordered, "Turn those Fuzzy Bunnies down. I'm trying to hold a cabinet meeting!" The President finally came out on the lawn and came over and had his fortune told. First he was just looking around while Mary Kaltman, i.e., the gypsy, was looking at his hand and telling his fortune. Then finally he began to listen; he got a little bit interested in what she was saying. I seem to have won a sackrace. My husband seems to have hit the bell with a hammer stroke, and generally we had a lot of fun.

The beautification summary was completed, and our intern departed on the twelfth of September. I brought it in to Liz, and she was really quite impressed with it. She said, "Gee, you never can tell what a flat-chested girl from Mount Holyoke can do!" Because Jean had been by far the least glamorous intern to grace the White House, and in my opinion, probably the most productive, too. Then Nash and I got together and talked about doing a really nice report to the President from Mrs. Johnson and her committee. I said I would draft it and put it together. Liz and I had lunch with Henry Diamond at the Sans Souci, talked about the report. Henry asked how much it would cost, and I said, "Oh, eight thousand perhaps, at the most. We would like to do up something with a nice cover, something that could be distributed to a fairly wide mailing list." He said, "Don't worry about publication costs. We'll have it covered one way or another."

Liz asked Henry how to get Nixon's support of the potential Abe Fortas appointment to the Supreme Court. Henry said, well, he knew pipelines to

Nixon, but the trouble was no one knew who really had his ear. Then Henry said, "Besides, I don't know if we want him to get any credit for supporting Abe Fortas." Then we talked with Henry considerably about the future of the Beautification Committee and agreed that the only person who could carry it forward would be the Mayor, if he wished to do so. It was already obvious, too, as much as we wanted to see it continued, that if the Mayor had a beautification committee there'd be a lot of push on him to have an anti-crime committee and housing and a lot of other topics, too.

Then we talked about the gap in the national leadership that was going to take place, particularly if Nixon became president, the need to have a much stronger citizen lobby for beautification and conservation. It was one thing when the first family itself was the lobby, but quite another if an ignorant or antagonistic person were in the White House. Henry said the real problem with mounting a lobby was that, of course, tax exempt money couldn't be used for it, and there were just not enough people, affluent people, who would be able to put out non-tax exempt money. But he said we ought to think about trying to set up something if possible.

Then we talked about the November Beautification Committee meeting, which would be the last one. He said Admiral Phillips, a member of the committee, had circulated a letter to the other committee members suggesting that everyone chip in ten dollars and buy Mrs. Johnson a silver tray as a farewell present with her name on it. Henry wanted to sound us out on our reaction to that. Liz exploded: "Why would Mrs. Johnson want another silver tray?" Couldn't her own committee give her something relevant, a tree, a bench, something at the Johnson Library? Henry said, "Absolutely, and we'll get together with the landscape architects at the Library and see if we can't draw up something that would be appropriate and then tactfully go back to the other committee members and get their participation in that kind of gift." He suggested also that at the November meeting we might like to come back to the Rockefeller's place on Foxhall Road, rather than the White House, and let the committee host Mrs. Johnson for once rather than her hosting them. We thought that was capital.

Liz asked Henry how his many diverse talents could help Hubert Humphrey, and Henry said, "Just give me a chance, I'd certainly like to." His lack of affection for Nixon was quite apparent. So Liz trotted off and phoned Humphrey and told him about Henry. It later turned out that Henry in fact didn't [help Humphrey]. He was nearly ready, I think, to come down and actually work in the Humphrey operation, but the Rockefeller wisdom was that it would probably be better for them to stay out. They didn't have to work for Nixon, but not to step over to the other party. Liz also confided in me. She said when the

President, down in Texas during the convention, heard about her remarks on Daley he'd said, "Liz is right, but she shouldn't have said it." Liz was also very annoyed that some of Humphrey's aides were telling him he needed to soften his position on Vietnam.

Boy, you know, these meetings and conversations go on and on and on. DeVier Pierson and I were working together on finding the right date and occasion for the President to release the report "From Sea to Shining Sea," which is that volume over there, the big interagency task force report on accomplishments in natural beauty and conservation. Udall had recommended that the President take a conservation trip, and DeVier and I agreed that if that turned out that would be the time to do it. As it turns out he did not take such a trip.

A woman at Conservationists for Humphrey called and asked for my help. They were trying to put together a mailing list of people to communicate with to support Humphrey. Nash Castro came by, and I told him about her call and asked him if he thought I'd be violating the Hatch Act to provide information to her. "Well," he said, "Be careful. Watch out." Then he told me people to talk to in personnel, and I got the biggest round-the-world-robin from Civil Service Commission and the White House staff and Park Service and Department of Interior. I have yet to find someone who could give me any definitive guidance on what the Hatch Act did or didn't provide and preclude. I got the full range of "do everything and shut up about it" to "do nothing" and "don't dare." So in the end I ended up using my own judgment.

