

THE PRESS LOOKS AT LYNDON:
A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL CAREER OF
LYNDON B. JOHNSON
AS IT WAS DEPICTED IN
THE PRESS OF HIS TIME
1940-1965

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THESIS

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PREFACE

The press is an important aspect of any politician's career. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the career of Lyndon Baines Johnson as it was reported in the pages of the newspapers of Texas. The study has been limited to newspapers primarily from the Central Texas area from the period 1940-1965.

Much of the material for this work was taken from the "Mary Sue Haynes Collection of Lyndon B. Johnson Printed Materials." This collection consists mainly of newspaper and magazine clippings about the life of Lyndon Johnson. It was put together by Miss Mary Sue Haynes of San Marcos, Texas, and was donated to Southwest Texas State University in 1981. The clippings span over forty years of Johnson's life and political career. They afford one insight into contemporary thought during the period.

This thesis could not have been produced without the help of many people. The author wishes to thank Professors B. R. Brunson, Everette Swinney, and W. C. Newberry who served as members of the thesis committee. Their assistance was greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Dr.

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Margaret A. Vaverek

CHAPTER 1

1908-1940

When Lyndon Baines Johnson was born on August 27, 1908, his grandfather is said to have proclaimed that "A United States Senator was born today."¹ That proud grandfather could not have known then what was in store for his grandson. Ahead of him was, indeed, a long and distinguished senatorial career and much more.

Lyndon was raised in the rugged Texas hill country. His mother, Rebekah Baines Johnson, taught him to read when he was very young. She encouraged him to develop his talents fully and to utilize them to the best of his ability. It was his mother who first introduced him to the world of public speaking and debate. Lyndon devoured all he could learn in these areas. He was not only successful in them, but they would prove to be vital elements of his future political career. The encouragement and support which Rebekah Johnson gave her son over the years played an important part in his development as an individual and as a politician.

While his mother taught him many valuable lessons, it was his father, Sam Ealy Johnson, Jr., who introduced

Lyndon to the world of politics. Sam Johnson ran for a seat in the Texas house of representatives in 1918. He often took his young son with him on campaign trips and to Austin to observe the legislature at work. It was from these early experiences that Lyndon Johnson's interest in politics began to take shape.²

While Sam Johnson did manage to gain a seat in the house of representatives, he was by no means a wealthy man. As a boy, therefore, Lyndon knew poverty. He observed how difficult it was for his family and friends to earn a living farming the rocky Texas ground. There was no electricity in the area and drought was a constant source of concern for the farmers. A lack of rain, or an abundance of it, could destroy the crops quickly--the latter without much warning. When this occurred, the farmer had to make do with what was available to him in order to support himself and his family until the next year. Young Lyndon observed all of these things as he was growing up and he did not forget them when he assumed positions of importance through which he could change these conditions in later years.

The key to escaping the poverty which was so prevalent in the Texas hill country was education. With an education one could get better jobs and move out of the region into a better way of life. Sam and Rebekah Johnson were aware of this fact and sent all their children to school. Lyndon graduated from Johnson City High School in

May, 1924. After a few years of travel and hard physical labor young Johnson decided that he wanted something more out of life. He returned home and entered Southwest Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos, Texas, on February 7, 1927. His attending college marked a turning point in his life. The lessons he learned there proved to be very important in terms of his political career.³

It was while he attended the college that Lyndon gained his formal training in history, political science, debate, and journalism. All of these things proved to be valuable tools as he pursued his formal political career. He quickly became known on the campus as a young man who wanted many things and knew how to get them. He financed his education by working as a janitor at the college. Within a few months of his entrance into the college, Johnson became a secretarial assistant to the college president, Cecil Evans. This was the beginning of a life-long friendship between the two men. Evans came to look on Johnson as a son. Lyndon even lived in a garage apartment in the Evans home for a time during his tenure at the college.

Johnson was a popular student on campus. His chief interests were debate and journalism. He became an accomplished debater under the skillful leadership of Professor H. M. Greene. As the captain of the team, he won several important matches for the college. Perhaps more than any other skill Johnson learned at Southwest Texas,

the art of debate would prove most valuable to him in his future political career. The experiences he had on the college campus and the friends he made there lasted a lifetime and served him well over the years. He graduated from the teachers college on August 17, 1930.⁴

After teaching for a year, Johnson went to work on Texas millionaire Richard Kleberg's congressional campaign. Kleberg ran in a special election to fill a seat in the house of representatives from the fourteenth congressional district of Texas. Johnson's hard work paid off and Kleberg won the seat in congress. Five days after his election, Kleberg appointed Johnson as his secretary. Johnson arrived in Washington D. C. to begin his political career, December 5, 1931. It was the beginning of a career that lasted over forty years.

During his tenure as Kleberg's secretary, Johnson became familiar with some of Washington's most influential men of the day. Among some of the most notable were Tom Connally, Morris Sheppard, and Sam Rayburn--all of Texas. Rayburn became a mentor of young Johnson and one of his most valuable friends. Johnson's time as secretary to Congressman Kleberg was vital as it allowed the young man many opportunities to express his opinions on matters, make valuable friends and contacts in Washington's political and social circles, and cultivate his own political talents. He did all of these things, wasting very little time. Richard Kleberg was re-elected to his congressional seat on

November 8, 1932. Johnson had served as his campaign manager.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president of the United States in March, 1933. His tenure in office would span almost twelve years. Johnson was quick to befriend the new president whom he often said was like a father to him.⁵ The forging of a friendship with Roosevelt proved to be an invaluable asset to Johnson's political career. Roosevelt took a liking to the young man from Texas and Lyndon soon learned that he had the ear of the president when he needed it. Thus his political career bloomed in Washington. No young politician could hope for more than the president's friendship as he embarked upon his career.

Johnson was only a secretary in 1933 but this did not stop him from taking part in politics on any level he could in the capital. After just fifteen months in Washington he was elected speaker of the "Little Congress." This was a group of young secretaries in Washington who gathered to discuss important political issues of the day. Lyndon had won his first election in Washington; it would not be his last.

Johnson left Congressman Kleberg's office in June, 1935. He was appointed as the state administrator for Texas of the National Youth Administration (NYA) in July of the same year by President Roosevelt. This was an important political step for him. He held this influential post until February, 1937, when he decided to run for congress.

As state director of the NYA he was responsible for coordinating the many projects undertaken by the agency. The agency put thousands of young people to work in Texas and all across the nation during the depression. Under his direction, many young people found work on construction sites, in offices, and in recreational facilities around the state.

Johnson's goal was to implement Roosevelt's New Deal in his home state.⁶ He did so with an effectiveness unprecedented in other areas. During his tenure as state director he did not forget his own origins. He had grown up in poverty in Texas not too many years earlier. Now he had a chance to return to Texas and to change the destiny of many young people. Through the services of the NYA, they were provided with trades and skills which would prove useful to them as they sought careers and a way out of the poverty-stricken areas of the state. Throughout his tenure in political office, Johnson made a point of remembering the youth of the nation and doing whatever he could to better their lot in life. Under his careful eye, the NYA flourished in Texas. Franklin Roosevelt had made a wise choice in choosing him to head the Texas agency.

The work Johnson did as director of the NYA served as an important asset when he decided to run in a special congressional election in 1937. The Texas seat had been vacated by the death of Representative J. P. Buchanan. Johnson resigned his position as director of the NYA on

February 28, 1937. The twenty-nine year old Texan returned to San Marcos to open officially his campaign for public office. During his opening speech Johnson announced that he was a staunch supporter of President Roosevelt and his New Deal. This was a popular stand to make among the democrats of Texas, many of whom benefited greatly from its various programs. Johnson won the election by defeating eight opponents and gaining twenty-seven percent of the vote in the election. Just one month after his election, he went to Galveston, Texas, to meet with President Roosevelt aboard the presidential yacht which was sailing off the gulf coast. Johnson spent time with the president and even accompanied him on his train journey to Fort Worth. Roosevelt was full of praise for the young Texan upon his election to congress. And so it was that Lyndon Baines Johnson was elected to congress for the first time in 1937. He had defeated eight candidates in order to gain his seat and visited with the president of the United States just thirty-one days after his election to the office. His political career had now begun in earnest. Johnson would assume his seat in congress just as his grandfather had predicted twenty-nine years earlier.⁷

Lyndon Baines Johnson was sworn in as a member of congress by the speaker of the house, William B. Bankhead, on May 18, 1937. He was appointed to the House Committee on Naval Affairs almost immediately. This was done at the request of the president. The position was one of great

power and prestige for a young politician. Johnson served the post well.

Johnson was elected to his first full term in congress on November 8, 1938. He ran without opposition. His platform for election had been one of ardent support for Franklin Roosevelt and the programs of the New Deal. Throughout his tenure in congress, Johnson supported Roosevelt's programs. Texas benefited greatly from many of the programs. And he was a vital force in uniting the Democratic party in Texas behind Roosevelt in April, 1940, as the president sought support for his third term in office. Johnson was elected chairman of the Texas delegation at the national democratic convention in Chigaco. When he attended the convention, Johnson cast his vote for Roosevelt and attempted to push through the Texas delegation the nomination of Sam Rayburn for vice president. This proposal failed. Roosevelt placed Johnson in charge of the democratic congressional campaigns shortly after the convention. This was due in part to the magnificent job Johnson had done for the party at the national convention.⁸

In his role as head of the congressional campaigns for the Democratic party Johnson did an outstanding job. The republicans lost five seats in the house to the democrats. Thus by 1940 Johnson had gained national recognition--at least within the ranks of the Democratic party.

CHAPTER 2

1941- 1947

When Senator Morris Sheppard died in April, 1941, Lyndon Johnson decided the time was right to make his bid for a seat in the United States senate. He announced his candidacy for the office on the south portico of the White House. He had the full support of President Roosevelt in the race. Full of confidence, Johnson opened his campaign on May 3 in San Marcos, Texas, where he had attended college. The local newspapers in San Marcos, the San Marcos Record and the Hays County Herald, both carried large political advertisements welcoming Johnson home and wishing him success in his efforts. The names of many of the town's leading citizens were listed in the advertisements as being supporters of Johnson. It is evident from this showing that the people of San Marcos felt a special closeness to the young man from Johnson City who had attended college in their city. They were delighted with the fact that he was opening his campaign in San Marcos.⁹

The theme of Johnson's opening speech in San Marcos was national and political unity. He pledged to give up

his senate seat to go to war himself if the day ever came when he had to vote to send American men to war. In his cry for unity and support of President Roosevelt, Johnson said: "If we cannot have internal peace, how can we hope for Democracy?"¹⁰ He stated further that he would fight for jobs for war veterans and that he favored a pension for the elderly over sixty years of age. He asserted his firm belief that the country could prosper under Roosevelt's direction. The candidate was given a standing ovation in the college auditorium where he spoke.¹¹

Barton Gill, one of San Marcos' most ardent supporters of Lyndon Johnson, had this to say about his former college roommate: "'Bull' Johnson, as the boys called him, was not the teachers pet kind of student. He can handle the U. S. Senate seat."¹²

On the eve of the senatorial election the Austin Statesman endorsed Johnson saying that he was "an active symbol of the fight for economic freedom [and] the U. S. needs him." The editor expressed his belief that Johnson was the man for the job in the senate because he had done great things for Central Texas. He could do the job on the national level that he had done for the tenth congressional district.¹³ By the end of election day on June 28 it appeared that Johnson had won the election. When all the votes were in and counted, however, Texas Governor W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel was declared the winner. Johnson had lost

his first bid for the senate. He returned to Washington and re-claimed his seat in the house.

Johnson returned to San Marcos in late October for a brief visit with friends and supporters. He was urged by many citizens to run again for the senate. Many people pledged to support him. But Johnson was careful in his remarks to make no statements about his political future.¹⁴ In fact, the future of the entire nation became uncertain when less than two months after Johnson's San Marcos visit the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Johnson voted for the declaration of war against Japan on December 8, 1941. At that same time he made good his promise to fight when he resigned his congressional seat and asked to be called for active duty in the navy. He had been given a commission as a lieutenant commander in the naval reserve on January 21, 1940.¹⁵ Johnson assumed a post as a desk officer of the United States' New Zealand Naval Command.

