

JAMES ROE KETCHUM

White House Curator, 1963–1970

Senate Curator, 1970–1995

Oral History Interviews

November 13, 2004, to September 30, 2007

Senate Historical Office

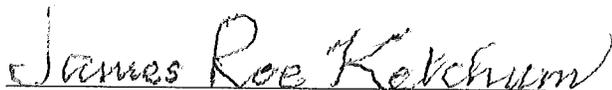
Washington, D.C.

**AGREEMENT AND RELEASE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
U.S. SENATE HISTORICAL OFFICE**

I, James Ketchum, wish to participate in the Oral History Project and understand that the recordings and transcripts of my interviews are and will remain the property of the Senate Historical Office. Access to the completed interviews will be governed by the policies of the Senate Historical Office. Portions of my interviews will be closed until 2027, unless I provide written permission authorizing earlier access to the transcripts and recordings. At any time before the end of the terms of restricted access, I may choose, in consultation with the Senate Historical Office, to make public those restricted portions of my interviews.

In entering into this agreement, I understand that my oral history—with the exception of the closed portions noted above—will be made publicly available to researchers and may be quoted from, published, or broadcast in any medium (consisting of all forms of print or electronic media, including the Internet or other emerging, future technologies that may be developed) that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate. I also approve the deposit of the recordings and transcripts at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Senate Library, and any other institution that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate.

In consideration for my inclusion in this project, I hereby convey permanently to the Senate Historical Office all legal title and interest in the intellectual and literary property rights, including all copyright interests, to the recordings and transcripts of my interviews for their eventual placement in the public domain. In return, the Senate Historical Office grants to me a nonexclusive license to use my interviews during my lifetime.


James Ketchum

Dated: November 16, 2016

I, Betty K. Koed, accept the interview of James Ketchum for inclusion into the Oral History Project of the U.S. Senate Historical Office.


Betty K. Koed, U.S. Senate Historian

Dated: 11/22/2016



Table of Contents

Preface

Interview #1: From Clyde to Washington.....	1
Interview #2: The Kennedy White House.....	47
Interview #3: The Johnson White House.	103
Interview #4: The Nixon White House.	139
Interview #5: Senate Curator.	179
Interview #6: Art in the Capitol.	209
Interview #7: The Senate and Food.	245
Interview #8: A Necessary Celebration.	283
Index.	333

Preface

As the only individual to serve as curator within the nation's two most prominent political landmarks, the White House and the United States Capitol, James Roe Ketchum played a significant role in the conservation, preservation, and expansion of both buildings' historical furnishings and fine arts.

Born in Rochester on March 15, 1939, the son of a William Jennings Bryan Democratic mother and a William McKinley Republican father, he was raised in Clyde, New York. After graduation from Colgate University in 1960, and while pursuing graduate studies at Georgetown University, he joined the National Park Service and was stationed at the Custis-Lee Mansion in Arlington Cemetery. When Mamie Eisenhower needed assistance with some furnishings at the White House, the National Park Service lent Jim Ketchum. He returned the following year when Jacqueline Kennedy launched her notable effort to restore and redecorate the executive mansion. Ketchum advanced from registrar to curator until the administration ended abruptly and tragically with President John F. Kennedy's assassination in November 1963.

Quickly adjusting to the new administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, Ketchum worked closely with Lady Bird Johnson, together continuing and expanding the program for White House restoration and expansion of its art collection. He also became swept up into many Johnson family activities, from social entertainments to weddings. Adjustment to Richard Nixon's administration proved more difficult and less satisfactory, and in 1970 Ketchum left the White House for the Capitol.

Throughout the 1960s, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield had expressed mounting concern over the considerable loss of historical furnishings and deterioration of the artwork in the Capitol. In 1968 Mansfield sponsored a resolution creating the Senate Commission on Art and Antiquities and began a search for a Senate curator. Senator Mansfield was delighted to hire Jim Ketchum, whom he called "the greatest curator in the country." Ketchum worked out of a small office located among the book stacks of the Senate Library, in the attic of the Capitol. Like the White House, he found that the Capitol was not a museum but a working building that annually attracted millions of visitors. The artwork that enhanced the building desperately needed care and conservation. Paintings,

sculpture, and furnishings needed to be catalogued, and new pieces acquired. Historic rooms were sorely in need of restoration. Upcoming centennials and bicentennials would require appropriate celebrations. Changing exhibits would help members, staff, and visitors better appreciate the historical role of the Senate. He tackled and accomplished all of these tasks in his 25 years as Senate curator.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole paid tribute to the curator on his retirement by noting that “Jim was the driving force behind the restoration of the old Senate and old Supreme Court Chambers, the President’s Room, and countless other important treasures. Paintings and documents have been recovered and preserved due to Jim’s tireless efforts. He has helped us all better understand this institution and the Capitol through exhibitions, lectures, publications, and other educational programs.” Senator Dole then added that “One cannot mention Jim without remembering his efforts on behalf of the State of the Union dinners. I am just one of many Senators who has enjoyed one of Jim’s trademark chicken pies.”

In these many endeavors, Jim Ketchum always applied wit and style. His irrepressible sense of humor was reflected in his listing of his dog Chester Arthur as one of his children in his *Who’s Who* entry. From time to time, he also contributed humorous remarks for various presidential and congressional addresses to the National Press Club and the Gridiron Club. A gourmet and epicurean, his enjoyment of cooking and socializing made every Senate celebration, small and large, special and memorable. In his oral histories he recalls personal anecdotes of the first families and senators with whom he served, the acquisition of art and pacification of donors, construction projects he supervised, historical items he helped to preserve, exhibits he designed, and receptions he catered—including one that culminated in a chafing dish being accidentally left behind on the Capitol steps and detonated by the bomb squad.

Upon his retirement in 1995, the Senate designated James Roe Ketchum as curator emeritus. He and his wife Barbara moved to an 18th-century farmhouse outside of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. These interviews were conducted there, amid an eclectic and exuberant collection of paintings, engravings, folk art, political memorabilia, books, cats, and dogs.

About the Interviewer: Donald A. Ritchie was a Senate historian from 1976 to 2015. A graduate of the City College of New York, he received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Maryland. His books include *James M. Landis: Dean of the Regulators* (Harvard University Press, 1980), *Press Gallery: Congress and the Washington Correspondents* (Harvard University Press, 1991), *The Oxford Guide to the United States Government* (Oxford University Press, 2001), *Reporting from Washington: The History of the Washington Press Corps* (Oxford University Press, 2005), *Electing FDR: The New Deal Campaign of 1932* (University Press of Kansas, 2007), and *The U.S. Congress: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010). He served as president of the Oral History Association and of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR), and received OHMAR's Forrest C. Pogue Award for distinguished contributions to the field of oral history.

FROM CLYDE TO WASHINGTON

Interview #1

Saturday, November 13, 2004

DONALD RITCHIE: Since we're in the middle of an apple orchard, the metaphor that came to mind was that the apple rarely falls far from the tree, so I'd like to ask you about your family and where you came from.

JAMES KETCHUM: Well, I came from western New York State. I came from a mother [Mary Louise Frantz Ketchum] who was a William Jennings Bryan Nebraska Democrat, born and raised in Nebraska, and a father [George Roe Ketchum] who had lived in a little town that the Ketchum family had resided in since the end of the Revolutionary War, in Wayne County, an Erie Canal town, halfway distant between Rochester and Syracuse. When DeWitt Clinton came through to open up the Erie Canal, the town was about 2,500, and Clyde, New York, is a little less than that today. In recent decades, we have not had the great events like the Lincoln train stopping there on the way to Baltimore, when he was heading east for his inauguration in the winter of 1861. But I remember when I was a youngster, and the employer of note was the local General Electric plant, each year this former Hollywood actor would come through to address and pass out pins and awards to the people working on the germanian diode line at the General Electric factory. Of course it was one Ronald Wilson Reagan. We didn't know that he had other plans at that stage. We thought he'd continue with *GE Theater* and do a few other things.

Anyway, it was the idyllic childhood. As I've told Barbara and our kids, I don't think anybody had a happier childhood than I did, because in a small town everybody knew everybody else's business. My family—Dad's family—had lived there forever. They were mostly farming until early in the 20th century when they moved into town, and Dad's father was the oldest of five sons. His father's mother had been killed when her foot got caught in the switch track when she was on her way to the Presbyterian Church Sunday services. Her name was Sarah Graham, and Sarah Graham married Albert Ketchum, so we have Sarah Graham Ketchum (our daughter) in our family as well. My grandfather helped to raise his four brothers. He left school in the fifth grade. He married when he was 22 my grandmother, who was one of these people who had gone off to finishing school and done all kinds of things. They were two very opposite folks, but both people who had roots in this town. They had two sons, one who died soon after his birth

and the other my father. Dad spent four years in high school in Clyde and then had to go off to boarding school for four years before he would be through sowing wild oats, and where he would be ready for college. In 1934, he married my mother, who was three years younger but had already finished the University of Nebraska. We always laughed because they celebrated not only their wedding anniversary but they celebrated the 5th of August 1929, it was the day they met. We always would make them tell the story of their first meeting again, and again, and again.

Mother was 16 and she had driven with her sister and brother, riding in a rumble seat of a Model A Ford coming from Nebraska to spend some time on an island on Lake Ontario, where her aunt had a cottage. Two doors down was my Dad's family's cottage. Pop had a date about three days after he met my mother with Florence Barnes, a young woman from Clyde, New York. There were no phones on the island in those days. Florence sent a youngster in the neighborhood over with a message about two hours before the date saying that she was going to have to cancel. He didn't quite realize that she was canceling in favor of somebody else. Anyway, he went over and asked my mother if she would go out, and indeed out they went, and they had a great time. They continued dating, and after Mother went back to Nebraska he started writing her. He found out, about two weeks after that first date, that the reason that Florence Barnes dumped him was because a Princeton freshman from Indiana, Pennsylvania, was visiting the island, and she preferred to go out with a Princeton freshman than somebody who was still in boarding school. Well, the Princeton freshman turned out to have the name of Jimmy Stewart. So we always went to every Jimmy Stewart movie and thanked him, as personally as we could, for getting Mother and Dad together. That was the beginning of the tale.

When Dad graduated from Colgate he went to Rochester. He and Mother were married the end of his junior year, and he was the only married student on the entire campus, with a student body of 1,000 men. He was the president of his fraternity house, so Mother was known as Brother Mrs. Ketchum. They went to Rochester, he was without a job, and he just took every single opportunity to fill out applications. But nothing happened until Christmastime of 1935 when he got a temporary job as a floorwalker in a major department store in Rochester, McCurdy and Company. After Christmas he was asked to fill a permanent position in the rug department. By the following October, Mother and Dad welcomed their first child, my sister, Joan. Two and a half years later, on the Ides of March, 1939, I would make my debut. By the time 1943 rolled around he had

risen the ranks to a vice president of the store and was very happy, except that his father, who had been in the family coal, feed, and farm supply business in Clyde, was ill. Dad had to decide whether or not to go back to Clyde and continue the family business that had been going strong since about 1905, or to help liquidate it. He decided to take his wife and then three children and move back into the town and into the house where he was born, a house that had been in the family for about five generations. My grandmother, since my grandfather was hospitalized in Rochester, simply traded houses with my parents.

Four more Ketchums arrived in the course of the next few years in Clyde. It was a Tom Sawyer childhood. It was Huckleberry Finn. We lived in the center of town but they had never sold off any of the land around the house so we still had the barns and the stables. Pop immediately started putting horses down in the stables, and we all had to learn to ride. I also wanted to raise goats, so there was room down there for me to have my goats. I just can't say enough about what America was like in the '40s and '50s for me. There was just not a care in the world. A lot of products that we'd forgotten about or hadn't even developed, like ballpoint pens, were suddenly making their appearance. I remember balloons—I didn't know what a balloon was and they were now back in full production in 1947 and '48.

The barn was the perfect site to set up a stage and to have all kinds of neighborhood theatricals. My sisters and brothers and all the neighborhood kids would build a clubhouse at one end of the stables, on and on and on it went. I've always felt that our own kids have been deprived terribly because they could not have exactly the same childhood.

One of my challenges was that it was decided I would start school a year early. They kind of pushed me ahead so that I was 16 for most of my senior year of high school. It meant that when you went to your junior prom you had to have your father or your mother drive you, and there were things like this that I probably look back upon shaking my head, but that all seemed to even out with college.

By the time I was in high school, I was always warming the bench, second-string basketball, and yet I found that with publications and all kinds of clubs you could really make a difference, at least in your own self-esteem, and that was certainly important for this character. Editing the school paper, photography editor of the yearbook, and all the

other things that were going on at that point kept me very busy—I never missed a day of high school, but boy I sure did miss a lot of classes in high school. But the teachers were very kind. They seemed to give you as much leeway as you needed. I had no trouble really with SATs and when it was time to go to college, I wanted desperately to go to Holy Cross. I was accepted, but with no scholarship help. In the meantime, the New York State Regents scholarships in those days did pay fairly well, and most schools would match them. I'd gotten a full scholarship at Syracuse, but Colgate, which had been my Dad's alma mater, and Syracuse had been poles apart in size, although they continued to be one of the oldest football rivalries in the East. I didn't really want to go to my father's school, but after visiting it and finding out that not only could I use my New York State scholarship there but they would also match my state scholarship and give me a job, I realized that I could pretty much pay my own ticket all the way through. So Colgate it was.

For a kid who graduated with a senior class of 49, going to a college which had a freshman class of about 250, it was perfect. It really was. That was 1956 to 1960. I had a job as a short-order cook at a local campus grill, and also in our fraternity house I was steward for three years, running the kitchen there. When you grow up in a large family, my mother had my brothers and me kneading bread by the time we were probably four or five years old. The kitchen in our ancient, venerable house in Clyde, New York, was kind of the center of all that goes on. So we all knew how to get around the stove, and that got me through college, and it brought me to Washington.

RITCHIE: Before we go to Washington, could I just ask about your parents? You said that your mother was a William Jennings Bryan Democrat. Wasn't your father involved in Republican politics?

KETCHUM: Oh, yes, he was Republican county chairman. He was Republican mayor. He was county commissioner. It was very interesting. Dad was an elder in the Presbyterian Church and Mother was the president of the New York State Council of Catholic Women. Pop used to hear our catechism, and we always thought: Well, someday he's going to come across. Father never, never moved across the line, but he was really awfully good. He honored the promise that he had made when Mother and Dad were married in 1934 that the kids would be raised in the Church. Mother cooked for more Presbyterian Church suppers than she did for Catholic Daughters of America or Holy Name Society suppers. But it was quite wonderful because at the table you had this

dichotomy of religious backgrounds. You had the political differences, and you had an ecumenical spirit in both politics and religion long before what was happening in the early '60s.

It was great to hear the conversation generated by my parents and my six brothers and sisters. Everybody talked at the same time. There were never fewer than 10 people at dinner each night, and quite often there were upwards of 14 because all of our friends wanted to have dinner at the Ketchum's. We always said, "Lose your breath, lose your place." People just talked non-stop. There were no bed and breakfast places or anything like that in Clyde, so if Dad had a businessman who was coming through to discuss things with him, he would bring him home and he would stay at our house. I remember once, this man arrived on scene, and unknown to us he had a reel-to-reel tape recorder. He put it under the dining room table and he said after dinner, "Now would you like to hear yourselves?" He played it back, and it was just one layer of conversation on another layer, on another layer. It was the funniest darn thing in the world.

I think we learned early on that if Mother and Dad could make such a fantastic go of it, the rest of us would have to, we had no other choice because they did indeed have such divergent views. But they both knew how to bend in each other's direction. Dad was an only child, and we always used to laugh about the neighbors who said, "We saw a duck running around your house, it kept running around in circles." We said, "That's no duck, that's just the stork but he's worn his legs down to the ground." But Lord, he was amazing. He did all the things that I suppose he wanted to do in life, no two ways about it. For somebody who had a heart murmur and an enlarged heart, and was a grand mal epileptic, he lived to 91. It was quite a tribute to his own persistence and certainly to medical science, how it worked. And Mother would have been 91 on her next birthday before she died. As they both said, they would rather wear out than rust out. They never did, they were still going strong almost to the end. In their mid-80s, one of my brothers was doing post-doctoral work in New Zealand, and they attached the seat of their pants to the seat of a Qantas jet and flew down—my God they were in the air forever, I can't remember but it was the longest trip in the world. I've been to China and I know that was not as long a trip as Mom and Dad's.

I've been back home in Clyde a couple of times in recent years for Mother and Dad's funerals, and it was heartening to see the town's people turn out and to hear about the effect that my parents had on so many lives, things that we didn't even know about as

kids that they were doing for people. They just loved to play the mystery person behind the door who got somebody the job that they wanted or got somebody the extra money that they needed for school. There were just a lot of things, and these all come out at times like this. The nice part about it is that we've been recently gathering videos that we've had of Mother and Dad late in years, and the local historical society—when Pop finally closed down his business he turned all of the buildings over to them and they formed a wonderful site for the local historical society and their administration offices and exhibits—anyway, they had done several video oral histories with Pop. We had done some work with Mother at one point. And now these things are being transferred onto DVD and easily circulated among the kids.

We're so mobile as a society. I don't know what the average is today, but about 15 years ago Americans moved on average every seven years. To have a family who had roots on Dad's side in a community for now well over 200 years, and to have the kind of world that that represented, it just doesn't exist that way anymore. It really doesn't. And to try to explain some of this, sometimes people just kind of look at you and wonder what you're really talking about. But it was great to have been a part of it, and it's quite wonderful to think back upon it as well.

I'm sure there were moments—I was often in the doghouse at school I remember, especially when I was rather young. I had a teacher who always changed my seat because apparently I talked a fair amount. Mother was in Nebraska visiting her family and I was in second grade, and Sister Finbar was my teacher, a nun who was a member of the Mercy Order. She had been born in Ireland and came to this country when she was 19. I think she believed in the Irish school of discipline. On this particular day, Sister Finbar moved my seat, and when she came back about 20 minutes later I had Lucille Lozipone (who sat in front of me in the new seating plan), I had her bobby pin and I was going through these letters that were carved on the top of the desk. These were initials of people who had sat there. This was obviously a forerunner of what I would observe in the Senate Chamber. She grabbed me by the shoulder and took me to the principal's office. She announced that I would be going back to kindergarten for two weeks, this was my punishment for doing this. I said, "Well, Sister, those initials were there. I didn't do them, I was just tracing through them." It did not make any difference.

I went home that night and told my father. He would never cross one of the nuns. When he was a kid the only people in town who could teach piano, painting, and so forth

were the nuns, so he had taken all these classes with them. He had great regard for them, and when he was mayor the first thing he would do each winter is flood their parking lot so they would have an ice-skating rink. But I was just desperate, I really was, because this nun had never, never been happy about me. She always wanted to put me back a grade because she said I was too young, but my marks were always okay. The next day, unknown to me, the mothers of my buddies in second grade marched on the convent and said that they would remove their sons from the school until I was put back in second grade. So I only lasted in kindergarten one day. Ultimately my mother came home. She was rather upset about the whole thing. I never, ever, ever quite got over it.

If you fast-forward to the White House in 1962 or '63, I was in the curator's office in the center of the White House, down on the ground floor, and the phone rang. It was one of the guards at the northwest gate saying that there were two women out there. "They're nuns," he said, "and one of them wants to speak to you." I said, oh, fine. I got on the phone and a voice said, "Jimmy?" I said yes. I thought, boy, this is somebody from my past. "Jimmy Ketchum? This is Sister Mary Finbar." "Oh, Sister Finbar, how are you?" "I'm just fine, thank you. Sister Conception and I are here in Washington and we'd love to see the White House and we wondered if it was possible for you to show us around." I kind of hesitated and I finally said, "Sister, I don't think you really want to see me, and I know I really am not very comfortable seeing you. It's a long time since we had our differences, but I just still don't feel very happy about what happened, and I think I'd better say goodbye now." So I hung up, waited about three minutes, and I called back and said "What happened?" The guard said, "Well, she turned to the other woman and said, 'He doesn't want to see us.' They're walking down the street. Do you want see if I can find somebody to go down and get them?" I said, "No, no, no, no, not at all." I went home and I told Barbara that night that "a great load has been lifted." I really do think that somehow it took me a long, long time to get over that whole nonsense.

Later on, when I found out about what Irish education was all about in the school systems of Ireland up through the 1960s and '70s, I realized that Sister Finbar was not the last snake to be driven from Ireland, but somebody who probably was the victim of the system. She did strange things. She had a bottle on her desk with a green liquid in it, and she would tell you if you told her a lie she would put that on your nose and it would turn your entire face green. She also said—she was the nun who prepared us for our First Communion—that if you did not tell absolutely everything in your First Confession, the day before your First Communion, that when the host touched your tongue your face

would turn black. I don't know why it was always the face. My Mother to her dying day said to me, "When you were returning to your pew after making your First Communion you were literally cross-eyed all the way back, obviously trying to see what color your nose was." I guess that probably was true.

But somehow I always was able to find some trouble to get into in school. I was very good at home, but by about the time I got to be in fourth or fifth grade things evened out and I exercised more self-control. No more changing of seats. But enough of that.

RITCHIE: Your dad was the county chairman for the Republican Party. Were there a lot of politicians around when you were growing up?

KETCHUM: There were. As I have probably mentioned, [Kenneth] Keating, for example, was very much somebody who had depended upon Pop both in terms of campaign management and also in keeping all kinds of things going, which was typical of Republican chairmen. There were always requests that got sent to Washington, and favors that are sought. It was very funny because one of the first people that I met when I came to Washington to go to law school was a young former Milwaukee school teacher named Nancy Hanschman [later known as the CBS and NBC correspondent Nancy Dickerson], who at that point had quite an interesting friendship with Senator Keating. After visiting Senator Keating over an evening she would then leave early in the morning and go off to Trinity Church to go to Mass every morning. I happen to be blessed by a wife who swims every morning and then goes to daily Mass, and I asked her a couple of times whether there was a politician in Gettysburg that I should know something about. (laughs)

But anyway, yes, it was upstate New York politics. Irving Ives was in the Senate, and Herbert Lehman, of course, but we were in a household that didn't really mention Lehman's name as much as some of the others. It was rather unfortunate because obviously New York had a wealth of Democratic senators in the 20th century, and has continued to. I'm not sure, let's see, Keating lasted until Bobby Kennedy's time. Ives, I think [Jacob] Javits succeeded him, if I'm not mistaken.

RITCHIE: Right.

KETCHUM: Is that what memory tells you? There was one person that Pop was quite close to and who would come to the house all the time. My job used to be—because

Dad was always late for everything, and he'd be upstairs dressing—but John Taber, who was the congressman from our district at that stage, he was really quite a power in the Republican Party and in the House of Representatives. By the time I remember him he was probably in his mid-70s. He served probably into his 80s. But I would always have to go and get the newspaper and make sure that he was sitting in the front parlor, and he was happy until Pop came down. I was maybe nine or ten years old, so I would sit there and try to ask him a question or two. He was not exactly somebody who wanted to get down on the floor and play with you, but it was fun even so and I learned a little bit.

In 1952 my candidate was Robert A. Taft. I wrote in ballpoint pen on one of my brother's ears, "I'm daft about Taft." Well, Pop was an Eisenhower supporter and that was not going to go over very big. My Nebraska grandmother was visiting us for the summer (Grandma would never come for a week, she would come for three months), and she would sing the praises of Al Smith and all kinds of ghosts of the Democratic Party past. It was at the time when Joe McCarthy was very much in his element, although soon to start going downhill. My grandmother would lecture every day on the evils of Joe McCarthy. Pop, who was very patient with my Grandmother Frantz, but you could see that his face was getting a little bit redder as he was holding his tongue. Television was very new to our family and that was the first convention that I remember watching. I remember in '48 both conventions were in Philadelphia, and I was in Nebraska that summer, in a very strong Democratic household, so we got to listen to both of them. But there was not much interest in the Democratic convention of '52 when Adlai Stevenson was nominated. And let's see, was it John Sparkman who ran?

RITCHIE: Yes, it was Stevenson and Sparkman that year.

KETCHUM: And then of course in '56 I was able to control my own television time a little bit more and watched the [John] Kennedy-[Estes] Kefauver run-down as the vice presidential nomination was thrown out into the convention by Stevenson. But the town was mostly Republican. It was a town that was built originally around a lot of the laborers who came through to work on the Erie Canal, and then later had a revival when the west shore of the New York Central Railroad was constructed by Italians who came from Sicily and other parts of southern Italy. When I was kid, I'd say about 70 to 80 percent of the town was first, second, and then third generation "Old Country" Italy. Everybody was making wine. If you weren't, you had a neighbor who was. Dates were cheap, and all the things that one was supposed to wait until they were 18 to do we were

probably doing it at 16.

But it was, as I said, a family with siblings who were unbelievably supportive, even though we tried to listen in on each other's telephone calls as much as we could—it was long before the day of anything but one extension. We had this 20-room house, and when we moved into it, it had been in my grandmother's family for several generations, there was just one bathroom. One full bath and a half bath off of my great-grandfather's bedroom down on the first floor. Somehow we made it work. Don't ask me how, but I think a lot of us probably raced down to the barn from time to time and took it from there.

RITCHIE: Were they interested in art and antiques the way you are?

KETCHUM: Dad went to every auction that you could possibly think of. He always came home with a Boston rocker that needed to be refinished, restored, repaired in 15 ways. I remember many years later going to the attic of our barn and there were at least 20 Boston rockers that he had never, ever gotten to. Yes, the house was filled with furnishings that this was Great Aunt Somebody's or Uncle So-and-So's. You had these objects that all bore some personal association with a past generation.

My childhood was filled with museums, auctions, theater, children's theater. George Eastman left a lot of money in a lot of different pockets in Rochester, New York. One of them, which was part of the Eastman Theater, was a children's theater program. I can remember that we moved when I was just four to Clyde. My mother at least four times during the September through June season would take my sister Joan and myself and later younger brothers and sisters to the Eastman Theater.

When we still lived in Rochester, Dad, because of his work with McCurdy's, because he was a principal buyer of women's ready-to-wear before he moved up into administration, would spend one week about every month and a half to two months in New York City. He was on buying trips. He would go down with a budget and have X number of thousands of dollars that he would allocate accordingly. He was introducing juniors, for example, which was an unheard-of line of size in clothing. But always when he was down there he would take in three or four shows. Often Mother would go down and join him for a couple of days. Being in Rochester and on the New York Central it was a very easy trip to go down to Grand Central Station and into the hotel from there. Mother often subscribed to concert series. Jarmila Novotna, and Lawrence Tibbett, and all

members of the Metropolitan who would tour the country. Then later in the '50s, Hollywood was in the throes of television, and the studio system was breaking down, and you had actors like Charles Laughton and Tyrone Power and Agnes Morehead, who came together to do *Don Juan in Hell* and various other productions that would travel through all the cities—Rochester and Syracuse never in those days were more than a half million at most. But if the opportunity presented itself, Mother or Dad, or both, would take us. Even though we lived 40 miles in either direction from Rochester or Syracuse, we did get a fair amount of what others didn't.

The thing I remember most of all is my parents subscribed to every magazine known. I mean every magazine. Before there was *U.S. News and World Report*, there was *U.S. News* and *World Report* separately. There was *Pathfinder*. There was *Collier's*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Women's Home Companion*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *The Farm Journal*, *The Catholic Digest*, *Presbyterian Life*, *Life* magazine, *Time* magazine, *Newsweek*, on and on and on. I cannot imagine how many there were. I remember racing home from school and delaying my paper route (which I had for years and years and years) because it was the day that *Life* magazine was delivered and I wanted to be there to read it. *Life* was my favorite. When I got to the Senate years later and discovered that the Senate Library was gathering all of their *Life* magazines on microfiche and they were disposing of all the hard copies, I was crushed afterward because I wish I had had enough sense to hang onto them. When they still had them, I would take a volume off the shelf every lunch hour and go back and relive my youth. I liked the photography and certainly the stories.

While my grandparents subscribed to *National Geographic*, we never did. So when I'd go to Nebraska to visit my grandparents I'd go up to the attic where they had saved every issue going back to Alexander Graham Bell, and I would read those. But any other magazine you could think of, we subscribed to. *Reader's Digest*, I hope I mentioned, and *Catholic Digest*. You have to believe it was the most reading family. Of course, everybody seemed to subscribe to the *Reader's Digest* condensed books, the Book of the Month Club, the Literary Guild. The books just came in and I don't remember them going out. Yet I'm sure that in latter years Mother and Dad disposed of all of them.

On top of that I decided that I would become a newspaper publisher. I had a gelatin process with which I could do one sheet and distribute 50 copies to the neighborhood at a penny a copy. From that I went up to a new process—new to me, it

was not new to anybody else—but from Montgomery Ward in Albany I got a hand-inked mimeograph machine for \$35, which took a lot of my savings from my paper route money. Then I could get upwards of 12 pages, which I could only put out monthly, but it was all done in an ancient LC Smith typewriter up in my bedroom, where I had one of these gothic radios that had been my Dad's in boarding school. I had to have a wire going out the window and so forth, and I would be listening to the evening news and whatever else was on, typing away. It was just all neighborhood news, this kind of gossip that was reported, some was true and others I suppose somebody was stretching something a bit. But again it was just all part of what one was doing. Marionettes, I loved to make marionettes and have these puppet shows in our basement in which my sisters and brothers would get dressed up. One brother would get dressed up as Clarabell the Clown, and I had a Howdy Doody marionette, and we had some of the other characters from that early show. I was surprised to read the other day that Dominic Dunne was the first studio manager for that show on NBC in the early '50s.

I'm not even sure how we got going down this slide. Where did we start all this out, Donald?

RITCHIE: About their interest in art and antiques.

KETCHUM: Oh, yes indeed. I think the thing is we were interested in everything. I had a younger sister—and this was not a very good thing—we would sell these objects we would make at home at school and tell the nuns that we were giving the money to the missions. Then we gave very little money to the missions. We'd make plaster of Paris, take my mother's teaspoons, put a little decal inside and fill it with plaster of Paris, and put a safety pin in before the plaster of Paris would set. We couldn't get the plaster of Paris out of the spoon, so we'd knock it on the back, the bowl of the spoon, leaving dents. Finally it would come out and we'd put a little shellac on it and we would sell that as a pin in school. We were also always having bake sales at school. The nuns during lunch hour would allow us to bring all these baked goods in as long as the money was going to the missions. Kate would tell her teacher that I was taking care of it in my grade and I would tell my teacher that Kate was doing it, and nobody compared notes on this whole thing to see what was happening.

We just were encouraged. We were in Scouts. We had a softball game every night of the week in one of our side yards, but it was never the organized play that I see today. I

warned our kids, “Please don’t program your kids to a point that they don’t have any free time.” Because if I wanted to take a fishing pole and go down to the Clyde River and catch catfish—well, they were Bullheads, but they were related to catfish. If I wanted to come home with a string of Bullheads, and have my Irish Setter sitting patiently by, I could do it. This was fishing with a long bamboo pole. And I did it. I could take off by myself. I always had some crazy friends who wanted to come along on some of these things, but never (except for maybe when the Scout meetings were being held or when we had practice for one of the sports teams) was there any kind of a sense other than you were in control. In other words, we decided we were going to have a carnival in the barn on Saturday, we organized our time accordingly and did all that. That was the magic. You could do anything. You believed in yourself.

We had a neighbor, a woman born in Germany who came to this country as a child. Her name was Rosa Ernst. She married a man named Frank Baker, who was a conductor on the trolley line that ran from Rochester to Syracuse. They never had any children and Rose really kind of adopted us. She had taken care of Dad when he was a youngster. As we were growing up across the street from her, she would have us come over on Sunday evenings, one at a time. We would have a simple supper with her and she would listen to one of these religious broadcasts. She would always be knitting. I was about seven or eight years old and I said, “Gee, I’d like to learn.” She said fine and she got me some large needles and some red yarn and I started knitting. Knit one, purl one. There was nothing fancy about it but I ended up with a length of red material which was probably about 40 inches long or thereabouts. I was really proud of it. She finished it off and I took it home. It was wintertime and I had a new red scarf. I showed it to my mother and showed it to my dad. Dad was not pleased at all. He did not think this was appropriate. Anyway, I wore it and he kind of muttered about it.

My grandmother (my grandfather by then had had a stroke and they were in Rochester) but Grandma still came down to Clyde every week. She had been visiting at the time when Dad was shaking his head thinking that knitting was not an appropriate way for me to spend my time. She said nothing about it, except that was a very nice scarf. She was a great knitter herself, did beautiful clothing for all of us. A week later, when she was down again—every week she’d come on Monday night and stay through until Wednesday afternoon—we were having dinner on Tuesday evening, and at the end of dinner, as we were all sitting in the dining room, 10, 11, 12 of us, she said, “George, I have a gift for you.” Dad said, “Oh, Mother, what is it?” She said, “It’s wrapped up. I’m

sending it around.” We were all still at the table. It was all done in tissue paper. Dad starts taking the package apart and out falls a length of red knitted fabric, very similar to what I had been showing a few days before, and on it was a note pinned “George’s Knitting, Age 8.” It was what my father had made, not necessarily with Rose Baker, but he had made it. So I realized at that point that I could do anything, and probably somebody else had done it before whether they wanted to admit it or not. Dad laughed forever on that one, because my grandmother had really taken him down a peg.

In terms of experiences that one would draw on afterwards, I loved to visit with everybody in town and having a paper route. I started with 20 customers and ended up with 100 by the time I was through several years later. The main reason I hung on to the paper route during high school—my brothers had to do it for me many times—was because Gannett, Frank Gannett and the Gannett family, gave to those paperboys who stayed through high school an opportunity to win a scholarship. I did not win one. I was a runner up but it didn’t mean any money. But that’s the reason I hung onto it. On the other hand, there was something called the Empire State Press Association, which all of the New York State high school editors belonged to. Each year we would gather at Syracuse University for four days and they gave a test. There were probably 1,200 or 1,300 kids who took a test on current events. I didn’t come in first, but I came in second. A woman named Inez Robb, who was a columnist for one of the syndicates, I remember standing up and she was giving the awards at the Hotel Syracuse, at this enormous ballroom banquet. They called the name of the winner, and then they called the first runner up, and I had to get up and go up to get the award, which was a four-year scholarship. Well, you couldn’t live with me for days after that. I thought this was it. But you had to go to Syracuse University, and that was something that I knew would give Pop apoplexy if I ever decided to go in that direction. Then I married a girl whose father went to Syracuse, so it all evened out.

The only reason that you get to that situation, I am convinced of it, is because you are in a family and in a community in which the sky was the limit. All of the reading allowed one to answer all the questions that you possibly could want to answer on one of those quizzes. It was a three-hour test that was given in Hendricks’ Chapel, which was a fairly large facility at Syracuse. It mostly dealt with things that had happened just in the past 12 months. It was not anything that many people would have to stretch too far if you just looked at a newspaper on a daily basis. But that gets back to what I said originally, none of our kids or grandchildren will ever have, I think, as much fun growing up as I

did.

RITCHIE: You went to Colgate, can you tell me a little bit about it? Was Colgate a college then or a university?

KETCHUM: Colgate technically is still a college. Colgate was originally Madison College when it was founded in 1819, and then in the 1870s and '80s, James Colgate, of the Colgate family that we think of as far as “smile, your dentures are showing,” gave a lot of money. He brought in Frederick Law Olmstead and he did all kinds of things for the campus. It was originally a Baptist college, and it was, as so many other schools at that time and even earlier, very much tied to a particular religious denomination. It was an all-male school, but early on it had what was known as a Female Seminary, a Fem Sem. You would have some interaction with some of the women students who might show up. And the faculty for Colgate, never I think until well after World War II was there a woman faculty member. Colgate was still all-male when I went. It was 1,000, which was pretty much what it had been when my Dad, who had graduated in 1935, had been. It was a good strong liberal arts college. It had a divinity school up until 1929, and that broke off and went to Rochester, where today it's still known as the Rochester-Colgate Divinity School. It was that separate school that allowed Colgate to come in under the university nomenclature and not the college, as it technically became afterwards, because they just continued to use the name that they had been entitled to before 1929. You need at least two different graduate programs to qualify in New York State for a university, and Colgate just gives a master's in education, that's the extent of it. I am thinking that they're probably going to branch out a bit from that. It's been the custom in recent days and years, as you know, that many of these colleges have now found ways to call themselves universities, and I'm sure they'll do it as well.

It's a very proud school. Pop had classmates like—well, a couple of years before him was Adam Clayton Powell, which was kind of interesting because when Barbara and I moved to Capitol Hill, Powell was living across the street in an alley dwelling and had Miss Bimini as his permanent houseguest there. When Dad was at school, Powell claimed to be an Indian prince. Anybody who would follow him would find he was going back and forth between Hamilton and Harlem every other weekend. I don't know how he got away with this, but that was the memory of Pop and his classmates. Bill Rodgers, William Rodgers, who was later attorney general for Ike and then, of course, secretary of state for Nixon, was there. Charles Evans Hughes had gone to Colgate. Somebody else in

Dad's time was Charles Addams, the great cartoonist with the *New Yorker*, so it was a small school but lots of fascinating alumni. A lot of kids from New Jersey, and New York, and Long Island. I would say that's where the biggest draw was from, and then maybe western New York State would be second, and then it went on from there.

There were still professors who had known Mom and Dad. Mother was a great commodity because they needed women in the theatricals, and there were very few young women on campus. They were all wives of professors who were from their 40s to their 80s. She talks about *Death Takes a Holiday*, which was one of Maxwell Anderson's productions. They would take it out of town to Norwich, home of Norwich Pharmaceuticals, for example, and they would take these shows around. Then finally they would bring it into Hamilton, New York, for the big staging of the production. I remember running across some of Mother's playbills of the various shows she was in, from the year that she lived there. Mom and Dad had an apartment because Dad was not going to live in the fraternity house and take mother with him. I'm sure she wouldn't have been allowed, although she did preside over dinner sometimes with him. She said she never went back to their apartment, which was a block from the fraternity house, but what there were not four people sitting around the card table, my dad and three of his fraternity brothers. They would not even ask what was going on, they would just appear, sit down, and raid the icebox, and go on from there.

So I had left a community where my family had been part and parcel and moved into one college community where there were any number of people who had known Mom and Dad, and felt immediately at home. From that moment on, I again got into as many different programs outside of class as well. Because I was working five or six hours a day at the Coop, the campus grill, from about seven o'clock until close to midnight every evening, it meant that I had to juggle my other things and get homework done either before or sometimes after, if necessary. I tried never, after my freshman year certainly, to have any classes earlier than 10:25 in the morning, which helped out a lot. But there were so many things going on.

Unfortunately, fraternity life was where it was at at that point. Ninety percent of the student body belonged to a fraternity house. So if you opted not to—the school was as much at fault as anyone because it did not build upper class housing—you lived in an apartment in town if you decided not to join a fraternity. I didn't realize until my junior and senior year, when I was rushing chairman for two years at our house, how much and

how seriously some of the kids took it. I suppose I did as a freshman, too. But it was much too much. If I ever had any magic wand to wave by the time I was through I really would have loved to have wiped out the whole fraternity system. I went through the kind of pledging that you read about all the time, had a burlap bag for underwear for two weeks, I can recall. I won't go into all the other things that were part of it, but it was a kind of hazing that was as dehumanizing as you could possibly imagine. It happened to every generation every year. They'd all been through it and they were going to make sure that next person went through it. I have a paddle upstairs that was used on me, a paddle that I had made, and you can see where it was just shattered and had to be glued back together again. It was just all part of what everybody thought that was the making of you.

Beyond that whole thing, I just found that what happens in the small college town, good, bad, and indifferent, what happens in classes where there are never many more than 15 to 16 (except for one large lecture course in my freshman year), what happens in classes where you're gathering in your major subject for a two-and-a-half- to three-hour session around a table and there probably aren't more than five or six of you, what happens is you're on the line. You really learn that you've got to perform and you've got to be part of what's happening or you might as well pack it up. Unfortunately, I had in my four years two roommates who were, believe me, far smarter than I was, brilliant kids, who just kind of let everything ride and flunked out as a result. One good friend it happened to was in his senior year, halfway through, which is a rotten time after seven semesters.

I always wanted to major in political science, but Colgate gave you an opportunity to major or minor or to have what could be a double major. I ended up loading up on courses in art history and art and participated in college theatricals as well. Other than political science, I probably balanced out between American history and art history. It was not obviously anything dealing with studio art, although that was certainly a good component of one's education at Colgate if you had any talent in that department. I had a professor who Pop had had as well, Alfred Krakusian, who was extremely good. I did take things like Russian, because I thought we all needed to learn to speak Russian, and it was the one experience that I really regretted. While I was fine in French and Latin, I had some problems there. I was taking a course in psychology that semester in which we were studying hypnosis, and I found out that I was a very easy subject with hypnosis. A roommate, Fred Rosen, who was also taking this course, was prevailed upon to put me under because I had a midterm in Russian the next day. I wanted him to give me the

suggestion that I would not go to bed until I had committed to memory everything I needed for that exam. I'm sure I didn't work that night at the Coop. I started studying right after dinner and I went right on through. About five in the morning I finally had done everything that I needed to do and I went to bed. The next thing I knew it was noon. The test had been at 10:25.

I went in to see Russian professor Albert Perry: "I am not a Red Russian. I am not a White Russian. I raced out of the country as fast as I could in 1920. I am a Yellow Russian!" He was the gentleman to whom I had to explain what had happened. "Tell me again why you missed the test?" "Once more." He said, "I think it may be time for you to say goodbye. You can withdraw." I fortunately had extra hours, so it was not a problem, but it was the only time that I ever said goodbye to a course. I still blame Fred Rosen on the damn fact that he didn't tell me not only would I go to bed that I would be up by ten o'clock so I could make the exam. That was my big, big, big failure.

By the time senior year rolled around I was ready to act on kind of a family promise that I would go to law school. I had a political science advisor who had been a graduate of Stanford. He was extremely kind in probably saying things in his recommendation that he would later regret having said, but I took the law APS and I did extremely well. I don't know why except that I always liked spatial relationships and it seemed to me it was 90 percent spacial relationships. I wanted to come to Washington, but I got into Stanford, got into Georgetown, applied to CU [Catholic University], GW [George Washington University], and AU [American University]. I had four law schools in Washington. I was accepted at all of them, but I decided to come down and go to Georgetown. Again, it was a question of money, so I came down and went through the application process to the National Park Service, and got a job. They were really of very short duration—these were called tapers, temporary appointments—but I got a job with the Park Service and was assigned to Arlington House.

Coming as a Damned Yankee from upstate New York to becoming a counterfeit Confederate with General Lee and all that goes with it was quite a departure. My law school—I was carrying 12 hours—would begin at about seven o'clock in the evening, if I remember correctly, and it was way down at 6th and F streets, it's no longer there, long since replaced with the present Georgetown Law Center. It was in a series of old red-brick buildings that had been there since the 19th century. By the time the spring of 1961 rolled around, I was pretty sure that I did not want to go back to law school. My problem

was I could never see two sides to the question, I could only see one side. But I did want to continue doing something in graduate school, and in the late spring, early summer, word came to Arlington House that Mrs. Kennedy's people were interviewing prospective staff for a newly organized curatorial program. A friend of mine went over and got a job in the office kind of as a curatorial assistant, but then he was called up for Berlin. I got a call from the personnel office of the Park Service: was I interested not in that job but in the job of registrar? I barely knew what it meant, but I had been doing a fair amount of cataloging at Arlington House.

I went over, and applied and heard back that I did not get the job, it was filled by someone else. But the curatorial assistant's job was still open. I got a call back: would I like to apply for that? I said sure, and I did, and I got it. By the time they finished the full-field security investigation it was in the late fall, probably almost early winter that I was able to go and begin. At that time, I enrolled at GW in the history department and started taking more American history, mostly 19th but some 20th century. I did that until the job at the White House started requiring doing evening receptions. So I guess I ended up with about three semesters of graduate history at GW. Mary [Phelan] and I used to laugh about some of the professors that we both had had. One character lived in Georgetown and he and his wife used to have a Christmas party for all of his classes every year. It was kind of nice for a university in the middle of the city to be giving that kind of time and attention. I doubt if they do it now.

The curator's office at the White House was the newest game in town at that point. It was really a lot of catch-up ball. My first job was trying to manage all of the correspondence that had come in, first of all from Mrs. Kennedy's September *Life* magazine cover story, Labor Day weekend of 1961, which Hugh Sidey wrote. It was photographed extensively throughout the summer of '61. Obviously, there was an agreement with *Life* and the White House that they would make some kind of a contribution to the fund that was being used to acquire paintings and sculpture. Then, oh, golly, by November, one of my earliest memories is CBS signed Mrs. Kennedy up to do a televised tour. That was taped in late January of '62 and it went on the air on Valentine's Day in '62. Lord knows, everybody who could put pen to paper would write after that. It was fascinating because CBS had done it, but NBC, CBS, and ABC all ran it within that week.

You cannot believe what it brought out of people. Everybody had something that

they wanted to send in. Some wanted to give, most wanted to sell. It ran the gamut from—I can't believe the number of commodes, which used to be known in the country as slop jars, were suddenly making their appearance. I remember somebody sending something in from Illinois saying, "If you can't use it at the White House, send it up to the Capitol, we're sure that Everett Dirksen needs something like this." Somebody obviously was not Mr. Marigold's biggest fan, I guess.

We were located in a room with very low ceilings in the center of the ground floor level of the White House. It was great because it was just across from the family entrance and you saw all kinds of things that were happening. But it was a room that heated up rather quickly. It had been used, when Ike was there—this was after the Truman renovation—as a television studio. Robert Montgomery, who was Eisenhower's great television expert and consultant would get all the lights and the cameras set up there, and a desk. Ike made his first couple of addresses from there. But the lights were so powerful and so hot that Ike was sweating like Nixon in his worst moment had been sweating. So they moved the telecasts over to the Oval Office where there was better air exchange, and much higher ceilings.

We inherited what had been Mamie Eisenhower's toy room. Mamie Eisenhower throughout all of her years as an army wife complained that she was never able to do anything at Christmastime for the families of the military, who were part of her extended family, and she wanted to do something. So when she got to the White House she called her friend Louie Marx, the toy manufacturer in New York, and she said, "Louie, start in January when all of those toys come back from the department stores, start sending them down to me, those things that don't quite sell. You can afford to give them to me. And if you have other things through the year that come back, send those down as well." So she had shelves all over what was known as the broadcast room, and on the shelves she would have names of youngsters of certain ages, so all the Secret Service agents, all the staff aides, whoever had children or grandchildren, she got the names and the ages and would outfit in her mind's eye exactly how the Christmas Party would be run, and each year in December all these kids would come. They had all the house staffers lined up to take the kids down and give them the toys that she had set aside. She did that for eight years.

She also wore the same red taffeta dress, and she wouldn't send it out to the cleaners. She would just tell Clara and some of the other women who helped, the maids

on the second and third floor, “Just touch it up under the arms a bit.” There are these wonderful photographs of her holding hands with her grandchildren and coming down the cross corridor at Christmastime that appear in several of the books chronicling White House families at home, and there she is with that dress and the noise that only taffeta can make.

So that was our space. When we moved in, that space was just filled chockablock with letters and correspondence. Letters would be opened, a card acknowledging it would be sent out, and then these things would be left for me to go through and find out where there were serious things that needed to be looked at. And some did, there was no doubt about it. There was a couple down in West Virginia who had been married for 70 years—I mean, just the thought of it absolutely blows you right away—but they had a suite of furniture that they had from their honeymoon night on, that they thought looked very much like the furniture that Mrs. Kennedy was showing in the Lincoln Bedroom. And they were happy now to get something else and make sure that their furniture went to the White House. To show how serious this man was, he had not only enclosed a map of where they were located, but there was a circle with an X on it and he had a note saying: “I have cleared this area for your helicopter to land.” He thought that any offer that went to her, Mrs. Kennedy was going to come down directly and look things over. We were, unfortunately, not able to accept this furniture.

But we did get a letter from Gypsy Rose Lee, and indeed she did have an exact copy, or an exact mate rather, of the Lincoln bed, except her’s had been bleached. The carving, everything was identical to it. Were we interested? I talked to the Smithsonian and they said, “We’re probably going to do a Lincoln Bedroom someday, if we ever do White House rooms, and even if we don’t, a copy of the Lincoln bed would make an appropriate exhibition item.” So that was very popular with them. I went ahead and we accepted it. We went back and forth on the phone. We had U.S. Army drivers who took trucks to New York and brought back anything that we were buying from galleries, such as paintings or furnishings. When they went up to pick up her bed, she insisted that the box spring and the mattress come with it. Obviously, it was like buying a new refrigerator: take my old one off my hands. Well, it was the grungiest mattress you have ever seen! I suppose if mattresses could talk, maybe there was a story there, I don’t know. But she was wonderful. She was just as happy and upbeat about giving her bed to the White House as anything that you’ve ever seen. I’m sure she got some mileage out of it later on. Someplace in the bowels of the Smithsonian Institution is Gypsy Rose Lee’s bed,

the exact duplicate of the White House's Lincoln bed.

Youngsters in St. Louis had mounted a big effort to get an elephant for the St. Louis zoo, and a youngster named Joseph Helbrunner, who was about seven years old, wrote and said that there would be many other opportunities for elephants for the St. Louis zoo, "But I am sending you a box, which is my contribution to the program." Apparently, he had been selling lemonade, and in the box—this was probably the fall before Mrs. Kennedy's tour, because I don't think he was selling lemonade in January and February in St. Louis—were dimes, nickels, quarters, all wrapped up in tissue, to the tune of seven or eight dollars, not probably much more than that. It affected everybody, it really did.

Not long afterwards we started getting a procession of governors' wives who decided that it was time to do something for the governors' mansions. So this had a great effect. I mean that whole period. Between 1961 and 1970 the number of historic sites, local historical societies, museums, historic homes, and so forth in this country more than doubled. I'm sure that Mrs. Kennedy just hit it at the right time, but it was so much exposure and so much interest that it engendered the kind of projects throughout the country that in one way or another were related, including what Mike Mansfield at that point felt was going to be appropriate for the Capitol, but he never quite got it as early as he hoped. The White House Historical Association was formed in 1962 in order to have a publications program of material that could be taken out of government strictures and protected by copyright. That was soon followed by the Capitol Historical Society.

We found that by the time the Kennedys left, while much had been accomplished, there was still a good deal to be done. Mrs. Johnson made it so much easier for everybody—it was probably much harder for herself—but she asked everybody who was associated with the program to stay on and continue. In my first year at the White House, I had served as curatorial assistant. In the late spring of 1962, the registrar moved up to the curator's position and I became registrar. That was followed—let's see, we were married that summer, and in the summer of 1963 the curator went over to the Baltimore Museum to take on their decorative arts program. He was a native of Baltimore and had done most of his graduate work on Baltimore cabinetmakers. So Mrs. Kennedy asked if I would be interested in the job, and I really said, "I think you can do a lot better with somebody older and more experienced." I still remember her saying things that seem rather silly now, like "Jack, they always said he was too young," things of that type. She

must have been laughing up her sleeve when she was saying it. Anyway, the agreement was I would take it for the time being. Like the man who came to dinner, within a very short time afterwards there was a new administration.

RITCHIE: You were only about 24 years old then.

KETCHUM: Twenty-four, yes. That was one of my complaints. I said, “Mrs. Kennedy, I just think the age really is a problem.” She said, “We’ll take care of it, don’t worry.” So Pam Turnure put out a press release which listed me as 29. I remember sending a copy to my mother and father, which meant that I was born certainly before they were ever married. I think Mother may have found it to be rather amusing. I’m not sure Dad did, or maybe it was the other way around. But that was the deal, that I had a few extra years of experience. And I didn’t. I was as green and as wet as you can be. Sure, being there for a couple of years prior to it you grow up rather quickly, but even so, there’s nothing that can prepare you. I think as a result you kind of assume a persona that acts as if you know everything that’s going on, even though you don’t. Fortunately, you come to a stage where you realize that not only are you not aware of what you should know, but you’re becoming even less aware as you get older!

But people were very kind and very supportive, because it was a new administration, and Henry du Pont at Winterthur (chairman of the White House Fine Arts Committee) was tremendous to me. The chairman of the Paintings Committee was a man named Jim Fosburgh, who was married to Harvey Cushing’s oldest daughter Minnie, who’d been married to Vincent Astor; she was one of the three Cushing sisters, the youngest was Barbara “Babe” Paley, and the middle was Betsy, who married Jimmy Roosevelt and Jock Whitney. These families all had had an interest in the White House socially through the years, or through the family connection, with Betsy having been married to Jimmy Roosevelt. They just wanted to do anything that they could. You could call them up and they would find out who had the money, so that when you went to an auction or when you put the bid in you knew that you were fairly well covered to a certain level. It was interesting to me, when I went to the Hill. I never had problems getting people taking my calls when I was at the White House, but things really change when they say, “Where are you calling from?” and you mention that it’s the Senate curator’s office, you do not get the instant genuflection at all.

There were also a number of people—you realize this, though, and thankfully I

have a good bartered bride who would remind me of this early on—you'd go to a cocktail party, for example—our kids were starting to arrive on scene so we didn't do too much of this—but when you would go you were first introduced as “White House” and then your name came up. The one person who really—well, I have memories of several, but in Washington Joe and Susan Mary Alsop were terribly kind to us. We were just brand new and because the Kennedys had entertained and been good to the Alsops and vice versa, and because of Joe's interest in furniture, and also he loved to talk about his descent from two different presidential families and did his TR thing whenever he could, we would go to dinner. Well, when you grow up in Clyde, New York, and you go to dinner you don't expect to see the secretary of state or the secretary of defense, or half of the upper echelons of the State Department, and some of the other folks there.

The one person that I always enjoyed most—because we did not know enough to go home at ten o'clock when everybody else did—was Mary McGrory. Mary would stay, and Barbara and I would stay for maybe another 45 minutes. I would listen to Joe and Mary trade stories of Washington, and it was just the most fascinating stuff in the world. Susan Mary, God love her, just knocked herself out making Barbara feel comfortable and making me feel comfortable. Last time I saw her was down in Texas at a dinner for Mrs. Johnson. We were out in a tent seated together and I finally had an opportunity to tell her. I said, “Susan Mary, when I go back to Washington, I'm going to sit down and write you a letter and tell you all this again,” and I never did. When she died recently I really felt very guilty about this, and I've taken it upon myself since then to write some of these people and thank them for what a difference they made in our lives.

The Kennedy years, and the carryover into the Johnson years were just—you had to pinch yourself that you were there. You could not believe that these people were talking about the things they were talking about. The Alsops still at that stage of the game—Kay Graham had not yet pulled her “I'm going home” ultimatum—but this was something I had no idea of what it was all about: they separated the men from the women after dinner. The old custom. The men went into the library where Joe had his parrot, and his cigars, and his brandy, and the women went upstairs into Susan Mary's bedroom. About 45 minutes later, everybody got back together again, and that was that. I thought that was the strangest thing I'd ever heard of, but that was old Washington. You recall the tale of how that was all brought to a crashing halt with Kay Graham storming out one evening. It probably should have been done many generations before.

Again I think it's part of small-town America. You come to a city. We looked long and hard where we could buy a house and where we could afford a house. The places that we were happiest were in Northeast and Southeast. I did not want to get caught up in what I thought was kind of a Georgetown spin. It didn't seem to me to have an awful lot of ground under it. It was an awful lot of frosting on a rather thin cake. I think you can be swayed by that stuff, I really do. But by going on Capitol Hill, in an area where we were for a long time the only whites with only African-American neighbors, our part wasn't even considered Capitol Hill back in the early to mid-'60s, you found that people were not only neighbors but they could become extended family. They could care for you. And on different levels this seemed to carry through no matter what our experiences were.

Washington, while not an easy town to forgive sometimes for some of its transgressions, is a very easy town to live in, and very difficult to say goodbye to. I didn't have quite the difficulty that Barbara did, but I do know that in many ways, by being an hour and 45 minutes away, we have been able to extend our Washington times here and as often as possible have good friends who will come up and share this part of the world with us.

RITCHIE: That raises a question: When you left New York, did you intend to go back to New York, or did you ever think that you would spend most of your adult life in Washington?

KETCHUM: No, I didn't. I thought I'd go to school there, but I didn't know that I would stay. I think if I had really been serious about returning to New York State I probably would have gone to a New York State law school. I think the city of Washington—as a kid, I remember, there was a family in Clyde who had a grandson whose family lived in Washington. He came every summer to spend about six weeks with his grandparents, and I would see him quite regularly. He would talk about the city and all that was going on. And I think my readings, I mean *Life* magazine was constantly giving me Washington up close and personal, I'm sure that I probably in the back of my mind felt that I was going to stay there for the immediate future, but I never really planned anything. I didn't. When my parents found out that I really did not want to return for another couple of years as far as finishing up law school was concerned, I think they were somewhat disappointed on that, because I didn't know what I wanted to do.

The fact that the Republican county chairman's son is now working in the Kennedy White House meant that letters were going to the White House, and not from Republicans but from local Democrats who had worked very hard in the campaign and had gone to Washington in January and February of 1961 to find jobs, and didn't find them, and had to go back home after staying there for a couple of months and being told, "Sorry, no more openings." Those were the people who wrote the letters complaining about my being hired. Mrs. Kennedy answered them and said, "You know, this is a program that is relying as much if not more on Republican support and money as it is from Democrats," and went on from there.

Janet Cooper, who was part of Mrs. Kennedy's circle and who had been a classmate of hers in grade school, came down to be her liaison with the Fine Arts Committee. She was the first person that I worked with. Recently, she told a funny story [at the recent symposium of the White House Historical Association] about the fact that Janet had worked for Nixon in '60. She told Mrs. Kennedy this, and she said, "Really, I think that would be an impediment to my coming down and working for you." And she said, "Oh, Janet, forget about it. My *whole family* voted for Nixon." She said, "You can't use that as an excuse." Everybody just roared when they heard that, because Janet is a very proper Bostonian with this very unique accent that you would stop and listen to and think it was Beacon Hill revisited. They roped her into doing this because she's never done anything publicly at all about her White House years. She was a very important link to this entire program.

I'm trying to touch on a couple of other bases as far as the Kennedy period and those years. Like Topsy, it just grew. Eventually, by the time I had been at the White House for three or four years, I recognized—by then we had bought a house, we had a baby—that this was going to be a place that I would want to live for some time to come. In fact, when it was really time to leave the White House, and I was having my differences of opinion with one H. R. "Bob" Haldeman about how money was being spent, I had wonderful offers that were coming from other parts of the Eastern seaboard, one from the Rockefeller folks in Westchester County for Sleepy Hollow Restoration, and another one from the Park Service to head up a program at Thomas Edison's Laboratory at Menlo Park, where so much needed to be done, and I didn't want to leave Washington. I absolutely did not want to leave. It was only because starting in '67 and '68 Mansfield had asked if I was interested in coming up and working on a museum for the Capitol. They tried to get it for House and Senate, but the House would never go along with it

because the Speaker and the architect of the Capitol were too firmly entrenched, and so it ended up, as you know, being a Senate program. But on the third go-round, 15 months into the Nixon administration, when I realized how miserable I had been, and how really difficult things were becoming as far as the White House program was concerned, I was delighted to take Mansfield up on his offer.

But I wouldn't trade my decade at the White House for anything. The Johnsons, as I have said so often, the Kennedy program exists today because Mrs. Johnson, no matter how easy it would be for her to walk away from Mrs. Kennedy's efforts, and not even thinking of the odious comparisons, decided to learn everything she could about the White House, and she did. I can still see her at the very first meeting when she gathered Bill Benton, and Mrs. Marshall Field, and all these committee members who knew a fair amount about what the program was about, and had been serving through the Kennedy days, gathered them together and she made the most unbelievably moving plea for paintings, and started to talk about all of her favorite American artists, and what pictures she was hoping for. She ended by saying, "And my absolute favorite, my favorite for ever and ever and ever, Homer Winslow." And everybody looked and she said, "I mean Winslow Homer, I'm so sorry." They knew she was human, and indeed she was. Boy, she would call the meetings to order on a very regular basis.

Mrs. Kennedy, more often than not, operated out of her back pocket, although Mr. du Pont was there at the White House all the time. Du Pont was in his mid-80s at that point. He was *the* king. Winterthur was considered absolutely the high-water mark as far as historic preservation and the decorative arts were concerned, and the period 1640 to 1840 they had covered in absolutely amazing ways. It was a time in his life when he mumbled a great deal, and Mrs. Johnson, the first thing she wanted to do in January of '64 was to have him down for lunch, and down he came. The three of us got together up in the president's dining room. She was at one end of the table, he was at the other, and I was in the middle. He could not understand her accent. She could not understand his mumbling, and I was trying to go back and forth, explaining to each one what the other one said. It was one of the hardest things. Only later on when the Senate wives every year would entertain Maureen Mansfield, who became deaf as a post, and I was the only male because I was the one they put next to her to tell her what the others were asking about. It reminded me of the Garrett Morris skit on *Saturday Night Live* where he did the news for the deaf by screaming at the top of his lungs.

At the White House, your life is never your own. Lyndon Johnson, because he realized he had to sell the war in Vietnam, started by inviting 25 congressmen and spouses each Tuesday and Thursday evening. He went through the whole House and then he went through the Senate. Then he'd do the governors. Then he was going on to mayors of large cities. Each night, every Tuesday and Thursday forever, it was the same drill. He would take the men into the East Room, McNamara and Rusk would be in there with charts and so forth, and Mrs. Johnson would take the wives down to the White House movie theater. I would show a film, *Paintings in the White House*, and then depending on how long things were going upstairs, I would tell anecdotes. I'd get Liz Carpenter to hold up a sign at the back of the theater saying "last one." That meant that word had come down from the East Room that McNamara or Rusk and Johnson were winding things up. Then we'd all have to go up and have a buffet supper. Well, it meant that you got home at eleven o'clock at night. Not only did you miss whatever syndicated show you wanted to see—it was a time when ABC Television was doing the first series of evening soaps, like *Peyton Place*, and some of those things, so I never did know what the rest of the American public was seeing. And it was hard because we had a baby. I was doing a fair amount of traveling on the lecture circuit to raise interest in the program. Everybody loved to invite someone from the White House. I could have been Joe Shmoe, but the fact that you came from the White House made you desirable. I remember saying "no" to the folks in Dallas who invited me about five times, starting in 1964. Finally, I went down in 1968 to speak to them. I don't know why but it just felt rather uncomfortable. I suppose had it been 60 years earlier I wouldn't have wanted to go to Buffalo.

But that was the gist of my sense that maybe there was a time coming to leave the White House, and fortunately, or unfortunately, that happened because of the way the West Wing operated in the Nixon administration vis-à-vis the family quarters, and how Mrs. Nixon was really left out in a different world. My main complaint was that funds that had been given specifically to use to acquire paintings and furnishings, or for conservation, Haldeman felt it was appropriate to use them for social events, because people would be coming to enjoy these objects, and it would be an extension of the story that they could be telling by paying for liquor, food, entertainment and what have you. That, of course, was the furthest thing from what people had donated the money for. I knew that I would never live long enough to see Haldeman do anything but be considered the most important link in the White House chain forever and ever, and the shock that I got in May of 1973 when we were in London on the train going down to Kent and I picked up the *International Herald Trib[une]*, and there on front page was the fact that

Haldeman and Ehrlichman were in deep, deep, deep trouble, and my old Colgate classmate, John Wesley Dean, seemed to be right there by them. I thought, “My God, I’ve got to get back home as soon as possible and find out what this is really all about.”

The Nixon era was a really difficult time because I had never had any unpleasant times with the Kennedy and Johnson folks. Oh, there was Marvin Watson, who was Johnson’s chief of staff for the last couple of years of his administration. He loved to cut the budget every time. We had a car that was assigned to us, only for business, not for pleasure, not to pick you up at your house or anything else. But if you had something that had to be taken to a studio for conservation, or if you had reason to have to go down—I remember Johnson’s portrait was being painted by Peter Hurd, and once a week, as he would do more work on it, he would invite his brother-in-law, Andrew Wyeth, to come down from Chadds Ford on the train and see the modifications and what he thought of it. Hurd was just very intimidated by Johnson and was very uncomfortable about some of the things that Johnson expected of this portrait. Hurd would go off to New Mexico and say, “Andy’s going to call you and he’d like to come down in the next two or three days.” Wyeth would call, so I’d go to Union Station with a car and pick him up. We would come back to the White House and he’d see what he could see. We’d have lunch and then I’d take him back to the train and he’d go back to Chadds Ford. It was that kind of use.

Well, Mrs. Johnson had, through the years, because of the name Lady Bird, I’m sure, individuals who would give her either American or English porcelain birds. There was a woman named Dorothy Doughty who worked for Royal Worcester in England, and then there were the Boehm birds from Edward Boehm, who was a sculptor in New Jersey. Lo and behold, these birds caused all kinds of problems. The first time I had ever really gotten the chance to sit down and talk to Mrs. Johnson, when she came into the White House, was the week that she was moving in. She called and asked if I could come up to the family quarters. Well, it was Grand Central Station, because another truck had just arrived from the Elms and all this furniture was coming up. She had brought over a couple of days before these boxes of porcelain birds. She probably had 50 of them, and each one was valued at anywhere from \$5 to \$25,000. She said she was in her bedroom. I walked into her room and she was not there, but she was in a huge walk-in closet. She was on the floor, unwrapping these birds, down on her knees. So I got down and started helping her, and she said, “Oh, no, let’s go and sit down.” Just as we were about to get up, a sofa was being brought into a sitting room and the door to the closet was closed, and the light to the closet where we were, the light switch was in the jamb, so the light went

out. Here we are trying to play touchy-feely as we worked our way out. Fortunately, the door was close enough that I could get around and open it back up. It was very funny. She laughed, I laughed, what else can you do about that whole situation?

Many years later, towards the time that they were leaving the White House, sometime in the last year, she said, “I want to confess something. I am not fond of birds, but they have been given to us by heads of state, heads of governments, family friends, and so forth.” From time to time, when one would be dusted by some of the folks upstairs, even though we tried to tell them not to, that we would take care of them, a piece would be broken off, and I would call for a car and I’d go up to Mario’s, a place at Dupont Circle that used to do very fine repairs. They’d do a good, better, and best. I would always go in and have the best done because she was paying for it out of her own pocket. One day I called and the White House garage, which was located over near Blackie’s House of Beef in Northwest, not too far from Washington Circle, they said, “Sorry, but you don’t have car privileges anymore, Ketchum, you’ve lost them.” I said, “What do you mean?” “Yep, Marvin Watson said that you’re off the list. You want to know who else is off the list?” I said, “No, that’s all right, I don’t want to know.” So I called Mrs. Johnson and I said, “Mrs. Johnson, you had asked me earlier to take a couple of the porcelain birds to be repaired but unfortunately I didn’t drive today.” She said, “I don’t understand, does that make a difference?” I said, “Yes, because I need a car to get over there. Mr. Watson has taken our car. We’re off the list, and I certainly don’t hold that against him at all. That’s perfectly understandable. I know how he’s trying to save money.” Mrs. Johnson said, “That’s not a problem. Anytime you need a car, just use mine. I’ll call the garage and make the arrangements.” Ten minutes later I had a call from Marvin Watson, who announced that our privileges had been restored and not to think a thing of it. For some reason there had been a mix-up and we had been taken off the list. That was fine.

Probably the time I dragged more people into an untenable situation was fairly early in the Johnson administration. On the day that President Kennedy died, our office was carrying out something that Mrs. Kennedy and the president had asked about, oh, probably a month or two earlier. Kennedy was convinced that he might not win in ’64. He thought that Nelson Rockefeller was going to be the candidate. I don’t think he ever quite understood that Barry Goldwater would have been opposing him on the stump, but he was making plans for a Kennedy Library. Those plans always seemed to begin and end with the recreation of the Oval Office. That went back to FDR’s days—although now you

can go to West Branch, Iowa, and see that the Hoovers have since done it. Truman certainly made his fairly well known, and these offices are usually three-quarters to seven-eighths the size. For his library, JFK wanted to have a replica of the Hayes desk. This is the desk that was fashioned from the timbers of the *H.M.S. Resolute*, it was a ship that foundered in the Arctic in the 1850s. The boat had been towed back to New England by an American expedition, and after the Civil War it was re-outfitted by the United States and returned to England. Because the relationship with Victoria's government was not that great at that point, it was a gesture of goodwill that the White House was making toward the English. When the ship was finally decommissioned in the 1870s, Victoria had some of the oak timbers removed and had a desk fashioned for the president of the United States, the plaque reads—I think [Rutherford B.] Hayes is mentioned specifically—and his successors. So it stayed in the White House and it was used both on the second floor, where the president's office was until McKim, Mead, and White's construction of the West Wing in 1902. It kind of went back and forth between the house and the office, but finally it ended up in the Broadcast Room under the Eisenhower administration and was just over in a corner, covered, when on one of Mrs. Kennedy's forays into what's in each room, early in the administration. It was described and she could see the plaque, so she very much wanted it and saw to it that it was brought to JFK's attention and that it would be appropriate for his desk in the Oval Office. This was the desk that he used, the desk that Stan Tretick would photograph for *Look* magazine with young John Kennedy coming out from a panel that had been made at the end of FDR's day—I don't think it was ever in place when he died, but it had been created to conceal his braces when he was sitting at the desk.

The fact was, though, that within weeks after the assassination, we were getting visits from the Justice Department, specifically from one of Bobby Kennedy's aides. But the fact also is that on November 22, 1963, the Smithsonian, and an outside firm, and our people spent the whole morning on how that desk might best be copied for a future Kennedy Library. It was one of those things that was a given that the desk would never leave the White House. Before Lyndon Johnson had ever moved in, he said to Mrs. Kennedy, who came over to the office to see him, "Little lady, if there's anything in this room that you would like, you just take it." Well, when it was time for an organized Kennedy traveling library exhibit, to raise money for a library, it was Barrett Prettyman who came to the White House and explained—and I had already heard the tale—that Johnson had offered the desk. Unfortunately, legislation had gone through Congress in the fall of 1961 which made every object in the White House inalienable and a permanent

part of the White House. Johnson could not give this desk away. I said, "Look, we'll loan it. You sign the loan agreement and when the traveling exhibit is over it will come back." He was not happy, but he signed the loan agreement, and the desk left and it went all around the United States. It was so successful that they said, "We'll take it to Europe." Well, in Europe the security was nil and people started breaking off pieces of the desk, molding, drawer knobs, and so forth.

When it came back, it went to Archives and the archivist of the United States was holding forth one afternoon when I discovered that it was there. I called him and I said, "I have a man who carved the panels for FDR. He's still alive. He's not terribly well, but I've talked to him. He lives out in Silver Spring. He will make the appropriate repairs to the Hayes *Resolute* desk." Before the guy could say yes or no, I said, "I've called the army and they will be coming over with transportation to pick up the desk so that it can go to Silver Spring." He hung up and he called the Justice Department, and he got through to the attorney general of the United States, one Robert F. Kennedy. Within about five more minutes I had [Bill] Moyers on one phone from the West Wing screaming at me, and on the other phone Kennedy from the Justice Department screaming at me. I really did not know which way to turn except that I wanted possession of the desk, which we got. It went to Silver Spring. I said, "Look, the important thing is that we put the desk back together again while we still have a craftsman who is familiar with it and can do it." I said, "What goes on after that, let's discuss."

I talked to Bess [Abell] and she said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I think this is something Mrs. Johnson is going to have to get involved in, and I think the president's going to get involved in it. First of all, he's not in a position to be giving it away." Bess said, "I agree completely." She said, "Do a memo to Mrs. Johnson and let me put a cover over it." I had really given the whole story and background to Bess. She sent it up and Mrs. Johnson said, "Come on up and let's talk about it." I went up and she never made any judgment. She said, "I think this is something which should be discussed with Mr. Clifford." She said, "I'll let him know you're coming. Why don't you call and work out a time in the next few days?" I called Clark Clifford and went over. His office was just around the corner at that point from the Mayflower Hotel. I went in at ten o'clock in the morning. Clifford was one of these people who had a huge room with a desk there but you sit a mile away down here. I can remember the desk was totally covered with piles of paper under paperweights, very neatly stacked, it was just like all of these great prehistoric monuments to something or other. There they were, Stonehenge

revisited. I explained the whole story. It took him an hour to get it, and I thought: “Why isn’t he getting this right off the bat.” Finally he said, “Well, I’ll think about it for a few days and then I’ll call Mrs. Johnson and we’ll see what we can do.” He called her and said, “Really, the White House has no choice but to keep the desk. They could perhaps loan it eventually to a Kennedy Library, but I think that desk belongs in the White House and should stay. Even if the president’s not going to use it, it should be there for future presidents.”

The Kennedy family was not terribly happy with the results of all of that, but Lyndon Johnson was told that he couldn’t give the store away any longer and we all went on from there. The Smithsonian, with the legislation passed in ’61 that made the collection permanent, there was a provision there that if an object was not going to be displayed in the White House, and it did have historic merit, it could go to the Smithsonian, subject to White House recall. The Smithsonian had just opened a museum of what was then History and Technology—it was supposed to open in November of ’63 but the assassination came in the way. It opened in ’64 and by ’65 they were still looking for important things that could go in there, so the desk went there and everybody got the sense that this was important, it still belonged to the White House. Then when Jimmy Carter came in, he decided that he would use it as his desk and it has continued to be used. Now there is a cabinetmaker someplace around New York who is making copies of it and selling them. In fact one of the presidential libraries bought one, and you can’t stop them. I don’t understand, because in my day we used to send threatening letters that the White House counsel would write for us, and people would desist. But I’m told now that it’s considered public domain, so I can’t tell you how many thousands of dollars, but if you would like the Hayes *Resolute* desk, Donald, we can arrange for that.

Those are some of the things that you got involved in, but you always had support. Suddenly, with the Nixon administration we were really dealing with people and situations that were very, very uncomfortable, absolutely. It was just not what we had known before, obviously, and yet on the other hand, the program needed to continue and it needed to continue with different hands as far as I was concerned. That’s where I was left, on this threshold of leaving Washington, and I really don’t want to go. I would if I had to, but there must be something else. And suddenly, again, Mansfield was there with another request for the third go-around. It was a situation that worked out much, much better than I ever anticipated.

I could soon start walking children to school on my way to work. I could enjoy more fully the community of Capitol Hill. I could become a “room father,” which I did do over at St. Peter’s, and take something at the Capitol that was really more of an idea than anything else when I started and try to put it on the path where it could really grow and develop, with a lot of support, and a lot of very patient and understanding people. I often felt—I didn’t feel this way as much at the White House but I certainly did at the Capitol—that I should never be paid for what I was doing because I was just enjoying much too much what was happening.

All the things in the past that I had learned, whether it was the shoe box exhibits I used to make as a kid, when I would have clear plastic and attach various things and drop them down from the top of the box and have light coming in from the side so you got this three-dimension effect, and as my feet grew larger and larger the exhibit case that I was making could grow larger. We put them up in our carnivals and our sideshows in the barn and charged people a penny to look into some of these things. As all these things came about and you suddenly were working—granted, we had done some exhibits at the White House on a limited extent—but doing things that were telling a story, using all manner of resources that you had touched on at some time way back.

As a kid, I loved working with liquid latex. Dad would have a frame that would have some gesso or carving missing and I would cast a part and then use a fluid wood putty to put in the mold that I had made, and then I would sand it down and attach it. Well, suddenly I was doing that at the Capitol for frames and paintings that we were trying to preserve. Our initial budget was almost nil as far as conservation. We would bring the painting up and take it out of the frame. I would put it across a couple of saw horses up there on the fourth floor. I wouldn’t even take it over to the carpenters’ shop. So it was just building one step at a time. Truly, just letting it grow, but using the kind of guidelines that the museum profession had established for one and all to emulate and to follow. The American Museum Association has been headquartered in Washington for most of its existence, and there were people throughout the city and its complex of institutions that wanted to be able to give you a hand. The best part about it was bringing in the folks like the Dorothy McCartys of this world, and the Dorothy Scotts for that matter, who didn’t really understand what such a program was all about or why it was needed. I remember a memo from Allen—what was his name, from Louisiana.

RITCHIE: Ellender.

KETCHUM: Ellender, from Houma, Louisiana, was chairman of the Appropriations Committee at that point—in which he said that he would think it would only be appropriate to put money in a picture if it fell off the wall and was damaged badly, that kind of thing. That was the way it was. But Frank Valeo understood the propositions, and so did Mansfield. I'd go down and talk to Mansfield on a very regular basis. You would always have to have a cup of coffee with him, and it was all “Yep,” “Nope,” “Yep.” He would sign off on it, and 15 minutes later you would get up and you would have done more and gotten more answers in 15 minutes that you would in two hours with some other people.

The worst thing I ever did, early on the Senate wives wanted me to lecture at a luncheon they were having in what later became the Mansfield Room, but it was just given its room number on the east front, to talk about the program. I opened it up to questions afterwards. Barbara was there and we had a house guest from Canada who was visiting and she was there. The Senate wives had heard that there was money coming into the Capitol Historical Society for a sound and light show on the Capitol east front. What did I think of sound and light? I said, “I don't think it's ever going to happen.” I was obviously feeling so relaxed and comfortable at that point. “Well, why don't you think it's ever going to happen?” “Because,” I said, “you'll never get all of the members with hideaway offices on the east front to pull their shades down at the same time.” Well, there was a ripple of laughter but there was no loud guffawing at that, and I waited, boy did I wait afterwards, day-in and day-out, for somebody to say something about it. But nobody ever mentioned it. As I said afterwards, if I ever could call back one moment it would be that stupid answer.

RITCHIE: Great line, wrong audience.

KETCHUM: Wrong audience, exactly. But as you got to know the members' wives, they were fantastic. I always have enjoyed doing a bit of calligraphy. Often I would do name tags for various functions. Not long after the Senate started orientation sessions for new senators, the Senate Wives Club organized an orientation program for the new wives. One year we gave them access to the Old Senate Chamber. Peatsy Hollings called and said, “Would you do the name tags?” I said, “Sure, I'm happy to.” I took them down and then I kind of waited around, because she was going through each one, and on one I wrote: “Elizabeth Taylor, Hilton, Wilding, Todd, Fisher, Burton, Burton, Warner.” And I heard a scream. I went around the corner and I said, “Is

something wrong?” Then I pointed out that right behind it was another tag with “Elizabeth Warner.” At that point I was comfortable enough doing something like that, and they knew who was doing it and what was intended.

But getting the thing off the ground in the beginning was a job. Simple things, like where would your office be? “Well, you’re going to be involved with the restoration of the Old Senate Chamber, so we’ll put a desk in the back of that room for you.” I thought that’s kind of strange. Then they said, “You know, Bill Cheatum has left upstairs on the fourth floor. He was sharing space with Emery Frazier. He was there through the Nixon inauguration and stayed on a year to finish up, and now he’s gone, so you can have Bill Cheatum’s desk.” I thought, gee it’s too bad he’s not still there, we could have Ketchum and Cheatum. It would be absolutely the combination of all times! So I went up, and Emery Frazier, who had been given that space when he retired [as secretary of the Senate], supposedly had a book in the works. There were trunks and all kinds of things up there, but Emery would come about once every two months and just check in, and that was it. So I didn’t have anybody to answer the phone when I was gone. They didn’t have any kind of answering system. So they ran an extension to Polly Sergeant and Carmen Carpenter, who were in the circle [a circular space within the Senate Library stacks, under the Senate-wing cupola on the attic floor of the Capitol], you will remember that good pair out there, I’m sure. Carmen and Polly, when I would flip a little switch in my office they would then pick up the phone, knowing that I was gone, and they would take messages. Polly would say, “Sweet thing, here, so-and-so called,” when I got back.

That lasted to a point when I finally said, “We’re taking on quite a bit now, we’re getting legislation introduced [which took forever] to restore the Old Chambers.” Five times in two and a half years, both for legislative and the supplemental, we introduced the legislation for the money to restore, and each time the Senate would pass it unanimously and the House would turn thumbs down on it. Ultimately, after two and a half years, Mrs. Johnson made the mistake of saying, “Is there anything I can do to help you?” I said, “How are your relations with George Mahon?” She said, “Well, they’re pretty good.” Legislative appropriations had a Texan who was chairman of that subcommittee, and then Mahon was chairman of the full committee. She placed a couple of phone calls. At the same time I had Maggie Hunter of the *New York Times* doing a story in the *Times*, and Isabelle Shelton of the [*Washington Evening*] *Star* doing a story in the *Star*, and Marlene Cimon of the *LA Times* doing a story in the *LA Times*, and Bill Anderson did a column in the *Chicago Trib[une]*, all within three days of each other, and Mrs. Johnson’s phone

calls. I think it was her phone calls that did it because I got a call from Charlie Ferris [staff director of the Senate Democratic Policy Committee] who said, “Come on down, I think this thing is being settled,” and indeed it was. The House finally passed it and got behind it.

Then, of course, we had to swing into action as far as the management of the whole restoration and working through the plans. That was the nice thing about having the House saying no each time, because I could dig more deeply and try to vet the thing, and find out areas where there were obvious interpretations that were wrong, that did not reflect what [Benjamin Henry] Latrobe had done. It gave me a chance when we were in London to spend a good bit of time at the Soane Museum—Sir John Soane was Latrobe’s mentor—and find how lighting and various other aspects of one of the plans that had been proposed by a firm that the architect [of the Capitol] had hired in New York to develop some of this were totally wrong. That was the kind of stuff that we got Valeo and hence Mansfield to get behind, and to make sure that the right things were done.

You’re never going to know all of it. There will always be things that will need to be changed as research and scholarship comes to the fore, but there was really almost a faux Colonial Williamsburg aspect to much of the earlier planning. Maybe it was because the good Mario Campioli [assistant architect of the Capitol] had been an architect with Colonial Williamsburg before he came to the Capitol to work for J. George Stewart [the architect of the Capitol]. But all of these things finally came together, and in the meantime we were slowly starting to develop staff. The great experience that we had with the Hon. Darrell St. Claire, the chief clerk, when with the approval and behest of Frank Valeo I was hiring Mary Phelan to be registrar, who apparently had not been properly vetted by the chief clerk of the Senate, and we had to make sure that everybody was on the same page with that one.

But I can never recall—we always had opportunities to do things, for example, Dorothy McCarty was retiring [from the Office of the Sergeant at Arms] and nobody seemed to be doing too much of a farewell for her, so we made sure that we had a party up in the stacks [the book stacks of the Senate Library] and everybody had red, white, and blue hats. The Senate had a bookbinder retiring by the name of Joe Cloren, who was in the small room where the original bindery was on the attic level. He had been there for probably 25 or 30 years, he came over from GPO. Nobody—the Senate Library wasn’t doing anything for him, the Government Printing Office wasn’t doing anything for

him—and I said to Mary Phelan, “Mary, we really should do something for him.” She said, “I agree.” So we got together, we fixed the food, we brought it all in, we cleared off furniture from S-411, the small office that we had, and we put in tables and got some things from the outside, and people came from GPO, people came from all over the Senate, and the Senate Library, and it was a great time.

One of the things that we used, they were probably the only hot dish, but they were meatballs in a chafing dish that Barbara and I had been given as a wedding present. We had never used it until then, but it was fine and we kept refilling it, heating up the meatballs in whatever sauce they were in. At the end of the day, Carmen, Polly, everybody else who was around, about 6:30 or so, they helped us load the car. We took everything down and put it underneath the Senate steps, and I loaded up our yellow square-back Volkswagon. This would have been May of 1971. I went home, and Barbara said, “Jim, is everything out of the car? The chafing dish isn’t here.” I said, “Well, obviously we left it back in the office, I’ll bring it tomorrow.” Well, tomorrow almost never came.