I helped Tom Appleby. He was having trouble with FHA requirements on Fort Lincoln, and we had to bang some heads together in order to relax their standards slightly so some of these more creative architectural plans could be approved. Keep America Beautiful officers came in to talk to Liz and me to see if Mrs. Johnson would present their awards this year, and they wanted to set up a program in the future to be named for her, an awards program. Liz said, "Don't give as awards just a crystal bowl or a hunk of silver or a gob of something, but give something that is going to have some meaning. Give a park in their name or something, a thousand dollars they can take back and spend in their own town. You'd really have a multiplier effect from that." They were all conservative: well, they didn't have that much money and if they gave a piece of glass, Corning Glass would do it for free. Liz said, "If you want Mrs. Johnson, you're going to have to have a meaningful program. I'll have to sell it to her."

They hemmed and hawed and [said] their board wouldn't approve and they didn't have enough money. Liz said, "Who's on your board?" So she knew a couple of people on the board and placed calls to them herself and said, "You

put up a few thousand more dollars to have a more meaningful awards program.” They agreed that they would. Well, the poor Executive Director of Keep America Beautiful just sat there and cringed. It finally turned out that they gave Mrs. Johnson a great glob of glass, Liz nearly barfed over it, and that they gave their award winners a set of different films on beautification that they could take back to their communities. It wasn't a thousand bucks cash, but it was a reasonably meaningful gift.

The twenty-third of September Walter Washington came over to talk with Liz and me about the future of beautification and said really, he couldn't decide to do anything until he saw who was president--for that matter, who was mayor. He didn't know any better than anybody else who would be mayor, and he spoke of his beautification office as a staff nucleus. I sat there thinking to myself, "Yes, and it sits under the Highway Department, which is just a good way to keep it from doing anything." But there wasn't any point in discussing that level of concern with him, because obviously he couldn't see far enough ahead to know whether it was a program politically he ought to undertake in the future. Liz also talked to him about staging a farewell salute dinner to the Johnsons, and he was going to ask Mr. Danzansky, head of Giant Food, to be head of the committee to do it. It was one of Liz's ideas that never did quite come about.

Twenty-fourth of September, 1968: Liz was featured in both the Times and Washington Post this morning for being among the joggers yesterday launching the nationwide jogger's association. She was wearing a huge Humphrey button, and she gave up the race halfway. We all had a good laugh over it, since Liz had never been noticeably athletic. We all nearly had to carry her out there to get her to do it the day before. She got--do you say cold feet or cold sneakers?

I was in communication from time to time with Neal Peterson on Humphrey's staff. He handled Humphrey's coordination for the President's Council, and he moaned about how Nixon had ten million dollars for television and Humphrey was scratching to get four million and just wasn't able to get the resources coming into him.

When Tyler Abell was about to be announced as chief of protocol the twenty-fifth of September, Bess was all nervous and sort of pale about it, and wanted to bring her children and to know whether in fact the announcement was going to be made or not. Liz called Jim Jones and said, "Now, what gives? Is it going to happen or not? Can the children of the man come? Are you doing something here or not?" Jim said, "Yes, it's going to be done." So Bess dashed off to get their children.

Another Liz joke. I can't miss them, they're just too good. They're excruciating. Liz was cussing out George Christian [for] keeping Bess dangling, keeping Tyler dangling: Couldn't they ever make up their minds on anything? She said that she told George Christian yesterday that if she ever died at her desk she forbade the West Side to announce it. They'd probably wait three days and then say she'd gone the wrong way.

I had lunch with Henry Kimelman, who was working for Stewart Udall, and we talked about who ought to be secretary of the interior if the Republicans came in. Henry thought Laurance Rockefeller would be great. Then Henry began saying, "You know, Udall is the only cabinet member who has never been on the cover of Time. What a tragedy, and everything he's accomplished," and what have you. I had not really thought of it, but I agreed that was rather awful. So I called David Dominick, who is now head of water pollution control for the new administration, who is an old college chum of mine whose uncle-in-law is head of the Washington Time bureau. Dave's a good conservationist, a loyal Republican, a Udall fan. I pointed out this discrepancy to him and began reciting the conservation legislation that had come through this year, the Redwoods and North Cascades and Land and Water Conservation Fund. He said, "Sharon, that's absolutely great. Let me run with it. I'll be back to you if there's any bite." Well, the next day he phoned back, and the word he had was that Time did not do post-mortems.