Many of the newspapers in Texas carried large headlines announcing Johnson's decision to quit the congress and join the navy. The Corpus Christi Caller proclaimed that "Johnson made a promise to Texans and he kept it. He is a man of his word."¹⁶ The duty Johnson saw as a member of the naval reserve was not strictly office work. He went to see the president in January, 1942, to ask for a challenging assignment. Roosevelt sent him to take a survey of military supplies in the Australian combat zone. Johnson was quick to accept this task. His actions

in the service helped to convince the people of Texas and the nation that he was a man dedicated to the people he represented and that he was a loyal American. For example, when Johnson was up for re-election in 1942 the people of Burnet County supported him with enthusiasm. They believed that no real American could oppose Johnson while he was serving in the navy. It is thus clear, then, that Johnson still had great popularity with the voters of Texas. If he still wanted the job in congress they would see to it that he was re-elected to the post.¹⁷

San Marcos received wonderful news in early May, 1942. There was to be an air base established in the city. This would bring jobs and prosperity to the area. The thanks for this great accomplishment belonged, in part, to Congressman Lyndon Johnson. The Record carried large headlines of the story. A telegram was sent to the editor of the paper from Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, who was running her husband's Washington office in his absence, in which she stated that the air field would have a value of five million dollars. The benefits this would bring to San Marcos and Hays County were obvious.¹⁸ The air field and pilot training school in San Marcos were supervised by the San Antonio district corps of engineers. The headline "AIRPORT GETS FINAL O.K." appeared in the Record on May 13, 1942. Johnson was quoted as being pleased with the decision of the government to place these facilities in San Marcos.¹⁹ The bringing of this industry to Texas is an

example of the many ways in which Johnson used his position to help the people of his state. The gratitude of the people of the area is best expressed in the newspapers of the time which praise Johnson for his efforts and pledge to support him at any time.

President Roosevelt ordered all members of congress to leave military service and return home to their legislative duties on July 1, 1942. Johnson returned to Washington on July 15. Two weeks later he was invited to a "Home Folks" party in his honor in San Marcos. At this gathering of friends and supporters Johnson lambasted what he called "incompetents" among high United States military personnel. He did not elaborate on this but admitted that the Japanese zero fighter plane was difficult to fight against and that he had learned that the United States often used less experienced pilots to fly its bombers. One can thus surmise that he was unhappy with the air force. He stressed that this situation had to be remedied and that it was essential to convince officials that "It is no longer a crime to cut red tape." The congressman then made his familiar plea for unity. He urged the people of San Marcos to support the war effort and reminded them that the war could not be won without their help and support.²⁰

Congressman Johnson returned to San Marcos one month later to deliver the summer commencement address at his alma mater, Southwest Texas State College. In that speech he charged that America was not winning the war. He

claimed also that the men who were fighting overseas did not have the proper equipment to do the job. He urged the graduates and all in attendance to pull together for the war effort. He assured his audience that there would be no "easy victory" in the war.²¹

Johnson, after his San Marcos visit, was soon appointed to chair a congressional subcommittee investigating manpower utilization in naval affairs. This was an important task, one for which his tenure in the service had prepared him well.

Johnson was again elected to his seat in the house on November 3, 1942. This was another race in which he was unopposed. He had proven himself to be a man with ambition and purpose. That is what the people of Texas wanted in a representative. And their representative knew how to get power and how to make the most of it, both for himself and his constituents once he had it. That is the mark of a good, professional politician.

Johnson served the people of Texas well. He worked to get them programs which would help the economy of the state and he supported their interests in Washington. During his tenure in the congress, he saw to it that many federal programs were implemented in his home state. Industries as well as individuals in Texas benefited from Johnson's diligent work. He made a surprise appearance in 1943 at a Christmas party in Wimberley, Texas. He spoke on an informal basis with the group of friends and supporters

at the gathering. His appearance caused a great boost in the sale of war bonds. This is what the organizers of the party had hoped to do. Johnson praised the people of the area for their support of the war effort.²²

Johnson never forgot what it had been like to grow up in poverty in the Texas hill country. He was a major supporter of the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) which brought electricity to many homes and farms throughout Texas and the nation. He even announced plans for the post war expansion of the REA lines when he addressed the leaders of the electric cooperative in San Marcos on January 7, 1944. He told the cooperative members that the lines would be expanded to reach 20,000 more homes in Texas. This expansion would provide work for many war veterans when they returned from the service. He also praised the Pedernales and Lower Colorado River Authority cooperatives for their work with the REA. He was keenly aware of the great service these companies provided for farmers and all the citizens of the Central Texas area.²³

Johnson again supported his good friend Franklin Roosevelt for the presidency in 1944. He met with the president in January to discuss the presidential election and to pledge his support. He promised that he would attempt to persuade the Texas delegation to the national convention to support the president also. But he had a difficult task when he attended the state convention in May. He had to keep the Democratic party united so that he

could be assured of its support for Roosevelt. His efforts did not succeed. At the convention the state's democrats split into anti-Roosevelt and loyalist factions. A resolution was passed ordering all delegates to vote for any man except Roosevelt. This situation provided Johnson with his first political challenge in many years. He managed to defeat the anti-Roosevelt candidate, Buck Taylor, in the primary congressional election. And in the campaign that followed he contended that he had not bolted the party but had stood by the true democrats of Texas and their ideals. He restated his belief that Franklin Roosevelt should be re-elected as president.²⁴ Senator Alvin Wirtz of Texas managed to get a new slate of democratic electors in Texas, all of whom were pledged to Roosevelt. It appeared that Texas had been saved for the president again. Johnson was re-elected to his own seat in the house when he defeated the republican congressional candidate in November. He was thus assured of his national office. Some thought, however, that his ambitions were now stalled at the congressional level. At any rate, he would have to wait until 1948 if he did have more ambitious plans.

President Roosevelt died suddenly on April 12, 1945, ending an era in American history. It also left the Democratic party in shock both in Texas and around the nation. Johnson had lost an important political ally and friend. He knew that he had to continue the work which had

been started by the late president and work diligently to end the war overseas.

Even though the war had not ended, Johnson also continued his efforts on behalf of rural electrification. He reported to the people of Central Texas that the LCRA electrical cooperative was ahead of schedule in making its debt payments. This announcement was made shortly after Roosevelt's death. In making the statement he said that the debt payment was made possible by the "intelligent, thrifty farmers of Central Texas."²⁵ He had insisted that a portion of each user's bill be used to pay off the debt while keeping the rates low. The system worked well; he could be proud of what had been accomplished in his home state.

When the war ended the attention of the nation shifted from war to peacetime activities. Johnson appeared in San Marcos on April 25, 1946, to discuss the future use of the training air field in that town. The president of Southwest Texas State College, John Garland Flowers, asked Johnson about the possibility of using some of the space at the training center to house veterans who were returning to college. And others in San Marcos enlisted his help with this problem. They had a government facility which they did not wish to lose. If anyone could find a suitable use for the facility and get Washington to approve it Lyndon Johnson could. He promised to help as much as he could.²⁶

The air field in San Marcos was inspected by the

secretary of war in early May. Johnson urged the people of the area to submit a proposal to the government as soon as possible requesting the use of the buildings for veterans attending the college. He felt that such use would be approved by the government and that it would keep the field from being declared surplus and shut down. And in a speech in San Marcos on May 2, he expressed concern over what he considered the two major problems in the nation in the postwar period. They were housing and the stabilization of the economy. He also recognized the need to control inflation.²⁷ The citizens of San Marcos appreciated Johnson's honesty and hoped that his suggestions would solve their problems.

The rural electrification project continued to flourish after the war and Johnson remained as one of its chief supporters. He secured additional funds from the REA in May, 1946, for the extension of lines to 728 more homes in Central Texas. They were to go to those people who had been short of materials during the war years. He hoped to have over 18,000 homes electrified by June, 1947.²⁸

Johnson made public his views on organized labor in June, 1946. He contended that the interest of the public was paramount over that of unions. He believed, therefore, that the nation had to forge a basic and permanent labor policy. He felt that the basis of the act must be fairness to both the employer and the employee. The act, he thought, had to be directed to the causes of the various

labor problems.²⁹

During his campaign for re-election in 1946, Johnson pointed to his record of achievements in Central Texas and in Washington. And it is not surprising that the people of Central Texas supported Johnson on his record. He had provided them with wartime industries and peacetime alternatives for employment. Rural electrification projects had prospered under his watchful eye and Central Texas stood to gain much more if Johnson were re-elected.

San Marcos was no exception to Johnson's political achievement list. In a political advertisement in the Record his list of accomplishments for the town was an impressive one. It included such things as the establishment of the army air field, the building of dormitories on the college campus with federal funds, the veteran housing projects which he had secured, and the helicopter pilot training program.³⁰ All of these had been secured with his influence and political expertise. And the people of San Marcos were aware of the important role the man from Johnson City played in securing the prosperity of their town. He could most assuredly count upon their support in future elections.

Johnson polled more votes than all of his opponents combined in the 1946 congressional election. His victory was seen as a victory for the people of Central Texas. The newspapers of the area reflected, through their support of Johnson, the opinions of citizens in the tenth district of

Texas and elsewhere. They knew they had a friend in Washington and would do anything to see to it that he stayed there.

Back in office, Johnson continued to work for those who elected him. The air field in San Marcos was made permanent in August, 1947. He gained assurances from the federal government that the field would stay open as long as there was a need to train pilots.³¹ He warned the people of San Marcos, however, that if adequate housing were not found for the men and their families who came to the base, it would be forced to close down.³² The people of the town thus took quick action and enough housing was soon found to assure the future success of the air field. The people of San Marcos were, once again, indebted to Congressman Johnson for his diligent work.

Johnson had learned his way around Washington well by 1947. He knew the right people who could help him to accomplish what he could not accomplish on his own. He knew what the people of Texas expected of him and he made every effort to live up to those high expectations. As the next election year approached Johnson contemplated his political career and wondered what the future had in store for him.

CHAPTER 3

1948-1951

Lyndon Johnson decided that the time was right for him to make another bid for the senate in 1948. He had been had been in the house for eleven years where he had accomplished a great deal. But he wanted something more both for himself and for the people of Texas. Thus he officially filed for the Texas democratic senatorial primary on May 15, 1948. There were seven other candidates running in the race. The most threatening to Johnson was former Texas Governor Coke Stevenson. Stevenson was very popular and promised to give Johnson a fight for the democratic votes of the state.

Johnson opened his campaign in Austin on May 22. In keeping with his general views of the nation's affairs, he announced that his campaign slogan was "peace, preparedness, and progress." Peace meant threatening the Soviet Union with war; preparedness meant vast re-armament; and progress, "protecting the public from both selfish labor and selfish capital" and "a federal policy leaving to the states those matters which are state functions, such as civil rights."³³ Interestingly the press gave little, if

any, coverage to Johnson's speech. He thus needed something really spectacular to get his campaign off the ground. He needed something no other candidate had which would impress the voters of Texas enough that they would vote for him. Johnson looked to the sky and, there, found his answer.

A group of friends in Dallas gave Johnson a helicopter for his use in campaigning around the state. This was the first time such a device had ever been used in a political campaign. The press gave this new twist front page coverage across the state.³⁴ His campaign was now, literally, off the ground. "The Johnson City Windmill" was the official name of Johnson's new toy. Because the Windmill was so easy to maneuver Johnson was able to make stops almost anywhere. All he really needed was an open area and the helicopter could be set down. This enabled him to see more people and cover more ground than had ever been possible before. It was just the thing he needed. He set a pace of twenty towns per day and talked to thousands of people. Most of them had never seen a helicopter before and were enthralled with both the machine and its occupant. Coke Stevenson had set a slow campaign pace for himself after an initial flurry of activity. Now that Johnson was doing so well, could Stevenson catch up with him?

Stevenson did manage to keep his hope alive by relying on a heavy contingent of supporters from the past.