The next morning was a Friday. We were going down to the dedication of the Johnson Library in a few days and Barbara wanted a dress. She wanted to go out to Loehman’s, which was located out on Route 50 in Falls Church. In those days, NBC News had a radio spot, news on the hour, 9, 10, and 11. At nine o’clock we were headed down Route 50 when Merle Muller was on with the NBC News on the Hour and he ended the five-minute broadcast by saying, “Well, whatever tourist left that package on the Capitol steps last night”—you have to remember that in March we had the bombing of the [Senate-wing] bathrooms—“is going to be mighty surprised that it caused the entire Capitol to be emptied out and the bomb squad from Ft. McNair came over and placed a lead shield over it and detonated it out on the plaza, and it turned out to be a chafing dish, with two egg-cups inside which apparently were holding toothpicks.” I almost drove off the road. I said, “Barbara, we can’t go any further, we’ve got to go back right now.” I went straight to the secretary’s office and Val [Frank Valeo] started laughing and said, “I think you’d better go up and see the sergeant at arms.” I’m trying to think who that was.

RITCHIE: Bill Wannall?

KETCHUM: It could have been Bill Wannall. It probably was. I said, “I have a confession to make.” He said, “What is it?” I said, “That chafing dish used to belong to

my family.” “WHAT DO YOU MEAN?” I explained to him what happened. “Well, he said, we’re going to have a report on you that’s going to be so long you’re never going to do anything but regret the day,” blah, blah, blah. I said, “I just am so sorry.”

So some of our great attempts to do the right thing and to make people feel like we were all part of the same family did not always work. But one of the things that I got roped into, and I should have known better, but it grew again more like Topsy, started with some of the retirements when Frank Valeo retired, for Dorothye Scott and Darrell [St. Claire]. We always had receptions for the dedications of the Old Chambers, or when we’d open a new exhibit in the Crypt area [of the Capitol], but we never really did too much other than that of any size that we ourselves were doing the cooking and serving. For the functions in ’75 and ’76, for the opening of the Old Supreme Court and Old Senate Chambers, we had to bring in outside people. We planned the menu but we had catering forces, and this always caused problems with the Senate Dining Room, because the Rules Committee said that “Unless you people are doing the cooking yourself, you cannot bring in outside catering forces. You have to use what we have available here.” The only way around it was to do it totally yourself.

So for Dorothye Scott’s and for Darrell’s retirement parties we did it ourselves. Most of it was done at the Ketchum kitchen at 209 Eleventh Street, Southeast. By the following Christmas, the secretary of the Senate was now Stan Kimmitt. He wanted to do something, and I said, “Let’s see what I can put together.” It grew, and grew, and by the time Bill Hildenbrand was secretary we had Ted Stevens sending us salmon from Alaska, and we had God knows what all else coming in. We did the secretary’s Christmas parties, and then we started catering the pre-State of the Union receptions, and it really reached the pinnacle with Joe Stewart and what we would do in the Lyndon Johnson Room [of the Capitol]. As many as 500 to 600 people would be served. The point is that when you then went to legislative appropriations for mark-up on funds for what the secretary’s office was asking for your operations, the questions were never “What can we cut?” but “Do you have enough?”

The only low point in all of this was when I retired and I was reading the kind of thing they say on the floor of the Senate, and Bob Dole was spending more time talking about country chicken pies and less time about *A Necessary Fence* [the Senate’s bicentennial exhibition]. But I will tell you that it just did wonders in terms of our educating people as to the needs that we definitely had. I guess again it’s the old business

of small town upstate New York, there was never a death or a wedding, or anything else in town, that Mother wasn't spending her time in the kitchen and sending food off for. And there was never a time when anybody needed an organizer for a new scout troop, or whatever, that she and Dad were not operating full-tilt at home and offering the house as a place to meet and get the organization underway. All these new roads that were being traveled by their children, in this instance it was probably doing what comes much more naturally that one would ever realize.

There's no way that you can describe an average day in the Senate. Of course, that's the beauty of it. You never knew what five minutes from now was going to bring. You didn't know who was going to be on the phone with a question. You didn't know who's going to have done some strange deed. Poor Frank Valeo, during the Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence, got involved with the French embassy. A group of French senators wanted to come to the U.S. and bring a broadside to the U.S. Senate, which they said had been in Lafayette's family and had been signed by George Washington. Well, indeed, this was all true except that the signature was in the plate. The engraver had put it in. It was a fine facsimile of Washington's signature, but it was not Washington's signature. In a meeting that I had up at the French embassy about how we were going to arrange for this presentation I made this point. They said, "Oh, no, no, no, no. That is Washington's signature." I said, "It is, but it isn't a signature that he would have seen. Actually, the broadside was not even published until after his death." Well, they just insisted. It got to such a point that somebody picked it up in the press and it made the front page of the *Washington Post*. Val was tearing his hair out because he said, "The group from France had decided that they may not want to come. They may not be coming. What can we do?" I said, "We can tell them what a wonderful document it is, but we don't lie and say that this is something that it isn't. We'd be fools. We'd be laughed right out of town. This is a fairly well-known broadside. Other examples of it exist. This is not the only one. The fact that a copy was given to Lafayette is very important." We finally settled on that, but the French never quite got over it. The day that the delegation from the French Senate came, everybody was on tenterhooks wondering what next would be part of the story.

But again, you were allowed the freedom to do and say with as nice a spin on it as you possibly could what the story was all about. That was really because there were folks there that seemed to understand that that was how it would work best. You know the quality of the Senate. Darrell said that it never was quite the same after 1935. Others say

that it was never quite the same after World War II. I found the '70s to be absolutely wonderful, I really did. When I think back, I wonder what the period of adjustment would be to reenter at this stage of the game. The security bothers me terribly, and the whole numbers game up there is not to be believed. We didn't know people in the office buildings all that well, although the first year I was there I made an appointment to meet every senator and their office staff, and make sure that they understood that we were a resource, and we could be counted on. Many of them started borrowing paintings from home state institutions, and that probably became a bigger headache than we needed, but at least it was one of the things that we could do to make sure that they knew what we were all about.

Back then when you walked into the Capitol there were no screening devices at the door. Later on, when I had all the titanium put in me for a double hip replacement surgery, and the magnetometers were being set up, it was quite wonderful to see how you could set the bells off. The nicest thing that happened was the last year that I was there the chief of police called up and said, "How would you like to have one of our blue pregnancy cards?" I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "We are giving to any woman who is pregnant a card which will allow her to walk around the magnetometers." I said, "Hey, that's great." He said, "We have to update them every six months." So for about a year and a half I ended up with three renewable blue pregnancy cards, which I loved to show. It didn't say you were pregnant, but that's what they called them, and that's what they were all about.

Today it's just a totally different world. I kind of even hesitate when I'm up there walking around on my own. But it takes about five seconds for your sense of well-being and self-esteem to return full-tilt, and you soon put your nose up in the air and keep on walking wherever you want to go. Go ahead, sir.

RITCHIE: I just wanted to check with you in terms of time. It's a quarter after four. Would you like to stop now and we could pick it up against tomorrow?

KETCHUM: We will do that. What have we done, about two hours now? Why don't we pick up tomorrow if that's okay. Can you save some time for yourself today to put your feet up and rest?

RITCHIE: Sure, whatever. I'm at your disposal. I have lots more questions. So

we can set a time for tomorrow.

KETCHUM: Well, it's been kind of an overview. I'm going to rely on you to take me down areas where there are some specifics that will flesh this thing out. But I like the whole concept of doing something that begins at the beginning. The other day I was watching a DVD of Pop back in 1987. They were showing him photographs of the town, and of course his memories go back to his earliest days. This has now been edited, but this was just two hours of raw footage, and it was great, because I was finding out things about my own father that if I had ever known it I had long since forgotten it. Because it was an overview, it was a "best of." I used this in Mom's eulogy. He asked her to go to the movies, and she said, "I can't, I have a date." Then a humongous storm came up and the date was coming on a canoe from another island and he couldn't make it. Somehow, when he didn't show up, and I don't know how he got a message because they had no phones on Leroy Island, Dad convinced her that it was time to go into town to the movies. They drove into town and he took her to—it was the first time she ever came to our house, and he went down to the barn where he had a gunnysack with bootleg liquor that he had purchased at Sodus Bay, which is on Lake Ontario. Mother was 16 and Pop was 18. He brought it up in the house and poured her a drink. He said, "Oh, my gosh, within three or four minutes I looked and her glass was empty." He said, "Hoorah, this is really great." Soon he had to go back to the barn to get some more. What he didn't seem to understand was that Mother would get up and walk around and go over to the edge of the porch and pour her drink out. She never touched a drop of it.

Well, I was looking at a video. When Sarah graduated from high school, Jim Haugerud [curatorial assistant] loaned me a video camera. We'd never had one. I always used Super 8mm., which didn't have any sound attached to it at all when the kids were growing up. We had had an 8mm. when I was growing up. Anyway, this had sound, and I did Sarah's graduation. Sarah Brady, Jim Brady's wife, was the graduation speaker. Sarah did a tour of our house with Mother. It was the night after graduation that we were doing a dinner party for some of her friends and some of our friends. We had three tables of eight set up out in the garden, so she ended up out there. They were videos that I haven't looked at in 15 years at least, and I wanted to have them converted to DVD. I was looking at them, and at the end I remembered that I had a lot of tape left and so I just set the camera up on a tripod, put Mother and Dad on a sofa in our living room on Eleventh Street, and John, who missed Sarah's graduation but was home from college by that point, and Sarah and Tim sat there and asked them questions starting with when they first

met. And Pop told this story about Mother and the liquor. If I had heard it before, I could not remember it, and I just loved it. So that was one of the things that I'm sure shocked the good people at St. John's church recently when I was telling about their early meetings and dating (at Mother's funeral Mass eulogy).

It's wonderful because they gave the kids kind of an overview from the time that they met until the time that Barbara and I went off to Europe in 1971, in the fall. Tim was probably about eight months old. Sarah would have been almost two, and John would have been almost six. They had them for three weeks, and Mother afterwards told my other sisters and brothers, "We'll come and visit you. We'll come and sit from time to time. But don't bring your children home for three weeks." John went off to school every day, that was fine, but Sarah and my mother were too much alike. Every time my mother would try to bring her to heel, she would say, "I don't like you, and I'm telling my mother on you. When she comes home, my mother will take care of you." I don't know if you ever met my mother, probably at the time that we dedicated the Old Senate Chamber in '76, so you may have remembered meeting them then, but Mother was absolutely perplexed. My mother could do anything. She was the world's best manager. She was the world's best psychiatrist, but Sarah, at age two, had bested her.

Funnily enough, they became the closest of close, to the point that in 1991 Sarah graduated from college and before she went off to Europe backpacking, she took about a six-month assignment, which she had always wanted to do, at a shelter for abused children in Tucson. My parents at that point in their lives were spending six months in New York State and six months in Arizona. So Sarah moved into their house in July and Mother and Dad did not come out until November. When Mother and Dad arrived in November, Sarah—we had seen her in October, because I had gone to the University of Texas to lecture, and then Barbara and I went down and spent a week with Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Johnson had called earlier and asked, "Is there anyone around here that you would like to see?" I said, no. She said, "Don't you have any family in the Southwest?" I said, "Well, we have Sarah, Mrs. Johnson, in Arizona, but she's working seven days a week at what she thought was going to be a volunteer job for four days a week. Frankly, she's so busy she's burning herself out, I don't think we'll get a chance to see her." She said, "Let me work on it." She got Sarah to fly in, with Mrs. Johnson picking up the tab, and had her come down and spend the week at the ranch with us. I'll tell you, it was just the most glorious time ever.

Within another couple of weeks, Sarah went back, Mother and Dad moved in, and Sarah said to Mother, "I have never learned to drive." My mother, who had been driving since she was 12 in Nebraska, where you didn't have to have a driver's license, said, "Say no more." Mother at that point was in her late 70s and she taught Sarah how to drive. It was the most wonderful relationship that grew out of that. Every day they would go out for an hour or so, and finally, by the time Sarah was ready to leave at Christmastime, she went and took the test and got her license and has lived happily ever after as a very good driver. Mother was a fantastic driver and so was Pop. But it's funny when you think of these generations talking to each other, grandchildren and grandparents, how much they will reveal to their grandchildren that they didn't want to reveal to their own kids. I can remember John asking questions of my parents about us, and Mother and Dad being rather forthcoming about my generation. Some of that shows up on this videotape that I just had transferred to DVD.

I've got to call the Johnson Library because the hour lecture I did down there was in '91, at the time we were getting ready to celebrate the bicentennial of the White House and its cornerstone laying, which actually took place in '92. I do want to get that on DVD. The only difficulty that I don't think any of us realize is that DVD in many ways is going to be as much a fragile medium as tape, and we've got to get beyond that somehow, because how we're going to be saving some of that stuff is a real puzzlement.

RITCHIE: The hope is that it will transfer to the next technology a little easier, from one electronic form to another.

KETCHUM: Because it's digital, that would seem to answer some of that, but even so they have found disks that are no more than six or seven years old that already the surface has started to deteriorate. That poses some problems.

RITCHIE: That's why we're still using the old audiocassette tape, which may be obsolete before long, but it's still a better recording medium than digital for preservation.

KETCHUM: All of us were part of a world where we took a picture, if we had a family that was understanding, and mine because my Dad had had a darkroom when he was in his 20s, when I got around to doing black and white I had an old Kodak box camera and I would set it up and make everybody freeze at the Thanksgiving table, because I had these bridge lamps with photo flood lights, and I had to open the camera up



Jim Ketchum, Lady Bird Johnson, and Barbara Ketchum in 1991 at the Texas Ranch.

and count to five in order to get enough light on everyone, and then I would race into the only half-bath in the house, down on the first floor off my great-grandfather's bedroom, where I had set up a darkroom, and try to get pictures for people before they would go back to their respective residences, those who had joined us for Thanksgiving dinner. Sometimes I succeeded, sometimes not, but the fact is that you had a picture, and you had a negative, and you could file everything away, and you could go back 20 years from now and it was fine.

Because we lived in Rochester early on and Dad had some contacts with Kodak, Kodacolor in the late '30s was brand new. They were still testing Kodachrome, for example, and Dad was getting film from his friends at Kodak. While colors are off, perhaps because of the years that have elapsed since then, it's still something that you can see and appreciate. I remember as a kid, when I was old enough to look at photographs, I couldn't figure out why there were no pictures of me as a baby. My sister Joan, was the firstborn, there were just a tremendous number of pictures of her. They were all over the place. Finally, somebody cleared their throat enough to say, "Look, you were not exactly the most photogenic kid." They tell the story about my mother's sister Elizabeth, who was teaching at Hunter College at that point. Mother called, and in those days, and in fact throughout all of the seven deliveries from 1936 to 1954, she always stayed at least two weeks in the hospital. She called a couple of days after my birth in March of '39 and said, "Elizabeth, George and I would like you to be Jim's godmother. Would you like to come up and visit the baby and then we'll plan the Christening during your Easter vacation." Lib said, "Certainly, I'll be up over the weekend." She got on a train at Grand Central, got off the train at Rochester. She went to the Genesee Hospital. She went into the first floor where there was a flower shop. She bought a dozen roses, which for her on her salary was not the easiest thing. She took the elevator up to the maternity wing. She went down to the maternity ward and went into my mother's room and gave her the roses. Elizabeth said, "I assume that the baby is down in the nursery. I'll go down and see him." She tapped on the window and said "Ketchum baby." They held me up. She looked at me, she turned around and went back and said, "Mary, would you give me back the roses please?" And that's a true story.

By May of 1939, when it's still rather cool in Rochester, Mother was out pushing the carriage, and she had layers of mosquito netting over the carriage, not for mosquitos. There was a woman in the neighborhood whose husband was at Strong Memorial Hospital, which was part of the University of Rochester. He was a medical doctor and he

was studying psychology. His name was Peter Lindstrom. His young wife of a couple of years had just come to the United States because she had been hired by David O. Selznick and Company to do a film called *Intermezzo*, which she had already made in Sweden but now they were doing it in the United States with Leslie Howard as the male lead. She was spending as much time as she could with her husband who was doing his residency. So Mother was walking down the street and this woman came along with this lovely Swedish accent and said, “Oh, a baby, may I see the baby?” And Mother said, “Oh, no, he’s sleeping.” “Oh, I’d love to see the baby.” “No.” So I wasn’t shown. And that was how I was *not* introduced to Ingrid Bergman! When Mother and Dad told that story later on in life, I was fit to be tied, because at that point I was enough of a Hollywood junkie to really love that whole scene.

I found only one photograph of me taken when I was about a year old. It’s my Dad’s 1939 Buick. He was holding me and I was on the bumper. The only problem was the camera was about a block away. You can barely make out that it’s Dad, and you’re not sure what he’s holding, but you can see the car. But as we would say, “Homely in the cradle, handsome at the table.”

RITCHIE: On the other hand, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth children never get as many pictures taken of them as the first does.

KETCHUM: No, they don’t, that’s absolutely true. But how much grief I have taken over it over all these years. So be it. All right, Donald.

RITCHIE: Well, think of this as a verbal picture.

KETCHUM: Yes, I am. I got it.

End of the First Interview

THE KENNEDY WHITE HOUSE

Interview #2

Sunday, November 14, 2004

DONALD RITCHIE: I thought we'd go back to 1960 because it seems to me that's a pivotal year. You graduated from Colgate. You came down to law school at Georgetown. At the same time, you took a job as a staff historian for the National Park Service. What exactly were your responsibilities at the Custis-Lee Mansion?

JAMES KETCHUM: My first responsibility was really as a tour guide, and to work in the office when the visitation was at low ebb. In those days, unlike today, the Park Service always charged at these sites, but only a quarter. You held this device in front of the incoming visitors, they put a quarter into it, you pulled the trigger, and the quarter went down and added a number, so it also took the daily census of visitors. You stood just inside Mrs. Lee's conservatory, with all of her plants. Her father had built the house and he was very interested in agriculture and very much involved in the establishment of the first Department of Agriculture. If there were not many visitors coming in, you started to give a bit of interpretation, and then you sent them on their way. Now, many times, you were just behind the person who was welcoming them, and you literally did lead them through. If you could put in time on weekends, holidays, and so forth, when there were enough people, you could make a great deal of difference as far as moving them through the house.

The office that I worked out of was on the second floor of what had been a potting shed, and I believe it really was constructed more during the post-Custis-Lee times. It was built by the army after they had taken over the site. They took it over, of course, during the Civil War, then continued on, and there was a long, long, long period of litigation between the Lee heirs and the federal government about the return of the house and the surrounding grounds. But, unfortunately, the army's insistence on burying people almost right up to the front steps meant that the family was not really very happy to press that. So it was settled under financial terms, and that was the last that the family actually spent there.

In front of the house, directly in front, is the tomb of Pierre L'Enfant, who had been buried out in a farm in Maryland, and he was re-interred there in about 1900. A great tablet supported by columns shows the map of the city of Washington as part of the

original L'Enfant plan. It's all incised in granite. That used to cause a bit of a problem because when you were working during the day and coming back at night with a date, which we often did, you brought very cheap Italian wine (from my hometown of Clyde, New York). It was the perfect bar. You would set up this, what would be a form of Chianti, on this tombstone, with glasses, usually just paper cups. The cups were light and you'd knock them over and I can remember once, the Potomac River running red. The reason I remember it is not from that evening, but the next day I was on duty and it was a very hot, hot, hot fall day. A group of the Daughters of the Confederacy were going through, and the women came over to look at L'Enfant's tomb and to bow in the direction of the city of Washington. A woman beckoned to me and said, "What is this?" And she was, of course, pointing out the purple Potomac on the incised map. I looked her straight in the eye and I said, "Pigeons, madam, pigeons." And that was the way we left it.

But I had a very supportive mentor and boss who was the superintendent of the site, named Paul Swartz. Paul early on said, "Look, you may, after you've told the story for the 500th time, be a little bored. There are two things I'd like you to do. One is to set up a program for all of the public schools in the area, do a slide show at the school, and then make arrangements for them to bus the group to Custis-Lee mansion in the next month or six weeks." So I would travel all around Northern Virginia doing these school assemblies with my carousel projector and all that followed. It worked out very well. You had an audience every time. Usually these kids were so anxious to get out of the classroom for anything that they were cooperative. So that program worked well. And also, very little work had been done on the cataloging of the collection through the years. Some work had been done back in WPA days, but nothing really much since then. And so that was the other responsibility that I spent a fair amount of time on. And Paul Swartz would be assigned projects from Park Service headquarters. For example, study the Frederick—I'm trying to think of the name of the house out in Oxen Hill.

RITCHIE: The Frederick Douglass house?

KETCHUM: The Frederick Douglass house, yes.

RITCHIE: There's one called Cedar Hill.

KETCHUM: Cedar Hill, that's it. In those days, the house was privately owned by a group. And they went to the Park Service, at the end of the Eisenhower

administration, and asked that the house be put under the purview of the Park Service. For that to happen, the Park Service would have to study and weigh Douglass's role and all that goes with it. We were barely on the cusp of the awakening to contributions of African Americans to American life. He seemed like a perfect individual to consider, there was no doubt about it. So I remember spending a good six months, off and on, looking at everything that Douglass had done and putting together materials so that Paul could write the report to the secretary of the interior and the director of the National Park Service on this particular subject. As it was, within about a year's time, the government did decide favorably and Congress, of course, was involved in this, in turning Cedar Hill into a national site. I can honestly say I've never visited there. I did before it was open, but never since the Park Service took over. I was off at the White House at that point and never went back. And here all these years that we lived on Capitol Hill and it was just a trip across the Eleventh Street bridge. It would not have been far at all. So, some day, I have to go to Cedar Hill.

RITCHIE: It's actually a beautifully done site and very educational, too.

KETCHUM: It was very sad, and not in good condition at all, because I think the group barely had enough money to make ends meet on a basic day-to-day operation back in 1960. But, yes, that's what I understand.

RITCHIE: There's some parallel to Custis-Lee because it's up on a bluff overlooking the city with the nice, extensive lawn.

KETCHUM: Yes, and of course, he also, as you know only too well, lived on Capitol Hill as well. He was fascinating. I was born in the city of Rochester, and that's where he was publishing the *Star* and was doing all kinds of things, so that kind of played into my consciousness. I remember there were an awful lot of people in the Park Service, probably for good reason, not necessarily reasons that we would think of, who were very much opposed to it being turned into a historic site. I think they were always afraid of letting the genie out of the bottle. If they started saying yes to one, then they were going to have to take on Susan B. Anthony and they were going to take on everybody else in the country, and that was not really the way to look at it. Conrad Wirth was then the director of the Park Service, and he was succeeded by George Hartzog, who I had worked closely with because he was on our Committee for the Preservation of the White House. He was much more enlightened on the subject. He was a wonderful, garrulous attorney from St.

Louis, chomping a cigar. He felt that all America should be reminded of these historic sites, and the more the Park Service could do to open them up and put them front and center the better off we would be. But that was not quite the attitude of 1960.

So I felt involved in the Washington scene by being engaged in some of these projects. Everything that I was doing at this point did play a role later on. I mean, just the whole idea of the school assembly programs, and just being allowed, for example, to work on your own exhibit plan. On the first floor of the potting shed a series of exhibits had been installed through the years, and they needed some renovation and changing. In some of the text we had found errors that needed to be corrected, or interpretations that needed to be changed. All in all, it was a wonderful environment. I can't tell you what visitation was about, but it certainly would change after November of 1963. But I was long gone at that point.

I can remember a horrible experience. It was April of 1962. I was working at the White House, but I still had my keys to the main gate of the cemetery. My mother and father had come down from New York state to visit. I lived in an apartment over in Arlington, not far from Arlington House, in South Arlington. Mother and Dad somehow took pity on a woman in Clyde who did mother's hair. I have to explain, she was the only beautician in town, and what Josephine Young did not know was not worth knowing. Well, I was really stymied because Barbara and I had decided to get married and my folks did not know anything about this. They had never met Barbara and they never knew anything at all about her. So when they arrived in Washington on a Friday afternoon, I was still at work. I came home and I said after dinner (we were going to have dinner at the apartment), "About nine o'clock I'd like to take you on a little trip and show you the sites." That was fine, and at 9:15 I got out of the Volkswagen Beetle and turned the key on the padlock on the gate at Arlington Cemetery, opened the gate, drove through, went back, re-locked the gate and drove up. I bet Dad was thinking, "What are we doing in the middle of Arlington Cemetery at 9:15 at night?"

Parked the car and went around and sat on the edge of L'Enfant's tomb, just on the base, which is just a couple feet up off the ground, not up on the tablet. It's just absolutely stunning. The Potomac is in front of you, and the glide path into National Airport, and the lights of the city. You can see directly across to the Lincoln Memorial, and over here is the Jefferson and the Washington Monument. I started to tell them that they were going to be meeting somebody that weekend, and how special all of this was.

And suddenly, over in a huge clump of shrubs near Phil Sheridan's tomb, gales of laughter broke out. It was a Park Service buddy of mine and a nurse date from Boston. They were apparently playing doctor and nurse in the bushes, and they were listening to me talking to the folks. They couldn't keep a straight face any longer. So they came out and I had to start all over again. First introducing my folks. Then they left. They did not go back to the shrubs again.

When I finished and I explained and Dad had said, "Well, are we going to meet her?" I said "Yes, tomorrow evening." I said, "She has invited us for cocktails and then we're going to go to a restaurant which is called the Watergate." I said, "It's run by a woman named Marjorie Hendricks, and it's a lot of good Pennsylvania Dutch cooking." Mother's family all had come from Lancaster before they went to Seneca Falls in the early 19th century, so I thought this would all be very good. That was fine, no problem at all. But the difficulty that we had was that I had to make sure that we didn't tell Josephine Young about all this. She fortunately was not staying with us. She was staying with a nephew in Maryland. But I did believe that she was going to be due the next evening and she never was, she never came along.

So now we cut to leaving Arlington on Saturday afternoon. As I said, I think it was six o'clock for cocktails. Well, this was at a time when there had been a great number of Cubans coming in after the Bay of Pigs. They were settling in Florida, but many were coming up to the Washington area. And Barbara lived at 314 D Street, Northeast, right across from Schneider's Liquor Store. At the house just adjacent, with a common wall, a rental property, was a fairly elderly Cuban gentleman who had with him a young woman who he claimed was his niece, but everybody realized she was not. She was all of 18 years old, and she looked like a combination of Abby Lane and maybe Pia Zadora. Very strange but all the right equipment in the right place. Often times, she was outside puttering around with the rake and the grass and so forth. So, Mother was in the back seat of the Volkswagen, Dad was in the passenger seat in front, and we arrived a little bit before six o'clock. We pulled up and parked, and there was Abby Lane in a halter top, bare midriff, shorts, and a rake. I said, "Mother, what time is it?" She said, "Well, it's five of six, why?" And I said, "Well here's Barbara outside raking! My God!" I said, "I know she said six o'clock—should we stay in the car?" And Mother said, "Now, you get out and don't you dare embarrass her. Absolutely, she obviously has gotten her time wrong." And Dad, of course, was falling on his face looking at this woman.

My whole theory was, if I got out and explained that this was not Barbara, I could introduce Marjorie Main or Zasu Pitts, and it would be perfect. So we all got out of the car, and Dad's going over ready to be introduced, and Mother's standing back wondering what's next. And I said, "Oh, excuse me folks, but that isn't Barbara. She's in this next house." Well they could have killed me, there's no doubt about it. So we went in, and Barbara had spent the day at Arden's having her hair done, and buying a dress at Garfinkels, and doing all kinds of things. We had a couple of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and down we went to the Watergate. We parked and went in, and Pop loves martinis. Unfortunately, he had a couple at Barbara's, and he had a couple more at the Watergate, and then wine with dinner. Barbara had a new flip on her hair—it was a very modified Veronica Lake, but it came down and bent over and went back. Finally at dessert, having had too many drinks, this wonderful Presbyterian elder father of mine leaned over and said, "You know, you're a beautiful girl, but you got to get your hair out of your goddamned eyes." Well, my mother kicked him so hard that he let a war whoop out and everybody in the restaurant turned and looked at us! I thought, boy, I've had a few embarrassing times in a restaurant (and I had one a little bit later on with Mrs. Kennedy), but this was really the one that I did not want to even try to remember.

I can remember driving back to Barbara's house in silence. I was very upset, very frustrated by the whole thing. Well we got together for brunch the next day and, of course, Barbara thought it was the most wonderful, funny thing that she had ever heard. But, boy I could see this whole thing was off. The nice thing about it was that when we had set the date, the only Saturday in August that made any sense was the 18th, which happened to be my parents' wedding anniversary. So that really had some nice symmetry to it.

My first year in Washington, 1960, was a great year. I went to a party between Christmas and Thanksgiving. It was actually a party where one of Barbara's house mates, who'd gotten married over Thanksgiving—she'd been a college classmate of Barbara's, married a friend of mine from law school. And that's how I really got introduced to Barbara. Our very first date was at Arena Stage on the 9th of December '61. I called to thank Barbara the next day for really a great evening. It was one of those times where a cousin who had extra tickets called up and said, "Can you, in the next four hours, find a date to go to Arena with Charlotte and me?" And I said, "Well, gee, Phil, I've got a roommate visiting from college" or actually Fred [Rosen] was at that point, had gone from NYU Law School to Syracuse and he was working on his PhD in political science.

“He’s here doing research at the Library of Congress. I’m not sure, but I’ll do my best.” Well, Fred had no desire to go and I had my little black book, and the first four names I called, they laughed me off the phone. They said, “Are you kidding? We’re not going any place on three or four hours notice.” But the fifth name was Barbara, and I didn’t even have her last name, just her phone number, because I had met her at this party that she and her house mates were giving for Janet and Phil Donahue, who were the couple who had been married over Thanksgiving. She said, “Sure. I’d love to.” And I remember writing down “English major, likes theater” in my book with her phone number. So I picked her up and we appeared at Arena. My cousin said, “Well, this is surely not the roommate from Colgate, ho, ho, ho.” And I said, “No, no, it’s not at all.”

The next day, this was maybe the afternoon of Monday, I called to say “thanks a lot,” and one of her house mates said, “I’m sorry, but she has gone home. She had mononucleosis diagnosed and she has just left to fly home to Syracuse to recover. She has not been feeling very well.” Well, geez, I thought, this is bad. I went in the next day to Janet Travell, who was the White House physician and I said, “How do you get mononucleosis?” And she said, “Well, not from holding hands, so I would not worry about it.” I said, “Okay, fine,” and that was it. So, we started exchanging notes. I would send her something, say, signed, let’s see, “Mrs Lincoln,” and she would send something back signed, “Mary Surratt.” It was that kind of thing that would go back and forth. She never returned until, gosh, March. We had a couple more dates, and I’d been dating a couple of other women fairly steadily at that point, and it was kind of an embarrassing situation to try to figure out how all this was going to play out, but we decided to get married.

The worst thing that happened was we came back from our honeymoon the last week of August, came back on a late Saturday night. I was sure that some of my buddies in D.C. would have cleared out the apartment. But they did not get in, they were not successful, but there was a knock at the door at eight o’clock the next morning and I staggered to the door. It was a guy who was dating a house mate of a woman named Peggy Duncan, who I had been dating for about a year but we’d broken up early in the year. Peggy and her roommate were down in the car. They were hoping they could take me on a morning picnic down the Potomac. I explained that it was not possible, and Barbara came out of the bedroom and looked and said, “Is anything wrong?” And I said, “No,” and I said, “Dave, I tried to tell Peggy when we broke up that I probably wouldn’t be back in touch with her.” Indeed, years later, one of the guides in the Old Senate

Chamber said, “There was a woman here today, she was married, very stylish, very nice, didn’t leave her married name, but said you’d recognize her as Peggy Duncan. She wanted to know how you were.” And I thought, oh gosh, these things. But the funniest thing was that, in order to get rid of Dave, to go down to the car, I looked around and we had brought some of our wedding gifts back with us. We had gotten two toasters. I still had an old toaster and I knew that the girls didn’t have one in their house in Alexandria, so went and took the old toaster out of the cupboard and wrapped the cord around it and said, “Here, would you give them this? I know that they would appreciate using it.” That was my peace offering. But, you know, that was Washington. It was a city filled with an awful lot of young people who came down to get involved in the Kennedy administration. It was like the Sirens’ call and the Pied Piper all in one. You just never wanted it to end and you never thought it was going to end.

RITCHIE: To go back just a bit to the Custis-Lee Mansion, you were cataloging items there. In a sense, that’s the job of a registrar, isn’t it?

KETCHUM: That is the job of a registrar.

RITCHIE: You mentioned registrar before. For the record, could you explain exactly what a registrar does?

KETCHUM: Well, a registrar really is a record-keeper. Knows all of the vetting and all of the documentation of any particular piece. Often times, a curator will bring a piece with very little information, and the registrar will have to work with some of the folks doing research, do a fair amount of research himself, but make certain what it is. Technically, it was a much different story then as it is today. But, ultimately, every object has some kind of a record number and an appropriate folder or file to define and describe what the object is. The Custises and the Lees had a lot of 19th-century and late 18th-century engravings, especially of Washington. Of course, George Washington Park Custis being the child of Mount Vernon, and having been adopted—he was actually a grandson of Martha, but John Parke Custis went off and left Nellie and her brother George with the folks at Mount Vernon and they, not legally, but certainly in every other way, these youngsters were adopted. They became fully vested, as far as the death of Washington and Martha, that is how the property that Custis inherited in 1803 became his part and parcel, through Washington’s will.

I remember cataloging a series of maybe 40 or 50 of these Washington prints, mostly engravings. On the back, in very, very tiny handwriting, you would put a number in India ink, that could never be separated. In effect, you could be considered, if you did it incorrectly, damaging the value of this. But, everybody who applied a numeric had kind of a special way. You could almost identify the fact that you had done this. I did this as part of my job. And years later, in the Johnson administration, I received in the mail, addressed to me, a package with a letter saying, "Dear Mr. Ketchum, we know that you are collecting prints for the White House collection, et cetera. Please know that we hope these will be appropriate." It was an unsigned note to me. I did not recognize the writing, did not know anything about it. I looked at the numbers, and they were numbers that I had applied over there. I called the Park Service and they put the folks on it and they found that a disgruntled employee who had not been getting the raises and had not been getting the attention that he thought he deserved, knew that I was at the White House and decided to pack them up. I guess what he didn't realize is that I immediately would recognize these things.

Of course, they were not on exhibit. Mostly, they were in a study collection over in the safe-keeping in the potting shed. But it was just the funniest thing because, you know, you look, and you look again, and it can't be. You recognize the way you were forming your letters and this was one of those standard things. Boy oh boy, I was never sure what happened, but I did have to write a report and was interviewed by the investigative team that the Park Service sent out to check this thing through. But it was a very, very funny way that the wheel came around.

But that was really what you were doing. I mean, the word "registration" probably describes, somewhat, what happens. Everything from making certain that a letter to the donor, that a certificate of gift, that the donor signed all claims, and so forth, that the donor realized that there was never going to be any specific way, other than how it might fit into the scheme of things. That if, say, a painting was given, that it would not go on the wall with the donor's name on it. You know, lots of times, that is part of the original agreement. But, we were at a time when we were going to do everything possible not to be tied by donors restrictions. Of course, one of the problems that has resulted since then is the whole subject of deaccessioning, which is something else that we don't need to get into at this point. But, the whole care and feeding of donors is a rather delicate thing because you want them to be happy, you want them to be satisfied. You know they probably have other things you would like them to think about giving down the road a bit.

Yet you also do not want to be hamstrung as far as how the piece is going to be used. The Smithsonian, in recent years, has made some horrible decisions that have resulted in tremendous embarrassment both to the prospective donor and to the institution itself. That's the kind of thing that, on any level and with any collection, you want to avoid.

Arlington House had the distinction of being Mecca for many of the families of the South. I mean, they never wanted to admit that General Lee was actually a Union officer and sweated bullets over at Blair House deciding whether to go with the North or the South, and that a lot of the things that they were putting on his shoulders as far as his views on racism and so forth was just really incorrect. They were imposing something that they themselves felt strongly. But, you did have a fair number who came knowing the story. Douglas Southall Freeman had done a really fine job in his research and writings on the story of Lee. Custis, in many ways, almost a more interesting person, did not get the press. Yet he really made that site. Throughout the early years, he had these agricultural fairs on the grounds as they swept down to the Potomac. You would have sheep-shearing here, and you would have the various livestock judging over on another part, and various vegetable and produce stands that people had raised, showing. It was really like what would later become a county fair. He was very serious about certain types of agricultural research and, as I said, he was one of the great moving forces behind the founding of the Department of Agriculture for the federal government. But that's in a bit of a nutshell a description of what was going on.

RITCHIE: You mentioned that you were getting other projects assigned by the Park Service. Did you have any work to do at the White House before you went to work there?

KETCHUM: No. I remember working with a *Look* magazine crew, it must have been "Thanksgiving in Washington" or something like that, it was in the fall of '61. It was before I went to the White House. The same crew was doing the shoot at the White House. I can recall getting some questions about what they were anticipating with the White House, but I was not able—I mean, I knew a bit of my presidential history. As a kid, I can remember once sitting at dinner, I was about eight years old, and I asked everybody at the table if they knew how many living presidents' wives were out there. And they guessed a number, and I started listing them all. At that point, maybe it was as early as seven, I think Mrs. Cleveland was still alive. I went through the whole list, from Mrs. Wilson, and on. Well, everybody just thought that was amazing, and it was that kind

of encouragement—and you didn't need to give me much encouragement—that would make me go back and add a few more pieces of trivia to the storyline.

I can remember sitting on the stands on January 20, 1961. I remember many, many months later, after I got to know Barbara, her talking about going over and standing, she lived not that far away, outside on the plaza at the Capitol for the inauguration. The *Washington Post* and *The Evening Star* were also filled with stories about the White House. It was at a time when so-called “women’s pages” still were doing an awful lot of reporting on the social scene. And so, you were kind of consumed by the new people, and what was happening in Georgetown. It took on a life that you couldn't believe. I was certainly fascinated by it, and it didn't really take much to persuade me in the summer of 1961, when the White House first started looking to the Park Service to bring people in for some of those curatorial jobs.

The curator's office was a small office. We were never more than four or five up until, oh golly, about the time, maybe within a year before I left we may have gone up to six. But it's still just about that today. They do call in special teams for various things. But, no, I did not, and I probably was doing as much a crash course in the presidency. I had Stefan Lorant, for example, who did those picture books on the presidency.¹ I had several presidential biographies. At home we had a couple of encyclopedias and, from time to time, you could buy subjects that were specially bound and developed, so in '52 there was a new set on the presidency. But beyond just the general knowledge that I had as an undergraduate in Colgate, no.

RITCHIE: When was the first time you went to the White House, by the way?

KETCHUM: The first time I went would have been summer, and it was to interview for the job of registrar. That was the first time I had ever been in the building. I had never been in the building before. And funnily enough, the first time I went to the Capitol was in '68, at the behest of [Mike] Mansfield, to talk about the curatorial position there. I had never been to the Capitol Building. And yet, I lived on Capitol Hill.

It was, I can remember, probably July, because a lot of the people like Janet

¹Stefan Lorant, *The Presidency; A Pictorial History of Presidential Elections from Washington to Truman* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), and others.

Felton and others pretty much disappeared in August. The Kennedy White House was very forgiving with the summers. It was almost like a White House in a Washington of the '30s. It pretty much, by July, closed down. That continued to be the pattern for the next couple of years. But anyway, I went in, and the curator's office was what had been the map room during FDR's administration. It's where they kept the maps and various troop movements and so forth. A fairly secure area, but right in the center. The physician's office and the curator's office are the only two non-housekeeping offices—housekeeping, I suppose, in a sense, the curator's office could be called—in the entire mansion. Most presidential wives have had some kind of a room up on the third floor where the guests' rooms are, where they would put a secretary from time to time to work on projects, but other than that everything was over in the East Wing for the president's wife, and over in the West Wing or the Eisenhower Building, the Old Executive Office Building, over on the west side of the mansion.

Your security clearance for the White House was a bit higher than it would be in either one of the wings, and I think the main reason is because you're coming in contact with family every single day of the week. I went in and I was given some objects to examine and given catalogue cards. And I said, "Aha, I can do this." Well, I probably did not do it even half as well as I thought I was doing it, because I don't know how many people were applying for the job, but I turned everything back in, and *Life* had a photographer there that day. I can remember that Janet Felton and Lorraine Pierce, who was the curator, they were working with a woman named Nina Leen, who was a *Life* photographer. They were doing the final shooting for a piece that I found out, I didn't even know about it then, was coming out in September, on Labor Day weekend, with Mrs. Kennedy on the cover.

Anyway, a letter came from the White House probably about a week later saying, "Thank you, but no thank you." Then a phone call came for a job that a friend of mine thought he had landed from the Park Service and that he was called up with the Berlin call-up, and they asked if I was interested in that job. That was the curatorial assistant. I said, "Sure, absolutely." I went back and, and at that point, that must have been just the week that the issue came out in *Life* because I can remember telling Janet Felton and Lorraine Pierce how absolutely stunning they looked in the black-and-white photographs that Leen and company had taken. I was told then, they had my resume on file, that indeed if I wanted the job, I had the job. And now I would have to work with the security folks in going through full-field, and that took many weeks, it really did. I can remember

getting a call from some of my old underclassmen who came in behind me at the Theta Chi house at Colgate wanting to know, “Ketchum, what the hell are you doing down there?” Because the FBI agents never said why they were investigating neighbors at home, and the folks who lived under us in this tiny apartment we had in South Arlington were saying that, “We were convinced that you were blowing up a bridge somewhere or some wild story.” When I got clearance and started, it was really towards the end of the year at that point. And as I had mentioned, the first baptism was the baptism of correspondence that had flooded in courtesy of *Life* magazine.

RITCHIE: As the job grew, did you wind up moving around through the building, getting to see various parts of it?

KETCHUM: You sure did. You did quite easily as a matter of fact. Security was not at all like it would become after the fall of 1963. You had pretty much free range. The nice thing about Mrs. Kennedy was she made it a point of meeting all employees early on, and sitting down and talking. I went upstairs. I remember two things about her: She was smoking, and it was really my introduction to her. She was wearing nothing but jeans and a pullover. Her hair was brushed straight down and she looked anything but what the picture that I had of her and I had seen. Everybody had this impression of the world’s most beautiful hostess at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. She was still quite lovely, no doubt about it. Those eyes are so far apart that she could take a photograph well from any angle. But she told me that there was only one thing to remember about access to the house, and that was that every afternoon the president, after lunch, liked to take a nap. She really appreciated it if we didn’t come up to the family quarters to do any photography, anything, at that stage, but waited until he was through with his nap and had gone back to the office. This was what we honored and we did, and rarely would we ever get caught upstairs with them around. But sometimes you had no choice because she would call and ask you to do something that involved something in the collection up there.

My dealings with her were of really a very comfortable nature. She would come into the office. She’d bring John in sometimes if she wanted to meet with somebody over in the East or the West Wing and not take him along, and we would entertain him and do all kinds of good things, being older brothers or sisters. She sometimes would come in and say, “Would you care to play tennis this morning?” And I would say, “Mrs. Kennedy, I am not the tennis player that you would like to play with.” I had played a bit of tennis in

high school, and Barbara and I had played sometimes, but neither one of us were even equipped to walk across a court let alone be a challenge to her.

My philosophy has always been don't take yourself seriously but take what you do seriously, and that was certainly hers. She had probably the wildest, zaniest sense of humor of any woman that I would ever hope to meet. Sharp, funny, she mimicked people. She did it in ways that were not unkind, but she would do voices and gestures and all that went with it. Some people were individuals who were part of the establishment in Washington who she had to deal with, and apparently grew somewhat tired of their excuses of why certain things couldn't be done. You found very early on that she would give you an assignment that she wanted you to do, but that assignment might also be given to two or three other people. So you learned who those two or three other people were and you immediately got on the horn and said, "Okay, what do you know about this?" Ultimately, she would learn that we would send back a report signed by three of us, and she then got the message that if one was going to get it, you can be sure that they will be counseling with the other two. You don't have to worry about a race to the finish as to who gets there first with the best.

She did not always like the press. She didn't like what the press was writing about Caroline and John more than anything else. I'm sure she didn't like their interest in her, but she knew how to deal with them. She and Pierre would fight fairly often, because, whenever she would go out of town and not take the kids with her, he would then bring in people like Stan Tretick of *Look* magazine and other photographers. That's why we have those wonderful pictures of John Kennedy, Jr., coming out from under the desk, because Mrs. Kennedy was off in the Mediterranean in the fall of 1963. There's another series of the kids trick-or-treating over in their father's office at the same time. I don't think she had even gotten back at that point.

But the fact is that she would not give interviews directly. She'd answer questions. Sander Vanocur, who had covered the campaign and now NBC had assigned him to the White House, was somebody that she would sit down on camera and do some pieces with. I don't ever remember her doing anything for ABC. But in the fall of 1961, she did agree to do, for CBS, a tour of the White House, which would air on Valentine's Day of '62. Nothing like this had ever been done since Harry Truman moved back from Blair House in May of 1952. In those days I think the DuMont network existed as well, but ABC, CBS, NBC, and DuMont cooperated and what would happen was they had at least

four correspondents, and one would start in what is today the Diplomatic Reception Room. You had cables everywhere. Truman loved history, but he was the world's worst historian. His facts were never quite jiving, but he had a story to tell and he told it. "And you see in this room where Andrew Jackson . . ." and on and on. Then he'd get to the next room and the next correspondent would come along, and so you'd have this movable correspondents thing. They finally finished up, but they never went above the state floor, which of course was something that they did do in the Kennedy tour.

Television had grown tremendously between 1952 and 1962, and it was so obvious Mrs. Kennedy, for the very first time (unlike George W. Bush, who had a bulge up in his shoulder), had a bulge right above the waistline of her skirt in back. They used the very first battery pack miking system. It was just still in the stages of being developed, and it was rather large and bulky, but they somehow reduced it enough in size that wearing a two piece, very loose top over a skirt, something that was kind of a princess, an a-line at the time, but it concealed it well enough. It had to be all the king's horses and all the king's men, I can remember, trying to install the darn thing. But that allowed her then not to have to worry about having some kind of a boom mike overhead. She had all of that as part of her personal equipment.

Charles Collingwood was the correspondent. I don't know whether he had subbed for Ed Murrow on *Person to Person* at one point when they were on, but he had done one earlier interview, and he was fairly well-connected socially in New York, and so that was very comfortable. A producer from CBS named Perry Wolfe was the responsible party behind the whole show. Early on, there was an attempt to script this, and then all she really wanted was just to make sure that she remembered the donors and could pay tribute to them, because she was by far the best of anyone on the staff as far as putting it all together. She just had a wonderful sense of what and why and who and when, and it showed. Much of what she did was all taped in late January, but it was done just in one clean take. You look at it today and it's hysterical. Collingwood would say, "Oh, Mrs. Kennedy, this room is different from the Blue Room." And she would say, "Yes, it's red." It was that kind of thing that we all laughed at. I don't know whether she intended it or not.

But she was the true pro and it bothered her because John Kennedy was the one who she really was deferential to and said, "Oh, he would do such a wonderful job." Well, at the end of the day, the first day of shooting, they ended up in the Treaty Room,

which was still in a state of preparation and was far away from being done. It was really my favorite room in the White House, with no exception, because it just had all the wonderful Victorian, Grant elegance and what have you about it. And, damn it all, Barbara Bush decided to turn it into an office for George Bush and she just totally took everything out. It's very sad, and then a decorator in the Clinton administration named Kaki Hockersmith also got involved and did some horrible things to the room. But, anyway, that's where they ended up at the end of the day. Sitting at Grant's cabinet table, looking at plans for the room. Kennedy started to describe what he thought this program was and what it would mean for future occupants and so forth. But he just hesitated, and hemmed and hawed, and so forth. They looked at the tape that evening and said, "This will never do." So the next day, they put everybody back in the room and he came back up and redid that portion beautifully the second time around. I think she was quite surprised that she could do it as easily as she did and for him it was a little bit of a challenge.

RITCHIE: Well, there is a story that when Mrs. Eisenhower took Mrs. Kennedy through the White House for the first time she came back and she cried. She said it was like living in the Statler Hilton.

KETCHUM: Well she cried for two reasons. First of all, she had called on J. B. West [the chief usher], who had been introduced to her before the baby was born. Right after the election, he'd gone over to Georgetown to meet with her. After John was born she called him and said, "Mr. West," this is from the hospital, "I'm going to be leaving Georgetown Hospital this afternoon, and later today I am going to be flying down to Florida, but in between times, I'd like to come over. Mrs. Eisenhower has invited me for tea and this is the best time because I am not going to be coming back to Washington until just before the inaugural. Could you have a wheelchair someplace where I could use it, because I don't know how much walking we are going to do, and I really feel that I probably will need one." So, J. B. said, "Yes ma'am, no problem at all." So he went and said, "Mrs. Eisenhower, Mrs. Kennedy has asked if we can have a wheelchair for her." And Mrs. Eisenhower said, "Well does she think I'm going to push her around the White House?" And J. B. said, "Oh no, no, we'll have a doorman take care of it, but we really, considering her condition, I think it's probably something that would be for the best." Mrs. Eisenhower said, "Well, Mr. West, you find a big door someplace near where she's coming in and you hide that wheelchair, and if she needs it, we'll go and get it, but not until she really shows signs of needing it." So Mr. West said, "Yes, ma'am."

Well, Mrs. E walked Mrs. Kennedy through what seemed like every single room of the White House, and Mrs. Kennedy kept looking and looking for the wheelchair. Later, Mrs. Kennedy called the chief usher and said, “Mr. West, I looked everywhere for the wheelchair and it wasn’t there. Can you tell me what happened, please?” He said, “Oh, ma’am, I feel so badly, it was there, but Mrs. Eisenhower thought perhaps you’d be embarrassed to have it out where other people could see it. So she wanted to be discreet about it.” Of course, J. B. is dancing on this hot stove as he was going along. She said, “Oh, I have never been so tired in my life, absolutely.”

Mrs. Kennedy didn’t call it Sheraton, it was another hotel that she described the White House as being, another one of the chains. But she was, yes, rather depressed by the state of affairs. The house didn’t look terrible, but it was just still filled with reproductions and chintz fabrics in places where simpler was better. Mamie and Ike were very big on each having their own television sets and their own tray tables and eating in front of the TV sets each evening. It was just a different life. Mrs. Eisenhower, of course, had pointed out all of this on the tour. She showed Mrs. Kennedy where her card group played and where all of the other things were. Mrs. Eisenhower led a rather interesting life, because she never got out of bed. She stayed in until noon of each day. She did have an inner-ear imbalance. She did not have a problem in the White House with liquor, and yet these rumors were flying all over. Mrs. Eisenhower every morning had the housekeeper and the head usher come to her room about 8:30, and they would plan the day’s activities. Mrs. Eisenhower was always sitting up in bed with a pink nightgown and a pink peignoir, in front of pink pillows and a pink headboard, and they would go over the day’s schedule.

J. B. said one time he went in and she was on the phone with her sister. This was very early in the administration and her sister, apparently, had asked about Ike’s sleeping arrangements and how Mrs. Eisenhower liked them. Mamie said, “Oh, I love it, because I now just reach over and pat him on his old bald head any time I want to.” Well, that was really very nice, because about a year later, J. B. got a phone call, it was about seven o’clock in the morning, and Mrs. Eisenhower said, “Can you get a hold of Mrs. Walker?” Mabel Walker was the housekeeper, “And come up now, and not come up during your usual time?” J. B. said, “Yes, ma’am, we’ll be right up,” and five minutes later, up they were. They went in, and Ike was no longer in the room, and it was the strangest appearance that no one would ever believe, J. B. said, because there was Mrs Eisenhower,

but you wouldn't recognize her, sitting in bed. As they got in closer and looked, they realized that something horrible had happened, and indeed it had.

Mrs. Eisenhower would spend her mornings, after she had issued her orders for the day and had approved menus, signing mail. I love this story because, when I graduated from high school in June of 1956, I had two invitations left over. I sent one to the palace in Monaco to Princes Grace and Prince Ranier, and I sent the other one to the White House. I never heard from the palace, but, several weeks into the summer, an envelope with gold letters "The White House" in the upper left hand corner arrived. It was typed. The first time, I think, I ever recall seeing a script typewriter. I opened it up, and here, in script, was, "Dear Mr. Ketchum, President Eisenhower and I so appreciated being invited to your graduation. While it was not possible for us to attend, we want you to know that we extend every fond wish and blah, blah, for success. Congratulations." Signed, "Mamie Doud Eisenhower," in large, sweeping letters. Well, she thought that auto pens were the work of the devil, and no one ever dared put her signature into an auto pen system. She signed everything, and that's the way she wanted it, and that's the way it always would be.

Well, the folks in Iowa, and she was born in Iowa, these are the folks in Fort Madison where the Script Pen Company was located, had provided her with all the products for all these things. The pens and what have you. But Mamie, at this stage in her life, this early morning call up to the bedroom, had a horrible cold. And on her bedside, she kept a jar of Vicks Vaporub. So during the night, every time her nasal passages were filling up, she would unscrew the bottle and she would rub Vicks on her nose and all over her chest and really give it the full treatment. She did this apparently two or three times. When the sun came up and Ike looked over, he said, "My God, Mamie, what's happened to you?" She had unscrewed the bottle of Script ink instead of the Vicks Vaporub and she looked like she was getting half ready for a minstrel show to be performed on the South Lawn. But she had the greatest sense of humor in the world. The reason that she called everybody up there is, before she took it all off, she wanted them to see it. I think she also wanted them to realize why the pillow, why the headboard, why the sheets, why the nightie and why the peignoir were also covered in black.

That was Mamie in her glory. Later on, she would come back during the Nixon administration, and it was really rather sad. Mrs. Nixon would let her rearrange the furniture in some of the areas of the family quarters along the lines that the furniture was

when she was there. Then Mrs. Eisenhower would come back up here to the farm and Mrs. Nixon would call up and say, “Now can you come up and put the furniture back the way it was?” But Mrs. Eisenhower was very lonely and Mrs. Nixon didn’t seem to have the rapport with her. Mrs. E never was a great fan of Nixon’s, and I don’t think he ever forgave her, because she went to him on the fall of 1960, and Ike was not 100 percent as far as Mamie was concerned, and she didn’t want him out on the campaign trail. She said to Nixon, “Would you please tell him that you don’t need him and you would really not want him to campaign?” Of course, Nixon was absolutely cooperative, even though Ike had that wonderful press conference in the Indian Treaty room, when reporters said, “Can you tell us what Dick Nixon has contributed to your administration over the past years?” And Ike hesitated for a half minute a la Jack Benny, not giving any answer. But Nixon always blamed, in part, Mrs. Eisenhower, apparently, for losing the election in 1960, because she would not encourage Ike to campaign. And Nixon did go to Eisenhower and say, “Mr. President, I think I’ve got everything wrapped up fine and I really am not going to need to bother you for all of this,” and Ike was able to say, “Okay, I’ll appear once or twice,” and that was it.

Anyway, the relationship was not very good between them. I think they just never had sparked a kind of friendship. Mrs. Eisenhower was the easiest person in the world to talk to. She had that wonderful midwestern, “I’m comfortable in every situation” attitude. Probably as an army wife, she had to show that in spades. She’d come down to our office, and we had photos of administrations arranged, in album form. We’d start with engraved views, during the early 19th century, and then work our way up into the story of photography. She loved to take the Hayes volumes down, and later, the Theodore Roosevelt, and she’d go back to the farm and then she’d write a note saying, “Dear Mr. Ketchum, when I come the next time, could we look at the Hoover and the Coolidge administrations?” And she’d sit at a table in the office for a couple hours at a time. Then she’d come in and sit down and we always had a coffee maker back in the file room and hot water for tea, and she’d have a cup of something and we would chat. And, my God, you were talking to your aunt, you really were. When we came up here in 1970 for the cabin, she was still very much alive at that point, and she always was indicating, please come if you are ever in the Gettysburg area. This was before we ever had any property up here, but once we got up here, I never had the nerve to call her up and say, “Mrs. Eisenhower.” Yet I know people who have said to me, “Hey, she would have loved it.” She really was very lonely.

She had a problem here, because, when Ike was making arrangements for the farm to go to the Park Service, it was very clearly spelled out, and this was passed in the congressional legislation, that she would be there only through his life, and then she would move. The plan had been put in the works for the Army Distaff Home in Washington; that's where she was to go. They spent just thousands of dollars doing a special wing for her. There were several other wives who had been married to generals who had served with Ike in the European theater, and it was going to be a good, happy thing. Ike dies, and she changes her mind. She said to the Park Service, "I don't think I'm going to move out," and they're saying, "Mrs. Eisenhower, you've got to." One night when Jim Pearson, who was still in the Senate at the death of Ike, was over for dinner we were talking about this. He said, "Let me tell you a story. I got a call from the director of the Park Service and he said, 'What can you do about getting some legislation through which no one will really look at more than once, which will give her life use?'" And Jim said, "Well let's see what we can do and I'll work on it." He did and he arranged the thing, so within a week's time all was well again and the Army Distaff House was left with a humongous suite that had been arranged for her, and Mamie stayed at the farm.

But she just loved Ike's memories, and she loved the memories of the White House. The house out there, as you may remember from visiting it, is filled with things that various workmen at the White House would make for them. She loved going down to the carpentry shop with a list of things she needed for the farm, just as she was wonderful about having half of the White House staff up for picnics and making all kinds of modifications when it was under reconstruction. But, people really liked her, although, I used to ask who their favorite was, for those who'd been there from, say, the Hoover administration on, and Bess Truman always got the highest number of votes somehow. I thought, well, that was probably because she was in Independence half the time and they liked the freedom that they had. They loved her, and again, I think her midwestern nature. I met her once at a ceremony, but talked to her on the phone a few times when we were making arrangements for her portrait to be painted and also a copy of a portrait of President Truman. An artist named Greta Kempton had done both of them. Mrs. Truman was, again, easy and comfortable, and very much in command of things. Just let you know that this was the way that she wanted something done, but certainly understanding that you may have a different viewpoint, and she would let you speak your piece.

The house ran rather strangely in the Eisenhower days, because it was very much a military place. Mrs. Eisenhower had just tremendous distaste for any type of carpeting

that showed footprints. Unfortunately, much of the White House carpet would show footprints. So, wherever anybody went, they got used to buying narrower carpeting for hallways, so they could walk on the marble on either side. The staff was forever on their hands and knees trying to brush out footprints. The other thing was, there was a kitchen elevator, which was used for functions that were going on up on the state floor and sometimes in the family quarters—although there was no dining room in the family quarters, and hence the TV trays. The main elevator for the house, which went from the ground floor up to the third floor, she only wanted used for herself and for Ike. There was a young doorman who was a wild character, who loved to run the elevator all the time, he being the only one on it. At one point, she pressed for the elevator and it kept going up and down, up and down. He was just having a field day. So she, who was not in the best condition, raced to another level where there was the glass windows and you could look in as the elevator went down. She spied who it was and she raced to the usher's office and said, "Get that man in here right away!" She didn't fire him, but she said, under no uncertain terms, "You are in my elevator, and you should not be in my elevator!" They got the message after that.

RITCHIE: When Mrs. Kennedy came in, the whole place essentially was filled with reproductions. Much of it was hotel-type furniture. Where did she start? Did she have a plan of action of what she wanted to do?

KETCHUM: Well, yes, she did. She really came prepared, there's no doubt about it. Just after the election, the first week of November, she asked the Library of Congress not only for books but for monographs, for all kinds of things that were in the library collection that they could copy. While xerography was in its infancy at that point, they must have burned up the one machine the library had because it all came over. A great amount came, and she took it with her. She had some of it in the hospital. She took all of it to Florida. Her way of operating was with yellow legal pads. She wrote just amazing amounts of material at that time. Just can't stop. She was digesting these things and she was also forming a plan, and that was, "What will the philosophy be?" She'd seen the house, she'd seen the condition, and she understood that there would have to be some changes made.

The first sense of what it would be all about seemed to have been: let's go back to the original construction dates. Let's think about 1800 and thereabouts, as far as when Adams moved in, and use that as the period. Then, very soon, she realized that each

administration had made a contribution, some tremendously, others very little, but the entire range certainly coming well into the 20th century, because of the McKim, Mead and White renovations, the work that Stanford White and Charles McKim did for Theodore Roosevelt was tremendous, both on the house itself and, of course, on the addition of the first office wings.

As this was all being fleshed out, she was also building in her mind a way of going about this. So you have a committee, and who do you put on the committee? She had some suggestions of various and sundry people. She had not met any of these, or very few of these people, although her family was certainly well connected, but she hit upon the idea, and I'm sure that somebody had suggested it to her, that "Mr. Americana," Henry Francis du Pont, whose father had been in the United States Senate from Delaware, would be the man because of his historic house-museum, or historic houses-museum, namely Winterthur. This was a man who not only had turned over his family property to the promotion of American arts, with a span from 1640 to 1840, but had also set up a program for scholars and for fellows, which would end up being one of the first programs of a master's in museology, at Winterthur, the degree was granted by the University of Delaware.

I was fascinated by this because during my senior year at Colgate, Colgate was being considered by the New York State Historical Association for a similar Cooperstown degree that they were offering. We were guinea pigs. I would go over to Cooperstown and we would take courses and they would be evaluated and so forth. While we got credit for them, the degree-granting proposition was not to take place for a couple more years. Then Nelson Rockefeller came in. He was elected in '58 as governor, and he decided, when he heard about this, by about 1960 or '61, that it should go to one of the schools in the State University of New York. He got behind getting it into Oneonta, which nobody had really heard of and was where Pat Moynihan had his farm very close by. And so, Oneonta became the degree-granting institution, just as the University of Delaware. But you did most of your work on site at Cooperstown, at the New York State Historical Association, just as you do at Winterthur for their program.

Getting back to this, du Pont had been a [Harvard] classmate of FDR's, they had been at each other's weddings, but he was "Mr. Republican." His wife was absolutely astounded. I mean, she couldn't stand the name Kennedy, let alone the fact that there was a Democrat in the White House. Ruth du Pont was a very strong person, and she said, you

know, “Harry, don’t come home if you’re going down to meet with that woman.” Well, they were in Florida, and Mrs. Kennedy very wisely decided she wouldn’t have Mr. Du Pont down, she would go to visit him in Florida. She was down there in February of 1961. She and Jane Wrightsman, the wife of the oil magnate Charles Wrightsman, flew over in a small plane, I assume it was the Wrightsman’s, to Boca Grande, I believe, where the du Pont’s had their house. They were received, except that, I believe that the du Ponts had invited several other kind of society types from Florida to be at the luncheon. They were all dressed to the nines, and Mrs. Kennedy came just in a cardigan and a pullover kind of thing and was terribly embarrassed because she had not understood what the dress code was about. I remember, later on, this being discussed.

But from that point on she was laying things out. She really had already committed to paper some of the philosophical points and was showing where the gaps were in the collection. These were gaps you could have driven Jumbo the elephant through. The first time Mr. du Pont came to the White House, they were walking around and Mr. du Pont said, “Well, the only thing that I’ve seen so far that really might be worth saving in this room are those two card tables over there.” Mrs. Kennedy said, “Let me find out how long they’ve been here.” They had come in the Roosevelt administration and they had been given by Mrs. Crowningshield, who was Mr. du Pont’s sister. He didn’t know, he had no idea of this gift but Eleanor Roosevelt used to go out and accept gifts from people, from time to time, for the White House, and that’s how these arrived on the scene.

The first meeting was in February, and if you tick through all the things that happened in that first year on this program, there was just one thing after another. Let’s see, the first meeting, it was known as the Fine Arts Committee at that point, was in February. They met again in April. They issued a series of press releases on what they were looking for. By July 4th there was a multi-page release on all of the things that had been acquired and an additional want list. We had the *Life* magazine cover story in September. In the fall, we had the arrangements being made for CBS. Then we had the chartering of the White House Historical Association in November. It just went on. I remember ticking off about 15 different things that would normally take about five years to accomplish, that were all done in the first 10 months of the program, and that continued to be the pace. The next year, 1962, was an extremely busy year, because the rooms, especially the state rooms, were being totally rehabilitated and modified.

She didn't think about it as restoration, because she used to say, "Restoration to what?" Some of these rooms had never had—well they had association pieces, and that was terribly important. The things that we were being asked to consider, the prime category, were pieces that had once been in the White House, but the next category down were pieces which may not have been in the White House but had presidential associations someplace else. Then you got into the finest pieces of American cabinet-making. So you really weren't attempting to compete with the American wing of the Metropolitan, for example, but rather something that would help flesh out the White House story, and not the story of American decorative arts. But, that being the case, in all three categories, things really started to arrive on scene.

I remember the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] got into the act because, each year, probably going back to time immemorial, going back to when Mrs. Benjamin Harrison was one of the founders of the DAR, during their April annual convention, the women with their corsages and their hats would all be invited to come over to the White House for an afternoon tea. Somehow, Mrs. Kennedy was able to avoid it in April of 1961, but later in the year, she discovered that they had at their DAR museum in Washington, they had two chairs purchased by President Monroe as part of a suite of furniture for the Blue Room, from a cabinet maker named Pierre Belanger, who was an ebonist in Paris in the teens and into the 1820s. These chairs had been part of one of the White House turn-of-the-century auctions, when the hammer would come down in a Washington auction house and all things in the backroom had been carted over from the White House. Louis Comfort Tiffany was in charge of doing things for Chester Arthur and they said 24 wagon loads were drawn away. Then again with McKim, Mead and White in 1902 to 1903, the things that were removed then.

Anyway, they had these two Belanger chairs, part of a much larger suite. I think at that point three more had come back to the White House, and this would make five of the original set. The Daughters would not even consider loaning them. She was furious and so she let it be known, "They will never come to the White House while I'm here." And they never did. Nobody treated the DAR this way. Well, Mrs. Johnson came in and I can recall her saying, "Oh well, we'll have them." And the only time I ever remember anything being stolen from the White House was a green glass and bronze inkwell that was on a desk in the Green Room that had some association with Thomas Jefferson. During this mammoth tour, some light-fingered lady decided to reach over—because we had opened the rooms, they would not be behind stanchions and ropes, they would be

allowed to circulate from room to room and work their way into the State Dining Room, where tea and crumpets were being served. That's the only time I can recall anything being stolen.

We had all kinds of problems that would happen. I mean, the tourists would arrive on scene and somebody, of course, would be throwing up on the Red Room rug. We then learned that you put down coverings on the floor and take them up at the end of each day. I remember one poor woman who was incontinent, in the second degree, and that caused quite a commotion and quite a situation. So, the care and comfort of visitors was not necessarily the easy thing of all times.

But Mrs. Kennedy would poke fun at the DAR, and we would hear all kinds of things about what was going on. There were times when gifts would come in and they would be vetted and then it would turn out afterwards that they were not quite as we had been told. We always had awfully good people in the country who were examining items. I remember President Kennedy was very embarrassed because there was a Mrs. Maurice Noun out in Des Moines, Iowa, who had a ladies writing desk which dated from the 1780s, 1790s, made by a Baltimore cabinet maker. It had these glass panels, these oval panels in the cabinet case that was mounted on the desk, that you would open and find the shelves behind. These were eglomise, they were reverse painting on the glass. It's a reverse order of painting everything, so as you look through you see the foreground items first and then the background and what have you, and it's beautiful. Lo and behold, after it had been in the White House collection and Mrs. Kennedy had made a great deal of it during the television tour, it was found to be a centennial piece. A piece made 100 years later, in recognition of the quality of the original. It was beautifully made. The cabinet makers in the 1890s and the 1880s would follow everything to the letter. They would even use many of the same tools that their ancestor craftsmen had used in the 1780s and '90s.

When that story got out, it got a lot of publicity, and Maxine Cheshire, who was a columnist for the *Washington Post*, who covered the program for her paper at the White House and was forever digging up everything that she could possibly dig up, including going to various vendors who had sold things and showing her White House press pass, saying that she was from the White House and she would bring a *Washington Post* photographer and he would show his White House photographer's pass and he would be from the White House also. These people would pose as White House staff,

misrepresenting themselves. I can remember Kennedy calling Ben Bradlee up and just really telling him all kinds of things that Bradlee did not want to hear because of this. Kennedy was very protective. Mrs. Kennedy, I think, was fearful that he would not agree with some of the things that were going on. That the Blue Room, for example, would look like something that would be more a part of a madame's salon in a Paris house of the early 19th century, and not something that would be in the White House. But while he was not happy with the press, he certainly seemed to like what was happening, and told her so, and made it known.

It was always fun to go to the Christmas parties, because the minute he would spy anyone from the staff coming along, he would ask what project they were working on. Once, she was away someplace and the National Trust for Historic Preservation was meeting in Washington. It must have been the fall of 1963, but I can't be sure. It probably was. He was going to speak to them. He would oftentimes act in her stead. There were hundreds of them. There were too many to speak to in one room in the White House, so when the buses let them out they were all going to wait out in the South Lawn, and he would come out from the office. Twenty minutes before they were to arrive, I got a call from Evelyn Lincoln and she said, "Can you come over? He wants to talk to you." So I went over and he said, "Now, tell me a little bit more about the group." And I explained to him all of the things that they had done and some of the sites that they were responsible for and the Woodrow Wilson House was among them, and we went through all of this. He said, "Oh, I'm not quite sure what I'm going to say, but I'll try to put it together."

Well, not only did he go out and wow them, but he ended up with Edna St. Vincent Millay's verse about "building my house on sand."² I'll pull out the text of that at some point. But he ended with that. Well, they were just awed. I was as amazed by it, because I had never heard him use that before and I paid pretty close attention. We always got the press releases every day from the press office, of his speeches that had been given the day before. They were transcribed and then distributed to all the offices. They were, I think, mimeographed as a matter of fact. But anyway, we got them, and I was pretty familiar with all the things that he was saying while at the White House to various groups. I had been there for a solid block of time of two years, and knew a bit about it, but never had I observed this. And that was the thing, the curiosity of that man.

²"Safe upon the solid rock the ugly houses stand: / Come see my shining palace built upon the sand!" from *Second Fig* (1920).

We kept things over in the old Map Room even though our offices moved to the Broadcast Room not too long after I got to the White House, but we still used the Map Room to store things. I was over there at lunchtime, I had taken a sandwich over to eat, and it was supposed to be my free time, and I stretched out on pieces of a mantle, of a fireplace surround, that were on the floor. I suddenly heard somebody say, “Janet, Janet,” and it was JFK looking for Janet Felton. He had read in one of Maxine Cheshire’s columns that morning and needed to know some answers of what she was really writing about. We hurriedly found Janet and put them in touch with each other. But he looked at me as if to say, “What are you doing down there, sir?”

The whole idea of them being, first of all for us, just a family more than anything else, of having young children. Growing up in an active family where I still had younger brothers and sisters who were barely kindergarten age by the time I got to Washington, it was all something that you looked at in a much different way, and didn’t genuflect quite the way you probably would have had you not had some of those ties, and had they been a bit older. But it was a time when the press was filled with images of her, and her style was being emulated and copied. We had Nancy Nugent (Nancy Hough), who was a secretary in the office who looked enough like Mrs. Kennedy, and had Mrs. Kennedy’s hair, and some of Mrs. Kennedy’s looks, that from a quick glance you would swear it was she. We would make Nancy, on Easter Monday, during the egg roll, this is long before it became the organized thing it is today, kind of like a three-ring circus with clowns and everything else going on, go to the Diplomatic Reception Room door looking out to the South grounds which is just across from our office, and wave. The families went wild. Well, if they picked up the paper, they realized that Mrs. Kennedy was in Florida, she was not in Washington.

Then that led to my doing an impersonation of a man named Stefan Boudin, who was a French interior designer, who Mrs. Kennedy had gotten to know through her friend Jane Wrightsman, and who came to the White House and started making very critical comments, and very strong suggestions about what should be done. Of course, over here you have Mr. du Pont with his plans in action, and over here you have Mr. Boudin. They really did not like each other very much. Mr. du Pont was especially upset that somebody like a French decorator would be on scene. Boudin seemed to just kind of shrug his shoulders. Later on, when he came during the Johnson administration, Mrs. Johnson said, “Well, I know you, I lived in one of your houses.” Of course, he’d done Pearl Mesta’s house, The Elms, which the Johnsons had bought. Anyway, we started this business in

which I would impersonate Monsieur Boudin going around the White House with Mrs. Kennedy. Instead of, “Off with your heads,” it was always, “Off with the legs,” because he loved to lower everything and change scale. We did this for some of our colleagues in other offices, and in November of ’63, Mrs. Kennedy was just back from the trip. It was Nancy Tuckerman, her social secretary’s birthday, probably the end of the first week of November. She called and she said, “Any chance, Jim, that you and Nancy would be able to do—,” and I thought, God, what is she asking, “— your routine?” “Routine?” “Yes, you know, the impersonation of me and Boudin?” I said, “Oh dear, I don’t think so.” She said, “Well, Mr. West is going to dress up as the headmistress Miss Porter’s. He’s going to wear one of Miss Shaw’s uniforms and one of my own wigs. So the least you could do is support poor Mr. West who has agreed to go through with this.” So I said, “Okay, alright, I’ll do it.” So we did this whole bit in the White House theater for about 90 people and everybody just roared. She laughed harder than anybody else. Afterwards she came over and said, “How soon can you do that for Jack?” I thought, Oh God, there is no way Jose, and fortunately, I never had to do it for him.

When I was a kid, my parents gave me a number of books on a Russian folk character named Baba Yaga, who lived in a house that would raise and lower because it was on chicken legs. For protection, whenever Baba Yaga saw something was coming into the forest that would be a force that she did not want to reckon with, she would give the order and the house would come up. Young John Kennedy, by the time he got into the fall of ’63, loved these stories. He was just fascinated by it. So, after they moved to Georgetown, Governor Harriman loaned his house on N Street, she would call up and say, “Any chance on your way home tonight you could come over and read John a story?” I said, “Oh sure, fine.” At that point, I was able to find booksellers in New York who had used books who could get me some copies so that I was putting together a collection of some of the titles of the Baba Yaga stories for him. I found out later they were one of the best known if not the best known Russian folk tales that was out there.

Well, one night in January, I had just purchased a new Volkswagen Beetle in Baltimore, and those days you had to be on a list for about six months. I called Barbara and she was working for *National Geographic*. She usually rode home with me, and I said, “Can you just get the bus home because I’m going to be doing this?” She said, “Sure, no problem.” So I went over and I’d read the stories and Mrs. Kennedy said, “You know, I really haven’t been out anyplace. I’ve been to a couple of homes but I want to go to a restaurant tonight. Anybody have any ideas?” Nancy Tuckerman was there and she

said, "Well, how about Billy Martin's?" Something called the Snuggery. Billy Martin had two places on Wisconsin Avenue. She said, "Oh, that would be wonderful." And I said, "Hey, I've got a new car! Do you want to go in a Beetle?" She said, "That would be wonderful." Well, unfortunately the car idea was vetoed by the Secret Service, but the problem was not the car idea. The problem was that she went upstairs to say goodnight to the kids, and I said, "Nancy, do you have any money?" And she said, "No I don't have a penny." I said, "I don't either." Mrs. Kennedy came downstairs and I said, "Mrs. Kennedy, we're going to have to borrow a little money from you." "Oh," she said, "don't worry at all. You can't believe the youngsters' banks upstairs." She said, "I take money all the time." So she went up. She came down and she had a wad of bills like this. And stupidly, instead of my saying, "Do you want to give it to me?" She put it in her purse and off we went.

We got there and they had just dedicated at the restaurant what they called the "Sam Rayburn Room," and the maitre d' met us at the door and he said, "Oh, can I show you the Sam Rayburn Room?" And she said, "No thank you, that's not necessary." We went in and we were seated, and I can remember people really left her alone. There was kind of a buzzing in the room, but Matt Kilduff, who had been Pierre's assistant press secretary, and who had announced JFK's death in Dallas, was sitting with some White House friends over at one table. But everybody left her alone. The three of us had dinner and it was really very fine and very enjoyable. She was laughing and feeling, you know, you felt that no matter what she was going through, she was going to put a good face on it. Well, now it was time to pay the bill, and the bill was delivered. So I said to her, "Can you give me the money?" And she said, "Yes, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to put the money in my hand. I'm going to put my hand under the table and you just reach and take it from there and no one will be any wiser." So I thought that was fine. She took the money out of her purse and she put her hand with the money in it under the table and I reached under, and just as I reached, she dropped the money.

So I got on my hands and knees and by now the entire room is watching. And of course it's a white damask table cloth that comes down, and I am under scooping up these dollar bills that are down in one pile. I came up looking like I was looking for air, trying to keep the money somewhat hidden away. The waiter came, and I mean these were mostly singles that we were paying with. The bill was not outrageous, there's no doubt about it, but it was a horrible, horrible, horrible time on that whole bit. The end of all of it was that we got out of there without seeing the Sam Rayburn Room, and without being

thrown into the pokey. But I do recall that a couple of nights later she showed up at the same place with Marlon Brando. We didn't make the paper, but Brando, who decided to take her out, did.

Kilduff, at the end of dinner, did come over to say hello, but that was it. People were most respectful. Soon she moved into another house that she bought from Michael Straight, whose family were the Whitneys of the *New Republic*. And that, of course, became the house on the bus tour. I used to continue to go over there to read stories to John. It was a huge house. The Harriman house was relatively small. It had a lovely garden and pool in back, but the rooms in the house were low ceilings and you stepped down into a living room. You didn't have quite the space that she had in the Michael Straight house, which was a much different period and different design.

But she just wasn't happy in Washington and she wanted to get out from underneath all of the scrutiny and the tour buses. The sad thing about it was Billy Baldwin, who was her interior decorator from New York, had knocked himself out doing the house. She told him to come and take everything back, and to her dying day I'm not sure that he ever received the compensation—he got a lot of publicity, but never the compensation he deserved on all of that. But it's hard with the Kennedys, to separate, when you kind of get swept into their milieu and into their world, to look at them and be critical of many of the things that I think one should probably be critical of, both in terms of policy and in terms of some of the other aspects of their time there. But they were terribly generous. I never really felt anyone was the least bit condescending.

She was interesting in terms of how she wanted her children to address the staff and how she wanted them all to know them by name. It wasn't "Bruce," a doorman named Preston Bruce, it was "Mr. Bruce." She wanted to be absolutely certain that whatever was part and parcel of their title or of their name or whatever appellation it was part of it, that it was done with great respect. And she would line those kids up, Caroline especially was old enough to be able to carry off with this. Yet she preserved their world by making sure that their education was in the White House proper. We would all get called upon to take interesting things, "What do you have, Jim, that the children would like to see? What is that?" "Well, that's a leather fire bucket from the 18th century which has a symbol of George Washington in profile on it, from a company up in Massachusetts." "Do you think they'd be interested in that?" "Oh, I'm sure they would."

And you'd take these, and it was not the kids doing show and tell but it was the White House staff doing show and tell.

So when your day was broken up with events like this, you couldn't help but feel affected. I remember when Barbara was taken to the White House for the very first time, in '62. We were not married yet. It's when Mrs. Kennedy came back from India and Pakistan and Ed Murrow had sent a USIA team along to photograph her. The rushes were finished and some of the editing had taken place. You could not show these USIA productions in the United States. Congress had very wisely prohibited it, because it was a form of propaganda. But they were showing them at the White House, and we all went over and had an evening in the movie theater and then a reception. One of the first times that Barbara met the whole group, including the president, was at a reception for the judiciary the night before they left for Dallas. Barbara had made a dark emerald green velvet evening suit, I can remember, with a lighter bluish-green silk shell. It was a stunning evening. The Supreme Court was there, the federal judiciary, the Justice Department. Mrs. Kennedy was wearing a similar suit only it was in a deep wine red. So she said, "Oh Barbara, have you met Bobby?" Barbara didn't know who Bobby even was. I mean, she knew that there was an attorney general and that he was the brother of the president, but she didn't quite know who she meant at that score. And Barbara said to Mrs. Kennedy, "Oh no, I haven't." So she took her over and made sure. Then he had to ask all kinds of questions.

The Kennedys had more questions per square inch when you associated with them. You just never stopped answering them. I can remember the next day just talking about how absolutely wonderful we felt about being welcomed into the fold under those circumstances. That made Dallas that much harder. The day that we were, as I mentioned, planning the rest of the copying of the Kennedy desk, and going back to have lunch in the office. The officer who sat out in the cross hall—there was one security person between the East Wing and the West Wing of the White House, and it happened to be outside close to our office—coming into the office and saying that he had just gotten word that something had happened in Dallas. We raced upstairs to a guest bedroom on the third floor, what we called the Blue Bedroom, and there was a black-and-white television set up there. We turned it on and all we could get were soap operas. Fortunately, we were tuned to CBS when Cronkite came on and broke the news, and we were just—it was the most incredible situation that you could think of. You just didn't understand what was

next and what was happening. We went back to the office and soon we got the full gist of things.

What I remember next is standing on the South Lawn of the White House, oh maybe 8:30 or nine o'clock, watching helicopter after helicopter land from Andrews, bringing cabinet and sub-cabinet officers. Lyndon Johnson had called a meeting in the White House, in the West Wing. These people were all coming to go to that meeting. It was just afterwards when I saw—what was the movie?.

RITCHIE: *Apocalypse Now?*

KETCHUM: It was *Apocalypse Now*, yes, it was that scene with the helicopters, and that just kind of brought that whole thing back. We had always one chopper. It was the president's helicopter, and the Marine crew and so forth. But never do I recall seeing anything that was even close to that.

By that time, we had gotten the word that it was very likely that she was going to want to proceed with the plan to do the East Room and several of the other rooms a la the Lincoln engravings. The Library of Congress had some material, but we had down in our own office any number of books that showed the interior of the White House, and the exterior, at the time of the Lincoln funeral. So we worked with the upholsterer who had all of the black cambric that was used on the underside of furniture that was being upholstered for the White House, and oh gosh, there were several people who were involved. We spent the night doing that. Then on Saturday morning, a Mass was going to be said in the small family dining room, and she said at the last minute she really would prefer to have it changed and have it in the East Room itself so that Jack could be part of it. Just to see that casket in the center of the East Room in less than 24 hours after the parade and the Dallas part of the tragedy was something that you couldn't quite fathom. I can recall, over that weekend—I just stayed and slept on the couch in my office—Eisenhower arriving on scene, and I believe, within a day, Truman.

When I finally got home it was Sunday morning, and I lived in South Arlington. I went to the bedroom, sat on the bed, turned on the television set which was in our bedroom and looked and it was the coverage of them transporting Lee Harvey Oswald. The next thing I'm looking at Jack Ruby and the gunshots are going off. At that point I couldn't figure out what was up and what was down. I finally got some rest and I went to

bed and the next morning at about 6:30 the phone rang. It was Mrs. Kennedy explaining that she had made arrangements to receive some of the heads of state, just a handful, like De Gaulle, among others, not down in the Red Room where she would be meeting most of those representatives, but she would be meeting a handful up in the Yellow Oval Room. She felt that the Cezanne's that were there were inappropriate.

