

Oral History Interview
with
LOIS BERNHARDT

Stenographer to James F. Byrnes during World War II and from July to November, 1945.

Clarion, Iowa
September 19, 1989

by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

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JOHNSON: Mrs. Bernhardt, would you give us your full name, including your maiden name, and your birthplace and the date of birth.

BERNHARDT: My maiden name is Kevan, Lois Kevan Bernhardt, and I was born at Dow City, Iowa, on November 22, 1919. My parents were Jay and Golda Kevan.

JOHNSON: Did they happen to be Irish in background?

BERNHARDT: Scotch. I've seen the name in Ireland, so it could have been. One grandfather was from Scotland, and his wife was from England.

JOHNSON: How about brothers and sisters.

BERNHARDT: I had one brother and two sisters, who are all deceased now.

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JOHNSON: Are you the youngest?

BERNHARDT: No, I wasn't the youngest. I had one sister that was younger. She died just a short time ago, so they are all gone. I went to school in Dow City, but graduated from Schaller, Iowa, where I met my husband. We were high school sweethearts there, but it took us eight and a half years to finally get married, but of ourse, there was a global war in there.

JOHNSON: The only one that took longer was Harry and Bess Truman.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: What was your father's occupation?

BERNHARDT: He was a farmer. My mother was a schoolteacher before she married him.

JOHNSON: So you were raised on a farm.

BERNHARDT: Most of the time. My father passed away when I was only seven years old, so my mother had the problem of raising four children during the Great Depression.

JOHNSON: By herself, schoolteaching.

BERNHARDT: Well, she was a nurse then.

JOHNSON: Well, I guess at least nursing was in demand so

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that she was . . .

BERNHARDT: She was never without work.

JOHNSON: Then you graduated from high school.

BERNHARDT: The Depression was just slowing down, but money was very scarce, and I had a scholarship to a business school in Des Moines, the American Institute of Business. So I attended that.

JOHNSON: That would have been what year?

BERNHARDT: I graduated in '37. And after I graduated from there I was in an insurance office in Des Moines. Through my mother's insistence, I took a Civil Service test. I was not interested. In fact, I put on the Civil Service test that I did not want to go out of the state of Iowa. I did not pursue any job at that time with the Government. But by the time I got the telegram from Washington--I didn't accept the first one because I wasn't interested--but then I had advanced as far as I could in the job in Des Moines, and so the third telegram was very attractive and I went to Washington all by myself. Didn't know a soul; didn't have a place to live.

JOHNSON: What office in Washington was offering you a job?

BERNHARDT: The War Department.

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JOHNSON: What year?

BERNHARDT: This was 1940.

JOHNSON: Before Pearl Harbor.

BERNHARDT: The year before Pearl Harbor.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the name of the person, or the boss, the first boss that hired you?

BERNHARDT: No. I was in the G-3 division of the War Department, which at that time had the job of troop movements and troop training. So, that job became more of a secret nature as the possibility of war became a reality. So we were highly investigated, and at the time troop movements were very, very secret. I had made a trip to Fort Dix to see a friend who was among the troops that first went to northern Ireland. No one on that base knew where they were going, but they knew that I knew where they were going. So, don't anybody ever tell you that a girl can't keep a secret.

JOHNSON: This would have been after Pearl Harbor then, in 1942.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: And you were still single.

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BERNHARDT: Oh, yes, still single until after the war. I rather skipped over Pearl Harbor a little bit there. In Washington I wanted to go to visit Congress. As we were working all day, I took advantage of an evening session to visit Congress. And that night was when Congress was voting on the extension of the draft law. The draft law had been passed for only one year.

JOHNSON: That's right. This would have been just a few weeks before . . .

BERNHARDT: They were voting on an extension. It was August, four months before Pearl Harbor. And that passed by one vote. So, the extension of the draft was voted in by one vote, four months before Pearl Harbor.

JOHNSON: Now, were you in there to see the vote taken?

BERNHARDT: Yes. That was a very interesting, timely time to be in the Congress.

JOHNSON: Where did you live when you were working at that point, '40-'41?

BERNHARDT: Close to DuPont Circle, at 1533 New Hampshire, in a boarding house. When I got to Washington, as I say, I didn't know anybody. I went to the YWCA to get a list of residences. I just happened to go to this boarding house, and the reason I took the room was

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there was a girl there that was home that day that had the prettiest smile and the most sparkling brown eyes, and I thought, "Oh, I need a friend." I was never sorry, because we are still friends with that girl. Nina Nicholson was her name then; Nina Collins is her name now.

JOHNSON: She was working for the Government too?

BERNHARDT: She was working in the War Department too, and we used to walk to work together and I really enjoyed her.

JOHNSON: Where did you work exactly?

BERNHARDT: In the old Munitions Building. Remember those buildings . . .

JOHNSON: Is that on the Mall, facing the Mall?

BERNHARDT: Yes. They were temporary buildings in World War I, and were still there.

JOHNSON: I think they were there until what, ten, fifteen years ago.

BERNHARDT: I think so. I think they still used them.

JOHNSON: Yes, that was just up from the Smithsonian, I think.

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BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: You worked in that office for how long?

BERNHARDT: Well, at that time, if you worked for the Government and war was just starting, you were not permitted to change jobs unless you acquired a skill that you were not using, and then you could apply for another job. So, I went back to the Washington School for Secretaries to be able to use the stenotype fluently. So then I could say, "I can use a stenotype now; I'd like to have another job." So then they assigned me to the Price Adjustment Board. This was still in connection with the War Department. The Price Adjustment Board was in the new Pentagon. Now, that Pentagon was the largest office building in the world, and was built in one year.

JOHNSON: Amazing.

BERNHARDT: However, the roof was not finished, and every time it rained, water just came down the walls. You might be working at a desk, and when you came to it you might be surrounded by water.

JOHNSON: What was your job title of the first job you had?

BERNHARDT: I was a clerk, clerk-typist.

JOHNSON: Then you went back and got this additional

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training for stenotype. Then what was your title?

BERNHARDT: Clerk-stenographer.

JOHNSON: Clerk-stenographer in the Pentagon.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the room?

BERNHARDT: Oh, no. In fact, they really didn't have individual rooms yet. They had this big, long corridor and I was assigned to be a secretary to Donald Russell. He had never dictated to a stenotypist before. This was my first experience at taking dictation, so all these people in this long corridor stopped their work and watched us. I didn't do very well on that first letter, I'm sure. Mr. Russell and I talked about it a year later when I had worked for him a while, and he said, "Now that was pretty bad, wasn't it?"

But anyway, they didn't have the partitions in yet. We were only in there a short time though, because Mr. [James F.] Byrnes was on the Supreme Court, as Justice of the Supreme Court, and Roosevelt needed him as his assistant. So, he asked him to leave the Supreme Court and come to the East Wing of the White House; that was where our office was. And in turn, Mr. Byrnes asked Mr. Russell if he would come because Mr. Russell had been a law partner of Byrnes in

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South Carolina. They were good friends, for a lifetime. So, Mr. Russell therefore went to the White House.

JOHNSON: Well, when did you go to the White House?

BERNHARDT: Well, shortly after, because I was pretty anxious to see if I couldn't get there too. So, Mr. Russell gave me the nod and I got there.

JOHNSON: I think that started off as the Office of Economic Stabilization.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: Then it was changed to Office of War Mobilization, and eventually ended up as the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion toward the end of the war.

BERNHARDT: They created that office for Mr. Byrnes to be in the White House so that he could be an assistant to Roosevelt. Also, they had this myriad of ABC offices. There was a lot of bickering between the agencies, each one striving to be the most important agency. And Roosevelt had, oh, you could call it a failing or what, but he did not want to put anybody out of office and so he just created another office over them. You know how that's pyramided.

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JOHNSON: Is this G-3 that you are in, in the Pentagon?

BERNHARDT: No. No, it was completely out of the G-3 Division then.

JOHNSON: And you were in the Pentagon.

BERNHARDT: The Price Adjustment Board.

JOHNSON: Oh, the Price Adjustment Board was in the Pentagon at that point?

BERNHARDT: Yes. The Price Adjustment Board was.

JOHNSON: So, it was through Russell that . . .

BERNHARDT: That I came to the White House.

JOHNSON: And that got you into contact with Jimmy Byrnes.

BERNHARDT: Jimmy Byrnes needed somebody to take his conference reporting, and also to take his official dictation. So my stenotype really served me well to do that.

JOHNSON: And what is stenotype?

BERNHARDT: Machine dictation, like court reporters use.

JOHNSON: Oh, okay.

BERNHARDT: Now, Jimmy Byrnes had been a court reporter. He had a very interesting past. You probably have all of

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that in your notes. He was born after his father had passed away.

JOHNSON: That's right, he didn't have a college degree, and he studied law in a law office.

BERNHARDT: He worked for a judge and passed his bar. Of course, Truman didn't have a college degree either.

JOHNSON: He had two years of law school, evening law school. Both of them were very much self-educated.

BERNHARDT: Yes, very much so.

JOHNSON: Read an awful lot.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: I suppose that's true of Jimmy Byrnes. Do you have any idea of his reading habits? Was he a voracious reader, Jimmy Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: At that time, he was so busy trying to keep up with things, that a lot of his reading was recreational reading. He loved mysteries and things like that, to relax him. He did do that.

JOHNSON: Sort of like Bess Truman. And now, Margaret writes them.

BERNHARDT: He was very much on top of things. One day he

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was dictating to me and he made the remark about some rumor being "all over the lot." I looked puzzled at him and he said, "Lois, you don't know what I mean do you?" I said, "No," and he changed it because he said, "Well, if you don't know what that terms means, then maybe the people that are going to read this won't know it either." Well, it meant that all over Government circles that . .

JOHNSON: It shows that he was alert to his audience.

BERNHARDT: Oh yes. Oh yes.

JOHNSON: The people that were going to read or hear what he had to say.

BERNHARDT: Very much so.

JOHNSON: Would you say that that made him an effective communicator?

BERNHARDT: Yes, everybody felt at ease with him. He had that quality that he was a very kind, observing person.

JOHNSON: Do you recall anything about the relationship between Franklin Roosevelt and Jimmy Byrnes? Did you ever see them together?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: You saw them together. In what situations?

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BERNHARDT: Really not that much at the White House, because anytime in the White House that the President needed him, Jimmy Byrnes, of course, had to go to the Oval Office because the

President was completely a cripple. They were together at the international conferences more visibly than anything else.

JOHNSON: Did you get into the Oval Office while Roosevelt was President?

BERNHARDT: Yes, we had the Manhattan Project file in our office in the East Wing and whenever this was under discussion at the Oval Office, I was the one that carried it over there.

JOHNSON: What kind of clearance did you have?

BERNHARDT: Well, of course, at that time, I was not aware what I was carrying. If I had known it was the atom bomb file, I still wouldn't have understood what it was because at that time I didn't know what an atom was, you know.

JOHNSON: Was this a sealed folder then, or . . .

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: You could have flipped it open and read it?

BERNHARDT: It was kept secret; it was in an office in an

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unlocked file, in an ordinary file.

JOHNSON: It was?

BERNHARDT: Yes. So there was nothing to call attention to it.

JOHNSON: Did they stamp it "Secret?"

BERNHARDT: Not the outside of it. I never opened it because I thought this was none of my business.

JOHNSON: Did you have any particular clearance?

BERNHARDT: Well, we were cleared to be employed in the White House itself.

JOHNSON: And that was considered adequate clearance.

BERNHARDT: Yes, because the Secret Service went back to our home town of Schaller and went up and down the street asking people, "Does she use alcohol? Does she talk too much? Is she morally okay?"

JOHNSON: But you were sworn to secrecy.

BERNHARDT: Oh, my yes.

JOHNSON: You were told not to breathe a word of this project.

BERNHARDT: At that time, everybody in any kind of work was

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very aware of keeping their mouth shut, because of the danger to our own troops and everything.

JOHNSON: Had posters up, even had them in the White House did they?

BERNHARDT: Yes. You bet.

JOHNSON: Such as "Loose lips sink ships," and that sort of thing?

BERNHARDT: "I Mean You," all these things. So we were very aware. We just forgot what was in our office when we left it. Even when we'd type a letter, they took the carbons and burned them, in case someone would see that carbon.

JOHNSON: Exactly where was the office in the White House?

BERNHARDT: In the East Wing. It's very different now. We were there several years ago.

JOHNSON: Now, the Oval Office is in the West Wing the southwest corner. In other words, you had to go a ways.

BERNHARDT: We had to go down through the middle part where the President's swimming pool was, and then go upstairs to the Oval Office then.

JOHNSON: How come he was so far away from the Oval Office?

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I would think he would have had an office closer to Roosevelt himself, considering . . .

BERNHARDT: That was where there was room. We were a Government agency, with nine people.

JOHNSON: Nine people now working in this Office of Economic Stabilization, which becomes OWM?

BERNHARDT: Right. People would come in and say, "Well, where's the rest of your office?" That was it, because Mr. Byrnes did not want a large, unwieldy agency.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the names of the people?

BERNHARDT: Sure.

JOHNSON: Who were those nine.

BERNHARDT: Besides Donald Russell; there was Ben Cohen, you've heard of him. Ben Cohen was a person without personality, but a very brilliant person. He was with the atom bomb at the very beginning. He was at Dumbarton Oaks and all the way through, working with the atom bomb. And, of course, Walter Brown was the press agent, and Samuel Lubell was there for a while; he was an economist.

JOHNSON: A political scientist I think. He is noted for his book, *The Future of American Politics*.

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BERNHARDT: Yes. A pretty dry book. Then the women: Cathy Connor was Mr. Byrnes' personal secretary, and had been for 25 years, an administrative assistant. There was a good friend, Anella Robinson, who lived in Silver Spring. She was secretary to Walter Brown. And Francis Leibel was secretary to Ben Cohen. I don't know if she is still living. I haven't heard from her for years and years. Then at different times, different people were called in, like Fred Searles. Do you know that name?

JOHNSON: I know the name.

BERNHARDT: He was there, a very fine, very fine person. He was one of those people that was very, very wealthy but hadn't lost sight of the ones that weren't.

JOHNSON: Yes. He was a dollar-a-year man too, I think, wasn't he?

BERNHARDT: Right. Yes. And General Clay.

JOHNSON: Lucius Clay was in the office there too.

BERNHARDT: Yes. He was in the office for a while, not long. He was just one of those that was in for a while.

JOHNSON: In fact, didn't he become an assistant, really sort of the assistant to Jimmy Byrnes?

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BERNHARDT: For a while, and then he was commander of the forces after V-E Day in Europe.

JOHNSON: Went over to become Military Governor.

BERNHARDT: Right. Then did you ever hear of Edward Prichard?

JOHNSON: Prichard? [Edward F. Prichard, Jr. Mr. Prichard's name is sometimes misspelled in the secondary literature.]

BERNHARDT: He's still around, but there is an interesting fact on him. He was a young person with an unsatiable curiosity, and when Mr. Byrnes came back from the Yalta Conference--Mr. Byrnes took shorthand, and he put his book on his lap and took notes at these conferences--he came back and dictated them off to me. Well, this was a highly secret conference, of course, but Mr. Prichard knew I had those notes and was typing them. He stood right at my shoulder, reading it line for line, as I was typing it. I knew he shouldn't be doing this, so I went in to Mr. Byrnes and told him what was happening. He took me down the hall with my typewriter and my stenotype and locked the door. And Mr. Prichard didn't get to have his curiosity satisfied.

JOHNSON: Yes, we need to bring that up again, you know, these notes from Yalta, because they are an important

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part of the story. But that comes a little bit later, so we'll work on that when we get to it. Were you on the first floor of the East Wing?

BERNHARDT: Yes, we were on the first floor.

JOHNSON: And there was a basement floor underneath?

