

Anne Lincoln Oral History Interview 2/9/1965
Administrative Information

Creator: Anne Lincoln

Interviewer: Nancy Hogan

Date of Interview: February 9, 1965

Length: 26 pages

Biographical Note

Anne Lincoln worked in the White House for Mrs. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy first as a wardrobe assistant and later as the housekeeper – in charge of the maids and butlers. This interview focuses on Lincoln's various duties in the White House and her interactions with the President and First Lady. In her first role at the White House, Lincoln assisted Mrs. Kennedy in purchasing clothes, scheduling hairdresser appointments and the like. As housekeeper, Lincoln was responsible for the maintenance of the living quarters and for procuring food and wines for all White House meals. She was involved in the planning of White House events like parties and State dinners. The interview covers Mrs. Kennedy's relationship to staff and involvement with her children. There are several anecdotal stories about the President and Mrs. Kennedy.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Anne Lincoln

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Suggested citation

Anne Lincoln, recorded interview, February 9, 1965, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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Oral History Interview

with

Anne Lincoln

February 9, 1965
Washington, D.C.

By Nancy Hogan

For the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library

HOGAN: This is an oral history interview for the John F. Kennedy Library with Anne Lincoln, the Housekeeper at the White House. This is Nancy Hogan, the interviewer and the date is February the 9th, 1965 and the place is Mrs. Lincoln's office in the White House. Anne let's start out by just asking when you first met Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy]?

LINCOLN: I guess it was probably within 2 or 3 days of when we started in January. I don't even remember the circumstances. I think she was having her picture taken for the Heart Girl of the Year or

HOGAN: This was before the inauguration?

LINCOLN: No, this was after the inauguration.

HOGAN: You had already come to Washington?

LINCOLN: I had already come to Washington.

HOGAN: Then let's go back into how you got your job with Mrs. Kennedy.

LINCOLN: Well, I was working in New York and knew Tish Baldrige [Letitia Baldrige] very well. And when Mrs. Kennedy asked Tish to come and be her Social Secretary, Tish asked me if I was interested in coming to Washington. At the time I just didn't know. I said it would all depend on the job. So she said, "Oh well, send me a resume." So I sent her a resume. And she wrote or called Mrs. Kennedy and read her my resume over the phone and Mrs. Kennedy said, "Oh, that's fine." You know.

HOGAN: This was December?

LINCOLN: This was December, the end of December of 1960. I think I had all of 10 days notice before I came down. And actually even rented my first apartment over the telephone [Laughing]. The landlady sent me a floor plan and I thought, "Ok". So I had never even seen my apartment when I came. That's how quickly I had to move.

HOGAN: No Mrs. Kennedy?

LINCOLN: No Mrs. Kennedy

HOGAN: But you first met her...

LINCOLN: Actually, I had met her many years ago in Spain which - we were all a Pamplona for the bullfights and she and her sister [Lee Bouvier Radziwill] were there and then they left for Madrid. And I saw her again in Madrid, but she wouldn't remember that. That was a long time ago.

HOGAN: Well in 1961, then from January until about October of '62 you were working directly with Tish Baldrige.

LINCOLN: That's right. And then in the Spring of '61 I went to New York with Mrs. Kennedy for a short trip and then down to Palm Beach. And that, on the trip back from Palm Beach was the first time I ever met the President [John F. Kennedy].

HOGAN: Oh really?

LINCOLN: Yeah.

HOGAN: What was your first impression of him?

LINCOLN: Well, I was terrified because Pierre [Pierre E. G. Salinger] had sort of

motioned for me to come up into the cabin and Mrs. Kennedy was sitting at a table with Mrs. Fullbright [Elizabeth Williams Fullbright] and Peter Lawford. And the President was sort of sitting on the left talking to Senator Fullbright [William J. Fullbright]. And I just sort of snuck in and sat down. And he saw me and he turned around to me and he said, "You must be Anne." And I said, "Yes I am, sir." And he said, "Did you have a good time?" And so the first thing I ever remember about him was, "Did you have a good time?"