A man named Charles Loesser, who had made a fair amount of money in France and had a great collection of French impressionists, during the Truman administration, gave a collection of Cezannes to the White House. President Truman could not see any reason why they should be in the White House, and David Finley and Johnny Walker could see every reason in the world why they should be in the National Gallery. So Truman turned them over. Fortunately, while the language in whatever letter of intent was signed was somewhat fuzzy, there was no question in Mrs. Kennedy's mind when she arrived on scene and called Mr. Walker over, that those Cezannes were due back at the White House where they were given. I mean the minute she found out about it she went right into action. He hemmed and hawed and said, "Well, perhaps out of the five, could we send over two at a time?" She said, "that would be fine." By the time November of '63 rolled around, we may have had more than two, but they were all hanging in the same room, the Yellow Oval Room. It was putting the seal of France on space that she wanted to put the seal of the United States, especially if De Gaulle was coming. You and I would probably think, hey, he'll be very comfortable with the Cezannes and feel that we've really gone out of our way for him, but that wasn't her way.

We had just acquired a group of [James] Bennett aquatints. Large, elephant folio-sized, hand-colored prints of American cities circa 1800: Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington. Her call at 6:30 on the morning of the 25th was, "Can you get into the White House as soon as possible? I think things are really turned upside down here in the family quarters, but please come in? You will be falling over bodies, but would you get them installed and take the Cezannes away?" I said, "Yes, ma'am, right away." I was probably in the White House within 45 minutes after getting that call.

She would call early mornings sometime, but you didn't expect to hear from her under these conditions. I got Bonner Arrington, who was the head of the carpentry shop and we got the equipment. I put all the prints together and we put them on a type of dolly that we had designed through some plans from Winterthur, put them in the elevator and took them up to the hall, got off in the west hall on the second floor, went down to the

Yellow Oval Room, which is the very center, just above the Blue Room, in the very center of the house but on the south side. We opened the door and looked, and there sitting together on the sofa in the room are Aristotle Onassis, who apparently had flown for I don't know how many hours to get there, and Lee Radziwill, who was then his lady love. Well, I excused myself and we backed out and I said, "Bonner, I don't know what the heck we're going to do because we've got to get in there and we've got to get those folks out." Well, we waited for about 10 minutes outside, and I opened the door again and they were both gone. I don't know who got them word or anything else. So we went in and we installed, but it was one of those moments that if you could have your magic wand, you would make either yourself disappear or you would make them disappear.

This was the family that I had known from the beginning of my time at the White House. I remember working throughout this entire period of time, while Mrs. Kennedy didn't move out until the 7th or the 8th of December. Mr. West, who was very much a supporter of our program and very helpful, and quite an amazing and efficient person, headed the usher's office, really what a hotel manager would do for a large establishment, never seemed to show any emotion at all with any of this. And I couldn't take it any longer. I knew him well enough, and I finally said, "J.B., what the hell goes on? Do you have ice water in your veins?" He said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "Well, you just don't even seem to be affected in the least by all of this. This is just a horrible situation." He looked at me and said, "I came to the White House in 1941, and my first president was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and I mourned in April of 1945." And I thought, aha, that's it. You get involved with the first one and you never get as involved with anything that is part of a succeeding administration.

I felt very close to the Johnsons, because while the Kennedys partied with one group of people and worked with another, the Johnson's partied and worked with the same group. They drew you in even more so. But by the time the Nixons came around, it was quite a different story. (laughs) They neither worked nor partied with anybody. No, it was quite different.

RITCHIE: One other thing about Mrs. Kennedy was that I just heard a talk by Charles Atherton [member of the Commission on Fine Arts] about the work around Lafayette Square, in which she had an enormous impact, not only on the restoration of the building but on the restoration of the neighborhood around it.

KETCHUM: Right, exactly. Well, the head of GSA [General Services Administration] was a man named Bernard Boutin, who was a political figure from New England who came down and really was quite an amazing character. One of the members of the Fine Arts Commission was a friend of the Kennedys, and somebody who was around a good deal, William Walton. He was a Washington painter, single, but certainly one of those people who always played the extra man role at dinner parties. But somebody who JFK, and certainly Mrs. Kennedy, thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed, and cut across many levels of the town. He was on the Fine Arts Commission, later chairman of it, as a matter of fact, for a period of time. I think it was John Carl Warneke who got involved as well at that same period of time. Anyway, the plan was to raze all of the buildings on both Madison and on Jackson Place, on either side. You would still have the church and the Hay-Adams Hotel across the way, but they would literally do to the side streets what they built the Hay-Adams, after they tore down John Hay's and Henry Adams' houses earlier in the century.

Somehow she was prevailed upon, and she really took it to heart. She had already been involved in trying to figure out how what was called a "National Cultural Center" would work out. That was Edward Durrell Stone's plan, and to raise money for that she would have the model brought into the State Dining Room and would have any number of important people come for an afternoon tea so they could see the model, and Stone could explain. She also wanted to save the old Corcoran Gallery, what is today the Renwick, but it's where W. W. Corcoran put his money to develop this gallery but by the time it was ready to open—and it was open very briefly—he had so many pictures that he had to turn around and build the Corcoran on the present site and move everything out. Then it was turned over to the court system before the century was over and there they stayed until the 1950s.

She thought that was important, but soon her attention went to the Square. Funnily enough, I talked to somebody who sat next to her at a dinner party, well, maybe a year or two before she died, who said, "Mrs. Kennedy, I want to thank you for what you did for Lafayette Square." And she turned to the person and said, "I can't believe you're saying that." And he said, "Why is that?" She said, "Nobody has ever told me that before." I find that hard to believe, but she did, she certainly played a role. Charlie Atherton was exactly right. Without her push on that, I don't think it would have ever taken place, because they really had to come up with a plan whereby the facades could stay. It's quite lovely behind the Decatur House and some of the houses on Jackson that feed into a communal garden

back there that they can all use. It's quite nicely maintained. I'm not sure by whom, as a matter of fact, would be taking care of it . . . whether they do it themselves. The [National] Trust [for Historic Preservation], of course, owns Decatur House, but you have places like that house that's devoted to the former presidents. You have the White House Historical Association. You have any number of other facilities along Jackson Place. Of course, then down around the corner you've got Blair House and the gardens behind Blair House. I've never been in the buildings on the other side where the Dolly Madison house is, so I don't know quite how they work, but they may work in a similar fashion.

But, yes, you think of the Lafayette Park itself with the benches, with Bernie Baruch sitting on a bench feeding the pigeons, and all of the things that went on through the years. You think of Dan Sickles [shooting Philip Barton Key in 1859]. If you really want to bring Washington alive, you could use the park itself as a stage and a setting and you can get some wonderful tales that come out of there. Of course, the attempt on the life of President Truman which was, again, one of those moments. There were still Secret Service agents in the Kennedy administration who had been on the Blair House detail that day, and boy they would tell stories. That was real cops and robbers kind of stuff. Although the attempt in the House Chamber [in 1954] certainly was also something that was rather scary.

RITCHIE: So many administrations seem to be focused on what's going on in the world, where Washington is just a place to hang your hat. It's not a place that you pay much attention to. The Kennedy administration really had a huge impact on the city, on Pennsylvania Avenue, and on Lafayette Square, in a relatively brief period of time.

KETCHUM: Because they both had lived in Washington before there was ever any public life for them. When Joe Kennedy was part of the Franklin Roosevelt administration, they had the house out in Maryland. Certainly JFK was away a good bit at school and so forth, but this was where they came back to quite often. And of course she, when her parents were divorced and her mother remarried, Washington soon became home. That was her first job of any note down here, working as the inquiring photographer for the *Times-Herald*. I think history always was her great love, and when she decided to go back to school after dropping out of Vassar, she went to GW and she enrolled in the history department. There were still people there when I took classes who remembered her as an undergraduate, and who really, apparently, in class took a very active role and was very much involved in class discussion. I remember one prof. at GW

saying it was really unusual because the men dominated the questions and the conversation, and she was never going to be bested by any of them, and that her observations were not only the most perceptive in the room, but the things that, years later, long before she ever was even the wife of a senator, that one would still remember and really happily so.

I don't know whether she was blessed with the kind of intellect in which she just saw things through a prism of a different time, a different century. She had a lot of time as a child to kind of be on her own and dream. I think it was a lonely childhood. She was quite close to her sister, although she could be, sometimes, critical of some of the things her sister was doing. Her sister spent a lot of time at the White House. I don't remember Mrs. Kennedy having a lot of women friends who would come to visit. I don't think that was really her thing. On the other hand, I know that she was never quite happy with somebody named Lem Billings, who had been an old roommate in boarding school of JFK, who was there every weekend. I mean, he had one room, the Red Toile room up on the third floor, that he thought was his. Peter Lawford would be there from time to time and she seemed very fond of him.

But, she did have an enormous effect on the refurnishing program. And I think she soon learned this. I think she was, like anybody in that situation, probably terribly surprised to find out how people perceived her. We saw her unloading trucks in that same pullover and the same jeans. We'd send the word along that the truck from New York had just arrived from Stair and Company or one of the places that we were buying 19th-century pieces that would be appropriate to the cause, or pieces that the Fine Arts Committee had assembled to send down for her just to look at and consider. And, hell, she would be at the tradesman's entrance where we would unload and be bringing things in, just hauling them right off and helping them down, or being down there. You know, it never bothered her going into a room and moving a candelabra that would probably weigh 35 pounds. It didn't seem to affect her in the least.

But we didn't see this absolutely stunning look that might have been on the cover of *Vogue* magazine and made the grade. That was not the woman that we knew, and we didn't know. There was always a humorous comment about something that was happening. She just had a very—sometimes humor can be cynical and biting—not really that, but certainly funny. David Finley was one member of the Washington establishment who gave her a particularly difficult time. Once, I remember, at the White House, we

were coming down the stairs, and he was standing down in the foyer on the first floor where the Marine band would play, and she spied him and she said, “Oh, there’s the old fart now.” I’d never heard her use that word before and I just about tripped over my size fifteens. She had a quality about calling a spade a spade rather easily and that certainly seemed to fulfill what later became that expectation.

When she was off getting ready for the birth of Patrick in the summer of 1963, she worried if we were selling enough guidebooks and getting the guidebooks to the public. So we all went out and posed for the White House photographer on East Executive Avenue. I was inside an automobile, leaning out, trying to buy a guidebook, and Nancy Tuckerman, her social secretary, and Bill Elder, who was then the curator, were outside exchanging money and books with me. We had that picture blown up beyond 8x10 size and sent it up to her on Cape Cod so she could see that we were all working very hard on the thing.

She didn’t only rely on sending back yellow-lined foolscap. Wherever she was, she was always writing memos. But she got into the habit, courtesy of the Signal Corps, of calling the Signal Corps in Washington and having them hook up a Dictaphone machine to the phone. The army would deliver the next morning Dictabelts to your office, and everybody had a Dictaphone and you would put this on the machine and you would hear her telling you what things she was thinking of. She could be many miles away but she was still going. And she kept all of this in her mind, I mean, how things needed to be moved from where and why. Nobody could ever have done this. I saved the Dictabelts, and then, I think it was about the Nixon administration, this was before Watergate certainly, I borrowed a machine and there was enough shrinkage that I couldn’t get the belts on. And the most stupid thing I ever did is I didn’t realize that there would probably be technology down the line that could reverse this, and I just tossed them. What a stupid, idiotic thing to do, because it just would have been one of the great, great things that would have been. It wouldn’t have equaled what [Michael] Beschloss has been working on with Lyndon Johnson, but it certainly would have helped understand the kind of attention to detail that she was so much a part of for the White House.

RITCHIE: How is your time?

KETCHUM: I want to check something in the kitchen for just a second.

RITCHIE: Okay—wonderful aromas.

KETCHUM: What I'm doing is—for some reason they seem to like more beef dishes than anything else at the soup kitchen, and beef had been a little bit on the high side over the past couple of years, but the dividend is that when I'm preparing it, we've got all these wonderful things wafting through the house and somehow you do live vicariously and you do live with the sensory perception that goes with it.

RITCHIE: I miss meals that take long hours and even days to prepare. Today when everything's microwaved, houses aren't filled with the aromas that they were when you're in the midst of cooking something.

KETCHUM: That's one of the reasons that I love what goes into barbecue, both the rub and then the smoking and then the very slow cooking. One of the beef dishes that I do is an Amish dish in which the meat is browned, and it's usually a good lean piece of chuck. So you're trimming away, because chuck can tend to have more than a bit of fat at the edges as well as throughout. But you're really concentrating on what the edges are because you'll get plenty of moisture from the center. Then putting into a Dutch oven, and putting it into the oven at about 225 degrees to 250 max for about six or seven hours. It just kind of melts. And what you get in flavor and juices and the herbs and so forth that are part of it. Well the smell, you can open all the doors and windows and be half a block away and it really is something that will affect you. I think that's the cooking that we probably all remember from our grandmothers. It beats the daylight out of me how people can buy these convenience foods which take just as long to prepare, many of them, and beyond that, why do they feel that they've got to get in and out of the kitchen in 15 minutes each evening? Can't they kind of move the schedule around a little bit?

One of the nicest things that ever happened to us is that early on we decided, and I think it was just doing what comes naturally, as our families had, is to have dinner every night with our kids. Even if we were going out, we'd just had a cup of tea, but we would sit there at the table and discuss the days events. When our kids started coming home from college and telling about the fact that they had visited friends houses and they never ate with the family. They were all on their own. Something would be in the refrigerator, something would be in the cupboard, something would be in the pantry, but there would never be something called a mother and father at the table. How else do you find out what's happening in your kids' lives? Very sad.

RITCHIE: One more question about the Kennedy period is that it seemed to me that another divide at that stage was, up until then there wasn't as much interest in historic preservation. Historic preservation was often re-creation rather than preservation.

KETCHUM: Exactly.

RITCHIE: And the tendency was tear it down and build something new. Not to restore something. Did you think Mrs. Kennedy's ideas about restoring the White House had much of an impact on that trend?

KETCHUM: Oh it definitely did. The story of historic preservation, the efforts are as old as the country itself. When you had, for example, the purchase of Monticello and the efforts of Pamela Cunningham, in what later became the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, with Mount Vernon. But that was really an exception to the rule. There are an awful lot of historic sites which were being torn down. There were also efforts by communities when they realized what they were about to lose. There was a house in Massachusetts that was considered the oldest house in the nation. It went back to the 17th century, and it was to be gone and razed—and this was well into the 19th century when this took place. Suddenly everybody gathered and word went out that this house was to be saved. It was written about enough so that people in other parts of the country started to understand that we were going to be losing these things. While Massachusetts thought, well, we're filled with this type of structure, we can afford to lose them, that was not necessarily the case and they soon changed.

In the 20th century, "newer is better" was the mantra, and it continued to be that with the opposing force. But there was never—not really until WPA days, when we started to do some of the recording and some of the documentation in earnest. We had teams of architects who had been unemployed, who worked for the Historic American Building Survey, which was probably the best example of what was being developed at that point, going out and taking measured drawings and making sure that no matter what happened to this building—I mean, we necessarily are never going to be always able to throw our bodies in front of the bulldozer, but at least we'll know what was there. With this came a process of education in which people did look and did see the efforts and think, aha, this is a very special place. It's a place that tells something about us that we're going to not know unless we have the example there.

So it was slowly changing, and so much of it is tied up with the national feeling. World War II obviously created a sense of Americana that would be with us for some time to come. During the peaceful range of the 1950s, you had the development of the National Trust, which had existed but was just kind of getting off the ground. So you had private partnerships. The federal government had not done all that much since World War II. They had turned over—HABS had finally found a repository with the Library of Congress—but you didn't have some of the energy that would be poured into these efforts a little bit later on. Ultimately, by the time Mrs. Kennedy arrived, you had the medium of television, which was looking for material that they could share. You had programming in the '50s that the Ford Foundation was underwriting on *Omnibus*, where some of the programs would go to a historic site that maybe the Lincoln-Douglas debates had taken place, or Salem, Illinois, and on and on. You had NBC developing a program called *Wide, Wide World*, which would try to plug you into history with Sutter's Mill in California. And slowly but surely people started to see this great mosaic of these pieces from the past.

Along comes a woman who says, "This house," this was the decision, finally, "should not tell the story of just John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, but really we should be proud of the contribution of all the presidents and what it means." That being said, I am sure, triggered the kind of response that we came to see with state governor's mansions, with state capitols as well. It was not just residential structures that were important at that point. And soon, people realized that if we were going to save a house in a local community, we couldn't wait for the state or the federal government to come in and do it. We couldn't wait for the National Park Service to look at it. They probably wouldn't look at it more than once. If we want it we've got to do it ourselves, and we started doing it ourselves. That is what accounted for the more than doubling of spending on the arts and the humanities in that 10-year period between '61 and 1970. The federal government was spending next to nothing. Seven cents per person was going into the arts and the humanities during that period. Canada, at the same time, was spending a couple of dollars per person. Any number of European countries were doing as much or more. It was a pittance.

But somehow, the most important part of it, and I'm sounding like a terrible conservative in this, but I don't feel that way, it was the grass-roots. It was the can-doers on the home level that looked at a spot where somebody had visited or someone had lived for a period of time, and said, "This is where we are at." It's just continued to grow

exponentially. Since then, to such a point whereby the 1990s when FEMA was really starting to spread its wings in the Clinton administration, they looked and said, “You know we are involved in emergency preparedness and we’re doing it for banks and we’re doing it for all kinds of structures, but we’ve never really set aside and realize that we need separate rules for galleries and libraries and museums and historic houses.” The Getty folks stepped in and said, “Hey, we will help you develop over the next four, five years.” They did, and now there is a division in FEMA called the Preservation Office that goes around the country and helps all manner of institutions, which are devoted to fine and decorative arts and to historic preservation, to tell them this is how you do proceed in case this, this, or this happens to come down the road in the form of an emergency.

So, we’ve come of age. At the same time you had a number of young attorneys throughout the country—Charleston is probably an exception to the rule because you would always expect them to be interested into their past, this is South Carolina, but these are young attorneys like Fritz Hollings and others who were practicing preservation law for the first time. They were representing the interests of these local people who wanted to save these places and they then found themselves elected to Congress and soon you started having a cadre of individuals who understood and who were able to be a part and parcel of the necessary legislative process. So when the Park Service would come up with request for this and that, when somebody would have to say, “Look we’re going to lose this unless,” and “eminent domain does not necessarily prevail here,” Congress had members who had been educated through the process, could step in and say, “We agree completely, and we understand.” Probably if we look at the areas that there has been in the last half century a real coming of age, it is in the field of historic preservation, and in the field of trying the damndest to make certain that these bookmarks in our national story are not lost and are not forgotten, and instead all can be done to make sure that they are safe.

RITCHIE: You think of the White House during the Truman years when they just gutted the entire building out. And supposedly put back things where they had been.

KETCHUM: Well there was some molding saved, but more often than not what they did is they just did recasting of things. And they gathered all the timber that they weren’t using and they took it over to Fort Meyers and they set up a shop over there where they made mementoes. We have two breadboards which came from oval disks of original timbers from the 1790s. One has a little burning from one side that we’d like to

think that it was part of the August 1814 visit. But they made paperweights and all these things and people from all over the country were getting a piece of the White House. To copy that later on, Fred Schwengel in the Capitol Historical Society taking stonework that had been removed from the Capitol from an early period and turning them into bookends. You've seen some of those things that go on from there. You know it's a piece of the Holy Grail. It's Veronica's veil, it's all kinds of thing molded into one. You'd think wouldn't there have been a better use of those original materials in the White House, and not have to be treated quite that way.

At the White House, every new system would come a long way certainly. As far as air-conditioning, William Howard Taft did not get up to holiday in Quebec Province with his family as quickly as he wanted, up in Murray Bay. He was sweating it out in his White House office and somebody had the ingenious idea of building a shelf on one of the window ledges and then putting ice on it and then putting a fan outside and blowing in what they thought was cold air. Well, what it did, the fan was so strong it took the moisture from the ice and within two seconds poor Taft's shirt was totally, totally drenched. Systems were important for the health, and sanity, and safety of Washingtonians, especially in the summertime, such as air conditioning, but I think we arrived at another destination in our thinking as well that we would never, ever be able to replace some of these things if we didn't start to pause and understand how they could be used in a different way and we should not be necessarily trying.

Margaret Truman's piano never fell through the ceiling at the White House as he claimed it did. It never happened. But he thought it would be a very good way to scare people. Just like J. George Stewart never saw stone falling off the Capitol Building the way he said it was. Every time a plane went somewhere in the vicinity of the Capitol, the vibrations supposedly caused more of the west front to fall off, that was another one. We had wonderful stories about Henny Penny, the sky is falling, but they were countered. In the case of the White House during the early '60s, Mrs. Kennedy was not doing anything that had not been done in some small ways before. Mrs. Coolidge had her committee to gather things, but she got into a few problems with donors who either wanted to control how the donation was used or who kind of changed their mind and recalled them. They were loaned and they came back. So that did not work. Mrs. Hoover on the other hand, turned around and decided that she would make the first attempt ever to catalogue everything. She was building, though, on an effort the second Mrs. Woodrow Wilson had

made about cataloging just the White House china. And prior to that Mrs. Benjamin Harrison had started a collection of china.

Julia Gardiner Tyler, who was the second wife of John Tyler, arrived during the Grant administration for a visit and brought her portrait, a huge portrait of her, and said, “I hope this will be the beginning of a collection.” Mrs. Grant was not impressed and she put the portrait away and was never seen again until later in the Hayes administration when it was brought out and other presidents and presidents’ wives were added. But through direct and indirect ways of the past, occupants of the House understood what it needed. Theodore Roosevelt had all kinds of opportunities to make changes and the only ones that he would make really were to try—we went through a great classical revival period in the early 1900s, and he wanted to go back to the days of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. That’s what McKim, Mead, and White convinced him they could do in the East Room and in the State Dining Room. Even though he still wanted to have his buffalo heads and other heads throughout the room, much to the consternation later on of Woodrow Wilson, who insisted on eating with his back to the fireplace and all that was on that particular wall of the room. They all had, or many of them, had their hearts in the right places.

The idea that Mrs. Benjamin Harrison had was let’s extend the White House all the way down the Ellipse on either side. We’ll have wonderful long galleries and people can come into the White House—it was rather easy to have access then. You could always walk in the South Lawn and there’s really no difficulty in coming into the House. You didn’t need an appointment. If you were a visitor in the morning, you just walked in and walked through and walked out. Let’s have galleries in which we could hang all the presidents’ portraits. Portraits really seemed to be the dominant note of any collection, and let’s line those up on either side and we go from there. So the end was that here finally there was an opportunity to not only think about what the physiognomy of a particular member of a presidential family and what a portrait they might have look like, but what was the chair that they sat in, what was the bed that they slept in, and what was the kind of porcelain that they entertained with. Bring all these things together and let us have really a dimensioned view of the lifestyle and the life of these individuals.

RITCHIE: The White House is an interesting combination because in a sense it’s a public museum with heritage items. It’s living quarters for the president. And then it’s also the working space for the top levels of the executive branch of the federal

government, in the West Wing. How much of the curator's work extended into the West Wing?

KETCHUM: We tried to limit it. What we eventually did was to get GSA to set up a division to handle it, because we considered the office function not something that we really were equipped to handle. First of all, we did not have the personnel to monitor it. Every office in the West Wing, every presidential assistant right on down to sub, sub, sub, wanted to borrow something from the Smithsonian or from the National Gallery. We had enough difficulty dealing with lending to the Mansion, the White House proper, without getting into that. But we did in the beginning have to work rather closely with institutions like the Corcoran. We had private museums as well as those that were under the aegis of the federal government. But eventually what we did by the time I left was we had worked it out so GSA could pretty much handle that, and they have continued to do that to this day. Because it's out of their budget that redecoration of the president's office is funded, with few exceptions. The White House Historical Association would step in from time to time and pay for some of the things over there. Many of them of course end up in a re-creation of a president's library. The Oval Office re-creation that takes place today as just a matter of course.

But we certainly gave a great deal of attention to advice where things could be located and found. What we didn't have were the people who could check on a regular basis, go into each office and see if something was there. And things have disappeared. It's about the last thing that an institution that has loaned something unfortunately seems to be able to do, to get into an office during the interregnum of a change of one administration to another. Back, oh, wow, I don't know whether it was the Carter administration or perhaps after the Reagan administration, but an awful lot of things did disappear that had been a part of the holdings of the National Museum of American Art, that should have been returned. I can't blame the Smithsonian because they were really depending upon the White House. The White House is not an easy place for an outside agency to police, not in the least. But I knew that if we in the curator's office took that responsibility it was going to be something that would be a no-win situation.

Similarly at the Capitol we tried our damndest not to get involved. We would look over the office of the senator that was borrowing the picture from the Buffalo Bill Center in Wyoming. We would explain to the lender exactly what the conditions were, what the light sources were, and so forth. But we really had to have a member of the

Senate staff in that office do some liaison work with the institution to make sure that there was that kind of a bridge. Because, again, you don't have the personnel to go to 100 offices. After one borrows a headdress from one museum and a sculpture, a Charles Russell bronze, from another, it starts to mushroom all over the place and it has. Diane Skvarla and her good and faithful staff do their damndest to try to be helpful. Some members are more understanding than others. For others it's just, well that's your job and you better be doing it, and if not we want to know why.

We had all we could do to handle what was going on in the White House. We were asked to take on Blair House and we just absolutely said thank you but no thank you. Just as in the Mondale time in the vice president's house, our office [the Senate curator's office] was asked to get involved with the vice president's house. I explained to them that just was not to be done. We did work with them with setting up the library up there. That was Marvin [Kranz, of the Library of Congress] and the retired librarian of the University of Iowa, and myself. Beyond that, no, because we also had the Fine Arts Committee, we had a painting committee, we had a library committee, and we were doing any number of other things that were somewhat not intended in the very beginning of the program that were popping out. All of them took extra hands-on and we did not have the numbers to really do adequately all the things that we were sometimes asked to do. I guess that's probably a better way to be than sitting there waiting for the next shoe to drop.

RITCHIE: Well, you mentioned transitions. I remember there was a very poignant picture of Kennedy's rocking chair being carted out of the Oval Office. Were you involved in the transfer of personal furnishings?

KETCHUM: Yes, we were involved in getting some of the things out of the office space and making certain that it was going to go into a storage facility that was appropriate until they could be transferred to a presidential library—assuming that maybe five years down the line the museum and library that was going to be devoted to his papers and to these objects would be completed and ready for them. But again at the point, while GSA had not gotten as much into the picture as they would later on, there were people from that agency that we were working with.

Meantime you also have a presidential family receiving all kinds of gifts from heads of state, and from things that are just coming over the transom. Many of them were

paintings, or sculpture, or textiles that had a value. What presidents wanted to know was: “How much are they worth?” We didn’t have the laws that would come after Watergate but we still had some restrictions. The understanding being that if they were given to the president by a head of state or the head of government, it’s a government-to-government gift and they should end up in a government facility. That would be something called a presidential library or a presidential museum. In order to make sure of that and still attach some kind of an evaluation to what was going, presidents wanted to know their value. So John Walker and Carter Brown [from the National Gallery] would come over and the three of us would go over to a room in the Executive Office Building was just lined, cheek by jowl, with stuff. I mean, you had paintings on velvet. I used to be embarrassed to call them up and say, “Can you come over and we can do our thing?” But they rather enjoyed it. It was kind of like a busman’s holiday. They would come and we would spend the morning examining these things. Walker—I was always interested in this relationship with Carter because it was quite different from what I would’ve expected where two people had worked rather closely together—Walker was rather dismissive of some of Carter’s views. Maybe Carter and I were from a different generation, I don’t know. Carter was one of those people that I always wanted to imitate because he had this kind of distinctive way of speaking and acting. It could be a little off-putting, but obviously it was a societal thing, or something I never quite understood.

But anyway you can’t believe what people would do and what they would send. Some of them, especially the primitives, things that looked like were done by a cousin of Grandma Moses, were very charming. They would come from a particular part of the country which would show say a family celebration over a particular holiday, and you could see that in an exhibit down the road, very nicely. It would define beautifully those times. But other things, like some of the things Lyndon Johnson got, were paintings returning from Vietnam showing horrific scenes that they remembered from the war and venting their emotions on canvas instead of being on a psychiatrist’s couch and talking about it. You realize that these efforts have played quite an important role in the life of the creator. So all was fair game and you would proceed accordingly. Eventually they would end up in the presidential library.

We didn’t obviously have to do presidential papers. I remember one friend who did presidential papers in the next administration, Ralph Newman who ended up in jail. Scott Simon [of NPR] is his stepson. Scott’s mother was married to Ralph Newman. When I was doing the NPR commentary at the time of Reagan lying in state in the

Rotunda, I can remember being a little reluctant because Scott said, “You knew my stepfather didn’t you?” I said, “Yes I did” and I didn’t want to proceed further because I knew exactly what was on his mind. Newman got snagged by Haldeman to do the deed. Haldeman convinced him, “Remember that this is Nixon, and these are far more important than most presidential papers, blah, blah,” Eventually Ralph went to serve time. He was roughly in his late 60s, early 70s. I saw him one time after at the Johnson library. He was a very broken man. You don’t go to jail at that stage of your life, no matter what Martha Stewart can do, and feel that you could come out and hold your head high.

At the same time that you were doing things that were generated by the administration, you were also working with things that had been in the family for a long time. Objects that just because of their association suddenly started taking on new meaning. We were very careful, we never, ever would attempt to place a value that we would sign our name to on anything. Always, no matter what it was, something that they had to bring in an outside, non-governmental appraiser. Because it was really a conflict of interest there, so if you were going to donate a piano, we could point you to a professional organization that recognized the quality of these appraisers, and you could contact them, and that would all be part. If you wanted to add the cost of the evaluation and of the appraisal to the value of the gift, we could certainly accept that as well, and the tax people would look favorably on it. But they would not look favorably on my giving you an appraisal, because it was coming to a federal government collection. Sometimes people didn’t quite understand that. “If we’re good enough to give it to you, why can’t you come, crate it up, take it away, and give us the appraisal?” It just did not work quite that way. Most people understood, but not always.

On the other hand, if you had Lyndon Johnson, as he once did, calling me up when he was having lunch and waving a pepper grinder in my face, telling me that it had been given to him by the Japanese government but it was no longer working, and “can you get this Goddamned thing fixed, because curators can fix anything,” you marched to it and said, “Yes, sir, yes, sir.” And you ran down to the office and called some aide at the Japanese embassy and say, “Can you look into where the heck this thing came from so we can get a replacement part for it?” I thought it was some Shakespearean king waving his mace over me when I saw LBJ. His secretary had called. He always had secretaries at lunch with him, even though he was dining alone, because he wanted things carried out. Every dining table had phones under either end. I don’t know why they were always white phones under a mahogany table, it never made much sense to me at all.

The funniest thing is that when you went into the Cabinet Room, he had this poor steward, who was probably not more than five feet in height, and he was in a closet right off the Oval Office. He had a board in the closet that said, “coffee with,” “coffee without,” “Fresca.” At the cabinet table, and also on Johnson’s desk there were these buttons that he pressed. Somebody would come in to meet with him and he’d say, “Would you like a Fresca?” He’d press a button and Manola would get the glass and the ice and come in. This guy had to spend his entire day in this closet. The problem was that Johnson went from eight o’clock in the morning until eleven o’clock at night. The cleaning force from GSA came in once at three in the morning and heard this scurrying around in the closet. They opened the door and there he was. Nobody had ever told him that the president had gone home. Manola thought he had gone over to the swimming pool and would be back any minute and would want “coffee with” pressed, and he would have to swing into action.

Mrs. Kennedy had a slang expression about the staff. She walked into the White House kitchen once and was very concerned that there were too many people. They were getting in each other’s way. I remember her memo to Ann Lincoln, who was then the housekeeper. “Dear Ann, I went into the kitchen yesterday and there was more traffic than downtown Manilla at midday.” (laughs) You got an image of all these people racing around.

The personal side, for those of us who were working in the vicinity of the family, you never could escape. My desk was used by Lynda Robb as a study place, and fortunately, having four sisters, it didn’t bother me after she was using it for several weeks, and then I discovered that she was leaving these damn cookie and cracker crumbs around, we had a rodent problem. We always did have a rodent problem. I was finding mice droppings and perhaps droppings from a slightly larger rodent. I called her up and I said, “Lynda, this has got to stop. I don’t care if you use my desk. That’s okay. But you’ve got to take that food someplace else when you are through.” She apologized profusely, and the next day—she knew I loved Charles Dana Gibson—a book of his illustrations, inscribed from her, arrived on my desk. You know, when it was time for these people to go down the aisle, because we had seen them everyday, we got invited to their weddings, we got invited to all the pre-wedding parties. We got literally invited to everything but the honeymoon.

I can remember putting things up on mantles, pseudo, faux plaques saying that “In this room Lynda Bird Johnson and Charles Spittal Robb spent their first night after honeymooning.” Mrs. Johnson came in and thought that somehow this had been done in earnest. We had just done it photographically. She said, “Is that really going in there?” We had to say no, it’s not. She had to sleep in a room in which Mrs. Kennedy had us put a plaque before she left saying that “In this room, John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline lived from 1961 until 1963.” As if they slept together every night during that period of time! That was more than Pat Nixon could take, and one of the first things that had to go was that plaque. In fact, anything reminding the Nixons of the Kennedys, from the exhibits or anything else, had to go. Of course, they soon got into the business of modifying and changing rooms. It was rather sad, because they were still fighting the campaign of 1960.

RITCHIE: It’s interesting that there is that group of people who work for the house, for the institution, and yet when the family occupying the house changes that’s a dramatic change.

KETCHUM: It is traumatic, but some of them have been there for five, six, and seven administrations, the domestic staff. They are very interesting people. You’ve heard me talk about Charlie Thompson, for example, and all the things that he would do. This was an African American who truly was wed to the house. He was also somebody who just courted danger, every step of the way. Nobody ever knew what Charlie was going to be doing next. There was a famous story—he graduated from sweeping up after the horses that were pulling carriages under the North Portico, to being a bicycle messenger by the time the Coolidges came around. The first thing that you learned when you got to the White House was that if you mentioned Charlie’s name, you could get a different story about him from every single staff member.

Barbara and I used to be invited to picnics where we were the token members of White America, down in Virginia where they would have their annual gatherings, and all the old retirees from the domestic staff would be there. Why I didn’t have the presence of mind to take a tape recorder and wander around, I’ll never know, although that probably wasn’t quite the setting to get interviews. The White House is finally starting to do some oral histories, and advisably so, of Alonzo Fields and wonderful folks who had seen it from the beginning.

Charlie, who was dead at that point, but his memory was still extremely strong with one and all. He was assigned a bicycle and a messenger's job with Coolidge. The White House physician, who probably didn't have an office in the White House to the best of my knowledge but who would come in from time to time from his Washington practice, a la Cary Grayson and Woodrow Wilson, was doing an annual physical on Mrs. Coolidge. He gave Charlie a certain specimen in a bottle, and unfortunately they were still using corks instead of screw tops. Charlie had it in his bicycle basket, and he was to take it up to Walter Reed Hospital for examination. So up Sixteenth Street he went and at some point he hit a curb, the bottle popped out and emptied. Charlie simply picked it up and found the cork, went into an alley and filled the bottle back up, put the cork back in and continued up to Walter Reed and delivered the sample. He then came back and told the staff about it. They were horrified, but nobody had the desire or the guts to go and tell Mrs. Coolidge what she was being tested for and how it was working out. Those things became absolutely legends that were going around.

Probably the worst thing that ever happened was when Pa Watson and somebody else in the West Wing during World War II, this would have been probably late '43 or very early in '44, Pa called Charlie and said, "This envelope is to be delivered to a room at the Mayflower Hotel." What they didn't tell him was that it was information that was to be passed on to the British. It did not go to the British embassy because there was fear by American and British security that there was a mole in the embassy at that point. About an hour after Charlie left with the envelope, the White House operators got a frantic call from a shoe salesman from Kalamazoo, Michigan, saying, "I have some material here that I don't think belongs to me." They were smart enough to plug this guy into the office where this information had been sent from, and lo and behold Charlie had delivered the Normandy invasion plans, D-Day, to a shoe salesman instead of the British embassy rep in a room just across the way. He apparently had reversed the room numbers.

These mishaps went on and on—once during FDR's administration, David Finley and his wife (he was Andrew Mellon's lawyer and this was before, I think, he became the first director of the National Gallery) were invited to a reception. It was wintertime, and there were not the heaters in cars, so people had lap robes in the backseat. For functions at the White House, the chauffeured cars would queue up and as each car came to the portico a doorman would open the door. Charlie at that point was working as a doorman, and he apparently didn't wait until the car that had David and Mrs. Finley in it got up to the front entrance. He started to go ahead and open doors all the way along the driveway,

and when he got to theirs they didn't realize what he was doing. The lap robe was somehow attached to the handle of the car, so when he opened the car door the lap robe spun off, and apparently David Finley's hand was in somewhat of a compromising position with Mrs. Finley, much to everyone's embarrassment.

All these things had some reverberation, but Charlie's wife was an invalid and she did portrait sketches. She would look at the newspaper when there were announcements that Harry Hopkins or other presidential aides had been appointed to this or that, and she would do a pencil sketch of their face from the newspaper photographs. Charlie would take it to the White House and put it in his locker. He had a whole stack of these things, so that when Harry Hopkins would say, "Charlie, report to my office, you're in deep trouble," Charlie would report and carry in the envelope with Harry Hopkins's picture in it under his arm. Before Hopkins could get a word out, Charlie would say, "You know, my wife, no matter how ill she is, she just so admires what you have done that she drew this picture. Would you sign this for her?" What could Hopkins do but inscribe it for her and say, "Now, Charlie, you can't be doing this any more," and Charlie was off scot-free. The staff just admired this tremendously.

RITCHIE: Was he still there when Kennedy was president?

KETCHUM: No, he was gone by then. I think he was there through most of the Eisenhower administration. But FDR was delighted to see him again and FDR hated housekeeper Henrietta Nesbitt's kitchen and the way she handled food. Henrietta Nesbitt had come down from Hyde Park. She had somehow been involved in cooking up there. He couldn't stand her. He loved things like turtle soup, and that was just a natural for his messenger, John Pye, to prepare on a hot plate over in the West Wing, so Roosevelt relied as much on Pye for food as he did on the White House kitchen. Mrs. Roosevelt was not anyone who could cook, but she could scramble eggs on a chafing dish, so on Sunday night suppers she would preside. More people I've talked to who were invited to those suppers talked about her sitting at the end of the table. She had all these eggs beaten up in a pitcher and she kept pouring them in the hot plate, scrambling them, serving them. Some night we'll have to do a re-creation of Eleanor on a Sunday night!

RITCHIE: Would the staff swap stories like that about the presidential families?

KETCHUM: They would, about things that really delighted them. For example, Bess Truman had been in Independence for months and months and she came back—this was when the Trumans were living in Blair House—and the next morning she called the staff in, including the carpenter force, and showed them that the bed had collapsed the night before, with her and Harry in it. They both had to get out and go to other rooms. You didn't have security right under your nose quite like you do today. Sometimes, depending on what's going on in the family quarters, you have security personnel up there. That was never the case before, unless it was for a reception of large numbers.

But, yes, the staff would tell these tales. The trouble is that it's still much more an oral tradition than anything else. A few wrote books, like Alonzo Fields³ and Lillian Rogers Parks⁴—her mother Maggie had started as a maid as early as the Taft administration. Lillian, who had polio, visited a lot in the early years, but she came in to work, I think, by the Harding or maybe Coolidge administrations. But she knew all the administrations in between. She never retired until just as the Kennedys were coming in. She was a grand person and wrote an “as told to” book. It was kind of the beginning of these books. You also had books by White House aides, like Bob Gray, who was the cabinet secretary under Eisenhower.⁵ The difficulty with their books was that when you read them you'd think they were the only people involved in some of these decisions. They are very much a reflection of an egocentric view of how we solved the world's problems and took care of all the difficulties the president was experiencing. So you take them with a grain of salt. I know a lot of people feel as I do: I don't want to write a book. I'd rather help other people do it, and hopefully help the story.

I worked with Margaret Truman and some of her people. It's really sad because they are cashing in on their name more than anything else. Not so much the mysteries, which she never wrote, somebody else did. The publisher would send her manuscripts to check certain things. But I remember she did a book on White House pets.⁶ She insisted that certain animals that belonged to Benjamin Harrison really belonged to William Henry Harrison. I said, “The only thing that belongs to them is the family name and the grandfather-grandson relationship.” But she would fight. She really was a rather feisty

³Alonzo Fields, *My 21 years in the White House* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1961).

⁴Lillian Rogers Parks and Frances Spatz Leighton, *My Thirty Years Backstairs at the White House* (New York: Fleet Publishing, 1961).

⁵Robert Keith Gay, *Eighteen Acres Under Glass* (New York: Doubleday, 1962).

⁶Margaret Truman, *White House Pets* (New York: David McKay Co., 1969).

character and rather outspoken. You'd think, "Why don't you just say, in a polite way, 'Hey, bug off and don't bother me.'" You'd give her chapter and verse. You'd give her all the documentation she would need. So you have the situation where even though they are no longer at the White House—or you're no longer at the White House—they still seek you. I still get questions from past residents, or from their children, which I would just as soon not necessarily have to engage in because sometimes there are rivalries, shall we say, between sisters in a family who are both looking to somehow gain things after the demise of their mother. I'm of course talking about the Woodrow Wilson daughters in this case. (laughs) You don't want to get caught in that kind of a situation.

But the domestic staff is something else again. We were down there recently and I turned around and Barbara was embracing somebody who looked like he was all of five foot one or two, and it was Wilson German, one of the butlers, who back in the early '70s, when John was a baby and Barbara was not working outside the home, it was during the Nixon administration. Money had been cut from a program that the federal government had been operating in Washington, for summer jobs for youngsters in high school. Barbara and another mother with a baby in a carriage walked the streets of the Hill and got businessmen to put up the same amount of money and hire people for recreation, so the youngsters on Capitol Hill would have a place to go. Well, Wilson German's daughter was hired to help run one of these programs. She was at Howard University at the time. Wilson never forgot this, and when he saw us in a group down on the ground floor of the White House, he made a beeline for her. I thought, how wonderful to come back, and even more so—I mean people might recognize me, but to have Barbara come back and be remembered for something that she did, which was only tangentially associated with the White House, but more with the people who were part of this domestic staff family, you couldn't help but want to be part of it. We still exchange Christmas cards and greetings at birthdays with many of these individuals. They're as much the heart and soul of the place as the family elected to live there. They really are.

RITCHIE: Well, this has been fascinating. I've enjoyed this immensely. I feel as if I'd been part of the family as well after listening to your stories.

KETCHUM: But we still haven't gotten to Richard Nixon or my Senate service!
(laughs)

RITCHIE: Not yet, but we've been at this for a while.

KETCHUM: All right. As we put the postscript on this, let's polish off the afternoon with a little fire in the fireplace. If Anne wants a little sherry or you want a little of anything, we can do that as well, because it's all here. I hate to think that we will have other weekends that will not be as enjoyable as this one, but I must thank you for making it very special.

RITCHIE: It's been lovely, but I still have many, many questions to ask, so we will need to arrange some more sessions.

KETCHUM: We will do that, and I hope that when I get to Darrell [St. Claire]'s age, you're still asking questions.

End of the Second Interview

THE JOHNSON WHITE HOUSE
Interview #3
Tuesday morning, November 30, 2004

DONALD RITCHIE: The last time we talked about the Kennedy years, up through 1963. It strikes me that the White House curator is someone who works for the house, but the house changes depending on who lives there. How much did the house change between the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations?

JAMES KETCHUM: A lot. I hope I'm not repeating myself but the point that really was driven home to me was that you have a very special relationship—you being an employee at the White House under several administrations—a very special relationship with the first administration under whom you served. I certainly felt that strongly for a couple of reasons. One, the location of our office was literally in the residence itself and so you saw family all the time. You saw all the comings and goings on the private side as far as friends of the kids, and the schoolmates, and all of those aspects of private and personal worlds. Not only did it come to a screeching halt—and I think that was part of it, there was no mental preparation at all. I had met Mrs. Johnson a few times. I had seen him from time to time when he would come into the residence to meet with President Kennedy up in the family quarters, but normally he would come over from the EOB [Executive Office Building] where he had an office, and would come in through the West Wing. I don't think that the Kenny O'Donnells and the Larry O'Briens ever let Johnson in the West Wing, but I could be wrong about that.

RITCHIE: No, he didn't.

KETCHUM: Of course, Johnson certainly had somebody in Kennedy who understood his dilemma, and did everything he could to support him. But you never got the feeling from Kennedy's staffers, if you had a request from the vice president's office and Walter Jenkins, who was his principal aide at that point, that you had to necessarily honor it immediately, or tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow. Mrs. Kennedy was amazing because she would always invite the [Johnson] girls to come if there were special diplomatic parties where they needed additional hostesses, for diplomatic children at Christmastime.

Christmas at the White House, even with all the security today, has always been a time when press, and segments of the official Washington family, namely the diplomatic families, and Cabinet families, are all brought in to see the holiday decorations and the White House in its high-tinsel glory. But the transition was tough. I think part of my problem was that I'd never lived further south than Washington, D.C. This kind of Texas twang that was part and parcel of the accent really bothered me a little bit. I wanted to kind of mock it, and then I realized that I couldn't out of respect for these people. What won me over almost completely and totally in the first few weeks was Mrs. Johnson herself.

I was uncomfortable, for example, with Liz Carpenter [Lady Bird Johnson's press secretary]. I remember her coming into our office, she having gotten herself squared away over in the East Wing, along with Bess Abell, who was social secretary. Liz had been an aide to Johnson during his vice presidential years. We had a series of exhibits for the public, very small vitrines, very small cases, along an exterior wall of the movie theater, which would be the corridor that would look out over the east garden. The public would come by and you could do certain things that would prepare them for what they would see in the other rooms. They were very simple. If Christmas was coming we might just do a small case of Christmas ornaments through the years, what Khrushchev had given Eisenhower, and what the Woodrow Wilsons had used, things of that nature. We still had quite a few Kennedy things. This was December of 1963. She came storming in and wanted to have those changed.

There was something else that was on her mind that day, and she went back up to her office and called me. She had some information about availability of certain things. I knew that what she was telling me on the phone was just not correct. I said that to her in so many words, and she kept insisting that it was correct. I said, "I really think, Mrs. Carpenter, that what you should do is check back with so-and-so. Your time is too precious. You're going down the wrong road right now. Why don't you check back and let me know?" And then I said goodbye and I hung up. I thought that was probably a little too abrupt on my part, but 20 minutes later she called back and she apologized all over the place. She said, "Don't you *ever* let me get away with anything that I shouldn't on that score. You're absolutely right." Well, that was unheard of. Here was a woman who reminded me of Anna Pauker, who had been Romania's principal female powerhouse back in the Stalin era. I thought this woman is not to be believed, and of course, within a short period of time she became not only a great colleague to work with but a very close

personal friend, and is to this moment. She just called a couple of days ago with some questions about something she's been working on.

It was amazing to me to see these people who I had stereotyped in so many ways that were 180 degrees off course be as splendid partners in crime as she was. I have to tell one story about her, and only one, which relates to the time of the Walter Jenkins affair. Somehow, Johnson convinced most of the staff members of Liz's level that they needed recording devices. The Signal Corps went around and put in all desks some system that could be activated simply by sitting at your desk and tapping a lever with your knee. Two of Liz's assistants watched this whole thing in action and realized that Liz, who was very short from the groin to the knee, probably was going to have problems, but they didn't quite know how to test the thing out. So they called me up and clued me in. They said, "Go up and tell her you have some information that only she can receive, you can't tell anyone else, and watch and see what happens." They explained exactly why this was all very necessary. So I went up and closed the door and pulled a chair up. She said, "What are you here for?" I said, "Liz, this is really serious business and I think we've got to discuss this." I saw her start to move and wiggle in the chair. It was like the dance the limbo, where you keep going down lower and lower. She finally got to a point where I think she'd made connections, but apparently had not and then began doing it even further. In the meantime, I'm trying to spit out something which is going to end up with a great April Fool at the end, because I had to 'fess up what I was really there for. It took me about three minutes. If only there had been somebody in the corner with a camera to record the facial expressions. But I finally gave up because I was laughing so hard and everybody in the outer office behind the closed door were also starting to go into gales of laughter, because they knew what was happening. But that's the kind of relationship we had, and that's the kind of person she was, and unfortunately that's the kind of person I was, as far as having a reputation for being the one who would get involved in that. I don't think that my childhood was ever over for many, many reasons.

Mrs. Johnson really concentrated on getting to know staff and getting to know responsibilities, and then getting them to share with her everything they possibly could. They moved in the day after Pearl Harbor, on December 8, she lugging this photograph of Sam Rayburn, and having a couple of beagles on leashes. The poor woman looked like she was about to run down the roadway on the south lawn with these dogs pulling her, with Sam Rayburn flapping in the breeze. She wanted to do what she called "walk and learn." That meant that we did the entire White House from one end to the other. She

took—I assume it was Gregg shorthand that she was taking—but she took a stenographer’s pad and she made shorthand notes as we went through. I gave her piles of stuff, but she wanted to get her own impressions on record. Then she would go back and read her notes and do tape recordings. Of course, from the very beginning she was keeping a daily diary and a journal, which she used extensively for her book called *White House Diary*.¹

I never saw her in really a foul mood. She was an interesting person to try to peg because she would walk down the hall by herself just singing and smiling. She was in her own reverie. It was a little world that she had created, and I suppose it existed going back to her childhood, having not a mother after a very early age and being raised by an elderly aunt and domestic staff in the part of Texas where her father held forth. She had obviously been a very serious student at the University of Texas and had gotten into journalism after her undergraduate education as a means of supporting herself. She never grew tired talking about being courted in the most whirlwind fashion by Lyndon Johnson. She never seemed to be embarrassed by what she was doing. She would call me and ask me to come up to talk about something. It would be five o’clock in the evening. I brought all the papers that she needed to consider and she had some material, but she was sitting in a wrap putting cold cream on her face. It was just the most natural thing, as if you were talking to your mother in the bedroom before she was about to go out with your dad for the evening. She never drew lines. She had such a strong sense of herself and nothing really seemed to interfere with that at all.

She always apologized for taking you away from something in the evening. Or she would call from Texas and ask if Barbara and I could substitute for her at a small informal reception that she had scheduled at the White House. She always wrote you notes after meetings that had gone particularly well, or after an acquisition that you had been working on and she had been helpful. Years later when I had to call on her for some help in getting members of the House Appropriations Committee to look a bit differently at legislation that was going to fund the restoration of the Old Senate and the Old Supreme Court Chambers, I knew then what tremendous value she could be. She kind of just destroyed any of the stereotype of a woman who would have to weigh every decision and be terribly, terribly careful. She was careful but she really didn’t fear going into areas

¹Lady Bird Johnson, *A White House Diary* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

that other areas that some people would have probably stopped and said, “No, I don’t really want to get into that.”

RITCHIE: You mentioned that she wanted to carry on Mrs. Kennedy’s program.

KETCHUM: Right, which would have been the easiest thing in the world for her to say no thank you, because Mrs. Kennedy was so identified with that, both in the writing press and certainly in other media as well. We were getting to a point where every presidential spouse had a project, or projects. Mrs. Eisenhower did really what they had been doing for years, and those were the hospital visits or christening the *USS Nautilus*, or whatever else. It was a case in which Mrs. Kennedy had gotten into an area that was high-visibility, high-PR, high-interest, and for Mrs. Johnson to swim in those same waters there obviously were going to be comparisons. But it didn’t bother her. She felt that it was so valuable, both to the White House and to the country. The fact of the matter is that had she treated it as I think most people in her situation and position would have, I wonder if the program really would have been as alive and well as it is now, 44 years later. I’m not sure it would be. I really feel that it took two to put the kind of imprimatur on the program and its mission, and wonder what would have happened had Mrs. Johnson not picked it up.

At the same time, there was a great effort from all of her staff to figure out where she could do something that would be separate and appropriate to her needs and her interests. By 1964, the word “beautification”—which she despised, she hated it—every time there was a meeting that had more than four or five people she would throw out the question, “Isn’t there something else that we can call this other than beautification?” But the name somehow got into the lexicon at the White House and stuck. Beautification it was. She worked herself to the bone on that and did it with the help of an awful lot of people who could bankroll it: the Brooke Astors, the Lawrence Rockefellers, the Mary Laskers, and others. She also made sure that the projects were nationwide, which was obviously good politics. She was doing that as her main focus, but at the same time, and especially in ’64, she was trying to figure out what role she could play as the wife of the political candidate.

That’s where the Lady Bird Special came in, which was just amazing. I don’t think anybody at the time realized how nervous the Secret Service was about that trip and what kind of challenges she was taking on in going into the Deep South, and being

picketed at almost every stop along the way once she got down into the heartland, and having to get a bit of quiet in the crowd down below the back of the train from which she was speaking, to say what she felt was very necessary. It's kind of interesting because it was as much a marriage to what Johnson was doing in signing the '64 and later the '65 Civil Rights legislation and saying to the South, "Okay, it's time to cross the Rubicon." She was literally in her own very ladylike, southern way, saying exactly the same thing, but being very firm about it. Later on, when we had the Eartha Kitt situation and some of the other things that were coming up, you wondered how much of any of these were spin-offs that the public was willing really to be brutally frank and honest with her, because they felt that she heard and listened, and would be accepting and not just bring the veil across and tune them out.

She was a very complex person, yet I don't know of anybody who ever had worked with her—and I think, if I am correct, that probably only Dolley Madison, maybe one other, of former presidents' spouses, who were given permanent floor privileges in the House of Representatives. She really, in her own way, redefined the role. Mrs. Kennedy despised being called First Lady. I notice that Laura Bush does as well. Mrs. Kennedy always said it sounded like the name of a racehorse. Mrs. Johnson, I never heard her say anything about that, but she just never let you think that she was on any kind of a pedestal, whether she had placed herself there or anyone, she wanted it destroyed immediately. That was the make-up of the person.

I found myself leaving an administration in which I felt extremely close to in certain ways, even though your day-in-and-day-out responsibilities were not earthshaking and were not changing the face of the earth by any means, but when you got into the new family, unlike the Kennedys who worked with one group and played with another group, and entertained another group, the Johnsons worked and played with the same people. So you were at family weddings, you were involved in evening functions, you were doing any number of things on the social side, just by virtue of the fact that you were a White House electrician who happened to take care of the dogs, or just by virtue of the fact that you were part of the team of three who did the flower arrangements, and so forth. It was interesting to me how some of these functions have really grown in more recent years. But the fact of the matter is that they just did not build any kind of barriers. If you worked for them, you were just as apt to be around at ten o'clock in the evening anyway, so I guess the decision had been made long ago that you'll embrace everybody.

There were people there who were probably there as much—I'm talking about personal staff that they brought in, Zephyr Wright, for example, who was known as the "Queen of Tapioca," because she was able to fix tapioca as Lyndon Johnson had always remembered and always wanted it. She was not a terribly accomplished cook so far as White House standards were concerned. Rene Verdon, who was the French chef who Joseph P. Kennedy had introduced to the family, and who had come down rather early in the Kennedy administration, was absolutely outraged when for the first Johnson reception he had to make what was then not quite as well known as it would become later on, Chile con Queso. He screamed in his French Gallic accent, "Chile Concrete!" The kitchen was right next to our office so we always got to sample all these things, and we also got to see the angst that some of the kitchen employees were under when things were not working quite the way they wanted to. But Chile Concrete it was, and within several months Rene was on his way out and Henry Haller, a Swiss chef, who seemed to really cut through all kinds of worlds, and tastes, and interests in food, came in and stayed until the early Clinton years.

There were not too many changes in the residence, and there were not too many changes over in the West Wing. I often wondered, while we considered ourselves, going back to your original point, as part of the permanent staff, you certainly were subject to the political winds, there's no doubt about it, and it could happen. I certainly found that my feet were being put to the fire not during the Johnson administration but during the succeeding administration of President Nixon. I'm just trying to think of some of the other aspects of life in the Johnson administration as far as family.

The program continued with an emphasis on the acquisition of presidential and First Lady portraits, the so-called official portraits. There were not any portraits in many instances. The collection of presidents and their wives went back to the early 19th century, but there were still some gaping holes. Also, there had been no time in the first three years to acquire that many examples of American genre and landscape paintings. So Mrs. Johnson concentrated on them. We developed lists of paintings that were available to all of the members of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House. Johnson was the one who signed the executive order that made the Office of Curator a permanent part of the White House. Up until then it had kind of floated under the Park Service and the Smithsonian and was reporting to people outside as well as within, and it was an untenable situation. They realized that, but Mrs. Kennedy stuck to her guns and worked through Nick Katzenbach and the Justice Department to get the executive order for

Johnson to sign, and on the 7th of March 1964 he made the curatorial program a permanent part of the White House in perpetuity. Up until then, things that had not been given kind of a historical stamp of approval could really walk out the door with each administration. Or as we see on the Hill, if a member of the Senate retired and wanted to take his office desk with him, the leadership often would make it available through the sergeant at arms. This was the case at the other end of the avenue.

You had both a professional curatorial program that was very much set in concrete. You had the establishment of a Committee for the Preservation of the White House, and you built on the legislation that Congress had passed in September of 1961 as far as the permanency of the collection. I shouldn't put that under Johnson, because while the executive order strengthened it a bit, the good work that Clinton Anderson and others had done on behalf of Mrs. Kennedy back in 1961 had started it. From the time she had Anderson in for tea until the time the legislation was passed in the fall of '61, just to backtrack for a second, five weeks elapsed. If you can imagine doing something like that today in five weeks. No, no way.

RITCHIE: I was interested in the donors, the people who were on the committee. Did they change much under the Johnsons? Were they the same people who supported the Kennedys or were there new people coming in?

KETCHUM: The Committee for the Preservation of the White House was of course a brand new committee, and what it meant was that the old Fine Arts Committee, Paintings Committee, and so forth, were no longer in operation. We actually had four committees under the Kennedys. We had a committee of museum people, who were museum heads and curators across the country who could do the research and the spadework if something came up in Iowa that needed to be looked at. Those were the professionals. Along with them you had a library committee that Jim Babb, who was the librarian at Yale, headed. You had a paintings committee that Jim Fosburgh, who was the brother-in-law of Bill Paley, and the husband of Harvey Cushing's oldest daughter, Minnie, and then you had Mr. du Pont. This was the premier committee called the Fine Arts Committee. With the new Committee for the Preservation of the White House you had 13 members. Seven were from the public—so you had to reach into Mr. du Pont, Jim Fosburgh, and so forth, and collect seven from what had existed before, and then the other six were ex officio. You had the chief usher at the White House, the director of the National Gallery, the director of the Park Service, the secretary of the Smithsonian, the

curator of the White House, and the chairman of the Fine Arts Commission. These two forces comprised the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.

In addition, the Johnsons appointed people like Bruce Catton. There were not very many openings by the time they got through picking the leaders of the other committees. Who all else in that first group? Bill Benton, who had been in the Senate, who had been the founding father of Benton & Bowles, the advertising firm. He was brought in. Some of these were obviously appointments that Johnson himself was involved and interested in. Ruth Field—Mrs. Marshall Field—came along at some point, but that was pretty much it because you had Fosburgh and you had du Pont.

Mrs. Johnson was the honorary chairman, and the permanent chairman was the director of the Park Service, that kept it pretty much in government hands so you could rely on both the legislation that associated the NPS with the White House back in the early New Deal days of FDR. At that point they were given responsibility for care of the grounds and certain responsibilities for the early, early effort to try to get a handle on inventories of what was there, which later became the full-fledged cataloging program. It was a much easier committee to work with, streamlined. It met probably no more than once or twice a year during the Johnson administration, which was actually more than the preceding committees met during the Kennedy administration. Lots always goes on over the telephone and this was not the exception.

Every member knew what the want list was and they had no problem calling in with their questions and their comments. Usually we heard about it first before Mrs. Johnson did, so you tried to play peacemaker if it was somebody who was really upset about something that was going on, or felt that not enough effort was being paid to a prospective donor. She was great. She got on the phone and would talk to people about donations that were being considered. If somebody had an object in their own personal collection that we really had our sights set for, she was very much in favor of letting them know what she hoped. In the meantime, out on that wider stage as far as the arts are concerned, you had her wooing all manner of people.

It was at the time that they were courting Joe Hirshhorn. He was living up in Connecticut. Certainly the National Gallery was, but you also had the Metropolitan, and you may have had the Tate. You had at least one institution abroad and they were all descending upon him because he had let it be known that all the warehouses in New York

where he had amassed a fantastic collection of painting and sculpture, he wanted to see them go to an institution. Somehow, Mrs. Johnson got Lyndon Johnson into the act and he started putting the moves on Hirshhorn. I think at one point Johnson visited him in Connecticut—I know she visited him—he may have been in Manhattan and took a chopper ride into Connecticut. I’m not totally clear on this, but I know that the heavy hand of Lyndon was there and was reaching out. It was definitely getting to a point where all the efforts that institutions here and abroad were making were considered small potatoes compared to Mr. Pressure himself. And you know the rest of the story. It was unheard of that a federal institution would be named after a donor. The Mellon name, although it was associated with the National Gallery of Art, it has never been the Mellon Gallery. I’m sure that every time it was ever considered it was thrown right out the window, but suddenly we have the Hirshhorn Museum, and all that followed. That was certainly part of the deal, and it was Lyndon Johnson who made it. You can almost here him saying, “Joe, anything you want, my friend, we’ll give it to you.”

This was a different way of dealing with the arts in Washington, and a far different way than what we had seen in the previous administration. But by golly they were going to make their mark, and they did. All the efforts that went on toward getting the money for the Kennedy Center, which up until the 22nd of November of 1963 it had been the National Cultural Center. I can still remember Mrs. Kennedy upstairs in the family quarters in late November, early December ’63. I had heard about the plan. I was up talking to her about something else, and she said, “What do you think?” I said, “Well, you know, it’s kind of interesting because we have the Lincoln Center in New York and now we have the Kennedy Center.” If she had heard that before, she acted totally surprised, as if wasn’t that the most wonderful thing in the world. I walked away, and I thought, “I’m not sure that she actually is hearing that for the first time, but she sure did seem to like that idea an awful lot.” Of course, it was the Johnson push that made all of that happen. He was signing off on renaming half the country, from Cape Kennedy to God knows where all else, some of these things which later were reversed.

That’s a bird’s eye view of what was happening in the arena that I was working in. In fact, the one thing they did not do, which the Kennedys were about to do, was to name Dick Goodwin the arts czar. August Heckscher had done a report on the federal government and the arts that was published in early ’63.² He laid out a plan which

²August Heckscher, *The Arts and the Federal Government, A Report to the President* (1963).

ultimately resulted in what Johnson signed in '65, namely the establishment of the Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. A lot of the disappointment that there was not going to be somebody on the White House staff who would guide these new enterprises probably was something that the Claiborne Pells of this world were not terribly pleased by, but somehow it all seemed to work out. I would have to go back and look at the list of the first members that Johnson named to the first Arts and Humanities Endowments, because there were great people like—well, Gregory Peck made his way in. J. Frank Dobie was one of the first people I met—he didn't live much longer—at the White House. The Kennedys, for example, upstairs in the guest rooms you had Peter Lawford, and Mrs. Kennedy's sister Lee Radziwell, and so forth. With the Johnsons, you went upstairs and who were you meeting but John Steinbeck, and J. Frank Dobie, and on, and on. They had these icons out there, be it uouthwestern history or the world that we all knew as far as letters were concerned. It just didn't seem to bother them at all that that same bedroom tomorrow was going to be occupied by a woman from Johnson City, Texas, who had been doing Mrs. Johnson's hair for 35 years. It was just a wonderful mix of extremes. I'm sure there were some people who were part of the middle line, but wow, you never knew who was going to be on scene.

The thing that I loved about us being located in the mansion proper was that there were times when the West Wing, the president's office, did not want to do any kind of special tours for someone who they were avoiding. That's how I got to take, for example, Jayne Mansfield around the White House. Eartha Kitt before the Eartha Kitt blow-up. There was a long, long list. One day, a few years ago, I started putting down some of these names. I realize that I was the kid collecting baseball cards from Clyde, New York, or collecting Hollywood movie autographs on glossy photographs that I used to write away for. From John Wayne to Hopalong Cassidy and back again. One of the things my brother brought down with him the past year from upstate New York was one of my albums. It was very, very upsetting to me because the one picture which had been taken out was an 8 x 10 photograph signed in red ink, "To Jim, with love, Marilyn." It was Marilyn Monroe, and on *Antiques Roadshow*, a great point was made about three years ago that her agent used green ink, her manager used another color ink, her secretary used another, but red ink was reserved for her. Mine, damn it, had red ink, and it's gone. I don't know whether my brothers decided that they were going to have fun with their brother, but the appraisal value that was given to one on *Antiques Roadshow* was \$8,000.

RITCHIE: Did you take Marilyn Monroe through the White House?

KETCHUM: I never took her through the White House. This was part of my childhood collection. This was my album from when I was 12 or 13 years old and I was writing to all these stars. No, I never took her through the White House. I was once asked about her at the summer folklife program the Smithsonian does on the Mall. They did White House domestic staff at one point, and I was involved in sitting in a tent and answering questions. One of them was, “How many times did you see Marilyn Monroe in the White House swimming pool?” I had to explain, “Only in my dreams.” I had never really seen anything that resembled that going on, fortunately or unfortunately.

I don’t know why, but there were two women when I was a teenager that I used to dream about. One was Kim Novak and the other was Marilyn Monroe. There was just something about Monroe. I’ve seen every one of her films. I remember *Niagra* and *River of No Return* and even musicals like the Anita Loos, “Diamonds are a girl’s best friend,” film that she did with Jane Russell.

RITCHIE: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

KETCHUM: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, exactly. One of Carol Channing’s entrees to Broadway. But anyway, the whole business is something that you have to kind of avoid, but later on I wished that I had paid a little bit more attention to keeping a few notes on some of these instances. The only time I ever kept any journal at all was during the period of the assassination. I did that for about a month or so. From time to time I would just write down some thoughts and put them away. Unfortunately, they’re all packed away in boxes up in the attic. I have to say that if I ever want to make happy an overly patient spouse it will be the day that I go up and start going through some of these. I don’t know why but it’s very easy to put those things off. Yet when you get in the middle of it, it’s just fascinating what you have forgotten and how wonderfully these bookmarks of the past work.

RITCHIE: If you ever find any of those documents, we can add them as appendix material, diary entries and things like that.

KETCHUM: (laughs) Okay, very good.

RITCHIE: In talking again about the donors, was there any influx of Texans, in terms of the oil people and others?

KETCHUM: Yes, they were very much in evidence. Mrs. Johnson had a very close friend in the form of Alice Brown, who was the wife of George Brown, of Brown, Root and now Kellogg thrown in, too. If you look at Iraq and see where the money's going, it's going to Brown, Root and Kellogg. Oveta Culp Hobby was a friend. Let's see, the Johnsons had courted any number of Texas and southwestern artists, also. Stanley Marcus—but Stanley Marcus had been on the Kennedy paintings committee. Stanley Marcus made suggestions, but he never, ever would give a single thing. It was very interesting how he played his money.

I had a terrible experience with him once. From the time the spring of '64 rolled around until about '66, I probably had eight invitations to speak to groups in Dallas, Texas, and I just did not want to go down there. Finally, in '66, one of Liz's associates said, "The nicest thing you could ever do would be to help out there." I thought that enough time had lapsed, I'd go down. I went to Dallas. The first thing they did from the airport was to drive me by the Texas Book Depository and they said, "This is the speed that the car that President Kennedy was riding in was going; this is how slowly it was going." I thought, "Boy, this is nice revisiting all of this." I was not very happy, but the people just knocked themselves out for me. I was told that Stanley Marcus wanted me to come and visit him in the store. I went over and presented myself to his secretary up on the top floor of Nieman's. I was ushered in. We sat down and talked and talked. After about 20 minutes he pressed a button and in came Miss Jones, for lack of a name that I can't recall. He said, "This is my personal shopper. She would like to take you around. I want you to pick out something that you would like to take home to your wife, and something to your young son." I said, "Oh, thank you very much, that was just lovely." This was before we had all of the laws on the books that followed the Nixons!

I went around, and the only thing that saved me was that I was not going to feel like I was on some kind of a deal where I could spend hundreds of dollars. I found a summer straw purse that I thought Barbara would like. It was lined and quite beautifully made, and it was Easter time, so I found an oversized stuffed-type—except it was not even that quality—rabbit, a pink and white rabbit for John. When I got all through, Miss Jones said, "Wouldn't you like to have these gift wrapped?" I said, "Oh, certainly." Nieman's had wonderful wrapping, so they were gift wrapped. When they were finished with that, she said, "Now, would you like to pay by check or would you like to pay on your American Express?" I think that was the only card I had at that point, it was long before the other cards we have come into use. My jaw just dropped way down to the floor.

Fortunately, I did have a checkbook and I did write a check. It probably didn't come to much more than \$100, but boy did I learn my lesson when somebody says, "I'd like you to meet my personal shopper and I want you to pick out what you want," this was not exactly the way I had thought things were running.

The Texas donors were extremely good because Mrs. Johnson could have something on her want list and didn't have to worry about whether or not they necessarily even knew who the artist was, or knew much about them. They would support you. Although Alice Brown seems to be rather well versed in early 20th century American painters. It must have been the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston which had a lot of Texas oil money in it, and there were several people there that she could tap into as well. Of course, she really wanted so desperately to have something by Peter Hurd. Johnson had Hurd paintings, and Tom Lea paintings, and other southwestern artists in his office from almost the very beginning.

As the war wore on, and some of these pictures were exchanged for others that either the artist or Southwest institutions would loan, I remember Railway Express (which does not exist anymore) was our principal means of sending paintings back and forth. Peter Hurd worked in a medium of egg tempura, where the egg is mixed with the paint and gives a very permanent bonding and quite a different surface value to the reflection and refraction of light. We had sent some pictures back and he was sending some up to the White House to replace them. They were sitting on a railway siding in New Mexico. Somebody came along and saw the fact that they were being sent to the White House and took an axe to the boxes. It was late at night and there was no security, or not anything that anybody could remember, around these. Unfortunately, while the damage could be repaired, and he did the repairs himself, we then had to start to think of other ways of getting pictures. They'd be driven to the ranch and they would come up on Air Force One when the president would be coming back from a visit down there.

The whole complexion of what was happening changed, just as White House tours started to change. Security was nothing to speak of during the Kennedy administration for those of us who were employed there. You never were challenged so far as your pass was concerned. You just were acknowledged and usually called by name and pointed in. Things got a little bit tighter with the Johnsons. Then when we started to have groups of protesters sitting down in the middle of White House tours. That then became something that was causing a few more people to tighten the grip of security. You

always had that difficulty. I mean, the Secret Service was forever having a meeting in which they were wanting to modify details of say the White House fence, for example, and we'd get called in on it because they felt that if we could sign off then they didn't have to go to the Fine Arts Commission.

I remember the Technical Security Division, TSD of the Secret Service, as it was then called. Somebody had come up with this great idea that the uppermost horizontal bar on an iron fence, if you put a system up there where the bar was in two pieces and any weight of the upper coming down to the piece on the underside would touch a core that was sensitive to pressure. When these two would meet it would send an alarm. The reason for this being that they had as many as 25 to 30 people a year who would come into the White House by putting a ladder up and somehow getting over the South Fence. One character in the Johnson administration was so enterprising that he dressed as a painter. Of course, we had Park Service painters all over the grounds at all times, doing all kinds of things, coming in and out of the White House. He got up to the entrance of the Diplomatic Reception Room and was about to go through but a policeman at the entrance stopped him because he realized there was nothing going on in which anybody was going to be painting in that part of the White House. That was the kind of thing that was happening. Well, they put thousands of dollars into testing this mock-up and they finally put it in place in one part of the fence, and lo and behold, it was one of those days when too many birds landed and every time you had more than so many birds the sensitivity was such that bingo, it set the alarm off. The whole idea had to be scrapped.

These were kind of Rube Goldberg variations on a theme, but they were starting to think about security, which obviously now has been so well thought out that it's fully in place.

RITCHIE: Talking about the tourists, the White House like the Capitol is a museum that attracts great crowds, even as you're trying to preserve it. What's the balance between making everything just the way you want it, and then allowing millions of people to walk through it?

KETCHUM: Well, what worked then were a couple of things. Mrs. Kennedy was very interested in everybody knowing that there was now a guidebook for sale. She was interested in the bottom line there. Mrs. Johnson was interested certainly that the White House Historical Association would have its money but as far as the public was

concerned it really just depended upon how you divided up the day. The morning was given over to the public. If there was something, such as a midday luncheon, then they simply had to arrange the tour in such a way that the last room on the tour, the State Dining Room, was just not going to be open that day. Everybody would come in and file around as far as the Red Room and then go in the entrance hall and go out the front door. You came in on the east side.

Early on, Mrs. Johnson was terribly concerned because she knew that while we had these special congressional early-morning tours that would start at 7:30 or eight o'clock, the general public was going to be coming in at ten o'clock. Many of them would stand in line for a long time. In the summertime they would start at least an hour and a half before the gates would open to allow them entrance. There was nothing for them to do while they were standing there, so she decided that what was needed was burying in the landscape all the way around the South Lawn, but very close to the fence, these speakers from which you would hear a recorded message. It would be a continuing history lesson. As you came along there would be enough proximity between each of these that you got the full story and it might go for 15 or 20 minutes and then it would repeat itself. I can remember when they put the thing in and they had not adjusted the sound. Mrs. Johnson was narrating much of this. We were out there and suddenly this voice went: HI! THIS IS LADY BIRD JOHNSON," and everybody just about jumped off the sidewalk into East Executive Avenue. But they toned it down and perfected it and it was really very successful as far as getting everybody in.

But once you got in there, in the Kennedy administration you had a little bit more freedom in the rooms. Early on in the Johnson administration, in the Red Room, we had a character who picked up something, I believe it was an inkwell, and threw it through a convex mirror that was over the secretary on the south wall and shattered the glass. He didn't really hurt the frame, so the damage was minimal. Within weeks after that, an elderly woman lost control of her bodily functions in an area where there was no protection on the rugs. That led us to realize that we had to use stanchions and ropes, bring them in only at one side of the room, put down a protective carpeting. This then meant that you had to have a crew that every single morning set the rooms up and at midday took them down. The White House, when it was designed during the Truman renovation, didn't really have—for example, there is not a single bathroom on the state floor of the White House. Not a single bathroom. And there is not a lot of storage space either. In fact, there's none, with maybe one small closet. The idea always being that if

you were coming for a function you came in on the ground floor. You went to a cloakroom. Your wrap was taken. There were bathrooms down there. You then climbed the stairs, or took the one elevator. There is a kitchen elevator and a dumbwaiter, but that's not anything the public or guests could ever use. The one single elevator is used by the family. It probably would accommodate, in crowded situations, six at most. Not much thought was given to all these things.

But that's really how things developed so far as the public coming in. Mrs. Johnson started these candlelight tours, Christmas tours, garden visits, things that Hillary Clinton continued in many ways. It's just interesting to see how succeeding administrations would build on what had happened before. But there was a lot of new territory that was being explored with the Johnsons. They really wanted the public—we did interviews of some of the visitors over the course of several weeks and we discovered that they came twice, the public did: once as a child with your parents to see the White House and then later to bring your own children in. We also discovered that while Maryland and Virginia were the two contiguous states with the District of Columbia, you had percentage wise in population as many people coming from California as you did from the state of Maryland. That was something that surprised us.

The whole upshot was that things were planned so that those mornings were free for visitors. Congressional tours were important. This was a perk that you gave members. I'm sure that at some point along the line presidents were letting the word go out to the people who coordinated the ticketing for these early morning tours that "He doesn't get more than one for the next six months" type of thing because of a vote. Lyndon Johnson would probably remember this more than anyone. Although I can't say for a fact that happened. That was something that we really didn't get involved in.

We were involved in what the tour guides were saying, and these were all, of course, White House policemen. This was at a time when something called the Executive Protection Agency was formed to not only give additional coverage for the White House but also to the embassies and to other government posts, which is again one of those things that's grown. Washington of late '63 to '69 was obviously going through a lot of changes. Certainly the war affected many, many of them, there's no doubt about it. As much as we were against the war, we were rather protective of the people in the White House. I never felt that we worked solely for the Johnsons, or the Kennedys, or the Nixons. I always had a sense—and this was something that was shared by other staff

members in the residence itself—that you were also thinking of the other administrations and the other families who had resided there.

Mrs. Johnson was awfully good about including the presidential descendants in White House functions. In fact, the first book that she asked the White House Historical Association to take under its wing was a book called *The Living White House*—the strangest title in the world. We all said, “As opposed to *what?*”³ But it was a book that traced the family stories. That particular journey was one that had not been particularly fleshed out from the White House standpoint. When the book was launched, she invited every presidential descendant that she could find. There was Princess Cantacuzene, whose father was Fred Grant, and grandfather was Ulysses S. Grant. There was Marthina Harrison Williams, Benjamin Harrison’s granddaughter, who was quarantined in the White House with scarlet fever. Alice Roosevelt Longworth, of course, would be on scene. I think there were four out of the five Cleveland children living. I believe they all came. Some close by in Baltimore, Richard, and then others who were living up in New Hampshire and New York. Esther and Ruth, who at that point I think were living together. Ruth was the original Baby Ruth. It was fascinating for me to see and get a chance to talk to some of these people, who had only been names on a genealogical chart up until then, or names that your were filing anecdotal material within administration files, to see them all gathering.

Mrs. Eisenhower had done something a little bit along the same lines, but not as comprehensive. Whenever anything would happen in Washington that would involve presidential families, whether it would be Herbert Hoover’s funeral, and the families would be here in town to go through the public observance, Mrs. Johnson would make sure that they would be invited over, and come for the afternoon. That meant I got a chance to take them around and then always have tea with them afterwards. That was great, because you established a contact, you asked questions, you could follow up with letters and phone conversations. I remember early in the administration Mrs. Johnson saying that Stuart Udall was coming with very two very special guests, would I be standing by. I said fine, sure. She said, “One of them will be Carl Sandburg, and his wife, and his wife’s brother,” and I had to make the connection there, who was Edward

³Lonnelle Aikman, *The Living White House*, foreword by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, introduction by Bruce Catton (Washington, D.C.: White House Historical Association with the cooperation of the National Geographic Society, 1966).



Jim Ketchum and son enjoying the White House Christmas decorations.

Steichen, the photographer. Steichen had an absolutely gorgeous early-30s young wife named Joanna. They arrived on scene. Steichen was in pretty good shape, but Sandburg was rather garrulous. He insisted on smoking his cigar no matter where we were. Mrs. Johnson decided, wouldn't it be nice to have tea, at the end of our visit, up in the Lincoln Bedroom.

At one point, Johnson appeared on scene. He grabbed Sandburg and took him into the Yellow Oval Room next to the Lincoln Bedroom and goes out on the Truman balcony. The press had lined up down below. George Reedy had them all down there, and Johnson was shouting, "Look who I've got up here! I've got Carl Sandburg! Can you see Carl?" Sandburg was holding the nub of his cigar, he had smoked it down to that, and he opened up the blade of his jackknife and shoved it up into the bottom of his cigar and that's how he's holding his cigar as he's puffing away, his white hair coming straight down in back. We went back in and Mrs. Johnson said, "Mr. Sandburg, what do you remember that would be especially funny about Lincoln here at the White House?" I don't know whether Sandburg had been asked that question too many times or what, but he started going into a scatological bit about Lincoln and everybody started clearing their throats. Udall was trying to get on something else rather quickly. Mrs. Johnson was trying to be polite. There's a photograph of this and I was sitting over on one side and the rest of the group was on the other. The expression on my face was one of horror at that point. Those were the moments.

The Johnson administration, whether we're talking about southwestern donors, I mean the impetus for getting moneys for collections from the Southwest, or getting people to come to the White House and share in its tales, they were just all encompassing. One of the most amazing times was when Eric Goldman—who had succeeded Arthur Schlesinger over in the East Wing—came up with an idea, probably at the request of Liz Carpenter, on doing something for the entire community of performing and fine arts. He decided that it would be absolutely wonderful if we had what was called the "Festival of the Arts." I'm thinking this might have been '66, but maybe it was '65, I'm not sure. Once the idea was accepted and Johnson had signed off on it, within a matter of weeks it was launched. It meant one day, and one day only, was going to be devoted from eight in the morning until midnight to outdoor sculpture on the South Lawn, symphonies playing on the South Lawn, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, and any number of other galleries of contemporary art displayed in that area that I was telling you about, where the public used to walk down the corridor and see the small vitrines, the small exhibit cases

that we had. We literally built gallery space throughout the entire ground floor and then in portions of the state floor. We had Charlton Heston overseeing a film festival in the State Dining Room. We had Helen Hayes and others performing on stage in the East Room, bits and pieces of contemporary and Broadway productions that probably went back 40 years or so. The whole house, we had Marianne Moore reading poetry in the Red Room, and on and on it went. It was planned down to the last detail, until suddenly you had Robert Lowell and Dwight—

RITCHIE: Macdonald?

KETCHUM: Macdonald, yes, getting into the mix. I'm trying to think. Lowell did not come, Macdonald did come. A lot of people backed out at the last minute because of the war. Macdonald started distributing a petition against Johnson, and Johnson heard about that in the morning. He was supposed to come over at midday and address the group, but he was just furious. He absolutely would not have anything to do with it. In fact, he wanted to close the thing right down then and there. Mrs. Johnson prevailed upon him saying, "No, darlin', you can't do that, that's not going to be possible." She carried through beautifully. It was an amazing collection of individuals. It was a who's who in every single area of performing arts. You had ballet out on the stage on the South Lawn, where you had symphony. You never would have tried this if you'd had a year to plan for it, but the fact that they only had about eight to ten weeks! [Eric] Goldman on behalf of Johnson would pick up the phone and the director of the Whitney would say, "Certainly we can do this." They brought in Smithsonian to help construct. They brought in the National Gallery to do a lot of the registrarial work. The Library of Congress for prints and photographs. A man named Gene Ostroff, he was with Smithsonian, handled photographs. He worked with Alan Fern [director of the National Portrait Gallery] in doing the exhibit of photographs. It was all the king's horses and all the king's men. They really did put Humpty Dumpty back together again, except for the Dwight Macdonald flap and what Robert Lowell had been saying to the press.

John Hershey was there. He was doing a reading from *A Bell for Adano*. He had been quoted earlier in the press. Yet these people who did show up, with the exception of Macdonald, no matter what their objections to the war they put their best foot forward and were extremely polite. But Johnson just could not stand to think that he was being personally taken on by somebody who was passing a petition around. I think most of the opponents of the war were quite horrified to think that was happening as well. That is not

quite the way the White House saw its role as far as being the host with the most. When you think of the checklist of the Endowments and other enterprises such as that, it showed an administration that was absolutely daring in its attempt to bring front and center for the American public to appreciate and understand and to honor these individuals and what they had contributed. We'd come a long way from Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians during the Eisenhower administration, and Kate Smith helping to get the moon over the mountain, to Marianne Moore reading her poetry or Phyllis McGinley also, I remember, reading in the Red Room at one point.

People had a program and these events were all going on simultaneously. They could just go from one to another, and they knew who was going to be where. It was a little bit like what Mrs. [Laura] Bush now does with her book fair each year. I would like to think that somehow these more recent events are somewhat a continuum. Today, who knows what would happen in the White House as far as security is concerned. Whether even some of these things would be allowed to take place in quite the same manner that they did then. I always felt that the day would come when a bunker down the Potomac someplace would become the presidential residence and the White House would become strictly a museum, and that would be such a sad day, because what gives it its import and its imprint on all of our senses and our minds is the fact that the president is living over the store.