I worked with Mrs. Johnson on some draft letters, people urging her to continue with beautification, and how she wanted to handle them, saying that her interest of course would always be maintained. The twenty-eighth of September, on Saturday, she had a meeting in the Queen's Sitting Room with those of us on her staff to brief Helene Lindow who would be going down to Austin as her secretary. We talked about the type of letters Mrs. Johnson was likely to receive and the need for pictures that she could send out. She said she really wanted to give emphasis to beautification and encouragement to those people if they still wrote her, and asked that we give Helene all our sample letters and have a good briefing file for her. Mrs. Johnson said she was looking forward to hiking the Appalachian Trail, to visiting some archeological digs, to going snorkeling, to working on the President's homes. She said perhaps she'd be able to do something for Head Start in Texas.

Mrs. Johnson and Liz and Nash and I went out on the thirtieth of September to drive around and look at different parks. We went to Columbia Island, to Hobart Place, where there are two little vest-pocket parks on a black street and where we were going to have a dedication ceremony. Mrs. Johnson wanted to see it before they were done.

With Liz's tacit concurrence, Nash had gone to the Board of Geographic Names in Interior to have Columbia Island renamed Lady Bird Johnson Park. Nash had initiated the suggestion. Initially Stewart Udall had been opposed to it and called me and told me his opposition to it, because he felt it could reflect unfavorably upon the Johnsons. It would look self-initiated. He said he'd like to set machinery in motion to have it done after they had left and have it something that he would work out with the next secretary of the interior, that it would be done. But he thought it would look much better for Mrs. Johnson if her administration wasn't seeming to be self-serving in doing it. Liz thought it would be a good idea to do, that the chance of having a ceremony with Mrs. Johnson out there would give us a great story, and that we shouldn't worry about postponing it. We ought to undertake it at this time. Mrs. Johnson didn't know anything about it, and we were not to let her know.

Then Mrs. Johnson and I were trying to figure out a date, and her calendar was really crammed, to dedicate a series of things in Washington, to sort of have a wrap-up trip and do a number of things. Of course election was going to be the fifth of November, and she said, "Well, how long is it going to take after November fifth for people to wake up again so they can face any other news?" I chuckled and said, "It depends on what kind of news has hit them." She laughed.

Ervin Duggan and I began collaborating on getting the President to initiate a 1976 exposition in Washington, which would be the celebration of the agenda and be called Urban Man in the City. We worked out quite a briefing, which Joe Califano thought was great. The whole city itself would be the exhibit. The array of city projects would be there for the world to see. It would be real; real life would be the exhibit, not an exhibit exhibit. We decided to go over and see Stewart Udall and help get him backing the idea.

The second of October we had the signing ceremony for Redwoods National Park and North Cascades National Park. I had helped draft the President's statement. He extensively praised Mrs. Johnson as [an] "enthusiastic, tenacious, pugnacious, persistent advocate of conservation every hour in this house." Then that same afternoon we had the Beautification Committee meeting, went out and dedicated the Hobart Place parks, several other places around the city. Mrs. Johnson looked very drawn, and I later learned why. It was because Abe Fortas had asked that his nomination for chief justice be withdrawn. I didn't know at the time, but afterwards [learned] that was why her mood was restrained.

Well, then we were having a thank you luncheon for historic preservationists. That took place on the fifteenth of October. Mrs. Johnson

asked my husband and me to attend as guests. Typically, I snagged my stockings an hour beforehand and went over to Garfinckel's to get some new ones. Mrs. Johnson, as she had been working out the seating, gave me a ring and said she thought my husband was a most interesting person and would like to ask him to be host to Alice Longworth, sit with her. She said, "He's such a good conversationalist, I know she--Mrs. Longworth--will enjoy him." So I passed this on to Harry, who rose to the occasion very well, but who felt a little too flattered I think. He sat between Mary Rockefeller and Mrs. Longworth, and he did have an absolute ball.

Of course I was all involved with the speakers, because I had gotten the speakers together and had been coaxing all of them along on their remarks and calming their worries. Everyone performed very, very well. Old Henry DuPont was there with his watery eyes. My husband's father knows him fairly well. It was the first time my husband had met him, so DuPont sort of came alive when they conversed, and then, like a turtle, he sort of went back into his brown suit. You know, there aren't many men who can wear a brown suit and bring it off, really, an absolutely brown suit.

Later that afternoon a consultant of Pride Incorporated, this is the city antipoverty program, brought some of their cats into my office to talk about a vest-pocket park they wanted to do. He wanted to expose them to me and some of our experience and the costs and the workmanship. The real question was, "How cheaply can you build a park that's still going to last? If you put five hundred dollars and fifty people's labor into it over a weekend, six months later are you going to have anything?" The answer is no. So we talked around this question. I enjoyed it very much.