The former governor was still very popular in many areas of the state. Johnson flew around the state defending his congressional record while Coke Stevenson drove around the state attacking it. At the close of the campaign Stevenson, in a field of seven candidates, defeated Johnson by a narrow margin. A run off election would be necessary to determine the winner for the Texas seat. And the run off election and its aftermath was destined to become one of the most controversial races in Texas' political history.

Both candidates campaigned vigorously with Johnson seeking the vote in the larger cities where he had had only marginal success in the first race.³⁵ And the controversy surrounding the race began with with tabulation of votes immediately after the polls closed. Even today no clear picture of what actually occurred is available.

The vote count for Stevenson and Johnson went back and forth. Each candidate led in the race from time to time as the counting process continued. Early returns indicated that Stevenson defeated Johnson. The Texas Election Bureau finally announced that the vote was complete on September 2. It reported Stevenson the winner in the election by 362 votes but also stated that these results were unofficial. Two days later, some counties revised their vote totals and this gave Johnson the lead over Stevenson.

Almost from the beginning there was speculation in

the press and elsewhere throughout the state that the vote count was false and that the "stuffing" of some ballot boxes had taken place. The official canvass of votes made by a committee of the democratic state executive committee several days later showed Johnson the winner by eighty-seven votes. Part of this margin for victory had come from the counties which had revised their votes after the unofficial tabulations had been made. Stevenson felt that fraud may have existed in the revision of totals from Jim Wells and other counties; therefore, he asked for an investigation of the Jim Wells County election.³⁶

The pages of the various newspapers in the large cities of Texas were set afire with accusations and speculation about the election results. Johnson made his victory speech just one day after the votes had been "found" in Jim Wells County.³⁷ It was the Dallas News that carried an editorial on the front page of its September 5 issue which called for a federal investigation of the election.³⁸ Johnson was quick to lambast the paper in his comments to the Austin paper. He said that it, the Dallas paper, had not protested the election results as long as Stevenson was winning. Johnson accused the paper of only being upset about the situation when it appeared that its candidate was loosing the election.³⁹ He was also very quick to remind the people of Texas that he had lost the 1941 senatorial election by a small margin also. But the

Dallas News remained an ardent supporter of Stevenson while the Austin and San Antonio papers tended to support Johnson in his fight for a clear victory in the primary election of 1948.⁴⁰ Stevenson, however, was not about to give up the fight. He pushed for court action to forbid Johnson's name to appear on the November general election ballot, and even won a temporary victory. An order was issued but it did not have much effect. Johnson's supporters appealed to the Texas Supreme Court and had the decision of the lower court reversed. Johnson's name was finally placed on the ballot and Stevenson realized that the fight was a useless one.

Johnson had friends in high places who helped him when the going was rough. And certainly the support which the press afforded him played an important role in influencing public opinion. It provided both Johnson and Stevenson with a sounding board for opinions and reactions from the public. Interestingly, in the general senatorial election Stevenson gave his support to the republican candidate, Jack Porter. But Lyndon Johnson received twice as many votes as Porter.

The primary election of 1948 had caused a great deal of controversy and confusion in the state of Texas. When it was all over Johnson had at long last obtained the seat which had eluded him seven years earlier. He was now destined to begin a long and distinguished career in the United States senate.

Johnson became a United States senator on January 3,

1949, when he was officially sworn into office. He was appointed to some of the senate's most powerful committees including the Armed Services Committee and the Inter-state and Foreign Commerce Committee. He now had the reputation and the power necessary to achieve great things in the senate.

Johnson always had an avid interest in the military preparedness of the United States. He had supported numerous efforts in both the house and the senate to upgrade and to improve the resources and the technology of the country. He spoke in July, 1950, of the desperate need of the United States to improve its military forces.

The communists of North Korea had invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950. No one knew what the future had in store for the United States; if war were necessary, Johnson wanted a prepared nation. In the same speech, Johnson applauded President Harry S Truman's decision to defend South Korea. He was quick to add, however, that the United States was outnumbered in men and equipment. And the government was not able to supply her troops in Korea adequately. Johnson blamed this situation on the fact that there had been a steady decrease in the size of our armed forces since the end of the second world war. This was done as a cost cutting measure. Americans in general do not like to think about war. Throughout their history they have striven for peace in their relations with nations around the world. And when the time has come for them to

fight they have not been amiss in their duty. But they simply let the armed forces deteriorate while they were at peace in the post war era. Thus, the Korean conflict quickly worsened. Johnson and many others in power became concerned about the military strength of the country. As a means of dealing with this grave problem, Johnson proposed the following program of minimum action for the country:

Order all national guard and reserves on pay status into federal service. Authorize various departments to accept volunteers from non-pay reserves. If necessary, order non-paid personnel into service. Order all branches of the service to organize all units for combat duty. Get the necessary materials to care for all those called into service. Get the necessary power for the full mobilization of industry. Make full use of the provision for the government to get all the materials it needs for the services on a priority basis.⁴¹

Johnson stressed his position by saying: "We cannot delay -- victory is our only choice."⁴² It was due to his tireless fight for better conditions in the armed services that Johnson was named chairman of the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee on July 17, 1950.

Chinese "volunteer" armies had crossed into North Korea and engaged American troops in battle on November 26, 1950. The American public became outraged at this action. Johnson was upset as well and sought ways to support President Truman in his efforts to defeat the Chinese.

By the begining of the new year, Johnson had proved

himself as an able senator and representative of the people of Texas. He still worked vigorously to expand his power base in Washington and to keep the people at home happy. A big part of keeping them happy involved keeping the Texas press happy with his performance. It was the press, after all, that reported to the citizens of Texas the actions of the politicians in Washington. With the support of many Texas newspapers and the support of many influential men in Washington, Johnson was ready for bigger and better things as a United States senator. His chance for these things came in 1951.

Lyndon Johnson was elected as the majority whip of the senate by acclamation on January 2, 1951. After only two years as a member, he was now the second highest official in the senate. He had enough friends in high places to be able to use his authority in his new position. He seemed to thrive on power and its use in the senate. But this did not seem to be the end of his political career. As early as May, 1951, his name was being mentioned in Washington D.C. as a possible candidate for vice president in 1952.⁴³

When General Douglas MacArthur was relieved of his Korean command in April by President Truman, Johnson played an important role in the controversy. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, he participated in the senate's MacArthur hearings. Sometimes his duties on the committee involved serving as its chairman in the absence of Richard

Russell, the regular chairman.

Johnson returned to San Marcos in November, 1951, to attend the homecoming festivities at his alma mater. In a speech delivered there he continued to stress his favorite theme--the need for national unity as well as strong leadership.⁴⁴ And by this time, Johnson had emerged as a strong leader for Texas, the Democratic party, and the nation.

CHAPTER 4

1952-1960

Lyndon Johnson's rise to power continued when he was re-elected as the senate majority whip in January, 1952. Since elections were again approaching, Johnson's interests focused upon the political structure of the Democratic party both at the state and national level.

Johnson knew that the support of the Democratic party and its candidates was of the utmost importance if he were to keep his job in the senate and continue to amass power on the Washington scene. He worked hard to achieve this task. Even though the Republican party gained a majority in both houses of congress by a slim margin, Johnson, due to his unique ability to use the power he had and the people he knew, managed to support the winners in most races. Once he had helped someone get elected that person never forgot him, and Johnson would not let him forget either.

Johnson was elected minority leader in the senate in January, 1953. And he became, at the age of forty-five, the most influential man in the senate when Robert Taft, the senate majority leader, died in late July. President Dwight

David Eisenhower, even though they belonged to opposing parties, depended on Johnson to push important legislation through the various senate committees. Johnson never let him down. He was one of the most powerful men in Washington by the fall of 1953. He was not content, however, to stop at this level. He began his campaign for re-election in 1954 early in the fall of 1953. He was a man on the move who knew what he wanted from the political system and how to get it.

When Johnson appeared in San Marcos on a campaign stop in July an advertisement in the Record summed up the feelings of many Texans very well when it stated that he was: "The youngest man ever to be chosen Democratic Senate Leader, a believer in a united Democratic party, supported Veterans, and had served Texas well."⁴⁵

Senator Joseph McCarthy was on the move also in the summer of 1954. His so-called "witch hunts" for communists in the federal government and elsewhere was a source of great concern to the nation as a whole and to Lyndon Johnson in particular. McCarthy's tactics were upsetting the congress and no one could be sure where he would strike next. Thus, in an attempt to undercut McCarthy's power, Johnson pushed the Communists Control Bill through the senate in the summer of 1954. He proposed treating communists and communist orientated regimes differently from other dictatorships from a foreign policy standpoint. His plan was to limit action solely to communist

penetration of the Western Hemisphere. Communism was an explosive topic in the summer of 1954. With the coming of elections, the fall promised to provide even more political fireworks.

Johnson was re-elected to the senate quite easily on November 2, 1954. The Democratic party gained control of the congress with a majority in both houses. Johnson was elected as senate majority leader, Democratic Policy Committee chairman, and Democratic Conference chairman in January. His power in the senate increased steadily with each election. At the same time, his health began to fail. He was forced to take a leave of absence from the senate in early 1955. When he returned three months later Johnson plunged headlong into his work despite the doctor's warnings about his frail health. He then suffered a heart attack in July and many newspapers around Texas carried stories of speculation about his political future.⁴⁶ He, however, refused to speculate about his future plans.

Johnson came to San Marcos to be honored at the homecoming festivities for 1955. He led a parade and made a speech which was billed as non-political. The speech was broadcast on television in both Austin and San Antonio. This was one of his few appearances in public before the opening of the congressional session.⁴⁷ The Austin newspaper carried news of Johnson's speech in which he said that foreign policy should be kept out of the 1956 campaign rethoric. He told his audience at Southwest Texas that

Americans had adopted a bipartisan attitude toward foreign policy.⁴⁸

Johnson's recovery was declared complete in December and he announced that he would continue his duties as majority leader. He, thus, had once again beaten the odds, and anxiously awaited the 1956 elections.

Johnson returned to his full duties in the senate in 1956. Of primary interest to him were the 1956 elections and their results. The "Lyndon Johnson for President" committee was formed in Austin in April. He was named chairman of the Texas delegation to the national convention in May and was considered the party's favorite son for president. At the convention Johnson was nominated for president by John Connally. His bid was lost, however, when the party chose Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver as its candidates. Johnson's time had not yet come. He would return to his post in the senate and wait.

In the congress there were two very powerful Texans. One was Sam Rayburn, speaker of the house, and the other was Johnson, senate majority leader. Johnson was described as a "one man political caucus."⁴⁹ He knew what he wanted from the senate and how to get it. He was not a great orator. Johnson preferred to speak face to face with his fellow congressmen in order to get them to see things his way. There was an aura of affection and admiration for him that few politicians have known. Johnson knew how to use this to his best political and personal advantage. He

billed himself as a "middle of the road" democrat. This was a safe label since it allowed him a great deal of flexibility in his dealings in the senate. He was a man whose personal style dictated that he go after the votes he needed on any given measure in the senate. He was results oriented in his approach to politics. He took great delight in confronting his opponents on any given measure and simply overpowering them with his behind the scenes skills. It is no wonder that he was both admired and feared by many of his colleagues. His behind the scenes approach to getting what he wanted, or needed, from the senate proved very effective. But his relations with President Eisenhower were cool to say the least. He knew, however, that he must cultivate some type of working relationship with the chief executive if he wanted to continue his rise to power. His relations with Eisenhower, therefore, were power related. He dealt with the president only because he knew that it was necessary in order for him to keep his political career going.⁵⁰

Johnson kept his career moving with such force that he was re-elected as senate majority leader in January, 1957. This was a post which Johnson loved. From his unique vantage point he could control many aspects of the senate and its procedures. One example of this is that he gave a seat on the powerful Foreign Relations Committee to Senator John F. Kennedy. In so doing, Johnson kept Estes Kefauver, a 1960 presidential hopeful, from gaining recognition as a

democratic foreign policy spokesman. Johnson did not believe that Kennedy was a serious threat in the presidential race of 1960. Through this maneuver Johnson thought he was making his bid for the 1960 nomination more secure.