RITCHIE: You've talked about the functions that were going on, and it strikes me that the flip side of the public tours is that every night practically there's some kind of a function going on, a state dinner or some reception. What kind of wear and tear does that cause?

KETCHUM: A lot. We paid a price. We finally, for example, many of the fabrics, the textiles, especially the carpeting on the rugs, you would have an expensive Savonnerie or an English Axminster in one of the state parlors, and with those heels on carpeting that was not protected with anything, soon those 130-year-old threads that were holding the wool in place became tangled up in a heel and problems resulted. What we did late in the administration was we started having all of the rugs copied, by a firm down in Puerto Rico. That helped immensely, but by the time the Nixons arrived on scene there was certainly enough wear and tear. Mrs. Nixon had a problem of committing to some of the things that really needed to be done. I think it was understandable that she wanted to take her time and feel her way along on this, but in the meantime it was becoming

apparent in the state parlors and the rooms that the public saw, and the rooms that the guests saw in the evening, because the Johnsons never did anything in small numbers. Anything going on, even in the family quarters, if something was planned you could be sure that the numbers would be doubled by the time the president finally got over there. He just swept everybody up. If you went for a late-evening meeting with him you were just as apt to be taken over to dinner and find another 15 to 20 people waiting for you there.

I remember there was great interest in having a bust of Winston Churchill. Johnson especially was hoping that would happen. He talked to Averell Harriman, and Harriman, who had been very close to Churchill, was the point person. It took about six months to get all the donors, because Harriman was very interested in making sure that various people from World War II were included, so that Eisenhower would be represented, and General [Lyman] Lemnitzer, and on and on. The evening came for the unveiling, and we had sent out invitations. Harriman called me at home at night, and day in and day out during the last couple of weeks with additional names, so some of the invitations had to be phoned in. He remembered that Janet Murrow, Ed Murrow's widow, would be appropriate, and others. But he had invited—and for the life of me I can't remember whether Pamela Harriman, who was then Mrs. Leland Heyward, whether she came. But Young Winston, and he was then young Winston, did arrive on scene. He was kind of the principal. I don't think he was even married at that stage. It was at seven o'clock, early evening, cocktails, fairly heavy hors d'oeuvres, Yellow Oval Room on the second floor, and suddenly Johnson arrived on scene with a whole crew who probably knew who Winston Churchill was but I don't think they had any idea who anybody else was, and here was this Epstein bust of Churchill that was about to be unveiled, and the whole party was kind of taken over by this crew that he brought in. He would think nothing of it, absolutely, no matter what was happening.

A friend of ours who happened to be in the official party when LBJ did his last foreign trip, it must have been in '68, when he went to Australia and Vietnam. It was the week just before Christmas. She and her husband were down for a private dinner and the next thing they knew they were on Air Force One flying to the Pacific and all that goes with it. She tells the story—or she told the story, she died last year—that you just had no power over things like this. He oftentimes went to Mrs. Johnson's or the girls' closets and pulled out clothing for these people who said, "Mr. President, I'm just here for the day." No nonsense. There was a great stash from toiletries and tooth brushes to clothing that he

would borrow and make sure that you had something to put on. When he got down there he would buy something for them.

Bess Abell tells wonderful stories of traveling with him when he was vice president. He'd sweep up the Pakistani camel driver and bring him back to Washington. He'd be great today as a counterpoint to our relationship with the Mideast, there's no doubt about it, but gee, you never knew. Talk about larger than life! He had a presence about him that just dominated. Any president does, but he especially, because he grabbed you, like those Theodore Francis Green series of photos by George Tames. Those are exactly right, just the perfect example of how he controlled what he could do. He did it, and he knew it, and he had mastered it to a fair-thee-well. It's amazing to me that a man who supposedly had some of the insecurities that he had vis-a-vis his treatment, and the fear that all those Harvard people were out to get him, didn't realize that he was in the bully pulpit first, last, and always.

RITCHIE: Did he get much involved in the curatorial side of the White House, with the paintings and the furnishings?

KETCHUM: When we would have, say, the unveiling of Bess Truman's portrait or something like that, he would always be front and center, but my dealings with him were really limited. I saw him more as part of the family than I did on business. But it didn't bother him at all to pick up the phone, even from the luncheon table. This was rather late in the administration, something that will forever stand out in my memory. Marie Fehmer was one of his secretaries. She oftentimes came over with her stenopad at lunch time. He was just giving orders, and talking, and eating his tapioca, and doing four things at once. I got a phone call from Marie and she said, "The president would like to see you upstairs"—in what is known as the President's Dining Room, a dining room put in during the Kennedy administration because there was no dining room in the family quarters—"as soon as possible." So I double-timed it up. I don't think I even waited for the elevator, there's a circular staircase that goes up adjacent to it. I got up there and he said, "Want to see something nice?" I said, "Oh, yes, Mr. President, what's that?"

Well, he had a bronze sculpture, a [Charles] Russell, if I remember correctly. He had been up on the Hill to see Speaker [John] McCormack, who was about to step down. They were both saying goodbye to each other at the same time, but McCormack had this sculpture that somebody had given to him and he wanted to give it to Johnson, but not for

the White House. Johnson made it very clear that it was going to his library, when that was built, but he wanted me to see it. Then he said, “That’s not really the reason I’ve got you here.” I said, “Oh, what is that, Mr. President?” He said, “Look at this!” And he held up something that was not quite the size of the House mace, but it was an enormous object, kind of detailed, with turnings on it. I looked again and I thought it can’t be, but indeed it was, a giant pepper mill. “My Japanese pepper mill, my electric pepper mill, isn’t working! Damn it, it isn’t working. Now, curators can fix anything. I want you to take care of this and get this thing back in working order just as soon as you possibly can, y’ hear?” “Oh, yes, Mr. President, yes I certainly do, and I certainly will.” He handed over this battery operated thing that somebody in the Japanese government had given to him and it was his pride and joy. I don’t know whether he was using it to make points when he was at the table, or whether he wanted to lead the band with it, or whether it was actually being used as a pepper mill. But I took it out of there and called the Japanese embassy and we figured where it all came from. We got a duplicate—I don’t remember ever repairing that—we had one that was sent in almost immediately so that by the time he was ready for one more meal he had his pepper mill back.

Nothing was beyond getting done. I was close enough to both daughters to watch how they handled him, and realized that you just did the same thing. Mrs. Johnson would go along to a point, but boy if you got her beyond a certain point. One of the most telling things was in December of ’67 when Lynda and Chuck Robb were married. It was after the wedding but before the reception really went full swing, there were pictures being taken upstairs in the Yellow Oval Room of the bridal party. He insisted, because Thrappes Bryant, who was the electrician whose wife made all of these outfits for Yuki, this was the white stray who came up from Texas, who used to sing all the time. Johnson would sit in the usher’s office off the main floor, after taking phone calls, when he would be summoned by an usher that so-and-so was on the line. He’d leave a reception, and he’d have the dog sitting nearby and when he was through with the phone call he would say to Yuki, “Can we sing now.” He’d do this “AOOOOOOOO,” and then the dog would do the same thing. All the guests would be in the East Room or the parlors wondering what the hell was going on in the other room. What are those noises? Well, Mrs. Bryant made these strange Santa Claus outfits. There was an Easter Bunny outfit, too, but now we were in the Christmas season and Bryant suddenly appeared as the photographer was setting up, and he had Yuki in this amazing red and silver and gold and green outfit. Johnson said, “I WANT THAT DOG IN THE PICTURE!” Lynda was in tears, and Mrs. Johnson

said, “That dog does not get into the picture.” He said, [lowering his voice] “Okay, Bird.” The dog did not get into the picture.

I remember when Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong Jones arrived on scene for a state visit. They obviously were having great problems with their marriage at that point and were barely speaking to each other. Everybody seemed to know this, including Johnson. I was to stand by and be in the group, with the Lady-in-Waiting, and Liz Carpenter, and two pool reporters, maybe there were 10 of us, as he took them on a tour of the family quarters, the Lincoln Bedroom, the Queen’s Room, and so forth. I never heard such outlandish total murdering of every single fact of history that went on. I was so taken aback that I never had the common sense to sit down the next day and write some of these things down. But I heard things that *nobody* had ever heard of before, and interpretations that were so far removed from the truth. Truman used to use a little bit of license, but this was really something else again. All you could do was smile and let it go.

I know when it was, it was in 1965, because Barbara was home waiting for John to arrive on scene. He eventually was a month late. We were invited to come in for the after-dinner entertainment. We had said no, so Liz said, “Would you work as a press aide?” I said “Sure.” That was it. I was really more there with the press pool than I was in my curatorial role, but Johnson had assumed that anyway, and nobody was going to take that away from him that night. But it was great, because I was just so fascinated watching the repartee between the two visitors as they went through. That was the night that Christina Ford’s strapless dress descended as she was doing some strange dance with Robert McNamara, probably the Twist, in the East Room, and everybody got a good sight of what Henry Ford had been looking at for weeks.

The wonderful thing about the White House is that all the things that go wrong in one’s household, if you magnify them by a million they go on there as well. Mrs. Johnson never put the family quarters off limits. The press was just astounded in January of ’64 to find that they were invited to go through the entire house. They went into their bathrooms. They saw what kind of toothpaste they used. They saw the color of the toilet paper. She was forever taking people around in small groups herself, or making sure if it were larger groups, or she didn’t have the time that somebody else would, and usually we got the call. Marc Chagall was there and Mrs. Johnson had the foresight, and so did a couple of other people, of going to one of the bookstores and getting copies of his illustrations and having him sign the book. I’m just thinking of it today because as I was

watching him, not only did he sign his name but he did a little sketch next to it. I thought, “Ketchum, you lost.” The only time I ever lucked out was with Upton Sinclair, of all people, who was then in his 90s, and who could barely walk, talk, or write, but he did inscribe my copy of *The Jungle*, so all is well.

We had these evening functions that time-wise were parallel to what Johnson was doing in the East Room during the war, when he would have, as I explained before, various groups starting with the Senate, 25 members at a time, and then the House, and then the governors, and then the mayors. Mrs. Johnson would give tours up in the family quarters, usually everything was ready, except that in this particular instance the Lincoln Bedroom had John and Nellie Connally staying in it. She knew this, at least I thought she knew it, but when we were upstairs getting the family quarters squared away before the guests arrived, she had another group of people that had come in late in the afternoon to see her. J. B. West, Bess Abell, Mary Kaltman, the housekeeper, and I raced into the Lincoln Bedroom to put things away because we knew that later on the other folks were going to be coming along, the spouses of the people meeting in the East Room. The bed had to be made up, a coverlet pulled down and shams returned and so forth, and clothing had to be put into the closet, and suddenly, there are four of us around the bed—it looks as if we’re all getting out at the same time—and the door opens up and Mrs. Johnson looks and has all these people staring over her shoulder. We said, “Oh, come right in.” It looked like a Marx Brothers movie, but she quickly explained to everybody what was going on. She’d forgotten the Connallys were even there, but she didn’t miss a beat on it. She usually never did.

It was that kind of business, hiding the vacuum cleaner as somebody’s knocking at your front door, the White House has to do exactly the same thing and try to make something shipshape for sudden arrival of guests. That story could probably be told time and time again about the house. It was a reflection of the day and age. Today, security-wise, I’m not sure how it would affect it, but I do know for a fact that is next to impossible, say, for a David McCullough to get up on the second floor unless he has the president urging him to come up, to see how the arrangements might have been during the Truman administration, or to do some of the things that historians are wont to do in getting a sense of space and scale.

RITCHIE: Speaking of the family quarters, I understand that Johnson was very particular about his shower.

KETCHUM: Yes, he really was, and it was never solved. He had a shower in Texas and somehow they had gotten it set up—and I don't think it was water being pumped from the Perdinales River, either—but it was pressure, pressure. He wanted to be literally knocked right out of the shower. They tried everything. The Park Service came in. GSA was consulted. They put a huge holding tank of water up on the roof of the White House. They did everything. One of the problems, as I could tell, I never turned it on, but Rex Scouten, who was in the usher's office at the time and later became chief usher, did have to try it out. Johnson didn't want just one showerhead. He wanted all of these nozzles pointing to him that were attached to these vertical strips, so he was getting water from seventeen different directions at once. Well, this does dilute a little bit of the effect, since you are opening it up from so many different apertures. He also couldn't see very well to shave, so he had this enormous mirror that enlarged every pore. When you got up on top of it, it was like going to the Fun House almost. That combined with this shower were the two rather strange things in his bathroom.

To the very end of his administration—J. B. West, who was the chief usher—they tried absolutely everything with that shower, to a point where what they thought was finally going to solve it, with this major holding tank up on the roof, when Rex Scouten undressed and got into the shower it damned near knocked him right across the room, it came out with such force. But it still wasn't enough for LBJ. Talk about getting a body massage from the water force that would leave you tingling forever and ever, but that was the way he was operating. He had a valet, Paul Glynn, who was army. Johnson would change his clothes sometimes two or three or four times a day, if he would come over for a half hour nap, he would change. He would come back in the evening. He loved his room and he loved to invite everybody into the room, and he didn't really mind the fact that he was issuing orders from sitting on the throne in the bathroom, and that you were there, because he would call you front and center. There were certain women who found themselves in that situation. It was all just an accepted way that Lyndon Johnson operated. Of course, it helped to encourage the thinking that this gentleman had long since forgotten his manners. I would like to think that he was just always trying to use every last moment, no matter what he was doing, toward the greater good of God knows what. But there he was, absolutely.

He had a massage table in his bedroom as well. That was something that was new to us. The thing that really caught our eye soon after was every room that he was going to be in for any length of time would have three television sets, so he could watch ABC,

NBC, and CBS. God knows what he would have done in the day and age of cable. CNN was barely probably even in Ted Turner's imagination at that point. But those three TV sets were all going simultaneously, which I could never quite figure out. We did not have the closed captioning that would have solved some of his problems, but he could control the sound. That's the first time I ever remember seeing as many remote controls. Remote controls existed at that point, but he would go switching from one to the other knowing that to have the sound all playing at the same time probably was going to be confusing. Something he saw he didn't like, he was as apt to get on the phone to, say, Bill Moyers or George Reedy and tell them what he thought of the whole thing.

Isabelle Shelton told about being swept up by him [while she was doing an interview] for one of the [Hale and Lindy] Boggs' youngster's wedding. He did that. He was either screaming at the press or he was trying to win them over by every way, shape, or means. People could hardly wait for Christmas with the delivery of the deer sausage from Texas, and the leather book marks they would make. I think so much of this started way back. He had folks down at the ranch, or in Stonewall—it was actually closer to Stonewall than to Johnson City—starting in October making pralines, and these would all get boxed and sent up. You'd have the sausage, you'd have the book marks, you'd have the pralines, and Lord knows what all else that would be put together in these gift baskets that would be distributed to each and every member of the working press. I suppose it set a very bad precedent for the administrations that would be coming afterwards, but the ethics on some of this changed, so it can't happen quite the way it did then.

He just found it very difficult to understand why you could not see things the way that he could see them, and why you would not want to support whatever he wanted to do. One of the great things, and nothing tells the story better than what has come out through the Beschloss editing of the taping system at the White House.⁴ I think everybody can't hardly wait for the next volume. I was interested in how Mrs. Johnson responded to these tapes. I don't know how much she knew about them. I'm sure she must have known something, she was spending time almost every day of the week looking over her notes and putting together her taped diary. A few years ago, when we all gathered in Texas, she had a luncheon at the ranch. Bill Moyers was in charge of the luncheon entertainment,

⁴ Michael R. Beschloss, ed, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997) and *Reaching for Glory: Lyndon Johnson's Secret White House Tapes, 1964-1965* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

and he decided that it would be perfect to have some of these recordings played. He put together snippets of maybe 20 minutes's worth. One of the recordings that he included was Johnson calling a manufacturer of pants in Texas, I think it could have been the Haggard slacks man, telling him that he loved his three pair of pants, but he wanted now a dozen pair, and he wanted to have extra room in the crotch. He very graphically described why and how. Mrs. Johnson got up afterwards and said, "While I have loved every minute of today—almost every minute—and I have loved everything that I heard—almost everything I heard." We soon got the message that this was taking things a little bit too far.

Helen Gahagan Douglas, for example, who supposedly was a great interest of LBJ's back in his House days, before she ran for the Senate. He would get her on the phone and try to convince her that she had to represent the United States at some God knows what affair off in Zanzibar. He would say, "Here's Bird, she wants to talk to you, too." And Mrs. Johnson would say, "Helen." I wondered what went through that woman's mind when she thinks of how he has reached out. Barbara Walters had the chutzpah to ask Mrs. Johnson in her valedictory interview for the *Today Show* in January of '69 what she thought of all of the stories of Johnson and women. Mrs. Johnson very nicely said, "Barbara, more than 50 percent of the population of the United States are women, and you know Lyndon could not refuse to reach out to each and every one of them." I thought, that's the way to do it! That's the way to survive. Whatever her reverie was throughout all that time, and even today she cannot speak, but she can hear and she understands everything. Her face lights up when you tell her something. She tries to get the words out but they are very garbled, but she is still putting the most positive spin on what has happened to her, even though she is legally blind and has had the kind of debilitating stroke that is really so obvious, and painful to see. She doesn't make it that way. She's out in public. Anybody else would have gone into the bedroom and closed the door and hidden out, but not this good person.

RITCHIE: In addition to Lyndon and Lady Bird, you also had two adolescent daughters living in the White House during the Johnson years. That was a change from the Kennedys, who had two small children.

KETCHUM: It was. In a way it was harder because they could challenge you. The Kennedy kids were great. John was somebody to take care of, and Caroline was somebody to go to her classroom and do your own version of show and tell with objects

from the White House collection. But suddenly you had somebody who needed help with her art history paper, and you also had a transplanted undergrad from the University of Texas at Austin who didn't really want to be up in Washington. She wanted to be with her friends down in Texas, but to mollify her father she came up and was enrolled as of January of 1964 in GW, and was allowed to bring her roommate from Texas with her.

My introduction to Lynda was somebody who came into the office one day, looking around and saying, "Oh, this would be the place to study!" I thought, oh, yes. My office was rather small compared to the outer office, and I thought, that's what she had in mind, but no, she had her eye on my desk, which had been Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt's desk, and it was very much my great love. Things were arranged just exactly the way I wanted them. I tried to make the most out of every last square inch. So she asked. "Okay, Lynda, that's fine. No problem. You go ahead. When you're finished, don't forget to turn the lights out." Being a true disciple now, of her father who was into electricity we have saved.

So she started, but Lynda was kind of a nosh artist. She was snacking. This was before she started dating George Hamilton and got into a new svelte self. She would bring everything from Lorna Doone cookies and what all else when she was doing her studying from 7:30 or eight o'clock. She was smart because she moved out of the family quarters so she didn't have to see what was going on with her father's evenings of bringing everybody home for dinner with mother. When I first started seeing some of the things in the office I realized that she was leaving food and crumbs behind, but then—the White House has always had a rodent problem, very badly. Mice are acceptable but the larger versions are not acceptable. Our office, because we were right next to the kitchen, did find signs from time to time. But once the cookies and cakes and all other things were being left around the desk and the side tables in the office it was time to say something. So I did. I was really rather outspoken about the whole thing. I didn't think anybody could make her feel apologetic, because she always came in with such a full head of steam, but by golly not only did she apologize and change her ways but the day after I talked to her about it she sent down a book of engravings of Charles Dana Gibson, which she knew I liked particularly. She was then starting her book collecting phase.

That was my introduction, but we really became fast friends, to a point when we got so close to Lynda as well as Warrie Lynn Smith, who was her roommate, that the time would come in August of 1967 when Warrie Lynn was celebrating a birthday. Lynda had

several assignments after graduating from the University of Texas. She had done some writing for *National Geographic*, which had close ties to the White House through the White House Historical Association, and the Johnsons had a friend named Christine Coe, who was the Washington editor of *McCall's Magazine*—her husband Dick Coe for years and years was the drama critic for the *Washington Post*. Chris proposed that Lynda become a roving editor, so to speak, for *McCall's*. Anyway, in the summer of '67, Lynda between these assignments that she was taking on, had gone off to visit the great then, we thought, love of her life, George Hamilton, who was shooting a film in London. Barbara and I were talking to Warrie Lynn during that two week period. Warrie's birthday was coming up and we asked what was going on. She said, "Really nothing." So we said, "Why don't we have a party?"

We said we'd do it at our house, and we'd send out invitations, or phone invitations. Everything was planned, the menu was down, and Barbara had done the preparations between taking care of John. The morning of the party I got a phone call about 8:30 from Warrie Lynn saying, "Jim, would Barbara be terribly upset if two more were added for dinner tonight." I said, "Oh, I don't think so, I think we can make it work. Why? Who did you have in mind?" She said, "Well, Lynda flew in very late and very upset last night. She apparently has parted company with George, and she'd like to come over. And there's one aide who always makes her happy and smile. His name is Chuck Robb and he would like to come along. I've already talked to him and Lynda has said that's exactly the person that she'd like to be with tonight." I said, "Okay, fine, just tell her that she's in charge of games." That was fine, Lynda always wanted to have something to do.

She and Robb had dated a few times before then, but never really to a point that they had after they left our house about 11:30 at night. They had a very long discussion and at some point in the discussion he asked her to marry him. She then went back home where Mrs. Johnson was in bed with the president, and Lynda wants to talk to her mother. So she goes in on her hands and knees and she pulls at her mother until her mother wakes up and says, "What?" Lynda motions to her, so she came back out into the hall with her mother and they sat down and Lynda told her mother that Chuck Robb has asked her to be his wife. This then started what ended up being a December wedding, with the whole ball rolling. Including the fact that tied in is an article in the November issue of *McCall's*

of the night that my husband-to-be proposed.⁵ She spells out the evening in our house, and Barbara heard from all of her unmarried cousins who wanted to know how these things could be recreated. It was a little bit of 15 minutes of Andy Warhol fame that none of us really needed at that stage.

As a result of all this, we got to go the wedding, and to all the pre-wedding festivities and all the other things about it. Not a similar story, but because of working with Luci on her projects when she was at Holton Arms for four years before she went off. First she was going into nursing. She had several different career moves that she was going to make, including one going down to St. Dominick's to join the church, much to Lyndon's concern about what was happening, since the Catholic clergy were all marching against the war at that point. We did exactly the same thing with Luci. I can remember times when Barbara and I would be at a concert at the Capitol and Luci would come along. She was dating pages in the House or the Senate at that stage as a 15 year old. We would have John with us as a baby, and we passed the baby over and suddenly one great burp would mean that the red dress she had on was totally covered with John spitting up all over her shoulder, and somebody running to try to get some water to clean her up.

They were my sisters. I had four sisters, and my two brothers and I always felt very comfortable telling them what to do and how to do it. This was a little bit of history repeating itself. Had I not had my four sisters, I'm sure I would have been cowed into doing all kinds of things against my will. But this was not the way it was. We had a plaque in the White House that Mrs. Kennedy had installed in the bedroom that she shared with President Kennedy, which said, "In this room, John F. Kenendy," etc. So when Chuck and Lynda spent their first night coming back from their honeymoon, I had a similar plaque made up and put in their room. They knew it was a great joke, but Mrs. Johnson came along and said, "Why, that's the sweetest thing I've ever seen." You know, she only would look upon something like that as a very nice gesture, from somebody who was just in my situation just being obnoxious about it, and just teasing the daylights out of it.

Never, ever, did you lose sight of the fact that when you went to some of these family gatherings—for example, the showers were endless. Barbara had to go to I don't

⁵"Lynda Johnson Tells the Story Behind Her Engagement," *McCall's* (November 1967), 80-81, 134-36.

know how many. One of them was a kitchen shower, so she took recipes from past White House kitchens, like Florence Harding's chocolate cake, and then each recipe had attached to it a device, a whisk or what have you that could be used in making it. All this was good stuff for Liz Carpenter to feed to the press each time. By the time Luci, who was the first to marry, was ready to go down the aisle, the Smithsonian had suggested, or someone had inquired—we were not involved with this directly—that they had a special chamber. If the top of the wedding cake was saved and sent to the Smithsonian, they could put it in this chamber and after a period of several days the moisture would all be removed and the cake could be permanently preserved. A woman named Dorothy Territo, who was helping to save and organize things for a future Johnson Library, hand-carried this cake over to the Smithsonian and they put it in the chamber. They called her several days later to say that it would be coming out and she could come over for the grand unveiling. She went over, and they opened up the door, and they looked in, and it was just a pile of dust. Somebody had made the wrong modifications. So Luci, who wanted everything saved—and she did save her little cake boxes, several of them were extra—was never able to put the cake on exhibit, or whatever else she had planned. But I suppose it was just as well because the marriage like the cake also did not go the full distance. It was not quite what had been planned.

That wedding started the saving of everything, to the point that by the time we got to Lynda's wedding—and my job for both these was to try to put a non-official appraisal on all the gifts the public would send in. For example, it had been noted that Lynda had 12 bridesmaids who would be wearing 12 different gradations of pink. Some woman someplace sent 13, a bride and 12 bridesmaids, of these toilet paper covers, with doll torsos at the top and then the skirt portion of the dress was taken up as the cover. There they all were lined up. What they ever thought how these could ever be put into practical use no one was ever quite sure, but that was the kind of thing that came in. Luci, who had become a Catholic, received hundreds of rosaries. Every Catholic in America wanted to send her a rosary. We hadn't see so many multiples since baby booties being sent in for young John Kennedy, I remember we had in great numbers, and they kept coming in throughout. I think they thought that John Kennedy at age two and a half or three was wearing booties. But boy the stuff for the Johnsons was not to be believed.

It was mostly home arts 101. That was the under-riding philosophy of what you sent in. It was either crocheted antimacassars or knitted objects. The town in western New York State where I grew up was the home of the mason jar. Somebody sent her a

collection of mason jars, and the minute she found out my interest in them, I was presented with them. All of us who had children at the time, who were Catholics, they immediately received a rosary. So these things were distributed. But we could never put an official value on any of it, we could just give kind of an educated guess. Ultimately, most of these things did go to the Library. They would separate, I'm sure, some of the wheat from the chaff, and not necessarily keep them all. But it was wild—most of them were photographed, so some place they do exist in that form—what people sent in wanting to participate in the wedding of a presidential daughter. I'll bet Tricia Nixon never had that many things, but that's another story.

RITCHIE: Didn't you tell me once that a lot of people sent in toaster ovens?

KETCHUM: Not only toaster ovens but all kinds of small appliances. It was pre-food processors, fortunately, but there were blenders, toasters, and any number of things that were duplicate and triplicate. There was a place out in suburban Maryland, in Montgomery County, where you could bring in these items and exchange them. Say you brought in \$400 worth of items, you could exchange them for maybe \$300 worth of other things, which had a fair market value placed on them. Well, Lynda wanted to go and do this, but she didn't want it to be known that it was Lynda Robb coming. She was afraid that the press would pick up on this. Well, Lynda, it was very hard not to know it was Lynda. No matter what kind of a babushka she was wearing or how large the frames of the sunglasses were. We did this a couple of times at this place. I was asked to be the "bridegroom" so to speak, although I don't think we ever quite talked about a honeymoon. We had a White House car and an army driver, whether he was carrying stuff in, but I remember taking stuff out of the trunk. We had three or four boxes of things that went in. They were all readily identifiable and the total amount put on them. She was then given this chit and we went through and picked out what she wanted. That was one of those experiences that, having been married myself only probably five or six years at that stage of the game, it was a little bit too close for comfort, because we still had wedding gifts at home that had never been taken out of the box let alone try to exchange them for anything. I'm not sure that I had even heard that such an establishment existed that would do something like this.

I'm trying to think of some of the other things that we did outside of the White House. As far as the White House itself was concerned, Lynda was convinced that Willie Lincoln died in her bedroom and maybe the room was haunted. I explained to her that,

no, the best information we had did not put Willie in her bedroom the night he died, and more than that you have to remember that with the Truman “renovation” nothing of Willie was left in any of the details like the trim of the room that had long since been taken out, never to return. But she became a really good student, and so did Luci, to a point when Luci was leaving she decided to get her own film crew in there, just for her own sake, and for the future Library, and film her own tour of every single room. She’d seen her mother do it, and she decided she was going to do it as well. Lynda didn’t quite go that far, but she certainly knew the story of the house, and had a very good grasp of much of the material that most people would just ignore. She had read it, committed it, and could share it. That was always, to the rest of us, a special feeling for us because they did want to undertake that role.

I think children have a special association with each other, just as the presidents and their spouses do. Probably a month before the Johnsons left the White House, earlier than that, I’d say, around December 10 of 1968, they had the Nixon girls come in and bring a lot of their friends, and had an afternoon tour and tea for them, which was kind of above and beyond. I don’t remember that ever happening before.

Lynda had pictures, including autographed pictures of her father, and it always amused me that he didn’t sign these “Daddy,” but he signed them “For Lynda, with all my love, Lyndon B. Johnson.” I thought that was rather different. I’m sure some place she must have them signed by Daddy. She today has the most wonderful collection of photographs and other autographs and materials, like Ernest Shepherd who was the illustrator for A.A. Milne’s *Winnie the Pooh*, who she befriended when he was in his 90s. I hate to think of it but the poor guy sent almost every illustration extant that he still had from the Pooh series and gave to her, hopefully he was compos mentis at that point, but these are all wonderfully preserved and under a type of plexiglass that rules out ultraviolet light, although they’re in an inner corridor of their house over in McLean. A lot of these things that she just started, including her interest in children’s literature at the White House, have continued very much on to this present day.

Once you are part of that whole family, she does not mind calling you at 9:30 at night asking you about some things that are down at the ranch which she and Luci are describing to each other as to whether they want to take them. It’s obviously that there are plans afoot that when their mother dies, how some of the items will not be transferred to the Park Service along with the site. Mrs. Johnson has life use of everything there but not

all of the objects. I think the Park Service, they were getting everything, and the Johnsons thought no, there are family items that we don't want to give up. You'll get those phone calls and have to discuss them. And we still go down for family parties. She had a 60th birthday party on the 19th of March this year. Chuck made it a costume party. You had to come as your favorite storybook character. Barbara went as Eloise and I went as the manager of the Plaza Hotel. When Chuck was down in the governor's mansion you had to go as your favorite movie pair. So she went as the Mermaid and I went as Mr. Peabody (an ancient film called *Mr. Peabody and the Mermaid*, with William Powell and Ann Blyth). You have to put the outfit on in Washington and drive down, and as you're driving down 95 there are police cruisers going by looking at you strangely, because I had a fake mustache and my hair was slicked back and grayed lots more than it was with the addition of powder. It was a very strange sight, but even stranger was Tyler Abell as Harvey the rabbit, sitting in the car looking out at the same policemen. Bess, I can't even remember who she was at that point.

That's the thing, you still do feel like you're part of an extended family, no two ways. That I'm sure happens to other people with other administrations all the time, but it just happened to be our time, and the right group of individuals to kind of claim and sign the adoption papers for us. They happened to have the name of Johnson. If you had ever told me anything like that over the first several weeks of their being in the White House, I would have accused you of all kinds of perverted thinking.

RITCHIE: Well, this seems like a good place for us to stop this morning.

KETCHUM: All right, very good.

End of the Third Interview

THE NIXON WHITE HOUSE

Interview #4

Tuesday afternoon, November 30, 2004

DONALD RITCHIE: I wanted to ask about your dealings with reporters. You mentioned that at one reception you were recruited to act as a press officer, and you mentioned reporters like Isabelle Shelton. What was the relationship between the curator's office and the press in the White House?

JAMES KETCHUM: In the Kennedy administration, for the very first time a White House staff member had been assigned to the president's wife as a press secretary, and the person in question was Pam Turnure, who had had a very close relationship with the former senator from Massachusetts, namely John Kennedy. It raised many eyebrows when this was arranged. Ostensibly she was an assistant social secretary/press secretary, she had two titles, but Tish Baldrige, who was really the show unto herself, and who was social secretary, did not really cotton to sharing responsibilities, in fact was doing almost as much for the press certainly in the early days of the Kennedy administration as Pam was doing. But Pam allied herself with Pierre Salinger rather quickly, and the combination of Pierre and his grounding over in the West Wing, and Pam doing exactly what Mrs. Kennedy wanted—that was keeping her not out of the papers but keeping her away from having to do any kind of interviews other than a rare handful. Questions from time to time could be submitted in writing, but Mrs. Kennedy did not want, and I think coming out of the birth of John Kennedy, Jr., didn't want to even think that there was something as far as the press was concerned that would have to take up much of her time.

But she soon realized that the project that she had taken on as far as the White House restoration was concerned was going to have not only great interest but there would have to be moments of publicity. That's why her agreement, for example, later in that first year, in the fall of 1961, to do the CBS tour that ran in February of '62. The same thing in working with Hugh Sidey throughout the summer of '61 on a cover story that ran in *Life Magazine* on the program, in September of '61.

We were pretty much allowed to do our own thing with the press. The press would call. I never recall having to call anyone on staff—maybe only if I had a question, if it was a project that was involving several different offices in the White House. They were mostly different photo shoots, because it was a before-and-after situation that a lot

of people were interested in. There was tremendous interest, especially with regional papers. If they got the word that Mrs. Maurice Noun of Des Moines, Iowa, had given a particular desk to the White House, that was big news for the *Des Moines Register*. So you were working along those lines.

The newspapers and the so-called women's pages of the '40s, '50s, and now the early '60s, still played in Washington a very vital role. That was something that Parties, Inc., every hostess—it seems strange today to be thinking of Washington hostesses, when in the last 10 or 15 years it's just almost disappeared off the face of the map, the kind of women who spent their days and weekends planning and doing everything they possibly could to put together a kind of special occasion dinner party that would allow their husbands and all of the greats of the political power structure to not only relax but also to continue on into the evening making judgments on issues that they were facing every day at the office. The papers that took the greatest interest were the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Evening Star*. There you had both editors of those pages and their staff who had been—in those days you were there for years and years and years. It was kind of a hold-over. I'm thinking of people who worked for the *New York Times* like Bess Furman, who was not the editor of that section of the *Times*. I don't think the *Times* really should be compared to the *Washington Post* and the *Evening Star* as far as women's pages.

But they certainly thought it important to have someone assigned to the White House, going back to Eleanor Roosevelt's day, when she made a point of only having women reporters in, in a room upstairs in the White House known as the Monroe Room, later it became known as the Treaty Room. She would give press conferences on a weekly basis and sometimes more often than that. Her secretary, Malvina Thompson, would pick up the phone and let the word out that they were to all arrive on scene at a certain time, and it was really a rather gregarious, back-and-forth group. There was a lot of good humor. I can't say that they were necessarily always discussing the same things that their counterparts over in the West Wing were discussing, but they certainly didn't seem to leave too many subjects off the agenda for discussion.

When we first started putting out really comprehensive press releases, and I'm taking you back now to even before I was on scene, in the spring of 1961, the AP and the UP reporters. I guess UPI had been formed by then.

RITCHIE: Yes, UPI was formed in 1958.

KETCHUM: You had Helen Thomas [UPI] and Fran Lewine [AP], who were covering the White House principally over in the West Wing. They kind of did double duty, because you had Merriman Smith [UPI] and others who were also playing one of the wires. Mrs. Kennedy for some reason was terribly uncomfortable with reporters, especially among the women. I've never been quite sure of why, but I do recall her wagging a finger and saying, "You really probably shouldn't be able to trust those people." "Those people," speaking of Helen and Franny at that point. Unfortunately, I had started to get to know those people and found them to be absolutely wonderful human beings. Isabelle [Shelton], who was fascinated by the history of the White House, decided to publish the first commercial guidebook.¹ It was not done with much fanfare, but she really was the first one out of the starting gate, so that when the White House Historical Association's guidebook came out over the 4th of July weekend of 1962, Isabelle had already been on the stands for several weeks. Much of what she had in her book had come from the research that she had done in her office. Again, she was somebody that one gets to know and becomes a personal friend.

Maybe you are at fault—and I'm speaking about myself—for crossing this line, but I felt, as somebody who when I was 12 wanted to be the youngest editor of a newspaper in New York State, that it was as much in my blood sometimes as it was in theirs, and we can all make this thing work together. I became rather dependent upon them, so much so that when I got up to the Hill and needed to have some support, and some good, solid reporting done on what was going on, they were more than happy to help the effort. But you were never given a sense that there was a comfort level of any degree when it was time for Mrs. Kennedy to deal with the press.

On top of it all, the *Post* had a columnist by the name of Maxine Cheshire, whose column was called VIP, what we assumed was Very Important People. She misrepresented herself in any number of situations. She would waive her White House press credentials and say that she was White House staff, and introducing a photographer with White House photographer credentials that he was from the White House, and this then allowed her to get into various manufacturers who were working on White House projects, getting that into her column, and giving a heads-up long before the White House was ever ready to discuss publicly plans or what had been considered or what was in the

¹Isabelle Shelton, *The White House: Today and Yesterday* (New York: Fawcett, 1962).

stage of being carried out. That not only bothered Mrs. Kennedy but it bothered President Kennedy tremendously. He really took a very close look at what was going on.

I think Mrs. Kennedy was intimidated a bit by some of her decisions, which when we look back on them they were not extreme, but the Blue Room, for example, the basic color was going to be white for the first time, even though the material that was used on the chairs and some of the other furnishings was a shade of blue, and the pieces that were returned to the room were original to the Monroe administration, and the color white had been used throughout the state floor in the Monroe administration, it had been blue since Martin Van Buren and everybody thought of it as the Blue Room forever and ever. She was convinced that JFK was not going to be happy, and actually he was not displeased at all. Although the Green Room, with its federal furnishings showing New England at its very best, was probably his favorite space on the state floor. Oftentimes after state dinners or after functions that were taking place on the state floor he would find himself a convenient chair in the corner by the fireplace and everybody would gather around and talk to him. She would go off with some of the guests elsewhere. If the party was more than two dozen they usually came down and entertained on the state floor. Other than that, they were upstairs in the Yellow Oval Room and in the President's Dining Room.

Slowly but surely you learned what the demands of the national press and the regional press were, and Washington pretty much felt it fell into the category of national. Many of the columns were syndicated. I don't ever recall, for example, somebody like Drew Pearson being on our case. That was not the situation. We really were more beholden to the so-called women's pages and their successor, and of course to the national periodicals, so that you did have Bonnie Angelo with *Time*, and Hugh Sidey, who was then *Time* and *Life*, those were the people who were taking up a bit of your time with what was happening. But the press releases were churned out, there's no doubt about it. This was under the aegis of Pam Turnure. They were as comprehensive as you possibly could make them, and trying your best to get out the fact that these were things that were wanted and this is how they were described, and not necessarily where they might be located—if we knew of something we usually made a quiet effort to go after it and it wasn't going to be the subject of a press release, but where there were real gaps in the collection, that you made sure was known.

All of this had to be coordinated with the members of the Fine Arts Committee and the Advisory Committee, and the Paintings Committee was involved and they too

had to know about it, and the Library Committee. So it was a lot of mailing. It was before fax machines. Xerox was brand new. There was only one in the entire White House, over in the East Wing that we all had access to, both those in the residence and those in the East Wing, which had the military offices, the social offices, Arthur Schlesinger, the tour office, a lot of people. I don't know how we all operated in those days, but we seemed to do fairly well. Everybody had an IBM Selectric typewriter. They were coming out with self-correction typewriters that were part of the IBM Selectric series. That pretty much did it. Carbon paper was used. We had great stacks of tissues with carbon between, all together as a unit, so that everything had different colors attached. You simply had to make sure that the routing of the green copies went to so-and-so, and the clear copies went someplace else.

Except for Maxine Cheshire, I do not recall any great, traumatic moments. That was brought on not only by what she was writing but by JFK's reaction. He could get extremely upset and I'm sure called his friend Benjy [Benjamin Bradlee] up at the *Post* and let him hear all kinds of things from him. When I first got there, Bradlee was working for *Newsweek*. His father, Bay Bradlee, up in Massachusetts, had a Daniel Webster sideboard. We were able to acquire that from him, with wonderful brasses of Washington in profile on all the drawer pulls, but it was something that had belonged to Webster, who along with B.B. French, was the great collector of 19th-century presidential memorabilia. I guess Webster was trying out his own presidential library before he finally made the grade.

My interest was as much in the men over in the West Wing, as I've mentioned before, finding myself down at the Red Fox Inn in Middleburg, listening to Doug Cornell [AP] and Merriman Smith [UPI] and others talk about the White House, Kennedy and pre-Kennedy, was just amazing stuff. That's how they relaxed. They were still dealing with the subject at hand even though it was a Sunday night and they were waiting to see what was next going on, when was Kennedy going to come back to Washington the next morning. I don't think they cared very much whether Mrs. Kennedy was going to stay down there all week or not, but they sure were interested in what he was doing. In unwinding, the woman who used to run the Red Fox—I want to say Nettie, but I can't be sure—she was like a mother hen. She wasn't that old, maybe 35 or 40, but my God she treated those guys as if they were her children and nothing was too good for them. She always gave them this huge room up on the second floor, like an enormous living room

with a fireplace, where everybody could gather around and chew the fat and be totally away from having to file stories.

RITCHIE: Doug Cornell and Merriman Smith had both been covering the White House since FDR was president, they sort of came with the house as well.

KETCHUM: Cornell was with the *Herald Trib* when I remember him.

RITCHIE: And then the Associated Press during his latter years. But Merriman Smith went back to 1941 in the White House.

KETCHUM: They were both good storytellers. Cornell I didn't think was as good as Smitty, but Smitty was so much more colorful than Cornell. This was before, of course, Helen [Thomas] may have had her eye on Doug Cornell. It was long before they went down the aisle, because that didn't take place until the Nixon administration in the '70s. But, gee, were they something else. You always say to yourself, what you'd give to be able to have those tales retold. I'm hopeful somehow with technology we can reach back into outer space and recapture those worlds for a different time. It will be embarrassing to some, but it will be great for the rest of us who want to hear it.

RITCHIE: The women reporters had to cover the White House during the day—they had the “Jackie Watch”—but then they had to be there at night for the social functions as well. It was almost 24-hour duty for them.

KETCHUM: Right, it was. There were a few who I think probably drove the other women crazy. Molly Thayer must have been one in particular because Molly Thayer had been a great friend of Janet Auchincloss, Mrs. Kennedy's mother. In the spring of 1960, Molly somehow convinced Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Auchincloss that a biography that would help the campaign and help the election efforts along should be written. So Doubleday and Molly Thayer came together on a very slim picture book.² Every single word was Molly and all the research that she could get, and in many areas—her papers are in the Library of Congress—you will find Molly's material with Mrs. Kennedy writing large blocks within it. This same thing happened later on when Molly did a really

²Mary Van Rensselaer Thayer, *Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961).

fine book in the '70s on the White House years.³ That I know for a fact was as close as Mrs. Kennedy herself ever came to writing about her own White House years, and her memories of what was so definitely tied to that period. Molly used her friendship with the family of Mrs. Kennedy and also was very well connected throughout Washington. You'd go to her house for dinner and she would have people like Frances Knight [director of the U.S. Passport Office], and the widow of the Senator from Oregon, Dick—

RITCHIE: Neuberger.

KETCHUM: Maurine Neuberger, and any number of people together. It was always kind of an interesting mix. She would spend the first part of the evening screaming about Joe Alsop, who lived across the street, and how she was going to get him one of these days. They had a very friendly, but maybe not always as friendly as I'd like to think, competition going on about who was a better friend of which member of the Kennedy family. It never bothered Molly to say exactly what was on her mind. She came out with it. But she was very good to Barbara and to me. She kind of took us under her wing. When our first child was on its way, Molly appeared on the scene with all of these gowns that came from her travels in Sikkim, where Hope Cooke, whose mother Molly had known in New York, was the queen.

Molly had started working for Hearst back in the early '30s and she was covering as a kind of a backup, she was kind of one step up from a stringer with the Hearst organization, Adele Rogers St. John, who was covering the Lindbergh kidnaping trial in Flemington Court House in Flemington, New Jersey. Instead, Adele Rogers St. John shacked up in a hotel in Flemington and Molly was sitting in the courtroom every day. She would go over afterwards to the hotel room, knock on the door and give all of her notes over, and Adele would try to put her story together and file it. Hearst somehow took a liking to Molly, and the next thing she was writing Chollie Knickerbocker-type things for the Hearst organization in New York. She had one child, a daughter Eugenie. Molly went into labor at the opening of the Metropolitan Opera and was carted off to the hospital. She would tell about her family, and she would tell this story, and then she would talk about Sigourney Thayer, her husband, who she always explained to us, died in World War II. We always felt badly and bowed our heads for a moment when she described Sigourney Thayer's death in World War II, until a very close friend said, "Yes,

³Mary Van Rensselaer Thayer, *Jacqueline Kennedy, The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

in 1944 his car went off the road in Allentown, Pennsylvania. That of course was during World War II.” After that, nobody quite believed the rest of what Molly was saying.

But she was atypical. It was the Isabelle Sheltons of this world who really showed their stuff. Many of these women had youngsters at home and they had a family life they were trying to balance. They had situations that were totally unfair in terms of trying to get in and be a part of the same witness to the first draft of history that the men were. They just simply were not given the serious response that they should have been given. That’s one of the reasons why later on when we had an opportunity to join an awful lot of other people in trying to break down the barriers to women reporters, such as the Gridiron Club, that it was a great pleasure to participate in. I note today that if a young woman is starting out with a Washington paper, she would never believe half the stories that people would tell her about what it was like just a couple of generations ago. I don’t think she would have at all. On so many levels things changed between the exit of the cast from the Eisenhowers and what would come in with the Kennedys, Johnsons, and Nixons. The time did not seem to be the period that was going to turn this city upside-down, but when you look back upon it, the effect of so many things that took place then can be felt and will continue to be. I won’t begin to cite everything that comes to mind, but certainly the role of the press and the role of women in the fourth estate is something that is terribly important to that tale.

RITCHIE: You mentioned the Gridiron Club, which was exclusively men until the mid-1970s. You were involved in the Counter-Gridiron. What was that?

KETCHUM: Well, the Counter-Gridiron was a group made up of the Helen Thomases, and Fran Lewines, and there were a few men involved in it as well, some of the male reporters, but mostly women who were covering Washington and some of their editors as well, who organized an event that was held the same weekend in Washington as the Gridiron Club dinner itself. They rented, for a very nominal sum, the gymnasium at Mount Vernon Junior College, which was up on Foxhall Road. They brought together many interesting people—it was like a giant carnival—you had people coming not only from DC but also throughout the country, but most of them from Washington. I remember the one that was held soon after the Saturday Night Massacre in the Nixon administration, where Eliot Richardson was signing pardons. He was out of public life so I guess this was all very well. And Martha Mitchell, who had been known to make these midnight calls to Helen Thomas, about John Mitchell was really doing, Martha became a

Suzansaphone, *Bells are Ringing*, telephone operator. You would go up and plunk down five bucks a minute and she would call your family and say, “Mrs. Jones, this is Martha Mitchell, I’m here with your son. He’ll talk to you in a minute, but I just wanted to tell you what a wonderful evening we’re having. We’re going to get the truth out of this city if it kills us, and this is what we’re doing.” On it went. You name it.

One booth was selling flower seed left over from ’60s beautification days. Poor Isabelle, we had tons of marigolds that Barbara and I had dried and taken the seed out and put them in little glassine envelopes that we stole from John Ketchum’s stamp collection. We had hundreds of them. I did a Xerox illustration and Sarah water colored the marigolds, and Isabelle sold them for a dollar and a half a packet. She sold maybe 450, because everybody had to go out with these. Come to find out these were hybridized, and of course you’re not going to get anything even close to what was in it. I had not realized that or I’d been so stupid I had overlooked it. Six months later when people were calling Isabelle and saying, “Thanks a lot but those seeds aren’t doing a damn thing for me,” I felt like I should run back and give everybody their money back, but by this time it had been spent.

It was an effort to gain as much publicity as possible. Instead of doing nothing but picket lines to really have something that people could come to and be reminded. Gary Trudeau did a Doonesbury strip and had it printed and autographed it. People really gave of their own. I can remember Peter Jennings, who was still a fairly young Canadian at that point, we’d have once a week for about six weeks before the event, we would have a meeting at somebody’s house. Oftentimes it was at Judith—Miss Manners—

RITCHIE: Judith Martin.

KETCHUM: Judy Martin’s house up near the zoo. She had young kids at that point who a la the Theodore Roosevelt children in the East Room would roller skate in through the rooms. It was a large, rambling house. It was on two levels but we were on the first floor and it had a living room that had never been carpeted. It just went on forever. The kids would just roller skate in and roller skate out. I think Judy had been out of Vassar maybe 10 or 12 years at that point, and was still young enough to appreciate not being one of the desperate housewives. It was just wonderful things coming together.

Peter Jennings was very good. A lot of the ideas that would come forth would be broached at those meetings and then a committee would be asked to take them on. You'd get the celebrities. Lee Marvin was the first palimony lawsuit victim—or non victim—and the attorney who just recently died, Marvin Mitchelson, who had argued the whole palimony bit in court. He arrived on scene and my job was to do a palimony insurance certificate, which he signed, which said that if you are living with anyone, there is nothing they can do, even if you've been living with them for a 123 years, about trying to claim part of your chattel, property, or what have you. That was quite a top seller. The only thing is that I remember going to a birthday party the following year, and I had several of those certificates left over. I signed Marvin Mitchelson's name and matted it and went to the birthday party for a mutual friend of Bill Hildenbrand's and mine. I should have known better. I didn't really think this thing through. But the party was being given by a man and the woman with whom he had lived for 12 years but had not married. I thought she's got to have a great sense of humor, but when she saw the certificate I don't think she spoke to us again for about a year or so. Fortunately, it was a luncheon and there were no spouses at it. In fact, I think she was the only woman there. She's a good friend today, but at that particular stage of the game it was not a happy sight.

Some of these things were taken rather seriously, although those of us who were kind of in on trying to make them saleable didn't take them seriously at all, except that the proceeds that would come from them. I've never been sure what happened to the money from the Counter-Gridiron. I've often wondered whether it was just used to buy more supplies and fly people in for the following year, but within a handful of years, the Gridiron finally admitted women. What year was that?

RITCHIE: In 1975. They admitted Helen Thomas as their first and only woman member, so there was one more Counter-Gridiron held on the principle that “tokens are for subways.” After that, other women were admitted as members.

KETCHUM: I can remember at one of the early ones a young Maryland politician by the name of Barbara Mikulski, looking like a pit bull terrier running around the gymnasium at Mount Vernon, and everybody saying, “She's a real comer.” This was long before the “Senator Barb” days that we were to know later on. It's interesting when you think back about some of these folks. I don't recall who else participated, other than people like Eliot Richardson and Martha Mitchell. Bess Abell is the one to talk to on some of these things because she really helped to organize them. Again, you were dealing

with friends, people who you had known for a good long time, and Barbara was just as much involved as I was. We went to those meetings together. I can remember getting baby sitters from D.C. General Hospital, which still had a nursing program at that point, and going over to spend two or three hours going over these things. The following day, when you had a question about what kind of coverage a particular part of your professional life that you were working, you didn't hesitate to call these reporters up to seek some advice. That was when the *Evening Star* was still alive, not very well, but still with us.

RITCHIE: One woman reporter whom you mentioned earlier in connection with the Kennedys, but who was also close to the Johnsons, was Nancy Dickerson. What was her role in those days?

KETCHUM: Well, she had obviously a friendship that was tied to her days on the Hill. She came out of Wisconsin, having taught school around the Milwaukee area as Nancy Hanschman, and CBS was looking for a Pauline Frederick [the NBC news broadcaster] or somebody who would have some national visibility, and hired her. I remember coming down to Washington to try to nail down a job with the Park Service in August of 1960, when Congress had gone back in session after the conventions, and sitting up in the gallery of the Senate, and there she was. I was so totally, completely star-struck, that I either motioned or waved or said something like "Hi, Nancy!" as if I knew her. And she had a big smile and all that goes with it. Later on, I watched her in action during the Johnson administration. Johnson was obviously wanting to tilt things in her direction from time to time, especially when he was flying up to Atlantic City at the time of the Convention in 1964. He had Tom Dodd, and Hubert Humphrey, and somebody else hanging out there.

RITCHIE: Eugene McCarthy.

KETCHUM: It was Gene McCarthy, right. She was at the airport in Atlantic City and got the exclusive on which of them would be vice president. More than that, I had found out that she had a very close friendship with the senator from New York State, somebody who my father had been involved with. I think she was living in Georgetown at that point, but she was also spending her nights at the Keating residence. Ken Keating's wife was in a wheelchair and I guess he needed some additional nursing assistance or something. Molly Thayer was claiming to be close to the Keating house from time to time

where she claimed that Nancy was very good about going to Mass at Trinity every single morning, the only difficulty was that in getting down to the ground she had to jump out of Ken Keating's window. It was a wonder that she was able to get down the aisle at Trinity. This all made for good laugh material.

I had one rather bad experience with her. Barbara was going to New York State with John to spend part of the summer and I was supposed to go along. It was at the time of Luci Johnson's wedding in '66. In those days, requests would be made, as they still can be made today, to cover live certain parts of ceremonial occasions. It would be taken under consideration, but the White House would never say yes and never say no. So always there was a Plan B. And Plan B for NBC was to have Nancy—who was now Nancy Dickerson, having married Wyatt Dickerson, and having moved from CBS over to NBC—NBC had giant oil paintings done of all the women from presidential families, daughters, spouses, and so forth, who had been married in the White House. You would have Frances Folsom, and Maria Monroe, and on it would go. These would be used as backdrops for various segments that would be recorded, in which Nancy and I would sit in the center of the Blue Room and I would have small objects which would be introduced, and then in the background would be whatever administration we were then talking about. We were literally doing 10 hours, 45 minutes on each one, which could be edited down. We would do a couple at a time and then take a break and come back.

This happened over a period of time that I was supposed to be in New York State with Barbara and John. The plan had been we would go up to New York State and then come back maybe two or three days before the wedding and go off to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and come back and celebrate at the reception at the White House. That was just fine, but I had to scrub all of that because of this plan to give NBC an opportunity to have something in the can in case they never were able to get the live shots of the reception line and some of the other things that they hoped to get.

We were doing these things, the White House was closed. Things were really quiet, everybody had taken off. I don't know where the Johnsons were, but I assume they were in Texas. They were certainly not at the White House. Luci was gone. Lynda was gone. Nelson Pierce was the only usher on duty. At some point when we took a break, Nancy said, "I've been given permission to go upstairs and use one of the bathrooms up on the third floor, in one of the guest rooms." I said, oh, fine. She went off and very shortly afterwards, Nelson Pierce came back and said he could see the elevator from right

outside the usher's office, and instead of going to the third floor she got off on the second floor. "Do you want to go up there and see what's going on?" I said, "Well, I will." He said, "Would you mind if I went up there?" I said, "No, that's fine, by all means, it's your responsibility more than mine to be policing what's going on in the family quarters." So up he went and he couldn't find her anyplace. Finally, he went into Luci's bedroom, and there she was in her closet looking for the wedding dress. The whole business of *Women's Wear Daily*, which had become a new prime beat for the White House since the Kennedy administration, Fairchild Publications, and she was not going to be bested by their reporters on what the design of Luci's dress was. He explained to her that this was not the third floor, and this was not where the bathrooms were, and she apparently was terribly embarrassed by the whole thing. She went up to the third floor and he stayed out in the hallway waiting for her to come out and escorted her back down, and explained to her that were she to go up again he would feel responsible for what was going on.

I don't know, maybe reporters don't necessarily feel comfortable honoring just good manners, but today nothing like that, I would imagine, could ever happen in the White House, because more and more the security up in the family quarters is so different than it was in those days. After the wedding was over, a day or two after, I think it was the Sunday after it, she asked Barbara and me to come out to Merrywood, and I was fascinated because I wanted to see what the house that Mrs. Kennedy had lived in was all about. We went out there and she had Priscilla Kidder staying with her. She was a designer, and her designs were those of Priscilla of Boston, and she had done Luci's wedding dress. She sold locally ready-to-wear through Garfinckle's, and that's where Barbara had gotten her dress, and it was a Priscilla of Boston. The other person I remember who was there was the Hollywood producer Mervyn Leroy's wife. He was related, I think through an earlier wife, to Louis B. Meyer. As a kid I remember reading a Bosley Crowther bio of Louis B. Mayer, *The Lion that Roared*. I guess Nancy was trying to soothe whatever frustrations or feelings of those of us who found out she was going into parts of the White House that were off-limits to her. But after that I never really trusted her that much. I always wonder what her motive was for saying or doing what she was doing.

It was kind of a sad life for her. I think she had a lot of what it takes, but to be the first woman of any national stature for CBS was something that without a doubt had its built-in problems. Her coverage was pretty much of the West Wing. She didn't do anything that I can recall that affected us—unlike people like Marianne Means, for

example, who did cover our program, even though she was over in the West Wing. I'm trying to think who Marianne was even working for.

RITCHIE: She was with Hearst.

KETCHUM: Hearst organization, yes, that's right.

RITCHIE: Did you have much contact with the press office in the West Wing? The Pierre Salingers, and the Bill Moyers, and the George Christians?

KETCHUM: We did, but our prime contact was with Pam Turnure, and by the time the Johnson were arriving on scene, I have a feeling that Pierre who stayed on for a while before he went back to California to take Clair Engle's seat, I have a feeling that Liz was calling as many of the shots for the West Wing as she was for the East Wing. She was just fascinating for me. I'm not very comfortable with the Karen Hughes types of this world because I don't—well, she may be one of the few people who does tell the president of the United States what he needs to hear. But Liz did it in such a disarming way. She always looked for the side of the story that was going to help out somebody in need. She was just a sucker for trying to put her arms around a situation that needed support and needed somebody to pay attention to it, and who normally would be one of the lost causes out there. She never saw it that way, whether later on she was out spending the whole summer in a bus with Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi, or when she was trying to get the Equal Rights Amendment through. But she was such a strong force that really that was where we took our lead from vis a vis the press.

The press would call with a desire to do a story on a subject related to what we were doing, and within weeks or months of the Johnsons coming to the White House we made sure that in the area where we kept much of our documentation, not so much files but what we shelved as far as books, and reports, and photographs, that we had a couple of study desks right there so that the press could come in and sit down and we could just keep giving them material, something that I'm sure is what you do in the office today. But it was unheard of because we were in the White House proper and except for the housekeeper's office and the usher's office there had never been another office there. That must have taken the ghosts of past occupants back a pace or two when they considered how the house was being used. The only unreasonable thing I ever remember

happening was when Maxine Cheshire somehow dropped her gold pencil in the john off of the Gold Room, which was where the women's bathrooms were located.

RITCHIE: You mentioned that you were located right smack in the middle of the White House—

KETCHUM: Right, and for example, it was very hush, hush but the word was out that somebody was coming to visit Mrs. Johnson to have tea and we were all to take the oath that we hadn't seen any of this take place. Of course, that's all I needed to hear. Our doorway was next to the old kitchen and was the old broadcast room and was directly across the ground floor corridor from the Diplomatic Reception Room, which was an oval room directly under the Blue Room, which was directly under the Yellow Room in the family quarters. The Diplomatic Reception Room led out to the South Grounds. It was the entrance that the family used always, and it's the entrance that guests for state dinners used throughout that period of time. Now because of the security equipment, magnetometers and so forth, the entrance is over in the East Wing. They have a special building constructed for all of this, so people now come in that way. A much nicer way was driving up to the south entrance and coming in through the Diplomatic Reception Room with its great *papier pient* scenic American wallpaper, its federal furnishings, and a fire in the fireplace. That of course was FDR's fireplace from fireside chat days. Your wrap is taken and you then are taken by the arm of a military aide and your husband will follow, but you as the wife are escorted up the stairs and on into the East Room, where you wait for the president and the guests of honor to come, where you are announced.

All these things were taking place in that part of the house at the point. But we could look directly through and see whoever was coming into the White House. So the word was out that somebody was coming and that we had to be very discrete about it, not to go out into the hall at that point. Of course, I could hardly wait. There was a crack in the door where these two doors came together, because they had to move in all kinds of equipment back when it was the broadcast room. We, of course, appreciated it also because if we had a large piece of furniture we were photographing in the room or doing something with, the entranceway was most accommodating. I was looking through the crack and this tiny little woman was coming in through the Diplomatic Reception Room. She was wearing something very much in the family of Oriental costume, and I'm looking and looking again, and then it dawned on me, it was one of the great Soong sisters, namely Madam Chiang Kai-Shek. It was at a time when relations between

Formosa, China, and the United States were all on tenderhooks, and nobody was to know that she was coming to have tea with Mrs. Johnson. I guess Mrs. Johnson must have felt somewhat sorry for her because Madam Chiang had lived in the White House back in World War II days, when FDR was always turning over bedrooms to people. Mrs. Roosevelt was not happy because Madam Chiang had to have her sheets changed two or three times a day, and they were silk sheets. She came with her own staff, who drove the White House staff absolutely Looney Tunes. This was her domestic staff. She had four or five people in attendance, when normally if a guest came at most they would have one. Even the Queen of England would only have one person who was staying up in the servants' quarters up on the top floor. But not Madam Chiang.

Anyway, this very proper and beautiful woman, her face was almost sculpted with not a line in it—I don't know what kind of facials she was being given, but this was back in '65 or something. That was the kind of thing we liked to see.

We also were right in the catbird seat that if anybody in the family that we had been working with on a project was coming in or going out they'd stop in the office. "How are you doing? How far along is it?" Mrs. Kennedy would ask. We would try to give her the best possible answer as far as time frame. I remember one day John Kennedy, Jr., had fallen down out on the South Lawn, where there was all kinds of playground equipment, and he had knocked out a tooth. Mrs. Kennedy had grabbed him and brought him in, and the tooth was turned over to Dr. [Janet] Travell, the physician, who put it in a special solution to preserve it until a dentist could be found who would put the tooth back in. I guess if it's a baby tooth, it can be treated almost like a peg and put back up there and will stay until the other tooth finally starts pushing it down. Unfortunately, whatever Travell put it in, and the time that it took to find another dentist who was going to take this a few days had lapsed. They went to get the tooth out and it had started to disintegrate around the edges, so the solution had obviously been too powerful—you'd think that the last thing that was going to disappear from the face of the earth was somebody's teeth. But these were all kind of the family chuckles that you shared.

Having the kitchen directly next door, and having all of the new menus that were being tried out for state dinners—and unlike the Bushes, who I think in four years have only had two or three state dinners at most, although they have working luncheons from times to time—the Kennedys were probably having 10 or 11 a year at least. The Johnsons not only had state dinners, they had state luncheons as well, because I can remember

attending some of those. Many of Johnson's efforts as far as emerging African nations in the '60s were tied to these. I guess you weren't quite important enough or you had not been on scene long enough to have a dinner in your honor, but having a luncheon was certainly appropriate to the cause. I'm sure our friends over in the East Wing and the West Wing, especially the West Wing, could probably shake their heads and be a little jealous. We didn't realize how well off we were. We just knew that we had seen a lot of things that were being reported in the so-called women's pages the next day that we had known about the day before, and we felt good about that.

RITCHIE: It's the West Wing that has its own TV series, but the East Wing deals with a lot of the social and cultural issues.

KETCHUM: Right, there you have the calligraphers who do all of the invitations. They do the master and then that is engraved at GPO. You have the social office that handles every single detail in terms of the event and its planning. We worked with them most closely on state gifts that would be given by the Johnsons both to visitors coming to the United States and when the Johnsons would travel abroad. I can remember getting almost a midnight call a few days before a very quick plan that Johnson had of meeting [Alexsei] Kosygin up in Glassboro, New Jersey, at the president's house at what was then (it now has another name) Glassboro State Teachers College. The president lived in a house called "Hollybush." Kosygin was coming for a UN opening and relations with Russia had been very tense at that point. Somebody had the bright idea of seeing what was half way between Washington and Manhattan. It turned out that Glassboro in southern New Jersey was just about the perfect spot, so that's where they drew the line. My job was to find out enough about Kosygin and then to go shopping. It was understood that he liked antiques. So I went off and ended up with a mirror and a couple of other items. His wife may not have been alive then. His daughter came with him as his hostess. I got every shop I could find in Georgetown to open up over that weekend. We took several things out, of which most of them were returned. But he had a dacha, for which he especially liked to gather things that he had picked up on his travels. Supposedly, this is where these things were going to end up.

So you did that, and you were also working with the social office. You also were working at the same time with the office of protocol of the State Department. You also had some dealings with a program that Robin Duke, Angie Duke's wife, had started in the Kennedy administration for refurbishing Blair House. That continued on with Lloyd and

Ann Hand. Lloyd was the first chief of protocol. Tyler Abell later on became chief of protocol. He was assistant postmaster general in the early days of the Johnson administration.

The East Wing had on the second floor the office that processed all of Mrs. Johnson's or Mrs. Kennedy's mail, known as social correspondence. Nearby was the office of press secretary to the First Lady. The social office itself that did all of the planning and really was kind of the heart and soul. The press office, which by the time Liz was well enough along, you had Liz as the head of that office, Simone Poulain, who came over from State Department, who had worked for John Foster Dulles, doing his television, who was Mrs. Johnson's television person and was Liz's deputy, and then you had five other women. In fact, the East Wing, except for the offices of the military aides, was pretty much an all women's organization. You had the heads of army, navy, air force—but you didn't have marines, so I guess navy thought that they were covering that particular base. For a while, George Reedy, after he left the West Wing, came over and had an office there, working mostly with the periodical press.

You had Arthur Schlesinger, and then Eric Goldman, operating out of the same space during the Johnson administration, an office that went from '61 with Schlesinger to '69—and Goldman was gone about six months after the Festival of the Arts. He had a terrible time getting along with Bess and Liz. I don't know why. Boy, he was a super guy. I used to go over. Oh, Horace Busby also had an office over there, when he just had to get away from the West Wing. I think that Johnson gave people a little bit of freedom, but not so much that he couldn't reach out in about three seconds and grab them back. I can't think of the other person who came in and replaced Goldman, but there is no way to describe what a decent, interesting person Goldman was. I didn't feel that way about Schlesinger. I'm sure he's very talented and all, but I knew both of his secretaries and he was just kind of nasty to them. I used to watch him in action. He was going through a painful divorce at that point and there may have been a lot of extenuating circumstances. I do remember Mrs. Kennedy once saying to me when the Johnsons were giving the Lincoln appointment book for the first two months of the Lincoln administration, kept by John Hay and John Nikolay. It was coming up for auction at Southerby's in New York and Johnson had said to her that he wanted to give something to the collection, and this was something that was brought to her attention. She sent the catalogue back to me and said, "Why don't you take it over and ask Arthur, he doesn't have enough to do." I remember that statement. Later on he would write his books in which you thought he was

really right in the middle of every important decision that was ever made. That seems to be the story sometimes.

Bob Gray, who worked in the last days of the Eisenhower administration and then went on for public relations with Hill and Knowlton, wrote a book about his days with the Eisenhower administration and you'd swear to God that he sent the forces into Latin America and he did all kinds of things in Lebanon. You name it and he had done it. It's easy for anybody to get into that because you are many times part of a solution, or you're part of a discussion, but when it finally comes out, it's you are the one who saved the president's tail feathers, and it doesn't quite work that way.

RITCHIE: On a couple of occasions you've alluded to the Vietnam War going on in the background. It became increasingly the backdrop for Washington in the 1960s, with demonstrations outside and also frictions within the White House. Did that filter down to the type of work that you were doing?

KETCHUM: It did to an extent. And yet I think that somehow through our own doing we ignored it more than the rest of the country did. Maybe we felt protective, maybe we felt that some of the criticism was unfair. I don't know. I think I was probably unwilling to feel as deeply against the war as I would have were it today. I guess you almost feel like you're family and your father's decisions are being questioned to an extent that there is an unfairness about it. I believe the time that things really reached the boiling point was the Chicago Convention in '68, because that's the first time that I saw Liz Carpenter come back and have a meeting—there must have been 25 of us that she got from all over the White House, from the Executive Office Building, West Wing, East Wing, and so forth—and we were all under 30, I'm convinced. She somehow saw us as people in the park, once removed, as far as our feelings, and a lot of people really didn't leave any room for doubt at all as far as what they felt and what they felt needed to be done. She was very shaken, she really was. She was one of those advisors, and I guess using the analogy that I did earlier on Karen Hughes, she was somebody who Johnson did depend on. She would tell it to him as it was. But she couldn't believe that what went on went on up there. And of course all these Johnson people who wanted to ride on the Humphrey coattails had gone to Chicago as part of the effort for the nomination and they were all trying to be as hopeful as possible that things were going to be right come November. That was one time that it really affected us.

Another time, I was having a meeting that had been scheduled for some time with Mrs. Johnson. It was a nine o'clock meeting and it was the day after one of what Mrs. Johnson called her "women's doers" luncheons—again a name she was not fond of. Liz used to give things these monikers. She would invite women from all areas of interest and discipline to the White House to sit at lunch and then several of them would be called upon, and they would know in advance, to get up and describe what they were doing and what their mission was. One of the people was Betty Hughes, the wife of the governor of New Jersey. Another one was the actress and the songstress, "I Want to be Evil," Eartha Kitt. Kitt got up and in the most dramatic fashion talked about what it would be like to have a baby wrestled from your arms. God, she used every expression in the world and had everybody else's jaw going down to their knees. Mrs. Johnson let her speak and then tried to respond to her very quietly. The next day, it was a Mrs. Johnson who was very, very upset, who did not know whether she had handled things properly or not. That's all she wanted to do. She wanted to be assured. Liz and Bess and I were the three people that I remember were at the meeting. I don't know what the discussion was all about. I don't think it was another wedding coming down the line, but anyway we all said to her, as if I had been in the room—I think Liz and Bess probably were in the room—that she was just perfect. But it really did bother her.

Another time I remember we were gathering was the day after Bobby Kennedy died. I guess he was shot one evening and lived into the next day until they removed the life support. She had a special group that was coming through in the morning, people that she had known for some time. I'm not sure if I was giving the tour or if I was just along with them. But I do recall talking to her during that period saying how could we possibly accept what was happening. God, she was so sympathetic towards the whole Kennedy family. That was the thing about her. She never let politics, as he would, interfere with her feelings towards things. I suppose one of the times that that showed its head in the best sort of way was the time that he wanted the name Walter Jenkins removed from everything in the world after that incident, which was just before the election of '64. She insisted not only on speaking out but she put out a press release about her feelings about him in it as well. Then several reporters called her and she commented for publication on what she thought. That would have to be typical Lady Bird Johnson.

She agonized, and I think she hurt terribly when she saw the pickets, or when they would go to church in Williamsburg and the good rector of that parish would stand up and wag his finger at the president. Probably only the Dwight McDonald day was more

reminiscent as far as somebody taking him on. Yet we think of ourselves as a democracy where the president should put himself front and center. One of the things that I always loved about the House of Commons is the hour in which the Prime Minister stands up and takes all those questions. The accountability factor, especially in this day and age with television and all that goes with it, it seems to me could be more direct. But press conferences are so different. Lyndon Johnson was not a good subject for press conferences. He was great in small groups but the minute that red eye went on it was terrible. Slowly but surely the handlers got a hold of him and got him to wear contact lenses, which he had never done before.

The worst experience I ever remember for the poor guy was his hair was really thinning on top. Somebody, I assume it was in New York where he oftentimes was sending Mrs. Johnson to go get clothing. He used to line up his entire group of secretaries. There was a man named Eddie Senz. There's a wonderful recording early in the administration that is in the Beschloss tapes. He's calling Eddie Senz in New York and asking him to come on down and do a make-over for Mrs. Johnson, for Lynda and Luci, and then he said, "I've got several girls over here in the office that need a lot of help too." This poor little guy—I remember him very distinctly—he was all of about five foot two, gave up everything. Johnson said to him, "Now what's this gonna cost me?" Senz said, "Well, not very much." He said, "I can pay for your transportation but I can't pay for more than that, you know I'm really of very limited means. I've spent my whole life in public service." Anybody who knew Lyndon Johnson even halfway knew that that was pulling somebody's leg right around in a pretzel. But down he came and did his thing.

That was part of the problem of being in the house and seeing some of the things that were going on, or knowing some of the secrets, and saying to yourself, "This is just too good to be true." One of the problems that I had, and it was something that I never thought was ever going to be heard of again, was on the day that she went to Atlantic City with the girls, maybe three or four days before he went up. I guess they had been going back and forth, President and Mrs. Johnson, for several days in the summer of 1964, because the Bobby Kennedy situation obviously hurt him a lot. He was just as thin skinned about that as anything. He decided that the country did not want him, and if the country did not want him he did not want the country. So he told her, "Yes, I'm going to Atlantic City, but I'm going to stand in front of the convention and I'm going to say I'm stepping down, I will not be a candidate for election in November." She knew before she went away that we were doing a lot of cataloging of furniture in the family quarters. She

left on an afternoon, so the next morning Elizabeth Glasow, who was the registrar in the office, and I went upstairs to do the furniture in his bedroom. It's usually where she slept when they slept together. He didn't really go into her room as much as she went into his bedroom, and they were adjourning through a passageway between the two rooms—you didn't have to go to a main corridor or anything like that, even though both bedrooms opened up into a main corridor.

On his dresser, which we were taking apart and doing the measurements and photographing with a Polaroid, was a letter to him saying, "Beloved, you would never be able to live with the results," and she went on and laid out, "your friends would be mortified, your enemies would be cheering." She made the case as to why what he wanted to do was wrong. I couldn't believe what I was reading. I said to Liz, "Look at this and read it." The two of us thought we had stumbled into something that was really major. We never talked about it. We kept it absolutely confidential. It finally came out when she published her White House diary. Several years had lapsed before people understood what that was about.

But I was so taken by the thing that I had to sit down and write the whole thing out in longhand. Somewhere upstairs I have this, very quickly scrawled with a pencil. I guess we had a clipboard and tablets with us, so I did it on that and then put the letter very carefully back. I said, "This is never going to be believed, really." But you had crossed the line, there's no doubt about it that you weren't keeping faith with your responsibilities by reading something like this, and the only way that you could kind of live with all of it was just to make sure that nobody knew about it. So we waited it. Liz and I still—she lives out in Michigan—from time to time when we get together this topic comes up at some point: Do you remember when?

Mrs. Kennedy always would discourage anybody—although she made it clear that you could be in the family quarters whenever things were quiet and peaceful, but the one quiet and peaceful time that you couldn't be there was during JFK's nap time, but she indicated that she was up there taking a nap also. We stayed away and never tried to venture into that part of the world, whether he was napping or something else was happening. We didn't know and didn't particularly want to know about it. There is a lot of just a sense of protection that comes with the territory. Part of that may have played into the views that we had of the Vietnam War. As wrongheaded and as difficult as it was—because I had several classmates of mine at Colgate who came back in body bags.

Some of the kids were kids that I grew up with in western New York State. Jimmy Marshall was a brilliant kid with great promise, but that was not to be the case.

RITCHIE: Were the demonstrations visible from the White House? Could you hear them outside?

KETCHUM: You could if you went up to the second floor. It was much easier to hear them, they carried more, and especially on the north side, on the Pennsylvania Avenue side. But the day came when suddenly we heard this loud crash and we opened up our office door and realized that people on a public tour had decided to use the corridor right outside our office as the place to sit down. This was like about 9:30, a quarter of ten in the morning. Not only did they sit down, they sang. If they used bathrooms they were then escorted out, so none of them wanted to use the facilities. I don't remember them ever using anything, they just held it, but they were still there at seven o'clock that evening. There was a lot of back and forth going on—I think Moyers was involved in this, if I remember it—as far as what should they do as far as the D.C. police department? Should they arrest them? Should they not? Should they let them have as much time as they needed to make the point? It was finally over at the end of the day, it did not continue on into the next day, but to have a real, honest-to-goodness, live sit-in right there in your own backyard, in your own back office, was quite amazing. That hit because these were all kids about our age or a little bit younger, that found as much a sympathy vote with those of us in the office that I was part and parcel of than anything else that took place.

RITCHIE: The next big event was in April of 1968 when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. There's a book called *Ten Blocks from the White House*, whose title indicates that the riots that took place came within 10 blocks of the White House. How did that affect you?

KETCHUM: We were all told to clear out. By early afternoon, things started to really break up downtown. It's possible that Barbara had dropped me off that day, because I didn't have any transportation, so I walked from the White House to Capitol Hill. I can remember the eerie feeling. There were no fires that I recall in that part of the city but people were kind of streaming out, in a rather orderly fashion. People were calling to one another along the way, if you recognized somebody, about what was happening. We had had an emergency plan at the White House from the Kennedy

administration, at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, but our office all laughed at it because everybody else was going off to a mountain hideaway someplace and we were told that we were to go under the North Portico, which would have given us about as much protection as standing out, stark naked, in the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue. It was the craziest thing, but it really brought you up short. You knew how important to the cause you were at that stage of the game.

But I can remember going home and trying to assess the situation. We were the only white family in the neighborhood at that point. Our neighbors on one side wanted to write on our windows “Soul Brother,” because they had started that evening to come through and smash car windshields and windows. I said, “Oh, no, don’t do that. I’m sure we’ll be okay,” and the car was. But we moved John out of the front of the house, where the nursery was, into the back of the house where our bedroom was, and I filled the bathtub up with water. I thought, if we ever have a fire I’ve got to have some source of water up here. I had a rope ladder, that we had never had out of the box, it was for fire, in case of an emergency, that I took to a back bedroom window, that would lead us down into the garden area if we needed to get away that way.

I don’t recall that it was terribly long. It seems to me that it was on a Friday that all this started, and by Monday I was back at work. Yet we had burnings all over the Hill. At Lincoln Park where the—

RITCHIE: The old People’s Drugstore.

KETCHUM: The People’s Drugstore was burned out. Were you living on the Hill at that time?

RITCHIE: I was living in College Park, but I was at the Library of Congress that day.

KETCHUM: Okay, so you would know that whole scene. Sunday was the first time that we could get in the car and go anyplace. We went to a children’s animal farm in Oxen Hill, Maryland, and we took John. He would have been three that December. It was just an opportunity to get away. You just felt on the edge. But it was not anything that I saw through the eyes of my colleagues at the White House because we really all were dispersed and told to get out of there and get home. Truly, I believe that this would have

been the day after Memphis, after the evening before because I can so remember when it happened, when we got the news. A wonderful woman who just died had given birth the same time that Barbara had John at GW hospital. She had just stopped by to bring some cookies and to visit. It was dinnertime or thereabouts. We were sitting in the dining room talking and the news must have been on in the kitchen. We could not believe that whole situation. Within 24 hours Washington was going up in flames. I do remember walking in spots on the Hill and looking over towards northeast and seeing plenty of smoke. And of course seeing what happened at the People's and that section of East Capitol Street.

RITCHIE: From the Manuscript Room in the Adams Building you could see plumes of smoke coming up in different places all around town, H Street, Seventh Street.

KETCHUM: We had a High's store also on Eleventh Street, and that was burned out, never to return again. But it was the People's that I remember more than any because we depended upon that. We were always going down not just for baby aspirin but for plenty of other things as well. Today the building is an apartment house that has extremely high rents. I cannot believe what's happened to real estate on the Hill. You should have invested heavily, Donald, should we all! With what, I don't know, but that would have done it.

RITCHIE: Well, 1968 was a year of things going wrong.

KETCHUM: It did go wrong, the convention, the April riots, then June, then July, and all the frustrations, you had people like Anna Chenault playing evil go-between on Vietnam. You couldn't make any sense out of it.

RITCHIE: To some degree it started when Johnson said he wasn't going to be a candidate.

KETCHUM: Yes, nobody would have believed that. We were at a drive-in movie over in Northeast. We would take John along and he would sleep in the back seat. It was a cheap evening out. On the way back we turned on the car radio and I thought I would drive off the road. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. We weren't plugged into the West Wing, but I don't think that even they were too plugged in, except for people like Horace Busby and a handful of others. Like anything, Johnson played those cards so

close to his vest that he probably went back and forth a hundred times before he finally decided to put the tag line on the end of that speech.

RITCHIE: After he announced that he wasn't going to run, and you knew that it was going to be less than a year before the Johnson would be leaving, what did that require you to do?

KETCHUM: We had always been looking toward how things would be represented at the Library, that was one of those things that you did. We had done it a year before what would have been the Kennedy reelection campaign. That's what was going on the day of November 22, '63, we were making those plans for the recreation of the Kennedy desk (which I'm now glad to report you can buy copies of, and Bill Clinton did buy one for his office at his Library).

The stories about [LBJ]—yes, he was larger than life, but the stories were much larger than that. People would trade on these things. You could hardly wait to get the next one out there in hopes that somebody could top that and you could pass that around. Yet you had to both respect and have great affection for him, because he was such a complete character out of creation. You knew his feelings. Early in 1969 we lost a son who was several weeks old as a result of a crib death. The letter that he wrote in longhand afterwards, which we still have, was one of the most touching human messages. There was not a piece of it that was in any way boilerplate. It was just all from the heart. I thought to myself, God, he probably has done that a million times, but he does it in such a way that he really understands that this means something to people. You have enough to see the good side of him that when you're looking for the absolutely outlandish examples that it somehow offsets it.

The farewell parties for him were quite remarkable. Everybody wanted to get into the act. There were others in the staff who wanted to somehow exorcize some of the devils that had been called "special assistants to the president," I'm talking now about Bess, to a lesser extent Liz. We had a situation that occurred when a good portion of the Johnson china had to be rejected, the dessert service. For Mrs. Johnson, flowers were everything, for the detail and for the design. The dessert service was made up of state flowers. Each state has its official flower. We could do both the states and the District of Columbia, so we would have 51, and since we had to have more than 200 place settings, we could multiply this by four, so we would have four of New York, and four of

California, and four of four, and four. Tiffany's design studio was responsible for the designs. A young French designer named Andre Pietre. He did a fantastic job on everything from soup course to main course, entree, and so forth, but he did a horrible dessert course. These designs were not worthy of F.W. Woolworth.

When they were seen, and when Walter Hoving came down from New York to counsel with Mrs. Johnson, and Bess, and myself, and a couple of others who were part of the design team, he agreed. He then had to face up to what we told him, that anything that is ordered by the White House, even though it is rejected by the White House, has to be destroyed by the White House. They used to just dump it in the Potomac River, but that became fodder for all kinds of collectors when the river was dredged. So Bess had a suggestion that we make a humongous poster, that we put names on it like Marvin Watson and other people over in the West Wing who had been holders of the keys during the last three or four years of the administration and made life very difficult from '65 on. Connie Carter, who had worked with us on the research for the designs was brought in, and we invited Liz, and we had a tray of glasses with about four different kinds of champagne, and we went down to one of the bunker rooms in the sub-sub-basement, and we put the poster up at one end and we took the dessert service and one plate at a time we hurled it, one right after the other, and tried to hit the target as many times as we could. Bess and Tyler, I remember, were giving a farewell party for her staff and his people at protocol, and some of the folks who worked in my area in the White House over at Blair House later that evening, and you never saw such a loose bunch of people in your life because they were totally free at last.

It's a horrible thing. Here you are destroying literally documents, no matter that they've been rejected, but you have legislation which has been around since the Theodore Roosevelt days which insisted that this was the way you had to dispose of family plate, etc. And they did it. In this instance, no one needed to get on any psychiatrist's couch and vent their spleen because it was all taken care of courtesy of the rejected White House china. About 10 months later in the Nixon administration, the new dessert service was approved by one and all and it's been living happily ever after there, and no more opportunities to have such "bombs away" in the basement of the White House.

RITCHIE: Well, that brings in the Nixons. They arrived in January of 1969, and coming with them was a whole new set of staff, both for the president and the First Lady.