Well, all through October we were working on planning for the Last Hurrah, Mrs. Johnson's final trip, which would culminate out at the redwoods. Liz had sent different people out to advance pieces and portions of it. Then she and I sort of stood at the switchboard in Washington and got the reports in and said, "Do this" and "Don't do that" and "That sounds good" and "Explore this" and "Forget that." I had the report to the President from Mrs. Johnson and her committee all ready to go to the printer and just wasn't getting any word back from Henry Diamond as to whether there was going to be any money to print it. It made me think I was going to have an ulcer. So finally, when it was zero hour and everyone was going to have to work weekends and twenty-four hours a day around the clock to get it done in time, he said, "Oh, yes, sure. Seven thousand dollars? That's fine." Very casual.

M: Sharon, I have a note down here, and we passed by the time period.

F: Yes.

M: But in September of 1968 Mrs. Johnson taped a program with NBC on her activities in the White House.

F: Yes.

M: You didn't have any involvement in this one?

F: Simone coordinated that. I did to the extent of preparing memos for Mrs. Johnson on different events that had happened in different rooms and different things we'd done. Also, we used footage of various beautification projects, and I helped find some of the footage that was used on it. We gave a lot of assistance to Diana Fetter [?], who was the NBC research assistant working on the film, in terms of showing her all of the footage that had been available and helping her select what they finally used.

The twentieth of November Liz, Ervin Duggan and Ben Wattenberg and I worked upstairs with Mrs. Johnson all day on her speeches for the trip, the Last Hurrah. I had drafted about half of them. Ben and Ervin had also drafted some. We were all going over each other's with her. Mrs. Johnson was reflecting back on the first time she'd gone to New Orleans when she was fifteen years old. She said, "My goodness, I don't know if we even took a chaperon. Well, let's hope that we did."

M: Your asides are very informing.

F: You know, I don't know whether they are or not, but this is

M: You get a lot better feel about the life and times of working in the White House and working with Mrs. Johnson.

F: These light moments and humor are what make it all hold together. If everyone were deadly serious--I think everyone was aware of the public and policy implications of what we were doing. We were highly clued in on that level, but we were a very happy group of people enjoying each other as we did it. The fellowship was of high order.

Twenty-first of November was a dinner for the Arts Council. Liz's staff was all over the country advancing the Last Hurrah. She came in to me late in the afternoon and said, "Can you help on the dinner tonight?" I said, "Oh, boy, I'd love to." I turned out the press release for it and then helped get the press and corral them and hang onto them in time for the dinner party. A particular

pleasure for me was getting to know Duke Ellington, and having not only a couple of good visits with him but also dancing with him while Abe Fortas and Isaac Stern played the fiddle. Duke sat down at the piano and musically loosened up the whole place, and then Abe and Isaac Stern picked up the violins. Then Duke, beating his hand on the top of the piano, got up and picked me up and began dancing, and then the piano player sat down. Lovely. Lovely, lovely. Marian Anderson [was] powdering her nose like a queen, right in the middle of the dining room. I spent a lot of time with the Fortas' and had a lot of fun with them, which I often did.

The fourth of December: "These final days are flying by when they should be contemplated and savored. The telephone keeps ringing; the mail basket keeps filling. Somehow we must put a stop to it by the twenty-first of January .

The fourth of December Nash and Liz had the press release announcing the renaming of Columbia Island. Poor Stewart Udall had signed off on the recommendation from the Board of Geographic Names, but he hadn't realized that it was to be done now. He thought it was for an action to be taken post-January, but by that time the train was moving and down the track. So he said, "Oh, well, I didn't think it was going to happen that way. All right." I was in the throes of getting our final report out, too, and spending a lot of time with the designers and printers.

M: The report to the President?

F: Yes. On the ninth of January Mrs. Johnson invited thirty-five highway engineer trainees from the Bureau of Public Roads to come over and have tea. Alan Boyd had dropped her a note, I think in September, about this training program, saying that the chance for them to meet her and hear her own philosophy would just be a long range career plus for these young men who eventually would have positions of leadership all over the country in highway planning and design. So he brought them over. She received them upstairs in the Yellow Oval Room. The President came by, and he was just about to come in the room and I went this way (gestures), and he went on his way again. He didn't realize we were having a meeting in there. I had done a briefing memo for Mrs. Johnson on a lot of the different highway kinds of problems and things she might mention in impromptu remarks.

Well, without it ever being apparent that she was making points with this group of engineers, she raised all the questions about the difficulty of designing in urban areas. "How do you really take the wishes of the people into account?" "Will further hearings such as the 1960 Highway Act is providing for bring about participation?" When she said that Alan Boyd said, "I wish I could get you to

swear that I didn't put you up to that question, Mrs. Johnson." She said, "Of course I'd be glad to swear to it, because it's been something that's been very much on my mind." Then Alan Boyd went on and described how he saw this two hearing procedure working, as being a much more democratic and fair means of planning highways than just having the engineers present the community with a fait accompli. Then Alan turned to Frank Turner, who is head of the Bureau of Public Roads, and said, "Well now, Frank here may not agree with me. I'd like to hear his views, too." But of course his boss had put him on the carpet pretty well about what he'd promulgated and what he expected.