BERNHARDT: Right. I don't know if the basement was under the whole White House or just under the middle part, I'm not sure about that. We were down in the basement, only for blackouts and drills. We were issued gas masks.

JOHNSON: There was a bomb shelter under there.

BERNHARDT: There was a bomb shelter. There was an elevator down there so the President could go down by elevator.

JOHNSON: Was the swimming pool in the basement, or was that on the first floor?

BERNHARDT: No, it was on the first floor.

JOHNSON: So, it was easy for Roosevelt to use.

BERNHARDT: Easy for Roosevelt to use.

JOHNSON: That was built for Roosevelt's use, wasn't it?

BERNHARDT: Yes. He could do that exercise.

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JOHNSON: He could swim.

BERNHARDT: Yes, and that was what was good for him, for his polio. The swimming pool isn't there anymore; I understand they took it out.

JOHNSON: That was boarded over.

BERNHARDT: And one day we met Mrs. Roosevelt just coming out of the pool.

JOHNSON: Oh, is that right?

BERNHARDT: She was dripping wet and . . .

JOHNSON: So she did some swimming too?

BERNHARDT: Yes. But she stopped and I introduced my friends to her and she was very gracious.

JOHNSON: You saw Byrnes and Roosevelt together. Of course, we have Byrnes' own account of how much respect there was between the two. Did they seem to have a lot of rapport then with each other?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes. Until after the 1944 election.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's another episode.

BERNHARDT: Another big story.

JOHNSON: You say you noticed a little chilling?

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BERNHARDT: Oh, my yes, with good reason.

JOHNSON: Well, you mentioned some of these names. What are your recollections of Donald Nelson? Do you have any recollections of Donald Nelson?

BERNHARDT: Not very much. He was in the office only once in a while.

JOHNSON: Did there seem to be much interaction between Byrnes and Donald Nelson? You say they didn't visit very often, is that your recollection?

BERNHARDT: Not often. Oh, boy, that really goes back.

JOHNSON: He was chairman of the War Production Board.

BERNHARDT: Mr. Byrnes' job was to settle differences between all these other agencies, and Donald Nelson was one of them that was having difficulty. I'd have to read up on what the difficulty was anymore; I just don't remember that.

JOHNSON: Well, apparently, Donald Nelson and Charlie Wilson, Charles E. Wilson, who was chairman of the Production Executive Committee of the War Production Board, were on the outs with each other. Did you know Charlie, or did you ever see Charles E. Wilson?

BERNHARDT: No, I don't remember that I did. I could have,

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but I don't remember.

JOHNSON: How about Paul McNutt.

BERNHARDT: Yes, I knew him.

JOHNSON: Chairman of the War Manpower Commission.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: What were your impressions of him?

BERNHARDT: Oh, my, now you're going back. He was a handsome man, I remember that. Maybe I didn't look any further than that at that time.

JOHNSON: You didn't notice him visiting Byrnes very much?

BERNHARDT: I knew he was in there, but not a lot. No, not a lot.

JOHNSON: And Henry Wallace. Did he ever come over to visit?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes, Wallace was there until after the episode when, oh, what was he doing when Byrnes was overseas, trying to make agreements, and Wallace made some . . .

JOHNSON: He made a speech on foreign policy, which was in conflict with Truman's policy. Of course, that came later on.

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BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: And Jesse Jones, chairman of the RFC. Did he come in to visit Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: He and Jesse Jones, and who was it that had the conflict with . . .

JOHNSON: Oh, Wallace and Jones were in a conflict with each other.

BERNHARDT: Yes, quite a feud. That was leaked out to the newsmen. The media was really on top of that.

JOHNSON: Apparently, many of the corporations under the control of the RFC, which would have been Jones' organization, were at odds with Wallace's Board of Economic Warfare.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: There's an account of that in Byrnes' book, *All in One Lifetime*, of that feud.

BERNHARDT: It's been quite a while since I read that. Kevin [son of Mrs. Bernhardt] has it now, so he's probably read that.

JOHNSON: I notice that Byrnes did have the two of them meet in his office on June 30, 1943, but couldn't quite get them reconciled with each other. Do you have any

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recollections of that at all?

BERNHARDT: I remember when they came, and I remember the big hub-bub about it. But I did not have anything to do with it.

JOHNSON: You didn't type up a report or anything on that?

BERNHARDT: No. That was not recorded.

JOHNSON: Well, Byrnes reacted to this by drafting an Executive Order for Roosevelt creating a new Office of Economic Warfare, and replacing both men with Leo Crowley, who was former head of the FDIC, and was Alien Property Custodian at the time. Is that typical of the way that Byrnes operated, that if there was a problem, like a personality conflict, he would simply create some new offices, or reorganize, and . . .

BERNHARDT: That was Roosevelt's way.

JOHNSON: That was Roosevelt's way.

BERNHARDT: That was Roosevelt's way. And probably Byrnes' to a certain extent therefore, too.

JOHNSON: Sort of copied that style, you think?

BERNHARDT: I wasn't aware of that very much at the time. I was aware of how Roosevelt did it. But Roosevelt was trying to get rid of conflicts, because he had all he

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could do to keep track of the war.

JOHNSON: Yes, military and political things.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: Well, in fact, Byrnes was referred to as "The Assistant President" in one of Roosevelt's letters to him. Do you recall that term?

BERNHARDT: Yes, he was referred to as Assistant to the President.

JOHNSON: That's the way the media referred to him.

BERNHARDT: That's the way they referred to him.

JOHNSON: And I suppose he didn't mind that label?

BERNHARDT: Well, the title that he preferred all through this was "Justice."

JOHNSON: Justice.

BERNHARDT: Justice Byrnes. He liked . . .

JOHNSON: Did you address him as Justice?

BERNHARDT: Lots of times.

JOHNSON: Mr. Justice, or Justice Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: Either way. Yes.

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JOHNSON: Not many called him Jimmy?

BERNHARDT: Well, at my level we didn't call him Jimmy. But a lot of people did.

JOHNSON: I'm sure Roosevelt would.

BERNHARDT: Oh yes. Oh, he always did. It was always "Jimmy."

JOHNSON: Do you have any recollections about another feud between Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles?

BERNHARDT: No, I don't remember that at all.

JOHNSON: Apparently Hull was telephoning Byrnes rather frequently about this problem.

BERNHARDT: For a while.

JOHNSON: Welles' problem. Welles was apparently making speeches without clearing them with Hull, and there were some variations in his policies that conflicted with those of Hull.

BERNHARDT: And they were supposed to clear them absolutely before they made things public. There was supposed to be unity in any information that was put out.

JOHNSON: Yes, what kind of instructions did you have, or

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did you notice on clearing speeches, communicating with the public? Everything and anything had to go through Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: It was supposed to. It was supposed to so that there was unity on the home front. Because when this office was created, there was much disunity.

JOHNSON: Now, these phone calls that came to Byrnes, like from Hull, did anybody ever take notes of phone calls?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: There was no record of what was said in those phone calls?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: There were no tape recorders.

BERNHARDT: Not that I knew of.

JOHNSON: No bugging going on.

BERNHARDT: No, not that I knew of.

JOHNSON: That comes later perhaps.

BERNHARDT: Right. We were pretty honest and straight-forward; we didn't have any devious ways.

JOHNSON: Cassie Connor, you mentioned her name. What was

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her role, do you recall?

BERNHARDT: She was an administrative assistant to Mr. Byrnes and his personal secretary. A wonderful person.

JOHNSON: So she was in the office, in Byrnes' office.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: She would have been able to overhear many things.

BERNHARDT: Right. She was in on everything. She really was. She was a very diplomatic person. Oh, I remember one time when a Russian minister had an appointment with Mr. Byrnes, and he came, and right at that time the President also called Mr. Byrnes, and so he couldn't see the minister right then. Our dealings with the Russians were such that we didn't want to antagonize him. Cassie said, "I'll take care of him." She brought that guy into her office and sat him down and chatted with him. She had him eating out of her hand. He would have done anything for her. She was a wonderful person.

JOHNSON: Was she the one you reported to? Who did you report to? Who was your immediate supervisor, or superior?

BERNHARDT: Well, Mr. Byrnes had charge of all of us, but of course, he didn't have time for personnel things, so

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Cassie handled that a lot. When she was gone, I was her substitute, but I didn't want her to be gone very often.

JOHNSON: Well, when you substituted for her, were you in the office then with Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Okay, you took her place in the office, so you could overhear the things that were going on, the conferences, phone calls and that sort of thing?

BERNHARDT: The conferences were taken verbatim, and I took those. Phone calls, I closed the door.

JOHNSON: Okay, your notes on the conferences, where did they end up, do you know?

BERNHARDT: I didn't have to transcribe all of them. He wanted them down. Like the Yalta Conference, I took those minutes down from him, and as far as I know, they're still in the State Department untranscribed. They may have been transcribed, but he did not want those transcribed unless they may have had need for them.

JOHNSON: Are they still in shorthand form?

BERNHARDT: Stenotype form, as far as I know. Somebody may

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have transcribed them later.

JOHNSON: Okay, but he wrote in shorthand.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Was that Gregg shorthand?

BERNHARDT: Pittman.

JOHNSON: Pittman shorthand.

BERNHARDT: But no one else could read his scribbles.

JOHNSON: You took his shorthand and put it into a stenotype, so it's still untranslatable to most of us; a foreign language.

BERNHARDT: Right. And he didn't want that transcribed, because he didn't want anybody else to read them unless they needed it. If he felt they needed it . . .

JOHNSON: And he read those to Harry Truman, I think.

BERNHARDT: Then maybe they were transcribed later, I don't know.

JOHNSON: I think they must have been.

BERNHARDT: Because anybody that knows stenotype could transcribe those notes. But I didn't transcribe them; he didn't want it done.

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JOHNSON: So you don't know if they were put into standard English.

BERNHARDT: No. I don't know.

JOHNSON: Again, on this business with Welles, and Hull, apparently Byrnes used that occasion, or the occasion of Welles' dismissal, to merge the Lend-lease office and Director of Economic Warfare into a new agency, the Foreign Economic Administration, under Leo Crowley. And he appointed former Lend-lease director Edward Stettinius as Under Secretary of State. Did you meet or know much about Leo Crowley, or Edward Stettinius?

BERNHARDT: Ed Stettinius, I did, because he became Secretary of State during the first United Nations Conference.

JOHNSON: What were your impressions of Edward Stettinius? Another handsome fellow?

BERNHARDT: Another handsome fellow, but do you know how he became Secretary of State? At the time Cordell Hull resigned because of ill health, many people around Washington wanted Jimmy Byrnes as Secretary of State. So they were telephoning FDR and trying to get appointments with him to ask for Jimmy Byrnes. FDR wanted to be his own Secretary of State. He wanted to run the foreign office the way he wanted to, and he was

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a very powerful person, a very able person. So, he appointed Ed Stettinius and then when people objected, he said, "Oh, why didn't you let me know; I didn't know." Doesn't that sound like the way he would get around that? But Ed Stettinius was not a decisive person. In fact, he had a telephone in the bathroom in the Secretary of State's office, and when a major decision was coming forth, he would excuse himself and call the President. Now, I don't know how often he did this. But as soon as Truman became President, Truman appointed Byrnes as Secretary of State.

JOHNSON: Now, the Secretary of State had his office in. . .

BERNHARDT: The State Department.

JOHNSON: The State Department Building.

BERNHARDT: Right west of the White House, at that time. Not the new State Department Building.

JOHNSON: The one just west of the White House at that time.

BERNHARDT: The State Department was on the west side, and the Treasury on the east side. There was another person that was in our office a lot, and that was Bernard Baruch.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes.

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BERNHARDT: You know, his office was a park bench in Lafayette Park.

JOHNSON: Oh, he was offered a position, and he kind of dilly-dallied around.

BERNHARDT: He didn't want an official capacity.

JOHNSON: I wonder why?

BERNHARDT: He was doing very well the way he was; he was advising everybody.

JOHNSON: He sat on a park bench in Lafayette Park and waited for them to come to him for advice?

BERNHARDT: Well, I wouldn't think that, no. He was in our office a lot, but he was a good friend of Mr. Byrnes.

JOHNSON: What were your impressions of Baruch?

BERNHARDT: I liked him. I liked him very much. He was a very kind man.

JOHNSON: Truman didn't like him too well.

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: Do you think Roosevelt really liked him?

BERNHARDT: It was hard to tell. He called on him a lot, or had him call and come to his office a lot. He was a

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brilliant person and had things under his thumb pretty much. He was called "the adviser to Presidents;" that was his media name.

JOHNSON: In a letter to Roosevelt on January 26, 1944 Byrnes complained that Roosevelt had released a message to the Congress on a National Service Law without notifying Byrnes of an apparent change in policy from views expressed by the President the preceding August. I think this is sometimes called the "work or fight" bill. Byrnes favored an anti-strike law, but felt it inadvisable to seek a national service law. Roosevelt also had announced that the Federal subsidy program would cost about 1 percent of the annual cost of the war, and Byrnes had figured it would be 1-1/2 percent. There also had been some confusing signals from Roosevelt on appointing Will Clayton as U.S. representative to an international food conference. And it appears that Roosevelt had asked Byrnes to handle the soldier's vote bill, but then, later he dealt with Sam Rosenman on this, leaving Byrnes, I guess as we would say today, out of the loop.

First, do you recall any incidents of Byrnes complaining about being left out of important decisions?

BERNHARDT: I don't recall any, no. I'm not surprised, but

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I don't recall any.

JOHNSON: In other words, who would have typed up this long letter in which he was listing all these complaints.

BERNHARDT: I probably did.

JOHNSON: In diplomatic language. That could well have been yours?

BERNHARDT: I probably did.

JOHNSON: In fact, would you recognize your typing if I showed it to you? Let's see, this one, like I say, is a rather lengthy letter, and here is a memorandum for the President. The memorandum is dated January 31, but the letter itself is January 26 of '44. You may be interested in some of this correspondence that I received from the Roosevelt Library. You might like to look at it.

You didn't have to put your initials at the bottom of the letters you typed like you do now?

BERNHARDT: Must not have.

JOHNSON: Of course, it could go on the carbon, the initials and so on.

BERNHARDT: I wish I had. When I went through the Library

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down there, there were several things I suspected I had typed, but didn't have any proof. Here's Baruch. Harry Hopkins was right down the hall from our office.

JOHNSON: Just down the hall.

BERNHARDT: Just down the hall. He was not a well man though; he was ill a lot.

JOHNSON: What corner were you in there in the east wing?

BERNHARDT: The northeast.

JOHNSON: The northeast corner.

BERNHARDT: You just went in the door and turned to the right, down that hall. It was a very small area. In fact, in order to make an office for Cassie Connor, they just took the end of the hallway.

JOHNSON: Now there's the East Room there, a kind of a ballroom.

BERNHARDT: It was upstairs.

JOHNSON: That was above you. That was the next floor up.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Now, there's an implication in this letter that Roosevelt was dealing directly with Rosenman on some things that Byrnes seem to feel that he should have

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been dealing with Byrnes himself. Do you recall any contention, or any controversy at all involving Roosevelt's relationship with Rosenman?

BERNHARDT: Any controversy?

JOHNSON: Any conflict between Rosenman and Byrnes at all?

BERNHARDT: I remember Judge Rosenman being in the office.

JOHNSON: Was he in very often?

BERNHARDT: No. Not any more often than anyone else. No one was in there real often.

JOHNSON: Apparently Roosevelt was making some decisions with Rosenman's advice and not informing Byrnes about it.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: But you're not aware of how that worked.

BERNHARDT: That was 40 years ago, remember?

JOHNSON: In other words, there seemed to be some tendency of Roosevelt, sometimes, to work outside of channels.

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, right, and then tell what had been done after he had already done it.

JOHNSON: Fait accompli.