HOGAN: Anne, and your trip to New York before was just with Mrs. Kennedy?

LINCOLN: We just went up to, yes to do some shopping, nothing...it was nothing official, it was just a personal trip.

HOGAN: Anne, in the years that you were over in the East Wing with Tish did you deal directly with Mrs. Kennedy very much? Or was...?

LINCOLN: Yes, she phoned quite frequently and she also wrote a great many notes about things she wanted done. So we heard from her, I'd say practically every day.

HOGAN: What type of things did you work on then?

LINCOLN: Actually at that time, I seemed to be in charge of clothes. [Laughter] I spent a great deal of time on the phone to um, talking to Kay McGowan at Oleg Cassini and then I'd call various other places in New York to have clothes sent down. Because you see, she really in way was trapped here. It was very difficult. She couldn't go up to New York and go to all of the different stores to see what was available. And then she'd send over clippings from magazines, and sections out of the New York Times - that she wanted a book. And of course Washington would never have the books and we'd have to order the book; and new records; and all sort... and setting up hairdresser appointments; and it was a lot of personal.

HOGAN: Did she choose her clothes very quickly? Or...?

LINCOLN: I'd say yes she did. She knew exactly what she liked. I mean you could give her, I'd say, 25 dresses and she could pick out the exact three that would be right on her.

HOGAN: Without trying them on?

LINCOLN: Yes, literally, without trying them on. And she could look at sketches too and say, "I want to see that" and she was, very rarely did she ever

send anything back.

HOGAN: Did she or didn't she wear a wig? [Laughter]

LINCOLN: She wore a wig at times.

HOGAN: I think that first came out in Joan Kennedy's [Joan Bennett Kennedy] article last...

LINCOLN: Yes, well it made perfectly good sense. I think, as I remember, she got the wig, she may have had it before, but I know she had a wig for India. And that was uh, that trip was in Spring, I think, of '62. But when you're traveling, I mean, you have to have every hair in place and don't have a hairdresser with you, it's really very convenient to have a wig.

HOGAN: Did the current reaction to this, is that something that would bother Mrs. Kennedy or would she take this quite easily or is this was one of the burdens she had to bear in the White House?

LINCOLN: Oh I just feel that she really – I mean you'd never say anything about it. Then I think it was Joan Kennedy, wasn't it, in the interview for Look who said she wore the wig. I don't think it bothered Mrs. Kennedy at all. But I think up until that time she figured it was nobody's business.

HOGAN: Which it isn't.

LINCOLN: Which it isn't, any more than if you dye your hair, you know, it's really nobody's business.

HOGAN: Well then the American public, of course, believe that they want to know every aspect of the first family's life. And, was this a difficult thing for her to accept as a woman that a...

LINCOLN: I think...

HOGAN: In your relationship with...

LINCOLN: Yes, I think that she had a definite sense of privacy and I think that's why Pam [Pamela Turnure] was such an excellent press secretary, because she reflected Mrs. Kennedy's feelings and would not give out

the personal details that they would just lap up. And Pam always had such good common sense and I know Mrs. Kennedy was very pleased with the job she did.

HOGAN: Can you recall any specific things that you worked on in 1961?

LINCOLN: Well, the Spring of '61 was taken up pretty much with the trip to Paris. And then from there [inaudible] Vienna she went to London for the christening of her niece and then went to Greece. And that seems,

that of course went into the summer of '61, the trip to Greece. And then I believe she was away, except that she came down from the Cape for the Pakistan dinner.

HOGAN: That was...

LINCOLN: Mount Vernon

HOGAN: Did you work on the details of dinners like this at the time?