The young engineers asked very, very good questions. They opened up with her; they showed themselves to be considerably public spirited and to be very aware of the added dimensions of beauty and democracy that ought to be brought to the highway programs of the country. She felt extremely good about them. She felt that the hour had been well spent, and she had considerable hope when the future was going to be in the hands of people like that. After they left she snuggled into bed for a twenty minute rest. We went through a number of papers and things she had before, and she said she just looked forward to not being so busy and to be able to sit down and take a rest without having to take work with her everywhere she went, everything she did.

Liz had suggested that perhaps she write Russell Train, the designated under secretary of the interior, who was a close friend and collaborator of ours, about continuing the Committee for a More Beautiful Capital. Mrs. Johnson said, "If you want to have conversations with Judge Train, of course that's all right. But I never want there to be anything on paper that would indicate that we were instigating any self-perpetuation." She said she felt very strongly about it.

The tenth of December Udall called Irwin Miller, of whom Mrs. Johnson was so fond, in Columbus, Indiana, [who] had had a design done for the new federal post office. Marvin Watson, the postmaster general, had disapproved this design because it was going to cost two hundred thousand dollars more than the boilerplate kind of typical government kind of architecture. Irwin Miller had felt very confident that if Mrs. Johnson knew about the problem that she'd be able to do something. All the billions spent on what have you and what have you, and two hundred thousand dollars wouldn't make a lot of difference. I told her about it. I guess I wrote her a note. I didn't talk to her, I wrote her a note about it, and she called me at home that night.

She said that the Post Office Department had an enormous deficit, that there were so many projects in the city of Washington and elsewhere around the country that she had personally been involved with, and that if she dared ask the President for money for something, which she didn't, it would be for the things

that she was more closely involved with. She said, "After all, I think the world of Miller, but Miller is a Republican and a good one. He can get the money out of the next administration as well as out of us." I said, "Do you want Marvin to defer the decision until the next administration?" She said, "No, I just don't think we ought to get involved with it at all. Just let what will be, be."

The seventeenth of December was the final meeting of the Committee for a More Beautiful Capital. Parenthetically, as I say this, I realize I do not have account of the meeting that ended up back at Laurance Rockefeller's place on Foxhall Road. The record will show what day it took place on in November. We planned to go out to Columbia Island and have a little plaque ceremony there and then surprise Mrs. Johnson with the renaming of Columbia Island to Lady Bird Johnson Park; however, it rained. So the whole thing was held in the Department of Interior auditorium. Udall did a very, very pro job of pulling off the surprise, the name change, couldn't have been better. Mrs. Johnson was totally surprised. Her face just sort of lit up and her eyes shone. She had really been caught off guard. It was done well, and everyone loved it. I never heard any backlash of people resenting that it was done.

Then we, in our bus, bused out to Foxhall Road, missed the corner of the driveway, had to back the bus up, turned it around, nearly went into the ditch, finally got it around and got into the Rockefeller's place and had maybe the warmest time that the committee ever had together. There were some presentations of agenda business, even though it was the second to last meeting, that was still going on. Then Laurance Rockefeller and Henry Diamond together most wittily showed the renderings of the little bench and planted area at the Johnson Library in Texas that would be given to Mrs. Johnson from her committee. Henry said, "You know we realize, Mrs. Johnson, that you will be the designer and the landscape architect and the horticulturist who will bring all this about. But just to give us a bit of an idea, to show us what we're giving you, we know that you'll see, but we had this little rendering drawn up."

Then we had an elegant, elegant served dinner of pheasant, beautiful pheasant dinner, and almost everyone in the room stood up and gave toasts to Mrs. Johnson. Walter Washington at that time was not at his best. He was quite lugubrious, and the world just wasn't going to be the same again. Lee Udall piped up after him and said, "Now I don't think you all ought to be so sad. After all, you've done so much. It's still going to go on, and no one's going to forget it." She said, "I don't come to your meetings all the time, but I just can't stand to see you getting melancholy at a time of celebration." So she picked the whole room back up again. One of the most surprising and charming toasts of all was from Mary Rockefeller, who is usually very silent, deep. Still waters run deep, that's true of her. But she had a poetic quotation that was very to the point, and

it made quite an elegant tribute.