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BERNHARDT: Especially in his fourth term. In his fourth term, President Roosevelt was not well enough to be cognizant of what he was doing a lot, which was sad.

JOHNSON: And, of course, not able to get around on his own so that . . .

BERNHARDT: He depended on somebody else.

JOHNSON: He always had to have the person come to the Oval Office. Perhaps he would never circulate to any other offices. Did you ever see him, Mr. Roosevelt, come into your office?

BERNHARDT: Well, they had ramps all over the White House, and they had a ramp to our office.

JOHNSON: With a wheelchair?

BERNHARDT: Right, but we were not allowed to see him in his wheelchair. If we were going through the White House and the President was going through, coming down the hall or anything, a bell would ring and Secret Service men would usher us to a side room until the President had gone by. You were not allowed to see him in his wheelchair at all. I only recall once when he actually came to the East Wing, and he didn't come right to our office then. The theater, the projection room, was right close to

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our office, and they brought war films right directly from the front to this projection room to show.

JOHNSON: He would come to the theater to see these war films.

BERNHARDT: Right, or to a press conference.

JOHNSON: You never saw him in his wheelchair?

BERNHARDT: No. I saw him behind his desk, but they would take the wheelchair away. In fact, I was in a movie with him once, Pathe Newsreel. They wanted a picture of him getting a war bond, and at that time, I was the youngest person in the White House, so I got chosen. So I got to hand him his war bond and I was in the Pathe Newsreel.

JOHNSON: You were?

BERNHARDT: My husband was in South Carolina at the time. We weren't married yet, and he happened to see this newsreel. He saw me come on the screen and he stood right up in the theater and said, "Hey, there's Lois."

JOHNSON: Just like anybody else cared.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: I don't suppose you ever got a copy of that.

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BERNHARDT: Of the newsreel. No, I had wanted to, but I've never been able to find where it is. Oh, I wish I had it. I don't even know where to write to anymore.

JOHNSON: Write the National Archives, I suppose the audiovisual department. It might be in their newsreel material. Of course, some of that burned up.

BERNHARDT: Yes, I have been told that.

JOHNSON: Apparently, photographers observed the rule not to photograph him with his braces showing.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: Can we say they were vain about anybody seeing him in a wheelchair.

BERNHARDT: Well, it was also PR. While the nation knew that he had had polio, at that time they were not aware completely that we had a completely crippled President. They were not aware of that. He did not want them to know that, of course, either. And he was very conscious of it. As any of us would be.

JOHNSON: A visual image.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: In other words, we're talking about the image Presidency now, but we had that in the '30s, and late

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'40s.

BERNHARDT: Yes, we did. Yes, we did. Now, in his first two terms, he could get behind a rostrum with the help of his two sons that would help him to the rostrum, and leaning on it then like this. But after his first two terms, he had become so involved with Government and with the

war, that he did not take time to take his exercise in the pool as much. I don't know if that was the cause that he got worse and could not go to the rostrum anymore.

JOHNSON: He also smoked quite a bit, didn't he?

BERNHARDT: Yes, with a holder.

JOHNSON: Do you think he was a chain smoker? Do you recall?

BERNHARDT: Pretty close. I would say so. He and Churchill, both were; you never saw either one of them very much without it.

JOHNSON: But Churchill just smoked cigars.

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes. Big, fat cigars.

JOHNSON: Now, in this letter that you have here, Byrnes concludes that the heads of the various agencies you had been dealing with no longer could believe that he

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had Roosevelt's "unqualified support," because he had not been consulted about these things. Byrnes wrote, "I want to leave, but I want to leave in such a way that I will not give comfort to your political enemies." Byrnes recommended to Roosevelt that the OWM be terminated and that demobilization policies be transferred to the War Production Board. Byrnes said that if the reorganization was not approved, he wanted to be replaced within a week. Byrnes said that he would urge Roosevelt's nomination and reelection because it was necessary for "the welfare of this country," and "out of personal affection." Now, this is early 1944, of course, this letter we're referring to. Did you notice any change in Byrnes' attitude towards Roosevelt, even before the convention? Of course, after the convention there certainly was, but did you notice any change after the time of this letter?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: He doesn't put this in his autobiography. This doesn't appear in his book. He may have censored it, so to speak, to avoid negative things. But you didn't notice any change in their relationship then before the convention in '44?

BERNHARDT: No. I do know that Jimmy Byrnes put the welfare

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of the country first, before his personal welfare. And if he felt that it would be the right thing for him to resign his position because of any disagreements with Roosevelt, he would have done so without any thought of his own self.

JOHNSON: I haven't seen the follow-up on this, but apparently Roosevelt talked him out of quitting.

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes. I remember that. He occasionally wanted to get out of Federal Government. He was not one to be at the head, telling people they were wrong and issuing these hold-the-line orders that made no friends, that type of thing.

JOHNSON: I haven't seen any of the memos or whatever in which Roosevelt talked him out of doing what he said he wanted to do, that is, wanting to resign. But I notice a memo to Byrnes from Roosevelt in June, 1944, in which the President said, "As you know, you are indispensable on the handling and the actual settling of scores of problems which are constantly arising. You have been called, 'The Assistant President,' and the appellation comes close to the truth." Now, this is the first time I've seen that in the literature, and we've mentioned this before, that is, this label "Assistant President." You'd heard that term used?

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BERNHARDT: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: Even earlier than June.

BERNHARDT: When he first came to the White House he was referred to as the Assistant President.

JOHNSON: Did Byrnes ever say anything about that? Did you ever hear Byrnes ever refer to himself or talk about being Assistant to the President?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: So he didn't necessarily apply that to himself.

BERNHARDT: No. Byrnes was very concerned about the health of the President in 1944. In fact, when General Clay came to our office he had never met the President, so Byrnes made an appointment and took him over there. Roosevelt did all the talking, and General Clay wasn't able to say anything. So, when they came back why Mr. Byrnes just jokingly said, "You talk too much General." And General Clay made the remark; he said, "If he had asked me to, I couldn't have said anything because the President looked so bad."

JOHNSON: Do you recall any plan to replace Frances Perkins by a man during the war?

BERNHARDT: Well, the men didn't want Frances Perkins there.

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She was a very able person, but she was an abrasive person.

JOHNSON: What was her relationship with Byrnes, as you recall? Did they get along?

BERNHARDT: Well, not close. Byrnes' conference board was composed of several of the Cabinet members, and Frances Perkins was one of them. I can't remember all of the others that would go to some of the conferences that I had to report on. I know she was there. Sometimes they resented her because she made too much sense. Maybe that's one lady taking the part of another one, I don't know, but she was very practical and to the point. She didn't go around the bush like a lot of these politicians do.

JOHNSON: Direct.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: She also was a woman.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: And was there sexism, noticeable sexism?

BERNHARDT: Right. Still, she had a lot of respect. She gained a lot of respect of those people too, but she was a little abrasive. Maybe she was on the defensive

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too, I don't know.

JOHNSON: But do you recall rumors or any kind of campaign, rumored campaign, whatever, to try to replace her?

BERNHARDT: Not definitely, no. No, I don't. There probably were, but I don't remember that.

JOHNSON: But you just recall that some of the men that you knew, or maybe some of the women, too, felt that she was . . .

BERNHARDT: There weren't any women in there; in these meetings. She was the only woman.

JOHNSON: And she was not a shrinking violet.

BERNHARDT: Oh, no. Not in any way.

JOHNSON: She made her point.

BERNHARDT: She made her point, you bet. She was good at her work; she was very good.

JOHNSON: They did show respect for her?

BERNHARDT: Yes. Yes, they did.

JOHNSON: There is an episode mentioned in his book. In 1943, after a long session involving the miner's strike for higher wages, Frances Perkins apparently was willing to raise wages for the miners, whereas Byrnes,

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you know, wanted to treat them like anybody else. Byrnes came out to his desk and apparently didn't realize that Frances Perkins was right behind him and said to Cassie Connor that, "Fannie has ants in her pants."

BERNHARDT: Oh, my dear. I don't know that one.

JOHNSON: Did he call her Fannie?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes. I'm sure he was embarrassed.

JOHNSON: Then he turned around and there she was. He said she took it pretty well. You weren't there to hear that?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: And Cassie never talked to you about it?

BERNHARDT: She probably did at the time, but I don't recall it.

JOHNSON: Well, how did Byrnes deal with the routines and the pressures that came with his job? For instance, what kind of appointments would he usually honor, and what role did interest groups, pressure groups, play?

BERNHARDT: He necessarily had to make his appointments with only the top people of the organizations. The other ones were referred to his assistants as much as

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possible.

JOHNSON: Who arranged his appointments?

BERNHARDT: Cassie.

JOHNSON: Okay, so she's the one that had to deal directly with them and Byrnes.

BERNHARDT: Yes, and we had to limit very severely the time that they spent with him. If we wanted to get somebody out of the office, one sure way we could do it was to tell him that the President was calling. And then they knew that they had to leave, so he could talk to the President. It was a lot easier for him if the secretary would do that, because he couldn't tell some of these people, "Well, you've got to go now."

JOHNSON: But now, when Cassie Connor wasn't there, you said you filled in.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: So, did you have to take some of those calls?

BERNHARDT: I had to do that, yes.

JOHNSON: And decide whether he could make an appointment or not, whether the appointment should be made?

BERNHARDT: Right. There was never an appointment made

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without consulting him first, because we never knew what he may have . . .

JOHNSON: In other words you referred them to Brown or to . . .

BERNHARDT: Bill Russell, or Ben Cohen. Ben Cohen took a lot of them. Now, one day, you would be interested in this; Mr. Byrnes had a houseboy, a little black boy by the name of Truman--I don't know his last name. He was a boy that apparently didn't read or write because we wrote a lot of his love letters for him. But he was a cute little black boy, anyway. He was a person that would bring Mr. Byrnes' his lunch, because Mr. Byrnes ate his lunch in his office quite often, or bring his mid-morning coffee. And one morning he was ready for his mid-morning coffee and he didn't know that Senator Truman had come in for an appointment. He just hollered out, "Truman, come here." So, here came Senator Truman and set his cup of coffee down.

JOHNSON: Did the one Truman get acquainted with the other Truman?

BERNHARDT: They were all pretty surprised.

JOHNSON: Did he take vacations, Byrnes, or was he always on the job, what, six days a week?

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BERNHARDT: During the war everybody was.

JOHNSON: You worked six days, six full days?

BERNHARDT: Often it was six full days, yes. Very often.

JOHNSON: And he was there on Saturdays.

BERNHARDT: Very often. Occasionally not, of course. Bernard Baruch had an estate down in South Carolina, and occasionally he would have Byrnes down there for a rest. So, he would take advantage of that. Of course, he went on these international conferences, and while they weren't restful, at least it was a change of pace.

JOHNSON: Did his wife ever come over to the office, Mrs. Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: Come in to visit?

BERNHARDT: Not to visit. If she wanted to see Cassie about something she would come in. They had us out at their home several times. Oh, we were out there for dinner. Like when he went to the Yalta Conference, he knew that we all were very curious about the conference and his stories about the front, so he had a dinner party and invited us all to the dinner party and told us as much as he could about the conference.

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JOHNSON: Was that a Saturday night?

BERNHARDT: I don't remember what night it was. It was during the week. Bob had been up there and we had gone bicycling in the afternoon. At the dinner that night-- they had cocktails before dinner--Mr. Byrnes recognized that this little girl from Iowa wasn't used to cocktails. So when the maid came to pass the wine, he just said, "Miss Kevan won't have any."

JOHNSON: Going to keep you sober.

BERNHARDT: Yes, right. So I didn't have to tell them.

JOHNSON: Did they have children, Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: No, Byrnes did not have any children. He had one sister, Frances Fuller who visited us after the war in Ames. Do you remember when she came [speaking to her husband]? You had the measles and were sick. Frances Fuller came and visited us. Frances had a couple of children. She had a grandchild that was born without a hip bone, I think it was, and so was crippled, and had many surgeries. Many times I sent checks to the hospital from Mr. Byrnes so that the family would not know, and he requested that the hospital not tell the family. The bill would just be lowered. He did a lot of that.

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MR. BERNHARDT: Dr. Johnson asked about his relationship with pressure groups. You better tell him that he never accepted any presents.

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes, that was a no-no. People would send in neckties or a bottle of whiskey, or whatever, and we were given strict orders, no matter what it was, that we had to return it. He would send a note of personal thanks saying, "I cannot accept it, because a gift would involve an obligation and I have to be free to do my job. I don't want to be under obligation." How many of your politicians will do that now?

JOHNSON: Well, he was "clean Gene" as far as you could tell.

BERNHARDT: That's right.

JOHNSON: Was there any particular person that he seemed to be the friendliest with? Now, of course, he was a friend of the President, and with Russell, who worked with him.

BERNHARDT: Yes. He was a friend of the Trumans too.

JOHNSON: As a Senator, Truman came in to visit Byrnes during the war years when he was the head of the Truman Committee. Did he come in very often? Do you recall him visiting very often?

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BERNHARDT: No. I wouldn't say once a week or anything like that, but fairly often. Yes, he did.

JOHNSON: And they seemed genuinely to like each other.

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes, they were good friends. They were good friends, until later.

JOHNSON: Do you recall Roosevelt's majority leader Barkley being on the outs . . .

BERNHARDT: Alben Barkley?

JOHNSON: . . . over Roosevelt's veto of a tax bill, and Byrnes trying to help heal the breach? Do you remember him ever trying to patch things up between Barkley and Roosevelt?

BERNHARDT: He was a mediator in a lot of things, but I don't recall that.

JOHNSON: Did Barkley ever show up?

BERNHARDT: He was there once, I can remember.

JOHNSON: Of course, he became Vice President under Truman later on. Were you at the Democratic Convention in 1944?

BERNHARDT: No, I had to stay in the office, but I vividly remember it.

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JOHNSON: What do you recall of Byrnes' expectations that he would be the nominee?

BERNHARDT: Well, Roosevelt, you see, had asked Byrnes to run as his running mate in 1940, and Byrnes turned it down because he didn't think the country was ready to elect a southerner. But when he asked him in 1944--and Roosevelt talked him into it, Byrnes turned it down at first. I can remember his fighting with himself whether he should accept it or not, and finally he did say "Yes," he would run. And then they got to the convention, and Truman had his nomination in his pocket. FDR said, "Clear it with Sidney," and Sidney Hillman was the head of the labor union. Hillman said, "No, we cannot accept Byrnes because of his hold-the-line orders" that kept our country from run-away inflation, and also because of the Black vote that wouldn't vote for a southerner.

JOHNSON: Now, according to Byrnes' book, the biggest fly in the ointment appeared to be Ed Flynn, who was political boss in New York. He was telling Roosevelt, apparently, that he would lose the Black vote in New York and he lived in New York and needed New York. Well, he apparently didn't need it really to win, but it wouldn't look good for a President to lose his own state.

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BERNHARDT: That's true.

JOHNSON: There were these meetings between FDR and city bosses or city Democrat Party leaders in early '44. First of all, the bosses didn't want Wallace.

BERNHARDT: No. No, Wallace was anathema to them.

JOHNSON: They didn't want Wallace, and then they decided that Byrnes had too many handicaps.

BERNHARDT: Why didn't they decide that in D.C. instead of waiting for the convention, the night before he was to be nominated?

JOHNSON: Well, my impression is they were trying to convince Roosevelt of this for months and months, and yet, Roosevelt kept stringing Byrnes along, even though Roosevelt was being told that he was not the best candidate. According to Byrnes' book, Roosevelt wrote to him just a few days before the convention saying that he was the best qualified candidate. You say Byrnes was wrestling with this business.