LINCOLN: Yes, oh yes. That trip, that party at Mount Vernon – we went down there, oh 3 or 4 times to check every detail and decide where the tent was going to be put and where the shell would be put and where the army trucks that brought the food down were going to be. And then of course the tent had to be decorated and we had people down volunteer their services from New York, and setting up the marquee in the tent. That was a real production, that party.

HOGAN: Was the original idea Mrs. Kennedy's or was it...

LINCOLN: No, I think she got the idea, I assume she got the idea from a party that they had [inaudible] that de Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle] gave them out at Versailles. And that's why I think she thought that it would be nice to use some of our national monuments as background for State occasions.

HOGAN: This was though the only one held at...

LINCOLN: This was the only one and as we know, I think it's probably the most spectacular party that....

HOGAN: That has been given in the white house for many years.

LINCOLN: Hmmm.

HOGAN: You had mentioned something about the ducks?

LINCOLN: Oh yeah, I don't know why but that's [inaudible] why I remember the ducks standing on the pond and sort of what is [inaudible] since but the reason we had to get rid of them was Charlie. He chased them.

HOGAN: The dog.

LINCOLN: The dog, yeah, Caroline's [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy] dog. He gave them such a hard time that we never had to have the ducks ever again. I guess with dogs it's just not to safe having ducks in the pond.

HOGAN: Who first suggested that they be moved out to Rock Creek, was that Mrs. Kennedy or the President?

LINCOLN: I think that was Mrs. Kennedy, I'm not sure. It might have one or the other – I'm not sure.

HOGAN: Did Caroline miss them?

LINCOLN: I don't think, I don't know, I never heard any comment. That was the spring too that Caroline's hamster died. It disappeared.

HOGAN: On the third floor?

LINCOLN: On the second floor.

HOGAN: Never to be found?

LINCOLN: Never to be found. I – it's a very sad story. But I think the hamsters had baby hamsters and then the babies died. As I remember, the mother hamster ate the babies and I had quite a time explaining it to Caroline. We'll probably have to delete that.

HOGAN: Was Mrs. Kennedy upset that there were hamsters lost on the second floor?

LINCOLN: Oh no.

HOGAN: Was she very casual about most of the minor tragedies that would arise?

LINCOLN: Yes, she really was. She took things – dogs were not in the house, particularly the police dog wasn't allowed in the house but I think down in the country she had the dogs in the house.

HOGAN: Wasn't there at least, sometime I thought I'd read that the President was allergic to dogs?

LINCOLN: I think he was allergic to the long haired.

HOGAN: Not the short hair.

LINCOLN: But not the short hair. I'm not sure. I think Pushinko, because she had long hair – she was real white, snowball, kind of, I think he was allergic to her, I'm not sure. Because I know Mrs. Kennedy had her upstairs for the first couple of days when she arrived and then she was moved out.

HOGAN: That's the dog President Khrushchev [Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev] sent?

LINCOLN: Yes.

HOGAN: Did then – one of the highlights of the social life in the White House under the Kennedys was the Nobel Prize dinner. Did you work on that?

LINCOLN: Oh, yes. That was the – the President, I think, took more interest in that party than any other. Tish was away at the time. I guess she was off with Mrs. Kennedy on some trip, I can't remember. And the President – Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] was working on the guest list with [inaudible].

HOGAN: Was this the President's idea?

LINCOLN: This was the President's idea. I think it was about two days after he had the idea that he called up and wanted to know where the list was!

HOGAN: He called you.

LINCOLN: Yeah. Well, I called Arthur Schlesinger and said oh, but we're just starting on this. And that was that. And about two days later the President was even more impatient about it and he had one of the telephone operators call Pam and ask Pam if the invitations had gone out yet! Well that was just [Laughter]. But then, it was a very successful dinner and about, oh I don't know, 4 or 5 days later the President called. It was about 2:30 in the afternoon and he was upstairs resting and he says, "Hey Anne, have you seen the May issue of Life?" And I said, "No, Mr. President, I haven't." He said, "Well there are 20 pages on the [inaudible]. It's just

wonderful.” He said, “I’ll send it right over for you to see.” I said, “Well thank you very much.” And then he paused and he said, “No, I guess maybe I’d better leave it here till Jackie gets back from the country.” [Laughter]. But he was terribly pleased that we had such wonderful coverage of this party.