The issue of civil rights was very critical in 1957. Johnson's actions in this regard were of great significance both to the nation and to his own political reputation. A debate on the Civil Rights Bill of 1957 took place in the senate between July 2 and August 28. Johnson played an important role in that debate. An amendment was attached to the bill which stated that anyone who was found guilty of denying a Negro his voting rights, after an injunction had been ordered, had a right to trial by a jury of his peers. This amendment was the work of Johnson. The new Civil Rights Bill of 1957 had very little effect upon the larger picture of the civil rights problems facing the nation. It created a six man Civil Rights Commission and gave the district courts the authority to issue injunctions to protect the civil rights of individuals.

What did the Civil Rights Bill of 1957 do for Johnson? Because he was able to compromise and get his trial by jury amendment passed as part of the bill, Johnson was able to gain a reputation as a champion of civil rights. The more conservative elements of the southern Democratic party continued to support Johnson because he had succeeded in watering down the president's

bill to the point that it had no real effect upon existing situations in the south. Once again, Johnson had managed to please most of the people in his party by telling each faction exactly what it wanted to hear. Few politicians could deal with such a controversial subject and emerge as a hero to both those who supported the issue and to those who opposed it. This was a unique quality which Johnson had. It is the reason he was able to accomplish so much in the course of his political career.

Johnson's attention was abruptly diverted to the space race when the Soviets launched Sputnik I into orbit in October, 1957. He now became an ardent supporter of the United States' space program and fought hard to speed up the program so that the nation would not be left far behind in the area of space exploration and utilization. When he delivered an address to the senate in early 1958 he stressed the importance of national defense. He also called for a policy aimed at winning the race for control of outer space. The United States launched its first earth satellite on January 31, 1958, less than one month after Johnson's remarks to the senate. He further advanced his cause as a champion of the space age when he established a senate committee on aeronautical and space sciences. He became chairman of the new committee in February.

As the fall of 1958 approached there was the usual speculation in Washington as to the candidates and their chances of re-election to the congress. Johnson had a

position of great power and prestige. In fact, his position afforded him with power second only to that of the president. And he was content with his work in the senate. He was especially proud of his party when it was able to gain a large number of seats in both the house and senate as a result of the 1958 elections. One of the unexpected winners of the election was the young senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy. He was re-elected to his senate seat by a large margin. Johnson now began to take him seriously as a candidate for the presidential nonmination in 1960.

Johnson was once again re-elected as senate majority leader in January, 1959. This was a post with which the Texas democrat had become very comfortable. But presidential elections were approaching rapidly, and he felt that the time was right for him to make his bid for the democratic presidential nomination in 1960. His health and his being from the south were two important factors to be considered, however, as he contemplated his chances of getting the nomination. He had suffered a massive heart attack in 1955. Could his health stand the strain of a presidential campaign? Johnson had also been a southerner all of his life. Were the American people ready to accept a southern democrat as a serious contender for the presidential nomination? Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Montana), the senate democratic whip, expressed his belief that Johnson would not campaign but that he would

accept the nomination if it were offered to him. The senator also stated that either Johnson or Kennedy could win the election.⁵¹ Johnson himself approached the whole question of his seeking the nomination with an air of cool indifference. When asked about the possibility of his campaigning he assured the public that he was not yet ready to make the run for the White House. Only his closest friends and advisers knew differently in the fall of 1959.

Sam Rayburn opened the "Johnson for President" headquarters in Austin, Texas, in October. And Johnson himself began an official campaign tour of Texas on October 20, 1959. There was now no question; Johnson was a candidate for the 1960 presidential nomination. He campaigned all over the state of Texas in early 1960. San Marcos organized a "Johnson for President" club. Its task was to raise money for the campaign and to circulate petitions and pledges to recruit campaign workers. The Record carried news of Johnson's plans stating that: "San Marcos has always been a heavy Johnson supporter. This is where it all began for him."⁵² The paper in San Marcos carried the message which was being spread throughout Texas and the nation. The people of Texas were urged to join in working for Johnson's nomination and election to the presidency. Reporters from the "Today" show came to San Marcos, in March, to film scenes for a background story on Johnson's life. The footage was televised nationally and featured scenes of the college as well as interviews with

John G. Flowers, college president, and others.⁵³

A rally for Johnson was held in Austin in April. He had run an effective campaign but by the spring of 1960 he still had not declared his candidacy. Instead he chose to remain in Washington and keep on top of matters in the senate. To many he appeared to be hard at work on senate matters. That is exactly the impression Johnson wished to convey. He won renomination to the senate, in May, in the Texas senatorial primaries. But he had still made no official announcement of his candidacy for president.

While Johnson was busy in the senate, John Kennedy was busy on the campaign trail. The young democrat won many primaries and gained prestige and influence with each new victory. Could Johnson get the nomination without heavy campaigning and primary victories? He decided to find out. He officially announced that he was a candidate for the democratic presidential nomination on July 5, 1960.⁵⁴ His bid for the nomination then began in earnest. Was it a case of too little effort too late in the process? Only time would tell as the Democratic party's convention approached in late July.

CHAPTER 5

1960 - 1963

When Lyndon Johnson tossed his hat into the ring in search of the democratic presidential nomination in July, 1960, many people were puzzled by his tactics. He had run a very limited campaign and had entered no primary races at all. How realistic were his hopes of getting the nomination? If there was one thing that Lyndon Johnson had learned about political life by 1960 it was that politics was the art of persuasion. This was an approach with which he was very familiar. If Johnson wanted the nomination he would have to go out after it. Thus when the convention convened in Los Angeles, Johnson's hopes were high that he would be able to secure enough support from uncommitted delegates to gain the nomination. Johnson was nominated for the presidential spot on the ticket on July 13 by Sam Rayburn of Texas, but was defeated on the first ballot by John Fitzgerald Kennedy. His run for the nomination had started too late. His tactics had not produced the desired results.

Johnson's role in the 1960 presidential election was far from over, however, when he lost the nomination.

Kennedy offered him the vice-presidential spot on the Democratic ticket. It is a well established fact of American history that the vice president plays an almost insignificant role in the political process except in the case of the death of the president. That had happened only seven times before 1960.⁵⁵ The vice president also presides over the senate. But this duty carries with it the power to vote only in order to break a tie. That seemed extremely insignificant when compared to the power that Johnson held as senate majority leader. When all these facts had been carefully weighted, Johnson, nevertheless, accepted Kennedy's offer for the number two spot. Many people felt that he was making a big mistake.

Kennedy had chosen Johnson in the hope of preserving the unity of the Democratic party. Kennedy was a liberal northerner while his running mate represented the middle of the road democratic south. There were other factors involved in the selection as well. Kennedy was a handsome charismatic young senator while Johnson presented the image of a seasoned politician. It was hoped that this seemingly dissimilar combination would provide the needed ingredients for a democratic victory in November.

The Republican party chose Richard Nixon and Henry Cabot Lodge as its candidates in late July. When the senate reconvened in early August, Johnson returned to his seat. He still had a great deal of power in the senate by virtue of his position as the top senator. This was power which

he enjoyed and was not afraid to use.

The time then arrived for some earnest campaigning. Like many vice presidential candidates, Johnson did not receive an abundance of newspaper coverage as he campaigned for the Democratic ticket. He travelled to forty-three states and even went to Texas with Kennedy in September. Kennedy knew that the Texas vote was important to keep the party's hopes alive. And as the November elections drew closer, things looked promising for Johnson and his party.

When the final votes were counted Johnson and Kennedy had defeated the republicans. Much of the credit for the victory was given to Johnson for his efforts in winning the support of the democratic south. In Texas there was little question as to who the voters would support at the polls. Johnson had already accomplished a great deal for the citizens of Texas. How much more would he be able to do for them as vice president? But many southerners found themselves in an interesting position at the polls in November of 1960. If they voted democratic they would be voting for Johnson, a Protestant southerner, and Kennedy, a Roman Catholic northerner. Such a combination had never before confronted the democratic south. In the end, however, party loyalty prevailed.

After the inauguration Johnson assumed a new and unfamiliar role in the senate. He presided only as a figurehead. This position was frustrating for him since he had been used to controlling the senate. He had become a

spectator at a sport which he had once controlled totally. The office of vice president became, however, more powerful under the direction of Johnson. He told a reporter for the Saturday Evening Post that one of his major goals while in office was to "erase the vice from the vice presidency." He confessed that this was one of the most difficult operations in American politics to perform.⁵⁶

There was another major change in store for Vice President Johnson as well. He had been very effective as a "cloakroom diplomat" during his tenure in the congress. Now that he was in the White House many of his former colleagues were reluctant to confide in him. He was no longer "one of the boys" on Capitol Hill. Even though his relationships with persons in the senate changed, he was still able to accomplish more than any other vice president.⁵⁷ But he could not limit his work as vice president to his relations with the senate. He had become a representative of all the people across the country. If Johnson wanted to be an effective vice president, he had to branch out and accomplish much more.

Soon after his tenure in the number two spot began, Johnson went to Africa and Asia on the president's behalf. One major difference between his trip and those of other vice presidents was that Johnson had the power to bargain with foreign powers.⁵⁸ This helped to bolster the image of the vice presidential office. What was Johnson's training for negotiating with foreign diplomats? He was a shrewd

businessman and a flamboyant politician. These two skills proved ample for his tasks abroad. He thus managed to succeed in his quest for more recognition as vice president. Other people in the Kennedy White House had more power than Johnson. Many of them were closer to the president than Johnson. But he had an infinite amount of patience in early 1961. He was willing to wait for a chance to prove his usefulness to Kennedy.

Johnson proved himself very useful in the spring of 1961. The Bay of Pigs crisis in Cuba took place in April. Kennedy did not inform Johnson, however, of any of the actions he planned to take in regard to Fidel Castro's activities. But Johnson made his good will trip to Asia in May. And the trip was a huge success. Then, when the Berlin Wall went up in August, Kennedy was powerless to stop the Soviets. But he did send Johnson to Germany to assure the citizens of West Berlin of the United States' support. And Johnson was warmly received by the German people. Once again, he demonstrated that he was a vice president who intended to play a major role in the Kennedy administration.⁵⁹

Johnson continued to bolster his vice-presidential image as the spring of 1962 approached. He was honored in April for his twenty-five years of service in the federal government. He travelled on yet another good will mission in August. This time he ventured to various Mediterranean area countries. He met with His Holiness Pope John XXIII

at the Vatican in September. He returned to the United States on September 22. His various missions were huge successes. His charm and warm personality were well received all around the world. He was, indeed, successful in his quest for recognition as an extraordinary vice president.⁶⁰

Cuba continued to be an area of great concern throughout the Kennedy administration. In September, the vice president suggested that certain goals be pursued by the United States in its dealings with Castro and his growing influence on the Island. These goals included:

1. Destroy Castro's power in Cuba.
2. Make it clear that the United States would not tolerate any show of force by Cuba.
3. Prevent Cuba, by whatever means necessary, from taking action in the Hemisphere.
4. The United States would do whatever was needed to secure against a Cuban military build up.
5. The United States had to stay alert with regard to situations in Cuba.
6. Confrontation had to be avoided if at all possible.⁶¹

Johnson had seen the seriousness of the situation and proposed a course of action for dealing with it a month before the Cuban Missile Crisis developed. As an active vice president he had put himself in a position of great influence. He had always been a champion of national preparedness. Thus when the crisis in Cuba escalated, Johnson had his chance once again to take up the cause.

The vice president was not alone in his cries for a strong national defense. Many citizens realized that a hostile Cuba was dangerously close to American borders.

The actions of the United States in that area were of critical importance. Johnson hoped to be a moving force behind the quest for security. When the Soviets announced that the missiles had been removed in November, 1962, the American people seemed relieved. Johnson, however, was aware that the situation would have to be monitored carefully if the United States were to stay secure.