BERNHARDT: Byrnes was not anxious to take over any other Government work. He was rather anxious to return to his own private law practice. But he felt that his experience--see, Byrnes was probably the only person that I can ever recall that served his country in all

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three branches of the Government, because he was Congressman, he was Senator, he was Justice of the Supreme Court and he was in the Executive branch. So he thought that with his experience, he could serve his country very well in that capacity. So, he finally consented to do it.

JOHNSON: Yes, but you know, this mention about a southerner being difficult to elect in '40 could apply also to '44. South Carolina was not a labor-union state. It was considered anti-union, so in addition to what you mentioned, the hold-the-line, I think it was just that reputation, wasn't it, that South Carolina would not let unions organize. Didn't that then reflect on Byrnes, and Byrnes had to carry that burden?

BERNHARDT: I'm sure it did.

JOHNSON: And it didn't hurt that Truman was from a border state.

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: It was kind of a tradition that the Vice President, if they could, would be selected from a border state where he could get southern votes and still also get northern votes.

BERNHARDT: Well, now, at that time also they knew that

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whoever FDR picked, there was a good chance of winning the election, because FDR was very popular.

JOHNSON: Byrnes called Truman in Independence before the convention, and asked Truman if he would promote his nomination, give his nomination speech.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: And Truman said he would.

BERNHARDT: Yes, he had his speech in his pocket for Byrnes.

JOHNSON: But Truman apparently was still not aware just how things were going to work out.

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: Things were different then weren't they? Now they spend two or three years running for the office.

BERNHARDT: In Roosevelt's fourth inauguration, he spent \$2,000 for his inauguration. Of course, he didn't really have any great expences.

JOHNSON: So you didn't go to the convention, but you recall, you said, the kind of change in attitude of Byrnes after that convention.

BERNHARDT: Toward Roosevelt.

JOHNSON: Yes. He came back and took up where he left off,

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so to speak, after a little time off. He came back to the office and resumed his work.

BERNHARDT: The convention was in, what.

JOHNSON: In July of '44. But after he came back, did you notice then a change in his attitude?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes. Yes.

JOHNSON: What did you notice?

BERNHARDT: He was very badly hurt. He really was, at that time. Now, he backed Truman totally. He really rallied behind Truman. In fact, he wrote the speech that Truman made to Congress after Truman became President.

JOHNSON: Oh, you mean that first speech to Congress?

BERNHARDT: Yes. He and Ben Cohen.

JOHNSON: He and Ben Cohen wrote that speech?

BERNHARDT: And he rehearsed with Truman for his delivery, because Truman did not have any experience with this. So he rallied behind Truman completely. But there couldn't help but be a coolness with Roosevelt then, because he felt betrayed. He didn't trust him anymore. He really didn't trust what he would do. It was very, very hard for him.

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JOHNSON: Were you in the Oval Office after that convention when Byrnes was there?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: So, you didn't actually see Byrnes and Roosevelt together after that?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: But whenever Byrnes referred to Roosevelt, it wasn't with the same enthusiasm?

BERNHARDT: Well, of course, he wasn't obvious about it, but I wrote many, many letters to close personal friends who backed Byrnes and who felt betrayed too. So his attitude was shown through that.

JOHNSON: Through these letters to friends.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did he dictate directly to you these letters.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: He didn't write them in shorthand.

BERNHARDT: No, he dictated them.

JOHNSON: You had to go into his office to take dictation. Couldn't Cassie Connor do this too?

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BERNHARDT: No, she didn't take any dictation. I took all of it.

JOHNSON: Have you seen any of that correspondence since then, or where those papers might be?

BERNHARDT: No. I have no idea.

JOHNSON: Well, some I suppose are in the Roosevelt Library.

BERNHARDT: Of course, lots would be personal, and personal letters wouldn't be anywhere else. But another thing he did on letters was, when he went overseas to these conferences, every service man that he met, he asked them their home address and their parents' or wife or sweetheart's name. And when he came back in the office he dictated letters to everyone of them to let them know that he had seen their son and he was well. Wasn't that a nice thing to do?

JOHNSON: Yes. Now, you mentioned Hillman. Were you at any conferences in which Hillman and Byrnes were together?

BERNHARDT: No. No.

JOHNSON: Did they kind of refuse to see each other?

BERNHARDT: Not that I know of. I don't think there was any occasion for them to get together, especially

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after . . .

JOHNSON: But you knew that Hillman and Byrnes were not friends?

BERNHARDT: No, I wasn't even aware of that. I just know that the cry of the convention almost was "Check it with Sidney." "Clear it with Sidney." That was the cry of the convention.

JOHNSON: CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations].

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: As far as you can tell did Byrnes remain friendly with Truman after the convention?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: Must have, because . . .

BERNHARDT: Truman's first appointment after he became President was appointing Byrnes as Secretary of State.

JOHNSON: Al Whitney was president of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, and he apparently supported Byrnes' candidacy. He was a labor leader who was very much in favor of Byrnes, friendly to Byrnes. Do you recall them ever meeting?

BERNHARDT: No, I remember him, but I don't know that I ever

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met him.

JOHNSON: In September '44, Byrnes visited the front in Europe with General Marshall. But I suppose you didn't go.

BERNHARDT: No. No, I went to Potsdam.

JOHNSON: And then he made some speeches late in the '44 campaign at the behest of Roosevelt. I guess this was just the last few days that he made some speeches. Did you type up his speeches?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: You typed them up.

BERNHARDT: Yes, typed them on half sheets of paper, double spaced.

JOHNSON: And he claims he gave an excellent speech around October 30 of '44 and got a phone call right away from Roosevelt saying he had done such a nice job. Maybe trying to patch things up. But a lot of phone calls would come in without you knowing about them?

BERNHARDT: Oh, sure.

JOHNSON: They'd go from the switchboard directly to Cassie Connor?

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BERNHARDT: Well, no, we answered them. Between Anella and I we answered the phone. But he had a private line too, and if they came in on that line then we didn't answer it of course.

JOHNSON: Okay, so then you just switched them to him.

BERNHARDT: We'd switch them to Cassie.

JOHNSON: There was no switchboard as such, then.

BERNHARDT: No, not a switchboard. We had these different lines.

JOHNSON: Just push a button.

BERNHARDT: Just push a button and you could switch the call.

JOHNSON: Okay, in September of '44 Secretary of State Cordell Hull recommended that Byrnes be appointed to oversee the economic control and reconstruction of Germany with the rank of Ambassador. Roosevelt said the idea, "Hit the bull's eye, but it was premature to consider it and Byrnes was needed equally on the Home front." Did you ever hear a discussion, or prepare correspondence, relating to the idea of Byrnes being U.S. High Commissioner in Germany?

BERNHARDT: Not that I recall. No.

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JOHNSON: Well, apparently Byrnes turned it down. He said he didn't speak German.

BERNHARDT: That sounds like him.

JOHNSON: But it seemed like a pretty good reason. Also as a private citizen he said he could lobby in the Senate for laws to preserve the peace in Germany, and he might be more effective as a lobbyist with the Senate.

BERNHARDT: It makes sense.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Lucius Clay. What do you recall about Lucius Clay? Do you have any impressions of Lucius Clay?

BERNHARDT: I liked him very much. He had a secretary, a long-time secretary, and he learned before he was going to Germany, that she had cancer. She didn't know it and her death was eminent. He requested that he not be sent to Germany until her death, so that he would not have to tell her. This was granted and she died shortly afterward. And when we were in Germany, we visited in his home, his home over there.

JOHNSON: Lucius Clay?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: You mean this was during the Potsdam Conference?

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BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: In fact, we're up to the Yalta meeting in early '45. Now, Byrnes did not want to go to Yalta.

BERNHARDT: Not very bad.

JOHNSON: And he said there were issues at home such as the "work or fight bill," this national service bill. But he did go.

BERNHARDT: He did go.

JOHNSON: Roosevelt insisted that he go. Of course, you didn't go on that one.

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: But he was back on February 13, and held a press conference right after he got back. Did you take notes at any of these press conferences?

BERNHARDT: Byrnes'?

JOHNSON: Yes. Or did you sit in on them at all, take any notes?

BERNHARDT: No. No, I don't remember taking any press conferences.

JOHNSON: Byrnes recommended Fred Vinson or Lucius Clay as his successor. How about Fred Vinson? Did you get

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acquainted with him, or see him very much?

BERNHARDT: Slightly, yes. He took over after Mr. Byrnes left. He took over that office. So we met. And he was in our office quite a bit before he took from Byrnes.

JOHNSON: They apparently had been close friends.

BERNHARDT: Yes. They were very good friends.

JOHNSON: Byrnes resigned on April 2, 1945 from OWMR. So what did you do then? Did you stay on with his successor?

BERNHARDT: Well, before Byrnes had resigned, he had called me in and wanted to know if I would be interested in going into the law office as one of his secretaries with Cassie Connor, and I did. So I had planned to do that. Well, there was a lapse of time there, before he was going to open his law office, so I applied to go to the United Nations Conference at that time, and was accepted. So I went to San Francisco.

JOHNSON: For the U.N. Charter Conference?

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: Before we pick up on that, I want to back up a

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little. When Byrnes came back from Yalta, he had these shorthand notes.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: When did he give them to you to put into stenotype form.

BERNHARDT: Right after he came back.

JOHNSON: And then you had this party, this dinner, at which he talked to you about or told you people about his experiences there. Do you recall anything about that, what he had to say? What his impressions were of Stalin or of Molotov or Churchill?

BERNHARDT: I don't recall then, because my impressions would be overshadowed by the impressions of Potsdam. I don't recall. At the Yalta Conference, we in the White House got word that President Roosevelt died, and we weren't surprised because he was in such--oh, he looked terrible at his last inauguration. We found out later it wasn't Roosevelt that died; it was General [Edwin M.] Watson who died. But we were not surprised when we heard it was Roosevelt.

JOHNSON: So you were there on the front lawn of the White House at the inauguration in January '45? You were one

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of the few that were invited.

BERNHARDT: Yes. I have my invitation even.

JOHNSON: So Byrnes tells you about the Yalta Conference. Did he seem to feel it was a good conference. Did it do what it was supposed to do? Was that the impression that you got, that he felt it was a success?

BERNHARDT: Well, not necessarily. He felt that the ill health of the President could have caused him to make decisions that he would not have made otherwise.

JOHNSON: In other words, was Byrnes indicating a harder line toward the Russians, towards the Soviet Union than the President was? Was that the impression you had then?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Of course later on, you know, this becomes a factor. But you're saying that in February '45, it appeared that Byrnes would have taken a harder line?

BERNHARDT: Well, he just felt like the President was not making some of those decisions that he would have made at an earlier time when he was well, that his mental capacity was not on top of everything, that he signed some things that he wished he hadn't signed, things like that. His signature was hardly legible compared

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to what his signature had been before.

JOHNSON: Did he have Ben Cohen there with him?

BERNHARDT: I don't remember that Ben was there, but he could have been.

JOHNSON: Now getting back to the U.N. Conference. You did go to San Francisco?

BERNHARDT: Right. That was quite a good experience.

JOHNSON: And this was after Mr. Truman was President. Had you been introduced to Truman when he came in, as Senator, to visit Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: So, you had seen him several times. You had talked to him.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: What were your impressions of Truman the first few times that you met him?

BERNHARDT: I liked him. He was a very personable man, and very friendly; didn't look down on you.

JOHNSON: Set you at ease.

BERNHARDT: Right. Very friendly. Yes.

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JOHNSON: So when did you meet him first after he became President?

BERNHARDT: At Potsdam. I was at San Francisco and was planning to come back and have a vacation. While I was at San Francisco, Mr. Byrnes was appointed Secretary of State.

JOHNSON: Right at the end of the Conference wasn't it?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Because [Edward] Stettinius was still Secretary of State.

BERNHARDT: He was still Secretary of State during the Conference. I took dictation from him there at the conference.

JOHNSON: From whom?

BERNHARDT: Stettinius.

JOHNSON: You took dictation from Stettinius at the conference.

BERNHARDT: I took a conference between him and the Australian delegate one day, and I was wishing the Australian delegate had an interpreter. They are hard to understand.

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JOHNSON: Had a strong accent.

BERNHARDT: Yes. Byrnes had been appointed Secretary of State and the night before I was going to leave San Francisco I got a telegram from him saying, "Rush back to Washington immediately." Well, that was quite an experience too, because you know, transportation was at a premium. But he was Secretary of State, so I could show the telegram, and the way was cleared.

JOHNSON: Well, apparently Byrnes had already met Truman on the day after Truman became President, at Truman's invitation, and went to Roosevelt's funeral. Were you up there at Hyde Park for the funeral?

BERNHARDT: No. No. I was in Washington.

JOHNSON: Then on April 15, Truman said he wanted Byrnes to become Secretary of State, but he left Stettinius on just to get through the conference. What were your impressions of Stettinius?

BERNHARDT: Well, he was a very nice person, but I don't think he was a very decisive person.

JOHNSON: On July 3, 1945, Byrnes was sworn in as Secretary of State. But wasn't he also a delegate at the . . .

BERNHARDT: No.

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JOHNSON: He wasn't in San Francisco. Byrnes was not.

BERNHARDT: No. He was not there.

JOHNSON: And it was only, what, three days later that he went on board the *Augusta* with Truman.

BERNHARDT: After the Conference.

JOHNSON: Yes, after the U.N. Conference he went to Potsdam.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: This would be July 6th when they got on board the cruiser the *Augusta*. Truman, Cohen, Freeman Matthews, . . .

BERNHARDT: Yes, Doc Matthews.

JOHNSON: Charles Bohlen.

BERNHARDT: Right, Chip.

JOHNSON: Were you on the boat?

BERNHARDT: No. We wanted to, but the Navy didn't allow girls on board ship. That was under the Navy.

JOHNSON: Even for this?

BERNHARDT: No way. We were bad luck. So we had to fly.

JOHNSON: You and who?

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BERNHARDT: Cassie Connor.

JOHNSON: You and Cassie from the office, the only two from the office?

BERNHARDT: From our office. There were others. There were four other State Department girls that went. I didn't know them at the time.

JOHNSON: Okay, are you in another office? Are you in the State Department Building?

BERNHARDT: We're in the State Department now. When I came back from San Francisco.

JOHNSON: They transferred you to the State Department Building?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: So you no longer have an office in the White House; you're in the State Department building. Where is this? Was he on the top floor, or where was the Secretary of State in that building?

BERNHARDT: Mercy, I don't remember which floor it was.

JOHNSON: But you were right outside the door of the Secretary of State? Was that where your office was?

BERNHARDT: That's where our office, yes.

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JOHNSON: And Cassie was in the same area.

BERNHARDT: Mr. Byrnes was here, and Cassie was in the hallway again. Well, they didn't provide a private office for her, and it was necessary that she have a private office, so she just made do with what there was and put it in a hall. And we were just right next door to her.

JOHNSON: How was it that you got over to Europe, you and Cassie?

BERNHARDT: We flew in a C-54.

JOHNSON: On a C-54, with other personnel.

BERNHARDT: State Department people.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what date that was?

BERNHARDT: We landed on Friday the 13th in Germany. But we landed in Paris first, and we were in Paris for three days. Then we went on to Germany and landed on Friday the 13th in a temporary airfield, because the main airfield had bomb craters.

JOHNSON: Gatow. Would it have been New York that you flew out of?

BERNHARDT: Flew out of Washington to Newfoundland.

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JOHNSON: To Newfoundland.

BERNHARDT: To the Azores and then Paris.

JOHNSON: Azores, Paris . . .

BERNHARDT: And then Germany.

JOHNSON: And then Berlin. That was quite a ride.

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes, it was.

JOHNSON: You won't forget that will you?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: Paris for three days?

BERNHARDT: Three days over and three days coming back, we stopped again.

JOHNSON: What did you do in Paris that first time?