Well, that was November. Now the December meeting. Liz had to spend the day in the hospital with her husband, Les, who had had a tracheotomy the night before. He'd been having prolonged and intensive bleeding from his nose for a number of weeks. He was in very, very serious condition. Mrs. Johnson and I worked upstairs on her remarks. Betty Chapowicki gave her a massage. We went downstairs and had a little reception before the meeting in the Blue Room for Mrs. Rose Zallas and Mrs. Enid Haupt and others who had donated fountains. This last meeting was going to be a celebration of the fountains.

Udall brought his wife, his son Tommy and Tommy's girlfriend. Jane Life, Udall's secretary, had called our office asking if they could be brought. Cynthia had said it really would be much better not to, and tell them, "No, there's not that much room, and this is the last time this group is ever going to be together." Well, on they all came, and not only did they go on the bus tour, but the kids came upstairs to the party afterwards. I had tried to steer Mrs. Udall and the kids. I had said goodbye to them and "so nice to have you" after the bus tour when we got back to the White House, and "we're going to see them soon" and tried to see them out the door. Then when I got back up to the Yellow Oval Room, by golly, they'd come up the stairs. The Udalls are strong on a lot of things, but protocol is not one of them. I was appalled.

Well, we went to the two fountains along the Ellipse. It was cold, bitterly cold. Then we went out to Hains Point and dedicated the jet. The picture that came from that ceremony of Mary Lasker and Mrs. Johnson in their minks with that wonderful jet spraying behind them, the air sort of clear, and both women looked tremendous, is one of the best pictures that ever came on any of our trips. I thought it was great. We had eggnog back upstairs in the Oval Room, and, oh, boy, we were so cold we all needed it.

We had invited the President to come to this final meeting, and I was sort of one ear out in the hall waiting, looking, seeing if there was any sign of him. We decided he probably wasn't going to be able to make it, so Udall stood up and made his little thank you and tribute to Mrs. Johnson and had a trowel for her, presented with a ribbon hanging on it that had an inscription burned into it about where it had been used. Then I looked out in the hall, and I saw Jeffie [Fred Jefferson], one of the butlers, signal with his eyes. So I realized the President was coming. So I scooted people aside, and sure enough in he walked, shaking hands all round. Udall stood up once again and said, "Well, Mr. President, I made my little speech, but I'm going to say it over again because I said some things about you and your wife that I want you to hear." So he went through it again.

Then the President made a neat little speech, thanking the committee for giving his wife such a good time, for giving her so much to do and for giving her back to him. He said that the best thing that the committee had done, [of] all its many accomplishments, and he reeled a number of them off, [was], "You brought out the best in people." What could one say more than that? It was true, and it was absolutely lovely. Then he vanished like Saint Nick up the chimney. Bang. He was off to do whatever else he had been doing. At the meeting Mrs. Johnson had given the President the first copy of the report. So as he left he had taken it with him, and then all the committee members had it. The next few days I worked on the distribution of it.

One of the people I had worked with from time to time and had a healthy respect for was a Washington Post reporter, Bob Maynard, a black reporter on the Post, a Nieman fellow, a savvy person who I used as a bridge to the black community, someone who would tell me what was going on and who I could ask questions of when I didn't understand things or when I needed to know things. I hadn't seen him or heard of him for some time. On the sixth of January he telephoned. He'd been assigned by the Post to cover LBJ in transition. He'd been turning out, I thought, some extremely good stories about the President, and he asked if I had a few minutes for a Coke, he'd like to talk to me. I went over to the West Lobby, and we got a Coke and sat down and talked. He said his beat had changed and that's why I hadn't heard from him, and he didn't want me to think I was on his black list. Then he sort of laughed. I said, "Oh, I'd be honored to be on your black list, just don't put me on your white list."

What he wanted to say was, he wanted me to know that in this period of time he'd been covering the President that his opinion of the President had most considerably changed. He was ever so much more favorably disposed toward him, not only had an understanding of him, how he made decisions, why he made the decisions he made, but really liked him and respected him. Bob said he just wanted me to know that and know that he felt that way. I was very pleased, because while not radicalized, he certainly was highly sympathetic to the black demands going on not only in the city but around the country, and his beat had included the Panthers and the most radical black elements. I had sensed, though he'd never said so, but in other conversations we had I sensed he shared the deep antagonism that most blacks had for Vietnam and for the lack of resources going into the cities. So I considered that the President had done very well in making that convert.

Then the eighth of January Mrs. Johnson and I talked about the very, very last event that we'd do. It would be a stamp ceremony to launch the four new Plant for a More Beautiful America stamps. She said it really wasn't a very important occasion, but it was the last event that we'd have. The stamps would

be an advertisement that would last in people's minds even after she'd left the White House. We'd had a lot of trouble with the design of the stamps. I've forgotten when, and I don't have it recorded, but Marvin Watson had sent over a folio to show Mrs. Johnson of how the stamps looked. Instead of whatever color flowers there were to be in one particular stamp, the flowers were brown. I looked at it, and I said, "Looks like cow manure!" We'd gone screaming back to Marvin and said, "Get the manure out of there. Plant some flowers, would you?" So he had to run the whole set of stamps again.