KETCHUM: Exactly. On the 22nd of January, the day after the day after the inauguration, I got a call from Dwight Chapin. I cannot recall whether he was listed as secretary to the cabinet or what, but he was one of the Haldeman people who was in charge of the president's schedule at that point. He said that President Nixon wanted to have a tour of the White House. And could it be as comprehensive as possible? He had nothing on his schedule from two o'clock on until six, then he had two things. *The Shoes of the Fisherman* was going to be screened for him later that evening and Teddy White was coming in to interview him around six o'clock. Who am I to argue with anybody's schedule? Of course I was there, and that was fine. So Mrs. Nixon, Tricia, David Eisenhower, Julie, President Nixon, and a woman named Lucy Winchester, who was Mrs. Nixon's social secretary, who had come from Kentucky and is now married to a former governor of Kentucky who may have died not long ago, was it Breathitt?

RITCHIE: Oh, yes, Ned Breathitt.

KETCHUM: That's who she ultimately married. She was a divorcee at the time with a young daughter. She didn't remarry until she married Breathitt. I don't think Lucy was much older than I was. Maybe three or four years, so Breathitt must have been considerably older than she was.

Anyway, we started and we went through every room that you could possibly think of. Not in either one of the wings but in the White House, going down into the bomb shelter and continuing on. J. B. West was with us during part of that time as well. I can remember him being quizzed on various things. What slowly started to come out for me was two things: the Nixons had been treated very badly by the Eisenhowers. Secondly, Nixon judged state functions by Latin American standards. In other words, all the pomp and ceremony, how he wanted the state dining room set up, how he wanted the head of state, and head of government, and their spouse to come down into the entrance way. All these things, they were already planning the first state dinner. He was planning on going to Romania, that was his first trip abroad. The Kennedys loved the idea of having tables for 10, so that everybody could join in the conversation and things would stop at a certain moment and they would look up at a head table for 10. But Nixon, whenever he was in the White House, and he was there certainly for state dinners, it was part of an E-shaped table that the Eisenhower's had. You had one long side and then three projections. To anybody's knowledge, Mrs. Eisenhower would never let either one of the Nixons up to the family quarters, even though sometimes heads of state would be greeted up there and

brought down through the grand staircase and into the entrance foyer of the White House, with the Marine band striking up Hail to the Chief.

You heard him discussing for the first time something which must have been discussed recently after the election, he didn't like the way the South Lawn welcoming ceremonies were run. He felt that the White House police should have some role to play, and in doing that should have some kind of special uniform that they only wore on that occasion. Another thing about all of this that just kind of blew me away was that he had memorized, or somehow had made it part of his being, every statistic that you could think of about the presidency. He knew who the oldest president was, he knew who the youngest was. He knew who had been in office longest, who shortest, who had been married more than once, who had eight children by his first wife and seven by his second. It was as if he had taken all of David Eisenhower's baseball cards and scratched out those stats and put on presidential names and stats. How long it would take somebody to commit all that stuff to memory! This is something that he didn't just start in 1960. It really must have gone way, way, way back when he was in Whittier or down in Duke, but it was so funny to hear this. His facts were basically absolutely right.

He was very, very insistent on how things were going to be. I can remember going into his bedroom and he wanted to talk about all the cables that had been there for Lyndon Johnson that were cleared away. I can remember him distinctly saying, "This business of having to record everything is preposterous." How many times afterwards you'd think back on that particular statement, because he made Johnson sound like he was bugging every single thing that ever came down the pike, and here we have the grand master of them all in the making. It was amazing.

His bedroom stands out for a couple of reasons, not only for his statements about all the lines that he was having removed from under the bed, but he kept on his bedside table a folding screen, which was probably about yea high, and behind it was an arc sunlamp and these tiny goggles, the kind you would have on if you were swimming the English channel after you put the bear grease on. I guess he spent a great deal of time under the sunlamp to build up his tan. He also had a Dictaphone machine. I remember Mrs. Nixon saying to me once, very honestly, the poor lady she was a chain smoker. But she said, "I can't sleep with him because he'll wake up six times in the night and turn on the Dictaphone machine and talk for four or five or six minutes and then turn the light off and go back to bed." She said, "He's just doing this constantly. If you're in the same bed

with him you just never go back to sleep.” I thought, well, that’s fine. Again, probably hearing things that a very frustrated individual was having to operate under.

In the meantime, I was having my differences with Haldeman over how our budget was being spent. We had moneys that came in from the sale of the guidebook. We did not have a penny of tax dollars that came to us. Even my salary was donated by the White House Historical Association. The charter under which the association was drawn up and how the moneys were to be spent as far as the board of directors of the association were concerned were very detailed. It was only to go towards enhancing, conserving, and promoting the collection, and to acquiring objects that were appropriate to the guidelines that had been established. His idea was: if you have people coming to the White House to enjoy the art and furnishings, people who have been public spirited citizens who have given money to the coffers of the Republican Party, let us say a group of women from Grosse Point, Michigan, then moneys from the sale of the guidebook are very appropriate for entertaining them. He couldn’t see why these bills, which could have been sent to the Republican National Committee, I’m sure, but he was looking for another way out. Because my signature had to be on payment of these I would not do it, and we went back and forth. When I realized after about a year and a few months that the writing was on the wall, that I could not continue in this vein, it was certainly time to hang it up. In the meantime, Clem Conger had been approached about things. In the back of my mind I realized that things were so political, and so different than they had been, and there was such a lack of respect and coordination that the best move that I could possibly make was to leave. But what to do?

I had some very good meetings with Mrs. Nixon. We organized the Committee for the Preservation of the White House. We now had Clare Booth Luce on the committee, which was kind of interesting. She would come and make observations which seemed to me a little off the wall, and maybe she should go back to Hawaii for a while and reconsider. But I was terribly uncomfortable in the position that I was finding myself. The good thing was that I was young enough not to have to feel that I had to protect my economic interests at home. You could tell yourself that if you have to go the Pennsylvania Avenue and Eleventh Street Texaco station and pump gas for six months until something else comes along, then that’s fine. I had some very interesting offers, but they were from outside of Washington. Some of them I had been getting for a year or so before, but I had been in federal service for a little more than 10 years at that point. There were just too many things that appealed to me about Washington itself still. I was not

ready to say goodbye to them. What was my salvation was the fact that Mansfield, to whom I had said thank you but no thank you twice before, was good enough to come around again.

It was a difficult period for me because I would go home almost every night feeling so unhappy. As much as a lot of the White House probably was business as usual, you always carried that sense that “Gosh, I’m the luckiest guy in the world to wake up in the morning and say to myself that I work at the White House.” You lose White House-itis usually in the first year or two, but you never lose the pride that goes with walking in through the gate each morning and going into an office located in the heart and center of that building. I knew for a fact that when calls were put through and somebody said “It’s Jim Ketchum from the White House calling,” that I was going to get my calls answered. That gives you an unreal sense of what life is all about. Fortunately, I was married to someone who could remind me of what life was all about and could knock a bit of sense in me. But I feel very sorry for people who find themselves in situations where they cannot look for a way out and instead take a wrong turn.

I think that happened to a lot of the people in the Nixon administration. I had a classmate who was John Wesley Dean III, and I never thought that a lot of these people under normal circumstances would ever have gone in the direction that they would. I also never thought that what I found ethically so repulsive in Haldeman’s behavior would ever be revealed. I never did. In April, Easter of ’73, Barbara and I were on a train heading down towards Kent from London and I had picked up at the station the *International Herald Trib* edition for that day, and there it was right across the front page, right after Dean came back from Camp David saying there’s a cancer on the presidency, and Haldeman and Ehrlichman’s resignations were accepted, and all that followed.

I probably spent more time with Nixon—for example, he decided he wanted to have a White House show for a living American painter and the subject of his affection was Andrew Wyeth. We had to put together in the East Room, it was there for a couple of weeks, and he built a huge dinner around it. I can still see the picture of Barbara going through the receiving line for that dinner, Nixon bowing at her and she bowing at him. I thought to myself many years later, if ever there was something that captured a moment that I’m not too fond of and she probably even less so. I don’t hold any great enmity for him because he was so fascinating to watch. The way he set aside in the middle of the

summer the sitting room off the Lincoln Bedroom and kept a fire in the fire place going at all times on the hottest days, with the air conditioner turned way up.

There were always stacks of yellow legal pads on which he was writing out foreign policy. Henry Kissinger could have been John Jones in terms of how things worked. I don't know, Henry may have offered a lot to him, but it was Nixon who really found that this was the world that he wanted to be a part of. I think maybe he was happier to leave domestic policy more or less to others. But the pettiness of the man that came out afterwards was very hard to understand. I remember once he wanted me to go over and look at an office that he had set up in the Old Executive Office Building, he had a huge space over there and that's really where he spent an awful lot of his time. He had an Irish setter named King Timahoe. He would take the setter with him. The press would see him outside, walking over, and this became a bit of a problem. I got a phone call, oh golly, at home at nine o'clock at night from Haldeman's secretary saying he wanted to see me at seven o'clock the next morning in his office. I went in and he laid before me a plan that somebody had roughly sketched out in the General Services Administration for an enclosed bridge from the West Wing of the White House over to maybe the second floor of the Old Executive Office Building. This would mean that Nixon could go back and forth and no one would know who was walking back and forth.

He wanted to know: Did I think that this was a good idea? And what kind of approach could be made with the Fine Arts Commission? I said, "Frankly, I don't think it probably is going to sell." I was very reluctant to say I think it's a horrible idea, but I tried to put out all the reasons why they would have a difficult time. Haldeman wasn't happy with that kind of an answer. He said, "Can't you go back and find out how we can do something like this?" I don't know how many other people he told that to, because I certainly would have been the least of anyone who could have carried weight with the Fine Arts Commission, especially since there are presidential appointees on that score, but it never did come to pass. I think unless you were able to give the "right" answers to some of that stuff your life expectancy at the Nixon White House was short.

I thought at one point, working with some of his minions, some were really very decent people, and others, all they wanted to do was exchange gossip about something. I had learned early in the Kennedy administration that it was just better off to have been seen and not to be heard, and certainly not to have shared things. That became pretty much the way we operated. You acted very surprised if you were hearing something, even

though you'd known it for some time in the past. I certainly wanted to keep the office out of any politics per se, Republican versus Democrat. But I did also know that there was so much frustration in 1960, especially I think from poor Mrs. Nixon, in the loss to the Kennedys that anybody who had any association with the Kennedy administration was probably someone who was not going to be made to feel very welcome. I guess it's a wonder that I lasted as long as I did.

RITCHIE: You mentioned that they wanted to “de-Kennedyize” the White House. What did they want to do instead?

KETCHUM: Well, they first of all wanted to change the family quarters. Mrs. Nixon had an interior designer, a woman in her 70s by the name of Sarah Jackson Doyle, who was a New York interior decorator. She was brought in, and her claim to fame was she had more shades of beige than anybody going. In fact, I guess the Fifth Avenue apartment of the Nixons and anything that she had ever done for them was beige on beige on beige. We did work a little bit—although fortunately GSA came to my rescue—on new furnishing for Nixon's office. Mrs. Johnson when she left said, “Just remember, Jim, that if anybody ever says we'd like to give Mrs. Johnson another one of the Dorothy Doughty or Boehm birds”—the porcelain birds, for her collection—“somehow tell them that I cannot take any more. I have just great problems placing these.” And she said, “As you know,” and she had mentioned earlier that she never did like these birds. Every time anybody dusted them there was another \$150 bill from Mario's up at Dupont Circle to repair them. The first thing that happened was that Nixon said he wanted only birds on the Oval Office bookshelves! Hugh Sidey did a very funny column on this, as a matter of fact. Get rid of all the books and put in the birds.

Then he wanted the presidential seal on everything. He wanted it on the rug, and that was fine, but the problem really was in August of 1969, when the room was finished, and he and Haldeman, and Ehrlichman, and the whole gang were out in San Clemente, Pat Moynihan was the only one wandering around the West Wing. I got a call from Gail Linke, who was with GSA. She said, “Can you come over? Mr. Moynihan is going off the deep end.” I said, “Why?” She said, “Hurry over.” He was going through the Oval Office and he discovered that on every seat in the room the presidential seal had been woven into the seat cushion. He was screaming at the top of his lungs and laughing at the same time, and saying how God awful it was that “Every God damned senator is going to come down now and fart on the presidential seal!” This word was carried via the telephone to

San Clemente very quickly. The next day—snap—all the chairs were removed and plain fabric was put in until they could rework a design for the seat which had nothing to do with the presidential seal. That was the end of that.

In the White House proper, it was obvious that wear and tear had to be countered, but Mrs. Nixon could not make up her mind. I think she was torn between trying to stay with the direction that things had been set by the Kennedy administration and doing something which was totally different. The good news is that the research that we had done, and used, and promoted for the Red Room, Blue Room, Green Room, State Dining Room, and so forth, had had so much visibility in the press that it became very, very, difficult to change them. You could change window treatments, and you could change rugs, and you might be able to rearrange some of the furniture, but you couldn't wipe out a federal parlor or an American empire parlor, or Monroe furnishings from Paris from 1817. These things would have to stay the same. McKim, Mead, and White's work for Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 would stay the same. Actually, she was very respectful of the things that had been changed in the family quarters, unlike people like Barbara Bush, who took what was always one of my absolute favorite places in this world, the Treaty Room, that had been created with the Grant cabinet table and so forth, Mrs. Bush wiped it all off and made it an office for George. It was just the most beautifully thought out and wonderfully spirited setting up there that had been done, mostly from things that had been discards at the warehouse, that had been stored out at Fort Washington and then later in space at National Airport, now it's moved one more time.

RITCHIE: Who had done the Treaty Room originally?

KETCHUM: Mrs. Kennedy. It was just a knock-out of a space. If you sometime have a chance, look at Betty Monkman's book.⁴ Bill Seale may have it as well in his book.⁵ Bill is updating his history of the White House right now, which was published as a two-volume work about 15 years ago. It's been out of print for some time. I will give the White House Historical Association credit because they are finally doing—they have always done fairly conservative things, but they are finally getting into what a historical

⁴Betty C. Monkman, *The White House: Its Historic Furnishings and First Families* (Washington, D.C.: White House Historical Association, 2000), and *Treasures of the White House* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2001).

⁵William Seale, *The President's House: A History* (Washington, D.C.: White House Historical Association, 1986), 2 volumes.

association should be doing. It seems to me these government groups like our friends at the Capitol Historical Society, their intentions many times are the very best, but they just go down the wrong road and they do it in a way that beats the drum for constituencies and audiences that I don't think they are necessarily set up for. They don't take on some of the kinds of things that would leave a wonderful legacy if they were really serious about it.

RITCHIE: It's interesting that you mentioned that Mrs. Nixon's tendency was towards beige, because I can remember Nixon's rug in the Oval Office was the most electric blue that had ever been in that room, probably ever before or ever since. His tastes seemed to be a lot more garish.

KETCHUM: Well, they were, but who would think that a president would want to decorate the limited shelf space in his office with nothing but birds. I always found that to be rather amusing. Maybe it was because I was coming off an administration that wanted anything *but* birds, with all those Lynda Bird, Lady Bird—poor Luci, I don't know why she was ignored as far as birds were concerned, they gave her Baines a la papa as a middle name. But every day in the Nixon White House was a new set of problems that was not getting solved. It left you with a feeling that this was just not the way it should be. Even though you could see it getting on a track that was going to be somewhat of an anti-Kennedy reflection, you felt it would be better if somebody else ran with the ball. That's why when Mansfield came back it was very clear to me that it was going to be the opportunity. Up until then, when I was looking into possible areas I was finding things like the Thomas Alva Edison laboratory in Menlo Park that had not had any attention, where there were just hundreds of thousands of devices and parts and parcel of that that had never been protected in any way. In fact, I think in some respects I think it may be the same way today. One of the other things that I was considering was a job with Sleepy Hollow restorations, with the properties that the Rockefellers had in Westchester County. That would have been interesting but I just loved Washington.

RITCHIE: You may remember that in 1992 you took me on a walk through the various state rooms of the White House. There was a function we were attending at the White House and we were, I think, in the Green Room when you were telling me a story about the [Walter] Annenberg painting that seemed emblematic of the Nixon years.

KETCHUM: Oh, it was, very much so, because from the very beginning, Annenberg gave that portrait—it was the David Martin portrait of Benjamin

Franklin—which hung over the mantle in the Green Room. He gave it very willingly. It was not a portrait that he had in his collection but it came up for sale and worked its way across the Atlantic, and I believe Kennedy Galleries in New York had it. When it was installed and Mrs. Kennedy invited the Annenbergs to dinner, he immediately called the curator's office afterwards and said, "The painting is hanging much too high. It should come down at least seven or eight inches." So I reported this to Mrs. Kennedy and she said, "No, I want it just exactly where it is because we have the Monroe pieces that are going on the mantle and it's got to rise above them." His idea was take the Monroe pieces off and drop the portrait. We went thought that and then the Johnsons came in. Walter Annenberg came to the White House and the same thing happened all over again. I went to Mrs. Johnson and explained to her that we had been through this before, and she said, "Well, I think Mrs. Kennedy probably had very good reasons for leaving it where it is." So the portrait stayed where it was.

Well, now we have Walter and Lenore coming down for the good Nixons. They had been supporters and put their shoulder to the wheel and all the great things that happened. I always used to say to him that my father was in boarding school with him. Dad said that they really treated him extremely well. The Peddie School was kind of a school where if you'd really screwed up in high school, at least in Dad's situation, your family sent you off to get some seasoning and to get your grades up. Dad spent four years in high school and three or four at Peddie. Walter Annenberg's father, Moses, had been thrown into the pokey with income tax evasion charges that supposedly had been proved, and the masters at the Peddie School said about his son, "Hey, leave this guy alone, do not give him a hard time." So much to a point that Walter Annenberg a few years ago made Peddie the most highly endowed boarding school in America, period, with the greatest gift that any secondary school had ever received. I would try all of my tact on him about what happy memories Dad had of him and so forth and so on. He could have cared less. He said to Mrs. Nixon, and probably to President Nixon but it was Mrs. Nixon who carried the message, that the painting was hanging much too high. So Mrs. Nixon said, "Well, we can take care of that," and indeed within a day's time Walter Annenberg finally got his wish. Every time I go down, I swear to God it's back up again, but Walter's not.

Sarah called me from Haverford about five years ago. She was taking him around. He was visiting schools. She said, "Is there anything I should know about him?" I said, "Are you going to have a photographer?" She said, "Oh, yes. I'm going to take him around in a golf cart." I said, "That's interesting. You just make sure that you place him

in such a way because he has a cauliflower ear and he wants only to be photographed from one side.” Having lived through Lyndon Johnson, who only would let Yoichi Okamoto, who had also gone to good old Colgate, take his picture from one particular side. It was fun to watch Walter in action. Sarah called the next day and said, “That was the best advice ever.” He was looking at schools that he could give more dollars to, and that’s why he was there.

It was interesting, but you had to deal with people who sooner or later their dreams were going to come true. Nixon immediately wanted to know about the value of certain things that he brought in with him. In 1960, Norman Rockwell painted covers for the *Saturday Evening Post* of Kennedy and Nixon. Nixon had been given his either by the Curtis publishing house or someone else. So I had to call Rockwell up for an evaluation. Apparently, Rockwell was not the greatest Nixon supporter at that point and he let it be known that as far as he was concerned it wasn’t worth a plugged nickle. How to translate his feelings back to the Haldeman-Nixon forces was something else again.

I love going to Teddy White’s book because he ends it by saying—and it’s possible that Nixon saw him before he went on our tour—with Nixon saying “I’ve got to go now because the curator is going to give me a tour of the White House.”⁶ There was my 15 minutes of fame lying in the last chapter of one of those books which I thought were just great, at least the two or three. The 1960 volume was just amazing. By the time he got to ’68 he was probably getting a little tired. How much further did he go? 1972?

RITCHIE: Nineteen-seventy-two, and then he wrote a book about Watergate, sort of an anti-making of the president.

KETCHUM: Okay, yes, when he was doing the Watergate book he came to the Capitol, and I was in the Old Supreme Court Chamber. He came in because he wanted to know about its site as a scene of impeachment trials back in the early 19th century. That’s the only time I ever laid eyes on him. I don’t think he lived too many years after that.

Mrs. Nixon had a wonderful press secretary named Helen McCain Smith, who just died a few months ago. She had worked in the *Washington Daily News* office as a

⁶Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1968* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1969).

secretary, but she had been married to an Englishman who was killed during World War II. She was a very proper lady, lived in the Dresden apartments up on Connecticut Avenue. She'd been the secretary to Gerry Van Der Heuvel—an interesting choice since Gerry Van Der Huevel was a Minnesota Democrat, a great supporter of Hubert Humphrey—who Mrs. Nixon had hired as press secretary starting late in the campaign and continuing on through the wedding of Julie and David in New York in December. Gerry came into the White House. She was married to Bob—of the *LA Times*—who did the Truman book?

RITCHIE: Oh, Robert Donovan.

KETCHUM : Bob Donovan, right. She was married to Bob after she left the White House. She was able to stay through about six months of the Nixons and I think again it may have been a fact that it was very frustrating for her to try to get any projects that could be promoted because it was a time when Mrs. Nixon just was not moving very far from her bedroom. She was appearing for functions downstairs halfheartedly so and that was it. The usher's office—nobody was getting any answers from her. We really were not. Perhaps part of this depression that she seemed to be in was just tied to the fact that she could not quite come to grips with the fact that she was in the White House and could not figure out what her role was going to be. We think of people being so eager, and I'm sure that the candidate himself is eager to get there, but it may not necessarily be the case for his spouse. I think it was an example of that. All in all, it's more sadness than criticism than anyone could offer in terms of evaluating her. That's certainly my opinion.

RITCHIE: One other person from that period was John Dean, whom you mentioned was one of your classmates. Did you know him well at Colgate?

KETCHUM: No, I did not. I knew him by name. I knew him enough that—I was a short order cook at a Colgate-owned campus grill, in the basement of East Hall. It was the Coop. I stood behind a grill and took orders, and you stood by as I was finishing things up. I always had a lot of burgers and hot dogs and so forth. He always came through and wanted a special order that was not on the menu, it was a combination of things. You'd do it if you had the time, and I would always do it. Normally, people would leave a dime tip, or sometimes only a nickle tip. Prices were not all that extreme in those days. He's the one person I remember—two people who were always coming by for specials. One was Kevin Phillips and the other was John Dean. Phillips always did leave

me a tip. Dean never left me a penny. Never, never, never, which was kind of funny because one of my pledge sons at the Theta Chi house was married to Jill Volner, who was part of the Watergate team. She specifically had John Dean on her list. When he found out that her husband had been at Colgate, and somehow my name came up in the whole thing, he wanted to see if we could all get together for a drink or something like that. She explained very carefully to him, as if he didn't know this, that this was not the way one operated with Watergate hanging over his head. He was coming over from the Justice Department, where he had been working for John Mitchell, when I went up to the Hill, so we never really had any great times at that point. But later on he was ready to make plans.

RITCHIE: Did you remind him that you had once served him at the Coop?

KETCHUM: I'm not sure we ever talked about it. I don't think I did. I would be happy to do it. When he came to Washington, he got involved rather quickly with Tom Hennings' daughter, Carla. They were married and I think they had a child, as a matter of fact, but that marriage was long since gone by the time he got to the Nixon administration. I can't remember where he went for his first two years in college. He may have gone to Oberlin, but he didn't come into Colgate until his junior year, so maybe part of the reason that he was so stand-offish was that he was kind of a new guy in town while the rest of us had been there from the start. I can still see him standing there, sounding very much like he later sounded at the hearings. He always had a duffle coat on, toggle closure with a hood. He would come in from the great winter winds of Madison County, New York, and hurry down through the line, almost looking like a mole. Kevin Phillips, on the other hand, was extremely strange and funny. Because he was in a lot of my political science classes, I got to know him, and he was very good. I must say that I'm tickled to death to see where he's coming from these days, not the fact that he's in Connecticut but that he's writing some of the books that he's writing, which seem to be based on a bit of storytelling that is fairly accurate and should be shared by one and all.

RITCHIE: He makes use of the Historical Office from time to time.

KETCHUM: Does he really? Very good. He was a character plus.

RITCHIE: Before we move on to Capitol Hill, this would probably be a good

breaking point in our process. We can look forward to a post-holiday get together where we can pick it up with your moving from the White House to Capitol Hill and a whole new era. But this has been an enjoyable excursion for me.

KETCHUM: I don't know. You make it very painless, and I'm often conscious of the fact that if anybody should put some kind of a governor on their talking machine, I'm the one who should. You press a few buttons and away I go. But maybe with a really good editor down the line we can get enough out of it that will serve somebody's purpose.

RITCHIE: Well, these have all been very lively anecdotes that really give some glimpses into the people and the times.

KETCHUM: Well, I'm not going to contact Dorothy Scott's publisher right away! Anyway, Donald, thank you, and God bless.

End of the Fourth Interview

SENATE CURATOR

Interview #5

Friday morning, March 4, 2005

JAMES KETCHUM: The first week that I got to the Senate, I discussed some of the plans that Frank Valeo and Senator Mansfield had in mind for the work of our program and for the commission, which was then known as the Commission on Art and Antiquities, and that's another story that we'll get into. Anyway, I was dispatched to visit the various members of the Rules Committee first, and then I would go to all of the members of the Senate. So I would call up and make appointments. Very high on the list was Wallace Bennett from Utah, who was the Republican ranking member of the Rules Committee. I went over and was introduced to him and we spoke briefly, and then he turned me over to Tom Korologos, and that's when my education at the Senate really began, because he took me over every hurdle one could possibly imagine in probably 15 or 20 minutes of time. Very engaging, but this guy was really on his way up to whatever pinnacle would be out there to claim him. It probably was day three, no later than day four, of my being there and I thought my gosh, if this is what this world's going to be all about, I'm going to have every mentor that I could possibly find. But he was Numero Uno on that score.

I can also remember at the same time, going over to the senior senator from North Carolina, B. Everett Jordan, who was the chairman of the Rules Committee. He said, [draws] "Young man, half the problem of people who come up to work on the hill who've been in other government agencies is they're in a hurry. Never, never be in a hurry. Take your time. Don't feel you have to challenge, you have to shake, you have to do anything to stir up what's going on. It will just all come in its good time."

Later I found out that he was very much in league with the architect of the Capitol, and his top aide, the Honorable William McWhorter Cochrane, was definitely not in favor of a curatorial program at all. So Ketchum taking his sweet time seemed to all play into what the Rules Committee wanted, I later found out. It was very interesting, the kind of advice that people were so willing to give to you. But Korologos was the best, no doubt about it.

DONALD RITCHIE: You mentioned before that Senator Mansfield asked you several times to take the job and finally, on the third time around, you took it.

KETCHUM: Yes.

RITCHIE: What was it that you think that motivated Mansfield? Why was he so interested in setting up an office like this?

KETCHUM: There had been some damage to some of the paintings in the '60s, and I think that he was not getting very satisfactory answers as far as conservation and protection were concerned. An inkwell had been thrown at one of the paintings on the Senate side. Someone had also used a knife. There had been some defacement of sculpture. Also, the thing that I recall hearing from Valeo, and maybe from Darrell, is that an awful lot of things were leaving at the end of Senate terms, really without even being rubber-stamped by the Rules Committee, which was supposed to pass on this. The desks, for example, which had been ordered by Carrere and Hastings when the original Senate Office Building was constructed—with only three sides, and later a fourth side was added—each time they would go back to the same furniture manufacturer. Well these all took on kind of a life and a history of their own. They were great battleship desks, and every member wanted one. In fact, I remember running across correspondence which I think was down at Archives but I know in our office at the Senate there are copies, in which Albert Fall is going to Interior and is writing asking that he be able to take x, y and z and this was one of the early requests for these original furnishings. Obviously he got away with it, but somebody must have put this correspondence aside or pulled it out afterwards and saying, “See, this is what has been going on since Teapot Dome days and this is something that we might question.”

I think even the Rules Committee may have been bothered a bit, but nothing was done. Sergeant at arms would rubber stamp everything. I remember Nixon calling Dirksen in 1969, saying that he wanted the “Wilson desk” from the vice president’s Capitol office sent down to the White House. He wanted to have the same desk that Woodrow Wilson had. And Nixon, I don’t know what happened, but he obviously missed a beat during those eight years that he was in the Capitol, because the desk that he had requested was attributed to the administration of Vice President Henry Wilson, not Thomas Woodrow Wilson. It had absolutely no bearing on President Wilson at all. I’m not sure whether we talked about this or not but I spent the first year of the Nixon administration sending memos to both Haldeman and Rose Woods saying, “Please remind the President as he’s campaigning in New Jersey and Virginia,” which have an off-year gubernatorial election right after the presidential every four years, “that he does

not sit behind Woodrow Wilson's desk." The desk had been sent almost immediately, within the first month of the administration, and Mansfield was not very happy about this. But his friend Dirksen insisted that it was only going to be a loan and down it would come.

Of course, that turned out to be the famous desk that had the holes drilled in it by the army and the signal corps, to put all the mikes for tape recorders that were put in the Oval Office. There were mikes in other places in the room. But the desk had the main recorders. And the funny thing was that when the desk had been moved back to the Capitol, and Fritz Mondale was vice president, I went in to the Vice President's Room one day, and he had [Edmund] Muskie in there with him. Mondale was down on his back under the desk pointing out to Muskie exactly where the holes were and where the mikes for the taping devices went.

But anyway, they were playing fast and loose with the objects that have been part of an historic inventory of the Capitol and of the Senate. Mansfield wanted it done Capitol-wide, but the House was not willing because of the close relationship that had existed for many, many years between the office of architect and the Speaker, that went back well before Sam Rayburn's time. So, he finally decided that it would be something strictly speaking for the Senate, and he would not wait any longer. But S. Res. 382, which was the resolution that I came in under, which set up the Art and Antiquities Commission, was originally drafted to be Capitol-wide.

RITCHIE: When they created the commission, and put all the Senate leadership on it, did the commission ever meet as a group?

KETCHUM: Yes, under Mansfield it did meet, and after that it met rarely, if ever. Now, that is not to say that the members weren't always polled when there were decisions, but Mansfield was very good about sitting down and getting the commission members together. I'm trying to think of some of the issues. We had a fairly tight agenda. I do remember Mansfield telling the members not to send any kind of a representative, either they came or they didn't come. He was not going to put up with anything like that.

One of the best meetings was when I was rather upset about the direction that the restoration plans for the Old Senate and the Old Supreme Court [Chambers] were taking. As I mentioned earlier, it was kind of a Colonial Williamsburg effort on the part of not

only the architect, but those architectural firms that had been hired, something called DeWitt, Shelton and Poor. Back in the days of the Rayburn Building, maybe even before, the architect of the Capitol went to several architectural firms and said, “You will all get a piece of the pie, but what I’d like you to do is take a principal from each firm and we will make, literally, a new firm that will be strictly on this project.” And that’s what happened. As a result of this, this was J. George Stewart, as a result of it, that same group kept coming back, and back, and back, and back. Starting in the early ’60s, when the restoration of the old chambers was being talked about, and John Stennis and others were very much in favor of this effort, this group got together and started turning out these plans, which were what I call “the Colonial Williamsburg plans.” This just was not the ways the rooms appeared, in large part.

They had not done the kind of basic research at Archives and at other good sources in this country. And the Park Service, which had done so much in Philadelphia, and a bit in New York, as far as the early Congress is concerned, had some very able people who could support the effort. There had also been, in the academic world, some good things written by architectural historians, Paul Norton in particular, in Massachusetts, on Benjamin Henry Latrobe. And so, a lot of things could come together, and ultimately did, but the problem is they contradicted so much of what was there.

So we’re sitting, really, with two different bodies of material. One which came from DeWitt, Shelton and Poor, and one which was developing starting in 1970. In the meantime but also in tandem with this group, going back to legislative appropriations, both regular and supplemental, to get the money which kept rising, rising, rising as time would go on, in terms of the estimates. The problem came to a head with lighting in both chambers and I talked this over with Darrell and with Frank. I had been in England in 1971, and I had taken some time on that trip, as I mentioned earlier, to go to the Soane Museum and to look at some of the records they had there. It’s a wonderful laboratory. Soane built a house and he experimented in every corner with everything that he was doing, especially with light, this was something that was terribly important to his scheme of architectural design. I realized that much of what Latrobe was doing had been adapted from what he had known, what he was studying in England and studying under Soane in the 1780s and ’90s.

So, having all of this information and having documented it and talked to architectural historians within the National Park Service family, who were more than

willing to be helpful to the cause, I said, “They don’t jive and we’ve got to figure out where we’re going from it.” So Mansfield said, “We can have hearings, but let’s have a meeting of the commission and call George White,” who was on scene just recently, and we will just nail this thing down and we will work out a *modus operandi*, a way of dealing with it in which all of the research—and we ticked off the names of the Latrobe scholars and so forth—will be considered. And any plan that has come thus far from the architect’s office will be submitted for review to these various resources. And that’s what we did. It just changed the whole complexion and the entire story of what was happening.

I think that the mistrust that Mansfield and some others had with the way that the architect had done business, when I remember Mansfield getting to the leadership, it seems to me that the architect’s office was still in charge of cleaning the Senate and doing an awful lot of things that the sergeant at arms now does. He pulled the plug on that and replaced the architect’s staff with people that he had direct control over, namely the sergeant at arms. That may have helped this cause a lot because I think, had it been 25 or 30 years earlier, Colonial Williamsburg probably would have sailed through in a fine, fine way, and we would still be trying to undo some of those things.

RITCHIE: Didn’t Florian Thayne have an idea of putting a chandelier right in the middle of the Old Supreme Court Chamber?

KETCHUM: Yes, which when you reminded everybody of the story of the day that, not the bed fell, but the ceiling fell, you realize that that was not something that was there. In fact, my whole feeling, and still, I think, strongly held in the profession, that if you don’t know that there was a majestic light fixture there, you simply gain sources of light from something that is almost invisible in terms of placement, whether they’re down lights or a type of spot or what have you. Until you finally do understand what happened—we knew about the lanterns in the Old Supreme Court Chamber and we certainly knew about the Cornelius chandelier that dominated the Old Senate Chamber up above, but beyond that—and actually, yes, the recommended chandelier was right out of Virginia and the House of Burgesses in the Old Supreme Court Chamber, absolutely. Nobody was going to be seeing anybody unless you could kind of look through the woods and see something on the other side of the forest.

The other problem was that this so-called research that had been done in the architect’s office, they were so protective about it. It was not sourced properly, footnotes

were nonexistent. But they always put their names on these things, “The Thayn Report.” “The Thayn Report” had many parts, and I remember after Mary Phelan joined the staff, I had done my service down at Archives and she then went down and Archives was very helpful in making sure that—this was when George Perros handled the legislative archives—in getting all of the information that we were looking for, some on microform and some were originals. It was just totally a contradiction of what we had been told and what the story really was all about.

So you had this—I don’t want to call it a “Macy’s-Gimbels situation”—but you certainly did have this competition. I didn’t really feel there was much competition once we started to scratch the surface. But it did take time, and it was almost, in some ways, going back to home plate and starting to run around the bases all over again.

RITCHIE: For the record, could you say who Florian Thayn was and what her position was?

KETCHUM: Florian Thayn was a wife of a Utah native, and she herself was from Utah, both good Mormon families. Her husband, whose name was June, worked for a congressman from Utah. Soon after he came to the Hill, she was employed as a clerk in the office of the architect of the Capitol. I don’t think Florian got beyond high school, but she soon cloaked herself in the mantle of a researcher and an architectural historian of sorts. I can’t remember her exact title, but she was a very formidable force down there as far as the architect’s office was concerned.

I arrived on scene, and within two days she came up to give me some shaved coconut which had been put in the oven and candied, and I could have all that I wanted. Well, coconut has never been one of my favorite things, so that did not work. But Florian became a bit of a challenge for all of us. She was known, sometimes, to visit our office when we were not around and to open up things. So Mary Phelan and I had a wonderful idea one day. We decided, because we had just had a visit from a company that would place alarms, small alarms, battery-operated, behind paintings. So if the painting was jostled at all, the alarm would go off. He had left a couple of these things for us to try out and Mary and I developed this box which was entitled, “Secrets of the Thayn Report.” We put the item in the box, put the top on, and then somehow waited for an appropriate moment for Florian to come up. She must have been coming up regularly looking at information that we were uncovering. She came up and sat down and I excused myself

and I was gone for about three minutes. Then Mary, she excused herself because she said, “I’ve got to go find Jim, he needs to be reminded about something. I’ll be back in two or three minutes.” At which point Florian got up and went over. We had a small desk—we were gathering justices desks for the Supreme Court Chamber, and this was on that desk. And, of course, the office that we had was only four feet by nine, that’s not much of an exaggeration. So Florian could see anything in it. So Mary and I were both out in the stacks and suddenly we here, “zingalingaling!” The alarm went off. We went back and Florian who was a rather hefty gal, was sitting in her chair, the box was over on the table, and she was several shades of red. Mary and I, we didn’t say a thing, we just let it all go accordingly.

Unfortunately, because Florian took herself so seriously and was so enraged that any of her research was being questioned, and she meantime, had been proved to George White and Mario Campioli and others that most of the stuff that she had spent 10 years developing was not worth the paper that it was written on. She was, in their minds, being demoted, and not worth her salt, and this was just another terrible example of people not taking her seriously, I’m absolutely sure of it. But my whole adage about all of this always has been, “Do not take yourself seriously.” Certainly, take what you’re doing very seriously. But we did have more than our fair share of laughs in that small space, and this was one example.

RITCHIE: I recall that she was always insisting that she had loads of documentation, that she would be happy to share with you, but then she always found some reason why she couldn’t get access to those documents, and somehow you never saw them.

KETCHUM: That’s right. No, you never did. And, when they started to revive the curatorial program in the architect’s office, Anne Radice and there was a wonderful person named Beverly Elson—her Father was the Reverend Edward L. Elson, who had been the chaplain of the Senate for years and years. Beverly had a masters in art history, and she may have, at that point, a good bit of work had been completed for a PhD, which she later got. Beverly came in to work on some of the questions that were coming up that the architect’s office felt that they should try to answer, as well, about the projects. But Florian, from the minute she crossed the threshold, Beverly was persona non grata in Florian’s world. Beverly would always have a witness in the room from the architect’s staff who would hear Florian promise the world, and then nobody would ever see any of

this. That was the same stunt that she played with everyone. Anne Radice, later, who came in, had exactly the same problem.

Florian was a difficult person who had taken everybody under wing until the Senate program started, and people started looking more closely at what it was. Everybody had believed her, but now she was really out there, kind of left out to dry. I don't know what happened to her. Her husband died. She retired. She may have gone back to Utah for all I know. But there was no more Florian, and no more Thayn reports, and no more coconut, after about the first year and a half.

RITCHIE: She was also an officer in the Capitol Historical Society.

KETCHUM: That's right. Oh yes. That will have to be another chapter. It's the only organization that it was ever suggested that I would not be welcome for a second term. Nancy Stevenson and I got taken aside by Fred Schwengel because we both questioned the kinds of projects that the Capitol Historical Society was operating, and why were they not really doing some serious things instead of getting all this schlock that they were putting out as souvenir ware. So we decided that, with the help of Lon Aikman, who had written the Capitol Historical Society's guide book, the three of us decided over a series of meetings, that at our board meetings we would raise these issues, and raise them we did. And Fred was not happy. This was very much treading in a sacred area. So, when our terms were up—I don't know what our terms were, two years, four years—when it was time for us to have our terms renewed, he took us all to lunch and told us that he had other plans that didn't include us, and that was it. I, somehow, consider that a great badge of honor, having been told that the views that we had were not really the views that were appropriate for the Capitol Historical Society.

RITCHIE: Well it's interesting that both the architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Historical Society always seem, to me, closer to the House leadership than the Senate leadership.

KETCHUM: Absolutely.

RITCHIE: Isn't that sort of the way it is on Capitol Hill, that it's very difficult to be all things to all people. You usually wind up tilting one way or the other.

KETCHUM: Sure. If you look at the role of former congressmen, for example, in both the architect's operation as well as the Capitol Historical Society, you'll see that that whole story kind of holds true. I don't know of any former members of the Senate who have been interested in doing that. The board meetings were quite wonderful. At one point, Fred apparently decided that he was going to get some members who were plugged in on the Senate side and they were great. He had Nancy Stevenson and Joan Mondale, and Charles Mathias' wife, from Maryland, Anne Mathias, she was a member at the same time. They were great meetings, but none of them really appreciated Fred. When he found this out—I mean, I think he thought he could pretty much steamroller everything, and he was being questioned about some of these things. Not only was he being questioned, but Nancy Stevenson went so far as to bring in some outside design people to show him what could be done and how it could be handled. Up until then Fred had his son and his sister-in-law as his main employees with the Capitol Historical Society. Having somebody in our office who'd worked for them, namely Mary Phelan, who had a bit of the inside scoop, it was quite wonderful how we were able to operate.

The worst time, and I think what really made poor Fred ready to send that Mafia out after me, was when he had all the money from General Electric and several other corporations in an account for "Sound and Light" to be projected onto the Capitol Building. "Sound and light," as far as the House members were concerned was here to stay and was definitely going to be the best thing that ever happened. The French had given Mount Vernon a "Sound and Light" program for the years surrounding the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence. "Sound and Light" was going strong in Philadelphia, and Fred had elaborate plans for the Capitol. On the East Front he had bleachers that would rise out of the grounds at a certain hour in the night. (I told you my faux pas about telling the wives of the members of the Senate why it would never work because of everybody having to pull their shades down at the same time.) But beyond all of that, he had gone to tremendous expense. He had sent George White all over the world. He had sent him to the pyramids, and so White was on board, and on and on and on it went.

I personally—but I think I was reflecting an awful lot of other people thinking the same thing—thought it was something the Capitol really did not need. That it was much more vital to consider that this is where the Congress meets. This is not necessarily where we had "x" aiming a pistol at "y," although that can be told but not quite in this way. So the Commission on Art and Antiquities would not support him, and they were designated

along with the Rules Committee, being the committees that would pass judgement on this. I gave them report, after report, after report. Their tone was negative, there's no doubt about it, but I went to the people in the Park Service who had been responsible for Philadelphia. I went to the people, fortunately this was going on over a period of time, that the Mount Vernon folks could plug into what they were finding out about that, and it just wasn't going to be something that was a good idea.

The person I felt most sadly about was Jake Pickle, a wonderful guy from Texas who had Lyndon Johnson's old seat in the House. One of the nicest human beings. He would slog up the stairs—he never realized, I guess, that the elevator could go up to the fourth floor. He'd get as far as the Senate Library, and then he'd walk up the stairs and come red-faced into the office, time and time again, having been dispatched by Schwengel. He was certainly very involved and on the board. I would explain that it was really up to the leadership. Mansfield wouldn't really see him. He wasn't comfortable in discussing this. Hugh Scott was also very much involved and Scott didn't think it was a good idea. You were getting a little bit of noise from the Rules Committee, who were being plugged into the architect's office who was for it. But, ultimately, it died. It died because the Senate said, "We will not go along." It took probably a good three or four years before we killed it. But, in the meantime, I have no idea what has ever happened to all that money. I was told that it was never given back, and someplace in an account were funds that I assume that GE and others said you can use it for other purposes, and they went on from there.

That was Fred's greatest dream, "Sound and Light." He had Charlton Heston lined up to do the narration. Half of Hollywood, he claimed, wanted to take the various speaking roles for the voices that would be coming out of the columns and around behind the steps and so forth. So, see what you've missed? No telling what it would have been like as far as if it were still around today with the security forces being there.

RITCHIE: I thought about this when I was in Istanbul. The Blue Mosque had "Sound and Light" projected on it at night. The night that we happened to be there was German night—they did the narration in different languages—and der was dis German booming out that made you think Hitler had just invaded. I wondered if they would have done German nights at the U.S. Capitol for "Sound and Light."

KETCHUM: They had it at the Forum in Rome. I can remember Barbara and I standing with the Coliseum to our back, looking down at the Forum. We got there late and all we got were voices all in Italian, and various lights going strong. It was just the strangest thing in the world because somehow I had confused—I had not read my guidebook and I was thinking that somehow it was the Coliseum that had the program and not the Forum. That was not terribly impressive. I did go to the one at Mount Vernon, and it was okay. The French really thought they had invented “*Son et Lumiere*,” and I guess probably they did, but it was the Americans who brought it into popularity, P.T. Barnum. The Parks Service said they would never repeat it at any site again. Their experience with it was not good.

RITCHIE: A little too much like Disneyland.

KETCHUM: And the mechanics of it were always a problem. Schwengel had this system in place so that the members of Congress would not only be able to give out tickets for the White House tours, but they would also give out “Sound and Light” tickets. This would be the most sought after ticket in Washington, definitely, and when word got out there he knew that the Capitol Historical Society was finally going to have reached the zenith of its influence. This is what it should be doing. But this was not what some of us were concerned with.

You know you’re not playing David and Goliath when you have good people—I remember Nancy Stevenson was involved in this, she was a great person to have in your corner, because she is a delightful human being, Always a smile and the spark coming through. She never looked at somebody and said, “Oh no, we can’t have that.” She instead would figure out how to kind of take this thing to a new pitch and a new height. Both the Stevensons were terribly interested, obviously because of his grandfather’s role in the institution, and they gave the Senate this lovely presentation piece of a desk set, silver inkwell and pen holders and so forth, which had been given to the first Adlai when he retired as vice president. Just the kind individuals who would forever go the extra mile in terms of supporting what was appropriate and right.

The Capitol Historical Society was really created in response to the White House Historical Association. The one good thing about the Capitol Historical Society was it was open to membership. You got a certificate and what have you and that was it. The White House kept theirs as a closed association. I often wondered how they could operate

under the laws of the District of Columbia as the organization that they were chartered, but that was a very tightly held and even to this day, somewhat criticized by press and by some of the academics who would like to participate. They do some extremely good work, work that I wish the Capitol Historical Society would take on. I don't know what's happened to the Historical Society, there's a new director, relatively new?

RITCHIE: It's Ron Sarasin, a former congressman from Connecticut.

KETCHUM: Clarence Brown is long since gone.

RITCHIE: Yes, Bud Brown has departed. I guess the big question now is what will happen to their gift shop in the Capitol. It's now located in the Crypt because they've closed the entrance on the East Front. The question is whether there will be space for them to run a gift shop in the Visitor's Center.

KETCHUM: Right, that was the gist of the story the other day in the *Washington Post* about that whole row. It sounded to me as if they were leaving the Society pretty much hanging out there to dry for the time being. But you cannot bet against it, because those things have a way of changing rather rapidly when somebody decides that they have a way of getting their point across.

RITCHIE: Well, there are plans for a House gift shop and a Senate gift shop, so it's quite possible they will wind up running one of them. Usually there's a tension between the House and the Senate on these matters, such as when you were planning the restoration of the Old Senate Chamber and the Old Supreme Court Chamber. It was the House that was so resistant.

KETCHUM: Absolutely.

RITCHIE: Why do you think the House dragged its feet on that?

KETCHUM: Well, I think it had to do, quite simply, with the role of the architect of the Capitol. I really do. Because the commission was in charge, by law. Under S. Res. 382, the ultimate authority for the restoration of the chambers belonged to the commission, and also the ultimate authority for the art collections of the Senate. In the

beginning, to kind of go slowly, what the commission decided to do was to have shared authority. They didn't really decide because it was statutory authority that the Rules Committee of the Senate was operating under and we hadn't quite gotten that far as far as statutory authority. It later did come under Joe Stewart, and time has changed a great deal of the role of the curatorial program. But in the very beginning, in 1970, you had an extremely strong force in role and in the responsibility and in the relationship between the architect and the Speaker of the House.

The congressman from Texas who was the chairman of legislative appropriations subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, Bob Casey, along with George Mahon, and along with the Speaker were very much in league with what the architect wanted. George Stewart was still architect at that point, but he was not well at all. He was in a nursing home, the Carriage House, or something like that, out in Montgomery County. While he, from time to time, signed his name to various documents, Mario Campioli was pretty much running the show. So you had that whole lock which was not going to be broken. Mansfield tried everything that he could try and even he would admit to kind of throwing his arms up in the air and saying, "I just don't know when this is going to happen, but we're just going to keep working on it."

Finally, within two and a half years, as I've mentioned before, two things helped: one, getting the Washington press interested and somehow getting stories to all come within about a week's time with the national press, and the other thing was Mrs. Johnson. She just was amazing, and she called Casey and she called Mahon. I think it was her call to Mahon that really made tremendous difference to that.

I remember, later on, when Charles Guggenheim was doing a documentary on Mrs. Johnson and part of it was filmed in the Capitol, we tried as best we could to make sure that this was included in the story of her post-White House days—I don't know whether that ended up on the cutting room floor or not—that it recognize the tremendous interest she had taken, and how she exercised her interest in this. I can still remember Charlie Ferris calling up, having just come back from a meeting over on the House side with Mansfield, and saying that, "It's gone through. It's taken care of," and that was within two days of her call. Her office down in Texas was very good about saying, "She's going to call tomorrow." Tomorrow came around and they called that evening to say she called and she feels that maybe things are going to work out.

I can just hear her now, putting this whole thing down as the greatest thing that they could possibly contribute and how much it would mean to Lyndon and so forth. Many years later, when Barbara and I were spending a few days with her down at the ranch. I took her a copy of the hourglass gavel, the old original gavel, of which we had some reproductions made at the time of the opening of the Old Senate Chamber. She just loved it. I can remember visiting afterwards and going to one part of the house where she had this little shrine of things, and there it was, dead center.

But that's the way that whole logjam was broken and I'm sure that if we finally get to a Last Judgement in this world, or the next world, there'll be some wonderful behind-the-scenes stories that we can ferret out and hear for the first time. I knew nothing about how things worked at that point, I really didn't. So you kind of tried everything and hoped that some of the forces coming together would make a difference.

It was frustrating to have people in the Senate who also didn't feel that this was appropriate. There was a gentleman named Bob Brenkworth, who had been the head of the Disbursing Office and Val did not think too highly of some of the stuff that he was doing, because he was in league with Rules Committee and the architect. So they created a job called controller, and he was moved into that and moved around the corner from Disbursing into an office, and didn't really have much to do. When I came up there, he was still in the Disbursing Office, and he put a few obstacles in the road. One of them, he felt that I should be bonded. "The curator needs to be bonded because you do not know what he will be doing. You cannot know. Some of these things might come up for sale later on which he has gotten out of the building." It was that kind of a thing. So I was bonded, I mean, nobody was going to give him an argument. They just all said, "Why certainly, Bob, that's a good idea. As long as you're paying for it out of Senate funds and are willing to sign off." So, I can't remember what the bonding process was all about, but for the first year that I was there, I was worth a lot more dead than alive. It surprised me only because I felt, look, these are the Senate leaders, they are the chairman and the vice-chairman of the Commission on Art and Antiquities, then everything will follow after, but it didn't really happen quite that way.

There couldn't have been a better secretary to start out under than Frank Valeo. He was just such a pro. We had a note from him the other day, and just a few words remind me of so many things that he was supportive of, even though I'm sure that he got more gray hairs per square inch from what was going on in our operation. As was the case



Jim Ketchum in the newly renovated Old Senate Chamber, 1976.

with Darrell [St. Claire], who, on the 19th will be 99 years old. I can't believe it. Darrell and I had a running gag on Judge Crater for years, and I just ordered a book that came out last year on the whereabouts of Judge Crater, which I will send down to him.

On the White House staff, because we were one of the few offices in the White House proper, you feel part of the extended family. But you really feel that with the Capitol. You really felt that with the Senate. It was a wonderful, wonderful opportunity both to get to know people and also to try to get them interested in what was going on.

RITCHIE: What did the Old Supreme Court and Old Senate Chambers look like when you first came to the Capitol in 1970? Do you recall?

KETCHUM: I sure do. The Old Senate Chamber had been the source of a great deal of controversy between the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. They got to a point where they would not meet when conferences were appointed, in one wing or the other, one extension or the other, of the 1850s extensions. Ultimately, tape measures were produced in the '50's, and they found that the room closest to the rotunda that they might meet in was what had been the Supreme Court Chamber until 1935, and what since that point had been used for, oh golly, all kinds of things. But really something that the doors were left open, the Emancipation Proclamation hung up in the gallery level and people looked in at it. It was used for luncheons—this was before the East Front was extended—and it was used for dinners. Inaugural luncheons were very much part of that scene. There were some members who gave this as a reason that if the House were to ever approve of this, it would have to be understood that the room would be done in such a way that it could be stripped of its desks and its levels and turned back into a conference room. Ultimately they decided that, “No, tell you what we'll do: If you'll agree that we can meet down below in the Old Supreme Court Chamber, then we'll do that.” Fortunately, none of that ever really came to pass, but both rooms were done in such a way to prove to the House leadership—because we were going back for more money—that if indeed it ever needed to be reconfigured, it could be done.

The Old Supreme Court Chamber had been, up until 1935, the law library, starting when the Court moved up to the second level in 1860. The room had served the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy after the law library moved to the Senate attic. That committee itself wasn't set up until the '40s, so I'm not too sure what happened in between. I think it probably was the law library for the Capitol until it moved up to the

fourth floor. I think that's pretty much the sequence on that. Then when the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy moved, I'm not sure when that was, the sergeant at arms took it over and made it a storage room. You went in and it was like Alice in Wonderland, just chock-a-block, floor to ceiling. The plaster relief of Justice had been covered over, I remember. The lighting was horrible. That's what its condition was in 1970. I assume that probably that went back at least 10 years, that it was used in building storage for chairs, tables, all the things that would have been needed for receptions and what have you in the Capitol Building.

I remember Mansfield specifically talking about the fact that he thought it was a desecration to have deviled eggs falling onto the floor in the Old Senate Chamber. He would have really had a field day back in the days when some of the 19th-century members were doing all of the shavings, from the whittling that Sam Houston was doing at his desk and the kinds of wild whiskeys that were being consumed by some of the members from our good southern states. Senate tea was alive and well.

But the House somehow was looking for something in return. I know that they were told that if there was ever an effort to restore the Old House Chamber, that the Senate would really go along with it, and indeed they did. They didn't get involved in any of the research because that was done pretty much as that room had been planned going back to earlier days, although, fortunately, the Samuel F. B. Morse painting of the night session [in the House Chamber] did serve as a very good source. The Corcoran shared the kinds of detailed photographs of that giant canvas with them to proceed. They didn't follow all of what information they had there, but they certainly did enough. Again, it's a kind of a mixed bag, because you have Statuary Hall, which was created afterwards, and so you have a wedding of two time periods that are not necessarily always compatible. I'm still waiting for the day when states are allowed to withdraw some of their Statuary Hall.

RITCHIE: They took one out this year.

KETCHUM: Oh, they did?

RITCHIE: Samuel Glick [of Kansas] is gone, and a statue of Dwight Eisenhower has replaced him.

KETCHUM: He's gone? I see. That's the first time that's happened.

RITCHIE: That was the first time that's happened, and immediately somebody in Illinois said, "Let's take out James Shields and put in Ronald Reagan."

KETCHUM: No kidding?

RITCHIE: They're debating that in Illinois right now. So the dam has burst.

KETCHUM: Oh, isn't that fascinating? Wow. And is Eisenhower in place?

RITCHIE: He's in the rotunda but he'll eventually be moved. There's just an empty space where Mr. Glick used to stand. Apparently nobody in Kansas could remember who Glick was.

KETCHUM: And the fact that his first name was Sammy probably caused some problems. That's wild. That really is. Obviously Bob Dole was behind that very much so.

RITCHIE: Oh, yes, and [Sam] Brownback and all the rest of the delegation from Kansas.

KETCHUM: Did John Eisenhower show up for the unveiling, do you know?

RITCHIE: I'm not sure who did. But I thought, *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

KETCHUM: That's true, and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Well, I think, in your heart of hearts, you knew that the potential for that was extreme and in fact that it would happen at some point. I mean, it did make sense. We're going to have a wonderful new world of rotation here. Where is Glick now?

RITCHIE: He's gone back to the state capitol in Kansas.

KETCHUM: He's in the state capitol? Okay.

RITCHIE: They found an appropriate place back home for him. In Washington

they were getting a little embarrassed when the tourists from Kansas kept asking who he was.

KETCHUM: I don't remember anything in the press about this.

RITCHIE: I think it was done relatively quietly.

KETCHUM: I guess it was. Especially with Ike. You'd think that they would get more attention.

RITCHIE: Ike came in at the same time as Sakakawea, and somewhat embarrassingly they put the two statues next to each other, and Sakakawea was bigger than Ike. So all of the sudden, Sakakawea was moved, and Ike is still in the Rotunda.

KETCHUM: Isn't that wonderful. Well, we have Philo T. Farnsworth because the school kids of Utah voted him in somehow.

RITCHIE: Before, you mentioned the Samuel Morse portrait of the Old House Chamber and you've got lots of lithographs of the Senate Chamber. There wasn't anything of the Old Supreme Court Chamber. Did you ever find any pictures of it?

KETCHUM: Well, there was a very good seating plan from 1850, which did give some of the architectural layout. It was an overview, but it was very helpful. Now, granted, we have photographs of it as the law library. We have photographs taken I think as early as the Frances Benjamin Johnson period in the 1880s and into the '90s. But no earlier depictions. I was on the trail of a woman in Philadelphia—this was somebody who we'd known about back in the White House days, whose husband had died. She was then in her late 80s, early 90s and she claimed that he once had in his collection of prints, an interior view of the original Supreme Court Chamber. It never appeared in any of his material. I went through all of his correspondence. He saved absolutely every single bill of sale. Everything was vetted, and it was not to be found. And she was so certain. She was somebody whom I'd called early on when I went up to the Hill, because it was a point early when we were trying to gather as much of the iconography and as much of the pictorials that we could, the *London Illustrated*, *Frank Leslie's*, *Harper's*, on and on and on. Granted, we didn't get into wood-block prints until the 1850s, but they were filled

with things and it was still appropriate, with [Chief Justice] Roger Brooke Taney and company, to have something being shown in that chamber. But we can't find anything.

I would never rule it out. I think it's going to be found one of these days, but, to my simple knowledge at this point—and I don't think I've talked about this with Diane [Skvarla] in a couple of years—it has not been found. But the seating chart was tremendous because it confirmed what we thought about the rearrangement in the room, which had actually taken place earlier. There are wonderful documents. For example, we found out at Archives, all of the directions for the clock that Simon Willard made very late in his career. He came to Washington to make sure that it was appropriately installed. Who would have been on the bench from Massachusetts?

RITCHIE: Justice Story.

KETCHUM: Yes, it was Joseph Story, right, who had been a friend of his and who had made some of the arrangements for the Willard clock. It had an interior pendulum, which was rather unusual at that point. That wonderful clock, which the Court, God bless them, took across the street with them. We did get an awful lot back for that room, which they had taken over in '35. And one wonders, what would have ever happened to it if they hadn't taken it? In exchange, we gave them all of the busts of the Justices who had served from 1860 on, the period that the room above covered, because we were not going to be able to use those appropriately.

But going back to this whole thing about the documentation, there are Willard's handwritten notes to whomever would be the keeper of the clock, the Court's version of Isaac Bassett, about how it should be maintained and serviced. Still in existence, wonderful stuff.

RITCHIE: Well, you answered part of my question, but I was curious about the furnishings also. That seemed to me a terrific coup to discover that a lot or most of the furnishings in the room still existed. How did you find out about that?

KETCHUM: I think the architect's office knew that. I really do. The thing is that nobody had ever made the request for any of that, to my knowledge, until Mansfield made it more formally. Granted we had a little quid pro quo with the Supreme Court that we were working as far as trade-off for those busts, but I don't remember their ever having

raised any questions. Some of the justices' desks had stayed behind and at some point somebody had plaqued some of them. We knew there were several of them which had found their way into hideaway offices. One of the first things that I had done as curator—in fact, Dick [Baker], when he was holding down the spot before I got there—we were doing inventories of hideaways, which were hard to get into. You had to have the permission of the senator, and some senators were not willing. You were not getting much cooperation from the sergeant at arms. It depended upon the member himself. But if you got the senator's permission, then the sergeant at arms would let you in. Very quickly, with the help of a Polaroid camera, and as fast as your little tape measure would be whipped out and get measurements, you put this stuff together and moved out of there. That's really the kind of thing that I spent the first year or two doing, away from the office much of the day. Sometimes I would spend some time in the evening putting together what I had found that day if I didn't have the chance otherwise.

But the Court saved our soul, there's no doubt, because not only did they have pieces which were downstairs, but they also had some pieces that had remained upstairs when the Senate moved out, and it was extremely helpful that they had taken those. Others that had stayed behind disappeared. I can remember [Kentucky senator] Earl Clements calling me up and telling me about a settee that he had, which turned out to be a Supreme Court piece that had been left behind. One of the panel-back settees of which there were at least two different sizes, three panel and two panel. I don't think he ever took it back to Kentucky with him. He really had stayed in Washington until the very last two or three years of his life. All those years [after he left the Senate] he was working with the Tobacco Institute as their principal lobbyist. He lived in one of Drew Pearson's houses over in Georgetown [Clement's daughter Bess had married Pearson's stepson, Tyler Abell.] Bess and Tyler created an apartment for him over there.

But there are other instances of either members or people who somehow were allowed to buy things or take things out of the Capitol. I don't know if much money ever was exchanged on all this. Once they understood that these rooms were being done and they knew that there was some association, but it was mostly an oral association. I don't think people had written down anything at all. And, of course, because the styles were such that we could identify them, and they were rather simple and straight-forward, there was no big problem usually, once we could look at the wood to make sure that the joinery and the various techniques that were employed were appropriate to a certain time frame

and that they weren't copies made in the Senate cabinet shop in the 20th century, all was well and we could proceed.

RITCHIE: So that plus the floor plan told you where pieces actually sat on the floor?

KETCHUM: Exactly, it helped a lot. The thing that was nice about it is that even before the Old Supreme Court was opened, PBS was doing a show on the *Amistad* case as part of the John Adams series that was their big bicentennial effort. One of the 13 episodes, namely the *Amistad* case, used the Old Supreme Court Chamber, because that was the site of the actual deliberation, and where John Quincy Adams presented his side of the issue.

RITCHIE: I remember when you showed that documentary in that chamber as part of "The Senate Goes to the Movies" series. It was fascinating to sit in the chamber and know that was where the documentary was filmed, and where the original events had taken place.

KETCHUM: Isn't that the strangest experience you could possibly imagine? I'm trying to think of the name of the director who had done *The Miracle Worker* [Arthur Penn]. He had started out in television in the '50s, and then moved on to Hollywood, and had come back to television. He died not too long afterwards, but he, backed by PBS, wanted desperately to know *every* last detail about that room. They were so completely set on the integrity of their production, and the Congress wouldn't give them any permission to film elsewhere. This was strictly a commission permission to use the Supreme Court Chamber, and that was all that was necessary. So they went to, it must have been the old statehouse in Rhode Island, and that's where they did the interiors for a Capitol Rotunda. The man who was playing John Quincy Adams at that stage of the story was the actor William Daniels, who was very well-known. Except that he had just had his appendix removed the week before and he had very little stamina and very little strength. So we had to put up a folding screen over near what is the bathroom now in that room, and a cot behind it, so that William Daniels could rest.

I felt very badly because the whole business of make-up and costume took a fair amount of preparation each morning and they would start with a call for six o'clock a.m. and still be shooting at 10 p.m. We were about to open the room within a matter of maybe

about a month and, somehow, when they were doing location sites, somebody asked the right question, if it would be possible, and Mansfield said, “Well, as long as we’re not open to the public yet, I guess you can go ahead.” But then, it did open up a bit of a Pandora’s Box afterwards because once the room was known, everybody and their brother wanted to use it. There were staff members who would die in automobile accidents and the committee for whom they worked, I remember, this was true when [Claiborne] Pell was chairman of Rules, for example, would want to have the funeral in the room. I was out in Arizona visiting my family. Barbara and the kids were with me, and I got a call. Reagan had named Sandra Day O’Connor and they wanted to have her luncheon on the day she was sworn in in that room. And there were some times you just could not get out of it. I mean, especially if it were a Republican Senate and it was a Republican President and a Republican request, you might as well go along with it, even though you could point out all the problems it would cause.

The one time that I remember Republicans getting so upset with using the Old Senate Chamber above, was a gathering in there that involved John Tower, before he had been named secretary of defense. Anyway, the Republicans had a caucus in there, in the early Reagan era, and Howard Greene [the Republican secretary] and someone else came out and they were furious. I was standing outside waiting to go in and get the room back, and I said, “What’s wrong?” They said, Tower was anxious to leave the meeting and he was on the dias. He must have been sitting up at the clerk’s desk, and he got up on a chair, got up on the clerk’s desk, and then jumped off onto the floor and raced out. They could see these lamps that were in place, not the ones that are there now but the lamps that had been purchased at the time of the opening, knocked over—but they weren’t. Somebody grabbed onto them. But they saw the whole table coming forward and they were so mad and they said, “We’re never going to ask you for that room for anything again.” You know, for the longest time they didn’t. It was really interesting.

RITCHIE: They didn’t confirm his nomination either.

KETCHUM: They didn’t confirm his nomination either. No. Absolutely not. But I don’t know what possessed him. I mean, he obviously didn’t have to jump as far as some people, but I mean the whole idea was rather strange. But they were just, Howard was furious. Howard Greene died?

RITCHIE: No, I just saw him at Stan Kimmitt’s funeral.

KETCHUM: Who was it that died recently, somebody in that operation?

RITCHIE: I'm not sure. Howard Greene has gone back to Delaware, I think.

KETCHUM: Okay. He must have been, because Bill Hildenbrand had the senator that he was associated with was a Delaware senator and I guess—

RITCHIE: You're thinking of [J. Caleb] Boggs.

KETCHUM: That's right, Boggs. That must have been how Howard was to come into the whole thing. He and Elisabeth have long since parted company?

RITCHIE: Yes.

KETCHUM: Is she still there?

RITCHIE: I don't think she's still there, but they're not together.

KETCHUM: No, I know. I think it was happening, as a matter of fact, when I came up here. So it's probably 10 years. Can you believe that? It's been 10 years. Anyway, we won't belabor some of these points. Donald, as you've looked in kind of getting an overview of where we've been and where we're going, what area would help to tie some of this together?

RITCHIE: It was a little easier with the White House because we could do it president by president, but with the Congress it's a more continuous flow.

KETCHUM: Right, we could do congressional history forever.

RITCHIE: But I thought that we could talk about some of the big events, the opening of the Old Supreme Court and the Old Senate Chamber, and then the maintenance of the rooms over time. And then the fine arts catalogue. I wondered also about the Senate office buildings, when the Calder "Mountains and Clouds" was installed, and things like that. There are other issues dealing with the Capitol, the whole expansion issue with the west front, and your dealings with the architect's office and the leadership, hopefully moving chronologically, because we're still back in the '70s.

KETCHUM: It's kind of a Never-Never Land at that point of time. It was still very fluid and things could go almost in any direction. Because you were involved in it on a day- to-day basis, you often didn't have the kind of perspective that gave you that sense of where you were in the long haul. It was only afterwards that I realized how often we were skating on rather thin ice. We were dependent upon the people who were there to continue with the program, which was somewhat what had happened when the Kennedys left the White House and the Johnsons came in. This happens not only in the museum side of life, it happens throughout. It happens with every committee. It happens in any number of the agencies, that it depends upon the new people coming in to really pick up the torch, and are they interested.

I don't know what to attribute to [Senator Robert] Byrd's interest, because it was really Kimmitt who carried the water. Kimmitt was so devoted to the institution and had such a strong sense of what it might represent, but it was hard for me when he ran against Frank Valeo [for secretary of the Senate in 1976] because I was really devoted to Valeo. I knew that "The king is dead, long live the king," but that was not what I could feel good about. Frank Valeo, I had always assumed, even though Byrd succeeded Mansfield, would continue to be the secretary of the Senate for some time to come. Dorothea Scott must have realized that something was amiss someplace, because she had her retirement gathering and got out of there before there was ever any kind of an election of new Senate leadership.

It just bothered me because I did not quite know what the best approach was going to be. But thanks to Kimmitt, and thanks to Byrd signing off on anything that Kimmitt wanted to do, it worked. Kimmitt, he loved the gossip. He loved what was going on, and he loved hearing stories about various people who had either been behind Mansfield as far as some of the acquisitions were concerned, and the other things that were part of the story. As a result, and I'm sure there were many cold evenings in Montana when great stories were told around the fireplace in the Kimmitt household, he was extremely conscious of people being totally loyal. Loyalty was the watchword.

I remember his calling me down once. He'd seen me talking to somebody in the hall, I can't even remember who it was. He was afraid that maybe I was talking to them about something that I shouldn't be talking to them about. I had to explain what it was and he was satisfied that, indeed, okay that was fine. But he gave me a lecture that I think he'd been giving to people for 50 years. Giving it to young army personnel and everybody

else in between, about “the command structure” and all that went with it. I’d not quite gotten into those situations before, and it was a lecture that I don’t think I’d ever had. While I would not forget it, I found it somewhat amusing.

When he found out that there had been a portrait painted of the “old man,” as he referred to Mansfield, and that while we had a 21-year rule that no painting of a living senator could be donated, we could get around it by having the commission adopt a rule with an exception for leaders of the Senate, because we wouldn’t have to put the test of time to them. They had already risen to the top. The first thing we did is we had that put in place, and then we also proceeded to make arrangements to bring the portraitist down—he had done a much smaller portrait of Mansfield—to see the Mansfield room, to take the measurements, look at the lighting, think how things could be modified and go back and do the Mansfield portrait. And then, not to get Byrd’s nose out of joint, Kimmitt decided to hang it not during a weekday, but on a Saturday afternoon, when nobody was around. Even if Byrd was in his office he would not be running around the corner—nobody could know what had taken place so that it could all be seen. Apparently Byrd came in the following Monday into the Mansfield Room and noted the size of the picture, and within two years, had a larger portrait painted of himself and one of Erma, Mrs. Byrd. So, size is important in the Senate still this very day. That took that into account.

This whole business of going from one secretary to another, because in each instance the secretary is always the executive secretary of the commission. This was all part of the resolution that established the Office of the Senate Curator, so you had a direct link. You couldn’t hide behind somebody who was the Keeper of Stationery or something else. You had to be out in front and you had any number of things that concerned them, sometimes on a more-than-once-a-day basis. A good working relationship was important. By the time I finally retired, I had gone through three presidents and “x” number of secretaries. I was at a point where you thought, you know, I don’t think I ever want to go around this block one more time, because it’s always a new process, a new sense of: Are they understanding what the goals are? Are the goals appropriate to what they think is their overview of the program and so forth and so on. I think some of them obviously saw that we had a pretty good track record and, just as you found with your relationships with them, they were more than willing to pay attention, and to let you guide the program accordingly, and trusted you. But there were times when things would rise that you couldn’t make the decisions about, in any way, shape, or means, on your own. You could certainly advise, but beyond that couldn’t score.

RITCHIE: I was so new in 1976—I came in March and all the changes happened in November and December, when Senator Mansfield retired, Senator Scott retired, and Stan Kimmitt beat Frank Valeo in the election. I didn't realize how monumental these changes were. But you'd been there for six years and these were the people you had counted on, the Republican leader, the Democratic leader, and the secretary of the Senate, and they all left all at once.

KETCHUM: Right, exactly, and you really did feel orphaned in a way. You hope that things were going to work, but did you have enough to go on? Well, we did in the sense that we certainly had the two chambers, and we had responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of the chambers, and the interpretation, and all of the things that worked out as far as the logistics of how the public would be handled. Mark Hatfield, for example, thought it would be much better if the wall in the corridor outside the Old Senate Chamber could be replaced with huge glass panels—what he did later on down in Appropriations, except that they just had a glass-paneled doorway there. He wanted a long, sweeping view, like looking in the nursery at the maternity ward at a hospital. Fortunately that didn't happen.

Mansfield had great problems with Hatfield. Hatfield just was a loose cannon. I don't know whether he'd been involved when he was governor of Oregon with certain programs, but he just was going to do what he wanted to do. He was changing pictures around. He was calling up the architect's staff and moving paintings around, and not consulting anybody. Mansfield had to call him in, and it was just the three of them: Mansfield, Scott, and Hatfield. There was no room for anybody else. They explained to him that, "Mark, we now have a way of going about this. If you have any suggestions that you want to make we'll be only too happy to listen to them." Hatfield came up one day with his tail between his legs and said, "I guess I've really gotten myself into a bit of hot water." I acted as if I didn't quite know what he was talking about and I said, "Oh, don't worry about that," knowing damn well what had happened because I had to go and address Frank and Mansfield on the whole issue.

But the whole idea of the people who had been your protectors, your mentors, your go-betweens, gone, was stunning. And I didn't know Kimmitt at all. I mean I'd met him, but I don't think I'd ever had any real dealings with him. I knew Gail Martin [his administrative assistant] a little bit. She was helpful in the beginning. And I knew Ethel Low, who worked for Byrd in his Senate assistant majority leader's office down off our

elevator on the first floor. She didn't last too long because Barbara Videnieks seemed to take over rather quickly. I don't know whether she's even still around. She's gone, isn't she?

RITCHIE: I'm not sure.

KETCHUM: Okay, well if you've never had any dealings with her, consider yourself very blessed.

We were in a good position. Let me put it that way. I wonder, sometimes, had the chambers not been finished and opened, where we would be. The Supreme Court Chamber was opened in '75 and the Old Senate Chamber in '76. You remember handling the press corps for that opening and getting all kinds of strange assignments. Donald, you were patient to put up with all the nonsense.

RITCHIE: It was trial by fire, I remember, at that time. I also remember that you gave me my first view of the Old Senate Chamber, from the skylight in the attic. You lifted up a pane of glass and I looked down at this sea of little workers down below. I could hear the sawing and the banging going and thought that they'll never have this done by June. This was in March of 1976. And yet, the Old Senate Chamber was opened up in June. It was quite remarkable.

KETCHUM: Exactly, exactly, there it was.

RITCHIE: One of the big differences between the Old Supreme Court Chamber [on the first floor] and the Old Senate Chamber [on the second floor] is that you had all the original furnishings downstairs. You had very little original furnishings for upstairs. What did you do?

KETCHUM: Well, first of all, we thought it would be appropriate to take the desks out of the Senate Chamber. That was not going to fly, there was no doubt about that whatsoever. Even though it was explained that those desks had been added to and so forth and so on through the years, the response was "No way, Jose." There was, let's see, the clerk's desk for the Senate Chamber had been given to Alben Barkley when he left the Senate as vice president. He had it for that brief period of time when he came back to the

Senate. It must have gone down to wherever his papers were at the University of Kentucky, and that provided us with enough of the detail of what the presiding officer's desk would look like.

We did know of the settees in the room, and we had pretty good information of where the clerks worked behind the presiding officer, in that loge area behind. We had information on that that was good. But no, originals they were not available. We had a sense of the benches up in the gallery, except that the gallery was even steeper and there was actually another row. I don't know how they worked that out, especially considering the women's hoop skirts. Of course, in the beginning, there was only one gallery and that was the gallery that would have been on the east side over the presiding officer's desk. And then in 1819 and '20, [Robert] Mills got involved and they decided that it was just not terribly safe up there. The gallery that we see, the principal horseshoe gallery today, was installed with those narrow columns. But all that had all been ripped out totally when the Supreme Court moved upstairs [in 1860]. That was gone. The public just came in and stood around in the back of the room when the Supreme Court was there. I think they had some desks for reporters and that was pretty much the extent of it.

Yes, we were much better off downstairs than we were upstairs. But again, because it was a room in which there were multiples in furniture that was used, once you could really pin down some of these things, and many of them showed up in photographs of the Supreme Court in the 1870s and '80s. They show up in engravings of the Court upstairs, and I guess the first photographs that were probably the best detailed were again the Frances Benjamin Johnson period for up there. But the Court, because the Senate had a whole new chamber down in the extension wing as far as furnishing were concerned, and the Court had always been treated so badly by the Senate, that was its salvation, or our salvation in a sense, because the Court held on to everything. They continued to right into the days that they moved across the street [in 1935]. So all the niggardly aspects of the Senate's treatment of the Court came back to give us a great bonanza.

RITCHIE: I recall that there was a dispute over the bill hoppers in the Old Senate Chamber. That was one case where you knew there was an original piece of furnishing, and it was at the Smithsonian. What was the story there?

KETCHUM: Well, the Smithsonian would not part with it and we had asked really strongly but they would not part with it. So we went ahead and copied it. And then

later on when Joe Stewart came in [as secretary of the Senate], he decided to revive the whole thing. In the meantime Byrd was asking the White House for one of the U.S. Grant Bohemian crystal chandeliers back. We were going out and getting all these things back. We got the desk for the vice president's office. And I thought, well, why not go after the bill hopper? But it never shook out. It never came back. We still had the copies, and in the meantime, the Smithsonian began selling copies of the bill hopper. There was some question about, possibly, was it actually used in the way that it was placed in the room. As I said at the time, we're always going to find that there are mistakes that need to be corrected. You cannot say that this is the way the room looked, even though you have the seating plan of a specific time, 1850 or what have you, that this is exactly the way the room looked at a particular time. It's really an amalgam. It's a collection that extends further. Granted, the same architectural elements were there, and most of the furnishings, but you can't just press a button and say that the clock stopped at this particular point.

I think we do a much more honest job if we explain to people that there are compromises, and as we can get the questionable areas cleared up and as new things come to light as far as information, we will not have to necessarily see things quite the way they are. But overall, I was never happy with the fact that we had to conform—even though I was later given a couple of new hips—to the regulations as far as the handicapped. Because we had a very good system of having somebody outside the chamber and somebody inside, who could pick up any wheelchair and take the individual right into the very center of the room. I thought that was a wonderful solution. They really had a better view than the public which had to stay in the back. But Dole and [John] McCain—it was especially McCain who was rather obnoxious about the whole thing—insisted that they would do everything possible to close the room down unless we had a ramp. And it had just to conform with the angle specified in the law. Actually, we didn't conform to the angle, because if we did the ramp would go all the way into the Republican leader's office [across the hall]. It had to be a steeper pitch. But it did do a lot to change the overall appearance of the room.

I guess you have to give up a little bit on that side of the ledger in order to keep things going. Then, of course, security became an issue in 2001, and it became a totally different story. We used to laugh and say that, at some point, the president's going to move out of the White House and move to a bunker down near Mount Vernon, and we might say the same will apply for the Supreme Court and the Congress. But who knows what's going to happen? And we're all sitting here waiting for the other shoe to drop as

far as some God awful situation with terrorism. I haven't kept my oar in recently about what the visitor will do once he leaves and comes up the escalator or whatever and into the Capitol Building from the Visitor Center, how that will be laid out for them.

RITCHIE: Actually there's a lot less of the Capitol Building to see than there used to be, and that's a problem. The Old Senate Chamber is only open when the Senate's not in session, which fortunately is quite frequently these days.

KETCHUM: Right. Last time when I was down, Barbara was with me. It must have been a function that Emily had for the publications of the catalogue of fine arts. I can't quite remember what month last year it was. But it was devastating to me. It was summer and very hot and the whole security thing was just loony-tunes. I came down for something else recently—it was the unveiling of the portraits in the Senators' Reception Room. That was a little easier, a better time of year. But to see what the secretary of the Senate has to do in order to have a reception is really sad.

End of the Fifth Interview

ART IN THE CAPITOL
Interview #6
Friday afternoon, March 4, 2005

DONALD RITCHIE: You mentioned going into the different Senate offices to try to catalogue what was there and I thought maybe you might talk about the types of things you would find in an office and what you were trying to catalogue.

JAMES KETCHUM: Sure. Well, we were not doing much in the office buildings although we did want to get an inventory of all the Carrère and Hastings desks from the 1911-1912 period. Our main interest was the rooms in the Senate wing of the Capitol, and that's where we needed desperately to get the cooperation of the members so that we could get into the hideaways, where many of the pieces that were there would have been prime targets for an historic inventory.

We had to draw up some guidelines, and certainly, the facilities that had served as warehouses through the years, when I started out in '70, within the first three or four years, the Senate warehouse was relocated maybe in three different places. They just kept picking up and moving. They were over in Alexandria. They were in Southwest. They were moving around. But I wanted to make sure that we knew what was there, and *they* knew that we knew, that was even more important, really, that the sergeant at arms, who had maintained the warehouse inventories, realized that we had recorded these objects. What we would do early on, not in the hideaway offices, we'd simply note them. We had no system of numerics yet. There was supposedly an annual inventory that the sergeant at arms was responsible for, but this was a little bit tentative sometimes. Sometimes they did it, but sometimes they would not get around to it. But with Polaroid photograph in hand, and noting the measurements and so forth, we were pretty much satisfied with an early documentation of each of these pieces.

We were looking for things that had been in the institution for 50 years or longer. Sometimes if it was an object that was related to an historic occasion, or what had potential for this even most recent day and age, we also wanted to know that. But the offices of 1912 had a basic suite of furniture, and it was these pieces that we were especially interested in knowing a little bit more about. We soon were able to nail down the designers and found the companies, because not just one company was making these

items. It was an order that had to be filled in a matter of months, and when you had the number of pieces involved, you had to job it out to two or three who would follow the drawings and make the same desk or the same sofa and so forth.

The decorative arts collection of the Capitol, and of the Senate in particular, is not a collection that you could place normally in a museum setting. These are functional pieces, and they are pieces that have value in terms of telling the story about how the institution worked, how its offices were set up after 1912. Even though there were any number of committee rooms that were devoted to office space before that period of time. Sooner rather than later we realized that when Carrère and Hastings was going to be a designer for furniture for the offices, they were usually going to individuals who were very, very highly considered. So you ended up with pieces that did have a good deal of value as far as interpreting that particular period of style in that age and in that era, so much so from the early ones that when the second building, the Dirksen, was constructed, they looked back at some of those original pieces with an eye towards reproducing them and finally decided that they would keep a more contemporary style for the period of the building. But even so, it had an effect. It certainly had an effect on the members because of the 96 desks that were ordered, plus some extras, in 1911-1912, I don't think there were probably more than 10 or 15 that remained by the time we got there. Now, we did find out about some that were out of the building, but it was not only senators who were taking them, but secretaries of the Senate were also very interested in packing them up and traveling with them.

The Lewey Carraways, for example, he was an employee of the architect of the Capitol—

RITCHIE: He was superintendent of the office buildings.

KETCHUM: He was superintendent of the Senate Office Buildings. They were harder to bring around than their folks who worked for them. There was a woman who worked for Lewey, she was ancient, Helen Kane. She and Louie combined had like a thousand years of experience on the Hill. We got her interested in what we were trying to do, and whenever she would find a piece that was in some strange cubbyhole over in the office building, and she knew that it looked like it had a bit of a story, she'd call us up and we'd hurry over. We would transfer it over to the sergeant at arms of the Senate, if there was no problem with that, and usually there wasn't at all. Anyway, you would get

these folks in situations where they could see what was going on and knew relevance of something and, by God, they were the best things that ever happened to us. That went on time and time again.

Ultimately, we were filling a warehouse and also taking things down to the carpenter shop in the Capitol for some restoration work, if it was just basic restoration work, or if we had to send out. The conservation fund today is absolutely staggering compared to what it was when I first started out. I mentioned in an earlier conversation with you the memo that came from Allen Ellender of Louisiana about not thinking about any need of conservation of paintings unless the picture fell off the wall and the frame was shattered. That was typical, I suppose. But when you got these newer members like Fritz Hollings, who had practiced conservation law back home, they understood. Hollings was especially helpful when he was chairman of the Senate legislative appropriations subcommittee of getting the money through each time. It was always a unanimous committee vote and it was a unanimous vote in the Senate, and he carried the water each time. But it was our friends over in the House that held that up.