BERNHARDT: We went sightseeing and tried to get some perfume, but it was too expensive because they didn't have hold-the-line orders. So one of the servicemen said, "Well, if you can get me a package of cigarettes, I'll get you some perfume." So, while we were there we were attached to the Army and we were given the same ration of cigarettes as the servicemen were. So I gave him my cigarettes and I came away with some Chanel #5.

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JOHNSON: Do you still have the bottle?

BERNHARDT: I believe I do. Yes, I believe I do.

JOHNSON: A little keepsake.

BERNHARDT: Yes, I never thought about that.

MR. BERNHARDT: Tell him what happened on the plane on the way back with all of your perfume.

BERNHARDT: You know at that time, they didn't have pressurized cabins and the perfume leaked. We landed in Washington, they knew where we had been. We were well perfumed.

JOHNSON: On the way back it had leaked out. Well, it apparently made a fragrant atmosphere in the plane. While you were in Potsdam, where did you stay, at the conference?

BERNHARDT: We stayed at Babelsberg. Potsdam had been ruined in a 22-minute bombing, so we stayed at Babelsberg, which had been the Hollywood of Germany.

JOHNSON: That building that Truman was in was called something like . . .

BERNHARDT: The Little White House.

JOHNSON: The Little White House. Were you in that same

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building?

BERNHARDT: No. We were in another requisitioned house. This was all in the Russian zone, and the Russians had taken over this area and had given the Germans about an hour's leave, to take what they could. And then they turned it over to our Army to get ready for us. So they were getting furniture from wherever they could.

JOHNSON: Was this still kind of a mansion home that you were . .

BERNHARDT: No, it was a very ordinary kind of home. And, it was all in one area. The first night we had to eat with the servicemen. Do you know how they served meals? Tomatoes on top of potatoes, and eggs on top of that and, you know, all in one dish. Well, the girls were very sensitive; we just didn't eat. So then they prepared our own messes. They had somebody in each house that would prepare food for us. And Cassie and I and John Russell and Ben Cohen all ate in one house.

JOHNSON: How many Americans were there would you guess?

BERNHARDT: Oh, I had a picture of them. There were quite a few.

JOHNSON: Oh, they took a group picture?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

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JOHNSON: I don't think I've seen that. Do you have an 8 x 10 of that?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: We may have it, but I haven't seen it. I've seen the buildings; we have pictures inside the buildings and so on.

BERNHARDT: At Babelsberg?

JOHNSON: Yes. But I don't think I have ever seen this particular one.

BERNHARDT: We were right on Lake ? . Oh, I played croquet with Averell Harriman and a lot of the others.

JOHNSON: They let their hair down.

BERNHARDT: That was their recreation.

JOHNSON: What were your duties when you were there?

BERNHARDT: Well, I was secretary, again, with Mr. Byrnes. One of the communiques that I typed was a letter to Japan telling them that we had the means to annihilate their cities.

JOHNSON: The Potsdam declaration?

BERNHARDT: Well, this wasn't the declaration. This was a letter to Japan.

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JOHNSON: This was not the press release that was put out at the end?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: This was a letter, a communique?

BERNHARDT: A communique that Mr. Byrnes wrote for the President, and I typed it.

JOHNSON: You typed for the President's signature, to go to the Japanese, I think through the Swiss.

BERNHARDT: Through the Swiss. That we had the means to annihilate their cities if they did not submit to unconditional surrender immediately. And they didn't believe it. So we had to drop the bomb.

JOHNSON: So that letter I presume is in the National Archives. You haven't seen that letter in any publication since then?

BERNHARDT: No. No, I haven't seen any of it.

JOHNSON: Were there any other letters that you had to take while you were there?

BERNHARDT: We were working all the time, but I don't remember.

JOHNSON: Did you have a camera with you?

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BERNHARDT: Yes. Here is a picture. Oh, it even gives the names.

JOHNSON: This is a snapshot here. And you've got them identified here too. Freeman Matthews, Will Clayton.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Oh, did you meet Will Clayton? Do you have any impressions of Will Clayton?

BERNHARDT: I played croquet with him too.

JOHNSON: Did he impress you as a brilliant person?

BERNHARDT: Oh, I don't think I had much of an impression. I don't remember having any. Here's the plane we went on.

JOHNSON: The C-54.

BERNHARDT: And our pass to the conference. You see this side was signed by the British, but not by the Russians.

JOHNSON: Some of these are official photographs and some of them are just snapshots.

BERNHARDT: Right. These are just snapshots that I took in Paris.

JOHNSON: While you were in Paris.

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BERNHARDT: Here's General Clay and the house that he lived in, the day we went to have lunch with him.

JOHNSON: Well, you're going to be coming to the Truman Library sometime aren't you?

BERNHARDT: Oh, sure.

JOHNSON: Why don't you bring these along; maybe we can copy some of those.
[Photos in this album have been copied and the copy prints are in the Truman Library's audiovisual collection.]

BERNHARDT: And there's the Little White House.

JOHNSON: Here are State Department personnel that I see in this snapshot. This group.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Including Judge Rosenman, Ben Cohen, Ambassador {Edwin] Pauley, Ambassador [Joseph E.] Davies, Assistant Secretary [James C.] Dunn, Assistant Secretary Clayton. Yes. I don't know that we have these pictures. It would be good to have them. Will you be coming to the Library?

BERNHARDT: Sure. We're going to be down through there in October.

JOHNSON: Please bring that along.

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BERNHARDT: All of these, Clayton, Dunn and all--they were meeting on the lakeshore.

JOHNSON: [W. Averell] Harriman and Isador Lubin, General Lucius Clay; another candid snapshot of those three.

BERNHARDT: They had their minor conferences.

JOHNSON: What was it that Byrnes told you about China?

BERNHARDT: Oh, we always wanted to get pictures of the Big Three, but we weren't allowed to take them, and Mr. Byrnes knew this. And one day he called into our office--he was at the Palace--and he said, "Bring out the paper on China." Well, we knew China wasn't even on the agenda, so we suspected that since all phones are bugged over there, that he was telling us to come on with your camera. So we took our camera out and that's how I got some of the pictures of the Big Three. Now, these are the people that ate together in the house I was telling you about.

JOHNSON: Ben Cohen, Cassie Connor, Walter Brown, Colonel Jones, Donald Russell and you. Yes, that's a good picture.

BERNHARDT: And believe it or not, that is me. I don't know who took it. This serviceman gave the picture to me,

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so he must have had somebody take it.

JOHNSON: One of his cohorts, I guess.

BERNHARDT: Because he has this written on the back.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's interesting.

Now that's an official photograph I suppose of the Big Three, but did you take a snapshot?

BERNHARDT: I took some snapshots, but these the Signal Corps took.

JOHNSON: Yes.

BERNHARDT: These are the ruins.

JOHNSON: These are from your own camera?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what kind of camera you had there?

BERNHARDT: Ansco. It was very hard to get film. This book [album] came very close to being burned. We had a house burn down, and you can see how close it came, by the edges [which are browned].

JOHNSON: I'm glad you rescued it. There are some things you can replace, and other things you can't, and this is one you couldn't.

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BERNHARDT: Here's Anthony Eden. This picture I took.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes. July 25th. You, of course, glimpsed Stalin. Is that an official photograph?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Do you have any particular impressions of Stalin?

BERNHARDT: Well, he was always immaculately dressed, and he always smiled and spoke to us. I hope it was something good; I don't know.

JOHNSON: What was it he said, kind of under his breath?

BERNHARDT: Oh, at the end of the conference President Truman said that he hoped they would meet in Washington next year. He heard somebody say, "God willing." And it was Stalin, an atheist. So that was different. Now when the President had his dinner to entertain the Big Three, Stalin came first and he came in this big limousine with the windows all real dark so you couldn't see in, with Russian guards all the way around the car. And when they stopped at the Little White House, why a Russian guard took his place beside each of the American guards. About two minutes later, here came Churchill sauntering down the street all by himself.

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JOHNSON: I guess Truman did expect to meet with Stalin again the next year in Washington.

BERNHARDT: They were hoping so. Unless it was one of these host-like things that you say: "I'll be seeing you next year."

JOHNSON: Here's Attlee, and here's the Big Three again, and you're off to . . .

BERNHARDT: Here's me, and that's why I had to have that picture in there. England had their election you know while we were over there, and Attlee was elected.

JOHNSON: That was really something. Churchill had to go home.

BERNHARDT: The picture I missed was one day when three generals were walking down the street, General [Dwight D.] Eisenhower, General [George S.] Patton and General [H.H.] Arnold, and I didn't have my camera. Well, we weren't allowed to take pictures. Here's one where . . .

JOHNSON: You were fortunate to get what you did.

BERNHARDT: There's General Clay.

JOHNSON: Is that you?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

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JOHNSON: That's a nice picture.

BERNHARDT: It's a good picture to have. I like this one, Truman and Byrnes. I like that one.

JOHNSON: That's a Signal Corps photo, I suppose.

BERNHARDT: This is Cassie Connor.

JOHNSON: Oh, on the steps there. And is that you?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Now, is that an official photograph.

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: We ought to make a note of those so that we can copy some. Potsdam, of course, was one of the highlights of Truman's administration.

BERNHARDT: Oh, yes. And he did a very good job. He had never been exposed to the Big Three before, and he did a good job. This is Byrnes signing a document. That's me too. Mr. Byrnes gave me away at our wedding, on condition that that young man [Mrs. Bernhardt's husband] go back to school. And he did.

JOHNSON: According to your son, you typed up the surrender

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terms for Germany and Japan. The terms of surrender were typed up in your office?

BERNHARDT: For Japan, but not Germany. Germany surrendered when we were in San Francisco on May 8th. At San Francisco that didn't mean much; this is a big country. The Japanese war was paramount there.

JOHNSON: Sure.

BERNHARDT: Yes, I typed up the surrender terms in the office in the State Department, when we came back, and that was interesting. Mr. Byrnes was a very direct person. When he wrote a letter, he just said what he meant to say and that was it. We had to submit this to the Office of

Protocol, and get it all couched in State Department language. When I came back and showed it to him, he said, "Lois, are you sure this is the way" But that's the way we had to do it. So then we had to submit them to the Swiss minister, and we had three days before we got the reply. During that three days photographers and newsmen were in the office at all times, wanting to question me, all of us, and so we stayed in the office. Well, when the Swiss minister did come, Mr. Byrnes called us all into his office so we could witness that the war was over. Oh, that was great! And then we didn't dare go out in the hall because they could read

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it on our face that we had gotten the news, and it was up to the President to tell the world. They had thought they should wait until that night, about 7 o'clock, because the people in offices could be home by that time. So, we had to keep that secret again until 7 o'clock that night.

JOHNSON: Any other recollections about Potsdam before we put that behind us?

BERNHARDT: Can you think of anything?

JOHNSON: Impressions of Stalin? And the Russians insisting on equal numbers?

BERNHARDT: Oh, at the conference table there were supposed to be ten people, I think, from each of the three powers, and one day two more Americans inadvertently were seated. Immediately, two Russians were ushered in.

JOHNSON: This was at that big round table there at Cecilienhof?

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: Did you get to observe any of those meetings at the Cecilienhoff?

BERNHARDT: No, oh heavens, they would have ushered in two

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more secretaries if I'd been in there. No, and they didn't allow any verbatim notes to be taken of those conferences either.

JOHNSON: Oh, did you get into the banquet for instance where Eugene List played the piano for entertainment?

BERNHARDT: No. No, that's the one that where we saw them arrive, but no, we were not on the guest list.

JOHNSON: That snapshot in the book, the three walking on the sidewalk, was that when they were going in?

BERNHARDT: No, they had just posed for the Signal Corps pictures, when I took that picture. But we weren't allowed at those [functions] at all.

JOHNSON: So, you didn't actually see the conferences themselves.

BERNHARDT: No. We saw the conferees coming and going but not the conferences themselves.

JOHNSON: Now, who was keeping minutes?

BERNHARDT: No one did of those meetings. No one did. They agreed right off that there wouldn't be any official minutes taken because it was thought that they would all speak more freely if there were no minutes.

JOHNSON: Cassie Connor, was she attending any of those

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conferences?

BERNHARDT: No. No women. No women from the State Department anyway. I can't remember whether there were any Russian women or not.

JOHNSON: Well, who would have been Byrnes' right hand man there do you think?

BERNHARDT: Well, it was between Ben Cohen and Donald Russell I would say.

JOHNSON: One of those two.

BERNHARDT: They were both very helpful to him.

JOHNSON: Did you tour Berlin when Truman arrived? Stalin came a day late.

BERNHARDT: Right. We had been there for two days, I think it was, before that. We flew in and they came by ship. So, we toured Berlin for a couple of days before the President and Mr. Byrnes arrived. We came upon all this rubble.

JOHNSON: Did you see that scene along the Autobahn where they had all those troops and equipment lined up, and there was a review by the President, of American forces there near Berlin?

BERNHARDT: The Third Army?

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JOHNSON: It probably was the Third Army.

BERNHARDT: The Third Army review; I have a picture of that.

JOHNSON: Were you there to see that?

BERNHARDT: Briefly, just briefly went by it. Yes.

JOHNSON: There was a flag-raising ceremony, also, in which Patton and Truman were involved. Did you get invited into the Little White House?

BERNHARDT: Yes, we were in there just to see it.

JOHNSON: But no parties, no functions?

BERNHARDT: No. We had our own. There was one night club in Berlin that was open and, oh, we were extremely popular over there. These boys in the service had been there for three years and had never seen an American girl in that time. So, you see, we would have to be pretty well duds if we couldn't be popular in that situation.

JOHNSON: Treated like celebrities I suppose.

BERNHARDT: Of course.

JOHNSON: Surrounded by them.

BERNHARDT: Yes. And they thought we were German girls, because we weren't in uniform, until they heard us

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speak American. And, oh, then the word would just buzz around, "Hey, it's American, it's American." But at this night club there were Russians, Americans and British soldiers, all with big combat boots on, and their guns over their shoulders, trying to dance. And the British girls had a dinner for us American girls. So, we were entertained there too.

JOHNSON: And, of course, you speak the same language. More or less.

BERNHARDT: Well, in a way. In a way.

JOHNSON: How long were you there?

BERNHARDT: From July 13 to August . . .

JOHNSON: August the 2nd was when they ended the conference. So you were there right to the end then?

BERNHARDT: Yes, and then we went back and stayed in Paris for three more days before we flew back.

JOHNSON: So you flew back the same way, the C-54?

BERNHARDT: Right, but we went by way of Bermuda though, so we could see Bermuda on the way back. When we were over there, a lot of the other State Department employees got a trip to go to Copenhagen. We could have gone but Mr. Byrnes talked to us and he said,

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"These other people can go, and that will never reach the papers of the United States. If you go, as from my office, that's going to be in the United States papers." So he let us decide if we were going to go, and we didn't go.

MR. BERNHARDT: You made it pretty plain though that you wanted to go.

BERNHARDT: Yes. At the end of the conference we came back in the Secretary's plane with him, or he came with us, whatever.

JOHNSON: Just a few days later, on August 6 the first atomic bomb was dropped, and then the second one, on the 9th. When you were carrying this folder on the Manhattan project, were you aware that this was a super weapon?

BERNHARDT: No. No, I was not. You have to remember, I was very young then, and I wasn't really vitally interested in that type of thing. I had never heard of the atom, you know, as being a powerful thing, so even if they had told me this was the atom file, I wouldn't have known what the contents were. So, I was a very safe person to carry it back and forth.

JOHNSON: In other words, you were surprised as other

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Americans were when you heard about this weapon?

BERNHARDT: Well, I knew about it when we were over at Potsdam. I found out about it then.

JOHNSON: Oh, you did?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: How did you find that out?

BERNHARDT: Well, when I wrote this letter to Japan, and also while we were there Truman had to inform Stalin that we had the atom bomb, because they were our ally. Well, he sandwiched that in among other things they were conversing about. And either Stalin didn't

understand what it meant, or he already knew about it, because he never, never referred to it. Never about that bomb.