The ninth of January was the one and only time, to my knowledge, that anyone tried to influence me overtly. There were some people in Ashville, North Carolina, who had contacted everyone in Washington, including writing Mrs. Johnson, including calling me, about a proposed freeway that was going to plunge through a mountain. Their house was on top of the mountain, and they were pledging that it be routed around. The Bureau of Public Roads and the Department of Transportation wrestled with the situation, and the highway design was definitely not the best. It was also too far down the pipe to be able to do anything about it.

The son of these elderly people telephoned, and I must say they were extraordinarily nice people, said that he worked at the State Department, he knew how things were done in Washington. This highway location was really just awfully important, and it meant everything to his parents and the home he'd grown up in. Did I like to ski by any chance? Oh, yes? Well, he had a plane, and he flew up to Vermont weekends skiing. "Listen," he said, "why don't your husband and you plan to join us? There is a cabin there, and it's very economical. Everyone shares the cost. We'd just love to have you join our group." He said, "Of course, there's no connection between this. I mean I can just understand that you're a skier, and you must much prefer Vermont." I was upset and disappointed. I said, "Unfortunately, this now closes the conversation between us, sir, on both the highway and the skiing."

We were all cleaning out files, throwing things away, trying to get the files organized and material organized that Mrs. Johnson and Helene would have available to them in Texas. I was worried all during this period, and Mrs. Johnson was, too, that Helene hadn't had enough time, and to tell you the truth, aptitude, to brief herself on our operation and how it was done. Mrs. Johnson several times expressed her concern to me, and she said, "Lay everything out. Do this. Don't do that. Do this this way. Don't just assume that because it's in your head and you know it that Helene will know unless you lay it out for her." So Cynthia and I spent a lot of time trying to make things as simple and as easy and as clear for Helene as we could.

Cynthia and I also had worked up a surprise for Mrs. Johnson. The navy photo lab people had a lot of footage of beautification, lots of it, flowers and trees and ceremonies. We were aware of this. This was before Simone had left to go to Denmark, and the three of us had talked to them about--they just had some time just sort of to squeeze in and run a lot of this footage together into a little film on beautification that we could give Mrs. Johnson. Well, we worked up the script and spent a lot of time over at the photo lab looking at runs and reruns. There was a charming young man over there who really worked very hard on the script.

The fifteenth of January we had a little surprise down in the theater, the staff, and we gave Mrs. Johnson a copy of the film. She was just tickled and effusive about it. We did it just in time, because she'd been looking for some of the footage and wondering why it wasn't getting into the monthly reports. Well, we'd sequestered it for the beautification film, but the poor men at the photo lab were being asked by her where it was. They didn't want to prevaricate and make something up, so they had sort of begged us to hurry and show this to her so they'd be off the hook.

Let's see. We worked with Mrs. Johnson on her remarks upstairs in her room for the stamp ceremony, which was to be the next day, the sixteenth of January. The room was stripped of all her personal effects, the sitting room was, all the pictures, all the albums, all the mementos. There was one lovely blooming brown orchid on the card table, something that Mrs. DuPont had given her. Mrs. Johnson said, "The three words I don't want to hear any more: one is 'last,' one is 'goodbye,' and one is 'history.'" She was relaxed and warm, and working on the speech was as if we'd be going on doing that forever. Liz and I felt very poignant.

The sixteenth of January when I came up the stairs of the East Wing I looked up at the wall where an arrangement of photographs had been framed and hung, and they were all gone. Mrs. Johnson came to the East Wing that morning, into each of our offices, to have a picture taken with us which later then she autographed and sent to us. Oghda O'Gulian, who had been Liz's personal secretary, was in a great swivet. She was on State Department payroll, and she didn't want to go back to the State Department for how could she ever adjust to it again. She wanted to stay on at the White House but was just afraid she wouldn't be wanted. Liz came by and said, "Well, why are you looking so sad?" I sort of hugged her and said, "Guess why?" Liz looked at me, "Yes." Then we went on with the business of the day. Liz was giving a speech at noon over at the Press Club which she'd worked long and hard on and which was funny. Very good coverage, and it was a good job.

I spent the day banging as fast as I could on thank you letters to different people who'd helped us and we'd worked with, sort of one last postmark from the White House. I wanted to say thank you to them. I worked also putting together scrapbooks, also putting together files. I guess over Christmas my brother from Seattle had come in and spent several days in the office putting together a scrapbook for me of newspaper clippings and what have you. Early in the afternoon we had the beautification stamp ceremony in the East Room. Mrs. Johnson seemed very wistful. Her remarks, which I'd done the best I could on and she'd done the best she could on, just weren't inspired. They were boiler-plate to the occasion, but we really were . . . at the end, What could one say?