We were looking for any of the examples of post-1860s that had been in the Capitol. There you had over mantles, giant gilt-framed mirrors that had been in any number of the rooms over those Thomas U. Walter mantles that were designed for that wing. There were some pieces that showed up in Glenn Brown's photographs, which I think were Frances Benjamin Johnson's work, or certainly in that period of the early Glenn Brown *History of the Capitol*, the two-volume work that, is it being still worked on by—?

RITCHIE: I don't know if anybody's updated Glenn Brown.

KETCHUM: What's his name who was working on it?

RITCHIE: Bill Allen sort of replaced it in a sense with his *History of the United States Capitol*.

KETCHUM: He did, but there was somebody who was working with the Capitol Historical Society who I think now is down with the White House Historical Society. Bill—what was his last name? He was supposed to be redoing Glenn Brown. Bill Allen's

book, which is a splendid book, gives you pause for all kinds of thoughts on what might have been and what actually was.

Anyway, that was really the cross-section of what we were looking for. The first time frame, you were concentrating on getting more detail about the furnishings that had been part of the Old Senate and the Old Supreme Court Chamber, but at the same time, we were doing these forays into all of the spaces that we could possibly find. That was certainly a good way to get to know the Capitol. The hideaways, in those days, some of them which were down in the bowels of the basement were right out of the movies. Do you remember *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*? I don't know if that film is fresh in your memory, but you had a hideaway down there that was nothing but ceiling pipes and similar things. Well, that's what some of these rooms were like. Much different than what they would come to be. I don't know if there are enough now for 100. That was the goal, that all members could have a hideaway in the Senate.

RITCHIE: I think there's still only about 70.

KETCHUM: Okay. I think they were well on their way as far as the fourth floor of the Capitol until the 11th of September rolled around, but there's no doubt in my mind that they were going to carve that whole thing up for hideaways, but that has not been part of the plan since then.

Now that we have the *Catalogue of Fine Art*, there will be shortly a print catalogue, that will be kind of a successor to a print catalogue that we did about 11 or 12 years ago. And then it will be time to do a study of the furniture of the Senate under the Capitol.

RITCHIE: You mentioned that Senator Mansfield was concerned because the pictures were being damaged, but then Senator Ellender was saying, "Don't even think about asking for money for it."

KETCHUM: Exactly.

RITCHIE: So what did you do about the pictures?

KETCHUM: Well, first of all, our funds were such that we didn't really have more money than perhaps taking one picture or so a year, but we did make sure that it was a major picture. And sooner rather than later, we were even getting into things as some in the stairway art, like the *Emancipation Proclamation*. It was the *Battle of Lake Erie* that had sustained a hit back in probably the mid-'60s.

RITCHIE: Didn't somebody stab it?

KETCHUM: I think somebody stabbed it, yeah. Then, as I said, there had also been an ink bottle that had been thrown at a painting. Of course, the biggest moment of terror was with the second bombing of the Capitol, when the principal east-west corridor of the second floor, outside the Senate chamber, was bombed.

RITCHIE: That was 1983.

KETCHUM: That was '83. I remember John coming into the house, it was like 11:15 at night, and he had just heard the story. It was a Monday night—Tuesday night, excuse me, because Monday night, the night before, they would have been in watching the Monday night football game. Anyway, he came in , and the next thing I knew, I was getting reports on TV, and I just got my coat on and hot-footed it down East Capitol Street to the Capitol.

When I got there, they had posted all kinds of new orders all the way around that people were not allowed in, and I said, "No, that's my job. I'm going in." They let me in and I went and I discovered the condition of the corridor, especially a portrait of Daniel Webster had been just totally decimated. There was three or four portraits that had been affected, but this especially, and the problem was that you could see some of the pieces of canvas on the floor in front of the picture, but it was just rubble all over. The sergeant at arms people were good enough, within about two hours, to come once permission was given to take this away. They came and scooped up all the debris. We filled like seven of these wagons that they pushed through. These carts, which are probably yea long and yea high, with rubble, and then took it down to a room that we had down on the basement level, and sifted for I don't know how many days, the better part of a week. And every single patch of fabric that we got, we hung onto, because there are conservators in the Washington area as well as other parts of this country who literally can take that type of a

jigsaw puzzle and put it back together again, and they did. The only thing that raised any questions with us was, when they were through, they still had a few square inches left over, which we never quite figured out how that happened.

But anyway, when you look closely at Daniel Webster you can see the repair work. It was one of the pictures that had been purchased by the Senate from Matthew Brady's studio when Brady went into what would be Chapter 11 in the late 1860s, early 1870s, when his fortunes reversed and he sold any number of the paintings that had been based on daguerreotypes and photographs that his studio had taken at an earlier time. The idea being is that you went in and sat for Brady for a daguerreotype, say in 1850, and then he had these young, many times Irish, painters who came from Ireland as late-teenagers, but had been academically trained in studio art. From the small print, they would do a life-size portrait, which you could then buy. Usually this whole thing was a commissioning proposition, although he had done these members of the Senate just to show what was possible. Brady had a couple of them in his studio on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, but he also took them to New York City and had them there as well. But that's the kind of extreme case conservation that was going on.

We had pictures that we were not totally sure as far as who the artist was and you had some rather interesting and very, very competent painters' names attached to some of them, but it was not always the case. Under laboratory conditions, you could analyze the brush work and date the canvas and get a much stronger sense of was it by so-and-so, or was that just something that was passed along at the end of a ruler.

RITCHIE: Hadn't the Webster painting just gone through conservation just before the explosion?

KETCHUM: I believe it had, Don. I know that Marion Mecklinburg was doing those pictures that were in that part of the building and had tremendously detailed photographs. That would answer that it had, because he would not normally have had those photographs, had it not been for a type of conservation job.

RITCHIE: I can recall that the Theodore Roosevelt bust had a black eye, a shiner, literally.

KETCHUM: That's right.

RITCHIE: And I remember that before the Webster portrait had been taken off the wall, and it was just a dark exterior ring inside the frame, while the middle of the canvas was white. I couldn't believe, when I saw it, that they could ever save the picture.

KETCHUM: The bomb had been placed under a bench that was directly across from the Daniel Webster, and that, presumably, is why that particular picture took the full force. But when you look at what it did on either end of the hall—you had Senator Byrd's office at one end and you had the secretary's office at the other end.

RITCHIE: It blew out those big, circular windows on both side.

KETCHUM: Sure did, and one we had totally reworked and rebuilt. The other one was not as bad. One was of the seal of the Senate. Those were things that had been part of the original Senate extension. I don't want to say that they were installed originally when the extension was opened, because there had been limited funds, and a lot of things didn't come until after the Civil War. But I believe those may have both predated and gone in during the 1860 period.

RITCHIE: There was another bombing just after you came. It was in '71. Did you get involved in that in any way?

KETCHUM: Yes. If you think back when we discussed something that will be the embarrassing moment of all times. That was the time when Mary Phelan and I decided that no one was doing anything for the bookbinder, Joe Cloren, and gave him a little party. We moved all of the furniture out of S-411 and moved in tables and food and one of the items was, of course, this copper chafing dish which had been a wedding present to Barbara and me which we had never used before.

RITCHIE: That was the detonated chafing dish.

KETCHUM: That's the tie-in. That our office and yours truly was responsible for clearing the entire Capitol Building. It was a Thursday night in May 1971. The Johnson Library dedication was taking place, so it was '71. I will never forget it, because we supposedly had taken all the packages down to the steps, and I pulled up my yellow square back Volkswagen and loaded it up. I got home, and I remember, about an hour

later, Barbara was doing the dishes of the things that I brought home, and she called upstairs and said, “Where’s the chafing dish?” And I said, “Well, it’s in the car, maybe.” She said, “Well, it’s not in the house.” I went down and it wasn’t in the car, so I came back and I said, “Well, we left it in the office, we forgot.” The next morning we’re on our way out to Loehmann’s on Route 50 in Falls Church, Meryl Muller, it’s nine o’clock, NBC news on the hour, announcing that whoever the tourist was who left the copper chafing dish on the Senate steps the night before, will not be able to reclaim it. It was awful. It really was. I was just mortified, because I would just turn around. I wouldn’t even go any further. I was going to look at “No Label Louie’s” or someplace like that for some clothing.

We turned around and went back and I went in and told Frank. He just hooted and hollered and slapped the desk and thought it was wonderful. But when I went to Bill Wannall or Bob Dunphy, one of those two was sergeant at arms. They either had had a call from Val, who said, “make him squirm,” or something, because I was interrogated like I was about to be sent down to the Dry Tortugas. You know, the bombing of March of ’71 had affected everybody. We’d never had anything like that take place before. There had been a bombing during World War I, and a few other incidents, but nothing in my time that rattled one’s sensitivities. I just thought my job was on the line, no doubt about it. Of course, Val was so excited, he got the sergeant at arms and the police to give him the chafing dish and he had a special presentation, and called Joe Cloren down that afternoon and presented him with the chafing dish.

All I got out of it were English egg cups, which we’d used to hold toothpicks, which were never touched at all. They were right in the box. The bomb squad from Fort McNair came over, and as it was described to me, some kind of a robotic character or something got a hold of it and took the box down and put it in the middle of the plaza, which was empty. This lead shield was put over it. They put some kind of detonating device in place, they stood back, and however they clipped the wire and set the thing off and then they went over and opened it all up and there it was. I have all the clippings, and the office does, too, because the New York papers played it up. *The Daily News* put it on the front page. Of course, at the time, when the story was written, late on that Thursday evening I believe it was, or it could have been Friday. Whatever was written, they did not identify whoever was involved, and I was never identified. I was never called by the press or anything else, so thank God the powers that be at the Senate kept me out of that whole

thing. I was just . . . we all laughed about it for a long bit later, but at the time, no way. What is it? “No good deed goes unpunished,” is that Clare Booth Luce? Yes, that was it.

RITCHIE: And that was just a couple of months after the bombing that had been downstairs on the ground floor?

KETCHUM: Yes, that’s right, March to May.

RITCHIE: Had you had anything to do with cleaning up after that one?

KETCHUM: No, not really. We had some inventory of the barber shop, I remember, and we had some knowledge of what was in some of those rooms. But the destruction was pretty concentrated in a spot that it didn’t affect anything that we had recorded, if memory serves. No, we didn’t have anything to do with that.

RITCHIE: I wondered if those two incidents added to any sense of urgency of documenting what was in the building.

KETCHUM: It may have helped. I don’t remember it coming up in conversation and I don’t necessarily remember thinking of it. My concern was that we really had to keep that push on in a big way. I’d been through some of this at the White House, and I wanted to make sure that it was done. The White House, every five to ten years, going back to the late-19th century, had a system of inventory and a system of checking, which never quite anybody else followed through. I wanted something in there. That’s why I went to Frank almost in the first weeks that I was there and said, “Could we get some kind of computer in the office?” In those times, it was often done as part of a time share. There was a company in New York, Bowne Time, that sold us on putting in what looked like a teletype machine. There was no screen, no screen whatsoever, and we would type in entries. We had various fields that entry portions went into, and every single object was noted. Because in the legislation that established us, it said very clearly that every 10 years a catalogue had to be updated and available for public consumption, or what have you. My idea was that if we could start doing something on computer immediately, we would just have it. All that we had done would be there to be seen and considered.

There had never been a computer in the Capitol anyplace before. This was a whole new game. But they went along with it. There had been some work of getting them

over in the office buildings, but nothing like this had happened. Boy, I'll tell you, when I think of how quickly that whole pendulum shifted, because there had also been tons of interns in the office buildings but there hadn't been interns in the Senate wing of the Capitol. Well, you know, the offices that were there were mostly committee staff that didn't want to, I suppose, play games with the interns that were over in the members' offices, having then go back and forth. I remember going down in the Spring of 1970 to Frank and saying that Mount Holyoke had a program that I had been working with at the White House, and they would send an intern or two to the Capitol. I don't believe, at that point, there was even any money involved in the whole thing. He said, "Well, it's against my better judgement, but let's go ahead and see how it works." It worked out beautifully. From that point on, slowly but surely, other offices began taking interns. So that by the time your office came in, it was very much an accepted thing that could be done.

Back to the sense of urgency, we just had kind of a built-in, or at least I did, desire to move as quickly as possible on all this. The problem was that since I was the only employee, I would do this and try to stay within a certain schedule that I was following, but I'd get pulled off for other things going on. I mean, Frank would call up and say that Red Skelton was in the office and could we do a tour. You know, the same thing that you see every day of the week. That was a little frustrating. It was helpful to have the women out in the circle answering the phone for me, but it wasn't until Mary Phelan joined the office, and then soon afterward, Jim Haugerud, that things got a little more flexible and I could get a few more things done.

I had every expectation that the catalogue that came out last year would have been published by 1980. That's how hopeful I was, and it took another quarter-century. There's a tremendous—in a catalogue of that scope—amount of research, which continues to go into those entries even now that they've been published. They will be updated. My other great dream, in those days, which never was quite fulfilled, I wanted to do the most gigantic show of senatorial portraits, both sculpted and painted. And do it in the two levels of the Russell Building, both the rotunda and up above in the gallery space above the rotunda.

The Union League Club in New York, for example, has a portrait of [William] Seward which just is a knockout of all times. Done in the new chamber in 1859. You see these portraits of Howard Baker and others that have been painted in there and then you see this bravura performance that just takes your breath away. These exist, these portraits

of people who are not only most recognizable, but also the quality and the size and the scope really well worth reminding our present-day members that if they ever are going to go in the direction of a painted portrait, what the staff and what the commissions that review these things should be looking for. It would be a happy thought to think of something like that still being done.

I think one of the reasons we got into “Necessary Fence” [the Senate’s Bicentennial Exhibit in 1989], instead of the portrait show, was because as didactic as it was, it also, more importantly, gave the general public such a wide-ranging scope of how the Senate had interpreted its role and fulfilled its role vis-a-vis the Constitution. While portrait shows do wonderful things, you do not get that kind of a story and that kind of a scope from something like that. I would say, and I think I speak for Diane, I’m sure that you must have gained a sense of satisfaction from that enterprise, which we’ll probably not see right away again. It was just amazing when those ribbons were being cut for that show, and, in many ways, kind of a fulfillment of a long-held dream of what could be done.

RITCHIE: That was the bicentennial show in the rotunda of the Russell Building. Thinking back, actually, now as we’re working on the Visitor’s Center, one of the problems is that there are not a lot of physical objects to put on display that relate to the legislative branch. What was quite remarkable about your exhibit was how many physical objects you pulled together, from desks to canes, the magnificent treaties from the Louisiana Purchase and the Guadalupe Hidalgo, items that drew crowds.

KETCHUM: Do you remember even doing that small section of the Senate Chamber, where we had a desk and carpeting and so forth? We never could quite get the motion sensor right, that thing would spring up. But it was just phenomenal, and thanks to an absolutely wonderful group, Staples and Charles—talk about exhibition design of the finest and the highest quality. I always had to feel a little guilty afterwards, because there was an awful lot of tobacco money from R.J. Reynolds that went into that show. But if it meant that R.J. Reynolds could spend its dollars on something like that, to mean as much as I hope it did to those who really spent the time with it’s being there and viewing it.

I think what was especially warming and you probably were with us that night when we had the museum community of Washington coming in to see it. Just to show

people that even in a setting that everyone would say, “Gee, that’s impossible to do,” that it could be done. And that wonderful catalogue and all of the effort that you and Diane put into it. I remember one of Byrd’s grandson’s, who, we were really up against getting captions written towards the end because we’d been concentrating on so many other things. We had institutions from all over the country that were kind enough to place objects on loan. And he came in, Eric Fatemi. I had regard for Senator Byrd, but my esteem and respect for him went right up through the ceiling after that. I thought, any family that can produce somebody like this youngster, as far as I’m concerned, is doing something right.

I felt somewhat the same way when Harry Reid’s son came in. We were able, usually, to say to the secretary of the Senate, “Unless they’ve got some real ability in where we need them, we can’t take them.” I didn’t say, “I don’t care if his father is Senator So-and-so,” but we turned down an awful lot of children and relatives of members of the Senate through the years. I think there were only a couple of instances where we took them, and those were the two times. But, by golly, in each instance, it was very rewarding. I don’t say that one should judge a member of the Senate by their children, but I think it is a bit of a barometer of what life is all about and could be all about.

RITCHIE: The other nice thing about that exhibit, it was in such a good place that so many people came through, because it was the main entrance to the Russell Building, and there was a lot of off-the-street traffic, as well as a lot of senators and staff who probably would never have gone someplace to see something.

KETCHUM: Yes, that’s true, and we got a lot of calls from members’ offices on it, especially when we were about to dismount it and they were hoping against hope, I guess, that it would stay up a bit longer. That was photographed. Every square inch of that was photographed with an eye towards possibly doing an interactive video based on that, or an interactive program that could be used. All that material is housed. We tried to think before it was taken down, what technology was what we were leading to. It was in a time when we started to think about those interactive kiosks that we put up with the various exhibits, translated into those terms of interactive video. We went over and talked to Ward Chamberlain and the folks at Channel 26 in Arlington, because they were doing a Civil War program, I think maybe based on what Ken Burns was then shooting, possibly. This would have been in the late ’80s. They gave us a lot of help and a lot of direction.

We just didn't want to see that thing disappear and not have some way that you could recapture it, other than just what the catalogue had given us, and that's why we proceeded along those lines. To the best of my knowledge, that material has never really probably been looked at again, but it is there.

RITCHIE: Wait for the tricentennial.

KETCHUM: Okay. That would be 2089. When is the next big anniversary? I don't know. I guess the fire [when the British burned the Capitol].

RITCHIE: Yes, that's true, 2014.

KETCHUM: Yes, August, get yourself ready for it. I think, again, being rather young when I got up there and being somebody who had come from an institution where people really did, for the sake of saying, "Oh, I was helping the White House out today," did stop and make things happen even though it was not a traditional museum setting, but rather kind-of a working household, that I didn't know any better to be intimidated by people who might say no. And if they did say no, you knew deep down inside, they really don't mean that, they just have to say no and there's a way around it. That's how I felt, especially about folks that were part of the staffing of the sergeant at arms. I put the architect's office off in another category, but the sergeant at arms people were certainly part of that.

I must admit that when we did the first exhibit in the crypt—I'm trying to think what the title of that was. That case, which is still there today, constructed so that we could do rear view projection and we had all kinds of bells and whistles for 1970. I had need of some of the folks in the shops of the architect's office, and they were very, very good, and very helpful. As long as you stayed at that level, usually you could find some allies. It's when you got to the people who told them, "No, they shouldn't be doing that," that you had a few other problems.

RITCHIE: The first one I remember was for the presidential inauguration. It was '76. I don't know if there was one before that.

KETCHUM: Yes, there was. The first one would have been in '71, and I remember calling up Skeeter Johnston and other people that had been part of the

secretary's operation. His son was a classmate of mine at Colgate and I guess he was actually coming from Washington, he wasn't coming from Mississippi. But I just always thought that was so strange, because I remember him telling me that his father worked for the Senate. I think he was secretary then—when did Les Biffle leave? Early '50s?

RITCHIE: Skeeter Johnston took over in '53 so that Bobby Baker could become the Democratic secretary. He had been the Democratic secretary during the previous, under Senator Scott Lucas and then moved up to be secretary of the Senate.

KETCHUM: But Bobby Baker now in '53?

RITCHIE: He was never secretary of the Senate. Felton Johnson became secretary of the Senate and Bobby Baker became the Democratic secretary.

KETCHUM: There was just a chief clerk in those days. There was no assistant secretary of the Senate. I don't even know who that would have been, because I don't think Darrell—When Emery was secretary for that six month period—I can't even recall—

RITCHIE: Emery Frazier was the chief clerk, wasn't he?

KETCHUM: He was the chief clerk, you're right. He had been forever. That's precisely it. Who the chief clerk under Emery was [when he became secretary of the Senate in 1966], I do not know. There may not have been one, because that was all cut and dry before Emery even took the secretary job. He would be in for six months and then retire. Frank had been secretary to the majority, though.

RITCHIE: Yes, under Mansfield. He was succeeded by Bobby Baker.

KETCHUM: Under Mansfield. That's right, exactly. I'm sure you've heard these stories I'm telling many times, but Frank took great delight in going over some of that territory, and with those of us who were rather new, if he had the time, he always had the interest. He would skate through those things and just literally make you sit up and take notice of how things worked in that institution that you'd never have guessed in a million years. Darrell would do some of the same things if he had a chance. He especially loved

to talk about when Frank would be away and Dorothye Scott thought she was in charge, and how Darrell would circumvent her.

His great dealings with Verneil English, the principal aid for Carl Albert over in that House. During the Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence, when they were taking delegations to England and welcoming delegations to the United States, the things that went on and how he had to deal and work with him. Wonderful stories.

RITCHIE: You had talked about how you were looking for objects and furniture, and cataloging all the rest of it, but Senator Mansfield was concerned because so many things were disappearing. Did you get involved in trying to hold onto things or get things back?

KETCHUM: Well, yes. In some instances there were things that had been loaned, and that was no problem. Our main concern was that things not leave, that we have the kind of protections that they not leave to begin with. So, we started a system of numerics, which were applied to furniture. They were little tags that could be pried off, there's no doubt about it, but by doing an annual inventory of all those pieces, kind-of, sometimes doing it in tandem with the inventory that the sergeant at arms was taking. And keeping a warehouse staff on you side, I mean, that was as important as anything, because that could have been the barn door that often things disappeared or were stolen through. Whenever anything would leave the warehouse to go back to the Capitol, we would get a phone call, either from somebody out there or somebody in the sergeant at arms' office.

There were some sergeant at arms a little bit later on, people like Howard Liebengood, who were just committed like crazy. The combination of Hildenbrand and Liebengood, for my money, was just about as good as it gets. It was especially meaningful to me, because there were people like Joe DeGenova and others who had lined up all kinds of friends that they thought would be appropriate to take on the curatorial responsibilities. I can remember, once I just happened that I was in talking to Bill, and a call to DeGenova was put through. I listened to Bill lay him right out, and within about a month, DeGenova was getting married and Bill wanted to give him a reception and he said, "Remember, Ketch, when we were trying to make sure that everyone realized that you were going to be here to stay?" And I said, "yes." He said, "How would you feel about getting into the kitchen and putting something together?" I

said, “Okay, fine.” You know, how these things came full circle, and always food seemed to be involved in one way or the other on that.

But talking about how we hung on to things, or how we kept them from leaving, it was really getting the members, starting with the commission itself, to realize what was happening and underscoring this. Mansfield was very good, and people would pay attention to what he was saying. We had a lot of things that were in the building that were in kind-of a gray area. We thought they would be transferred. We were doing two inventories. The sergeant at arms was doing the everyday inventory, and we were doing an historic inventory, and there were things that you knew were, at one point, sooner rather than later, going to kind-of move over that Rubicon from everyday into historic. And so you started to peg those pieces as well. Things like having a complete set of furnishings from the office suites over in the Dirksen Building, the pieces that represented a period a half-century or less after the Carrère and Hastings Old Senate Office Building.

It was slow going with the Rules Committee, because they had been used to saying yes more often than not. Then, once B. Everett Jordan was gone, and Bill Cochrane finally retired, you did have a real change in the attitudes. There were groups that were protecting each other, and you had this relationship between the architect’s office and the Rules Committee of the Senate, and the architect’s office and the Speaker’s office, and that all made a difference for you. But there were always people in every office, including the architect’s office, who would call up and say, “Did you know that—,” and they would come very quietly, late in the afternoon to visit you in the office, and sit down and tell you about things that you would not have known about, that were about to disappear. When Florian Thayne retired, we found boxes of materials that had been turned over to her by Isaac Bassett’s granddaughter. There were no receipts for them, because the woman happened to come from Carlisle [Pennsylvania] and we happened to get to know her daughter up here, who came back from California to settle the estate. Fortunately, those things all ended up coming to us and we transferred them to the Library of Congress.

But there were people who realized that things were not being handled properly, and they apparently, had enough of an ax to grind with the Florian Thaynes of this world to let you know what was going on. So you took advantage of it. No two ways about it, and it was slow-going to get all of the inventories in place, and update those on a regular basis, plus whatever movement of furnishings and objects in between.

One of the things that did cause us—we were probably a staff of maybe three or four at this point—to realize we had been a little bit too much like the girl from Oklahoma, who couldn't say “no,” was the program of members borrowing works of art from home-state institutions. It started with one or two, and soon there were a dozen or so that were doing it. The institution would rely on us for going over and doing a security survey and going through a checklist of things that were appropriate to how such an object was going to be safeguarded. Then we would be asked by the senator or the institution to pick up the tab for shipment, and to consider insurance and so forth, and we didn't have money for this. We had to explain this. And while I would go to the commission and ask how far they wanted to go, they did not want to. They felt that this was something that each member would have to take out of their own pocketbook, or their own office budget, however they were going to construe this, and this would really be more up to the Rules Committee to pass judgement on that.

But we got involved in the physical side of it, as far as the installation and the hanging, and the security reports that had to be filed. Then you had to do, usually, a monthly survey of the object to make sure that it was still hanging where it was supposed to and nothing had happened. We never lost anything. The only thing we lost was from our own collection. The Senate Wives had wanted their room, or rooms, they had rooms on either side of the hall, over in the Dirksen Building.

RITCHIE: They had one in the Russell Building.

KETCHUM: Or maybe it was the Russell Building, then. And we selected one, which they told us that only they used, which apparently turned out not to be quite the case, and we put up a series of first quarter to mid-19th century engraved views of Washington and some of the other cities. There were some wood cuts, as well, of the interiors of the Capitol of a slightly later period. I think we had 20 over there, and the smaller ones, within about two month's time, disappeared. We had a special hanging device. You had to take the wire in kind-of like a maze, almost, to go around, and they were able to figure that whole thing out. So, I had to take them all down and put reproductions in. Fortunately, the pieces that were stolen were replaceable. There were other original prints from that same period and same subject and so forth. But that was the only time anything like that happened. I think the poor Senate Wives were horrified by that business, but there was nothing that we could do. Later, somebody explained to

me that, indeed, that room was used for more than just what they were using it for at that point.

RITCHIE: Yes, it became sort-of a multi-purpose room.

KETCHUM: Yes, it did. I think that if some group of interns wanted to have a “farewell to Washington” reception on a Thursday night in August, they let them do it. But until you stopped to think about how some of these things were accomplished, you don’t realize the interdependency on the individuals who had been there for years and years and years, and you were trying to teach them that there was another way to operate. Have I given you, kind of the sense that it’s slow-going, it’s easy to be diverted to something else? Because it is kind of a monotony that is not quite like watching paint dry, but there were times when you really thought, “oh, golly.” Then, fortunately, if you kept enough check-off lists in front of you, and also reminded yourself that it was another opportunity to get a member of staff in your corner. After we did our survey of a senator’s office, we would always call back if we did find some pieces that had been part of original furnishings of an earlier day, and let them know about it. Mainly because I wanted them to know that we knew about them, but also for them to appreciate them fully. Quite often, they were not aware of it. They just had gone out to a warehouse and said, “I’ll take that, that and that,” and nobody had ever told them, or maybe nobody ever knew, obviously, that “that, that and that” did have a better story than just the surface value.

RITCHIE: In addition to the pictures that senators borrowed, there were pictures that were painted for the collection; leaders, former senators, I’m sure spouses of senators must have had desires. Did you get involved in people trying to give artwork to the Capitol?

KETCHUM: Always, yes. A lot of relatives of senators painted, and we certainly did get involved in that, and we had very specific guidelines about what was acceptable and what was not and the normal answer was, “Thanks, but no thanks.” You had delegations that would come from a particular place, especially in the South. I think there were an awful lot of Sunday painters in the South, and if they wanted to remember a particular resident of a state who had some political ties, it could have been a senator, it was usually put together in the form of a letter from a group. Interestingly enough, some of the works that have come in recent years have come in because of the committee

formation down there, and then, “Let’s go up and lobby our senator, and have him take it from there.”

We didn’t loan. In terms of the permanent collection of the Capitol, we didn’t have a reserve collection. Pretty much what you saw out in the public corridors was what we had, so if a member was interested in borrowing something of substance, they had to work it out. If you were Pat Moynihan, you had no trouble getting the National Portrait Gallery or the National Gallery of Art to place pictures on loan. If you were a junior senator, and one who was not mixing it up much in those worlds, the National Gallery would give two reproductions to each office. That was the way that they’d handled that since the days of David Finley, and that seemed to satisfy. But there were those who knew an awful lot more about the subject than their predecessors, and that’s when the home-state institutions came into play.

I’d had a fair amount of experience with loans at the White House, both loans to staff members over in the West Wing, and then some of the offices in the Executive Office Building, and dealing mostly with Washington institutions on those. I also had a lot of experience with having to say no on examples of fine art that just were not gonna work vis-a-vis the collection and what you were building. But there were also times, and I can remember thanking Howard Baker in my morning and evening prayers, where you needed additional funds, for example, to go out and bid at auction. Washington auctions were always coming up with objects that had Senate history, especially portraiture of 19th-century members, Willie Mangum and some of the others.

I would go with a figure that the auction house would give me, an estimate that might range from say, two to three thousand dollars, and be sitting there, and the picture was now up at six thousand dollars, and what do you do? If I could get a better idea before I would go. I remember once, Baker was, gosh, I don’t even think he was in the country, but I told Bill Hildenbrand the problem and he said, “I’ll get a hold of Baker and Baker will call you.” So I talked to him, and it was over this level of funding, how far could I go? Because we were going to have to get the money from someplace and it was not in our budget. I had to explain what it was, it could have been that Mangum portrait. He said, “Even if it’s \$20,000, you’ve got my say so.” He was great, I mean, he always, whatever it was that was happening, he would back us to the hilt.

I really do look back upon those days fondly. I mean, each secretary had tremendous pluses as far as I was concerned, but he and the team of Liebengood and Hildenbrand were just wonderful, really. I didn't realize that Republicans would be that way and it was awfully nice to be reminded, and to tell my father, also, how good it was. But it was true. I would say of all the secretaries who were most interested in what we were doing, certainly Joe Stewart would get the nod in that direction. Of all secretaries who were most sympathetic, I'd have to give Sheila Burke very high marks. I've often been saddened by the fact that she decided to go down to the Smithsonian and take on that whole can of worms, because it's just not fair to somebody like Sheila who really, really was an amazing force when I saw what she could do.

But in each and every administration, things could be accomplished that you never thought. And what Joe did, by bringing in people like Tommy Gonzalez and others to look at the legislation and to elevate to the highest level as far as the statute books were concerned, really, really, did make a difference. Because that's the thing that you could point to when somebody in the Rules Committee or somebody in the architect's office was trying to run shotgun over you. I know that, while Diane has told me any number of stories of challenges that she has continued to see in that department, it's a lot easier than it was because of what these secretaries put in place. That was, I think, what Mansfield had in mind, when they designed that legislation, as far as making it a Senate program, by limiting the members of the commission to those five: the president pro tempore, the chairman of the Rules Committee and the ranking member, and the majority and minority leaders, and putting the secretary of the Senate in place as the executive secretary. When that was done, they really did have a blueprint for the future that would ultimately be strong enough to take on one and all.

RITCHIE: A good group to have in your corner if you're in a fight with anybody.

KETCHUM: Exactly, I could not agree more. I remember talking to David Mearns before I went up on the Hill, because I knew so little about it, and he was trying to explain to me the role of the Senate Library and some of the other things that had gone on in that part of the world. David, by now, had long since retired from the Library of Congress and from the Manuscript Division. I was trying to get a handle on it because it was such a foreign country. I had never had any dealings—I don't think, with one exception, I had ever even been in the Capitol Building until I went up for my interview.

I'd been up there to visit Mansfield a few times, but never really to take the tour or to do anything that related to the collection itself.

He used to ask me to come up and look at some of the things that the Marcos family had given him from the Philippines. He had a terrible time with this Nara mahogany which would come over, wood that had not been properly seasoned. They would give him a desk and other furnishings which he used in one of those offices down in that corridor outside of where the elevator would stop on the second floor (the elevator that went up to the fourth floor). If you stopped at the second and got off, there were offices down in that corridor that were assigned to the majority leader. And these pieces would have large fissures, like that, in them, where the wood had just absolutely separated because the humidity was so different than it was here.

So that was really the extent of my knowledge of the Capitol, nothing else. Concerts, sitting with Barbara and the kids at the evening, when we'd just wheel the stroller down from the house on Eleventh Street and sit on the Capitol steps. Those concerts don't even exist anymore, do they?

RITCHIE: If they do, they are very restricted.

KETCHUM: Very sad. It's very hard, I mean, I used to laugh at Darrell when he would pine for the days of the early '30s, and I'd think he was crazier than a coot, but now I realize what it means and how different it is, really.

RITCHIE: Another part of the collection that I was curious about were the busts. You have vice presidential busts going back to the 1890s, and they continue to add to them.

KETCHUM: Well, before that. The collection itself goes back. I think Henry Wilson's bust may have been about the earliest, but once that whole thing took fire and life was being breathed into it, there was no holding back. And of course, soon we went to John Adams and had every halfway decent sculptor in America in the 1980s, '90s and turn of the century, very busy turning these things out. There had been a design for the Senate Chamber which had niches that would have busts, but I'm not quite sure they considered, originally, whether they'd be vice presidential or whether it would be

Christopher Columbus and Dante. I mean, it seems to me that that was not necessarily nailed down in the 1850s. But once the bust was put into the vice president's office where Wilson had gone to heaven, it seemed to make sense that if you had these spaces in the Senate Chamber and they would add up. But that didn't last long. They were soon filled and they were moving out to the corridors outside.

That collection had been put squarely in the hands of the Rules Committee. I don't think the Joint Committee on the Library ever really got involved in that, because it was strictly a Senate collection. But when final interpretation was made of the legislation that established the commission, it was decided that as much of a role as the Rules Committee had played in the past, the Commission on Art and Antiquities would now play a role as well. It would be a shared role, and in that situation, nobody was quite sure what that really meant and how you would go about it. So there was an awful lot of whispering between the architect and the Rules Committee staff when a new vice presidential bust was being considered, and the curator's office of the Senate was not necessarily in the loop. And you just had to force yourself into it. I think today it's a lot easier than it was in the very beginning.

I remember when the bust of [Spiro] Agnew was first being discussed. Of course, everybody assumed that there just would not be an Agnew bust. Everybody got on that tangent and the next thing I knew, I got a call from Linda Wertheimer, who wanted to do a piece for *All Things Considered* [the National Public Radio evening news program]. And I said, "Okay, fine, but Linda I have one request, and that is that when we tape the piece we will not discuss something that nobody really knows anything about right now, and that is the Agnew bust." So, of course, what was her first question? The Agnew bust. That, combined with a couple of other experiences with her, led me to believe that she was not quite as nice and comfortable to be with as some people. Since then, a good friend of Sarah and David's, who was a classmate of David's at Wesleyan, and who worked with her when he was, he now manages the public radio station in Boston, but he was now here for three or four years in DC, and he said that she was a challenge, to put it mildly. I will not go into more detail about her than that, but it was interesting. She wanted a story, and she was out to get it, and she's certainly not alone in that whole experience.

Among the busts, there are some absolutely stunning examples of American sculpture. There are some that are not so. Of course, the 20th-century, as you can see with

your own eyes, in recent years, has suffered vitally, whether it be Nelson Rockefeller or Fritz Mondale. Fortunately, the Humphrey and the George Bush, Sr., aren't bad.

RITCHIE: Gerald Ford looks pretty good.

KETCHUM: Gerald Ford, yes, all done by the same sculptor, who, when he died probably about two years ago, Walker Hancock was his name, was probably 93 or 94. Lived up in Gloucester, Massachusetts, but a very experienced hand. Probably, at the time he was productive, and it was almost up until the end, I'd say he would be classified as one of the three best American sculptors out there. I have to give credit to the folks who selected him first go-round, and others who could see how capable and splendid his works were. You get into a situation like that, and even though you'd like to think that there are a lot of other sculptors out there who might be represented, when you realize what their works are all about and look.

Mondale, I think, is a real sad example. Joan Mondale says that he lost weight and the sculptor came back and tried to take some of the pounds off of him. Then he gained the weight back and it was impossible to do anything after that. And "Happy's revenge" was really well stated. I don't know, the Agnew bust is neither here nor there, and the Quayle bust is something else again.

RITCHIE: With the Quayle bust, you had a great artist, but he had a stroke.

KETCHUM: He did, and it had to be finished by someone else. I'm not terribly excited, speaking of recent works, and this is not to be part of this, necessarily, with the work that Simmie Lee Knox did for the White House. But I think his oil portrait based on the Matthew Brady of Blanche Bruce is splendid. I think that's a wonderful portrait. And now, we're of course getting into the field of oils, of painted portraits and not sculpted. It's a problem, but at least we did something that had never been done before, and that is, we leaned on the experience of the [John] Kennedy group back in the '50s [choosing portraits for the Senate Reception Room], and not only set up guidelines for the historical end, which the Historical Office got into, but we also set it up for the aesthetic values, and that really has made a great difference. We started out, and I look at it today and I think I'm not sure that's the most competent hand, but we started out with the Challenger crew, and we went on from there. Recently, there have been several commissions of members, as the Republicans and the Democrats are trying to volley back and forth between Arthur

Vandenberg and Jim Eastland and everybody else. The Eastland portrait doesn't merit being there, but it isn't the only portrait that doesn't merit being there, so we will have to leave it.

RITCHIE: You're not saying that there's politics behind any of these works of art?!

KETCHUM: Not ever, not ever. I'm surprised that the 21-year rule that the commission put in place at the end—it was probably '76—it was just before Scott and Mansfield retired, was extremely helpful during the period afterward that I was there for the next 20 years. It could be used, and people could understand that the test of time was a very important factor in deciding whether someone's portrait should hang in the Capitol. Once the crowded corridors, with all of the sculpted portraits of the vice presidents, came into the mind's eye, and the realization by the members both of the commission and of the Senate itself, that there was not a great wide-ranging number of spaces out there for some of these pieces to be placed. But the 21-year rule, we got it in place and had to turn right around, as I said, and break it for Mansfield. But the new commission that succeeded, with Byrd as chairman and so forth, seemed to buy into the fact that, if we were making exceptions, the one exception that we would make would be for majority and minority leader portraits. I guess that probably satisfied Senator Byrd when he realized that it was time to get his under way as well. And he did. I don't know where it is, it was in his office for the longest time.

RITCHIE: I haven't been in his current, his new office. I'm not sure.

KETCHUM: Okay, but it's a lot of canvas involved in that.

RITCHIE: When you were going to work with a senator who was going to do a painting or a vice presidential bust, what was the procedure for trying to find a suitable artist?

KETCHUM: This was really out of our hands. It was handled mostly by the architect's office and, with a couple of exceptions, when I think we were asked to give recommendations. But in terms of the actual commission, it was between the Rules Committee and the architect's office. And that was really a sore point with us because we felt that we should be involved from the very beginning. That has pretty much, from my

understanding of Diane, that has really come around to where it should be. We're all participants.

The difficulty goes back to the traditional responsibility going right back to the 19th century for that collection, was placed with Senate Rules. You know, you can't get a committee which is doing the housekeeping, like Rules, to give up something along those lines when they have lost a lot of other say so with the other things that the Commission on Art was taking on. The reason that their chair and vice chair were put on the commission was to somehow bridge these troubled waters. But it didn't really always work, because you had a chairman and sometimes a vice chairman who would take a different tact, and so politics would raise it's head.

I remember once, Mansfield wanted something done and he needed to get Everett Jordan to sign off on it, and Jordan was down in Carolina. Bill Cochrane was up here and he was very much opposed to what Mansfield wanted to do. Mansfield did not lose his cool too often, but boy he did then. He tracked Jordan down in North Carolina and got him to sign off on the thing, and then simply made a phone call to Cochrane to just tell him, not even to ask him anything else, just to tell him what Senator Jordan had done, and hung up the phone. I thought, geez, I don't want to get in the way of any of this.

The other thing that was always a problem was who controlled the world of Constantino Brumidi, because the architect's office considered it part of architectural decoration, and the curator's office of the Senate considered it a work of fine art that was part of the Commission on Art and Antiquities' purview. So you had to work through that. But I would say that Constantino was somewhat left for the architect's office to deal with and the catalogue is a reflection of this. You don't have the kind of treatment that, say, Barbara Wolanin would give, I guess.

I've never been too happy with the relationship with their curatorial staff. There had not been a curator in the architect's office since the 1920s, and suddenly, when Mansfield retired, "pop," that slot was dusted off and the appointment was made. Strangely enough, a person who had been the curator at the small museum at Colgate University. He had a few problems, both in getting along, and also in some other areas, and he didn't last all that long. Then Ann Radice came in to succeed him and I thought she was very effective and was somebody who was easy to work with. I was not terribly pleased with the role that she filled later when she was at the Arts Endowment. The head

of the Endowment lived across the street from us on the Hill, and I saw what was happening. She went in as the deputy, this was the Reagan-Bush era, I guess it was actually getting into the Bush administration. That was a rather unfortunate situation all the way around. She became terribly conservative in her views and she was quite a different person than we had known.

But, anyway, the major holdings of the Senate and the collections themselves and all that goes with it, with few exceptions, are now pretty much under one central authority, the Commission on Art. The program that supports it is what takes place up in S-411. I don't think that there will ever be a day or a week that there won't be some kind of problem with some of the other powers that be, but that's to be expected. That's what it's all about. Even in the most popular programs, there are people who are going to be taking shots at it, and you just know that goes along with it.

RITCHIE: It's always struck me that there are such strange jurisdictional lines in the Congress. For instance, if there's anything from the baseboard up you had to call the sergeant at arms, if it was from the baseboard down, you would call the architect of the Capitol, and someone was in charge of the office building as opposed to the Capitol Building. It usually took about six calls before you found who it was who had the authority to tell you that you could or couldn't do what it was that you were trying to do.

KETCHUM: Sure, sure. I suddenly found myself feeling that I had traded in one family in the executive branch for a hundred families. I think that, while you have had the development of the leadership role and the authority that they hold, it sometimes is rather tenuous, and it doesn't take much to have somebody else enter and dominate the topic at hand, or whatever, and it is amazing to me that it operates with any efficiency whatsoever, let alone that it operates. But somehow, it is managed to make it happen. I don't remember, other than the words of the Tom Korologos lecture, and the B. Everett Jordan, "just take your time," that there was ever anybody who was saying exactly how it worked. But there were so many wonderful anecdotes about what had happened in the past, that you finally started to put these crazy quilt patches together and get an idea of how you might operate in some of the situations that were to occur down the road.

I really relied on trying to be as up-front with people as I could, to be as generous towards them as possible, only because that was what made me most comfortable. And also putting devices in boxes and when the box was rattled or shaken or when the lid was

about to be taken off, would have an alarm noise. But I don't think, in all of the 25 years that I was there, that there were too many times that you left at the end of the day not feeling quite good about the people that you worked with, really very much so. And that's what you miss terribly. I mean, first of all, you're surrounded by folks in an office who are tremendously capable and devoted to what is happening, who understand the projects and the propositions and really are just as supportive as can be in nine out of ten situations. Then you extend from that and it's very hard not to feel good about it, and not to want to show your best stripes and do the best job possible.

It also was the kind of schedule that was so different for me than what I had known at the White House as far as family was concerned. I could finally enjoy all the roles that meant so much, both on the domestic as well as the professional front. But it is only done through the process of educating both the members and the staff who make the difference, and then those who will be doing the actual work with you. If you can keep all of those horses aimed and harnessed and pointing in the same direction, there's not much else, sometimes, that it takes to get it done. Well, as we've all said many times about what we've done on many days, there should not be any kind of a paycheck at the end of the week or the end of the month for that, because of the pleasures that it brings. You have to pinch yourself. You still are small-town America or you're somebody who comes from a different side of the moon, and woke up one day and found yourself in situations that you could only dream of.

I remember one afternoon, and I've probably mentioned this one, Mrs. Ribicoff had called and she had had Richard Rodgers and Dorothy Rodgers in tow. They'd had lunch with Senator Ribicoff and Mrs. Ribicoff and they were, obviously, long-time friends. Throat cancer had been diagnosed for Rodgers about a year or so before, and he had had a lot of surgery and could just barely get the words out, and he had had no rebuilding of the vocal cords or the voice box. I'm taking him around and watching his reaction to some of the stories and some of the objects. A man who was extremely well read, and his wife, very much the same way. I'm just thinking to myself, this is the man who did the score—and I started going back to Rodgers and Hart and coming on up through *The Sound of Music*, not that *The Sound of Music* is necessarily my favorite score, but just the effect that he had had on so many worlds, and here he was absorbing and trying to pay attention and taking all of this in and he couldn't really express himself. It was just that the irony of all of this was awfully hard to try to deal with.

But there are always moments that, in some way, in trying to look at the mission that you had, namely telling the story of that structure and that institution in every way possible. No matter how inadequate you were and how inadequate you felt about it, you also, by the same token, felt like the luckiest guy in the world. And you were, no doubt.

RITCHIE: There's another category of people that you were dealing with, and those were the vice presidents. Having come from the White House and dealing with the presidents, now you were getting all the vice presidents. In addition to having a bust, they also had an office, a room, in the Capitol, which took on various different appearances, depending on who the vice president was.

KETCHUM: Right, it did, it did. Usually, with one exception, the office was—soon, the vice president's wife arrived on scene. Sometimes she had a decorator, sometimes she just had a notebook and an assistant and lots of questions. The only person who didn't rely on a decorator, who didn't have a wife who came in to note how changes should be made and who did it all himself, was Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller. From beginning to end, he knew exactly what he wanted, where he wanted it. He knew that he had his grandfather's portrait that he wanted to have copied to leave for one and all.

He was very interesting. Barbara and I had friends who had worked for him in New York and in Albany, so we were prepared for some of this and I'd known some of the stories. When I was a sophomore, it must have been in '58 when he ran for governor, he came to Colgate, and I can remember as a Young Republican, being somebody who was on a committee to welcome him and to take him around. He was just as gregarious and "hi-ya fella," and so forth, as he was later on. Then, I went with Dad to the convention in Rochester, in which he was nominated. He and [Thomas E.] Dewey had had some differences of opinion, and Dewey came out, I think, to second the nomination, and all the Rockefeller supporters were booing Dewey at that point, and it was a rather embarrassing situation.

But he was the only one. I don't remember much with Agnew. I was trying to stay as clear of Agnew as possible because just before he announced that he was leaving the vice presidency, we were making inroads in getting the portrait of Washington by Rembrandt Peale, the "Patriae Pater," out of his office, where it had been since the Senate had moved into its present chamber. He was apparently not very happy about this, but boy, the minute he was out the door and there was nothing stopping us going in there and

getting that out. Because we had made plans from the very beginning, when we talked about the great grace note that would be there for one and all to admire going into the Old Senate Chamber, that it would be returned to its original place, where the painting had hung.

RITCHIE: From the Civil War until Agnew, there were essentially two major pieces in that room. One was the portrait of Washington, and the other was that enormous credenza, and both of them left about that point.

KETCHUM: They did, and the Eagle and Shield, also, were important. The eagle stayed—I mean, they were in there before 1860. They were divorced in 1860. The eagle stayed over the justices' bench, and the shield came out over the door. Again, if we're talking about decorative arts, that particular piece, that whole baldacino treatment which was recreated from some of the engravings of the room, is extremely important to the story. The early portraits, the Charles Wilson Peale, for example, of Washington, which the Smithsonian a few years ago decided that it was really theirs—that is another story, but fortunately, there was enough documentation of the Senate taking it in the 1850s, and under the conditions that it took it, that it was not to go back to the Smithsonian, where it had once been held for a brief time. I'm just going through the other vice presidents—

RITCHIE: I was just recalling that when they took out that credenza and they took out the Washington portrait from the vice president's room, then what I remember from the Rockefeller era was just that little French provincial desk in the middle, a very small table, and a piece that had been his grandfather's sideboard, I think, was in there.

KETCHUM: That's right.

RITCHIE: And then that completely left when Mondale came in, and the room changed. And then the desk came back from the White House. So it was like every time there was a new vice president, the room took on a completely different appearance.

KETCHUM: It did, and yet, if you look at the room in the 19th century, from the time of photography or even prior to that, say from the 1870s on, there was one big push to decorate that room in the 1880s, and that pretty much stayed in place into the turn of the century and continuing on into the 20th century. Today there are a couple of items in

there. There's the so-called Dolley Madison mirror, and there are some other things that do harken back, but it's part and parcel, really, of what the incumbent's spouse seems to think is most appropriate for him. I mean, you had Tipper Gore and some giant canvases that came in under that administration and under that time.

What I liked about the vice president's office is that he usually had some fairly interesting staffers. Certainly Rocky was an especially good example of that. Joe Persico was one who came to mind. I'm sure you must have had some dealings with him, possibly, before the end of the Rockefeller time, because whenever he was writing anything, he used to come upstairs and I'm sure you probably—let's see, did Dick come in in '75?

RITCHIE: Seventy-five, yes.

KETCHUM: So I bet there were contacts there. He would come over and look at some of our stuff and go through things that he was interested in. I've tried to keep up a little bit with some of his writing. The last book, I didn't read, and I can't even think right now what it was. Do you remember offhand?

RITCHIE: No.

KETCHUM: It's something that has come out within the past year. One of my favorite political biographies of all times, and I don't think there's anything that will ever be better, is the first volume of Cary Reich's Nelson Rockefeller biography, which I hope you have read. If you haven't, I wish you would put it very high on your list. That, and the Ickes biography that was published about 10 years ago.

RITCHIE: By Watkins.

KETCHUM: By T. H. Watkins. Those two just deserve to be read once every three or four years for my money. Beautiful, beautiful. As a high school kid, one of my teachers introduced me to the diary of Harold Ickes. Who could tell the story of Washington and the legislative branch as Ickes was able to deal with the executive branch. Again, we talk about how does a staffer on the Hill, in a particular area, develop greater comfort and confidence in what she or he is doing? Certainly, keeping a fairly active reading list is part of the answer, there's no doubt about it. Understanding what

was happening and how things were accomplished in the past. But Rockefeller, to me, the fact that he was able to overcome some of the things that he had to deal with, dyslexia included, and had a family which imposed certain requirements on what was expected of you, and tried to balance all of this with experience that went well back into the Roosevelt administration. And of course, family experience with the construction of Rockefeller Center and overseeing that, including trying to figure out what to do with Diego Rivera's controversial work. All of these things, when you finally see them parsed out there by a person like Reich, and treated in such an amazing way. Unfortunately, he died right after the first volume was published. I don't know how much work had been done on volume two, but it still would be my hope that somebody out there, someday will finish it.

RITCHIE: Richard Norton Smith is writing a biography on Rockefeller.

KETCHUM: Yes, that's right. I know. I love hearing what he had to say about Megan Marshak and company. A friend of ours who worked with Marshak, the other day, what was she telling us about what had happened to her? She literally has not quite disappeared off the face of the earth, but almost. As Liz Carpenter would say, "How to give mouth to mouth resuscitation without getting emotionally involved." Rather difficult. Anyway, there it is.

Are you finding in what is being published on the Senate today—there are still some wonderful things. Nick Kotz's book. Nick just sent his book up not long ago, on the relationship between Martin Luther King and Lyndon Johnson. I've started the Mansfield biography, but I haven't really gotten as much into that as I wanted, but, are you finding books about the Senate in the past year or so?

RITCHIE: There have been some interesting biographies. There's a new biography of Al Gore, Sr., that's come out. I liked that one a lot. I'm trying to think of some of the others that I've read recently.

KETCHUM: Are his papers all in Tennessee?

RITCHIE: Well, I was just thinking as you were talking about, Nelson Rockefeller, what I was remembering of him was his presiding over the opening of the Old Senate Chamber. You know, he looked like the father of the bride.

KETCHUM: He was, exactly.

RITCHIE: He really seemed to be enjoying himself.

KETCHUM: He loved being briefed before that, I remember trying to go over some of the stuff. Joe Persico was there in the operation and Spofford Canfield was still around. I'm trying to think who all else he had. But it was one of the few times that Mrs. Rockefeller got involved in something, because of the reception that we were doing. Who would have ever considered a reception out place in the corridors outside the Senate Chamber with the Senate in session—that was a real no-no! Mansfield had assured us that the Senate would not be in session, and then Ambassador [Francis] Malloy was killed, and he had been a close friend of Val's and of Mike Mansfield, and the Senate went back into session to discuss that situation. So we had, fortunately, they went in session in the Old Chamber, the ceremonial session, then they marched back down to today's chamber and went in. But Mansfield said, "Don't worry about it, we're not going to be in there too terribly long." And so, you had a very captive audience. I mean, we had expectations of using about half to two-thirds of the food that had been prepared, and suddenly it was all going rather quickly.

I can remember the Senate Restaurant had a manager named Jay Treadwell. He'd worked with Pan-American Airways, and Pan-Am was downsizing everything, including food service, so he came to the Senate. We didn't really give him much to do, we brought in Judy Goldinger and outside forces, which was always a no-no, but we did it. Just as the reception was beginning and people were filing out of the Old Senate Chamber, he gets off the elevator outside of what was then the majority leader's office with this tree in which shrimp was hanging from it from all over, and I simply took him by the shoulders and turned to him and I said, "Jay, I don't think that we're going to have room for that tonight. Thanks so much. I think you better take it back."

Well, I'm sure he was crushed, but it was the most awful-looking thing that I had ever seen, and I thought, how do get out of this whole thing? But he was a friend and somebody who never, I think, really held that moment against me. But that's the kind of thing that, right in the middle of—I mean, what else is gonna go wrong? I mean, we've got a Senate that's not supposed to be in session because we're having a function out here in the hallways, and all of these things are coming together and they're all going to ruin this evening, and then here comes a walking shrimp tree to really round the thing out.

But I can still remember Mary Phelan, once we were doing a function in which Treadwell was going to do the set-up and I said, “We need some white tapers. Do you have any?” And he said, “Oh yes, I have lots of them,” and he came up and put all of these gold candles in place, and it was just not the right thing to do. We were doing kind-of a country setting. I’m not sure what the function was, but it just did not work. But, I mean, we crossed so damn many lines that the motto that will go on all of our tombstones in there was, “Go ahead and do it and apologize later.” It got an awful lot of things off the ground that wouldn’t have otherwise, and that was our salvation. I

RITCHIE: This was also the Bicentennial—

KETCHUM: Bicentennials!

RITCHIE: Yes, and you had opened the chamber up so that Gerald Ford could go up a few days before the 4th of July to open up the “centennial safe.” It really was the way the Senate focused on that event, and they did it in grand style.

KETCHUM: We were also going off to Philadelphia, for example. On two occasions, we took either congressional delegations or the whole Congress up for functions up there. It was an awful lot going on on several fronts. And you were still trying to travel the country and accept some invitations to speak to groups to keep that process going, because you really depended on outside support. There were times that I needed to be able to pick up the phone and call someone who had hosted me in some of these cities and who said, “Look, if you ever need to have some support for something you’re trying to buy, let me know and I’ll see what I can do for you.” Well, these are very important people. I can’t believe the money that the Senate has now put into the program and how it’s grown. It was somewhat thanks to Sheila [Burke], but it was especially good for what Gary [Sisco] and others have done subsequently to that. I just think that is the most wonderful part of the whole story.

RITCHIE: Well, I think you proved the services you could perform from that office.

KETCHUM: The people who are there have proved it much more so than I was ever able to. I mean, we could identify these needs, but until you really can flesh them out

and show what you can do. Granted, you can't be dissatisfied with what went on while you were there, that you didn't take them all to a particular level, because that's just not going to be part of the art of the possible, and be grateful for what did happen. I mean, I look at things like the chambers and "Necessary Fence" and some of the other programs as being not only long in coming, but once they did appear over the quarter-century that I was on scene, I look at them as being real benchmarks for such a program. And you do feel that, to an extent, that you have fulfilled the mandate that you went up to handle. Many times, you have to admit to yourself, it's better that you don't know all the things that go on behind the scenes and all the long knives that are sometimes out there trying to whittle you back to normal size and trying to keep your ego in check. You really do gain, I think, by being out of the loop on some of that stuff. Absolutely.

There are so many stories that you think of from time to time, that you are reminded of, just small things, and large, all in the course of a day's activities, and you really hark back with an awfully big smile many times, one probably of some satisfaction, but the other on just the sheer pleasure and enjoyment and the fun that it provided. It really did. There was always some mischief being made just to get a rise out of somebody. That was certainly part of it. And you, yourself, needed to have that break. I think I learned some of that with Mrs. Kennedy and how she operated at the White House. She was always looking for the laugh lines and wanted to make sure that other people found them as well. That was a very good lesson for me, because I think, when I first started out, I was probably as pompous and as serious-acting as anybody going. I think it was a pretty obnoxious way to appear sometimes. But it was a cover for feeling that you didn't have the answer, sometimes, that you should have, so you'd pretend that you knew something, and go on. Wonderfully enough, the older you got, the less you had to pretend. You could just admit to yourself and to anybody who wanted to listen, "Hey, I don't have those answers, but we'll try to get them for you."

RITCHIE: Experience counts, though.

KETCHUM: It finally does. I'm at a point where I listen to television newscasters, especially local folks, and listen to them mangle the English language, and just the complete ignorance of "I" and "me" is enough to drive me right up the wall. I don't remember 25 years ago, either this was not going on, or I was paying no attention to it. But what has happened? Does anybody ever diagram a sentence? Does anyone ever

take Latin? Does anyone ever take English, and take it seriously? I can't believe it. The prepositional phrases that have been turned inside out and back again are not to be believed.

We had friends come and visit, oh probably 10 or 15 years ago, and they were pretty much on some of the same things, the dropping of "g's" all the time, that's another one. You'll get some of these young kids who are out on the street covering a story, and every "g" in the world has disappeared. I noticed that George Bush likes to do that as well. What I've noticed recently is the White House staff, more and more, has been saying "nucular," and that, obviously, means that they're all going to protect the boss. And apparently, if you will look at the dictionaries that have come out in recent years, it's an acceptable pronunciation, even though it doesn't reflect the spelling!

RITCHIE: Well, there once was a Spanish king who lisped and now Castilian Spanish incorporates his lisp.

KETCHUM: Exactly, exactly, well-reminded of.

RITCHIE: Well, I think, at this stage, it's probably good for me to start heading back, but I would love to come back again since I still have more questions to ask.

KETCHUM: We're going to Switzerland, and Germany, and the Netherlands in the middle of May, but after that I'm not going anywhere.

RITCHIE: Well, if you're going to the Netherlands, you should stop in Belgium and see Tom Korologos, who is now the ambassador there.

KETCHUM: That's right, that's right, indeed. God, I loved Elizabeth Biemiller's wonderful piece about him in the *Times*.

RITCHIE: It was perfect. It was exactly the way he is. Being an ambassador hasn't changed him in the slightest.

KETCHUM: God, as long as he was here in this country, he was bringing every single nomination up, front and center, for the Senate. And how he would run those classes of prepping and grooming and what have you, amazing, really.

RITCHIE: The last time I saw him, he was with his White House handler, visiting the senators, the White House handler just shrugged and said there wasn't much for him to do.

KETCHUM: Has he done an oral history?

RITCHIE: Yes.

KETCHUM: Oh, he did do one. When we were discussing that before, I didn't quite fasten that, because, I don't know of any staffer in the time that I was there, who really rose through the ranks the way he did. I guess over all, his time spent in the executive branch was as much as it was in the legislative, is it not?

RITCHIE: He was mostly legislative, but he also did White House congressional liaison for a few years.

KETCHUM: So, always there was the undergirding of the legislative for that, okay.

RITCHIE: When I first came to the Senate there were two people who fooled me. I was convinced were senators, because they were always in the Senate Chamber, and they always carried themselves in a senatorial manner. One was Bill Hildenbrand, and the other was Tom Korologos. After a while, it finally dawned on me that even though they were always there, they weren't senators.

End of the Sixth Interview

THE SENATE AND FOOD

Interview #7

Saturday, September 29, 2007

DONALD RITCHIE: Most of what we talked about previously was about the time when Senator Mansfield was majority leader and when Senator Byrd became majority leader, when Frank Valeo and Stan Kimmitt were secretary of the Senate. I thought we could pick up the story in 1980, when for the first time in 26 years the Republicans won the majority in the Senate. Bill Hildenbrand became the secretary of the Senate and Howard Baker became the majority leader. Senator Baker was just back recently for the unveiling of Senator Byrd's portrait, and it reminded me again of what a turning point that election was in the history of the Senate. How did it affect you as curator, since you had been so close to the previous leadership? What did that do to the continuity of the types of things you were hoping to do?

JAMES KETCHUM: Having lived through changes of administration and political parties once at the White House—it was one thing to go from Kennedy to Johnson, but to go from Johnson to Nixon was really a 180 degree turn—maybe I was a bit more prepared for it, but I do remember that you do have a sinking feeling that you've got to reinvent the wheel, you've got to start again with any number of ways of educating people, so to speak, with what you're really all about, and defending your turf and your responsibilities. But I don't recall it being particularly difficult, and I'm not sure if my impression today is more colored by the fact that the whole group that Baker brought it, and Baker himself, was just extraordinarily kind, competent, supportive people. In some ways, if you said—and this is a dangerous game to play, beauty pageants are not appropriate to this story, but who was your favorite leader? Howard Baker would have to come awfully close to the top. He was amazing. He understood. History was certainly something he supported and loved, and the history of the institution because of his father and his father-in-law and what he had contributed to its story, was something that was, I guess, as much a part of his sense of the Senate, or what it could be about and should be.

I'm trying to think of what those early days were like. We were still a relatively small office, as we stayed in terms of numbers. I think that the Historical Office was still there on the fourth floor [of the Capitol].

RITCHIE: Until '82.

KETCHUM: Yes. We were left with the imprint of Mansfield and Valeo that these offices under the secretary were a permanent part of the institution and should not necessarily change, and should not be affected by the political winds. That must have been part of the sense of security that you felt. All I can tell you is that Bill Hildenbrand was amazing. The only time I really ever remember his being upset was when we were asked by somebody in Vice President Bush's office to do a special publication on the vice president's office, which we did. Bill and I had talked about it, and I thought he had signed off on it, but when the final publication rolled off the press he was not happy. He felt that the vice president's office was somehow taking advantage of one of his offices, namely the curatorial program, and so forth and so on. We went around with that for just a bit, and I made sure that he knew that if ever there was another request of that type, that he could see it three or four or five times before it was finished.

But they were tremendous to work with, absolutely. We were at a stage where the Old Senate Chamber and Old Supreme Court Chamber had been opened maybe for or five years and we were still kind of developing rules of the road as far as who could use them and how, and what way the public would be able to visit them, because there were always members who wanted to do special events there. We had some regs that had been published in the *Congressional Record*, but there still were some areas that had not been fleshed out. He couldn't have been more helpful and more supportive.

That was not probably as traumatic as changing secretaries [of the Senate] in some ways, going from Frank Valeo to Stan Kimmitt, for example. It was interesting to go through these—you never quite got used to them—but when you talked to people for whom it was their first change of secretary, or first change of political leader, you realized it did become more palatable, you could handle it a little easier after a bit. But it never was simple. You always were on edge and went right back to trying to make sure that you covered all your bases again. And you felt protective, certainly about staff and wanting to make sure that everybody had a sense that there would be a tomorrow for them. Because some people would come to work that first day afterwards saying “the sky is falling, Henny Penny.” You would calmly say “No, we've been down that road before and all will be well.”

The nicest thing about Baker is that we continued to stay in touch long afterwards, even to the point that when he went down to the White House at the end of the Reagan administration he would call with certain questions about things that he was going to be

doing, an interview and he wanted to refresh his memory on something, he would ask away. I did not know Howard Baker from anyone before he became majority leader of the Senate, but his respect and patience, coupled with his understanding of what you were doing, was something that you just did not get in a leader normally. He had times for things that leaders should probably not be doing, but he did them anyway. I will never stop appreciating that kind of participation in what we were doing.

RITCHIE: One of the first things that he did was to expand the Republican leader's office in the Capitol. It had always been two rooms, and he then moved into the space that had been occupied by the Disbursing Office. Did you get involved in the redecoration of that suite?

KETCHUM: A little bit, but the architectural plans really were handled by the office of the architect. It used to be that everybody lined up for their paychecks out of that office. There used to be long lines snaking around the second floor corridor, but it raised questions about the use of the space. You got locked into a certain realm, that this person belongs here and these folks are going to be operating out of this space from now until kingdom come, and that was not the case. But no, we did some research. The Library of Congress got involved and did a fairly extensive study of what books would have been there when the Library of Congress had that space. But Baker wanted to bring as many historical antecedents together as he possibly could, and have their imprint in some lasting fashion exist. I guess it was all a good ploy to take over those rooms. It was a magnificent space to look down the Mall and have that as an office.

The Disbursing Office had been headed by Bob Brenkworth. He did not particularly see eye-to-eye with the Mansfield administration and so he was made comptroller and sent around the corner to another office, and that's where he finished out his days. But the Disbursing Office was soon to move far enough away that they didn't have the old Capitol dome overhead anymore. We were interested in that space, of course, because we were located just directly across the hall in the Old Senate Chamber and that was something that Baker particularly loved, because he loved to take any of his visitors over there and share that story with them.

But to answer your question, no. We did a limited amount, but overall it was more of an architectural project which the architect's office dealt with.

RITCHIE: It seems like these days there's a lot of effort in terms of decorating the leaders' rooms, and the curator's office spends a lot of time doing that, but back then it hadn't really started yet, perhaps because people had been in the same rooms forever.

KETCHUM: That's right.

RITCHIE: So the thought that you had to think about the history of the room, when you were moving furniture into it, hadn't quite sunk in yet.

KETCHUM: No. Our concentration, Don, up to that point had really been on the two chambers, from the very beginning, as we've talked before. We took that through appropriations and supplementals several times before finally the House was interested in going along, thanks to several people, including Mrs. Johnson, who seemed to be able to hold a little suasion over the Texas heads of legislative appropriations in the House, and also House Appropriations.

Another interesting thing that was opening up at about the same time was members wanting to bring examples of painting, sculpture, Indian headdresses, what have you, from their home states and have these objects exhibited in their offices, and not wanting to pay any insurance for any indemnification of what would happen damage-wise, either in shipping or what might happen while they were on exhibit. So we fell into place in that situation where we were not able to offer any insurance obviously but we could write reports of the condition under which these were being displayed within the offices, and satisfy or not satisfy the lending institution, and do all this preliminary to anything ever being sent. We started doing that, and that soon took up a considerable amount of time and effort. We would have at any one time out of 100 senators we might have 30 to 40 of them with one, two or more objects in their office.

That was certainly a problem because we had never really worked in the office buildings as such, and they did not want these in a hideaway in the Capitol, they wanted them over there where constituents could see them. There were any number of times when we had to frankly tell the member that under the conditions that these would be exhibited they just really could not and should not be sent, and so then arrangements would be made to either change the conditions or to go for reproductions or something else that would appropriate for the story they were telling.

I would say by '80 that would have marked probably the beginning of the moveable feast. You began to resent it a little bit because you were so locked into a view that this is where the secretary [of the Senate] had operated. And yet, as you started to go back you realized that all of these changes, while more slowly, had also taken place in the past and that you should be realistic about how the building will continue to be used. But you know the Hill—I used to listen to Darrell St. Claire talk about what a small town it was in the '30s, when he arrived on scene, and I thought very much the same thing about what it was like in 1970, as opposed to what it was like in 1995, where it had changed so drastically.

But we still concentrated on what was going on in the Capitol proper and continued to add not rooms or chambers of the scope and scale of the Old Senate and Old Supreme Court, but the President's Room, for example. One of the things we were trying to do with the Vice President's Room, back in 1981 and '82, was to put a bit more of the stamp of what had taken place there, because that room had always been, since the time that the Senate wing, the extension, was completed, that had been the Vice President's Room, just as the story of the President's Room went back that far. There was a President's Room prior in the original Senate wing, which was used not quite the same way that the second and present President's Room has been used.

When I see it now on television, and I see all of those ottoman pieces, with the overtones of the Ottoman empire and the design elements that go into it, I remember all of the blood and sweat that went into the research on that room. The nice thing about it is that we could develop these projects over a fairly long period of time and not really go in for the money for restoration until we had assembled all the facts. It wasn't done on a crash program. One of the nice things about Joe Stewart coming along later on is that he was ready then to carry to the leadership the request for these. He, as we may talk about it if we haven't already, had an ace in the hole. We would go over to Senator [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan's office before we did anything else with the leadership and we would talk to Senator Moynihan. He would look at our plans and he would shake his head and give the Good Housekeeping seal of approval. Because Joe realized that some of these changes would perhaps have the overtones of a New Orleans bordello if we really wanted to listen to some of the comments and the criticism might come, and I was sure that we were going to get it with the President's Room, and sure enough you started to hear it. But the minute that Moynihan had given it his blessing, and you could hark back to that, everybody said that "It's wonderful, it's special," and so forth.

You recall the tale that I told about when he was working in the Nixon White House. Did we talk about that at all? If you don't remember we'll check and see, and if not we'll put that as a postscript to all this. My experiences with him through the years were quite humorous and really well worth any time and effort of getting all the king's horses and all the king's men together for a show and tell for him, because he was just absolutely amazing.

RITCHIE: I was just in the President's Room this week. I was showing someone around, and it is a stunning room. It's been beautifully done.

KETCHUM: It's done because we had the photographic documentation. We had a lot of documentation, but thanks to a woman named Frances Benjamin Johnson, who was really the first American photographer to lasso her camera, tripod, and so forth and get into public buildings. There are shots of the second floor of the White House where you can see Benjamin Harrison kind of creeping over into a corner because he wants to get out of range and she's smart enough to open that shutter and let it go. She talked her way into everywhere. During the Spanish American War she got onto battleships. It didn't matter where she was, she somehow had that glib talent and got herself front and center, like she did at the Capitol. At the Capitol they were putting together a book by Glenn Brown. Many of the plates for that book date back to what she was doing in the 1880s.

In the 1870s there was really no money to put into the extension after the Civil War. It had to wait really for about 10 or 15 years. When they finally did start doing the President's Room, as it had been planned, the whole design scheme had changed, because taste had changed. We were really doing what we might call "steamboat gothic" at that point. You had a sense of Little Egypt coming out of one side of the stage, and somebody else on the other, when you saw the things that were put down on the recommended furnishing plan for the room. Then of course there were these photographs, to the point where you could blow up, for example on the leather upholstery and the leather scalloped skirts of the button-back ottoman chairs, there was a detail which we didn't quite know what it was. We kind of had an idea of the outlines, but in blowing that skirt up, we realized that it was an eagle. We could then make a metal plate that was exactly the same for the impression with the gold stamping that was going to take place. Then it was: Can you find an upholster someplace? We found a woman down in Fort Washington, Maryland, who had her own shop and had done very special things for the Smithsonian

and other museums. She was willing to give it the almighty, if we could get the other elements together, and indeed we did. Scott Strong of our office really worked quite diligently on that.

But that whole thing started, interestingly enough—nobody took interns in the Capitol back in 1970. They did in the senators' offices over in the office buildings, but not in the office of the secretary. I had been part of a program back in the White House with Mount Holyoke, and the person who coordinated that program said, "Would you like to have an intern at your office in the Capitol?" We said, sure, so they sent down two or three fairly descriptive vitae of these youngsters and we went through and picked one who seemed to be fine. That started out a whole new chain for the Capitol, and soon other offices were doing very much the same thing. Well, the project for the President's Room started probably in 1971 with an intern. I said, "Take this room and tell me everything that the architect's office knows about it, and everything anybody else knows about it. At the Library of Congress, do whatever research you can do in between other projects." And that's how it really came to be. So that when 1980—let's see, Joe Stewart came in what year?

RITCHIE: Nineteen-eighty-seven.

KETCHUM: Okay, when he came in, and after he had been there for a while and I could discuss with him the fact that if we wanted to go in this direction this is what we had. We had had the luxury of a decade and a half of research and it had worked fairly well.

The major challenge right now is tied to the Visitor Center and how this will play out as either an extension of what has gone on with historic recreation, restoration. It's sometimes hard to call something a restoration if you're not quite sure of all the elements that it's being restored to. You just don't have all the information, and the research does not always show everything. I can tell you still today things that we were uncertain about in the Old Senate Chamber, and yet slowly but surely, as you kind of take one stride after another, some of these questions are answered, there's no doubt about it. The answers show up in paintings that were executed within the chamber, or in journal or diary notes. It can be any number of things, as you know only too well, but finally it does happen that you can answer them. Our whole philosophy was: If you don't know how something was handled, leave it out. Don't try to do what we used to call the "Williamsburg effect."

Which is what we found in the Capitol Building when I got up there in 1970. The folks who had been drawing up plans for many, many years for the old chambers were really tied to trying to do things that had never existed, but felt that they should put something in place, and why don't we do what we did when we were working for John D. Rockefeller, Jr., down in Williamsburg? Well, enough said on all that questionable way. I think we probably covered some of that in the past.

RITCHIE: One other project that started in 1981 was when Senator Hatfield became chairman of the Appropriations Committee and he decided to restore the Appropriations suite on the ground floor. Did you have any connections with that?

KETCHUM: We did to the extent of showing him what existed, again using the photographs of Frances Benjamin Johnson, and some from slightly before that period. Hatfield had also been one of those who had questioned whether or not we should keep people out of the Old Senate Chamber and just put a glass wall along that corridor, and have them walk along that and look through the glass wall. We said that as long as we could, we would keep it the way it had been—although we came to a point later on with the need to see if we could get wheelchairs in a little bit more easily. We always allowed, and had an extra policeman across the hall outside the leader's office who would come over and join the person who was doing security in the Old Senate Chamber and lift the chair up. But of course a ramp ultimately became the order of the day, which technically by law we would not have had to have done that. But [John] McCain and others wanted to make a strong example of what the Capitol was doing, and I can understand that.

But yes, we could not find a carpet to his liking, but he loved the carpet in the Old Senate Chamber, so that came up. I would call that more of a redecoration than anything. It was not something that was tied to the appearance of the room at any time, but it certainly gave a feeling—I mean, those rooms down there had a history that was probably unparalleled as far as committee rooms are concerned.

Hatfield loved to come up to the Capitol attic. He was always coming up to the bookbinder bringing things to be repaired or bound. Then he would always come across to our office and sit down and want to talk about what was going on. And of course, if ever we could find another example of Lincoln having been on scene, then he wanted to know about it first, last, and always. He was interested in [Herbert] Hoover. Hoover was a hero of his as well. It seems to me that that was really one of the first of the committee

rooms in the Capitol to take on, at least during that period, that type of new luster and polish. I can't think of another space that had that. Meantime, we were losing barbershops. We were having a bombing from time to time. A lot was happening, not necessarily related except that there was a sense that the past was well worth examining once again. It was happening up in the leadership space where Baker was, it was happening down there in the Appropriations Committee.

I guess it was at about that time that we really started to develop the kinds of files about every room and chamber, and computers were making it a lot easier to track these things. We had the first computer in the Senate side of the Capitol, back in 1970 and '71, for the cataloging of the collection. It was a time share. There was no screen, it was just all typescript that was coming out of a glorified typewriter. You programmed everything with various fields, and then did very simple questions, and the answers came back. All the processing took place via a telephone modem to a mainframe up in Manhattan. It was a very different way of operating, no two ways about it. But it was our way of starting to capture the history of the rooms. More importantly, we were cataloging the collection of what pieces would be considered to be part of a permanent collection of fine arts or decorative arts.

RITCHIE: You were cataloging what was already there, but were you also acquiring new pieces when they were restoring these rooms?

KETCHUM: At the very beginning we did not. We had no budget. Slowly but surely we were able to build in. By 1981, Baker was extremely supportive, and so was Bill Hildenbrand, so I was finally able to go to an auction. Granted, I sometimes went with a private donor backing me up, but I would work it out with Bill. He'd say, "Call Baker." I would call Baker and Baker would say, "What do you think you're going to pay for it?" And I would tell him, "Well, the estimate is . . ." There were some times, thanks to a particularly generous donor, I had to go well above the high end on the estimate. The things that came into the collection earliest were woodcuts, which were many times used for documentary evidence of what the appearance of particular spaces and rooms in the building were like. *Frank Leslie's*, *Harper's* [magazines], both were extremely helpful to us. I found up in Gettysburg a dealer named Ted Sutphin. Sutphin had a backlog of issues of illustrated weeklies and monthlies that probably started about 1852, just about the time the discussion was coming round to the extensions of the Capitol, then coming right through to the end of the century and into the earlier 20th century. We started picking

those up. The bills for them never were tremendous, but if you looked at the cumulative over the period of a year or five years, yes, it did add up. I would daresay today that the collection of these woodcuts that the Senate has is probably one of the most complete available. There has just been published a volume that gives the full scope and scale of this collection.¹

But that was very helpful and came at a good time when people wanted to know—you'd get a staff director from Appropriations or from any of the committees that still had any space in the building (Appropriations was really the key one), who would come up and want to look through the woodcuts to see how the rooms appeared. They were, oh, gosh, I'm trying to think of rough numbers of what we had acquired by a particular time, but today there are just thousands of them. All cataloged, and photographed, and described, and ready to go. That was one way of doing it, as opposed to finally by the time Howard Baker was doing it when you could go and spend \$40,000 to buy a painting and know that everybody along the line approved. When I first went, there was no interest at all in doing this. I tried to explain that if a collection is going to be worth anything, it has to grow. It has to continue to take advantage of opportunities when appropriate objects come on the market, that they aren't available just at somebody's whim, or snapping of fingers, that you've got to go out and plow those fields and let people know that you are interested.

Then the dealers will start to keep an eye, and sure some will try to take advantage, there's no doubt about it, but the fact is that you can pretty much control what you are taking in. But also to get individual donors who either have in their own collection some of these pieces that would be appropriate. Earl Clements, for example, when he had left the Senate, when he had been defeated, had some of the furniture that was used in the old chambers. He later on, as he was moving back to Kentucky, had some things that he didn't want to take down with him, and had in his house that he lived in, his daughter and son-in-law's house in Georgetown. They were pieces that were there, and we were there to receive them and add them to the old chambers, which had been restored a few years earlier. Well, this all means that you've got to get the story out there. You've got to make people aware of this. But I digress. Take it back to where we were.

¹Office of Senate Curator, *United States Senate Catalogue of Graphic Art* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 2006), Senate Document 109-2.

RITCHIE: You were mentioning buying paintings. What kinds of paintings were you interested in?

KETCHUM: Well, some of the things that came up at this point were oil sketches for some of the work that [Constantino] Brumidi was doing, for example. There were portraits that were individual portraits that were part and parcel of the great canvas that is Faneuil Hall, of Webster's Reply to Hayne.

RITCHIE: Like the portrait of Gales making his notes.

KETCHUM: Joseph Gales taking his notes. This was an American painter named George Peter Alexander Healy, who was doing large canvases and individual portraits of presidents as well as congressional leaders for Napoleon III, and when Napoleon III was deposed, all these things were available at cut-rate prices, so off they came. One of the things that he had been doing was the individual portraits that formed the Faneuil Hall canvas, including Joseph Gales. But at the same time, the family, who had been part of the [Isaac] Bassett clan, seeing some of the things that were being acquired, decided to let one know that they had a good amount of material, not just iconography but also the writing of Bassett, his memoirs of a sort. They wanted to see if there was interest in those as well. So kind of Tinkers to Evers to Chance, one thing led to another and it was possible to acquire. It was difficult enough to get money for conservation, let alone to get funding for outright purchase of objects, until—oh, I guess it would have been in the early '80s when we crossed that particular bridge. From that point on it became kind of a matter of course to a point that by the time the '90s rolled around we were budgeting for appropriated funds that could be used for purchase.

RITCHIE: I always thought that one of the nicer things you did at that stage was to take some of the engravings and drawings and have them framed and hung in some of the public areas. I remember those in the small restaurant that used to be on the ground floor, and in other places. Part of it is useful to have as a research collection, but the fact that things were on display tied the larger staff into it. Also the fact that the Gales portrait and other paintings were hung on the walls in various corridors meant that senators and visitors noticed them. It had, I think, a very nice affect on the institution.

KETCHUM: Some of this went right back, really, to the first days of the program in 1970, when we started doing exhibits down in the crypt area of the Capitol. Then we

developed other areas in the building. We didn't always win when we were putting the prints out there.

We seemed to do well in the Capitol Building, but our worst experience was over where the Senate wives' Red Cross group met [in the Russell Senate Office Building]. We put several 19th-century engravings in there. Fortunately, they were some aquatints and others that were replaceable, but we used views of the Capitol, Bartlett for example, from about the 1840s. We double matted them and framed them, and put them up with what we thought was a very secure museum system, a special system whereby the wire went into the bracket on the wall and you had come along with not only wire cutters but almost have to have two people ripping something off the wall, and sure enough, the security where the wives met every Tuesday was not extreme and within six months, out of maybe 20 we had pilferage of maybe three or four, at least. So what we had to do was take them down and put reproductions up and let it go at that. It was kind of unfortunate. So the frames and the matting were worth considerably more than what people were looking at. But we tried once to publicize the fact that "Hey, folks, these are not the real two-dollar bills here, these are something quite different, and if you're trying to take something, it's not going to be worth all that much." I don't think we ever, to my knowledge, got anything back from over there.

Yes, it's hard. The Capitol is a working building, and how you somehow integrate collections and collection management with what is required security-wise and conservation-wise, is a challenge, no doubt about. The beauty of it is that in this building, every day, or conceivably every day, the legislators come, and the bills are enacted, and the hearings are held, and the questions are posed, and the solutions are sought. Along with it, we have these bookmarks to the rich history and tradition of the institution, and they're here to be shared in every way.

Before I left in '95, we were working with interactive exhibits, where you could see the story depending upon what direction you wanted to take it, and with the technology that was available. Not everything worked as you had hoped it would, but it was tried, and that was quite a different attitude from when I remember the memo that came from Allen Ellender, who was Senator Russell's successor as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and who was also president pro tem at the time—that's how he was on our five-member commission, saying that only those paintings (we wanted to start conservation on several paintings on the Senate side of the Capitol) that had fallen

off the wall and had their frames badly damaged should really be considered. This should be your priority. Well, that was an attitude in 1970-'71. I think that had been part of the attitude for a long, long, long time. But the arc had certainly been followed. We had crossed a Rubicon or two in the meantime.

Mentioning what we were earlier, about the moneys for the Old Senate and Old Supreme Court chambers, having people like Fritz Hollings, who had practiced law in South Carolina and had represented any number of groups that wanted to restore historic sites and properties, and having preservation law in his past, he was just a natural. The fact that he ended up being chairman of the Legislative Appropriations subcommittee of the Senate, where we were threading the needle, was just ideal. It couldn't have been better. So these things were all coming along. It was just as much a reflection of the times just as the White House program had been very much what was going on. To cash in on that whole sense of history and preservation was a terribly satisfying experience for everybody, for all of us who were involved.

RITCHIE: Well, as you mentioned, before your office was established there really was no controlling mechanism, for furniture that left the building or paintings that aged and needed work but no one was doing anything about it. I'm sure Senator Ellender thought that decorations meant hanging calendars on the wall.