Johnson resumed his role as a presidential representative in 1963. He attended the funeral of Pope John XXIII in June as the official representative of the United States. He travelled to several Scandinavian countries in September promoting American good will. Such good will trips were among the major accomplishments of Johnson's vice-presidency. Wherever he went he was well received. His country charm complimented perfectly his shrewd diplomatic skills.⁶²

The vice president's success was not limited to his ventures abroad, however. He was also very able in dealing with political affairs on the domestic front. Though his actual power was gone in the senate, he still had a great deal of influence among many of its members. When he was appointed chairman of the Committee on Equal Opportunity Employment Practices, he lost no time. He was quick to draft a proposal to stop all persons involved with government projects from engaging in discriminatory hiring practices. His work was passed into law in the form of an executive order. This action was taken in the first months

of Johnson's tenure as vice president.⁶³ It helped set the tone for his future work. He was not afraid to head into unfamiliar territory in order to make the government more efficient and fair in its practices.

Johnson celebrated his fifty-fifth birthday with great jubilation in August, 1963. The celebrations included a party with two hundred Tennesseans who were in Washington for the swearing in of Senator Hubert Walters, one of Johnson's most ardent supporters. The president even had Johnson to breakfast in the White House to celebrate the occasion.⁶⁴ Johnson had grown up in Texas and, yet, he had the knowledge and diplomatic skill of the most seasoned Washington politician. The young man from the hill country had come a very long way and accomplished a great deal in his relatively short fifty-five years of experience with life.

Johnson's record as vice president is one of the finest in recent history. Kennedy consulted with him on most important matters. He used Johnson as a good will ambassador for the United States. Johnson's travels in this capacity took him to many distant lands where he quickly made friends both for himself and his country. He became involved in top level policy meetings with many heads of state around the world.

Even though foreign affairs occupied much of his time, foreign countries were not his only theatres of operation. Johnson continued to work hard on domestic

issues. He travelled to many American cities speaking out in favor of Kennedy's administrative policies. He explained complex federal policy to the American people and helped to strengthen the Democratic party at every turn.

In Texas, Governor John Connally became concerned about political splits in the Democratic party within the state. He went to Washington in October to invite President Kennedy to Dallas in November in an effort to mend some of the fences. Kennedy agreed to make the trip. And it was agreed that the vice president would accompany him. But before the trip was made, there was a great deal to be done in Washington.⁶⁵

A military coup in South Vietnam overthrew the corrupt and inefficient regime of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem on November 1, 1963. The implications of this action were indeed profound. The United States had been carefully monitoring situations in this area for several months. It was feared that communist forces would make an effort to gain control of the region. Only time would tell what would happen in this delicate area of foreign policy. One thing was certain, the actions of the United States, whether direct or indirect in their nature, would play an important role in the final outcome of that situation. A concerted effort would be made by the United States to see to it that the communists did not gain a stronghold in Vietnam.

The American people were excited in the fall of 1963.

They were excited about John Kennedy, their young president and about Lyndon Johnson, their dynamic vice president. They were excited about where the country had been and about where it was going. They looked forward with greater anticipation than ever before to the future. Where would their leaders take them next? What new experiences were in store for them? A shocking answer to these questions was found when Kennedy and Johnson ventured to Dallas in late November.

When the president and vice president arrived in Dallas no one could have known what was in store for them. While riding in a motorcade through Dallas on the afternoon of November 22 tragedy befell John Kennedy and the entire nation. He was gunned down by an assassin's bullet. He died a few hours later in a nearby Dallas hospital. The nation was in shock.

Johnson became the thirty-sixth president of the United States when he was sworn in aboard Air Force One. He flew back to Washington taking with him Mrs. Kennedy and the remains of the slain president. He arrived in Washington late in the afternoon on November 22. This arrival was different than any of the thousands he had made in the city in all his years as a politician. Lyndon Baines Johnson had become president of the United States. His task was somehow to pull the nation together and carry on in spite of the overwhelming personal and professional loss he felt at Kennedy's death. He could only hope and

pray that the actions he would take in the first critical hours of his administration would be the right ones. Only time would tell.

CHAPTER 6

1963-1965

"All I have I would have given gladly not to be standing here today."⁶⁶ With these humble words Lyndon Baines Johnson began his first address to the American people as president of the United States on November 27, 1963. Not since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln almost one hundred years before had the American people reacted with such emotion to the loss of their beloved president. The nation was in shock. It was up to Johnson to carry on in spite of all that had happened. He had to conduct the affairs of state in such a way that observers both at home and abroad would be impressed with the smoothness with which the government continued to run.

The new president began immediately to take charge of the government. He met with several foreign representatives in the Oval Office during his first days there. The Canadian prime minister and the Soviet first deputy were two of the first to see the new chief executive. Both came to Washington to attend Kennedy's funeral. While they were in Washington they met with

Johnson and discussed foreign relations. Both men emerged from their meetings with a favorable impression of Johnson.⁶⁷ Anastas Mikoyan, Soviet Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev's representative, met with the new president for fifty-five minutes. This meeting was completely unexpected.⁶⁸ It was thus clear, from the onset that Johnson would continue his practices of seizing any opportunities which presented themselves in order to further the good of the nation. He was a man of quick, decisive, and deliberate action. These attributes would serve him well as president.

The American people could not help but be stunned by the events of late November. So much had happened so quickly that many people found themselves asking the question, "What will happen next?" In an effort to answer this question both for the people at home and those abroad, Johnson issued a statement affirming his position of unaltered government policies. He would seek the passage of Kennedy's legislation. Government policy would remain unchanged. This had been the purpose of his meetings with dignitaries at the time of Kennedy's funeral. He wished to make it unquestionably clear to the American people and to the world that he had charge of the government and that no sudden changes would be made.⁶⁹

One of the questions which plagued the minds of Americans in the weeks following John Kennedy's death was "Who was responsible for the act?" Had Lee Harvey Oswald

acted alone in shooting the president? Was there more than one individual involved? Were foreign countries somehow mixed up in the plot? There was great speculation all across America and the world. Johnson ordered a full-scale investigation of the matter in an effort to find the answers to these and other questions. Chief Justice Earl Warren was named to head the investigation. It soon became known as "The Warren Commission." Due caution was issued against a rash investigation. Oswald's death would also be probed by the commission. There was public outcry for strict laws to be made against anyone who murdered a federal official. And legislation was soon enacted which made any such act a federal offense. The public waited anxiously for the conclusions of the Warren Commission.⁷⁰ When the multi-volume report on the commission's findings was published, in September, 1964, there was a great deal of relief in the minds of many Americans. The report stated that Oswald had, indeed, acted alone. A single shot had killed the president and wounded John Connally. Johnson seemed satisfied with these findings. But there were many people who questioned the findings of the commission in 1964. There are some people who question the theory of a single killer even today. It is still too soon to know beyond doubt the true facts in this matter. Perhaps they will never become clear. The fact remains that when the Warren Commission issued its report many questions were answered. Perhaps just as many were left unanswered.

Nonetheless, the commission made its report and the official investigation of Kennedy's assassination ended.

When the president addressed a joint session of congress in late November, 1963, he called for support of Kennedy's legislative programs. He also asked that there be decisive actions on the part of the government in all matters. This he felt would serve as a show of our national strength to all the world. Johnson also said that he would do everything possible to pursue peace with all nations during his tenure as president. He was interrupted thirty times for applause during the course of his remarks.⁷¹

Johnson quickly became a very popular president both at home and abroad. He had done a great deal of good will work as vice president for Kennedy. He was now in a unique position to utilize the information and the contacts he had gathered on those trips. The support he gained around the world would prove very valuable to him as he embarked on his presidential career. Governments around the world seemed to have confidence in the United States' new leader. Early reports indicated that many were willing to work with Johnson for the betterment of foreign relations.⁷²

There are, of course, exceptions to everything. Johnson received negative comments from the Nigerian government shortly after Kennedy's death. These remarks lashed out against Johnson and the American government in

general. They stated that Kennedy's assassination was a clear sign that the United States government could not be trusted. The note further stated that the headquarters for the United Nations should not be located in America because it was a widely known fact that blacks were hated by some Americans. This, Nigeria said, alarmed some of the African states. Johnson is said to have ignored the remarks in his reply to the Nigerian government.⁷³

The people of Texas remained behind their president. There was a predominate feeling around the state that no one had to plead the cause of Texas at the federal level anymore. Now that Lyndon was in the White House he would see to it that Texas and her citizens were given a fair deal. Most of the press in Texas supported Johnson as it always had. One paper went so far as to state that Johnson was now a representative of ALL Americans but that he would always have a soft spot in his heart for Texans. This proved to be true as the president read several Texas newspapers everyday and even lunched with Texan congressional democrats in order to keep in touch with what was going on in his home state and to maintain his ties with congress.⁷⁴ Johnson's popularity in Texas was further evidenced by the results of a poll conducted in December. The poll showed Johnson to be the overwhelming choice of Texans for president in 1964.⁷⁵ Apparently even those who had been angry when he accepted the vice-presidential spot in 1960 had forgiven him by 1963.

Johnson's popularity was up across the nation in late 1963. A poll in Newsweek magazine indicated that the president's popularity took a seven point jump in the two weeks between December 3 and December 17. The magazine further reported that this was a larger margin than Kennedy had ever enjoyed.⁷⁶ Johnson had proven himself capable of assuming command and getting things done. This was a popular attitude with many people. The new president was not affraid of the legislative branch of government. The years he had served there afforded him many contacts and opportunities to work with rather than against the congress in getting desired legislation passed. Thus getting legislation passed quickly became a hallmark of his administration. This increased his popularity both at home and abroad. The people liked a man of action. That is what they had in Lyndon Johnson.

Just before Christmas the president signed a new job training bill into law. This popular law was aimed at fighting unemployment across the country. It provided funds for the training of 700,000 youths and illiterate adults for new jobs. This important measure assured high school drop outs, illiterate adults, and unskilled individuals a fighting chance in the highly competitive job market. This was a positive step forward for Johnson on his crusade against poverty. He was showing at every turn that he could deliver the things he promised for the people of America.⁷⁷

With the coming of the new year, Johnson's thoughts turned toward re-election. He had proven that he was able to take charge of the country at a difficult time and to achieve many things. He hoped that the American people would give him a chance to continue the progress he had made by voting for him in November. But he faced a problem in that he was not able to campaign extensively for re-election. He had to depend, therefore, upon his past record in congress and as president to speak for him. In January, 1964, however, elections seemed a long way off. And Johnson had much work to do before he could think about the re-election process.

The president went before congress on January 6 to talk about his legislative program. He asked congress to pass a legislative package in six months time which Kennedy was unable to get through in twelve months of working with congress. This would certainly be an impressive achievement for the president as November elections approached. This program was not without its problems, however. Many members of congress had resented the pressure tactics Johnson had used to push the foreign aid bill through the senate before Christmas break in 1963. They would be reluctant to support his proposals in 1964. The "honeymoon" period for congress and the president had ended by early in the year. Johnson's influence in the senate was diminished. It was, by no means, gone. He still had the support of senators from the "Solid South"

and from other senators. His problem was that, as president, he could not apply the same tactics of cloakroom diplomacy that had worked so well for him in the past. When he made his legislative proposal in January it became clear that congress would not stand for this tactic from him in the future. The president would have to work with congress from now on. Congress did not exist for the service of the president.⁷⁸

Johnson appeared before congress in late January, 1964; this time he had a budget proposal with him. His budget called for cuts in defense spending and provided funds for fighting poverty by providing millions of dollars for various welfare programs.⁷⁹ The reaction of congress was basically along party lines. The democrats applauded the budget while republicans cried that it was a fake. And that Johnson had promised more than he could deliver to the American people.⁸⁰ From this time on, it would be the party lines that Johnson had to fight to get what he wanted from legislative branch.