Marvin laid on tributes to Mrs. Johnson. He and I had talked about his remarks beforehand, and I'd said, "Please, what she wants is that other people get involved and do things, not that she herself be praised." So he said this after laying on all the praise which he did, and I thought "Oh, she probably wants to stick a needle in him ." Then he came up with that, and so that ameliorated and he was all right. The stamps, frankly, I felt were sort of globby. The pinks were too pink, the yellows were too yellow, and there was just a lot of too much detail in them for the size. I much preferred the one we'd done in 1965, where a Japanese artist had done beautiful cherry trees and the design had been just clear. But on the other hand these packed a message, and we had four of them, not just one but four different pictures.

One of Mrs. Johnson's invitees was Russell Train. All during this period of time Russell Train was the designated under secretary of interior. The rumor was he was going to be designated, but President-Elect Nixon hadn't said "Boo." We really didn't know whether he'd be able to come to the White House. If Nixon were going to announce, then probably he couldn't. But if he were still Russell Train of the Conservation Foundation he could still come, and he wanted to come. So all of us who were his friends were most anxious he was going to be appointed, but we also hoped he'd be able to come to Mrs. Johnson's party. So he showed up sort of blushing to the roots of his hair and winking and smiling, and we wished him good luck.

This was the time when I went around thanking all the butlers and thanking all the ushers and having the last bit of sausage wrapped in bacon and spent most of the time at the reception with Walter and Bennetta Washington. They were sad that the end was there. About eleven o'clock that night I was just beginning to do the dishes at home when Mrs. Johnson called, and she wasn't sure whether she had accepted a position to be on the National Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. This is a private conservation group. She wanted to make sure we had that clear, that someday while she'd like to do it, she'd rather

not initially. [She would rather] devote her time to other things.

Then we had a very nice long conversation in which she asked if I knew yet what I was going to be doing. I said I'd decided to join Stewart Udall in Overview, and that I thought it gave us an opportunity to carry on so many of the ideas that we'd begun to formulate. Then she was wistful. She said, "Well, you and Stu will be working on these big important things, and I'll have my hand to the wheel, too. But they'll be small things, just down in our neighborhood in Texas." Then she laughed and she said she hoped that when she died, and she was very chuckly about this, she wasn't lugubrious, that people would know her well enough not to try to do any sterile memorial but would plant a row of trees somewhere in her name.

Then I said nothing would give me greater pleasure in the future than, as a friend, to be able to help her to draft things, to spend time when she needed someone to spend time for her. She said, "Well, your time is very valuable." I said I was speaking now as a friend, and I didn't want her to think in the former relationship of a staff person who had to be paid. I just enjoyed doing things with her and wanted to, and she said, "I feel the same way. We will be doing things together." Then she said she now felt like something the President had said about the astronauts, that they could look up at the moon and say, "I was there." This is now how she was beginning to feel about the White House, and she said, "It's been so easy a role, and the main reason why is because I've had such an able staff like you." I said, "Well, you've made us all better people, Mrs. Johnson." She said, "I don't believe in saying goodbye, so let's just say 'I'll be seeing you later on some time.'" We said good night.

The day of inauguration, Nixon's inauguration, the day of farewell, I didn't try to go. I watched on the tube at home, and then grabbed up my husband and Christopher and went out to Andrews Air Force Base to wave the Johnsons goodbye. I guess Harry was parking the car, and Christopher and I went sort of running because we could see the airplane was there and the band was beginning to play. We met Cynthia along the way, and so the three of us, and Carol Carlyle, the four of us, showed our identification and went in through the fence and raced out on the field. We were trying to get over where the staff friends were assembled. The Johnsons were there looking like this was one of many ceremonies that was easy to go through. Just as we got past the color guard they struck up the "Star Spangled Banner," and Christopher froze and looked up at the flag. I held his hand.

Cynthia and Carol raced on into the crowd, and then I looked through the flags and there was Mrs. Johnson waving at us. So Christopher and I waved back. Then we stood there through the "Star Spangled Banner" feeling right in

the middle of the flags and the music. Then there were a couple of words of farewell from the Johnsons, and then they came through the crowd hugging everyone and talking. Mrs. Johnson had a long conversation with Christopher, and she was absolutely--one could feel it was an event for her. Yet she handled it gracefully and easily and wanted to talk to everybody and had sweet little nothings to say. You know, just happy little chats. The President reached out, and I didn't reach out and grab his hand, he sort of reached out and grabbed my hand and said, "We want to thank you for al you've done." I said, "Ditto to you, Mr. President." So let's stop.

M: The tape is about to run out anyway.

F: Good.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview III]