KETCHUM: Right. No, he was more interested in what was going on in the kitchen than he was in what was hanging on the walls in the parlor. He was a very colorful character, who loved once a year to entertain. Pat Nixon used to come up to keep everybody happy. He would have a little luncheon in his hideaway, which was on the east front of the Capitol, with a kitchen that would allow him to do all of his Louisiana specialties for them. But he just didn't quite get the picture otherwise. And he was very typical of what you would find.

Bob Brenkworth, who had been the head of the Disbursing Office, and was about to become comptroller at that point, felt that if there was to be a curator, how could you trust him? How could you not feel that he was going to be taking things? I mean, I guess it was just simple matter of fact that these things had been walking out and they'll just continue to walk out with somebody else tied to them. So the curator has to be indemnified. He was bonded to the tune of \$50,000 or \$100,000, something like that. Valeo was so upset when this thing was thrown at him that he said, "Well, damn it all,

then we will indemnify him. That's just fine." I don't know how they worked this thing. I don't think I ever signed anything but suddenly I was told that I was bonded to the tune of all this money and I'd darn well better be careful and not take anything out of there.

[Laughs] I had never been bonded before in anything that I had ever done, but that was the reaction.

Everybody wanted to tell you a story about how so-and-so got his desk out of there, and so-and-so had a desk that was used by one of the justices of the Supreme Court in the 19th century and had gotten that out. Within the building itself, when the Atomic Energy Committee had met down in the old law library, and before that where the Supreme Court had met, and by the time 1970 rolled around that was just a great big storeroom of used furniture. Some of it were jewels that later would see the light of day in the restored chambers, but there they were. If you could just back a truck into the law library door, we'll load it on for you. Sometimes there was something on paper. One of my favorite examples, when we were researching we found correspondence, probably from the Rules Committee, to Albert Fall, who wanted to buy God knows how much furniture for like a dollar a piece. And he was getting away with it, absolutely. It was pre-Teapot Dome, of course, but the fact of the matter was that this had been going on for ever and ever. The fact that it happened with somebody like Fall made it that much better a story for one and all.

RITCHIE: You've talked about cataloging the furniture and artwork. Do you think that the very act of cataloging it helped to preserve it? In other words, once it was recorded that this belonged to the Senate, that things didn't walk as much as they did before?

KETCHUM: Sure. And you know, interestingly enough, what we also saw happen for the first time was a very thorough inventory being taken by the sergeant at arms. And also improving tremendously the conditions under which these things were being stored, that was very helpful. But yes, because once you can shine the light from x number of directions on something, and really get people interested in how it was used. I suppose the Senate is ideal because of the way that the Senate Chamber desks had been handled for so many years, with the members being encouraged to sign their names in the desk interiors—and even before they were encouraged, the pages and others carved the names in the desks. You look at Bassett and the period he covered from the 1830s up until the end of the 19th century, and at that point you really can take the Senate to within

its first 40 years as such. It was a fine pendulum that was swinging, but you get the details. You nail them to the barn. You have graphic evidence whenever possible. You have the oral tradition. And you have the written documents. You vet these pieces and you just keep adding. This again is the beauty of the technology that we have today. Within the element we can add all of the illustrations online. We can do all of the documentation for primary and secondary sources, and have visual examples of some of this material there. And with the pressing of one button and one command bring it front and center. It's made possible publications on the fine arts and decorative arts that never would exist otherwise.

Once it's there and appreciated, people then begin to realize, and the whole attitude of the Rules Committee changed, very much so. They would come back to us and say, "Senator So-and-So wants to buy his desk," and you would say, "Sorry, but it's one of the few remaining desks from the 1913 period, and frankly we should keep at least—" Who can say it's better to have 15 examples than 10? But always going for the greater number in hopes that you can come close to that in the compromise, and it works. There are an awful lot of people who finally get under Billy Sunday's tent and hear the story and appreciate it. I think you have to feel good about giving people a sense of what the possibilities are in capturing the essence of the institution through the examples that have been there and have seen the light of so many past eras and times. No two ways about it. You have to search for a good sense of how these all come together, but surprisingly they do and you have no idea how the ripple effect continues to expand and to bring in people who truly become the helpmates, whether it is a committee staffer who is reviewing requests for increase in conservation funds or what it might be. Never, ever, ever, once we had been established for five or six years, did we ever ask for any money that we were turned down. The only time I can ever remember was we were turned down once for a color Xerox, but that was about the only thing. I just wanted to use it for copying prints and some of our colored lithographs, and it was really just a minor request. But every time we would go to the secretary and he in turn, if it was a large budget item, would put it in as a special line item, we got what we were asking for. It was often because you would find somebody who had been over. They loved to come and visit the office and find out what was new, what was happening, what kinds of things had you found out. What could you find out about our space, for example, and can you tell me in the Russell Building back in the teens and World War I period, who was in our office? Unfortunately, those offices have been reconfigured and cut up and so what was a suite in 1912-1913 was not exactly the same situation in 1985, but often you could figure it out. Again, each

year Scott Strong has been working on this program with us, we would try to show the changes in reconfiguration. I'm sure that your office has had to answer some of the same questions about those spaces.

RITCHIE: We're actually working with the curator's office right now in planning for the centennial of the Russell Building in 2009. Betty [Koed] and I just finished a text that covers the years before 1909 and after 1909 and how the building evolved. Diane [Skvarla] is thinking about creating a model office to show what the furniture from that period looked like, and then to do some displays with the Senate Library. As you say, the suites changed. Everybody had two rooms at first, and then some had three and four but they weren't contiguous. And eventually they began cutting doors through and creating a railroad car effect of a whole bunch of offices becoming one.

KETCHUM: Right. And what a change this was, as far as staffing and office set-up from what had existed prior. I don't think that many staffers today realize what it meant prior to the building, and what led up to it, and what the conditions were before this existed. And then suddenly you have White Star Lines and the Titanic being investigated in the Caucus Room. I mean, you could almost bring in Hollywood at this stage of the game. One of our earliest requests for information came from the folks, Warren Beatty's people when he was making *Reds* and wanted to use the Caucus Room. I think we have touched on this, but they were really so tied to getting every last detail they could of what the Caucus Room looked like then. I don't know whether it was because of John Reed and Louise [Bryant] and all the good folks who were part of the hearings that were taking place, but they did replicate it, it seems to me as I remember the film, there were two or three scenes that took place in the Caucus Room.

If I go to work in the office building or the Capitol Building every day of the week, and can see the added dimension that I would be getting from the interpretation of the objects and of the space, I am so much happier and so much more tied to the place. And many times, if you are asked to go the extra mile and burn the midnight oil, it might be one of the few things down the road that would make you feel very happy about being part of the scene instead of being terribly frustrated by how you were imposed upon as far as time and schedule. But the end of it is when your career works it to a period where you're walking away and ready to retire, looking back on it, if you can look back with as many memories and as much a sense of what you are a part of as far as the long cavalcade of history, I think you have succeeded mightily if you have participated in helping to

make this possible, and make people aware of this. It's really something that is kind of a contagion and you never lose sight of how it can affect and change people's interests, and heighten them.

RITCHIE: You've mentioned a couple of times that it's a working building. There's a lot of wear and tear on the building, it's not a museum per se. But it's also had some dramatic events, particularly the bomb that went off in 1983. You were also there when the bomb went off in '71.

KETCHUM: Right.

RITCHIE: But that one did mostly structural damage to a bathroom and barbershop, but '83 really had an impact on the art collection.

KETCHUM: It did have an impact on the art collection. While '71 was a shock, and immediately people thought back to when the Senate Reception Room was bombed during the First World War—I'm trying to think of exactly what year—but the '83 was much more dramatic. Everybody first of all turned the clock back 24 hours before and said, "Gee, if it had happened when we were in session on Monday night when people were in the cloakroom watching Monday night football. It involved plastique, supposedly. We were getting into a new form and a new level of what would become security, with dollars being poured into security systems.

I recall John, our oldest son, had either been out that evening or was just watching television late, because Barbara and I had gone to bed. He came racing into the bedroom about midnight or a little after saying that it had just come across that the Capitol had been bombed in the Senate corridor and there had been considerable destruction. I put my clothes on and raced down there. I don't remember driving into the Capitol grounds, so if I drove I must have parked some place on East Capitol Street. Anyway, I had no problem getting in. I was stopped but I just kept showing my ID and got in, and fortunately got up to the site before anything was being cleared. It was still probably two in the morning at that stage in the game, but we carried away the next morning I don't know how many cartloads of nothing but rubble, which included fragments of the three portraits that had been purchased from Matthew Brady, when he still had his studio in Washington and had gone into bankruptcy, and was selling oil portraits based on Brady photographs and daguerreotypes, of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun. These were all in the corridor just

outside of what was then the Democratic leader's office. They had been shattered. In fact, the Webster was in particularly bad shape. We sifted, and sifted, and sifted, and in a week's time we had retrieved all the canvas for Webster (the others were not as badly damaged). A conservator put those pieces back together again—and for some strange reason ended up with a little bit more canvas than was needed for the picture. But if you look today, under raking light, you will see that it looks like a jigsaw puzzle having been put back together again.

To the Senate, Webster, Clay, and Calhoun are the great triumvirate of all times and on their shoulders rests as much history and tradition of the place as you'll find anywhere, and to have them knocked off the wall the literally obliterated was I think more than anybody would be able to accept. Just to see visually—the barbershop, nobody really quite ever got in to see, I mean there were photographs taken, but the press did not have the field day with that that they did with '83. It reminded me of the difference at the White House for security between November of '63 and January and February of '64, how quickly things changed there. And the Capitol certainly went in another direction after '83. I think, as I've told the story about our famous farewell party for Joe Cloren, the bookbinder, and the little incident in '71 of forgetting to load the car fully with all of the dishes that we used and that causing the bomb squad from Fort McNair to be brought out. Well, the period of 12 years later with what went on with the bombing in '83 was just a great leap forward, no doubt leading up to what we see today.

I find it very sad, I really do. I'm very unhappy when I go back and find areas closed off. Granted the construction that has been going on with the Visitor Center has exacerbated some of this, but it just doesn't make any sense to me that we can't turn the clock back to a simpler time, and yet I have to be realistic and understand that there are people—and there are, I mean you look at the statistics of how many weapons are taken away from people visiting the Capitol. I still remember as kid what happened in the House Chamber when the Puerto Rican protest took a different form. And I recall Truman at Blair House, with that particular event. And we will have more, there's no doubt about it. But to see the Capitol in its present form, security-wise, to see what happens at the White House, to not be able to drive down Pennsylvania Avenue, to not be able to wander onto the Capitol grounds any longer for concerts. I don't know what's happened with the concert series. Has it be canceled totally?

RITCHIE: They still have some, but with a much more controlled environment. For the big concerts you have to go through metal detectors.

KETCHUM: Right, I understand that. That's what I hear. It's a real change, and it's going to continue to be this. And how does this affect your sense of the story that you're there to try to understand? As we've talked about, most people visit the Capitol twice in their lifetime. Once as a youngster with family, and then as an adult bringing another generation with them. To me, because it is a working building, to be able to walk right into it, and sure it was uncomfortable, and sure you had to stand in line outside, and you always think of ways perhaps to improve this part of the visit, but you were there and you were seeing it as it actually was.

I'm not against the Visitor Center, although I'm against a Visitor Center that seems to grow like Topsy, I just think the essence of the story is too good as it actually exists without all of the other things that are kind of put in your way. Everybody should leave with a different perspective. I'm not saying that we have to give them chapter and verse or tell them what to think necessarily, but if you can give them some of the real elements, and some of the feeling of seeing it as it actually is. I mean, what is better than being bored by a committee hearing, frankly? Nothing. You can go around and look at how a bill becomes law in booklet and brochure form, but the thing that you really should remember about it is that here, and what I'm seeing, maybe it's a chairman trying to gavel a bit of quiet from the back rows that are screaming at him, but this is us as a democracy.

Some of this came up the other day when we were all fearing that the world would come to an end if the president of Iran was allowed to go to Columbia and address the students, but that's what makes us what we are. That's why I think we should not fear these situations, not act the same way. I'm not sure it's appropriate for a committee chairman to be screaming and trying to take on some hecklers, although it does make good television, there's no doubt about that, and some of the questions and comments that flow back and forth, but to see four or five policemen to come in and start bodily dragging people out, it's a little hard for me to accept.

But back to the numbers game at the Capitol, the people who come will now obviously be more comfortable in their view. They will see a lot of things that have never before been brought front and center to be shared. It will be an experience like looking at a patchwork quilt of many different elements that are being brought together. You run a

risk when you do this, there's no doubt, of trying to sanitize the story and making it look as if it just all fell into place. I hope people will stop and think that this represents a very long, long line going way back to almost the earliest days of the institution, to try to savor it. We went through periods in our history where we would be celebrating say the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and we would get this great patriotic fervor and we would start dealing in hair clippings of Martha Washington to put in lockets. We went through this again after the Civil War. We went through it again in 1876 with the centennial period.

Maybe in spite of all the security, and in spite of all the barriers of really getting the essence of the building, maybe somehow with this effort to have a so-called Visitor Center we will be able to again keep that spark going. I don't know. It's hard for me because I like to deal in the real objects, and I like to deal with them in place, in situ. And this isn't going to really happen for people. I hope as they get into the building and are able to go into the Old Supreme Court Chamber they will think a little bit more of the Dred Scott decision, and they will think also about John Marshall and all of the decisions that were part and parcel of those early courts, that they would look to the *Amistad* case and they could consider probing a bit more deeply, but you and your profession, which is totally akin and complementary to the museum side of the equation, I think you have the same sense, and probably somewhat the same frustration, having spent a lifetime in Washington and watching the various institutions as they work. I don't think the Capitol will ever pose the disappointment that the White House does for me, but yet maybe we're coming to the day where a bunker down the Potomac River someplace is going to be where the president and his family lives and the White House is no longer a working building. That would be a very sad day.

RITCHIE: There's an interesting trade off. On the one hand, I suppose, because of the security after '83 they closed off the corridors all around the Senate Chamber, which used to be open to the public. There's this wonderful artwork that the public doesn't get to see. On the other hand, that probably protects the artwork in the long run. But you really wish that more people could go to the Reception Room, could go to the President's Room. Once upon a time they could walk back to see where the vice president's office was.

KETCHUM: Exactly.

RITCHIE: All of that was public space, and now it's cordoned off and you need an identification card to get back inside it.

KETCHUM: Yes, and that story is told there, and it's told—heck in 1941, until the end of the year you could just walk across the back lawn of the White House if you wanted to, if you were cutting from the Old State Department over to Treasury. The Capitol was exactly like that. God, when I arrived, it was the difference between small town America and the big city. Everybody knew you. They knew you were the new boy in town. I can remember going to visit Everett Jordan, who was then chairman of the Rules Committee, and his admonition: "Take your time, boy. Take your time. Get to know the people here. Don't be in any rush to make changes." Well, of course, as the chairman of the Rules Committee there was a slight bit of competition between what the secretary's office and Mike Mansfield wanted to do and what B. Everett Jordan wanted to do. We probably hit upon some of this before but there was a way of passing—possibly it was setting up the program and the Commission on Art and Antiquities—of waiting until Bill Cochrane was out of town and Jordan was someplace in order to get the legislation through without Rules dragging its heels on the whole thing forever. They did it somehow by working their way around.

Well, anyway I did try to take my time, but on the other hand there had been some preliminary work done on room surveys and so forth and it was really important to get into as many of these spaces as we could. And it usually was not too much of a problem. You could always find a sergeant at arms staff member with a key, who would let you in. There was a woman who worked for the sergeant at arms named Dorothy McCarty, Dot McCarty, who was considered by some to be a warhorse, absolutely. But for some reason we started getting along and working well together and something came up—oh, I know, I wanted another phone line, and she got it for me. I thought, well it's time to do something, so we had a luncheon for her up in the stacks. That's all we had, one small office and outside we had bookshelves. That went out to the circle [under the Senate cupola] where cataloguers were working for the Senate Library. By golly, we brought in the best silver, china, and crystal, and set up the tables. We had a couple of other people, and the next thing I know she's telling me all about furnishings that were in storage, that she had some interest in the fact that they had been tied to special areas and so forth and she felt they should be kept.

You kept finding people who wanted to be a part of the Salvation Army marching in and putting them where they could be protected, and again we had a much better relationship with the sergeant at arms later on as far as what their responsibility was. Granted, a lot of what they had been doing had been earlier under the purview of the architect. Mansfield took this away from the architect and set up under the sergeant at arms for storage facilities and the like. By the time we were through, I would say within ten years time, you really had a pretty good foundation.

I never wanted us to grow to a point where our numbers were such that we would become a target for people who were looking for ways to cut. I thought it would be better if we had special projects, as we did, and you remember so well with “Necessary Fence,” that we could bring in people for six or eight or nine months as a team to work on some temporarily, that would be fine. But it helped. The first exhibit we did, within a year, down in the crypt area, involved bringing together several different offices of the institution. I recall the secretary of the Senate before Emery—

RITCHIE: Felton Johnston.

KETCHUM: —was Skeeter Johnston, right. I can recall he and a woman named Katherine McCook Knox, whose father was Anson McCook (secretary of the Senate), of getting both their advice, although I don’t know that Skeeter’s advice was pretty good, but Katherine McCook Knox had all kinds of things that we were able to use in the exhibit. Also we invited her to a reception and she brought the tea tray that her father had been given by the Senate when he married her mother, to serve on. It was funny how you kept pulling these things out of the woodwork, but people were genuinely interested, they really were. It did not take a great deal either, everybody didn’t have to be blessed with Fritz Hollings’ experience in preservation law to get them to participate.

If you make it more difficult to see the elements that are the dimensioned objects, and see them as close to their actual day-in and day-out use or the role that they played, and take them away and lock them in a case someplace —granted there are many pieces that will never return to the scene of their original use—I think they will lack something. Wherever possible, things like the [Electoral College] ballot boxes, even though they are only used on ceremonial occasions, but wherever possible that the utilitarian value of these objects and the day-in and day-out story that they do tell, please, please, please, hopefully provide a way that they can be shared with people. I mean, the whole idea of

letting in the light and letting in the audience to what's happening is something that I frankly would rue the day that it was no longer possible. We've made it very hard for ourselves.

RITCHIE: Yes, unfortunately a lot of it is going to be only virtual in the future rather than reality.

KETCHUM: Yes.

RITCHIE: You've mentioned a couple of times about lunches and receptions. There was another very positive thing about your office when you were leading it and putting it on the map was putting on small lunches and larger receptions. I just saw Joe Stewart this week at the portrait unveiling and told him that I would be coming up to see you. Right away he said, "Oh, I remember the secretary's parties when Jim was the curator, and the brownies and the turtle soup." He was going down the menu. That, it seemed to me, was a very important part of your function there.

KETCHUM: It was. In fact, it culminated in the Senate resolution at the time of my retirement in which there was more discussion of chicken pies—

RITCHIE: [Laughs] Joe mentioned the chicken pies.

KETCHUM: —than there was of "Necessary Fence." Yes, that was a carry-over from the White House days. But you have to remember when you grow up in a large family and your mother has you and your brothers standing on a stool in the kitchen kneading bread at age five, that there is food around the corner to be had. It really started at the Senate in the small gatherings that we would do. Because we lived on Capitol Hill it was not a problem getting these back and forth. Sometimes we just set up little dinners at home. I think the worst experience that I ever had was when Barbara was expecting Tim, and Dorothye Scott wanted to have a baby shower for her. This was not something that Barbara wanted to be a part of, so Scott said, "Well, we'll do a little party anyway. We won't have a baby shower for Barbara." I said, "Well, I'll talk to her, but that would probably be fine." So who do you think was the victim of the baby shower? I was. They had a doll in a high chair that was supposed to be me. They dragged Darrell and Margaret St. Claire. Val was there. I was mortified, I really was. But there was Dorothye doing her

thing. God bless her, she was really in many, many ways a very supportive link. In fact, that whole office of the secretary, I could never have gotten a foot from shore had they not been as much the backers of what was going on.

Anyway, when Dorothy retired, they wanted to do a few things, but no big retirement party, and she'd been as much a part of the Senate as anyone, eating in the Refectory everyday with the same group of people, Dot McCarty and somebody from the architect's office. So I said to Val, "We'll put something together." I don't know whether we had done a secretary's party of any sort, maybe we had done a little Christmas party or something like that. He said, "Fine, go." I made the mistake of Dorothy coming in—it was not a surprise party—but we were setting up the tables and she said, "Where did that tablecloth come from?" I explained that it was something that was leftover from the gifts that were given to President Kennedy when he went to Ireland in '63 and Mrs. Kennedy was disposing of it. She tried to give it away and nobody wanted it and I said I would take it. Well, Dorothy was in seventh heaven. Suddenly it was the Kennedy White House and Dorothy was in the State Dining Room. Well, from that we went to Darrell's retirement. Frank [Valeo] at that point was gone, it was Stan Kimmitt as secretary. Stan said, "What about something down here?" I said that was fine. That was a surprise, I believe. Then it just went on from there.

For Kimmitt we did the Christmas parties. Eunice [Kimmitt] would do her eye of the rounds and we would do the rest of the food. Then I think it was Bill Hildenbrand who got us to do it on a twice a week evening receptions that he wanted to give from the early days of the Baker leadership for staff directors and various committee officials. We went through God knows how many of those. I think we probably did 10 or 15 of those. What I had to do, because I couldn't do all the food, that much in that time, was to work out a deal with Design Cuisine, which was on the Hill at that point. I'm not sure that they were not called something else at that point. But they would look at what they had leftover or were preparing in excess for the night before, an embassy function someplace, and we would build on that. I would go to Potomac Butter and Egg and buy various cheeses. I would go down and pick them up about five o'clock. Every Tuesday and Thursday—I think those were two nights that were selected—it went on for seven weeks or so. I can't give you the exact number.

Then Bill, of course, wanted to have the biggest Christmas party. His idea was we'll start with terrapin soup. I said, "Well, Bill, it's an endangered species. We can do

turtle soup, but we can't do terrapin." "Well, will anyone know the difference?" "No, I don't think anybody will know the difference." And we did. One of the nicest things when I retired, the kids in the office went back and got all the photographs and all the menus and they did a volume about yay thick. You didn't realize how much there had been, because in our household all the kids pitched in, Barbara of course pitched in, and then would even come into the Capitol and help do the pantry and serve.

Then we got into the business of the State of the Union. That, I guess, must have been Joe. I don't know whether we did State of the Union before, we could have. I'll have to go back and check. But those parties then involved hundreds and hundreds of people. I was always so afraid of the conditions under which the food would be prepared and stored that the chicken pies, of which I would do enough to serve anywhere between 400 to 500 people, I would not even buy the chickens until the very last minute. Then I would stay up for 36 hours cooking. Now, granted, I had made up most of the dough and popped that in the freezer. But all we had was one refrigerator at home. We had no separate freezer, so everything had to be cleared out just so that it could hold the dough. Ted Stevens would bring in salmon from Alaska and I would have an L.L. Bean smoker in the backyard on Capitol Hill in January smoking salmon, which I had previously brined. Then it went through a drying process, and then it went into the smoker. I don't know how the hell we did it, but we did it. I swear that half the success sometimes about requesting conservation funds or anything else came from the fact that people had been satisfied, had a good meal of memory.

I remember Elizabeth Taylor had gone through these campaigns with John Warner in which she always was choking on chicken. I had done a massive amount of chicken for one party, and I looked up—this was a party in the secretary's office, it was not over in the LBJ Room where we later did the State of the Union parties, so it must have been during the Kimmitt era—and she's chewing on a chicken bone, and I'm just waiting for her to choke! Fortunately, I've got a photograph of that. I'm not in the photograph but somebody was there photographing and she of course was at the end of every photographer's lens, I'm sure, wherever she was. But it was so interesting to see the worlds all coming together. But, no, it was amazing.

The office staff would get involved, especially one of the things that I wanted to do was about 400 deviled eggs for something. We had the salmon, we had the eggs, I would make massive amounts of herbed cheese and so forth. On a Sunday, we even

would get people who volunteered from the Senate Library. I remember Jean Winslow being there, and Diane [Skvarla] and company. They had never peeled eggs before, some of these people, and I was trying to show them how you could remove the shell easily and the tricks of the trade. We had this Pullman kitchen on Capitol Hill, or a galley, it was probably all of six feet wide and 20 feet long at the most, projecting out into the backyard. We must have had 15 people out there. There were counters on both sides and it was cheek by jowl, literally. I thought, “This is what it’s all about.” It started to snow and there was concern about what the weather was going to be the next day and would it all be for naught because they would cancel the State of the Union. Carl Fritter was dispatched to bring in the mini bagels that were going to be served with the Boursin and the salmon. The poor guy, coming across the Senate plaza with these boxes of mini bagels, falls and breaks his ankle. The stories just went on and on.

When Joe Stewart came in, he wanted to do a special dinner for the staff. Senator Byrd was going to be presiding. For some reason, somebody said, maybe it was Joe, that Byrd liked stuffed cabbages—the cabbages that were stuffed with rice and served cold. So God bless it I don’t know how many cabbages we put in the steamer, and the leaves, and the mixtures that were concocted with lamb and rice and what have you. We were returning to Old Morocco. It went on forever. But you did these things, and you never found anything that you couldn’t possibly do, because through the years, I think, I had had a chance to experiment with almost every kind of food and cooking, but damn it all, it really seemed to bring people together. The last several years, setting up pantries in the Senate Reception Room for the parties in the LBJ Room. All we did at the Senate was we used the ovens there, that was the extent of it. Everything else was prepared basically back at home, eleven blocks away on Eleventh Street.

RITCHIE: So you didn’t get any grief from the people who ran the kitchens for competing with them?

KETCHUM: You know, we did not. We probably should have. I would always go down and talk to them and tell them what we were trying to do, and know that they were going to be the dependable support. No, we did not. We worked out a timing because we would have these pans that would serve approximately 50 people, 40 to 50, these great big stainless steel pans which they would loan to me, because we didn’t have anything like that. The minute I was finished—I was usually through quite late at night the day before the State of the Union. They would then be picked up at seven the next

morning and taken directly to the kitchens. The secretary's office would work out with drivers and so forth and with sergeant at arms people if need be, and they would be delivered and be put in refrigerators. I would go in at that same time with the last batch and check to see how they were stored. Then I talked over with the Senate kitchen chefs the schedule of baking, so that we didn't bake them all at the same time. We had them coming off the assembly line, so to speak. By the time they left the stove and came up the stairs, there was enough time for them to kind of sit and the flavors to wed, and away we'd go.

My God, they'd be out there and people would have thirds and fourths, because all the chicken pies had just chicken, no filler of any kind whatsoever. It was just chicken and a very rich gravy. I would use the carcasses from the roasting chickens that I was using to make the sauce. The chickens were simmering away in broth that had been used for other chickens so it made double-rich, triple-rich, quadruple and so forth, as the base of the gravy. It had a flavor that was just unbeatable. You couldn't lose, with one hand tied behind your back.

The pies became for the State of the Union dinners the signature dish. That was what everybody seemed to remember, and while you built up to it with smoked salmon and herbed cheese and mini bagels, and then you went into all kinds of other things, it was the pie. The pie, the pie, the pie, and it was the crust as well. What I did not feel comfortable talking about was the fact that the crust was made with an abundant amount of lard. The lard be with you, and the lard was with you, and I feared terribly that every nutritionist who was looking into these questions would be coming by the office with a picket line, but it was the one way that you could make the flakiest crust in the world.

As a kid, my job when we would butcher, was to try the lard. You stood in front of the stove at home, and the smell went on forever, but all of the fat—this was not beef lard, it was pork lard—was rendered and this pure white substance was then put in crocks and put in cold storage. We rented at the point from the local GLF a locker. This was before home freezers. We had a locker that kept things at a certain temperature. It was like a little cage with shelves, and these were crocks of lard, which then my mother, through the rest of the winter, would incorporate into her cooking. I'm sure we ruined many arteries, although mother and dad lived well into their 90s, so I guess it did not affect them quite as much. But that was one of the secrets. And I loved also to do some special decorations on top with pastry leaves and what have you. So when these pies

came out they were totally self-contained, with the poultry and the very, very, rich sauce, and then this wonderful flaky crust on top. You couldn't go wrong with this. We never, ever, to my knowledge, had a mishap—except for Carl Fritter breaking his ankle.

People would stay, and stay, and stay, so by the time they were ready to line up for the State of the Union, to go over to the House side, there were several leaden feet that were getting themselves squared away and hopefully marching down the line. But everybody was invited. You'd have the vice president and his spouse, and right on down the line. The leadership of the House would come over. Many of the committee chairs and so forth. From the White House you'd have several of the special assistants to the president. Joe Stewart would be especially good—and Kimmitt was too—of inviting a cross-range. But they reached their apogee—the one thing that I talked over with Sheila Burke at the time that I retired was please know that the only reason that the staff in our office was involved was because I asked them to be. I really feel strongly that whatever happens afterwards, you cannot put them in the same situation unless they are really wanting to do it. So when I came up here [to Pennsylvania] in the summer of 1995, by about November the phone call came in: Would I come back and do it? I said, “No, I don't think that's going to work, thanks but no thanks. I'll be happy to talk to anybody who is doing it and give them the benefit of what little I can contribute to as far as what I learned.”

But it was certainly the most unifying thing that our office did, and I never, as I said, whenever we had any requests for dollars from the secretary or from the leadership, or for levels of what we could spend later on at auctions, it was not a problem, we could go with it.

RITCHIE: Well, people still talk about them. The pot pies are remembered fondly, because nothing like that is ever available at receptions or parties now.

KETCHUM: What I found out was that we called them pot pies although they are not. I finally said we would just call them deep-dish chicken pies. You are sitting now in Pennsylvania, in the heart of pot pie country. A pot pie meant that everything was done in one pot. You boiled the hen, took it out, took the meat off, put the bones back in and continued to cook it, strained that, and then put the meat back in. Then you rolled out squares of dough and as the liquid was boiling up again you put these in and they cooked. Then you took those out and you thickened the broth and the whole thing then together,



Jim Ketchum catering a Senate event.



For special events and holiday parties, Senate “catering” staff often pitched in.
[l-r, standing]: Jim Ketchum, Jean Winslow, Diane Skvarla, Kathy Jacobs, Barbara Ketchum. [l-r, kneeling]: Bill Hildenbrand, James Haugerud.



LBJ Room in the Capitol.



[l-r]: Terry Fantasia, Jim Ketchum, and Sally Walsh in the Senate Reception Room.



[l-r]: Unidentified, Dot Svendson, Jim Ketchum.

when you served it, was almost like a stew, meat, the thickened broth, and the squares of dough. That was what technically was a pot pie. But Mr. Clarence Birdseye in the 1940s came out with these little foil dishes with crust on top, with carrots and peas inside, with a little bit of beef or chicken, and he called them beef pot pies, chicken pot pies, and people then adapted. Really, it is a misnomer to call them that. So I went around, that was my little private crusade.

My great, great, great grandparents were Pennsylvania Germans from Lancaster County, who went up to New York State, Seneca Falls, and met the English antecedents from Massachusetts, the Quakers in the family. That's where they met and then went homesteading off to Nebraska. So I always felt that I owed a small debt to the Pennsylvania Dutch and all that goes with it. But it took a series of secretaries of the Senate to really make the thing sing.

One of the more unfortunate things was that Kimmitt really felt that he deserved credit for them, and Joe Stewart felt he deserved credit. Well, they both deserved credit, but they got into a harangue once over a publication that—I can't even think of the staffer's name, but it was a woman that was doing the original secretary of the Senate' in-house organ. It was way back. She worked with us, Don, at the time of "Necessary Fence." She was supposed to help do our PR, and she really was not very successful in that. If you remember her at all, she worked for the secretary in the late '80s. There was only one issue of the publication because in it she interviewed Joe and he talked about starting the dinners. Kimmitt got a hold of it and came storming in to the Senate and made life very miserable. Joe said, "We won't have any more of those publications, that will be it." Unfortunately, he didn't cancel the State of the Union dinners, but the rest of it. I just thought, what a strange turn that everybody wanted to be the parent of the thing. As I thought, well there's plenty of credit to go around to all of them. As I said, Bill Hildenbrand deserves as much, and Frank Valeo should deserve some credit for letting us get away with those functions.

Because you see the rules were very strict: only the Senate restaurant could provide for any social occasion. There was a little exception: unless the staffers did it themselves. But you could not bring in an outside caterer. I could not bring Design Cuisine in, but I could go and get food from them and build my menu around it. Bill Hildenbrand through his budget, and I don't know, maybe he was getting it from the Republican National Committee, but he could then pay them directly. Never once did I

take a penny for any of this, because the rewards were so fantastic otherwise that you didn't even really need it. I would not do it on company time, except for the last day of. The planning would be done at our dining room table at home. The whole thing fell into place really well.

RITCHIE: I remember especially the Christmas parties because they drew both staff and senators. It was very interesting to see the senators relaxed and away from the pressure in a social setting, and the food was so good. The senators would keep coming back and would cluster around the favored dishes. You mentioned those mini bagels with the salmon on top. I can vividly remember Strom Thurmond consuming the salmon off the top of a row of mini bagels.

KETCHUM: The problem with Strom Thurmond was not only the salmon off the top of the bagels, but we would spend an inordinate amount of time with garniture. The garnitures were all over the place. There were some folks who really were very good at it. Anne Womeldorf, for example, was extremely competent with working these things through, and Thurmond apparently thought he was grazing like a goat and wanted vegetation, because he would come right down the line and eat the garnish. We also had a reporter name Naomi Nover, who with her late husband Barnett Nover represented the *Denver Post* and other papers. By the time Barney went to heaven or wherever and Naomi was holding down, she would literally take out of her purse plastic bags—it was before Ziplocks—and she would put food in the plastic bags with bag ties. What she was carrying was one of these things that looked like an L.L. Bean tote, except it was something more like a humongous pocketbook, and she would think nothing of it! People would just be watching her. She and Strom were the two stars of our firmament so far as taking the food. I didn't mind Strom taking what he was peeling off the edibles, but when it got to all the vegetation and all the garniture that we wanted to have stay on. Once we had put a little dot of pimento and a little sprig of parsley, very tiny, on the deviled eggs, and he went along these deviled eggs just picking that off and just eating that. Not a happy thing. Of course, everybody could hardly wait to come back and tell Ketchum what was going on out there.

RITCHIE: I can also remember him slipping food into his coat pockets.

KETCHUM: Yes. Barbara would make her lemon bars and her Texas sheet cake. Her Texas sheet cake was somehow a favorite of John Warner's. The first thing he would

ask for as he would arrive was where were the brownies? He called them the frosted brownies. I don't think he realized what we called them by virtue of the recipe. And they were actually quite healthy because Barbara was substituting yogurt for the sour cream. She had finessed this thing to such a point that it was really extremely good. There was a frosting that did not have as much of the dangerous elements as recipes we have known, but damn it all, there was some member who loved the lemon bars. Forget about all the other food. We would take Eunice Kimmitt's recipe for eye of the round. I would have 10 of these. They weighed maybe three or four pounds a piece. I could roast usually four at a time. It was done in a very hot oven. You figured out what the weight was. You put them in at maybe three or four minutes a pound and turned it off and they had to stay in the oven for maybe two and a half to three hours, and they were perfect, they were absolutely pink throughout. If you wanted it well done, forget about it. Then I bought a slicer—the one contribution I made to the cause, I went out to one of the discount houses and bought a slicer. On the day of, early in the morning, you could come to 209 Eleventh Street and I would be running these roasts through the slicer. It's a wonder I still have all my digits to waive at the rest of the world. I laugh about it because it was one of these crazy things that just took on a life of its own after a bit. But that's fine. You have dined at our table enough to know that to me nothing is more pleasurable than sitting down with a group of friends and breaking bread. I've gotten into the habit of baking a lot of bread—not trying to eat as much, but baking a lot of bread of late. I have now found a recipe where there is no kneading involved, but the rising period is almost 24 hours. You are baking in an oven within an oven. The inner oven is nothing but a cast iron Dutch oven. It can be enamel lined and so forth, and then the outer oven. So it gives you a crust. It's truly a loaf of artisan bread. I've been blessed with a son-in-law who not only paints great pictures but he also bakes the best bread in the world. I must confess that all these things are carry-overs. But I have as many memories of the Senate and food as I do of almost anything else. It's not what I'm proudest of there, and it's not what I hope to take to the nursing home with me in terms of memories, but it's certainly something that made all else possible.

RITCHIE: It also gave a lot of good memories to a lot of other people. We were enjoying the party while you were working. You had to hustle all the time.

KETCHUM: Yes, there was a lot of activity, but it was never work. Well, you lived with us day and night and contributed so mightily to "Necessary Fence," but the pleasure of seeing something like that exhibited, really it's like a Broadway production.

When you finally had [George] Mitchell and company cutting the ribbon, and the first people coming in—and what I loved most of all, and you probably remember this, was when we brought some of our colleagues from the other institutions in Washington and did some special programs for them. And of course we had to have some food along for that whole score. The thing about when “Necessary Fence” opened, at the same time we were doing the food up in the Caucus Room, do you remember that? And so I was trying to keep an eye on how that was happening and what was happening down below. But bringing in a firm like Staples and Charles, these are marriages that are almost made in heaven as far as I could see.

RITCHIE: When you put it that way, now I can see that in terms of display, a reception in terms of the food and the display and the atmosphere is very similar to putting on an exhibit.

KETCHUM: Exactly. Precisely. It is. And you’re thinking through. You have an image but you’re also looking at how can we display it. Barbara got laughing hysterically the other day when she came home because I had taken some mini pumpkins and I had found a gourd that looked like a swan, and I put all the pumpkins in an old piece of English pottery so that it looks like a swan looking at a nest of her eggs about to hatch. You look at these things and you think: How can you put them together in a way that they really will tell a different kind of story? Well, that’s what food is about. It’s sensory. There’s a certain aesthetic to it, and it’s what a good portrait should be, it’s what a good exhibit should be. It is all telling another story, and telling it in a way that you can make people enjoy what they’re seeing and learn something about it.

Our kids are better cooks than we are. I mean, John Ketchum is an unbelievably good cook. He and Katherine have a field day in putting things together. Sarah, what I love about Sarah is along with being dean of admissions she’s also responsible for the foreign students at the College of the Atlantic. She has 40 kids from all over the world. They belong to something called the World College. There are probably five colleges in the United States, some very big boys like Princeton who belong to this World College. I think Prince Charles is the chancellor. Well, she has to entertain these characters once a month and she is forever looking for recipes that are glorified casseroles that she can do without breaking the budget. Two kids to take care of—fortunately, David’s studio is at home, and she has some daycare for Finn and Corin, very close so she is able to have lunch with these kids every day of the week, but she’s got all these balls in the air. She’s

down in Texas right now speaking and she's traveling left, right and center, and she pulls them off effortlessly. It's not, perhaps, the time that John would put into it, or that I might, but she does it. And she loves doing it. Even Timothy now, who surprises the daylights out of me when we visit. That's great because that's what I learned at home and it's just a way of bonding with folks that you don't know all that well.

Frank Valeo probably taught me more than anybody else in terms of what it was like to be "at table." He would have these dinner parties in which we all were expected to cook Oriental. We all were expected to bring two dishes. And we were never more than ten people, oftentimes eight, so that you had a multiplier of two times four or five couples. Each dish that was brought out would be discussed, and then we would sit at table and sometimes, although he would perhaps do a little intermission, we were there for four or five hours at table. Not getting up and taking our coffee to another room. The discussions ranged—I have friends like Liz Carpenter who arrive with little typed notes of what the topics of discussion should be, which works. But to me what you need is a good dining room. I know there are people who don't particularly feel that they are as necessary as they once were, but a good dining room to me is worth money in the bank. One of the things that appealed to me about this old 18th-century farm house when I saw it was that there would be a fireplace in the dining room. In the middle of the winter, when the snow is falling outside, and we're gathered in here, and that fire is lit, it's worth it.

Incidentally, your bedroom window probably wants to come down at some point because it was up earlier today. There are plenty of blankets in your closet. And we will not put this in the interview. You can tell whoever is transcribing to forget about this part of it. [Laughs]

RITCHIE: Mary has transcribed the last several interviews and she says that she especially likes it whenever you talk about food.

KETCHUM: Well, tonight I don't know that it's going to be anything, although the dessert is kind of special because Barbara gave me for our anniversary an honest-to-goodness, fully, totally self-contained ice cream maker. Nothing to put in the freezer to get chilled ahead of time, and with a special rum cake we have made rum raisin ice cream to go along with it. Then I think on the side are the last of the fresh peaches that were picked. And there's a special syrup that gets poured over the cake, and you'll go on from

there. But beyond that, no, we're going to start with Mexican mojitos and a salmon paté in this room. We'll have a fire in this little fireplace if we need it. And a couple of other good things, but not a lot. Then we'll go to table and we're going to have, let's see, I think it's shrimp remoulade—you remember Ray Moularde who was in *Lost Weekend*?

RITCHIE: With Jane Wyman.

KETCHUM: Jane Wyman, exactly. And then we're going to go into a pork tenderloin dish with a couple of other good things from the garden, so it will be not too much but enough to get you through and then we'll take it from there. Well, you know I did it just recently, I still make chicken pies. For my sense, they're still as good as they were years ago, and I still use lard.

RITCHIE: You know, on Capitol Hill it's such a busy place. Everybody has a lot of important things to do and they're always so stressed. People are rushing around. There aren't as many social occasions as there used to be. I think the modern senators miss occasions that were there in the '70s, when people didn't quite commute as frequently as they do now. There would be larger turn-outs for evening events. Now they're there from Tuesday through Thursday, and Wednesday night they're in session forever, and it seems harder for secretaries of the Senate to schedule something that will attract senators and staff.

KETCHUM: Well, the history of food in the Capitol, as you know only too well, a great story in itself, from the Hole in the Wall [a 19th-century restaurant] to the other things. When I first went up on the Hill I was fascinated by the Refectory. They had a carry-out down there next to the Refectory, and the staple for the fourth floor seemed to be a chef's salad, which had ham and turkey julienne strips, and Swiss cheese, and a good amount of greens of fairly normal lettuces, and the dressing was put in a couple of little containers. Well, suddenly there was an outbreak of Tuberculosis, and that stopped the carry-out service. I don't know how not having a carry-out was going to cure the TB bit, but that was a problem which I guess had taken place before, but now again it was rearing its ugly head in 1970 and '71. But I used to watch the people who day in and day out, especially the reporters who would gather in the Refectory, and then you turn the pages back a century to the Refectory in the 19th-century and see what a role it played.

Daniel Webster especially was a great epicure and wanted to make sure that everybody knew he had the very best chef in town. His wife—his two wives—they stayed up in Massachusetts but he was down here entertaining the daylights out of things. I think until he hit the White House they would not deem it appropriate for them to even set foot in the place. But you look at the usage of spaces in the Senate wing of the Capitol and find out where Webster supposedly kept a lot of his bottles of wine and other spirits.

We always enjoyed, although there was a reporter for the *Evening Star*, Anne Crutcher, who was food editor at one point, who took us to task. It was the opening of the Old Senate Chamber and we did items like switchel, and other things that were consumed in the 19th-century Senate, and we named items after senators. Our great sin was naming dishes after people. That was something that she felt you just should not do. But we did it. It was probably a not-so-successful attempt to draw attention to some of the names that were gastronomes of rank. We spent a lot of time getting foods and researching recipes. There was a woman named Helen Duprey Bulloch who was with the National Trust who had been *the* person in the United States to really dig into 18th and 19th century chefs and come up with what they were serving and was very helpful to us.

I've got as many cookbooks in this old house that relate to foods of the past as I do with what contemporary people serve. It would be fun just to do a history of food at the Capitol and really flesh it out. The Senate is by far more successful than the House because you had the members who were in for a longer duration and who really were established stars in the firmament, and many times had the wherewithal, but even discussing the boarding house fare would be well and appropriate to the cause.

RITCHIE: There used to be senators like Allen Ellender, as you mentioned, who would have his annual gumbo lunches, and a few others who had specialties, like the Texas chili cook-offs, and things like that.

KETCHUM: And the congressional cookbooks go way back in the 20th century. There alone you have documentation of what the members of the Senate and the House were consuming, and many times they had contributions from members of the Supreme Court and the White House. Recently, the Library of Congress had a question on a particular food issue. I get these strange calls, but this was on the Coolidges. A man remembered his mother making a particular pudding that Mrs. Coolidge made, and what could I tell them. I went through all this stuff and finally found in a little booklet that was

published about the Hoover administration, I found the recipe there. It was not in any of the normal compendia of these things. The guy wanted to make it. He remembered it as a child, and he was maybe 75 or 80 years old. He remembered his mother making it and attributing it to Mrs. Coolidge and it had been in the press. With all the Googling and all of the research resources the Library of Congress had, they were not quite ready to come with it. I'm sure they would have found it in a day or so, but I find a recipe like that and I want to make it, and see if it's all that everybody says it is, or was it just a fad at the moment and there it lies.

RITCHIE: Let me guess that it had Vermont maple syrup in it.

KETCHUM: No, it did not have maple syrup. In fact, I found a later recipe that had modified it slightly since then so I sent that down to the folks at LC as well. Yes, I think that if I have anything on my tombstone, it would have to be the words: "The lard be with you." And hope that that takes care of a multitude of sins.

RITCHIE: Well, you found a way to have a good time while you were doing it but also to give a good time, and I think again that was important in terms of the Senate recognizing the functions of your office and to some degree it helped our office as well, the fact that this institution could stop from time to time and appreciate its historical rooms, its artwork, but also have a good time while they were at it, at the openings that went along with a lot of those exhibits.

KETCHUM: As I say, it was kind of a means to an end, early on, to get people to stop and know that yes, your efforts may be a little strange to our way of doing things around here, and your goals may be a little different, but after all, we can all sit down and share in a good lunch or in a good reception. Once that's taken place, golly let's talk about—we never talked business at any of these things, and yet we also never had an opening of an exhibit that we didn't have—do you remember when we did the opening for "What This Country Needs?" which was the advertising exhibit? Okay, we decided that we had enough ads for the local Heurich brewery and we called up the present generation of Heurich, who unfortunately was the last generation, Gary, and said, "Any chance that you could donate some beer and come up and join us? We've got some original posters that we're going to be showing for Senate beer." Not only did he come up and bring beer, and bring beer, and bring beer, but he turned out to be the life of the party. He was a great raconteur, with lots of good stories to share with us. So you have the

overflow. You come from the exhibit and you're now enjoying the food. I think we did hot dogs. We were doing as much as we could to cash in on the examples that we had for the advertising of how the institution was used. I held my breath a little bit, because I thought there will be some members who will be upset to think that the commercialization of the Senate is being celebrated, and indeed that's what it was.

But it was as much a part of the times, and if people could see that and understand that the pressure on the Senate was nothing compared to poor Frances Folsom, who found that she was being used in advertising for special creams that had arsenic in them, or Lemonade Lucy Hayes who went up to Philadelphia to close the Centennial exhibition and the paper was filled with all kinds of things including a flatiron which she was endorsing, which she never apparently had never used a flatiron since she left Ohio. All the crazy things that went on, the advantage of people that was taken down there at the White House, the Senate was nothing compared to it, but the fact is it's an institution, it's an icon, and it was valuable. We still have White House applesauce. I used to have to write these letters to people who would be using our recent additions to the collection at the White House. A portrait of Benjamin Franklin that hangs in the Green Room that Walter Annenberg had given, some insurance company got a hold of a reproduction and put it on its calendar and said "in the words of Benjamin Franklin," and made it clear that this was at the White House. The White House counsel's office decided that this was taking advantage. I wasn't so sure it was. I felt that people understood what that portrait was and I was not going to buy my insurance just because Benjamin Franklin was hanging in the White House.

But yes, Donald, you hit upon a factor that probably was as important for our success in getting things off the ground. Not saying that sooner or later things would have developed without it, but they certainly helped push it a little bit sooner, they did indeed. What started with a small luncheon in the stacks grew and grew and grew, because you could do it, it was possible. It may have been a lot of hustle and bustle, but the rewards were tremendous. And as I said, when you looked at the resolution that was saying farewell to you from the good body politic, and you found that food was mentioned as much or more than anything else, you knew that you had a bit of problem there in how you would be remembered. But I have no complaints about it. It was wonderful. Barbara may, and the kids in the office may, but they were fantastic. If we had five interns at the time, it was just five more pairs of hands to put to work. What they told their school when they went back, "how I spent my December-January semester," I don't know, but some of

these schools that were on trimester or had an internship built into the Christmas through February first period of time, which Colgate among others did, it was perfect for the picking, there was no doubt about it. We could give them a job almost immediately, and they took it.

So be it. Well, shall we break?

RITCHIE: I was going to say that you now have more culinary work to do.

End of the Seventh Interview

A NECESSARY CELEBRATION

Interview #8

Sunday, September 30, 2007

DONALD RITCHIE: We started by talking about your relations with presidents and then with the Senate. The sort of in-between character is the vice president. I thought we could talk about the work you've done with vice presidents, particularly the Vice President's Room in the Capitol, but also the vice president's mansion.

JAMES KETCHUM: Okay.

RITCHIE: Because I remember that back in the 1970s the Vice President's Room was the same room that it is today, but it looked entirely differently than it became.

KETCHUM: Right. Okay, we will do that. And I also know that as I go through the transcripts I should probably make notes. I'll have to do a re-reading for things that I've left out for some reason that might be more appropriate to linking things together, because I assumed that we can put those back in.

RITCHIE: You might want to make a list, and at some point we can do a follow-up. Then we can integrate the material where it best fits.

KETCHUM: And I do have, although I have not gotten to them yet because they are up in the attic, but I will go through and get some of the photographs you can use. I do have a lot that refer to the Capitol years because of what the kids put together in '95 when I retired. I don't want to overload you with some of the White House stuff.

RITCHIE: No, we really would like to include them. Our photo historian can do some very nice photo montages, and then ultimately, when the interview is open we have been posting a lot of them online, and the Internet really is great for adding illustrations. So anything that you have, we can make a copy of it and then return it to you. There's no limit, in other words. We can also add them to the files for our office and for the curator's office.

KETCHUM: Well, as you know only too well, one of the reasons that I refuse to

ever do a book on White House experiences—I remember reading Eisenhower’s cabinet secretary Bob Gray, he worked for Hill and Knowlton and ran their Washington operations, you would think that every decision from Lebanon to getting out of Korea was made by him. I thought to myself, “It just doesn’t work that way, don’t kid yourself.” I mean, it might be nice to play the ego game, but in terms of people in Washington it wasn’t Andy Warhol’s fifteen minutes, it was more like ten minutes.

RITCHIE: A little like Theodore Roosevelt’s memoir, *Alone in Cuba*.

KETCHUM: Yes, exactly [laughs]. Are you going some day to visit Cuba? Do you have any desire at all?

RITCHIE: I would like to see it, yes.

KETCHUM: I kind of would too. Not to go up Kettle Hill necessarily, but just to see what is happening in the country. I was just fascinated. And the reason some of this was revived recently was that Barbara and I went off to see Michael Moore’s *Sicko*, which is about what you would expect, but he pulls it all together by taking this particular group of people who were all severely disabled, especially with respiratory damage affected by 9/11, mainly because they were all told that the air was safe and you could work down there, and they went to work every day, and now they’re left for the rest of their lives suffering with it. He decided, since they weren’t getting the right care, to put them in a boat from Miami and sail the boat to Guantanamo, and get aid from the federal government of the United States off of Gitmo. So he has a megaphone and he’s screaming into Guantanamo saying, “We are Americans. We are in need of help.” Of course, they ignore them. But the Cubans take them in and take them through the whole chain of medical treatment in Havana, and the people are given fantastic care. But, of course, we’ve also seen what happens in England, France, and Canada. We’ve got all this to compare to. By the time you’re through with it, even though you’ve been brainwashed, you also are rather frustrated and furious that the American way of medicine has not been comprehensive. It’s been far from it, as we know only too well. But he stays out of the picture for most of it. He doesn’t get himself front and center like he did in *Fahrenheit 9/11*. He’s learned a bit of a lesson, but he’s one of these people who is such a polarizing character that you would hope that he’s learned to play Mother Teresa instead of the heavy hand. But enough of Mr. Ketchum and Mr. Moore, we’ll proceed.

RITCHIE: So could we talk about the Vice President's Room? Because that was fairly early in your time as the Senate curator. Those were the days when that big portrait of George Washington still hung in there, and the big credenza. I remember that Nelson Rockefeller had a little French provincial desk in there.

KETCHUM: Right. The best thing really was that Spiro Agnew decided to depart, because that gave us the opening we needed to go in. It was kind of a time of Never-Never Land to get the portrait, the Rembrandt Peale porthole portrait that had been painted specifically [for the Old Senate Chamber]—well, I shouldn't say that. It had been available at the time that they were looking for a portrait of Washington for the Senate Chamber, but he had not necessarily had that in mind when he painted it. But it was the grandfather of all the famous porthole portraits. I mean, he used that device for John Marshall and others. But his Washington, that particular Father of the Country, was something that became somewhat iconic, because it was the first thing that everyone who visited the chamber saw, front and center.

RITCHIE: It had hung in the Senate Chamber from what?

KETCHUM: It was probably the mid-1820s. Originally, there was no circular gallery. In the early days after the room's restoration [after the British burned the Capitol], the room's reconstruction in 1815-16 right through 1818, and they did a double gallery over the podium and no circular gallery. That double gallery was reduced to one, the upper one, which was literally hanging. It had chains that were holding it in place. It didn't have the support system of the columns of the lower gallery. It was really jerry-rigged. People went up there and they thought, "We're never going to get down again, or else we're going to come crashing down on the good folks below." So they took that out and they put in the very lovely Bulfinch-designed second gallery. That then freed up the space up above for that portrait. It appears in all the woodcuts and all the engraved views of the chamber from about that period on. And then in 1859 the question was what to do with it. The Capitol extension was opening and they finally decided that it could go into the Vice President's Chamber because they didn't have any plans for it in the present Senate Chamber.

RITCHIE: So after that, vice presidents didn't want to give it up?

KETCHUM: They didn't want to give it up. The Wilson desk, which was in the Vice President's Chamber, which all the vice presidents since Henry Wilson had used. Of course, the great problem I had at the White House was the fact that Nixon was convinced that he had *Woodrow* Wilson's desk. How he ever did this, I don't know. But as you know, the gubernatorial elections in New Jersey and in Virginia are always the year after the presidential election, so in 1969, when the campaign for governor of New Jersey was going strong, he went to New Jersey to campaign and he told everybody who was assembled, "I am a devoted student of history and Woodrow Wilson, and the League of Nations, blah, blah, blah," and he said, "And best of all, I sit now at Woodrow Wilson's desk." Because what he had done was he had gotten Dirksen to take the vice president's desk out of the Capitol and out of the Senate and send it down to the White House early in 1969. He could have used the Kennedy desk, which was at the Smithsonian at that point, and which we had restored after it was badly damaged in the traveling exhibit the Kennedy Library did in the '60s, but he just decided that was not going to be appropriate for his needs. And he loved it. Of course, this turned out to be the famous desk that he bugged. I remember when it came back to the Senate, [Walter] Mondale was in the office when we were bringing it in and he got down on his hands and knees and Muskie or somebody came in and he said, "Let's see if we can find out where the mikes were located." They went around looking at all the holes underneath the desk. And of course, that was one of the places that the Signal Corps tapped into for his miking.

It was Rockefeller who started bringing pieces that had been in his father's New York house down, and used them as furnishing. He also had a copy of a Nelson Aldrich portrait that the family had, a very good copy for the collection of the Senate. From that grew interest, as much with Mondale and Joan Mondale as it was with Rockefeller to find some pieces that had some association and things subsequently came in, for example, the ink stand that Vice President [Adlai] Stevenson had been given by the Senate upon his retirement, a beautiful ceremonial piece. I think it was Tiffany that it was designed and fabricated under their direction. It was enough to kind of light a fire under other prospective donors. At that point we had enough of the graphic evidence of how the room appeared. For a while, Rockefeller had installed the vice presidential photographs, which I think the Historical Office probably helped perhaps to put together, engraved portraits as well as photographic portraits later on. It looked almost like going to dinner at the Palm, except that these were not caricatures. These were more representative and realistic than what we might find in a restaurant, but they were there. I often wondered if there was any

place in any of Rockefeller's residences where he did a similar treatment, because it seemed rather strange, and not quite what you would find in most instances.

RITCHIE: I remember a very vivid change from Rockefeller to Mondale. The room had seemed dark before. It was painted dark green, I believe.

KETCHUM: Right.

RITCHIE: It sort of was like a parlor, maybe a Fifth Avenue parlor, with a small provincial desk in the center of the room and these heavy credenzas.

KETCHUM: That's right.

RITCHIE: And then with the Mondales it became very bright and open.

KETCHUM: Right, and Joan started borrowing paintings from the Walker [art museum] out in Minneapolis and also locally as well. She took great interest in it. She was fantastic, one of the brightest lights in the firmament vis-a-vis public spaces in Washington. We worked together on some other projects, and suddenly Fred Schwengel had the brilliant idea that he would put together his committee [for the Capitol Historical Society] of Joan and Nancy Stevenson, and I was on it. There were about four or five of us. Well, we decided to take apart the type of things that the Historical Society was selling in the Capitol. It was within a year that committee was disbanded. Fred Schwengel was not about to listen to any criticism of what was going on.

But Joan decided that it would be appropriate, now that there was a vice president's house that had been turned over—because remember the Rockefellers spent most of their time at their house on Foxhall Road. I don't know whether they even spent a night up at Observatory Circle. I don't think they did. But the Mondales really were the first family to move in. They had kids and all kinds of activities going on. Joan just did a knock-out job, because she merged historic pieces with fine arts from several good institutions, and then got into the craft side of it. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful examples of porcelain and textiles and other things that the American Craft Association and other groups were able to loan. She tried to keep all the regions of the country front and center, and then just publicized the daylights out of it by having so many different open houses and receptions and the like.

The one thing that was lacking, as far as she was concerned, was trying to nail some of these vice presidential administrations to the wall vis-a-vis the biographies and autobiographies, the treatment of the role. So that's when a committee was formed, of which the two Washington reps were Marvin Kranz [a manuscript curator at the Library of Congress] and myself, and then the librarian from the University of Iowa. We met with her God knows how many times. I had talked to her and had been on scene when she would come up to the Capitol. We had known each other from past experience. Just as a Senate wife we had done some things together, so she was very comfortable, as far as I was concerned, to work with. But she also had Bess Abell as her chief of staff, and Bess and I were old friends from White House days. And Mike Berman, who I knew slightly, who was running the show for him. She thought maybe it would be a good idea to also have a curatorial program there and was I interested in participating in that. I said, "Well, I am, but I've really got my hands full here. And I'm happy in this situation." I didn't want to sound like I was out fishing for another job at that point. She said, "Well, talk to Mike and see what he can do about it." Well, I went to him and I just repeated the outlines of how the White House program had been set up and how the program at the Senate existed. They decided at that stage of the game the most important thing was to take her idea about a library and proceed.

Through booksellers and book dealers, and publishers and all kinds of people, we got a lot of the books, but many of them we still had to purchase from them. So we went around beating the bushes and I had one friend, who had been very supportive of other projects that I had worked with, who came up with the first \$25,000. Then we went on from there. It was a great fund and we tried to only spend the interest—each year we would look at all the works that had been published and select those that seemed to be best suited, because there was a limitation of space. And a little bit of culling went on after the third or fourth year, but of course Marvin with the resources of the Library of Congress was perfect on that whole score. The program continued. Mrs. Bush and Laurie Firestone, who was her assistant back in the vice presidential days, worked closely on the project. We'd have open houses for donors and things of that type.

Then along came a bit of a change with the election of George Herbert Walker Bush and his vice president, the Honorable Dan Quayle. For some reason, the library was not a top priority of Mrs. Quayle. So much so that she convinced the navy, that was administering this fund, that the money should be switched to a housekeeping/

entertainment account, and within another couple of years of the Quayles there was no money left. The project, to the best of our knowledge, really withered on the vine. I know that the following administration was aware of the situation—this would be the Gores—but I'm not sure at that point how much they wanted to pursue it. I assume that the books are there to this day, but beyond that, how they have been handled and in what order they are, I don't know.

RITCHIE: That raises a question: What do you do after you restore a room like the Vice President's Room in the Capitol, or something is done at the vice presidential mansion, and you get it to the right period, you get the right pieces in that people have donated, but the next occupant decides to do something entirely different? Is there anyway to prevent that?

KETCHUM: Well, first of all, you want to make certain that there are rules in the book that keep those pieces in the collection in perpetuity, that they cannot suddenly leave with the occupant, which of course was tempting before because there was really nothing restricting them. If Lyndon Johnson or Senator X wanted to pay the Senate the replacement value for something—and of course, what is the replacement value for something that hasn't been made in 75 or 175 years?—that's kind of hard to say. But those were the ways of the world, the ways of the White House, the ways of the Senate, up until the early 1960s. In '61, when Clinton Anderson at the behest of Mrs. Kennedy introduced legislation in the Senate that made a permanent collection of White House furnishings, and also gave special museum status to the state rooms, it did not establish the office of curator. The office of curator existed, but not permanently within the White House staffing relationship until Johnson signed an executive order in March of 1964. This was something that he and Nick Katzenbach of Justice and Mrs. Kennedy really crafted this thing over a period of many weeks, with the advice of Clark Clifford. Clark Clifford was always waiting in the wings, both in the Kennedy and in the Johnson White House to help, or as you'll remember not so much help on all of this.

But, yes, that was the problem, that they weren't protected. Granted, I suppose if a Senate majority leader wanted to say, "Let's paint the Capitol dome green or pink," and gathered enough support in some crazy corners he could try something like this. You only hope that the American public would not stand some of the changes. Or the other members of an institution would not necessarily do it. But you couldn't prevent it. You really could not. Even if these pieces are going to be part and parcel in perpetuity of the

institution of the Senate—and that’s one of the reasons why I think it’s terribly important that if there’s going to be a so-called Capitol collection, that the identity of the institution, of the Senate or the House, be placed on its specifically. Because that’s how they have operated from the very beginning. It takes the control and names the institution and puts it in the bailiwick of how these pieces were used and where they were used. Just as you have certain examples that were used at the Speaker’s desk in the House of Representatives, you also have things, a gavel for example, that has some historic value of longstanding, in the Senate. You can look at Charles Bird King’s painting of Henry Clay and see this wonderful inkstand that is there, and that appears in engravings done of the same portrait, and that is something that even to this very day is inextricably linked to that particular area of the House, even though the House chamber is not where it was when Henry Clay was Speaker. We also might consider the hourglass gavel that Nixon shattered when he was gaveling the Senate to order back during his day.

But, the fact is that yes, a vice president’s wife can move in and say “I don’t like these things in Charlie’s office, and Charlie is uncomfortable with this.” Then you have to try to come up with a compromise. Granted, it’s a process of education. The first thing that you should give them upon arriving in office is some kind of a looseleaf book that shows the treatment of the room and shows what works and what does not work as far as telling the story of the vice presidency. Most are strongly enough affected by the institutional history that they will then proceed to come out on the right side of it. But it’s not always going to happen. Just as we were attempting to help the vice president’s house, it did not happen when you had Mrs. Quayle there. As an attorney, and somebody who was looking at ways, I suppose, to expand the entertainment budget, she found a way to do it. To this day, I feel strongly that what she did was not terribly kosher, but there was nobody who was going to throw the book at her. The navy was not going to declare war on her, and nobody else. You know, everybody wants to help the occupants of the office feel that they are doing just exactly the right thing and they keep nodding yes. It’s the same problem on a different scale of what happens to a president who needs to have somebody say no, this is not appropriate to the cause. But there was no one. And by the time we found out about it, several months had lapsed. It was one of these things—what do you do? Do you call up the *Washington Post* and tell them that there is something strange going on in the vice president’s library? I think they probably would not be as interested as I was in what we found out. But that is one of those things.

Anyway, slowly several things have been returned to the Vice President's Room, and the treatment of the room looks more like it did originally. The great success story, and I hope it has helped the vice president's folks realize the importance, was what we were able to do just a few yards away on the other side of that corridor, that space of the Capitol just off the Senate floor, known as the President's Room. That was a situation, as we talked earlier, about a long, wonderful period of time in which the research and the thinking could be brought to fore. Thanks to Joe Stewart, who had a particular interest in lighting fixtures, we would go to New York with fixtures in hand and visit dealers. He knew several and I knew a couple through past experience. We found ourselves getting exactly or as close to exactly what had been used in the room originally. That, combined with both the restoration of the frescoes in the room, because it was Washington's first cabinet, as well as having the table that dated back to almost the earliest days of that room, and that whole concept of why have a room in the Capitol where the president could come and sign so-called midnight legislation, all of these things came together.

We talked about the questions that might be raised in the minds of some of the members that we were doing something that was looking more like a bordello in the minds of some, but it was so totally and completely on the money as far as the restoration goes that it didn't leave a bit of criticism, and has passed the test of time. We're looking at something now nearly 20 years later and it's still very much exactly as it was. I mean, it's a lot of frosting on the cake, but that was the period. That was exactly the period.

RITCHIE: The President's Room has had more stability to it because president's don't control the room, even though they occasionally use it. But the vice president's room has gone through these various transformations. One thing that I've noticed is that it seems like each new occupant wants to take the rug up. When they take the old rug up they discover that the Minton tiles are so beautiful and decide not to put a rug back down—until after a little while it becomes an echo chamber and the next thing they say is “We need a rug in this room!”

KETCHUM: Yes. Well, when you think of some of the stories—we talked about Henry Wilson and his demise in that room, and that brings in the Senate tubs and all kinds of good things come together. The nice thing about the Vice President's Room is that it's a focal point of all the tales that can be told about the 19th-century vice presidents, and then you add the layers of the Wilson desk and the problem with Nixon staffers not wanting to face up with telling him that he was not talking about the right

Wilson. Truman considered himself the great historian on many issues, but it was Nixon who really bungled the goods as often as anybody.

I got into more than a bit of trouble at the White House because he wanted to move the press into a space where they could be self-contained and would not be wandering around the halls as they had before. The easiest thing for him to do was to take out the White House pool, of which we all loved the story of the children of America saving their pennies to build the pool for FDR, and in the process we did some excavation. Lo and behold we realized—we knew a little bit about this—it would have been the great garbage heap for administrations. It had been a well during the Jefferson administration, with underground storage where ice from the river was brought up in blocks. Then it would be ice and straw, and ice and straw. That was the ice that would be used for refrigeration for a long period of time each year in the White House. Not until the Jackson administration, when they started finding deep wells with very cold water, which would go through the building in a trough, that would become a primitive form of refrigeration. Butter, eggs, and so forth would be put in small buckets and they would be submerged in this trough of cold water.

Then the blocks of ice were no longer needed, so they were left with this deep, deep hole over there, in what would become the area of the pool. All the broken plate, all the dishes from each administration that didn't make it through, were placed in this particular area, so it was one strata after another. It was fantastic. We found so many examples of presidential china, some of which had very little damage as a matter of fact, but we never knew had existed. These were brought front and center. Well, it totally threw the timetable that Haldeman had for this project off into a cocked hat, and ultimately I think delayed it by probably a good six to eight months. Once the story is out, you can't really run roughshod over it.

It's the same thing with the Vice President's Chamber. Once you start putting all the actors in place—there were none of these stories that weren't known, but you never had brought them in one mosaic or one patchwork. It's a pretty powerful thing, and it really does help to nail some of these objects permanently to the space in which they are exhibited. You can't deny the good theater that it presents to the visitor, and especially to the vice president. That memory of mine of Mondale, down on his hands and knees. I think it was Muskie who was with him, but I'll have to go back and see if I have any notes on this. But they were looking at the desk that was returned, at the beginning of his

vice presidency, from the White House, that had been the holder of all those mikes for the taping system that Nixon had put in.

RITCHIE: It was ironic that he wanted the desk because it was historic, and he made it even more historic.

KETCHUM: Exactly, and the thing that was kind of curious was I remember when I took Nixon around on a tour. This was probably the second or third full day that he was in the White House. I was told we would begin at two o'clock roughly but had to be finished by 5 or 5:30 because they were showing *The Shoes of the Fisherman* in the White House theater, one of Morris West's, the Australian writer's, books that had been turned into a film. We went into Nixon's bedroom, which had been the Lyndon Johnson bedroom—there had been traditionally in recent administrations a bedroom assigned to the president, and a bedroom assigned to his spouse. In the case of the president's wife, there is not only a bedroom but off of it is a sitting room and a lot of closet space, a lot more than is designated for the president. The thing that Nixon was so taken up by were all of the cables and all of the lines—you know, the Johnson White House had an awful lot of electronic systems, including some that were geared to electronic miking. But Nixon wanted all these cables removed. He couldn't stand the whole idea. And what does he do but within months he's turned right around and done exactly, and even more so, of what Johnson, who he was criticizing, had done.

He was fascinated with the Johnson's shower, which you will recall Johnson was never satisfied that there was enough force of water coming into the president's shower stall in the president's bathroom, and all the things that were tried by putting these huge tanks up on the roof that would increase the pressure, because it would be coming straight down, and the various jets that he wanted built into the shower stall so that the water could hit him from every single conceivable angle. I'm not sure whether Nixon, when he first tried Johnson's shower, wasn't knocked halfway out of the room, but it's very possible, because Rex Scouten, who was then one of the ushers, who tried it after the plumbers finished making the 19th modification to it, brought in a pair of bathing trunks, put them on and got into the shower and literally claimed that he was thrown right against the wall in the darned thing.

But the entire sense of how the extension served the Senate, starting in the late 1850s, was a fascinating exercise. While there is not a lot of space in the working Capitol

today that could be devoted solely to visitors, such as the Old Supreme Court or the Old Senate Chamber, there are still other ways, as Mark Hatfield found out with the Appropriations Committee. It's very possible that someday where the Republican leadership is located that some things could be done there. People still don't have an understanding of how many institutions, Supreme Court, Library of Congress, and so forth, were located in the building in the first half of the 19th-century, and especially the role that the Library of Congress played there, as a very good case in point.

RITCHIE: I've always liked the fact that after you renovated a room and redecorated it, you always had brochures done for them. Now almost every one of those historic rooms, the Vice President's Room, the President's Room, the Old Senate Chamber, the Supreme Court Chamber, they all have brochures for the public who visit them. How did you come to the decision to do that?

KETCHUM: Oh, I think it was partially guided by what we did at the White House. Early in the Kennedy administration, Mrs. Kennedy wanted to have a publication which was definitely tied to the visitors' understanding of what they would be seeing. She asked *National Geographic* to come up with a prototype. They came and made a presentation, and she very politely said, "Gentlemen, I'm afraid this is just not going to be acceptable," because in the traditional *Geographic* approach they had pictures of the rooms but they had children in every one, and she said, "I really want the objects to tell the story. We'll find a way to use the visitors, but this is not really the way to do it." She made the stars of the show the paintings and the examples of furniture and decorative arts that were being acquired, and it worked extremely well. So that was one way.

The other way was that she wanted to have on the floor in each room a folding outline of all the important pieces of furniture with numbers and under the caption just a five, ten, twelve-word description of what that was. It had to be large enough. So what we designed were long, horizontal panels that were hinged. It became a triangle and two sides just supported it in the backside. It was all wood tone, and then this laminate piece where you saw the design. Later on, in some rooms we actually put this on a pedestal as well, because most people—the way people filed through the rooms—could see this. It was put back in the room on the floor, but in large enough type faces to read, and that described it for them. There was never enough times with the general public tours, which began at ten o'clock in the morning and went through until noon, from 8 until 10 you had the so-called congressional tours in those days. These were guided tours and a tour guide

was able to point out most of this, although these things were still placed out every single day. They had to be portable enough. They could be picked up and put in a storage cupboard.

There's no bathroom on the first floor of the White House at all. It's just absolutely unbelievable what was in the minds of people back in the Truman renovation. You have to send people downstairs one full flight and hope that they all arrive at their destination, and then even so you can have a reception for a thousand people and we're talking about one bathroom for the male of the species and one for the women. The Capitol has long been far better organized as far as those facilities are concerned for the public. We're not talking about the public at the White House, we're talking about guests! If you are a member of the visiting public on a tour, unless you pass out or otherwise show that you are absolutely in need of immediate relief, there's no way that anybody's going to help you out on that score.

But the whole sense of getting the story out there in a published form—and that's the wonderful thing about the Internet today—you can go online and have a virtual tour if you want, and the possibility of expanding things like that is unending.

RITCHIE: I've noticed on Capitol Hill that a lot of the senators and representatives who walk past this artwork and these historical rooms are often oblivious to it, because they're fixed on today's legislation. But every once in a while they stop and they get very curious, and it's nice that there are brochures and other information that's readily available. I remember the story about Bill Clinton's first day as president. He went to the President's Room to sign his first executive orders, and he asked the leadership who the paintings were on the walls, and none of the Senate leaders knew what to tell him. Now there's a brochure when you walk in that room that spells it out for you.

KETCHUM: Absolutely, and that's one of the reasons why it's also been good to put some of these exhibits in corridors so that while they're changing exhibits each one will touch upon a particular facet of the story. I remember we did a rather primitive book on the Senate and dining, the various recipes such as for Senate bean soup, and Huey Long's pot likker and some of the things that came out of the *Congressional Record*. Well, Jim Pearson, a senator then from Kansas, was off on a foreign trip and the only thing he wanted to take along to give away was this particular brochure. We had a

somewhat limited printing, but we were going to go into a reprint so it was not a problem to give him a couple of hundred of these, and away they went.

But it's funny how you start to scratch some of these surfaces and look at it through different eyes, and people will come back with: "Well, why don't you do this?" And usually their ideas are quite appropriate to the cause. And that's in, I think once the folks who are locked into a particular mind set—before the Senate leadership organized the Senate curatorial program and the Commission on Art and Antiquities as it was then known, once you got them to realize that you are really not here to make life difficult, once you get them to realize that you're both people that have certain aims that are shared and goals that are shared, it really takes on a life of its own and develops rather quickly. It can and it did. And as we spent some good time yesterday talking about the merits of food and moments under the dome that were not to be used for taking each other on but finding some commonality and some interests there, once that was known, it was perfect. It was a great way to go down the road together, and you did. Boy, it took a lot of cooperation from those people to make it happen, because the feelings in the architect's office through the years were just amazing, at how difficult they made things. And they still do make life difficult for these programs, because it's been a real threat to what they felt was their authority.

RITCHIE: You had various exhibit spaces in the Capitol when you were curator, starting with the Documents of the Senate booth, which was a relatively modest sized exhibit in the crypt area, and then in the extension on the ground floor of the Capitol you've had a series of changing exhibits. How hard was it to get that kind of space?

KETCHUM: That was hard. It was hard to get out of the crypt. The crypt was not a problem because they thought, "We'll put them in there." It was the Rules Committee, I'm convinced, that decided, "Well, we'll give them something to play with and that will be it." It took us quite a while. In the meantime we also moved into the Old Supreme Court Chamber and did an exhibit in there. And of course the folks in Frederick, Maryland, were dying to have Roger Taney brought back to life and put on display. [Laughs] We were realistic enough to know that Taney was not going to be everybody's favorite chief justice of the United States, but on the other hand there was a story there and let's look at that particular story. [Louis] Brandeis' family, they were quite wonderful about sharing. So these things all came together. By the time we were through, and we were also doing new exhibits in members' offices about things that were related and

borrowed from state institutions, it seemed to be the right time to go back—because we had gone a couple of times to knock on the door of the Rules Committee and get them to sign off. I know the architect's office just said it would be a bottleneck and it wouldn't work. They were very much working hand in glove. But we had staffers who said no. We laid it out as directly as we could in terms of detailing what the subjects might be. The materials that we would be selecting for the installation, for the boards and the vitrines and so forth would be permanently tied to that space.

And you know, it's interesting, Don, once we got over that particular hurdle, it was not as difficult to get the interactive kiosks that we were doing. Slowly but surely, I mean it's a very strange marriage of space and story because that building is a fairly rich tapestry, and yet it is enough to find there are always people who are there who will give anything to have some of the questions they have answered. I hope today as many as possible can sit down at their computer and go to the Senate site and find out more about what is available through the historical office or the curator's office, or how the chamber is organized. The whole project on the Senate desks, for example, meant that each member ultimately would have a listing and a fairly good idea of what members in the past had occupied this space. You don't have to dig very deeply sometimes to find examples that really give a little bit different light and would turn a somewhat neutral ear to great enthusiasm over what had happened in this space or with this particular desk or chair, or whatever you might be trying to tell. I, for one, think that it's the kind of challenge that not only is a great pleasure, but the meetings that we used to have in the office planning something like this were just tremendous.

The ideas were coming from everywhere and it was just great to hear people who had been part of a different world before they had come to work in the office start to tell what their ideas and their thoughts were. We would always encourage any new employee to spend as much time wandering through the building and just getting to a point where they could ask questions about what is happening and why is this being treated this way, and what went on here. And because of a series of supportive leaders, and especially because of secretaries of the Senate who spent—I mean, Frank Valeo was as much heaven-sent as anybody could be, because of the patience it took to get the legislation through to start the work on the restoration of the Old Senate and the Old Supreme Court Chambers. You had very few members of the Senate that were really interested. John Stennis really carried it through much of the '60s, and kept getting up and making floor speeches and doing all that he could. Stennis had tremendous respect, as you know, in

that body politic, but it was a very lonely voice that was sometimes crying out in that wilderness. But he did, and by the time we got into the '70s, even though while I was there it was at least five times, if I remember correctly, either regular or supplemental appropriations that the bill for the restoration of the Old Senate and Supreme Court Chambers went through.

Those were big projects and they took a lot of time and they took a lot of people who had to do things that in the past they would not necessarily have agreed with. But it was fortunate. We had an old architect who was in a nursing home on Wisconsin Avenue, and would soon be leaving this world. We had a new architect who came in who was interested in his power base, and he knew that to get the Senate to be on his side he'd better go along. Once I remember we had a real impasse with the George White administration, and I went to Frank. He said, "Let me talk to Mansfield." And Frank came back and said, "Mansfield said we have subpoena power and if the commission has to meet and subpoena him and get him on record, as far as what he's supposed to do, we'll do it." It was not just a comfortable let's sit down with Hugh Scott and Mike Mansfield and George White and come to an agreement. Mansfield was ready and loaded for bear. He really cared.

He had great affection for what Mrs. Kennedy did at the White House. The kind of a bridge there was she was very good about the Treaty Room that existed next to the Lincoln Bedroom. It had been Grant's Cabinet Room, actually, in the White House. When they were putting the finishing touches, she thought what a great idea to have some of the treaties that the Senate had passed and were signed into law, many of them in this room in the 19th century. She had the Central Intelligence Agency make fantastic facsimiles of these original treaties that were at Archives or at State. They were then double matted and placed on the wall, in wonderful frames that were black lacquer and gold and so forth that worked with the room. Then she had Mansfield and Dirksen and company down to thank them. This was fantastic. The chandelier, of course, that she put in the room had its own story because it had been a chandelier that had been in the White House originally and then during one of the great Chester Arthur to Theodore Roosevelt sales went out of the house and was picked up by the Capitol along with several other White House chandeliers, and suddenly she wanted to see if it could come back. The Capitol and the Senate would not give it to her, but they would loan it to her.

One of my less happy moments was during the time that I was here for the first 10 years, Senator Byrd with the support of some of the other members decided that the White House no longer should have that chandelier. I think some of it was the bitterness with the Nixon administration and what have you. So they requested it back, and it did come back. But that was in the Treaty Room and with those high ceilings it made that wonderful space come alive. In 1962, she invited them down to thank them. So they knew the program a bit. They understood it. There are wonderful memos from Walter—well, Johnson was vice president and his principal aide at that point was Walter—

RITCHIE: Jenkins.

KETCHUM: Jenkins, who—I don't know what his title was, but let us say special assistant to the vice president—would be getting these messages from Johnson saying, "I saw Mrs. Kennedy last night at a reception and she wanted to know again what is the status of the chandelier." And Walter Jenkins was supposed to be doing his bidding with the leadership of the Senate, and the architect's office, and the Rules Committee. He was having a terrible time, and somehow, I don't know how, it was finally loosened up and gotten out of there. But it did, and it came down. Its vertical measurement was too great for the room, so we had to take one tier off, which was stored at the White House and not reunited with it until it went back up to the Capitol. But anyway, she was a good ambassador and it was very significant to get the folks in the leadership who had been helpful to come down to the White House where the room would be dedicated, and she could personally thank them. She did all of these things.

And it was the right time. During the '60s, about a third of the governors' mansions throughout the country were restored. Several of the state houses underwent historic preservation. Places as large as the state capital in Albany, in New York state, to what existed when John Burns was governor of Hawaii. That whole thing was a contagion of sorts. People got into the know, as well as the people who were representing them here in Washington were getting into the know. It's one thing to be able to acquire and to be able to tell the story, and it's another thing to be able to safeguard these things in such a way that they will continue to be part and parcel. Sometimes you can't use the original and you have to make a good replication and copy and put that in place, especially with textiles, with rugs as a case in point. Institutions that have people who are treading on the old surface of the floor know especially. The Capitol is absolutely ideal because of the Minton tiles, but even they after a hundred years have to be replaced.

RITCHIE: I've been hearing in other interviews from people who have responded to some of the exhibits that the curator's office put up. Particularly Isaac Bassett got a lot of attention. People remember that because it connected them in a way to the history of the institution. Did you get a lot of feedback from your exhibits from senators or staff?

KETCHUM: We did. One of the things that we did early on was to have staff members come over and look. And of course this culminated in how we treated "Necessary Fence," with the staff. But yes. The thing that was interesting about Bassett was we concentrated not on the members, not on the legislative issues, not on presidential inaugurations and the like. All those vehicles were quite appropriate, especially the inaugurals because it gave us a chance to do folios of 19th-century prints. We could start at the beginning and go say to Theodore Roosevelt with engravings from *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's*, and so forth. That was a limited edition which was given to the guests at the [post-inaugural] luncheon over in Statuary Hall and made the members of the inaugural committee very happy to have an opportunity to do something like this. But the subject of Isaac Bassett gave us the staff and that long look at how staff members were integrated into the process of the running of the Senate and of the Capitol for that period of the 19th century, which as we know ran from the very earliest days of the page system right on through to—not quite up to, but starting to knocking on the door of—direct election of senators.

People want to identify. They really do. And they want to know what was strange. What didn't work? What do we see today that reminds us of their time? There was a lot there. Everything from how snuff was used to the carving of the names in the desks. The racing from one end of the world to the other, all of the stories that could be told about pages and about people who were assigned to the chamber. And having restored the Old Senate Chamber and the room that really worked its way through the close of the Golden Age, up to the Civil War period, even though it's a much smaller scale and a much more limited staffing, it still had elements that people today could see and understand quite clearly. We realized that staffing is so terribly important to the success of how the institution runs and how it operates.

RITCHIE: It's interesting, when you think about the exhibits, that most of it is for the millions of visitors who come through the building, but quite often when you go

by it's a Capitol policeman who's reading the text, or somebody else who's waiting for a meeting and taking a little time to educate themselves about the history.

KETCHUM: Yes, and I think that you can agree that it really should be that way. In so many ways we think of the public as the prime audience, but should it be the prime audience? I mean, can't you do an even better job by looking at the family of the support team and efforts and the members themselves, and then let it work its way into the folks who are coming to visit the building? It would seem to me, just as people in their own domiciles would be the ones who should know what had happened and what goes on. Growing up and living much of my life in old houses, things were identified by whose furniture in the family this had been, and who had been married in the front parlor, and what time, and all of the other tales. There were three sisters when I was a child who had worked as scullery maids and one woman had actually lived in the house for three generations, raising my grandmother from the time she was two, raising my father, and then helping to take care of us. She died in her mid-90s. She had stories that never stopped about the house and about my ancestors. Well, this is the same thing, and Isaac Bassett in many ways had that kind of a period of representation.