JOHNSON: We have a photograph on which Mr. Truman has written on the back; this is a photograph of the meeting in Potsdam. It says, "Here's where I told Stalin about the atomic bomb; he didn't seem to know what I was talking about." Well, of course, he did, I guess because there was a spy or two there at Los Alamos. But how did you know about it? That wasn't on paper, was it, when he told Stalin about the bomb; that was just verbal.

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BERNHARDT: It was conversation. I suppose that was through Cassie Connor. I would imagine that . . .

JOHNSON: Was this right after that first test? The 16th of July, that was the first test. Truman waited until that was successful and then told Stalin about it. Then the word got around, even before the bomb was dropped? They knew that there was a super weapon?

BERNHARDT: Well, you mean, who knew?

JOHNSON: Well, the people there at the conference.

BERNHARDT: At the conference. Well, . . .

JOHNSON: Including yourself.

BERNHARDT: I don't know if it was generally known. I think I probably found out because I wrote this letter saying that we had the means to annihilate their cities.

JOHNSON: But it wasn't specific at all, was it?

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: Didn't mention the atomic bomb did it?

BERNHARDT: No. But they were curious about what we meant.

JOHNSON: So, you sort of by the rumor mill got wind of this?

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BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Well, apparently . . .

BERNHARDT: We were a very closed society over there then.

JOHNSON: We think Truman knew more about the project than what is indicated in his memoirs.

BERNHARDT: I don't think Truman knew very much about it until he became President.

JOHNSON: Well, according to a couple of people who were on the Truman Committee, who worked with the Truman Committee, he knew more about it than was indicated by his memoirs.

JOHNSON: Did he or did the people around there know the extent of the damage that it could cause?

BERNHARDT: I don't think no one knew until it was dropped.

JOHNSON: That it could destroy a whole city.

BERNHARDT: No, I don't think anyone knew it until then that it was such a devastating thing.

JOHNSON: So, you were back here when that happened. Now, Truman was still aboard the *Augusta* coming back.

BERNHARDT: We were on our way. When we got to Washington here were the headlines, "Atom Bomb Dropped."

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JOHNSON: So you got back about the 6th or the 7th?

BERNHARDT: Right. You see, we stayed three days in Paris.

JOHNSON: You knew the war was soon going to be over?

BERNHARDT: Hopeful. Hopeful. Oh my yes, we were all waiting for that word.

JOHNSON: So, what happened on August 14th, V-J Day?

BERNHARDT: You know, being a secretary, this was a little minor, extremely minor thing, but when V-E Day came up, Mr. Byrnes was dictating something about V-E Day and I went in and I said, "How do you want me to type that? VE or V-E, or how," and that is how it came to be V-E.

JOHNSON: I think that was a good decision.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: That was your decision, or his?

BERNHARDT: Well, I just asked him, you know, if that was all right, and he said, "That sounds all right." And that's the way it was.

JOHNSON: And it became "V-J" Day, too. When did you type the surrender terms for Japan?

BERNHARDT: That was after we came back from Potsdam. We were back in the State Department.

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JOHNSON: How were these terms written up?

BERNHARDT: These were not the terms that were signed on board the *Missouri*. They were not those terms. These were the terms under which we would accept the unconditional surrender, and they had to accept those before they could . . .

JOHNSON: Okay, this was that correspondence going back and forth now, in which Truman. . .

BERNHARDT: From the Swiss minister.

JOHNSON: I think in this one letter, in particular, Truman ignored the Emperor; that was the sticking point I think. They still wanted to keep the Emperor, which would have been a condition.

BERNHARDT: They didn't want unconditional surrender because they still wanted to keep their Emperor, and our premise was that the Emperor would have no influence, because we did not want that brainwashing to continue with the Japanese. And that's why they were hesitating about this unconditional surrender, why they didn't want to accept it.

JOHNSON: So, in one of the replies he just kind of ignored that issue didn't he, and that's what made it acceptable to the Japanese? He didn't insist that the Emperor had to be eliminated entirely, but his power,

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of course, had to be eliminated.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: So, you typed that letter which they accepted then?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: As a preliminary surrender document, so to speak.

BERNHARDT: Right. For their acceptance, and unconditional surrender was accepted.

JOHNSON: Then, of course, comes the September 2nd ceremony aboard the *Missouri* when they signed these documents. But you didn't help prepare those.

BERNHARDT: No. No, that was under Protocol and we didn't have anything to do with that.

JOHNSON: Protocol, in the State Department.

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: They had an office just for that function.

BERNHARDT: Right. They had to have that. You wouldn't believe what they had to go through with the diplomatic language and so forth. It had to be just right.

JOHNSON: Apparently, it was Byrnes' idea to hold Foreign

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Ministers conferences. After the Potsdam Conference, arrangements were made for Foreign Ministers conferences, conferences of the Big Four Foreign Ministers. The first one was in London, in September. It was not long after the war was over.

BERNHARDT: Shortly after Potsdam.

JOHNSON: Did you go to any of those Foreign Ministers conferences?

BERNHARDT: No. I was married in November, 1945.

JOHNSON: What day?

BERNHARDT: The 25th.

JOHNSON: To, Robert?

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Had you just gotten out of the service, Mr. Bernhardt?

MR. BERNHARDT: I was still on terminal leave actually.

BERNHARDT: We had Army, Navy, Marine and civilian in our wedding party.

JOHNSON: Where were you married?

BERNHARDT: In Washington.

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JOHNSON: At what place?

BERNHARDT: At St. Anne's Church.

JOHNSON: And that's downtown somewhere?

BERNHARDT: No, it's out towards Chevy Chase, out that direction. I can't remember just what street, but it was out that way.

JOHNSON: You had a lot to celebrate in '45.

MR. BERNHARDT: Oh, boy.

JOHNSON: The end of the war, beginning a marriage.

BERNHARDT: As I say, Mr. Byrnes gave me away at the wedding and Mrs. Byrnes even asked me if they could have the reception at their home.

JOHNSON: I should ask you, now. When Jimmy Byrnes came back from that first conference, did he give you notes to type up? That first conference would have been concluded before your marriage. I think probably in October he would have come back. But you don't remember . . .

BERNHARDT: I don't think I did because one of the other girls in the office had never been to a conference, and as I had just been to Potsdam, Dorothy Morgret went to London. So she probably did all of that.

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JOHNSON: What kind of work did you have to do those last month or two you were on the job there? Have you forgotten?

BERNHARDT: Oh, I probably have. We were busy. I don't know what we were doing. Of course, we always had international callers in and out of the office. We always had that.

JOHNSON: A lot of diplomatic activity going on.

BERNHARDT: Right. Some of those conferences between Mr. Byrnes, when he was in office, and a foreign person were taken down by dictation.

JOHNSON: Okay.

BERNHARDT: And I took several of those.

JOHNSON: So when an official of a foreign government came in to converse with Byrnes, in most, or almost all cases, you were called in to take notes of that meeting?

BERNHARDT: Right. Right, stenotype.

JOHNSON: And those became part of the files of that office.

BERNHARDT: Those were all transcribed however.

JOHNSON: They were transcribed.

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BERNHARDT: They were not left as stenotype notes.

JOHNSON: Do you know if he took those as his own personal files, or whether those would have gone into official Secretary of State files, and be in the National Archives.

BERNHARDT: I have no idea.

JOHNSON: You haven't seen anything of them since then?

BERNHARDT: I didn't want to see any more of those things. I was through.

JOHNSON: They are probably still there. They sound important enough that they certainly would have been preserved.

BERNHARDT: I would think so.

MR. BERNHARDT: We've looked several times down at the Truman Library there, and she's never . . .

BERNHARDT: Well, see, we didn't put our initials on anything.

MR. BERNHARDT: And several things she thought she remembered typing.

JOHNSON: And at the Roosevelt Library. Have you visited the Roosevelt Library?

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BERNHARDT: We visited the gravesite, but we didn't get to the Library did we?

MR. BERNHARDT: Well, we had such a short time there, we didn't get to look very much.

JOHNSON: They'd probably have some of your material there. So then on November 25th, that ended your Government career?

BERNHARDT: That ended my Government career. That ended it. We came back here to Iowa so Bob could finish his school. We promised Mr. Byrnes we would do so. [See the Appendix for an account, written by Mrs. Bernhardt, of her career in the US Government, 1940-45.]

JOHNSON: Finished what kind of school?

MR. BERNHARDT: I was going to Iowa State--it was Iowa State College then.

JOHNSON: Got your bachelors there?

MR. BERNHARDT: Bachelors degree in dairy industry.

JOHNSON: So you did what Jimmy Byrnes wanted you to do.

MR. BERNHARDT: I did what he told me to, yes. I thought I'd have to give her back. Well, that's why I had such a wonderful impression of him too, because he was such a folksy person. He was interested in that little Iowa

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boy too.

JOHNSON: So, when did you first meet him then? Was that at the wedding?

MR. BERNHARDT: No, I'd met him several times before. I got in the gate there several times. You had to go out and get special clearance I suppose. I got to go inside there several times.

JOHNSON: When did you first get into the White House, do you remember?

MR. BERNHARDT: Oh, heavens, I don't know when it was. I suppose it was about midway through your career there; that was probably the first time. She could get me in. It was very limited about how far I could go.

BERNHARDT: Oh, I took you through the White House didn't I? I must have.

MR. BERNHARDT: Well, I suppose wherever other visitors could go.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: So, Jimmy Byrnes walked down the aisle with you?

BERNHARDT: Right.

JOHNSON: Was this a Catholic Church?

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MR. BERNHARDT: Episcopal.

JOHNSON: Yes, that apparently was another issue, I forgot to mention; that he had grown up Catholic but became Episcopalian.

BERNHARDT: No he hadn't. No, he hadn't grown up Catholic. That's what a lot of people thought. But he had never become Catholic, and so he was not leaving the Church.

JOHNSON: Okay, I guess the public perception was that he was Catholic and had become Episcopalian, so they thought, well, there are Catholics that won't vote for him.

BERNHARDT: They thought the Catholics wouldn't. The Catholic Church has changed considerably since then--but at that time, if you left the Catholic Church they wouldn't recognize you. But that has grossly changed.

JOHNSON: So, he had never been officially a member of the Catholic Church.

BERNHARDT: No.

JOHNSON: That's interesting. But he had an Irish background and I suppose . . .

BERNHARDT: His father was Irish, but you see his father died before he was born, and he was never raised a

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Catholic.

JOHNSON: I wonder how that got started? So, he hadn't been confirmed a Catholic?

BERNHARDT: No. No, I don't know what upbringing he had in a church; I don't know that. I don't know whether his mother was Catholic or not.

JOHNSON: Some of the politicians seized on that as another excuse.

MR. BERNHARDT: Oh, sure.

BERNHARDT: I know they did, which was unfair.

JOHNSON: Now, did you have any contacts with Jimmy Byrnes after your marriage?

BERNHARDT: Through letters. We had Christmas cards and that type of thing from Byrnes.

JOHNSON: Did you ever visit him at all?

BERNHARDT: No. We never were back until he was gone. And he went back to South Carolina and was Governor.

JOHNSON: Right.

BERNHARDT: And then in his retirement he became very active in his James F. Byrnes Foundation, which is still going and is a wonderful thing. Since he didn't have any

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children, he took this way of helping orphans and disadvantaged children get an education. He was a great believer in education.

JOHNSON: He was a benefactor.

BERNHARDT: Yes, he was.

JOHNSON: Well, his first problem I think with President Truman was when he came back from the London conference, he went on the radio and gave a report but he hadn't checked it out with the President. The President had not seen the speech, the talk that he gave before he gave it. I think that was the beginning of some problems between the two. But you didn't observe any problem between the two before you left?

BERNHARDT: Not when I was there, but I always understood that their big disagreement came because Byrnes was very much in favor of a small Federal Government and giving a lot of the rights back to the states. Truman was not. Truman wanted a big Federal Government.

JOHNSON: It was a states rights issue.

BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: And that became a difference of opinion.

BERNHARDT: Became very sharply a difference until Byrnes

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resigned as Secretary of State. In fact, he turned and voted for Eisenhower.

JOHNSON: Well, also, there's a story or feeling that Byrnes always felt he should have been President instead of Truman. Did you ever get that feeling that he might have been a little condescending toward President Truman, feeling that, "Well, I should be in the Oval Office and not you?" Did you ever get that sense from Byrnes?

BERNHARDT: No, we always thought that Byrnes did his very best to overcome that. Now, there can't help but have been some feelings when he was replaced by Truman at the last moment. His office was really buzzing at the convention. Francis Leibel was there and said that everybody was coming in and out and all of a sudden, there was nothing.

JOHNSON: Because all these people thought he was going to be Vice President, so there was all of that activity. And then when Truman got it, why then, they just forgot about him.

BERNHARDT: Just dropped. Just dropped. And there can't help but have been some repercussion from that.

JOHNSON: A little resentment do you think?

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BERNHARDT: Yes. And yet, he did his best not to ever show that officially, by helping Truman as much as he could.

JOHNSON: But by giving this report over the radio without going over it with Truman beforehand might indicate that he thought that he had the right to some independence.

BERNHARDT: I don't know anything about that.

JOHNSON: But you never got this feeling that he resented Truman being President or felt that he should have been there instead.

BERNHARDT: No, not while I was there, at all. But of course, I wasn't there too long after we were in the State Department. But I can see why it would be.

JOHNSON: So then you came back to Iowa after you married and took up residence, where?

BERNHARDT: In Ames, so Bob could finish school.

JOHNSON: And then from Ames you moved . . .

MR. BERNHARDT: Well, my first job was with a dairy up in Wausau, Wisconsin.

BERNHARDT: We were floundering for that permanent job just as all the GI's were when they got out of service, and we moved to several places before I became . . .

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JOHNSON: Connected with the dairy industry?

MR. BERNHARDT: Yes. Originally with Russell Dairy in Wausau, Wisconsin. I really only had one dairy job and then I took an offer from the Extension Service.

JOHNSON: With the Agriculture Department?

MR. BERNHARDT: Yes.

JOHNSON: Civil service? Was this Civil Service?

MR. BERNHARDT: No, I was employed by Iowa State University. It was the Cooperative Extension Service. I was a 4-H Club agent at first; worked with youth, worked with young kids. Then we went farming for eleven years up in Minnesota, and from there came back right here to Clarion. New Year's day of 1962, we arrived in Clarion.

JOHNSON: The crossroads of America, Clarion, Iowa. Been here ever since?

MR. BERNHARDT: Yes.

BERNHARDT: Yes, it's been a good place to live.

JOHNSON: Now, these county agents, are they employees of the Ag Department?

MR. BERNHARDT: USDA, yes. In Iowa they called it County

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Extension Directors, but it's county agent or . . .

JOHNSON: But aren't they employed by the U.S. Government's Agriculture Department?

MR. BERNHARDT: They are funded three different ways; local, state and Federal.

BERNHARDT: They are under Civil Service retirement.

MR. BERNHARDT: We did have Federal service retirement. It started out that it was an option, and I took the option when it came up in 1950. Now it's no option and they're glad they got it.

JOHNSON: And they are Civil Service?

MR. BERNHARDT: Federal Civil Service, yes. But they are funded three ways: Federal, state and local.

JOHNSON: But you were never under Civil Service, or were you?

BERNHARDT: Not Civil Service, just the retirement. Federal Civil Service retirement.

JOHNSON: I see. Well, thanks very much.

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APPENDIX

AN IOWA GIRL IN WASHINGTON DURING WORLD WAR II, 1940-45

By Lois Kevan Bernhardt

This story of 1945 must begin back in 1937 when Bob and I were high school sweethearts in Schaller, Iowa. Our relationship starting then would culminate in marriage 8 1/2 years later after a global war which took us many diverse directions. Bob was a Navy flyer who searched for enemy submarines off the coasts of Central America, South America and our own east coast. Lois was in Washington, D.C. on an exciting career first in the War Department, then the White House and the State Department.