The newspapers exploded with rumors of congress being recalled in May when Johnson appeared at a routine press conference. Congress had stalled on the passage of several key pieces of legislation on civil rights and other issues of Johnson's legislative program. The press carried headlines of Johnson speaking out against "opposition for the sake of opposition." Rumors were circulating in and around Washington that the slow down in congress was a

deliberate move to stall the president's progress with his domestic reform programs. Johnson hinted in this news conference of May 6 that he would call congress back into session after party conventions if it did not take some action on his program. This idea was, of course, abhorrent to the politicians who needed that time to campaign.⁸¹

There was no need for the president to call congress back into session. It passed key legislative measures before the recess for the summer party conventions. This legislation consisted chiefly of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964. This bill, which Johnson signed into law on July 2, represented some of the most sweeping reforms ever to be made in the field of civil rights. The bill strengthened the voting rights of minorities and others through the abolition of literacy tests. Other parts of the law dealt with desegregation in public facilities, increasing powers of the Civil Rights Commission, and the establishment of the Equal Opportunity Commission. One of Johnson's chief goals was thus accomplished. When congress adjourned it had passed a major piece of Johnson's legislation. The president had leverage now with which to wage his campaign.

It is not unusual for an incumbent president to do very little travelling on the campaign trail. He often stays in Washington attending to the affairs of state. This strategy proved very effective for Johnson as it had for many of his predecessors. He did venture out of

washington on a limited basis in the spring of 1964. He went to Appalachia and spoke out for civil rights and against poverty. The president made it clear that the welfare programs passed by his administration would benefit that region. He intended to send money and other aid to poor areas all across the nation in an effort to eliminate poverty in America.⁸² Johnson spoke to many poor people across the nation. He had a special need to establish himself as a strong president. Even though he was an incumbent, he had a very short time in which to establish a strong presidential image. He needed to talk to the people. He also needed to stay in Washington to forge ahead with the business of government. Johnson hoped that the strategy he used would prove effective for him at the polls in November.⁸³ He vowed to stay out of partisan politics for as long as possible before the election. It would appear, then, that Johnson earnestly wished to be president for all Americans.

Domestic issues were not the only ones facing Johnson's administration in 1964. He sent a special message to congress asking for additional funding for military operations in Viet Nam in May. He appointed General William Westmoreland as commander of the United States forces in Viet Nam in June. Viet Nam would prove to be the toughest testing ground for the president's foreign policies. Two American destroyers were attacked by North Vietnam in August. The president ordered "air action" against the

torpedo boats and their bases.⁸⁴ The war was escalating in Viet Nam and Johnson seemed powerless to stop it. He knew that this was a major problem both for himself or whoever won the election in November.

While domestic and foreign affairs were brewing in Washington, the republicans held their convention in San Francisco. They nominated Senator Barry Goldwater for president and Congressman William Miller of New York for vice president. The Republican platform was concerned with both foreign affairs and domestic spending. Goldwater and the republicans promised a hard fight for the presidential spot.

A series of race riots broke out in major cities across the nation between July 18 and August 20, 1964. This could not have happened at a worse time as far as the Johnson campaign was concerned. While he was talking about peace and combating poverty, Ghettos were being bombed across the nation. The devastation caused by these riots cost the federal government millions in relief funds and in man power required to provide protection in the cities. Many of the cities met the requirements of the federal government to be declared disaster areas by the time the fighting was over. Johnson was shocked by these events and vowed to fight harder if re-elected to provide for the needs of impoverished Americans. He promised to help do away with the harsh living conditions in the ghetto areas of large cities.

While there was rioting in American cities, the war in Viet Nam was escalating. The American destroyer Maddox was attacked by North Viet Nam on August 2. Johnson instructed the navy to take retaliatory action. United States planes bombed torpedo bases in North Viet Nam on August 5. Johnson was unable to deescalate the war in Asia. The challenge would be dealt with by the next president of the United States. Johnson desperately needed to keep the situation contained as the 1964 elections approached.

The president's fight against poverty continued when he lambasted Goldwater for suggesting budget cuts in the area of farm subsidies. Johnson announced that this plan would bankrupt one of every five American farmers. The president made these remarks in front of a group of farmers in North Carolina. He had stopped there during an extensive campaign tour of the south in early October.⁸⁵

Johnson issued an executive order establishing the Federal Development Planning Committee for Appalachia later that same month. As the elections approached, he appeared to be making significant gains with his poverty fighting stand. His hopes were high for favorable results at the polls in November.

Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey defeated Goldwater and Miller by a wide margin on November 4, 1964. Johnson had achieved his goal. Johnson had done little campaigning but what he had done had been very effective. His limited but highly successful record in the White House was

impressive. He seemed ready and able to accept the challenge ahead of him. The American people had made their choice; Johnson could not have been more pleased.

His "Great Society" program of domestic reforms was unveiled in his state of the union address on January 4, 1965. The major goals of this program were: a voting rights bill, aid to schools, immigration law reform, and a general attack on disease and poverty nationwide.⁸⁶ The people appeared ready for a change in the government. They had seen what Johnson had accomplished during his long tenure in public office. They now hoped for great things from their new president.

Johnson was inaugurated January 20, 1965. He took the opportunity to outline further his domestic policies. The young man from Johnson City, Texas, had come a long way in his nearly thirty-five years of political life in Washington. What he had accomplished was due, to a great extent, to his natural political abilities. He knew how to amass power and how to use it to his best advantage. One factor which cannot be overlooked when considering his success is the positive image he gained from the press across the nation and particularly in his home state of Texas.

CHAPTER 7

POLITICAL CARTOONS

Political cartoons have occupied a unique position in society throughout American history. It was William "Boss" Tweed, the leader of a corrupt group of politicians in New York in the 1870s, who said "I don't care what they print about me, most of my constituents can't read anyhow--but them Damn pictures!" This feeling has been echoed by political figures from that day to this. Lyndon Johnson was certainly not immune to this feeling. The problems which confronted him as he attempted to wage both the war overseas and the war on poverty at home proved to be a cartoonist's dream come true as they searched for materials for their drawings.

The cartoons which appeared in the nation's newspapers during the presidency of Lyndon Johnson were especially interesting. The overwhelming theme in these works was Johnson's apparent inability to reconcile the domestic and foreign policies of his administration. The high passions aroused by these issues brought the cartoonists out in force. As cartoonist's Jules Feiffer wrote: "Whether we [cartoonists] attack Johnson on his tax

program, his poverty program, his credibility gap, or his handling of the cities, when you get right down to it we are all really talking about Viet Nam."⁸⁷ The thing which made the war especially difficult for the American people to deal with was the fact that, in spite of Johnson's aggressive policies in Viet Nam, the United States was not winning the war. This frustration was reflected in the cartoons of the day.

While the war overseas was being fought, Johnson's famous war on poverty was also being conducted at home. While significant gains had been made on the domestic front, many people felt that we were not winning that battle either. Thus, the conflict between these two aspects of Johnson's policies proved to be the basis for much of the political cartooning that was done during his presidency.

The cartoons which follow are but a few examples of those which appeared in newspapers throughout the nation during the Johnson administration. Every effort has been made to show a balance of the topics covered by the cartoons. While these cartoons were published after Johnson became president in 1964, they clearly depict the importance of the press in the life of the president. A drawing can have profound and immediate impact upon even its illiterate viewers. These examples reflect the attitudes, opinions, and frustrations of the American people as the written word never could.

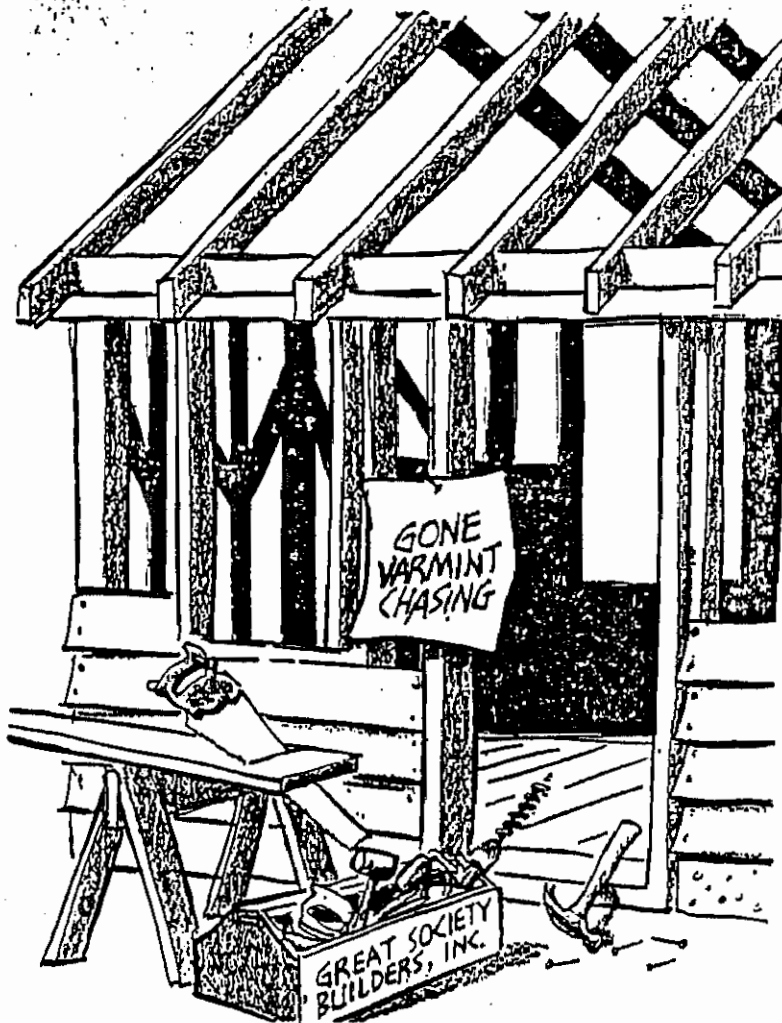
'First Get Their Attention...' *By Conrad*



Austin American Statesman, November 10, 1964, 4.

Johnson's hard-hitting state of the union message.

By Mauldin



Austin American Statesman, May 7, 1965, 4.

Abandonment of domestic programs in favor of foreign affairs.

Bill Mauldin



Austin American Statesman, July 12, 1965, 4.
The press and President Johnson square off.

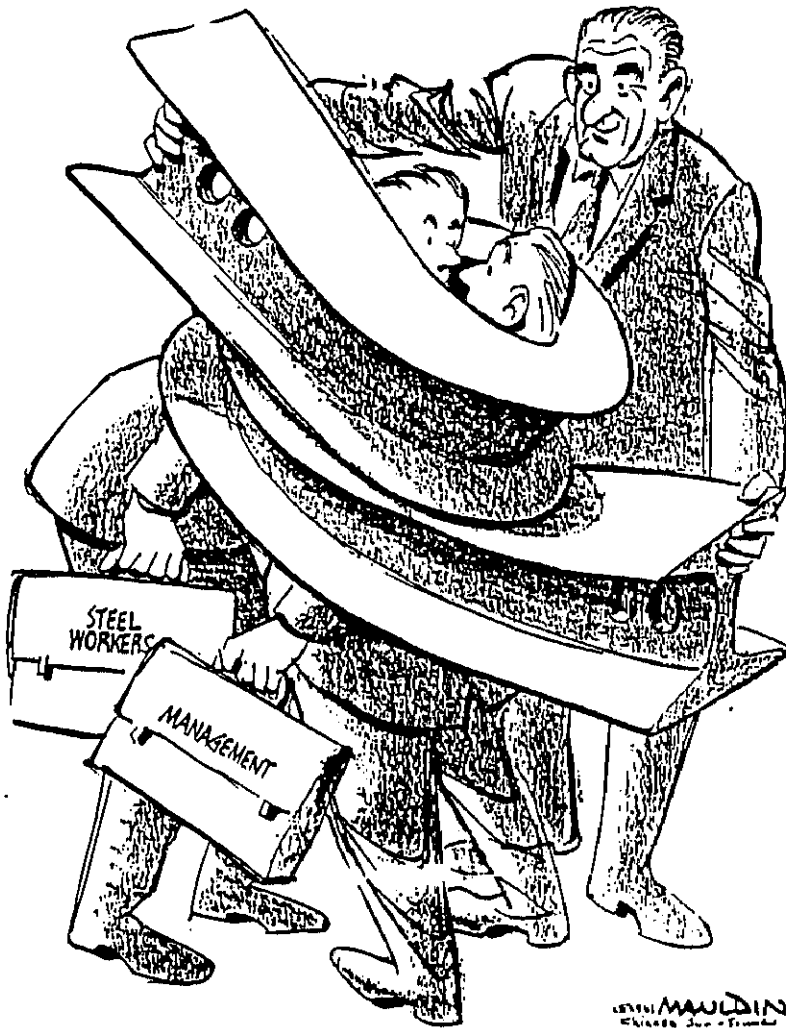


ACHILLES' HEEL

Austin American Statesman, July 21, 1965, 4.