Because he wrote this down—the book was never published and I don't know how serious he was, but at the time we assume that he was, and his family had enough respect to save it. They had lived for several generations on Capitol Hill and it was a woman just up the road in Carlisle, on High Street, by the name of Elizabeth Crosby who was a grandchild of Bassett's. In her 80s, we invited her to come to the opening of the Old Supreme Court Chamber. She had also given us a couple of lamps for the room. She was just absolutely taken completely by what this meant and in her will she made it quite clear that she wanted various affects that she had kept to come back to the Senate. Her daughter, who came from California to settle the estate, called me up and said, "Can you come up to the house in Carlisle?" Of course, living on weekends not that far away, we were happy to go up.

Mrs. Crosby, I can remember so clearly, the first time Barbara and I went up to visit her when she was probably in the last three or four years of her life, so she had to be close to 90, insisted that we come at midday so that she could prepare lunch for us. Here in a kitchen that hadn't been touched since about 1910 she prepared a simple but wonderful lunch. She just lit up like a Christmas tree. She'd lived on Capitol Hill in the area where the Folger [Shakespeare Library] is today. She just had stories that didn't stop,

and there was enough in her family coffers to allow her to keep a house in Maine and then in later years it was the house in Carlisle. So you would get her stories about Castine, Maine, and Carlisle, and of course all that had taken place in Washington previously.

The oral tradition was really what counted here. Granted, Bassett himself had written a great deal of it down, but what was passed on to the children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, was not the Bassett papers. I mean, they existed, but she turned them over at the time of the research on the chambers—the architect’s office was doing some research rather early on—to the architect’s office, and they just put them aside in a corner, used some of them, but were not about to give them back. She didn’t give them to them at all, she just loaned them. We had a bit of a tussle with a staff member in the architect’s office who did not want to even admit that they were there. But a new administration came in and Anne Radice was then doing curatorial duty down there and she was very good. She turned them over to us immediately and said, “You should discuss these appropriately.” I said, “Oh, the family knows exactly what we’re doing, and we’re hoping that they will sign them over to the federal government.” I said, “The Library of Congress should be the recipient and we will all have what we need in facsimiles, and we will borrow them whenever they’re appropriate for an exhibition or some kind of a program where they could be useful. But it’s a trove, and you’ve seen much of that material I am sure, and all of the things that he had. His little stories of members and their peccadillos are quite interesting, to put it mildly.

RITCHIE: Well, the modern staff respond very positively to it, and several of them have mentioned it.

KETCHUM: The nice thing about that is that your own colleagues in the office get excited about it, because they are the first line of making the identification with these. From them then follows what gets out there and the manner that it is presented. I am glad. Yes, I think you’re right, when I would be down kind of playing spy on what was happening—and this again went back to White House days when I got a memo from Mrs. Kennedy asking the curator’s office to develop some kind of a disguise so that we could go on tour and not be recognized by the guides at the White House. She suggested wigs. She suggested dark glasses. She went through all of these things because she wanted to know what kind of tours the public was getting. Well, I used to go down and stand in the connecting corridor in the Senate extension to see how people were taking to the exhibit that we mounted the first go-round.

But the sky was the limit once you understood that they were totally enjoying it and that you could pick from all kinds of apples on the tree of subject matter. You did not have to keep coming back with the same type and the same corner of interest. That was great, and I don't think we had—oh, sure, sometimes it was probably a bit of a congestion site, but I never thought that it stopped traffic from going through that part of the building. If you had a large group going through, well, sure, some might stop and take it in accordingly.

RITCHIE: A large part of your career on Capitol Hill was bookended by two bicentennials. We talked about the impact of the national bicentennial on the Old Supreme Court Chamber and the Old Senate Chamber, and then there was the congressional bicentennial in 1989. A lot of the work in the 1980s was in anticipation of that congressional bicentennial. How did that impact on the work of the curator's office?

KETCHUM: Almost from the beginning, when Bill Hildenbrand had a gathering and Dick [Baker], and people from the outside world, Forrest Pogue and others, sat around in the secretary's conference room. Dick and I came prepared with lists of suggested topics that could be included. We talked about the individual exhibits and so forth, but it was really time to take a chunk of the story and go Broadway full tilt. That was the planting of the seed for "Necessary Fence," which as you may remember did not really have a title that everybody agreed with. I thought it was a wonderful title. I didn't think there was going to be anything better, but people thought we were doing everything from 19th-century drug dealers to whatever else. I was never sure. But it was time to take all that we had learned about furniture in the old chamber, about the Isaac Bassett story, and about all the various elements, and really lay it out there in space, and size, and scope that could be assimilated.

The hope was that people would see it once and want to go back and see it a second and third time, if possible. I remember one of the staffers came over to the office one day to say that he had seen it something like 20 times. I didn't know whether he was just unable to go back and do the job that he was assigned to do in his office, but I thought I can't believe that this would be that captivating. I mean, for us it was manna from heaven. But as you know the time frame for that particular exhibit extended over a several-year period. It really was one of the high points of the quarter century that I was at the Capitol. I found that the reaction that we got from members, as well as the groups that went through, plus what it did for your professional colleagues in the city and in the

country was very, very positive. We showed that we could do it. And thanks to you, who played such a fantastically important job, and as Diane Skvarla will tell you she felt it was going to be the impossible dream, and boy, she just latched onto it and showed exactly what kind of energy and talent that she could put into it. I could play devil's advocate and just step back. But you carried it with you all the time, with such a sense of purpose and pride because you knew that it was going to work, it had to work, and you knew that there were so many people who were waiting for you to fall completely on your face. The space over there in the Russell Building [rotunda] had been used on a fairly regular basis for various groups that wanted to have an exhibit. One week was the average, or two weeks of an exhibition of one type or another. So to think that we were going to do this for nine months or what have you was unbelievable.

My major problem was taking tobacco money. That was really something that I wrestled with. Even though I was a former smoker, and somebody who although I don't think I ever had tobacco stocks my family certainly did, but that was a problem for me at that stage. But I guess you have to weigh all these things and hope for the best that it works out. I don't think I was aware of what kind of campaigns that tobacco companies had in trying to discourage youngsters from smoking because I never thought that those were really campaigns that they were serious about to begin with. So I had nothing to latch on to. But boy they had the dollars and Joe Stewart was awfully good about building the bridges to those dollars. I'm sure we could have raised a certain amount of money from private sources that would not be tied to the tobacco, but I doubt very much that we could have done what we did in the period of time that we had, because we were talking about a piece of change that ultimately amounted to close to, not quite a half million dollars but in dollars of the '80s it probably was more like three quarters of a million today. It was not inexpensive.

There again, you had an opportunity not only to mount the exhibit but to do a paper version that could be distributed to schools throughout the country. You could do publications that teachers could use in their guides to the story and instruction. A brochure, which I thought was one of the best things of its type, that you and Diane made possible. All of these things do have a life for a good long time to come. The whole idea of using the design elements and having Staples and Charles do the posters—at first we thought we'd do a series of maybe a dozen traveling exhibits. They would be paper. They would be fairly large pylons or folding elements that would go out there. Then we thought: Why not just make it a permanent thing for people? We'll have these published

as posters. They can frame them, put them on a wall, or do them in any number of configurations. We'll even send them various design ideas. That's what we did. Then we turned around and we went to every state humanities commission. In every single state, we first went to the members of the Senate, the senior member from each state and said that this was what we'd like to do and we'd like to work through the humanities council of each state unless you have another suggestion. Most of them were very content to have the state humanities group proceed with it. Then they in turn, with their relationships with the schools, were the distribution point for them. You can't help but walk away from that time frame and not feel very, very good about what people were able to do.

RITCHIE: That exhibit was for the bicentennial but the focus of "A Necessary Fence" was the first 100 years. How did you decide to focus on the period from 1789 to 1889, as opposed to trying to do the whole 200 years?

KETCHUM: I think we just really wanted to avoid trying to deal with the recent history, and it didn't make any sense to do 150 years. At some point the second hundred years will be taken on. I'm trying to think—that's what affected me more than anything else. I had another exhibit that I wanted to do before I left the Senate and it was a gigantic exhibit on the Senate and portraiture. Again, it was going to have to be a concentration of 18th and 19th century. We would certainly have 20th century, don't get me wrong, but there would be a lot more during the golden age of American portraiture, and we're talking about painted portraits now. I think we probably would have had to have considered photographic portraits at some stage of the game, although really in some ways that could almost be a separate exhibit. That was my other great goal.

Then we started doing certain things like the film festival, and getting Bob Saudek involved. Saudek, who in the last year of John Kennedy's life went to the White House and convinced JFK that *Profiles in Courage* should be turned into a television series. NBC was backing him on this, and Kennedy signed off on it, although they didn't debut until after the assassination. But he had done a lot of research, and his folks had, on the Senate and on how they could set the stage for these stories. It's one thing to see them in black and white on the printed page but he obviously was looking for that extra dimension. I'm trying to remember some of the actors he got. Walter Matthau as a senator just didn't make sense unless he was going to be somebody who was considered a bit of a buffoon. Wesleyan University has a bit of this material, and I think the Library of Congress has them all as well, although Bob gave a bunch of his stuff to Wesleyan.

RITCHIE: Wasn't William Daniels John Quincy Adams?

KETCHUM: William Daniels was John Quincy Adams in the *Adams Chronicles*. That was during the bicentennial of the revolution. I'm trying to think, the director of that episode was the same man who produced the *Miracle Worker*, he was a television director in the '50s at Philco and some of the other hour-long programs [Fred Coe]. Daniels had all kinds of problems when he was playing in that. It was before the Old Supreme Court Chamber had opened to the public. Daniels had just had an emergency appendectomy. One of the requests was could we put a folding screen at the outer perimeter of the Old Supreme Court Chamber and could we bring in a cot. He could then rest between takes. We did, and there was Infirmary 101 over in one corner and the rest of the production was being set up in the rest. It was several weeks before the official opening so it was not going to get us into trouble.

Later on, the calls would come in: We want to have funeral services there. Strom Thurmond decided it was the only place for a welcome to the world lunch for Sandra Day O'Connor could be held in 1981, when she was named to the court. It was not a happy thought because we had put all the effort into restoring those rooms so that they could be open to the public, and that while they had to stay back on the public side of the ropes, the rooms themselves would not have 57 people walking about with plates of food. I think we did fairly well, again the fact that Mansfield was majority leader for the first months and years of those rooms being opened helped a great deal, because we got those regs published right away, which helped us protect it.

RITCHIE: You had Senator Mansfield who had been leader for a long time, and who had tremendous authority and continuity. The same thing with Frank Valeo. They had been in office for about 16 years. In the '80s while you were planning for the bicentennial you started with Howard Baker as majority leader and Bill Hildenbrand as secretary. Then you had Bob Dole as majority leader and Jo-Anne Coe as secretary. Then you had Joe Stewart as the secretary and Senator Byrd as the majority leader. So you had very different personalities in each of those jobs. What kinds of problems did this create in planning for the bicentennial?

KETCHUM: The planning with Bill and Senator Baker was really very, very easy. It was challenging, but they gave you all the support plus that you would ever require. We spoke about Baker and how tremendous he was. And this was at a time when

we really were starting to spend the dollars and expand the purview of the program. Bill—one could not say enough in support of his efforts, and the same thing with Baker. Baker was just so darned interested. He was so good about understanding what you were trying to do. He took the time and he innately seemed to be with you, or understand what it was about. Byrd was no—I mean Joe Stewart could speak for Byrd and knew Byrd like the back of his hand, so there was no single request that was made of Senator Byrd that did not get approved. I remember the first meeting I had with Joe. We finished up and he said, “There’s only one thing that I really want to bring to your attention and I want you to be very careful about this.” I said, “What’s that, sir?” He said, “I don’t want to be called sir.” He really did not. I don’t know whether I was still practicing my boy scout deference or what it was all about, but I walked out of that shaking my head.

On the other hand, I can remember my first meeting with Kimmitt. He wanted to make sure that everybody understood what loyalty was about. “Absolutely,” I said, “oh, I do.” I think he thought that I was probably sending secret messages to Val. I don’t know what it was about, but obviously I was identified with the Valeo forces. But I was also identified with the Mansfield forces and after all Kimmitt was where he was because of Mansfield, or at least had gotten his Senate baptism because of Mansfield, granted we give the army credit for sending him up there. But Kimmitt was a person who was a bit suspicious. Bill Hildenbrand wasn’t suspicious at all. He loved to tease. I loved to tease. I tried to be respectful, but also it was very enjoyable. He was just somebody who you just did like working with.

Joe Stewart was great. All the elements that were there, whether it be the way to somebody’s financial support through his stomach or whatever you were talking about, he knew and appreciated and could be helpful. And he had many, many good ideas. He carried the water for us beautifully on the President’s Room. He made sure that people knew that when we had to say no for the use of a chamber or what have you, that here are the reasons why. Joe had a wonderful way of sounding fairly confidential [speaks in a low tone]: “This is really what we’re doing and why we’re doing it.” You could play into that very nicely.

Jo-Anne Coe was the one secretary who I really was not terribly pleased with. She got into the habit of calling me at home each evening, and obviously was sometimes in her cups. When Barbara and I might be out for an evening, she’d talk to the kids. I found her a person who you felt very sorry for. She had a wonderful assistant secretary in the

form of Lynda Nersessian, who was just fantastic and that helped a great deal. Jo-Anne was an interesting person, but it was a time when I had been there probably about the longest of any office head and I would start getting visits from other supervisors on a fairly constant basis who were not getting along with her at all. All I could think of was I had been through 327 changes of administration and they're all different, they really are. This was a difficult time. What I didn't particularly understand was why the necessity for Jo-Anne to vent on the phone three or four evenings a week. I just was not prepared for that at all.

RITCHIE: It didn't seem like it was a job she really liked. She had been Senator Dole's very close aide and she really liked that, but running the secretary's office was probably not something she had aspired to.

KETCHUM: I don't think so. She was the daughter of a very successful naval admiral who had all kinds of things that must have looked good as far as his administrative record was concerned. She really was—I don't want to sound sexist about this—but she was one tough broad. She could be. I would not want to go up against her in a dark alley. But I wanted to be helpful. I had an office and a program to try to keep going and to make sure that she understood. And I think that she did. She didn't block anything that we were doing. I don't ever recall her showing much animus towards any situation that arose in our operation at all. It was the side of her that exhibited itself after hours that was difficult for me to accept.

RITCHIE: It was a transition from one Republican majority leader to another, but they were entirely different personalities.

KETCHUM: Totally.

RITCHIE: Senator Dole and Jo-Anne Coe seemed suspicious of everybody.

KETCHUM: Sure. Alan Simpson, other than Chuck Robb, was the only member that I would ever call by his first name, and I resisted it. He said, "Now you've known me long enough," and I loved it. I remember one night we all got the giggles. We had gotten invited, God knows why or how, to Strom Thurmond's for the evening, out in McLean. We arrived on scene and just as we were arriving Ann and Al Simpson were getting there

as well. Staffers of Thurmond were parking cars. It was at a cul de sac. The house was not at all what you would think of for McLean, Virginia. These were houses that would have been much more at home in Falls Church or some place else. When you went in you were invited to go down to the cellar and you went to the basement level where there was a recreation room, and there were all these table top cases, these vitrines. Nancy Thurmond had been Miss South Carolina in her past and they had her crown, and her scepter, and her ermine cape, and photographs galore. Then upstairs you went out to the patio where there were probably five tables, each one seating eight people. You could sit where you wanted to, so we sat with the Simpsons. After a bit, these little Thurmond kids kept coming out and crawling up in Strom's lap. I swear to God, he wouldn't give any of them names. He would just say, "Hiya sweetie," and so forth and so on that we started to wonder if he really did know what their names were. Well, we laughed so, and we talked about that later on, but that was kind of our introduction to what was going on in the social occasions.

Suddenly, Dole comes in as majority leader and you were invited to a luncheon. The luncheon really is: If you're not going to play ball, take a hike and get out of here. Well, I had never been introduced to a situation quite like that. It really was a bit of a shock to me. We all got autographed pictures a few days later. I finally, later on, said something to Simpson about it and he said, "Aw, that's just Dole. Ignore it. He doesn't have enough to do." Of course, here's Dole who's wearing out two sets of secretaries day in and day out, he's going from 7 in the morning till 9, 10, eleven o'clock at night, shades of Lyndon Johnson all over again. But I never felt—and maybe it's because of the way the White House is set up—that Johnson invited everybody in and told them that you'd better take a loyalty oath right now here and there or else it's goodbye.

In the very beginning at the Capitol, I was voting probably not a straight Democratic ticket but close enough, but I think I was still a registered Republican as I mentioned, just because I never did anything about my registration. It was about that time that I realized that it was very good that soon after I went up on the Hill I'd registered as an independent, and that's what I kept throughout.

RITCHIE: I always thought that his two tenures as majority leader were like night and day. By the time he came back as majority leader the second time he'd had a chance to take the measure of everyone and he was incredibly cooperative and supportive. But the first time around they were so suspicious.

KETCHUM: Absolutely.

RITCHIE: It was like everybody had to prove themselves to them in some fashion.

KETCHUM: And they did. Of course, you obviously wanted to. The second time the difference was Sheila Burke, to me. I just found her a joy to work with. There was something about her that was much easier than Martha [Pope]. I loved George Mitchell, I thought he was wonderful, but I thought Martha was somebody who—we had a funny experience with her. We were in Ireland and we had been living for about eight days in a little hotel in the very center of the Dingle Peninsula, and at breakfast our landlady came up to us. She was a nurse out of Dublin who decided she wanted to go into the hotel business, and that meant getting up and putting the Irish bread in the oven at 5:30 in the morning. She came in and said, “Do you know anyone from Washington named Martha Pope?” I said, “Yes, as a matter of fact, I used to work under her direction at the Senate. Why do you ask?” She said, “Well, she’s in Northern Ireland with Senator Mitchell and she’s coming down and she’s going to be spending a few days here.” I said, “Well, let me write a little letter of introduction.” This woman’s name was Marie. “You give it to her when she comes.” So I sat down. It was the only time since I left the Senate that I have had any contact with her. I never heard from her afterwards.

I was fascinated by her, and there was a certain sense of attraction there as far her persona and how she handled herself, but there was no—I mean, Sheila had this empathy, this warmth. I could see Sheila as the epitome of nursing because of bedside manner. She just knew how to treat people. She was right across the board very intelligent in terms of knowing a little bit about a lot of things. I guess that’s probably where I come from too many of the times, just kind of voraciously interested in everything but is it more than a half-inch thick, sometimes you have to ask yourself about that. But that’s the way one is, so I could identify and I could share with Sheila. That was not the case with Martha. Martha had a certain protectiveness about her. That curtain fell and you went on from there.

Again, humor helped a lot. I took seriously what we were doing always, but I never tried to take myself that seriously. I would try to inject whenever possible the laugh lines that were there. I like the distinction that is drawn between the first Dole and the second Dole, because I don’t think that a secretary of the Senate is necessarily always the

reflection of the leader, or if they are, if the type of persona of the secretary changes one might assume that the leader himself or herself has changed in attitude towards administration. I mean, it's a whale of a job these days for that person. I can't believe for a moment that Jo-Anne Coe and Sheila Burke were related in any way, shape, or means. To me, I would think that they would be at opposite points.

I'm trying to think what Jo-Anne did do while Sheila was secretary. She was working on Dole's campaign, Campaign America or whatever it was called, that's right. She had a very interesting daughter who was married to an English peer who came a couple of times, I remember talking with her. And her parents were still very much alive. We would do the Christmas party and what have you, and she would have her father and mother there. I remember having some discussions with them, very nice people. Again, I have nothing personal against her, it's just that she operated in a way that didn't make much sense to me.

RITCHIE: That was the only time that a secretary has had a Christmas party where they called attendance.

KETCHUM: Yes. There were a lot of things. Maybe she read about Captain Queeg too many times. But all and all, Donald, I wouldn't change—as much as I loved the White House for its identification with the families who lived there, and the three families who were there while I was employed—I wouldn't change my days at the Capitol at all for any other experience. It was just again the people who made such a difference. There were characters who you couldn't and would not want to run into again necessarily, and then there were others who you would like to take to that desert island and keep them close by forever.

RITCHIE: One other thing about the Bicentennial in 1989 was that there was a big change in leadership personnel. It just happened that after all the planning that had gone into it during the 1980s, when 1989 came around, Tip O'Neil was no longer Speaker of the House, it was now the Representative from Texas—

KETCHUM: Oh, Jim Wright.

RITCHIE: And then the majority leader of the Senate was no longer Robert C. Byrd, it was now George Mitchell.

KETCHUM: I was trying to think, when did Tom Foley come in?

RITCHIE: Foley came in after Wright resigned, so that would have been 1990.

KETCHUM: Okay, so it wasn't long afterwards. I remember that you and I, at the behest of Liz Carpenter, were helping Wright with his Gridiron speech.

RITCHIE: We wrote one-liners for Jim Wright.

KETCHUM: Exactly, we sat around.

RITCHIE: That was probably the spring of 1989.

KETCHUM: Wright, spelled w-r-i-g-h-t. And by God they used some of that stuff. It was very funny. I once found myself, as you know, doing the same thing for a Gridiron for Lyndon Johnson. But the company then was the strangest group. It was Art Buchwald and a few others. It was a Friday afternoon in Liz Carpenter's office and Bourbon flowed freely. By the time I finally got home, Barbara threatened to push me into the shower and then into bed because I was probably singing and doing things that were not terribly appropriate to the cause.

But there was that change, and it meant that the Democrats were going to cash in on all the planning that went on and any of the money that was expended. Let's see, that was also the time of Ken Burns and "The Congress" film as well.

RITCHIE: Can you talk a little bit about working with Ken Burns?

KETCHUM: Well, yes. It was a different experience. We started out by his making the pitch. We were sitting in the secretary's conference room, off that corridor that connected the majority leader's office to the secretary's office. Ken, who looked all of about 12 years old at that point, would make the pitch and people would nod that yes, indeed, this was appropriate. Ray [Smock, the House historian] was very much part of the scene, and Dick [Baker, the Senate historian] of course. We'd all pipe up and say why we thought it was really the way to go. We talked about "The Brooklyn Bridge" and some of the other things that had taken place in Ken's earlier life, and the more recent things that

he had done. Then we didn't have to do anything so far as raising the money, he had already started to corral General Motors into the equation, and WETA as the producing station had their ideas of how it would run. Ward Chamberlain was then running WETA and had a lot of experience in New York at Channel 13 and throughout his history in Washington was very successful. And then the actual production began, and we were expected to pull everything that we could together and start going.

I thought it was rather strange that he was—and I didn't realize it until later that in a way he was kind of double dipping—because some of the stuff that ended up not being used in “The Congress” was never intended to be used at that time but he used it subsequently in his “Civil War” series. I thought later on it would have been a little bit more helpful to the cause if he was up-front and explained exactly why the Civil War things that we were doing, whether it was the caning of Sumner, I mean certainly it is part of the Senate story but he was going into it in much more detail than you normally would if you were doing just the overview of the Congress and the Senate.

RITCHIE: He really focused a lot of “The Congress” on the coming of the Civil War, and used a lot of the same narrators, the same music, and some of the same illustrations.

KETCHUM: That's right, and it's funny that we all have the same reaction to the fiddle music, which at the time I loved. I thought this is really quite wonderful, but when you have seen it used for 103 different productions, which had really very little relationship with that, you get tired of it. I started asking questions about him, including some of the good women, Sister Mildred included, of his production which had preceded “The Congress” by a few years of “The Shakers.” Ken was somebody who unfortunately was fascinated by something called the Almighty Dollar, and it showed, it really did. I was not very happy, because one of the things—again you talk about all the ancillary products and programs that are related to it, and one of the things was: How do we get this videocassette of “The Congress” into the hands of as many schools across the country? It would be very appropriate, especially for junior highs and high schools. It was no problem, it was just fine, we all had agreed that it should be done at cost and cost was going to be roughly \$20 a cassette, which I realized later was very expensive if we were talking about cost, it could have been just half that much and even less than that. But suddenly we have a grand gala opening down at the National Theater, and we have a great party, and we do all these things, and it's time to do the distribution and it's closer to

\$100 a cassette. That was not the agreement at all. I don't think we had a lot of this spelled out in black and white. Everybody was thinking good little kind Ken when he grows up he'll continue to honor all of his commitments. Well, he didn't. And I was the one who had to call him up and tell him that there was about to be a very public divorce between the Senate of these United States—I couldn't speak necessarily for anybody other than Ray Smock at that point—and the Congress over the fact that he was not keeping his word and it was going to really hit the papers the next few days. People would be left with a very bad taste in their mouths over what the name Ken Burns meant to them. Within 24 hours he came back and realized indeed of course he had said \$20, and of course it was not going to be the higher amount, and of course he would do everything possible to make sure that the distribution was sped up and these things got into the hands of the various states and the educational institutions and we all lived happily ever after. I did notice though that every time the production was run on television that the credits seemed to go faster and faster when it got down to the names of some of us who had participated.

RITCHIE: That was in the spring of 1989 and it was in the fall of 1989 that his “Civil War” came out that really made his national reputation and made his fortune. So he was still the struggling documentary maker when we were dealing with him.

KETCHUM: Yes, and people in the profession—Ward Chamberlain became a friend at that time, and while he liked Ken he was astounded at what kind of money Ken was making from the “Civil War.” I remember one evening it was just the Chamberlains, and Bob and Betty Saudek, and Barbara and myself. Bob had had kind of a bad experience with Ken. Burns was doing a documentary on radio pioneers and Bob had taken the time to sit for a long interview, with the camera right here in his face, of Q and A at his house in Georgetown and none of it was used. He also was not comfortable with Ken, let's put it that way. Bob was comfortable with every single person he ever met, it was kind of a funny problem that existed. But Ward started to talk about Ken and what he was making, and what kind of deals he had cut. I don't know if it was Time-Life that was going to be doing the distribution, but WETA of course knew everything right along. They saw so much of this stuff, whether they requested it or they saw what the residuals were going to be. I do not know the understanding, and what was on the table, but Ward knew everything, and you just shook your head because you could see that he probably said, “Well, Florentine Films, I've been scraping by from an early age and it's now or never, and boy it's going to be now.” He did, and you can live happily ever after in the

great state of New Hampshire with his converted barn and all the other things that go with it. Have you ever been there?

RITCHIE: No.

KETCHUM: No, neither have I. I think he'd probably know me if we ran into each other, but I don't know what his memory is. But I was as mad as anybody else, and that's probably why I said when we were looking around for who will make the case, but it was not a case that was difficult to make. I just had to remind him, and remind him that if enough people remembered it and were terribly upset. Maybe he thought we were all so busy going on to other things, and so happy with the way we had been treated at the premier that we would go along with it. I noticed when he was doing World War II that he went off to some of the cities and that each section had its own premier. At least the Minnesota town had its premier. I don't know if he did the same thing in Alabama or whatever. It will be on tonight, and you can also get Clarence Thomas [on "Sixty Minutes"] tonight.

RITCHIE: Another memorable moment in Senate history. I remember the premier of "The Congress" at the National Theater with the big dinner at the J.W. Marrott afterwards. For the bicentennial, were you involved in any of the receptions for the celebrations?

KETCHUM: I'm trying to think. Did we do something over in Statuary Hall? It seems to me that I was in a couple of planning sessions. Part of the thing is that you would bring in Carolyn Peachy and some of the PR firms in Washington and they really were the ones. I'm trying to remember some of the other members of that. Ellen Proxmire, I think, was working for them at that stage of the game. There were a couple of connections through Senate spouses. Who all else? Joe would convene these meetings and it was about the same time that they had organized and we were talking about the so-called Capitol Visitor Center Commission that was going to be heard from later on. It was just amazing what a pittance they were going to be able to construct that whole thing for compared to where they've gone today. [Laughs] Welcome to our world.

RITCHIE: It was a slightly modest plan in those days.

KETCHUM: Exactly. But they were pulling out all the stops. I mean the discussion was: “There’s a new singer named Mariah Carey that we’re going to try to get.” They were going to be doing at the time they did the ceremony at the West Front of the Capitol and Clinton was now in the White House, so we’ve got to be talking about ’93 at that particular time. Fred Maroon’s book, which was part of the original planning that there would be publications done by outside forces, as well as films, and exhibits.² It’s interesting, and it would be great to look at that checklist of what was presented in the very beginning of the Howard Baker period and how many of those things happened. I remember sitting down with Dick at one point and we hit if not all of them, nine out of ten of them. There was a certain hierarchy that we had given to those things.

RITCHIE: A joint session of Congress, and then a session of the Senate in the Old Senate Chamber and the current chamber.

KETCHUM: That’s right.

RITCHIE: Bringing back former senators and current senators, that really came together remarkably well.

KETCHUM: Yes, it did. Normally, I cannot see that kind of planning for the Capitol. So much is done with maybe six months, eight months, what have you, as far as the advance is concerned. That was the one instance where there really was a 10-year plan, and it worked beautifully.

RITCHIE: Although ironically, the people who had the least to do with it were the ones in charge by the time it happened, because the leadership of both houses changed that year. I can remember Senator Mitchell on the day of the commemorative session reading the cards we had prepared and editing them as he was sitting there waiting to speak. It was obvious that he hadn’t had a chance to really focus on it until that very moment. And yet there was this huge machine sort of unfolding that he and Speaker Wright were—

KETCHUM: Being carried along by.

² Fred J. Maroon, *The United States Capitol* (New York: Stewart, Tabor and Chang, 1993).

RITCHIE: Very skillfully running it, as if they had been involved in the 10 years of planning for that moment.

KETCHUM: Yes, that's true, but by the time we got to the big ceremonial things, like the trip to Philadelphia, for example, which we had done in 1987—I can recall going back to the Gerald Ford Philadelphia visit when Ford was president during the Bicentennial of the Revolution. You had John McCain's first wife, Carol McCain, who had been injured in an automobile accident and had a real disability in getting about. She was the point person for Philadelphia on that whole thing. But by the time we got to what we were doing in Washington, you had a lot of money going into public relations, a lot of private funds for sponsorship of some of the ceremonial events. It really got to be big bucks and big business. There were dinners, there were receptions, there were ceremonies at the Capitol, and then you had spin-offs, with the restoration of the Statue of Freedom. In many ways, how much of this was related to the programs that were put in place under Mansfield as far as the history and museum side of the equation, I don't know, but there is a certain logic and hand-holding between those things that grew and developed and their evolution and what continues to be considered right now. When we look at dates and look at the calendar and you see what you have, it will continue. Right now, for example, what have we got? We'll have the anniversary of the fire coming up and the rebuilding [in 2014].

RITCHIE: The Russell Building centennial.

KETCHUM: The centennial in 2009 of the Russell Building, Carrère and Hastings. In many ways, it's probably never going to stop. You wouldn't want to think of it quite in terms of everybody having to look at the calendar, but indeed that's what it should be. If you can do that, you can also take any number of those lessons and make them work very nicely for us.

RITCHIE: Well, it does focus the attention of political leaders, who are usually not focused on art and history, but a bicentennial is a moment when they will participate. One of the spin-offs of the bicentennial in 1989 was the minting of coins for the Congress, which generated a considerable amount of funds—

KETCHUM: That's right, it did.

RITCHIE: —for conservation and purchase of artwork.

KETCHUM: And to do that minting right out on the plaza. Yes, I think instead of considering the significance of “A Necessary Fence,” we should consider the significance of a necessary celebration, that will be a chapter in itself. In a way, probably you only started to explore one tenth of the various ways that these commemorations can take place, and minting was one. I don’t know who went to Joe Stewart or who went to whom on these lines of interest, but by golly it worked.

I can remember when we were doing our exhibits down in the crypt. It was another internship project: Find all the stamps in the history of the philatelic world of the United States that relate to either events that took place in the Capitol, or the painting, sculpture, and so forth, and amazingly enough came back—thanks to the Smithsonian’s philatelic division, and thanks to some other research that she did with wonderful things. We put this up and somebody said, “Nobody’s going to be paying any attention.” They loved it! A little brochure, a little yellow three-fold went out there with the various examples, and where more information could be sought, and we ran out of those things just like that. We put little stanchions with boxes nearby and everybody and their brother had to have one. Now, granted, I’m sure people were taking things because it gave them something to take away with them, but the mail that we got! Stamp collectors, their detailed knowledge of a particular issue and what went with it was such that we got letters and we got phone calls and all kinds of feedback. “Why did you leave such and such out?” I had to explain that in many instances we had to be selective. We could not do all the examples that were there under a particular heading.

We had geared this exhibit case in such a way that we had two rear-view slide projectors with a dissolve unit so you never saw a blank screen. Well, what we didn’t anticipate is that the wear and tear on these darn things after several days meant that we would have to have another new pair waiting in the wings while the other one was taken off to a place called Strauss Photo, which later turned out to be doing some repair work which was not terribly kosher and not terribly right, but nonetheless we had to have waiting in the wings new equipment all the time to substitute. So after a couple of go-rounds with this—because it helped a lot with the first documents of the Senate exhibits, those were the Anson McCook Knox papers that were sent down to the Disbursing office, they were in the safe in the Disbursing office until 1969, 1970. They were the images that were flashing. That helped to show graphic examples of who was being nominated or

what was the portrait's particular principals in the story line. Then because of the problems we decided we'll have simply a light box and we'll have the documents transmitted through a type of positive image that is on film and let it go at that, so we left the motion portion of all of this. But the things that you question most about the interest level often turned out to be quite the opposite. I had no idea, even as a stamp collector myself as a kid, that it would be great.

When [Isaac] Bassett was first talked about, and we were borrowing and receiving Bassett material, we decided to do another case down in the crypt area, in which we showed furniture. We made that whole thing work quite well. I could see there were several interesting chairs through the history of the Senate, beginning in Philadelphia and coming on through. I wanted to do just the chairs. Just hang them at various levels and have maybe engraved views of the chamber, but do it in a rather contemporary fashion. I thought that would be just the coolest thing. We never quite got around to doing that. But we always had 10 ideas of which we could put one or two in the pipeline to be carried out.

RITCHIE: When that fund was created after the selling of the coins, did that make it easier for you in terms of acquiring furniture and artwork? Was that available?

KETCHUM: I'm trying to think, did we dip into that? I don't think we did. But our funding just kept expanding at that point. Part of the reason was that Joe Stewart brought in a counsel. I don't know whether there had been a counsel to the secretary beforehand. I don't think so. The legislative counsel's office would help from time to time, but it was mostly in drafting and nothing beyond that. But when Tommy Gonzalez was brought in, I don't remember anybody before him in that position. He was very helpful when we were trying to examine budgets and so forth, and also we had authority—a little bit came from this resolution, a little bit came from here. He put the whole thing together and it was put in public law form, which had much, much stronger clout than just the things that were in-house or Senate resolution. That helped immensely. And when that happened, the dollars just seemed to flow, the dollars that were going to be appropriated, a separate budget for conservation, a separate budget for exhibitions, a separate budget for planning various events. I mean we had had nothing. Petty cash was just money that you took out of your own pocket and were never going to be reimbursed for. That was the way it had operated.

We grew exponentially at that point, because of the celebrations, because of the attitude of the secretary. It's hard to say who contributed more. Frank Valeo certainly had to be responsible for getting that ball down the court and doing it in a very big and thorough way, but it could have been something with a new administration walking in, not wanting to even play in that particular part of the forest and the thing would just be able to wither and die. I always felt that about the White House program, which is so strong today without any public moneys per se. Sure, they are in a building that is heated and furnished and has public money, but the objects in the collection, and the acquisitions that come in, and the salaries, are all moneys that are donated through the publication of the guidebook and through individual donors. That's the way it was set up in the beginning and that's the way it still operates.

Well, with the program at the Senate, it was very much an example of poverty pocket from the beginning, and then as, I guess the proof of the pudding came into view, the various budgets were created, and expanded, and continued. Diane tells me things today that just blow me out of the water about what they're able to do. I just think it's fantastic. I never thought I would feel over a period of 12 years that things would develop so quickly and so well. It has to be a tribute to the Mike Mansfields of this world. It has to be a tribute to even giving Mrs. Kennedy credit for what she was doing on that national stage. Ultimately, it's a credit to the times themselves that were right for something like this to come front and center.

I used to tell Bob Saudek that as a kid growing up in Clyde, New York, that the only thing I had to do on Sunday afternoon outside the house was to go down to the Playhouse Theater and see an MGM musical, and suddenly there was a program on CBS called "Omnibus." All these worlds started coming together, and I could build in my own mind's eye how that James Agee and his Lincoln scripts that were being produced, all these things came together in my world in such a way to make the world of history, political science, and fine arts not only come together as an undergraduate but then to be able to pursue on a graduate level and also in laboratories such as the White House and the Capitol that were unreal. Never, never let it be said that you can't just be the luckiest person in the world, indeed.

RITCHIE: One of the advantages you also had was a number of the people who were key players were really institution men, they weren't really intense partisans. Some of them were identified with particular senators they worked for, but they really loved the

institution of the Senate. That goes from Valeo to Hildenbrand to Joe Stewart, who rose above a lot of the day-to-day things to want to do something to preserve and protect the Capitol Building and the artwork that was in it.

KETCHUM: And it was really very good for somebody like me who sometimes saw things only in black and white to look at them again and realize that you could rise above it, you really could. Joe Stewart used to get horribly frustrated, very mad sometimes, but the next thing he kind of had a little smile and turned around. We used to take these trips together to Bucks County, where we would be exploring for items. I was in my element, because this is something I had done a lot at the White House but did not have an opportunity to do at the Capitol. When we got together—and he was a true collaborator on the President’s Room. We took three trips together that I remember that were especially useful. We went down to Alabama. We went to the state capitol, and of course I was knocked out because there in the rotunda was Lurleen Wallace in a larger than life-sized statue, which obviously swept in after her death, when everybody was feeling particularly badly about her last months and how she died. But then to see what they were able to do with their senate chamber, and also see—because the period was perfect really with the President’s Room—some of the fixtures that they had found and they had used.

Then going to Bucks County, to visiting along the river several of the small towns that had the shops that he had known. I had not been there since Kennedy or Johnson days. And then up to New York, for dealers in lighting. Lighting seemed to be the real question that we were trying to get answered. But also to get a good sense of colors for the interior. So often we knew what things looked like but we did not understand what the palette necessarily might have been. You could not look at a chair unless you could find an original section of the upholstery someplace, which sometimes you could, because when upholstery was removed many times some tacks would adhere to one small one-inch square and that would help to lead you back to the type of fabric, and what wouldn’t show up in a photograph.

But the fact is that this guy, not only did he care, but he had the power to make all of the trips that we did. Sometimes, to Alabama he wanted to take George White, because he didn’t feel that George necessarily understood the full extent of what was going on. We all would show up at National Airport and Joe, of course, had already taken care of booking the flights, and down we would go. These were day trips. I had never been in the

state of Alabama in my life, so I was very happy, even though we were doing Montgomery and nothing else, and we weren't marching across the Edmund Pettus Bridge anyplace in the vicinity, but it was just very fulfilling. You know, you hoped but so often you got blank stares when you mentioned these things. He was anything but. While I wasn't calling him "sir" anymore, I was certainly very deferential and most grateful. Also, I understood and shared his interest in how to entertain, how to bring a little bit of social suasion to the argument, and the various functions that we were able to help put on and put together were things that he was terribly grateful for.

I remember when he decided that he would do a dinner for the Ketchum family and invited God knows who—John was in England at the time but Sarah and Tim came, and Barbara of course. It was in the Lyndon Johnson Room, and by golly he had half the secretary's staff there. I was very embarrassed by it. It was something I would have hoped would have never happened, because I think it puts you in a very bad situation. And then he decided we needed an engraved frame, which is over on a table over there, from Tiffany. But somehow, Dot Svendson, who was putting it together, kept feeding the wrong spelling of the name and the frame had to be done over twice before it finally was ready. He apparently must have laid her out in lavender, because I heard all about it from Michelle later on about what had happened. But that was a lovely thing to do, except that I was not very comfortable with it. I think you don't necessarily want to be the prime mourner at your own funeral. But he did appreciate, I never doubted that for a minute, he always would send notes and thank you and make sure that he called up. I remember a dinner that was given for him at the Folger. Tell me the name of the woman who he put on the Capitol—

RITCHIE: Diane Wolfe?

KETCHUM: Diane Wolfe, right, was paying for it. She got Sam Donaldson to emcee it. It was a strange group of people. Pat Leahy and his wife. I'll bet there were 40 or 50 people over there. It was not black tie but it was certainly a best bib and tucker type of evening. I don't think it was a surprise, but I don't know whether it was an anniversary of his Senate service, how that whole thing would come out as far as the calendar was concerned. But she was doing for him on a much greater scale what he had done for Barbara and me, and it was just kind of interesting. That was, I think, after what he had done, so I don't think he was trying to duplicate it or anything like that. But in those cases you walk a bit of a line between being the good employee and being the friend of.

I tried my best to keep as much distance as I possibly could. It was rather hard, because Frank Valeo really did become a very good friend, and being in a situation where mobility was not good at the time of his death was something that bothered me to no end. It was soon afterwards that it was Darrell's 100th birthday. Frank had agreed to speak at that. I don't think anybody realized that he was as close to death's door as he was. It was really a great disappointment to Darrell, and I said to Barbara, "Come hell or high water, if we have to take two days getting down to Washington, I'm going to go down for that, because I would feel so badly if Darrell were to die shortly afterwards and I didn't have that chance." So it was really Frank's death that mobilized the forces up here to get down there. They were good companions. They were very good as far as working together. It was a very smart move on Mansfield and Frank's part in naming Darrell to that job. But I had no idea that Darrell was so taken by Val's death. He really expressed it, even at his celebration. He said, "There is one not here that I would like to pay tribute to." Everybody wondered if it was his daughter Elizabeth, who had died recently, and it wasn't, it was Val.

RITCHIE: When I think of Frank Valeo and Darrell St. Claire, I think of the traditional secretary's office in the Capitol, where secretaries had been located from the time of the Civil War, until 1987. The secretary had the corner office, and the assistant secretary was at the end of that long corridor, and when you went in to see him you seemed to have to walk a half a mile until you got to his desk.

KETCHUM: Right, the old Harold Ickes bit.

RITCHIE: And when Senator Byrd became majority leader again in 1987, he had Joe Stewart swap offices, so that Byrd moved into the offices that the Democratic leadership currently occupies, and then Joe moved over to what had been the Democratic leader's office, with the John F. Kennedy Room, a much smaller space. I wondered if the curator's office got involved in that transfer?

KETCHUM: Yes, we did, especially in what was going on in the secretary's room, but remember you're dealing with somebody like Joe who has very definite ideas of what he wants, but he wants to know if there are certain pegs that he can hang these things on. Where we got involved in the leadership offices was that they for the first time started borrowing works of art from presidential libraries and from various other sources. Starting then, every leader had a favorite president that he wanted, and of course the

Senate's collection is *not* a collection of presidential portraits by any manner or means. So that was a bit of a challenge, but it worked out.

There's only so much one can do to those spaces, unless you're really going to try to carve them up and put up temporary walls. But the window treatments are pretty much tied to how they have been handled. They're not quite what they were in the 19th century, but some of them can be. But Joe really got involved in bringing in all kinds of things that were appropriate, including some Indian art and other things along the way. He, at the same time, was doing some work on his house on East Capitol Street, so there were times after we had solved one problem that he would say, "Oh, incidentally, if you're looking through things and see a certain type of mantle that I'm interested in—" Well, that was no great problem. It wasn't taking me away from anything else. You were happy to help him. He was really engaged in a fairly wide range of interests, in interior design and in decorative arts, and to perhaps a lesser extent in fine arts. He knew what he liked and he understood the process.

I often wondered what made him tick through the years. When did this first develop? Did it develop when he came up from Florida back as a teenager? I don't know how one does get themselves somewhere. I came by my interests because of my family, because of a father who had interests and talked about these things fairly frequently, and by reference to generations before, and also I think it helps a lot if several generations have lived in the same house and in the same town, that you get a sense of so-called local history. Well, there is local history for the Senate of these United States. When you have somebody who is kind of a product of that from an early age, like Joe Stewart, I defy you to find anybody better suited to help the efforts that we were a part of. You really don't see that.

RITCHIE: I think it's interesting these days that the curator's office spends a lot of time during the recesses of the Senate in redecorating the leaders' offices. They're working in the Democratic leader's office, or they're working in the Republican leader's office. Now it's taken for granted that when senators are moving offices or fixing offices up, the first people they call are the curators. It seemed that took a long time to develop.

KETCHUM: It was happening. It was happening before I left, but not happening to the extent that it would continue after '95. They dread today having a recess. They

would much rather have it in the middle of the legislative calendar and all the events that are attended. They just cannot believe—and you know you have to work vacation times around things like this now. They used to laugh when I would describe the Senate of 1970 and the recesses and how we handled it, and it's long gone for them.

RITCHIE: It was sleepy time then.

KETCHUM: Yes, it was. And I'm afraid that's never coming back again. There's a lot of mischief out there in the land when you have to consider, are we better off putting our efforts right now into the condition of paintings for a survey that we've had on the books for some time, or is our time better spent in moving Senator X from A to B or getting ready to return his collection to the home state repository that loaned it? It's become much more of a service-oriented operation than it ever was before. Service in the sense of doing the work that is not necessarily reflective of the long range contribution to the cause, but rather something that is more tied to housekeeping than anything else. Not that that isn't part of the formula that makes for a successful curator, but it shouldn't have the upper hand. And there are times when it really does, and that's a problem.

And the Historical Office gets involved, granted it's one of those things that one anticipates that the papers thereof and how they are going to be handled, and there is a certain bit of automatic pilot that is put on, but the registrar's office, for example, under the curatorial aegis, has a very heavy load. You meet yourself coming and going. It's not what it was back in the early days by any means. It's certainly a far cry from what a registrar was when I was doing that particular duty at the White House, terribly different. Yet, somehow, it seems to happen. It has taken more people today to handle the expanded responsibilities. I think you tend to realize that when you say yes to your very first office of helping to coordinate a loan exhibition of works from the home state or even from local museums—the National Gallery used to send out reproductions, and that took care of a multitude of sins for generations, but that doesn't work any longer. I guess there are no simple and easy answers because each office is different. Some members have wives who get terribly involved, others the wives could care less.

It was difficult for me, for example, when Chuck Robb came into the Senate, because he thought, "Well, Jim's going to be able to do everything." I said, "Chuck, we don't have a reserve collection. What you're going to have to do, if you really want to work with Virginia, is to work through the state institutions. We'll help you with that."

“Well, no, you just go out and find things.” I said, “No, what you have to do—” And we went on, and I think for a while there he thought I was trying to escape and get away without helping him, but I explained that we can’t pretend that we have something to share with you. Finally it worked out and all is well.

But oh, geez, we had some of the strangest requests. I’ve talked about Phil Gramm, I’m sure, thinking that he was sitting at Sam Houston’s desk in the chamber, and we suggested that it had been used by Andrew Jackson Houston instead. That was *really* unbelievably a waste of time, two days of following him around so he could talk about it. I couldn’t believe that he was being so difficult. He had already put out press releases that had been distributed saying that it was Sam Houston’s desk, and that come hell or high water we were going to change that inscription on that desk somehow to reflect a century before. Instead of 1940 he wanted to go back to Uncle Sam’s days.

RITCHIE: He wanted the facts to conform to his press releases instead of his press releases to the facts?

KETCHUM: Exactly. And I always thought that even Lyndon Johnson in his worst moment—but then I realized that Phil Gramm, I think, was born in Georgia, so that was why this was all not working out to his liking. [Laughs] But you can’t help but smile about some of those moments. They’re all there. If you think about them in a short frame of time, the enormity of some of it may be more than you really want to consider, but on the other hand it’s what made the world go round. It still does, there’s no doubt about it. Diane started in ’79, so she will be 30 years in another couple of years, except for the period that she was in England. Her span will be a 30-year span over all, and she will have seen, I’m sure, far more changes in that 30-year period than I did in my 25 years that I was there.

RITCHIE: What made you think about retirement after your 25 years?

KETCHUM: The main thing was—good old personal reasons—but it was the fact that I was one of nine in my family to be told in three generations to be told that you don’t have any more cartilage left in your hips. So I went through the whole process of having hip replacement surgery in the late ’80s, beginning of the ’90s. I said, “If I’m really going to do any traveling or do some of the things that I wanted to do—” I looked at the debit and the credit sides of the ledger and saw that by continuing on I was not

going to be adding that many more dollars to the coffers, and that after 35 years it was time to hang it up and take advantage of it. It was obviously selfish motives because I loved what was happening. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I thought I shouldn't be paid for what I'm doing. It was much too much fun. And the people involved were just the greatest in the world. But I thought, "If you're going to do it, you're going to have to make a break, and make it fairly clean."

I remember when they announced the "curator emeritus," and they said—this is Sheila Burke—"You'll be assured of always having an office here, and having a desk." And I thought God damn it, if I found myself in the situation of having my predecessor looking over my shoulder from time to time and offering advice on a regular basis, I'd get up and leave. I really would. I said, "Thank you very much, that's really very nice." I did not say what I felt on that. But we had certainly known this part of the world for some time, and it was ideal. I hated leaving Capitol Hill, that was very hard for me. It was almost impossible for Barbara. But I was returning to my roots, so to speak. Rural America was where I started and where I really wanted to continue on. And it's been great. I wouldn't trade what we did for anything. I wish we had a bit better health, but everybody finds themselves in that situation sooner or later. But this has been such a labor of love. It's allowed me to keep my oar in a bit from time to time, both as far as working on White House projects and also on what has happened at the Capitol, to be available whenever. Thanks to the Internet, it's been really quite easy many times. But it was time.

How does one describe the love affair that you have with the American story over such a long period of time? And what it really has meant to you, personally, to your spouse, to your children, to your friends, to be able to share, and to be able to know that someplace out there is somebody who is seeing this space, or these objects, for the very first time and it's going to light a bit of a fire under interests that they will be able to develop in the American story. What is better than that? Nothing that I can possibly think of. I would not trade it for anything.

RITCHIE: That seems like a very nice note to conclude these interviews. We'll prepare the transcripts, and then if you want to go through and make some notes in case there are things that we missed. I'd be really happy to add in anything else.

KETCHUM: All along, something would happen and I would think, "Did we talk about that or not?" We all have our suitcase filled with stories that we tell and we tell

and we tell. But did we remember to touch on that particular one? While I know I have said things even recently which you have heard in some form or another before, I'm not sure that I dipped into all of those.

RITCHIE: Of course, we've had many conversations that are *not* on the tapes, so we have to remember what we've recorded and what we haven't recorded.

KETCHUM: Well, I'm happy to do this, as much just so that kids will understand what else was going on in their lives during much of this period. My hope is that we can somewhat polish and cull some of the areas. I don't want to take things out, and I don't want to be dismissive of some of the things, but I would like to tighten it up in ways that would make more sense, and make it easier for people not to fall asleep in the first five minutes of their getting to it.

RITCHIE: Well, I have to add also that when I first started working for the Senate in 1976 I didn't know very much about the U.S. Senate. I was trained as a political historian but I was really learning on the job. One of the best things was that our office was adjacent to your office, and some of the best afternoons that I spent in those first couple of years was going over and sitting in your office, especially on those quieter summer days when not much was happening, and you would begin to tell some of these stories, and explain to me what was going on in this institution. I didn't know the players, I didn't know the context of things. Stories about things that you had found and people you had worked with, and some of the more difficult people you had to deal with. I cherished those afternoons. They were some of the most educational and entertaining afternoons I spent. So I've always wanted to record your stories. I'm delighted to have had this opportunity to do this.

KETCHUM: Well, I have kind of—like all of us, you put off these things as much as possible, just because somehow you don't want to close out the storyline. Yet on the other hand, the further away you get from it, your memory will be playing tricks on you and you will be having difficulties, but I have the strongest memory of your arriving on scene, and I'll tell you, Donald, I don't know of anybody who makes me happier to be with this world than you do through the years. The fact that you married somebody who is just the perfect not just soul mate, best friend, whatever that stuff is they put on Hallmark greeting cards, but for my money, and Barbara will say exactly the same thing, just the best couple that ever came down the pike. But you have, through your ability to do and

feel so comfortable in so many ways that you participate in the telling of the story of the Senate, its legislative as well as its social and cultural side, you've got friends who—you have no idea, I mean I will get together with folks, your name comes up all the time. You have a legion out there, and it's what you have done and what you have been able to ignite in terms of spirit and feeling of people that is a gift that is incomparable, and I thank you, truly thank you for that.

If I had to pick up the phone and get something looked at in a way that I could see it in the light of the serious and yet its most unbelievably humorous and flaky side, I'd have to deal with your phone number immediately, I really would, because you have a capacity that obviously started very early in your life, and you have just developed it in a 103 different ways. You are one of the people that you take to the desert island. You don't care how small the island because it's a treasure. So you can blame your parents, you can blame your grandparents—I'd blame my great-grandmother if I were you. I'd say, "Dear Grandmother Jane, this is your gift to my generation." But it's been great. And it is the people, so many times, that make such a difference.

When I left the White House under the Nixon administration, it was a horrible feeling. You were dealing with all these J. Walter Thompson junior account executives who were all trying to slit each other's throat to get to the top of the ladder under Haldeman, and a lot of them went off and served time afterwards, as a result of it. But it was such a different world from the Johnsons, who played and worked and worked with the same group of people, or from the Kennedys, who while they played and worked with different groups made the people who worked there feel really very special. There are different ways of doing it. The Johnsons had one way, the Kennedys had another, and suddenly you had an administration where you doubted very much whether the president was even speaking to his spouse let alone speaking to his children, and you had a household that was running somewhat on automatic pilot and somewhat on very sad, sad worlds that were colliding. The Capitol was just absolutely at the other end of the spectrum of what I had seen with Nixon. Sure, it was not cut out of some kind of velvet cloth, and it was not a smooth-running operation, but it ran with a great big heart and a great big capacity for bringing folks into the process.

RITCHIE: Well, it's a much more attractive place since you joined it, that's for sure. You really improved the look of the building, and I think the atmosphere within it as well.

KETCHUM: I think a lot of people were pulling on that rope. Just to be one of them was enough for me. I don't say that out of a sense of false modesty at all, but I realized growing up in a large family that what you accomplished you could never do it alone, and you shouldn't pretend to do it. But, boy, it was a great time to be there. And I now understand a little bit more about what Darrell used to say when he would talk about the differences between the early '30s and what he saw at the end. I remember when Frank decided to change the title of chief clerk to assistant secretary. I don't know if Darrell knew about, he probably did, but it wasn't anything that he thought much was going to be made of. He and Margaret had a dinner party one night, and they were great hosts. Darrell had traveled the world with the Interparliamentary group, and he had married the daughter of a Tennessee congressman, so he'd been part of the Washington scene and he had built up a lot of ties, especially to embassies because of what he was doing with the Interparliamentary Union and how that had played out in his past experiences. But suddenly he was on the receiving end of Frank getting up and he had the legislation all matted and framed. It was just to be recognized, it was the difference of a title and not anything in terms of responsibility, but it was a very wonderful thing. I mean, the guy was just broken up over it. I don't think he necessarily would probably want to admit it, but he sure was. We all left feeling "God bless him." Those are the stories, they never quite get to the top of the ladder, but in many ways they make the top of the ladder possible, and he did. He worked out of his hat, so to speak, more often than not. How much it took to replace him when he did retire is something else again. If you ever have a chance, I don't know who he has there during the day, but he does have people there with him. You ought to go up and see him. He loved the experience of being able to deal with questions that were able to be considered again with the oral history program.

RITCHIE: The very first person I interviewed was Darrell St. Claire.

KETCHUM: That's perfect, and you'll never find one better, you really won't. We live too long, I suppose, and it's been difficult for him. I think more so in burying his daughter, because she was just the Rock of Gibraltar. She lived nearby and was over at the house every single day. While I know he misses Margaret, they were sometimes worlds apart because he did not necessarily always perform as she would ask him to, and I suppose she could get to be a bit of a thorn in his side, although they were a good couple. But he covered so many fronts that were of interest to me, and shared them, and shared them with our kids, with our boys especially. He collected many nautical prints and also prints of American scenes that were engraved, while he was in London during

World War II, and I guess those things were almost free for the asking. He'd have them sent home. Then when it was time for him to give them to his family, they weren't interested. So he thought of John and Tim. They have the most wonderful collection of prints as a result. Tim said one of the nice things about finally getting a house and not living in a condo is going to have his gallery. I said, "Well, just have it ever-changing." That's what I do. I've gotten to a point where I'm putting up lecterns and modest things where I can just keep changing the prints from time to time.

Well, Donald, it's been real. As my father would say, it has been real, and I wouldn't want it any other way. But for your patience and perseverance, there have to be rewards some place along the line, and I hope we can continue to gather at the river as the old hymn says and enjoy what's happening, because there's too much out there that we need to smile about. If I start taking it seriously in Washington these days, especially at one end of Pennsylvania Avenue that you don't represent, wow. I was reading Jenna Bush and the interview she gave the *Washington Post* the other day, and I was glad to hear her say that the Clinton Foundation had done great things. I don't know how much of a chance you get to read the *New Yorker*, but I hope fairly often, and some of the profiles, one especially that was done earlier this year, went on a two-week journey with Clinton as he went around the world and checked in. That pleases me to no end, it really does, because I think that he was more than maligned by what he was accused of, and while his judgment was not very good, it did not and should not detract that much from our view of what he accomplished.

RITCHIE: But he may have a second act.

KETCHUM: He may! Stay tuned, as they say.

RITCHIE: Thank you, this has been great.

End of the Eighth Interview

Index

- Abell, Bess, 32, 104, 125, 128, 138, 148, 156, 158, 164, 165, 198, 288
- Abell, Tyler, 138, 156, 165, 198
- Adams, John Quincy (F-MA), 199, 306
- Agnew, Spiro, 230, 231, 236, 285
- Aikman, Lonnelle, 120, 186
- Aldrich, Nelson (R-RI): portrait of, 286
- Allen, Bill, 211
- Alsop, Joseph, 24, 145
- Alsop, Susan Mary, 34
- American Museum Association, 34
- Amistad* case, PBS documentary on, 199, 264
- Angelo, Bonnie, 142
- Anderson, Bill, 36
- Anderson, Clinton (D-NM), 110, 289
- Annenberg, Walter, 173-75
- Architect of the Capitol, 27, 37, 179, 181-86, 190-91, 192, 197, 210, 221, 224, 228, 232-34, 247, 251, 266, 296-97, 302
- Arlington House, 18-19, 47-48, 50, 54-56
- Armstrong-Jones, Antony, 126
- Atherton, Charles, 80-81
- Atomic Energy, Joint Committee on, 193-94, 258
- Auchincloss, Janet, 144
- Babb, Jim, 110
- Baker, Howard, 227, 245-47, 253, 306-7
- Baker, Richard A., 198, 303, 312, 316
- Baker, Robert G. (Bobby), 221-22
- Baldrige, Letitia (Tish), 139
- Baldwin, Billy, 76
- Barkley, Alben, 205-206
- Bassett, Isaac, 224, 255, 258-59, 300-302, 319
- Bennett, Wallace (R-UT), 179
- Benton, William (Bill), 27, 111
- Bergman, Ingrid, 46
- Beschloss, Michael, 84, 130
- Bicentennial, American (1976), 40, 187, 223, 241, 317
- Bicentennial, Congressional (1989), 39, 219, 303, 305, 306-7, 311-12, 315-18. *See also* "Necessary Fence" exhibition
- Bill Hoppers, 206-7
- Billings, Kirk LeMoyne "Lem," 83
- Blair House, 56, 60, 82, 92, 99, 155, 262
- Boehm, Edward, 29
- Boudin, Stefan, 73-74
- Boutin, Bernard, 81
- Bradlee, Ben, 72, 143
- Brady, Matthew, 214, 231, 261
- Brenkworth, Robert (Bob), 192, 247, 257
- Brown, Alice, 115, 116
- Brown, Carter, 93
- Brown, Glenn, 211, 250
- Bruce, Blanche K (R-MS), 231
- Brumidi, Constantino, 233, 255
- Bulloch, Helen Duprey, 279
- Burke, Sheila, 227-28, 241, 272, 310-11, 327
- Burns, Ken, 220, 312-14
- Busby, Horace, 156, 163
- Bush, Barbara, 62, 172, 288
- Bush, George, H. W., 62, 172, 231, 233, 246, 288
- Bush, George W., 154
- Bush, Laura, 108, 123
- Byrd, Robert C. (D-WV), 202, 203, 204-5, 207, 215, 219-20, 232, 245, 270, 299, 306, 307, 323
- Campioli, Mario, 37, 185, 191
- Capitol Hill (neighborhood, Washington, D.C.), 15, 25, 34, 100, 161-63, 301, 327
- Capitol Historical Society, U.S., 22, 35, 89, 173, 186-90, 211, 287
- Capitol, U.S: Appropriations Committee Room, 204, 252-53; art in, 203, 210, 212-13, 226-27, 229-33, 236-37, 254-56, 261-62, 285-86, 290; bombing—1971, 38, 215-17, 261; bombing—1983, 213-15, 261-62; Crypt 39, 221, 255, 266, 296, 318; hideaways, 209, 212; inventory 209-12, 217-18, 223-24, 258, 289-90; leadership suites, 247, 323-24; LBJ Room, 270, 322; National Statuary Hall, 194-96; President's Room, 249-51, 264, 291, 294, 295, 307, 321; security in, 38-39, 41, 207-8, 215-16, 262-65; Senate Reception Room, 231, 261, 264, 270; Vice President's Room, 236-37, 249, 283, 285-87, 291, 292-93, 294
- Capitol Visitor Center, 190, 208, 219, 251, 262-64
- Carpenter, Carmen, 36
- Carpenter, Liz, 28, 104-5, 121, 135, 152, 156, 157, 164, 239, 277, 312
- Carraway, Lewey, 210
- Carrère and Hastings, 210, 317
- Carter, Connie, 165
- Carter, Jimmy, 33
- Casey, Robert (Bob), 191
- Catering, 39-40, 267-82
- Caucus Room, Senate, 260, 276
- Cedar Hill [Frederick Douglass House], 48-49
- Chagall, Marc, 127-28
- Chiang Kai-Shek, Madam (Soong Mei-ling), 153-54
- Chamberlain, Ward, 220, 313, 314
- Cheatum, Bill, 36
- Cheshire, Maxine, 71, 141-42, 143, 153

Churchill, Winston, 124
 Clements, Earl (D-KY), 198, 254
 Clifford, Clark, 32–33, 289
 Clinton, William J., 164, 295, 331
 Cloren, Joe, 37–38, 215, 216, 262
 Clyde, New York, 1–5
 Cochrane, William McWhorter, 179, 224, 233, 265
 Coe, Christine, 133
 Coe, Jo-Anne, 306, 307–8, 311
 Colgate University, 2, 4, 15–18, 68, 176–77
 Collingwood, Charles, 61
 Commission on Art and Antiquities, 179, 181, 183,
 187–88, 190–91, 192, 199, 203, 224, 225, 228,
 230, 232–34, 256, 265, 296, 298
 Committee for the Preservation of the White
 House, 109, 110–12, 168
 Computers, use of, 217–18, 253
 Coolidge, Grace [Mrs. Calvin], 89, 97, 278–79
 Cooper, Janet, 26
 Corcoran Museum, 81, 91, 194
 Cornell, Doug, 143, 144
 Crosby, Elizabeth, 301–2
 Crutcher, Anne, 279
 Cushing, Harvey, family, 23
 Custis, George Washington Parke, 54, 56 Daniels,
 William, 199, 306
 Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), 70–
 71
 Dean, John W., 29, 169, 176–77
 DeGenova, Joseph, 223
 Desks, Senate Chamber, 205, 258, 297, 300
 Dewey, Thomas E., 236
 Dickerson, Nancy [Hanschman], 8, 149, 150–51
 Dirksen, Everett McKinley (R-IL), 20, 180–81, 286,
 298
 Dole, Robert (R-KS), 39, 195, 207, 306, 308, 309,
 310–11
 Douglas, Helen Gahagan, 131
 Douglass, Frederick, House [Cedar Hill], 48–49
 Doyle, Sarah Jackson, 171
 Du Pont, Henry, 23, 27, 68–69, 73, 110–11
 Eastland, James (D-MS), 232
 Eisenhower, Dwight D., 9, 20, 63, 64, 65–66, 78,
 104, 123, 124, 157, 194–95
 Eisenhower, Julie Nixon, *see* Nixon, Julie
 Eisenhower, Mamie, 20, 62–67, 107, 120, 166
 Ehrlichman, John D., 29, 169, 171
 Elder, Bill, 84
 Ellender, Allen (D-LA), 34–35, 211, 212, 256, 257,
 279
 Elson, Beverly, 185
 Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, 113, 123,
 233–34
 Fall, Albert (R-NM), 180, 258
 Fatemi, Eric, 220
 Felton, Janet, 57–58
 Ferris, Charles, 37, 191
 Field, Ruth [Mrs. Marshall], 27, 111
 Fields, Alonzo, 96, 99
 Fine Arts Commission, 80, 81, 111, 117, 170
 Fine Arts Committee, *see under* White House
 Finley, David, 79, 83–84, 97–98, 227
 Ford, Gerald, 231, 241, 317
 Fosburgh, Jim, 23, 110–11
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 196, 253, 300
 Frazier, Emery, 36, 222
 Fritter, Carl, 270, 272
 General Services Administration (GSA), 81, 91, 92,
 95, 129, 171
 George Washington University, 18, 19, 82
 Georgetown University, 18–19, 47
 German, Wilson, 100
 Glasow, Elizabeth, 160
 Glick, Samuel [statue], 194–95
 Goldman, Eric, 122, 156
 Gonzalez, Tommy, 228, 319
 Goodwin, Dick, 112
 Gore, Tipper, 238
 Government Printing Office (GPO), 38, 155
 Graham, Katherine [Kay], 24
 Gramm, Phil (R-TX), 326
 Grant, Julia Dent [Mrs. Ulysses], 90
 Gray, Robert, 99, 157, 284
 Greene, Howard, 200–201
 Gridiron Club, 146–49, 312
 Haldeman, H. R., 26, 28–29, 94, 168, 169, 170, 171,
 180, 292, 329
 Haller, Henry, 109
 Hancock, Walker, 231
 Hand, Lloyd, 155–56
 Hanschman, Nancy Dickerson, *see* Dickerson,
 Nancy
Harper's Magazine, 196, 253, 300
 Harriman, W. Averell, 74, 76, 124
 Harrison, Caroline Scott [Mrs. Benjamin], 70, 90
 Hartzog, George, 49–50
 Hatfield, Mark (R-OR), 204, 252, 294
 Haugerud, Jim, 42, 218
 Hayes Desk [White House], 31–33, 286
 Hayes, Helen, 122
 Hayes, Rutherford B., 31
 Healy, George Peter Alexander, 255
 Heckscher, August, 112
 Heston, Charlton, 122, 188
 Heurich, Gary, 280
 Hildenbrand, William F. [Bill], 39, 201, 223, 228,
 244, 245, 246, 253, 268, 273, 303, 306–7, 321
 Hirshhorn, Joe, 111–12

Historic American Building Survey, 86
 Historic preservation, 86–89
 Hollings, Fritz, 88, 211, 257, 266
 Hollings, Peatsy [Mrs. Ernest], 35–36
 Hoover, Herbert, 252
 Hoover, Lou [Mrs. Herbert], 89
 House of Representatives, 26–27, 36–37, 106, 181, 186, 190
 Humphrey, Hubert (D-MN), 149, 231
 Hurd, Peter, 29, 116
 Inaugurations, presidential, 57, 221–22, 301
 Jenkins, Walter, 103, 105, 158, 300
 Jennings, Peter, 147–48
 Johnson, Frances Benjamin, 196, 206, 211, 250, 252
 Johnson, Lady Bird, 22, 27, 28, 29–30, 32–33, 36–37, 43, 70, 73, 96, 103, 104, 105–8, 109, 111–13, 115–22, 126–28, 130–31, 133, 134, 137, 138, 153, 158, 159–60, 164–65, 171, 174, 191–92, 248
 Johnson, Luci, 134, 135, 137, 150–51, 173
 Johnson, Lynda [Robb], 95–96, 126, 131–39, 160
 Johnson, Lyndon B. (D-TX), 28–29, 31, 33, 78, 94–95, 103, 110–13, 121, 122, 124–31, 137, 149, 155, 156, 157, 159–60, 163–64, 175, 312
 Johnston, Felton [“Skeeter”], 221–22, 266
 Jordan, B. Everett (D-NC), 179, 224, 233, 234, 265
 Kane, Helen, 210
 Katzenbach, Nick, 109, 289
 Keating, Kenneth (R-NY), 8, 149–50
 Kennedy, Caroline, 60, 76, 131
 Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 112
 Kennedy, Jacqueline, 19, 22, 26, 27, 30–31, 59, 61–63, 67–84, 86–87, 95, 103, 107, 108, 110, 117, 139, 141–42, 144–45, 151, 154, 156, 160, 172, 174, 242, 268, 289, 294, 298–99, 302, 320
 Kennedy, John F. (D-MA), 61–62, 71–73, 82, 103, 142, 143, 231, 305; assassination of, 30–31, 77–80, 114
 Kennedy, John F. Jr., 59–60, 74, 76, 131, 154
 Kennedy, Robert F. (D-NY), 32, 77, 158
 Ketchum, Barbara, 25, 50–53, 57, 77, 100, 133, 138, 149, 169, 189, 200, 215–16, 229, 267, 269, 274–75, 276, 277, 281, 301, 312, 322, 327
 Ketchum, John, 44, 276, 322, 331
 Ketchum, George Roe, 1–16, 23, 34, 40, 42–46, 50–52, 174, 236, 271
 Ketchum, Mary Lou Frantz, 1–7, 10–14, 16, 23, 40, 42–46, 50–52, 271
 Ketchum, Sarah, 42–44, 147, 174–75, 230, 276, 322, 326
 Ketchum, Timothy, 43, 267, 277, 322, 331
 Kidder, Priscilla, 151
 Kilduff, Matt, 75
 Kimmitt, Eunice, 268, 275
 Kimmitt, J. Stanley, 39, 202–4, 245, 246, 268, 269, 272, 273, 307
 King, Martin Luther, Jr., 161
 Kitt, Eartha, 108, 113, 158
 Knox, Katherine McCook, 266
 Knox, Simmie Lee, 231
 Koed, Betty, 260
 Korologos, Tom, 179, 234, 243–44
 Kosygin, Alexsei, 155
 Kranz, Marvin, 92, 288
 Lafayette Square, 80–82
 Latrobe, Benjamin Henry, 37, 182
 Lawford, Peter, 83, 113
 Lea, Tom, 116
 Leahy, Patrick (D-VT), 322
 Lee, Gypsy Rose, 21–22
 Lewine, Frances, 141, 146
 Library of Congress, 247, 252
 Library, Joint Committee on the, 230
 Liebengood, Howard, 223, 228
Life magazine, 11, 19, 25, 58, 69
Look magazine, 31, 56, 60
 Lorant, Stefan, 57
 Low, Ethel, 204–5
 Mahon, George, 36, 191
 Mansfield, Jayne, 113
 Mansfield, Maureen [Mrs. Mike], 27
 Mansfield, Mike (D-MT), 22, 27, 33, 35, 37, 57, 173, 179–81, 183, 188, 191, 194, 197, 200, 202–4, 222–24, 229, 232, 233, 240, 245, 246, 247, 265, 298, 306, 307, 317, 320, 323
 Marcus, Stanley, 115
 Margaret, Countess of Snowden, 127
 Maroon, Fred, 316
 Martin, Gail, 204
 Martin, Judith, 147
 Marvin, Lee, 148
 Mathias, Anne, 187
 McCain, John (R-AZ), 204, 252, 317
 McCarty, Dorothy, 34, 37, 265
 McCook, Anson, 266, 318
 McCormack, John, 125
 McGrory, Mary, 24
 McKim, Mead and White, 68, 70, 90
 Means, Marianne, 151–52
 Mearns, David, 228
 Mikulski, Barbara (D-MD), 148
 Mitchell, George (D-ME), 276, 310, 311, 316
 Mitchell, Martha, 146–47, 148
 Mitchelson, Marvin, 148
 Mondale, Joan, 187, 231, 286, 287–88
 Mondale, Walter [Fritz] (D-MN), 181, 231, 237, 286, 287

Monkman, Betty, 172
 Monroe, James, 70
 Monroe, Marilyn, 113–14
 Montgomery, Robert, 20
 Monticello, 86
 Mount Vernon, 86
 Moyers, Bill, 32, 130
 Moynihan, Daniel Patrick (D-NY), 68, 171, 227, 249–50
 Muskie, Edmund (D-ME), 181, 286
 National Gallery of Art, 227, 325
 National Park Service, 47, 49, 55, 58, 66, 87, 111, 182, 188, 189
 National Trust for Historic Preservation, 72, 82, 87
 “Necessary Fence” exhibition, 219–20, 242, 266, 275–76, 300, 303–5, 318
 Nersessian, Lynda, 308
 Nesbitt, Henrietta, 98
 New York State Historical Association, 68
New York Times, 36, 140
 Newman, Ralph, 93–94
 Nixon, Julie, 137, 166
 Nixon, Patricia, 28, 64–65, 123, 166, 167–68, 171–76, 257
 Nixon, Richard M., 65, 166–67, 169–71, 175, 180, 286, 292–93
 Nixon, Tricia, 137, 166
 Nover, Naomi, 274
 Nugent, Nancy, 73
 O’Connor, Sandra Day, 200, 306
 Old Executive Office Building, 170
 Old Senate Chamber, 36–37, 39, 181–83, 190–94, 200, 205–8, 212, 239–40, 246, 247, 248, 251–52, 257, 279, 285, 294, 297–98, 300
 Old Supreme Court Chamber, 36–37, 39, 181–83, 190–94, 196–200, 205, 212, 246, 248, 257, 264, 294, 296–98, 301, 306
 Onassis, Aristotle, 80
 Parks, Lillian Rogers, 99
 Pearson, Jim (R-KS), 295–96
 Pell, Claiborne (D-RI), 200
 Persico, Joe, 238
 Phelan, Mary, 19, 37, 184–85, 215, 218, 241
 Phillips, Kevin, 176–77
 Pickle, James [Jake], 188
 Pope, Martha, 310
 Poulain, Simone, 156
 Powell, Adam Clayton, 15
 Quayle, Dan (R-IN), 231
 Quayle, Marilyn [Mrs. Dan], 288–89
 Radice, Anne, 185–86, 233, 302
 Radziwill, Lee, 80, 83
 Reagan, Ronald, 1, 195
 Ribicoff, Abraham (D-CT), 235
 Ribicoff, Ruth [Mrs. Abraham], 235
 Ritchie, Donald, 328–29
 Robb, Charles (D-VA) 126, 133–34, 138, 308, 325–26
 Robb, Lynda Johnson, *see* Johnson, Lynda
 Rockefeller, Happy [Mrs. Nelson], 240
 Rockefeller, Nelson, 30, 231, 236, 238–40, 286–87
 Rockwell, Norman, 175
 Rodgers, Dorothy, 235
 Rodgers, Richard, 235
 Rodgers, William, 15–16
 Roosevelt, Eleanor, 69, 98, 140, 154
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 80, 98, 154
 Roosevelt, James (D-CA), 23
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 68, 90, 132, 147, 172, 214, 284
 Rosen, Fred, 18
 Rules and Administration, Senate Committee on, 39, 179, 180, 188, 191, 192, 224, 225, 228, 230, 232–33, 258, 259, 265, 296–97, 299
 Russell Senate Office Building, 256, 260, 317
 St. Claire, Darrell, 37, 39, 40, 193, 222–23, 229, 249, 267, 268, 323, 330–31
 St. John, Adele Rogers, 145
 Salinger, Pierre (D-CA), 139, 152
 Sandburg, Carl, 120–21
 Saudek, Bob, 305, 314, 320
 Schlesinger, Arthur, 121, 143, 156–57
 Schwengel, Fred, 89, 186–89, 287
 Scott, Dorothy, 34, 39, 202, 223, 267–68
 Scott, Hugh (R-PA), 188, 204, 232, 298
 Scouten, Rex, 129, 293
 Seale, William, 172
 Secretary of the Senate, 39, 202, 203–4, 208, 215, 222, 228, 246, 249, 251, 259, 265, 267–68, 271, 273, 306–8, 310–11, 323, 330; *see also* individual secretaries
 Senate Disbursing Office, 192, 247, 257, 318
 Senate exhibits, 219–20, 241–42, 260–61, 266, 270–71, 275–76, 285, 300–302, 303–8, 318, 323–24
 Senate Fine Arts Catalogue, 201, 208, 212, 217, 218, 219, 254
 Senate Historical Office, 245, 260, 286, 325
 Senate Library, 36, 228, 260
 Senate offices, art for, 224–27, 253, 323–26, 330
 Senate Spouses’ Club, 35, 225–26, 256
 Sergeant at Arms, Senate, 110, 180, 183, 194, 198, 210–11, 213, 221, 223–24, 234, 258, 265
 Sergeant, Polly, 36
 Shelton, Isabelle, 36, 130, 141, 146, 147
 Sidey, Hugh, 19, 139, 142, 171
 Simon, Scott, 93–94
 Simpson, Alan (R-WY), 308–9
 Skvarla, Diane, 92, 219, 220, 228, 232, 260, 270, 304, 320, 326
 Speaker of the House, 191

Smith, Helen McCain, 175–76
 Smith, Merriman, 141, 143–44
 Smith, Warrie Lynn, 132–33
 Smithsonian Institution, 21–22, 31, 33, 56, 91, 109, 110, 122, 135, 206–7, 237, 286, 318
 Smock, Raymond, 312, 314
 Soane Museum, 37, 182
 “Sound and Light,” 187–89
 State of the Union dinners, 269–73
 Steichen, Edward, 120–21
 Stennis, John (D-MS), 182, 297–98
 Stevens, Ted (R-AK), 39, 269
 Stevenson, Adlai E. [Vice President], 194, 290
 Stevenson, Nancy [Mrs. Adlai], 186–87, 189, 287
 Stewart, J. George, 37, 89, 182, 191
 Stewart, Walter J. [Joe], 39, 191, 207, 228, 249, 251, 267, 269–70, 272, 273, 291, 304, 306, 307, 315, 318–19, 321, 323–24
 Story, Joseph, 197
 Strong, Scott, 251, 260
 Supreme Court, 197–98
 Svendson, Dot, 322
 Swartz, Paul, 48
 Taber, John, 9
 Taft, William H., 89
 Taney, Roger, 197, 296
 Taylor, Elizabeth, 36, 269
 Thayer, Mary Van Rensselaer (Molly), 144–46, 149–50
 Thayn, Florian, 183–86
 Thomas, Helen, 141, 144, 146, 148
 Thompson, Charlie, 96–98
 Thurmond, Strom (D/R-SC), 274, 306, 308–9
 Tower, John (R-TX), 200
 Treadwell, Jay, 245
 Truman, Bess, 66, 99
 Truman, Harry (D-MO), 31, 60–61, 78, 79, 82, 127, 262, 292
 Truman, Margaret, 89, 99
 Tuckerman, Nancy, 74, 84
 Turnure, Pam, 139, 142, 152
 Tyler, Julia Gardiner, 90
 Udall, Stuart, 120–21
 Valeo, Francis R. [Frank], 35, 37–40, 179–80, 192, 202–4, 216, 218, 222–23, 246, 257–58, 267, 268, 273, 277, 297–98, 306, 307, 320–21, 323, 330
 Vandenberg, Arthur (R-MI), 232
 Vanocur, Sander, 60
 Verdon, Rene, 109
 Vice Presidents of the United States, 235–37, 283, 285–91
 Vice President’s house, 92, 283, 287–89, 290
 Vice Presidential Bust Collection, 229–31
 Videnieks, Barbara, 205
 Vietnam War, 157–59, 160–61
 Walker, John, 79, 93
 Walters, Barbara, 131
 Walton, William, 81
 Wannall, Bill, 38–39, 216
 Warneke, John Carl, 81
 Warner, John (R-VA), 269, 274–75
Washington Evening Star, 57, 140, 149
Washington Post, 40, 57, 71, 133, 140, 141, 143, 190
 Watergate investigation, 28–29, 175, 177
 Watson, Edwin (Pa), 97
 Watson, Marvin, 29–30, 165
 Webster, Daniel, (W-MA) 143, 213–15, 255, 261–62, 279
 Wertheimer, Linda, 230
 West, J. B., 62–63, 74, 80, 128, 129, 166
 White, George, 183, 185, 187, 298, 321
 White House: art in, 29, 66, 79, 90–92, 109–10, 111–12, 115–16, 121–23, 227; Blue Room, 70, 72, 142, 150, 172; china patterns, 90, 164–65, 292; Christmas in, 20–21, 103–4, 119; Committee for the Preservation of the, 109, 110–12, 168; Diplomatic Reception Room, 61, 73, 117, 153; East Wing, 58, 77, 104, 121, 143, 152, 153, 155–56; Eisenhower administration in the, 20, 31, 63–67, 98, 123, 166; family quarters, 28, 29, 59, 64–65, 67, 79, 99, 103, 112, 124, 127–30, 132, 151, 159, 160, 166, 171, 172; Fine Arts Committee, 23, 26, 69, 83, 92, 110, 142; gifts for, 69, 71, 93–94, 155, 268; Green Room, 70, 142, 172, 173–74, 281; Hayes administration in the, 90; Johnson administration in the, 24, 27–33, 80, 95–96, 103–38, 153, 154–55, 156, 161, 164–65, 174, 293, 329; Kennedy administration in the, 7, 19–24, 26–27, 30–33, 57–63, 67–87, 96, 103, 108, 140–43, 154, 156, 174, 294–95, 334; Lincoln bedroom, 21, 173; Nixon administration in the, 26, 28, 33, 101, 123, 167–83, 293, 304, 334; official functions, 123, 127, 155–56; Oval Office, 30–31; press corps, 71–72, 127, 140–54, 292; public tours, 71, 113, 116–19, 302; Roosevelt, Franklin D., administration in the, 58, 69, 98, 140, 154; Roosevelt, Theodore, administration in the, 68, 90, 132, 147, 172; security, 59, 116–17, 119, 267, 269; staff, 95–100, 109; State Dining Room, 180; Taft administration in the, 89, 99; televised tour 1962, 19, 60–61, 62; Treaty Room 61–62, 176, 302–3; Truman administration in the, 20, 79, 88, 89, 99, 118, 137, 295; weddings in, 135–37, 151–52, 160; West Wing, 28, 31, 58, 91, 103, 109,

113, 141, 151–52, 155, 156, 163, 165, 227
White House Historical Association, 22, 26, 69, 82,
91, 120, 168, 172–73, 189–90, 211
White, Theodore, 175
Willard, Simon, Clock, 197
Wilson Desk, 180–81, 7 291, 292–93
Wilson, Edith Bolling [Mrs. Woodrow], 89–90
Wilson, Henry (R-MA), 286, 291
Wilson, Woodrow, 72, 90, 97, 100, 180–81, 286
Winchester, Lucy, 166
Wolfe, Diane, 322
Wolfe, Perry, 61
Wright, Jim, 311–12, 316
Wright, Zephyr, 109
Wrightsman, Charles, 69
Wrightsman, Jane, 69, 73
Wyeth, Andrew, 29, 169