After high school, just as the Great Depression was slowing down, I went to the American Institute of Business in Des Moines and then worked in an insurance company. To grant my mother's wish I took a civil service test but stated on it that I did not want to go out of the state of Iowa! But after a third cable from the War Department, and as I had by then advanced as far as was possible in the insurance job, I accepted the offer of the War Department to come to Washington, D.C.

What a decision! I traveled alone to Washington, not knowing anyone there and not having a place to live. What a lonely feeling to leave the train in the huge Union Station at D.C. with no one to meet me! As I had stayed at the YWCA in Des Moines, I sought out the YWCA in D.C. for recommendations for a place to live. The decision to rent a room in a boarding house near Dupont Circle at 1533 New Hampshire proved to be a good one as there I made my first friend in this strange city and we remain long distance friends to this day.

My job was in the G-3 division of the War Department--the division which controlled troop movements and training of our Army. This became more important and more secret as war became obvious and then a reality. An example of how careful we were not to repeat anything was when our first servicemen were due to go overseas, where they did not know. I visited a friend at Ft. Dix and was the only one there who had any idea where they would land but I dared not breathe a word—for their safety from listening enemy ears and because we were on our honor never to divulge anything we learned at work. So

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those first servicemen to go overseas never knew they were headed for Northern Ireland until they arrived here. At the War Department all officers and enlisted men were in civilian dress until December 8th--the day after war was declared. It was only then that we knew the rank of all those men with whom we were working.

During this time, even if you wished to be transferred to a different job, you were not permitted to do so unless you had a skill that was not being used in your present position. To acquire that skill, I attended the Washington School for Secretaries to become a Stenotype operator. Then I asked for a transfer and was sent to the Price Adjustment Board in the new Pentagon building. This building was very hastily constructed—the largest office building in the

world was constructed in just one year. However, it still had much to be done—for instance, the roof was not completed and during a rain storm (of which there are many in D.C.) it would leak so that if you were intent on your work you may look up to find your desk in a pool of water! They had regular mop-up crews assigned to take care of the water. Also, there were not many partitions for individual offices put in yet. We were in one very long room with many officers and secretaries. When I first started there I was the only one who took dictation on the Stenotype and my boss had never dictated to a stenotypist before so everyone seemed to stop and watch—that first effort was less than satisfactory I’m afraid!

My boss in the Pentagon was Mr. Donald Russell who had been a law partner of James F. Byrnes in South Carolina. So when President Roosevelt asked “Jimmy” Byrnes to leave the Supreme Court and come to the White House, he, in turn, asked Donald Russell to be in his office, and Mr. Russell suggested that I come along with my Stenotype. Then, as Mr. Byrnes needed someone to take down his conferences, I soon not only took his conferences but also most of his official dictation. And that is how I came to be in the White House during the most exciting day in WWII history!

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Now, let me tell you something about Mr. James F. Byrnes. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1879, shortly after his father died, leaving Jimmy, his sister Frances, and \$200 for his mother. His mother then went to New York City to learn to be a seamstress, leaving her two young children with their grandmother to care for until she returned. With this new vocation, she supported her family in Aiken, South Carolina. While attending school, Jimmy also worked in the office of an Aiken judge, reading all the law books he could. He learned shorthand which led him to the job of a court reporter and which also he used at the many national and international conferences he was to attend at a later date. He passed the bar in 1904 and soon became a solicitor (a prosecuting attorney).

He was elected to Congress and then later became a Senator for his state. In 1941 President Roosevelt appointed him to the Supreme Court and of the many titles he acquired he preferred that of “Justice”.

In 1942 President Roosevelt asked him to leave the lifetime position of Justice to become the President’s Assistant I the White House. A new government agency was created for this—the office of Economic Stabilization with Mr. Byrnes as the Director and office in the East Wing of the White House. The many civilian government agencies created at that time were getting unmanageable and much bickering was a result. Their instruction, included in the Executive Order creating the Office of Economic Stabilization was that the heads of these agencies were to bring their differences to Mr. Byrnes instead of to the Executive Office of the President as the President needed all his time and resources to direct the process of the war. This meant Mr. Byrnes was responsible for the “Hold the Line” orders issued to control skyrocketing prices and wages. These Hold the Line orders were later to cost Mr. Byrnes the Presidency—to which I will refer later.

The Office of Economic Stabilization was a government agency which had

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only nine people! Visitors to the office would ask where the rest of the office was—Mr. Byrnes did not want an unwieldy large agency which would create more problems instead of offering more solutions. The men in this office were: Mr. Byrnes, Director; Donald Russell, his assistant; Walter Brown, press officer; Ben Cohen, a very able assistant to Mr. Byrnes. Mr. Cohen was a minus in personality but was a very brilliant man so was extremely helpful. The secretaries were: Cassie Connor, Administrative Assistant and personal secretary to the Director. She had been with him through his Congressional and Supreme Court years and their families were good friends. Angela Robinson was secretary for Walter Brown. She was my very good friend, in whose home our wedding reception was held three years later. Mary Butler was our gracious file clerk, and Frances Leibel was secretary for Ben Cohen. In addition to my duties as conference reporter and taking Mr. Byrnes' official dictation, I was secretary for Mr. Donald Russell who was a very fast dictator and a challenge. Other temporary assistants at a given time were: Mr. Fred Searls, a New York investor; Gen. Lucius Clay, Commander of our forces in Berlin after V-D Day; Edward R. Prichard for a very short time.

I shall take this time to relate a story about Mr. Prichard. He was a young man with insatiable curiosity. When Mr. Byrnes returned from the Yalta Conference he dictated parts of the conference to me as he had noted in his shorthand. Mr. Prichard attempted to read this as I was typing it. I knew this was not for his eyes so I reported to Mr. Byrnes what he was doing. Immediately Mr. Byrnes took me, my typewriter and stenotype down the hall to another room, locked the door until I was finished.

Also I have a short story about Gen. Clay who was indeed a very kind, brilliant person. He was due to go to Germany when he learned that his long-time secretary and friend was ill with cancer. The doctor had informed him of her condition but the secretary was not aware of its seriousness. They did not tell her as at that time such bad news was often kept from the

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patient. Gen. Clay requested a delay in leaving the States until after death so they would not need to tell her why she would not be going with him. This request was granted and her death occurred in a very short time.

As the war progressed, Mr. Byrnes was needed in another capacity—this time as Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion, as the country was anticipating the end of the War and needed to be organized for the peace.

During these years of working with Mr. Byrnes he was always very insistent that he not accept any gifts from anyone other than his own family and personal friends from whom gifts were received and given. When he received a gift, no matter how small, we returned the gift with a personal thanks from him explaining that he could not accept any gift as then he would have obligations to the giver and in his position he could not do the job he was required to do if he were not free of these obligations.

While working for Mr. Byrnes, we in the office were guests in his home at different times. For instance, when he returned from Yalta he had us there to report his part in the conference as he knew we were all vitally interested in hearing anything from the front lines of the war. Remember, I was one of those very naïve Iowa girls who had come to Washington, and Mr. Byrnes recognized this. When serving cocktails before dinner, as the maid came to me, he interrupted his conversation with someone else to say, "No, Miss Kevan won't have any!" He knew I would be embarrassed to refuse and also knew I was not accustomed having a cocktail.

His thoughtfulness saved me from any embarrassment. Another very thoughtful thing he always did. Whenever on government business overseas he would take the name and home address of every service man with whom he came in contact and when he returned to Washington would send a letter to the homes telling parents, wife or sweetheart that he had met their loved one and he was well. Many grateful parents appreciated this welcome letter.

Working in the White House gave us many opportunities of meeting famous

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personalities, both American and foreign. One of our statesmen in Washington was Mr. Bernard Baruch who was often in our office as he was a good friend of the Byrnes'. He was quoted in the media as being "the advisor to the presidents". He had no official capacity but was learned and his advice was always welcomed. He was often asked to act in an official capacity but this he did not want to do. His "office" was a park bench in Lafayette Park across the street from the White House. Other visitors were Mme. Chaing, French General DeGaulle, Iowa's Henry Wallace, General Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, Averill Harriman, Chester Bowles, senators Vandenberg, Rayburn and Truman; and then of course Winston Churchill.

Now I will tell another story—this on about Senator Truman. Mr. Byrnes had a young black boy in the office who was his chauffeur and who also brought his lunch to him as he often ate in his office, or bring his mid-morning coffee. The chauffeur's name was Truman (I do not know his last name). It was on such a morning when Mr. Byrnes called for his coffee, "Truman, come here", not knowing that Senator Truman had meanwhile come in to see him. When Senator Truman walked in, I'm not sure who was most surprised—Senator Truman, Truman the chauffeur or Mr. Byrnes!

We were to meet the President and Mrs. Roosevelt at Christmas parties where we would experience the firm hand shake of the President and his jolly "Merry Christmas" and then go on to shake hands with Mr. Roosevelt and her sincere "Happy New Year". Two of the gifts we received were a paper weight and an embossed copy of the D-Day prayer. I do not have either of these any more as they were destroyed when our home burned. My scrap book, though, with invaluable pictures in it was saved.

One memorable visit with Mrs. Roosevelt took place when I was showing two friends through the White House. Between the East Wing where our office was and the West Wing where the oval office is, is the area where the President's swimming pool was. This was installed for President Roosevelt for his health

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as swimming was one exercise he could do. When we were entering the pool area, here was Mrs. Roosevelt dripping wet in her bathing suit. She very graciously visited us for several minutes—she probably never realized how momentous this meeting was for 3 girls from Iowa, and we would never forget it.

As I was the youngest person in the White House, when the newsreel "Pathe News" came to take a picture of the President receiving the first War Bond, I was privileged to be on the film handing it to him. I didn't realize what an effect this was going to have in a theatre in South Carolina where my future husband was stationed. He happened to be in the theatre when the newsreel was shown. He stood right up and pointed to the screen saying, "Hey, there's Lois!"

Our President was a completely crippled man, having no use of his legs due to polio. There were ramps all over the White House where he might need to go. When we went through the White House, if he was going to be in the hallway, a bell would ring and we would be ushered to a side room until he had gone by as he didn't want anyone to see him in his wheel chair.

Several times I was authorized to carry a very non-significant looking file from our office to the President's office. This proved to be the "Manhattan Project" file which became famous as the atom bomb file. I did not know what the file contained nor would I have realized what its contents meant.

An invitation we received and accepted was an invitation to the birthday party for the Shah of Iran at the Iranian Embassy. Washington transportation was chiefly by street car and it was difficult to ride a streetcar and not be aware of the stares if you were dressed formally. My predicament was settled by Mrs. Byrnes as she offered to pick me up in her chauffeured car—another indication of the kindness we experienced from Mr. and Mrs. Byrnes. With her was the wife of the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Fred Vinson, so I was regally cared for.

There was a ticker in the White House but the only place for it was in the men's restroom which was just across the hall from our office. When there was a minor news item, you would hear one bing, but when something came of

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major news, as when MacArthur surrendered, when he returned, and when the War in Europe was over, it rang 5 times. We couldn't go in to see what the news was of course so had to impatiently wait for one of the men to come tell us. Often they stayed in there to visit about the news so face a barrage of female questions when they did come out!

I joined many other government girls in the Girls Service Organization to help entertain service men. We had very strict rules and were transported to and from the social functions by bus, well chaperoned. My very good friend in the White House, Annella Robinson, met her handsome Marine at one of these functions and became Mrs. Wickham a couple of years later. We also rolled bandages and worked as an aid at the hospital. We had city blackouts which were scary but necessary. The White House issued gas masks for each of us and we were instructed to go underground in the place provided. The President could reach this area by elevator.

On a lighter side, the annual President's ball was always exciting with wonderful entertainment. There were about 5 of these at different large hotels and if you purchased a ticket you could go to all of them to enjoy the star performances. Two stars I remember well were Rita Hayworth, the popular pinup girl of the day, and Lucille Ball. Also enjoyed was the music of Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians.

I have mentioned Mr. Byrnes being at the Yalta Conference. While he was there we received word that President Roosevelt had died there. We were not surprised as he was very ill when we saw him at his inauguration. This report was untrue however—it was General Watson who had died, but the President did not live many more months.

When I first went to Washington, in 1940, one of my "musts" was to visit Congress. As we worked all day, I attended a special evening session and there they were voting for the extension of Selective Service, the draft bill. This had been passed for only one year, in 1939, and was now up for

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extension. The draft bill passed by only one vote—and this just four months before Pearl Harbor!

The 1944 Presidential Conventions were considered to be more important than any convention of recent years. It was well known that the state of President Roosevelt's health was such that it was doubtful if he would survive another 4 years in the presidency, so the selection of a vice president was paramount. Roosevelt had requested Mr. Byrnes to be his running mate in 1940 but at that time he declined because he did not think the country was yet ready to accept a southerner as a candidate for a national office and if FDR did lose, politicians would blame it on that fact rather than any true fact, and then it would be many years before another southerner could be considered (was this still a hangover of Civil War thinking?)

But when he was asked in 1944 he consented to be a candidate. Harry Truman was prepared to nominate Byrnes, had the nomination speech in his pocket, when at the last minute FDR asked that this candidacy be cleared with the head of CIO, Sidney Hillman. Hillman said he would not accept Byrnes because he did not believe the labor people in New York State would vote for the man who was responsible for the Hold the Line orders. He also doubted if the black population would vote for a southerner. How easily influenced our voters are—the Hold the Line orders saved the United States from run-away inflation that the other countries suffered, and yet the man responsible for this would be penalized for his service by not receiving a bid for the Presidency. It was a severe disappointment to Mr. Byrnes but he rallied behind Truman and helped him any way he could. He and Ben Cohen worked hard to draft a speech for Truman to make to Congress after he became president. Then Mr. Byrnes rehearsed Truman on his delivery so he could impress Congress as Truman as yet did not have the polish of a statesman.

During these war years I should mention the rationing the whole country had to accept. We couldn't have a cup of coffee with a cookie at a friend's home

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as perhaps she didn't have the necessary stamp for coffee for the stamp for sugar. We could buy only 3 pairs of shoes a year and no white shoes—I wore white bedroom slippers at my wedding. We couldn't go for a ride on a nice day as we would not have sufficient gas nor could we wear out the tires as couldn't replace them. There were no new cars manufactured during the war. We were very short on red meat as it took stamps too-so we ate lots of fish. Butter was severely rationed—we did not use much margarine at that time. However, we didn't hear much complaints about rationing—patriotism was high and we knew this was one way we could help in the war effort.

Only a few days after President Roosevelt's death in April of 1945, the San Francisco Conference was to open—this later was known as the United Nations Conference. Although the President had been very instrumental in the planning of the Conference and he would be sorely missed, it was decided the Conference should be held because it was Roosevelt's idea that it was better to hold the Conference while the countries were at war rather than at peace as there was a greater chance for agreements to be made and unity. This was proved to be wise.

There were 5 official languages at the Conference: English, French, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. Everything was written in all five, but orally translated in 2 languages: English and French.

I had applied to go to the Conference as one of the secretaries before the death of President Roosevelt. Mr. Byrnes had decided his service for the government would be terminated and he was going back into private law practice in Washington—and I had agreed to go into his office also with Cassie Connor whom I had learned to respect and to love. In the interim it seemed a good idea to go to the San Francisco Conference if I was accepted. My application was accepted and here I was going off to the other side of the country, not knowing anyone else who was going or exactly what it entailed! And here is another example of an influential, wealthy man's kindness to a "Little Iowa

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Girl". Mr. Fred Searls, whom I have mentioned previously, had some relatives in San Francisco, and he wrote to them asking them to take care of this little girl. And they did.