Foreign policy depicted as Johnson's "Achilles Heel."

Bill Mauldin



"COME, LET US REASON TOGETHER..."

Austin American Statesman, September 7, 1965, 4.

The Johnson touch in a steel crisis.



"WE'RE OKAY AS LONG AS THE PUMP HOLDS OUT."

Austin American Statesman, December 26, 1965, 8.

Johnson attempted to keep the dollar and his programs afloat.



"HERE, CONSENSUS! HERE, CONSENSUS! HERE, BOY!"

Austin American Statesman, May 26, 1966, 4.

Johnson in search of a consensus in support of his policies.



Austin American Statesman, December 24, 1966, 6.

Sharp contrast between the provisions for the Asian and domestic wars.

Mauldin



"DOESN'T THAT BRAT EVER GO TO BED?"

Austin American Statesman, February 9, 1967, 4.

The press often obstructed Johnson's relations with the public.

Mauldin



Austin American Statesman, April 5, 1967, 4.

Lyndon Johnson's credibility gap with the press is depicted.

"I'M AFRAID THE PREMIUMS ARE GOING UP"



Austin American Statesman, October 10, 1967, 4.

Johnson forced to take a hard look at his Viet Nam policy.

"NOW ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS, RICHARD?"



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Austin American Statesman, January 4, 1969, 4.

Johnson and Nixon surrounded by the problem of Viet Nam.



'Come let us reason together!'

Austin American Statesman, Janurary 29, 1969, 4.

Lyndon Johnson depicted fighting for his place in history.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The press plays an important role in the career of any politician. Lyndon Johnson's career was certainly no exception to this rule. From his beginnings as a representative to the end of his tenure in the White House the press was an important factor in his political successes and failures.

Throughout his career the majority of the newspapers published in Texas supported their favorite son. This was important to Johnson, as he sought to gain the support of the people of Texas for his various campaigns and programs. The press and the people of Texas supported him because he was able to provide them with many benefits. More Texans than ever before had access to electricity after his work with the electrification projects of the 1930s. Many young people in Texas were put to work and prospered under Johnson's watchful eye as director of the National Youth Administration. Money and industry poured into the state as it never had before while Johnson was in Washington. And the citizens of Texas remembered all these

things, of course, and supported Johnson at every turn.

The newspapers published in Texas reflected this popular attitude. Newspapers like the Austin American Statesman and the San Marcos Record were very important to Johnson's career. The Austin paper was published in the state capital. It was read daily by important politicians as well as by average citizens of the city. The paper's staunch support of Johnson was a key ingredient to the success of his career. Its pages reflected time and time again the good that Johnson had accomplished for the people of Texas. This is the fact that the Austin American used most often in gaining support for Johnson. Texans had, indeed, benefited from Johnson's presence in Washington. The support of the capital city paper was an important element in the success story of Lyndon Johnson. Through its pages, Johnson gained needed exposure and publicity to many important people who read the paper.

The San Marcos Record was important to Johnson's career in a very different way from the Austin paper. The Record was a small paper with limited circulation. It perhaps typified many small town newspapers across the state. Despite its size, the paper supported Johnson wholeheartedly. After all, he had attended the college in San Marcos, and many of the town's citizens knew him personally. Johnson did great things for the people and the town of San Marcos while in Washington. These things would not soon be forgotten by those who lived there. Many

felt that he was, in some way, a citizen of the town. He had been educated there and had applied that education to help all of Texas. It is this type of "grass roots" support which all politicians hope for. San Marcos was, by no means, the only small town in the state which supported Johnson's political efforts. It is presented as an example of the hundreds of small towns across the state which provided the necessary support for his political career.

Many Texans were faced with hardships in the years following the great depression of the 1930s. When Franklin Roosevelt offered them the promise of a better world through the New Deal many were skeptical. Then Lyndon Johnson, himself a Texan, who had grown up in poverty, arrived on the scene in Washington. When he promised the people of Texas a better world they believed him.

As mentioned earlier, one of Johnson's greatest accomplishments in Texas was the work he did with the electrification project which had been started as part of Roosevelt's New Deal program. He was keenly aware of what it was like to grow up in a small Texas town without the luxury of electricity. He knew that something had to be done to change this situation. He wanted as many Texans as possible to have electricity. As a result of his efforts thousands of Texans were provided with electricity through the New Deal electrification program. This was an accomplishment which the people of Texas never forgot. Obviously Johnson had served them well. They thus would do

anything possible to support him throughout the course of his career. It was his service to the common man which endeared him to the hearts of Texans throughout the state. The feeling that Johnson was a man of his word, that he was a man of the people, and that he would do anything possible to help his fellow Texans, was a predominate feeling throughout his political career.

Johnson could not have enjoyed his immense success as a politician with just state support. The base of his power and support spread from the grass roots areas of Texas to the very heart of Washington D.C. Richard Nixon once called Johnson "one of the ablest political craftsman of our time."⁸⁸ This describes well the attributes of the man. His skill as a legislator was awesome. He knew better than anyone else in Washington how to get what he needed and wanted from congress. Johnson used his skill to help his own political career along as well as to help the people of Texas he represented. His reputation as a shrewd politician spread quickly in Washington. He was thus admired by many and even feared by some for the immense power he was able to amass at every turn in his career. A friend of Lyndon Johnson was a friend forever. An enemy was seldom forgiven.

Perhaps more than any other single factor it was Johnson's ability to get along with people that helped him most in the course of his career. He knew what people wanted to hear and did his best to tell them that. He knew

how to use people in high places in order to get the things he wanted. This is a trait which every aspiring politician attempts to cultivate. And Johnson was better at it than perhaps any other politician of this century. The unique combination of a charming southerner and a shrewd politician blended perfectly in the person of Lyndon Johnson. For him, that combination of attributes spelled success both politically and personally.

The newspapers of the time reflected time and again the great effectiveness of Johnson's personality when combined with his political shrewdness. Texas gained a great deal from his tenure in Washington. The military installations which are scattered throughout the state are but one example of his ability to serve the needs of the people of Texas while also serving the purposes of the federal government. He was an important force in getting some military installations moved into Texas, particularly during the second world war. These installations have served the needs of the federal government well by providing year round training conditions in many areas of the state. Texans have been helped economically through the presence of these profitable installations.

Houston, Texas, gained a great deal from the advent of the space age when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration placed major facilities there. This provided needed jobs and growth to the area. Johnson, of course, helped to make this possible. He seemed to have a

gift for matching the needed industry with the people who needed it most. This trait gave him a special place in the hearts of Texans across the state and also in the minds of politicians in Washington.

When Johnson became president in 1963, much of the press was filled with speculation about his ability to take over the government as its chief executive. But Texas newspapers expressed confidence in their old friend. This confidence was not unfounded as Johnson rose to the awesome task before him and assumed power with great competence. The new president was thus praised by many newspapers in Texas and across the country for his skill in a time of national shock and grief.

The press is never one hundred percent behind any president or politician. And Johnson certainly had his share of critics just as any other public office holder. Among the harshest of Johnson's critics were the cartoonists who depicted his presidency. These artists have played an important part in the career of many public officials. Their drawings reach a large audience everyday and no knowledge of the written word is needed to understand their blatant and often harsh messages.

It may be said that the cartoons which appeared in newspapers across the country, even in Texas, during Johnson's presidency were, for the most part, highly critical of the president. Through the eyes of the cartoonists, Johnson appeared to be a man of indecision and

conflict. The cartoons which were syndicated nationally reflected an exaggerated and more cynical side of newspaper reporting. But a representation of the career of any modern politician without the consideration of these artists would be incomplete. The drawings produced by these individuals did, in fact, play a role in the press' depiction of Johnson's political career. This art work provided a fresh and somewhat unique approach to viewing the president's accomplishments and failures in office.

Through the study of newspaper articles and political cartoons, which are contemporary to the life of any prominent political figure, much can be learned. Newspapers reflect the attitudes and opinions of the individuals they serve. A study of these papers reveals the thoughts and feelings of individual members of society as they saw a prominent political figure. To study the career of Johnson without studying in detail the newspaper articles which were published during his time would be an injustice. He was a man of the people, particularly of Texas. The newspapers of his era reflect this as well as the people's feelings about him. History books cannot fully depict the political career of this unique man in a vibrant, contemporary style drawing upon the actual events and people of his time. Only the newspapers can do that.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE

AND POLITICAL CAREER OF

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

1908-1965⁸⁹

YOUTH AND EARLY CAREER

1908-1937

1908

August 27 Born near Stonewall, Texas, to Sam Ealy and
Rebekah Baines Johnson.

1924

May 4 Graduated from Johnson City High School at
the age of fifteen.

1927

February 7 Entered Southwest Texas State Teacher's College. Johnson first entered the sub-college. He entered the regular college on March 21.

1930

August 17 Graduated from college receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree.

1931

November 24 Worked on Texas millionaire Richard Kleberg's campaign for congress which resulted in a Kleberg victory.

November 29 Johnson was appointed secretary to Kleberg and accompanied him to Washington D.C. in December, 1931.

December 5 Arrived in Washington to begin a political career which would last over forty years.

1932

May 1 During his time as Kleberg's secretary Johnson made many important friends in Washigton. Among them were Tom Connally, Morris Sheppard, and Sam Rayburn.

November 8 With Johnson at the helm of the campaign, Kleberg was re-elected to congress.

1933

April 1 Elected speaker of the "Little Congress," a youth group of congressional secretaries in Washington.

1934

November 17 Married Claudia (Lady Bird) Taylor in San Antonio, Texas.

1935

July 1 Appointed state administrator of the National Youth Administration for Texas by President Roosevelt.

1937

February 24 Decided to run in a special election for the congressional seat of J. P. Buchannan who had died the previous day.

March 5 Johnson made his opening campaign speech in San Marcos, Texas, and announced his staunch support of President Roosevelt.

April 10 Johnson elected to congress.

CONGRESSMAN AND SENATOR 1937-1961

May 18 At the age of thirty-nine, Johnson was sworn in as a member of congress. He was placed on the House Committee on Naval Affairs at the request of the president.

1938

November 8 Johnson was re-elected to the house for a full term.

1940

September 20 Roosevelt put him in charge of democratic congressional campaigns. The republicans lost five seats in the house to the democrats. Lyndon Johnson had made his

first real entrance into politics at the national level.

November 5 Johnson re-elected to congress.

1941

April 22 Johnson announced his candidacy for the senate seat of Morris Sheppard. He was endorsed by Roosevelt.

May 3 Began his senatorial campaign in San Marcos. He pledged to join the service if the day ever came that he cast his vote to enter war.

May 19 Texas Governor W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel annouced his candidacy for the senate seat.

July 2 Johnson lost the election by a narrow margin. He returned to Washington to reclaim his seat in the house.

December 7 Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands was bombed by the Japanese.

December 8 Johnson voted for war with Japan.

December 11 Voted for the declaration of war against Germany and Italy. Immediately after the vote, Johnson was ordered to active duty by the navy. He was the first member of the house to go into uniform.

1942

July 1 President Roosevelt issued a directive ordering all members of congress to leave military service and return to their legislative duties. Johnson returned to Washington on July 15.

October 16 Appointed chairman of a congressional subcommittee investigating manpower utilization in naval affairs.

November 3 Re-elected to the house.

1944

November 7 Defeated his republican opponet in the Texas Congressional election. His ambitions seemed stalled at the house level.

1945

April 12 President Franklin D. Roosevelt died in Warm Springs, Georiga.

1946

August 25 Appointed to Select Committee on Post-War Military Policy.

November 5 Johnson defeated his republican opponet and was re-elected to congress for the fifth time.

1947

September 9 With Sam Rayburn's help, Johnson was appointed to the Joint House and Senate Committee on Atomic Energy.

1948

May 15 Johnson officially filed for the Texas democratic senate primary election. His only serious opponet was former Governor Coke Stevenson.

July 24 Stevenson defeated Johnson in the race by a narrow margin. A run off election was set for August.

September 2 The Texas Election Bureau announced that the vote was complete. Stevenson had won the election by 362 votes. These results were unoffical.

September 4 Precinct 13 in Jim Wells County revised its voting returns. Johnson won the precinct, and the election, by 87 votes.

November 3 Lyndon Johnson defeated his republican
opponent, winning the Texas senate seat.

1949

January 3 Sworn in as a member of the senate.
Appointed to the Armed Services Committee.

1950

February 9 Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin began
his "witch hunt" of suspected communists in
the federal government.

June 25 Communist North Korea invaded South Korea.

June 26 Johnson defended Truman's actions in Korea
in a speech before the senate.

July 17 Named chairman of the Senate Preparedness
Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate
Armed Services Committee.

November 26 Communist troops from China crossed into
North Korea and engaged American troops in
battle.

1951

January 2 Elected majority whip of the senate.

April 11 General Douglas MacArthur was relieved of
his command by Truman. Johnson participated
in the MacArthur hearings in the senate
since he was a member of the Armed Services
Committee.

1952

January 3 Johnson elected majority whip of the senate
for the second time.

1953

January 3 Johnson elected senate minority leader.

July 26 A truce ending the Korean conflict was signed.

1954

April 3 Johnson called for a stronger American policy regarding intervention in Indochina.

May 8 The French surrendered to the North Vietnamese.

July 21 A declaration of the Geneva Conference divided Viet Nam at the 17th parallel. North and South Viet Nam were thus created. French troops withdrew altogether.

August 11 Johnson pushed a communist control bill through the senate.

October 24 The United States promised aid to South Vietnam.

November 2 Johnson was re-elected to the senate.

1955

Janurary 5 Johnson elected senate majority leader, Democratic Policy Committee chairman, and Democratic Conference chairman.

July 2 Johnson suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized until August 7.

December 30 Announced that he would continue his duties as senate majority leader.

1956

March 11 Johnson refused to sign the "Southern Manifesto" which pledged to use "all lawful means" to reverse the supreme court's 1954 ruling barring segregation in public schools.

May 22 Johnson was named chairman of the Texas delegation to the democratic national convention. He also was declared their "favorite son" candidate for the

presidential nomination.

- August 16 Nominated for president by John Connally. The party's nomination went to Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver.
- November 6 Republican candidates Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon defeated Stevenson and Kefauver in the general election.

1957

- January 3 Re-elected majority leader in the senate.
- January 6 Johnson gave John F. Kennedy a seat on the Foreign Relations Committee.
- August 28 Engineered the passage of a watered down civil rights bill through the senate.
- September 6 President Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Bill of 1957. Johnson gained a reputation as a champion of civil rights. His compromise tactics allowed him to gain this reputation while keeping his alliance with the southern bloc of senators.
- October 4 The Soviet Union launched Sputnik I into outer space orbit.

1958

- January 31 The United States launched an earth satellite Explorer I.
- February 8 Johnson assumed the role of democratic leader of the space age when he created and became chairman of the senate Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences.

1959

- January 7 Re-elected majority leader of the senate.
- October 20 Johnson told Kennedy that he had no intention of seeking the democratic presidential nomination in 1960.

1960

Janurary 2 John Kennedy formally announced his
 candidacy for the democratic presidential
 nomination.

Janurary 25 Johnson announced that he would seek
 re-election to the senate from Texas.

May 7 Won renomination to the senate in the Texas
 senatorial primary.

July 5 Johnson finally declared himself an official
 candidate for the Democratic party's
 presidential nomination.

July 13 Nominated for the presidency at the
 democratic national convention. Lost on the
 first ballot to John F. Kennedy.

July 14 Kennedy asked Johnson to serve as his
 running mate. Johnson accepted the offer.

July 25 The republicans nominated Richard Nixon and
 Henry Cabot Lodge as their candidates.

September 12 Johnson campaigned with Kennedy in Texas.
 Kennedy was counting on Johnson's ability to
 secure the Texas vote in November.

November 8 Kennedy and Johnson defeated Nixon and Lodge
 at the polls in the general election.

VICE PRESIDENT 1961-1963

Janurary 20 Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as vice
 president of the United States.

Janurary 21 Johnson presided over the senate for the
 first time.

April 15-17 The Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

1962

April 10 Johnson's twenty-fifth anniversary in
 federal government service.

October 14-28 The Cuban missile crisis.

1963

- October 5 Governor John Connally of Texas visited the White House to arrange a trip to Texas for President Kennedy. The trip was planned for November and Johnson was to be in the company of the president. It was hoped that this trip would help mend some democratic fences in Texas.
- November 22 President Kennedy was gunned down by an assassin while riding through the streets of Dallas. Lyndon Johnson became the thirty-sixth president of the United States when he was sworn in aboard Air Force One that afternoon. He then returned to Washington to assume his duties.

FIRST TERM 1963-1965

- November 27 Johnson made a speech before a joint session of congress. He pleaded for unity and asked support of Kennedy's programs. He assured Americans everywhere that he had control of the government.
- November 30 Appointed a commission to investigate Kennedy's assassination.
- December 16 Johnson signed the Higher Education Facilities Act.
- December 20 Signed the ratification of the Chamizal Convention with Mexico. This finally settled the long standing boundary dispute along the Texas border.

1964

- January 3 Delivered his first state of the union message to congress. He called for a "War On Poverty."
- January 15 The first of Kennedy's aides resigned. It was only a matter of time until all either resigned or were replaced by loyal friends of President Johnson.
- January 23 The twenty-fourth amendment to the

consitution was adopted. It outlawed the poll tax in federal elections.

- Janurary 29 Johnson announced the successful launching of the first satellite by Saturn I.
- March 16 The president sent a special message to congress calling for an all out attack on the sources of poverty across the nation.
- May 18 Another message was sent to congress. This one called for an increase in funds for military operations in Viet Nam.
- July 2 The Civil Rights Bill of 1964 was signed into law by Johnson. This was the most sweeping legislation of its kind in American history.
- July 18-August 30 Riots caused by the conditions of Ghetto living took place in several large cities across the country.
- August 3 As Commander in Chief of the armed services, Johnson ordered the navy to act against the North Vietnamese attack upon a U.S. destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin.
- August 5 In a message to congress the president pledged United States support for peace in Southeast Asia.
- August 26 Johnson was nominated for the presidency at the Democratic party's national convention. He selected Hubert Humphrey as his mate.
- September 7-17 Johnson made one of a very few campaign trips. He prefered to stand on his record and say nothing to antagonize anyone.
- November 4 Johnson and Humphery defeated their republican opponents in the general election.

1965

- Janurary 4 The president delivered his state of the union message in which he outlined his "Great Sociey" proposals for the nation.

Janurary 20

Lyndon Johnson was inaugrated and, thus,
began his own term in office as president of
the United States.

NOTES

¹William C. Pool, Emmie Craddock, and David E. Conrad, Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years (San Marcos, Texas: Southwest Texas State College Press, 1965), 50. Hereinafter cited as Pool et al., Johnson.

²Ibid., 175-176.

³All references made in this work to the of Johnson's life are based upon the chronology appears as an appendix to this work.

⁴Pool et al., Johnson, 67-111 passim.

⁵Alfred Steinberg, Sam Johnson's Boy: A Closeup of the President From Texas (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1968), 224. Hereinafter cited as Steinberg, Johnson's Boy.

⁶Pool et.al., Johnson, 178.

⁷Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 118.

⁸Ibid., 147-153.

⁹The San Marcos Record and the Hays County Herald, May 1941. Hereinafter cited as Record and Herald.

¹⁰Austin American-Statesman, 4 May 1941. All references to the Austin American-Statesman, Austin-American, and Austin Statesman hereinafter cited Statesman.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Herald, 2 June 1941.

¹³Statesman, 27 June 1941.

¹⁴Record, 24 October 1941.

¹⁵Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 189.

¹⁶Corpus Christi Caller, 12 December 1941.

¹⁷Herald, 13 March 1942.

¹⁸Record, 8 May 1942.

¹⁹Ibid., 13 May 1942.

- ²⁰Herald, 31 July 1942.
- ²¹Ibid., 21 August 1942.
- ²²Record, 24 December 1943.
- ²³Ibid., 7 January 1944.
- ²⁴Ibid., 2 June 1944.
- ²⁵Herald, 12 April 1945.
- ²⁶Record, 26 April 1946.
- ²⁷Ibid., 3 May 1946.
- ²⁸Ibid., 17 May 1946.
- ²⁹Herald, 7 June 1946.
- ³⁰Record, 19 July 1946.
- ³¹Ibid., 8 August 1947.
- ³²Ibid., 12 September 1947.
- ³³Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 243.
- ³⁴Record, 18 June 1948.
- ³⁵Dallas Times-Herald, 3 August 1948.
- ³⁶S. S. McKay, Texas and the Fair Deal (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1954), 240-241.
- ³⁷Statesman, 5 September 1948.
- ³⁸Dallas News, 9 September 1948.
- ³⁹Ibid.
- ⁴⁰Statesman, Dallas News, San Antonio Light, 28 August- 28 September 1948.
- ⁴¹Record, 25 August 1950.
- ⁴²Ibid.
- ⁴³Ibid., 18 May 1951.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., 23 November 1951.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., 16 July 1954.

- ⁴⁶Record, Statesman, Light, July, 1955.
- ⁴⁷Record, 18 November 1955.
- ⁴⁸Statesman, 19 November 1955.
- ⁴⁹New York Times Magazine Sunday supplement, 30 December 1956.
- ⁵⁰Ibid.
- ⁵¹Statesman, 4 May 1959.
- ⁵²Record, 4 February 1960.
- ⁵³Ibid., 3 March 1960.
- ⁵⁴Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 524.
- ⁵⁵Record, 21 July 1960.
- ⁵⁶"The New L. B. J.," The Saturday Evening Post, February, 1962, 95.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., 97.
- ⁵⁸Houston Chronical, 10 September 1961.
- ⁵⁹Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 582-583.
- ⁶⁰Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 570.
- ⁶¹Record, 29 November 1962.
- ⁶²Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 570.
- ⁶³Howard B. Furer, ed., Lyndon B. Johnson 1908- : Chronology- Documents- Bibliographic Aids (New York: Oceana Press Inc., 1971), 29.
- ⁶⁴Statesman, 28 August 1963.
- ⁶⁵Furer, Chronology, 32.
- ⁶⁶Houston Chronical, 9 February 1964, Special supplement, "Profile of a president," 34.
- ⁶⁷Statesman, 26 September 1963.
- ⁶⁸San Antonio Express, 27 November 1963.
- ⁶⁹Ibid.
- ⁷⁰Ibid.

- ⁷¹Ibid., 28 November 1963.
- ⁷²Ibid., 30 November 1963.
- ⁷³San Antonio Express-News, 30 November 1963.
- ⁷⁴Statesman, 15 December 1963.
- ⁷⁵Ibid.
- ⁷⁶Ibid., 17 December 1963.
- ⁷⁷Ibid., 20 December 1963.
- ⁷⁸National Observer, 6 January 1964.
- ⁷⁹Statesman, 22 January 1964.
- ⁸⁰Ibid.
- ⁸¹Ibid., 7 May 1964.
- ⁸²Ibid., 9 May 1964.
- ⁸³Ibid., 11 May 1964.
- ⁸⁴Steinberg, Johnson's Boy, 764-766.
- ⁸⁵Ibid., 4 October 1964.
- ⁸⁶Furer, Chronology, 39.
- ⁸⁷Jules Feiffer, LBJ Lampooned: Cartoon Criticism of Lyndon B. Johnson (New York: Cobble Hill Press, 1968), 11.
- ⁸⁸Houston Post, 23 November 1969.
- ⁸⁹Furer, Chronology, 1-39.

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