Do you remember who was Secretary of State during the Conference? Cordell Hull had resigned this position because of ill health. Many in Congress and in other official positions were trying to telephone the President to endorse Mr. Byrnes, but as he did so many times, when the president didn't want to hear, he ignored phone calls or personal calls and then appointed Howard Stettinius. Then he could tell people "Oh, I didn't know you wanted Jimmy—you should have told me!" You see, President Roosevelt wanted to be his own Secretary of State and knew he could do so with Mr. Stettinius and couldn't with Byrnes. Mr. Stettinius even had a phone in his bathroom in the Office of Secretary of State and when a decision was eminent he would excuse himself and go in there to phone the President to seek advice!

And here is another story—of how mob action can affect you. Remember I had worked in the White House and had seen and talked to Mr. Truman many, many times. Well, at San Francisco, one day the electric word went around, "The President is coming, the President is coming" and you know I found myself hurrying along with the mob to get a good place to see the President ride by!

After weeks of deliberation the United Nations Charter was to be typed and I was chosen to type it! It was an honor I appreciated then and still do.

As I had not had a vacation for a long time I had planned to stop in Schaller to visit my family on my way back from San Francisco to Washington. Bob had just returned to the States and he was going to be there too. Then the evening before I was to leave I received a telegram from Mr. Byrnes saying "Hurry back to Washington immediately!" By this time Mr. Byrnes had been made Secretary of State so at a time when any transportation reservations were at a premium, I had only to show that telegram and the way was cleared!

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Before I leave the San Francisco Conference, I must tell of our train trip out there. The train was a special one, made up entirely of people attending the Conference, so we spent five days going across these United States with the same people so before we got there we were quite well acquainted, and many became good friends. The train was well advertised as it had many celebrities from all over the world as passengers. Whenever we made a scheduled stop there would be crowds of people to see these celebrities and many asked for autographs. Well, there wasn't any way of identifying us as not being part of the elite, so we just nonchalantly signed

many autographs too! Also, on that train there were two girls that I did not think I wanted for room mates. We had no choice so would accept anyone assigned to us. Well, you know when I got to the hotel I was assigned to a room for three, and those two were my room mates! I learned to love the one very much. We had nothing in common—she was older, she was wealthy, she spoke many languages, in fact, was one of the interpreters, she was educated abroad, but the spark of friendship was there and I shall never forget her. The other was loud, coarse girl with low morals—we never became friends but I could tolerate her—however, those two could not tolerate each other at all. It was a good lesson in human relationships.

Back to returning to D.C. Bob did not know that I wasn't going to be in Schaller as we planned. When I arrived in Washington and learned that I was going on to Potsdam to the International Big Three conference, I then phoned Bob and told him I might visit with his brother Jim. Jim was stationed with the Army in Germany, so Bob knew where I was going. He immediately flew to Washington and saw me off to Germany.

In getting ready to go overseas we had to take all of the shots that every traveler has to—but we had them in one day! We also had to have a passport and as I had not yet been an employee of the State Department, I had to be sworn in there. Each of the jobs I had in Washington entailed some secrecy, especially in the White House so my friends and family in Schaller were asked

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if I could be trusted, if I used alcohol, if I was morally okay, if I talked a lot, etc. They must have given satisfactory answers!

We wanted to go overseas, at least one way, by ship but the Navy did not allow girls on board (we were bad luck) so we flew both ways in a C-54. We were each issued a “Mae West” (life preserver) for the flight over the ocean. If I had been older that may have appeared ominous, but then I just took it in stride.

Our first stop on the continent was in Paris. It seemed strange but we soon heard strains of “Show Me the Way to Go Home” from G.I.'s who were in the army-requisitioned hotel next to ours, and we felt a piece of the U.S. was right there with us. The inflation in Paris was unbelievable—thank goodness for Mr. Byrnes' Hold the Line Orders during the war! We wanted to get at least one bottle of perfume but the price was out of our reach. One of the servicemen asked if I could get him a package of cigarettes and he would get the perfume for me. We received the same ration for cigarettes as servicemen whether we used them or not, so I gladly gave mine to him and came home with some Chanel #5. When we eventually returned to the States, the airport people knew immediately where we had been as our plane reeked with perfume.

After 3 days of sightseeing we flew on to Berlin. Paris had shown little effects from the war, so we came upon the terrible wreckage of cities very suddenly from the air when we landed on July, Friday the 13th at an emergency field, Gatow, instead of at Tempelhof which had not been cleared of the bombings.

Potsdam had been completely destroyed by a 22 minute bombing. We were to stay at Babelberg, a suburb of Berlin, about 12 miles southwest of the city, between Berlin and Potsdam. Babelsberg had been a summer resort for wealthy Germans, being the Hollywood of Germany. This was all in the Russian Zone so the road was guarded by Russians as well as American and British troops.

The Russians had cleared Babelsberg of the German people who lived there, giving them an hour to take what they could, then the houses were

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raided of anything the Russians thought was valuable. Then they turned the houses over to our American soldiers to make them ready for the conferees. The Russians had even taken the furniture, in many cases, and shipped it back to Russia, so the furniture was very make-shift and didn't always fit. Our only complaint were the mosquitoes! There were no screens on the windows—only bars—and sometimes we suspected the mosquitoes were of the size that the bars did keep them out. Soon we were issued mosquito netting which helped a lot.

The first night when we went where we were to have dinner, we noticed the dishes the G.I.'s were calmly tossing about—they were Dresden! When we exclaimed about them they began to handle them with care and the next night those dishes had all disappeared. You see, the boys there desperately wanted to take something back with them and there was absolutely nothing in Berlin so they took this opportunity to at least have something to send home.

The living quarters of the British were 2 blocks away, and we were free to go there; the Russians were in a very wooded area about a mile away, and were never allowed access there.

As the President and Mr. Byrnes had not yet arrived, we took advantage of this time to go “sight-seeing” in Berlin. For comparison, Berlin was about the size of Chicago. Can you imagine going to Chicago and seeing only rubble, bombed our buildings, not a single store at all? You couldn't get a cup of coffee anywhere—indeed, you couldn't get a glass of water. There was no traffic except military vehicles, no stop lights, but lots of people. These people were depressed, without hope, cold, and hungry. Some were carrying belongings or just a bag of sticks. They would pick up any sticks they could find to burn for warmth. To cut down a tree was illegal in Germany so they would wait for a wind storm and then pick up any branches that were blown down. Many were barefooted and the only shelter for them was under bridges or back in some ruins where debris was still falling.

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We, too felt depressed after seeing such desperation in those faces. Seeing such misery had its sobering effect on all of us—how lucky we were to be returning to the United States!

The black market in Berlin was sad to see also. We were offered at least \$250 for any watch (when it cost about \$30 then), \$10.00 would buy a package of cigarettes, \$5.00 for a .05 candy bar—again we were thankful for our Hold the Line orders.

There was a reason the Russian soldiers were paying such prices (as they were the purchasers for most black market items). We were told they had received no pay during the war and were told they would receive all their pay when “they had won the war”! Well, Russia did indeed pay them—but in German marks which Russia did not honor and there was nothing in Berlin to buy.

We were always mistaken for German girls. We had no mark of being American, and this was often amusing but could be serious too—we hoped the Russians would never mistake us for Germans. There was a non-fraternization law in effect for our G.I.'s for their won safety. Many a German girl would entice a G.I. into danger if she could. When we were sight-seeing we were

close to a truck filled with G.I.'s and they were showing some resentment as we were taking their picture. We could sense this so called to them, "Anyone from Iowa?" in a clearly American voice. They were so surprised they nearly fell off the truck. These service men had not seen an American girl for about 3 years. Can you imagine how popular we were? We really ached for the war to be over for them though when they would take out their well worn pictures of children they had not seen—one had twin little girls 3 years old and he had not seen them. What a homecoming that would soon be!

The Big 3 Conference was held at Cecilienhof Palace which was the former country estate of Crown Prince Wilhelm. It was built in 4 wings with a center courtyard planted in lovely red flowers. This palace had been used as a hospital by the German and then by the Russians and was in the Russian

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Zone of Berlin. It was located out in the country from Potsdam so had not been touched by bombs.

This Conference was to make plans for peace instead of plans for war as the previous conferences had been. One of the main problems to be resolved was that of reparations. The U. S. wanted to get Germany back into a peaceful, producing nation as quickly as possible, avoiding the mistakes made after WWI. However, Russia had completely different goals and was for taking everything they could out of Germany as fast as they could. They were dismantling factories and shipping any large machinery back to Russia before the reparations had been agreed upon. Our delegates confronted them with this but were told this was not true—although they knew we could see what they were loading on the trains and how they were taking all this back to Russia. How can you tell a nation that they are lying to you? They knew they were and they knew that we knew they were. It was extremely difficult to find a point on which to find agreement. Sometimes Stalin would seem more friendly and agreeable than Molotov. There were times when Molotov would say "No" and after talking it over with Stalin, would change his mind.

As he did at the meetings he attended, Mr. Byrnes would take notes in shorthand on his lap and then dictate them off to me in the office. In one of his pages of notes he had encircled "Stalin asleep". This was during one of Churchill's speeches which tended to be lengthy. In one of his speeches about the difficulty of getting any news about Bulgaria and Hungary, Churchill made the observation that it was like an "iron fence" around those countries. This was the beginning of the coinage of the Iron Curtain, or Berlin Wall.

We did not think Russia had any inkling that we had developed the atom bomb. However, since they were our ally it was felt we should tell them before using it. Mr. Truman did that very well, sandwiching it among other items. Stalin never made a reference to this news item at all—either he did not understand what it was or already knew about it.

The Conference was Mr. Truman's entry into international politics and

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the consensus there was that he did very well.

We were very anxious that the war be over before Russia declared war on Japan. Russia was not yet at war with Japan, just with Germany. We learned later that Japan had made peace

overtures through Russia, but Russia did not tell us of this—we knew only because we had broken the Japanese code. This was probably the only time in history a nation (Japan) had made peace overtures and been confronted with a declaration of war at the same time (from Russia).

The present Russian tactics first became evident at Potsdam as they were there to cooperate. They would ignore major issues and become so involved in trivial matters that much of the time was wasted.

There was an unwritten agreement that each country would have 10 around the conference table at one time. One day 2 Americans were inadvertently included, so immediately the Russians brought in another 2 before the Conference could continue—but perhaps we would have done the same thing had it been reversed. Another day, Cassie had to take a paper to Mr. Byrnes and about 2 minutes later two Russian women were ushered in. One day Mr. Byrnes called the office about a paper on China. We knew China was not on the agenda so we grabbed our cameras and went to the palace. Sure enough, this was his way to tell us to come because the Signal Corps was taking pictures and we were permitted to take some too. One picture I missed though—one day I saw three of our generals walking down the street together--Generals Eisenhower, Patton, and Arnold!

As the conference ended President Truman made a remark he hoped they would meet in Washington next year and heard a murmur, “God Willing”—it came from Stalin.

As we were getting nowhere in agreements and as the President wanted be on the way back when the atom bomb was dropped, the Conference ended abruptly. This conference was termed a success that turned into a failure as the Russians did not keep a single agreement and apparently had no intention of doing so when they made them.

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Did you remember that Russia declare war on Japan after the atom bomb was dropped—just 3 days before V-J Day? It was an obvious effort just to share in the reparations which they succeeded to a limited extent.

We had some light moments of course at Potsdam. There was one night club, very small, and very crowded. The American, British, and Russian soldiers wore combat boots and had guns over their shoulders. Again, we were thought to be German girls, although many wondered why there were German girls at the off-limits club. Then, again, they heard us talk and the word buzzed around, “Hey, fellas, they’re American”!

The Big 3 also had dinners for each other. It was interesting to watch the guests arrive at the dinner President Truman gave at the Little White House. Stalin arrived first. He was in a black limousine with dark windows so that the passengers were invisible. He had guards all around his car and when they stopped at the Little White House each Russian guard took his place by an American guard—trustful, weren’t they? The menu was: Caviar on toast, vodka, cream of tomato soup, celery, olives, chilled Rhine wine, filet mignon, mushroom gravy, shoestring potatoes, peas, carrots, Bordeaux wine, lettuce and tomato salad, French dressing, Roca cheese, vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce, champagne, demitasse.

Shortly after Stalin arrived here came Winston Churchill sauntering up the street with his cigar in his mouth, all alone—one bodyguard several feet behind.

We also had dinner with the British girls one evening. When I made a remark that they were really “on the ball”, they did not know what I meant. When they served coffee they asked if

I wanted black or white and I didn't know what they meant. German evenings are long. Because of 2 hours of daylight saving time and because Berlin is a long ways north, it was light at midnight—not conducive to getting much sleep!

A letter which I typed for Mr. Byrnes for the President was a communication to Japan telling them that we had the means to annihilate their cities if there

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wasn't immediate unconditional surrender. Of course we were referring to our atom bomb. They did not believe the letter and the atom bomb was dropped.

Now we hear many people criticize our country for using the bomb, but these are nearly always younger people, those who did not experience being in this catastrophic war, never having had to say goodbye to a loved one whom they may never see again. The best estimate was that stopping the war may have saved a million American lives and perhaps that many Japanese lives. If you had to make that decision, what would you do? We were glad our president had the courage to make the decision he did.

Also during the conference the national election in England was held and Winston Churchill was defeated—Clement Attlee was the new Prime Minister. Mr. Attlee had been at the conference all the time as a delegate so was aware of all the deliberations. However, Stalin had difficulty in accepting the change of leadership and had doubts that Attlee's contributions would be accepted.

The conference ended rather abruptly and we were on our way home. We stopped again in Paris, seeing places all the tourists go to Paris see—the Louvre, Versailles, Fontainebleau, Eiffel Tower, etc. We left Paris after lunch, arrived at the Azores for dinner, breakfast in Bermuda, and in Washington for lunch. It seemed fast to us, but now of course would be comparatively slow.

Back to the State Department and my first official duty was the most pleasant of those years—typing the Japanese surrender terms! These were submitted to Japan through the Swiss minister and we went through 3 days of suspense waiting for the answer. Photographers were in our halls continuously waiting to question us so we stayed inside our office. When the Swiss minister finally arrived, Mr. Byrnes called us all into his office so we could witness receiving the answer that the war was over!! We dared not go into the halls then as the waiting newsmen would have read the answer in our face and it was necessary we wait for the president to announce to the world “The war is over”. This happened about 7:00 in the evening so that workers could be home with their families.

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We had a joyous V-J Day celebration as everyone did all over the world. Bob was then in Boston and observed their celebration there. When we were still in Potsdam and I learned of the atom bomb, I was concerned as I knew Bob was in training for something very secret for the Navy Air Corps and was fearful there was a connection. He was indeed in dangerous training, although not the atom bomb. He was learning how to combat the kami-kaze planes in the pacific who were bombing our ships.

Two months later Bob was discharged from the Navy and we had a beautiful wedding in Washington, Mr. Byrnes giving me away. When I talked to him about the wedding, he said he would consent if “my young man” would finish his degree! I assured him our first plan was to

return to Iowa State University. Happy-to-be-home servicemen from the Army, Navy, Marine and a civilian were in our wedding party.

Now it is almost 43 years later and I have added many more happy memories of a happy marriage, four super children, nine beloved grandchildren. However, these memories of those exciting 5 years will always be treasured.

After his service with the Federal Government, Jimmy Byrnes returned to South Carolina to become Governor. In his retirement he was busy with the James F. Byrnes Foundation which still provides funds for college education for orphans or the disadvantaged. This was one of his dreams and was realized. All the royalties from his two books, “Speaking Frankly” and “All in One Life Time” were donated to the Foundation.

Mr. Byrnes served his country and his state unstintingly and unselfishly—we there are more politicians and statesmen like him today!

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