HOGAN: Was it the President that said that - never more scholarship in the White House, or more intellect in the White House...?

LINCOLN: That was a famous quote in a speech. When he – I don’t remember the exact words, but it was to the effect that never had so much brain power been assembled under the roof of the White House and then he paused and he said, “With the possible exception that Thomas Jefferson ate dinner here alone.”

HOGAN: Well that’s marvelous, one of his best. You changed jobs then in about October or November of 1962.

LINCOLN: Yes, that’s right

HOGAN: Under what I think Mrs. Kennedy has called a reorganization of her staff. Were there problems? What were the problems that led up to this change?

LINCOLN: I think the chief problem was that Mrs. Kennedy wanted somebody in this particular job with whom she felt she could communicate more readily than she had been able to do with this office in the past.

HOGAN: The previous woman had been here a long time?

LINCOLN: She had been here a long time and it was just one of those situations that... Mrs. Kennedy had found that the food bills had been enormously high and felt the time had come to, well, they had to cut down. She had to have someone in this particular job that would be able to cut down.

HOGAN: Was the President personally concerned about this as well?

LINCOLN: Oh yes, he was. Actually one night before a state dinner he came downstairs a few moments early, walked into the ushers’ office and sat down and proceeded to discuss in some detail the milk bill in Hyannis. And to this Nancy Tuckerman remarked afterwards that I’d never seen him sit still for that long or be that interested in anything for more than 5 minutes.

HOGAN: Well if Miss Tuckerman was here this was after....

LINCOLN: This was in nineteen sixty - it was the fall of 1963.

HOGAN: But he was personally involved...?

LINCOLN: Oh yes, he'd like to see the monthly food reports and I think the reason he as particularly interested in the food bills is – he asked me how they were and I said, “They were quite low, except for the milk bill at Hyannis”. And he then went on to say, “How could they be terribly high because we haven't been there much of the time.” That's what brought on the milk bill.

HOGAN: Could you describe, just for a minute, what your duties are and what Mrs. Kennedy set out as your particular and sole responsibilities as the housekeeper?

LINCOLN: Well, it's sort of a long – well, primarily I supervised the maids and the butlers and make up a schedule for the maids. Formerly they did not have any firm schedule. They'd work a 40 hour week and they'd work in shifts. And I tried to set it up in such a way that every third weekend one girl would have the weekend off. They'd all get two days off a week but formerly it was just sort of hit and miss. Then of course, you know...

HOGAN: Was this a problem where Mrs. Kennedy was personally concerned about?

LINCOLN: She never – I don't know if she was concerned about it, but I think she just sort of felt that they were rather disorganized. She'd know who was here and who wouldn't be here. This way we'd have a chart upstairs and we could just look at the chart to see who's on, who's off.

Then of course all the things...like to see that the silver's polished and spots are taken off skirts of, you know, sofas and the draperies get sent to the cleaners and curtains get washed and the usual routine for seeing that the house is maintained.

HOGAN: One of the new functions that Mrs. Kennedy transferred to you was complete meal planning for State functions....

LINCOLN: Yes, that had been done over in the social office and she transferred that over here. And how we would work is Rene [Rene Verdon] would give me several suggestions and we'd talk about it and then I would send Mrs. Kennedy a memo with the suggestions and she often as not would change it to something that she thought might be better. And then she'd write ok and send it back down here. Then in this office we have all of the ordering of the food not only for the family but for the official entertaining account, the State Department, and the staff, which means keeping all those four accounts - have to be kept separately. And all the food has to

be kept separately. And all the wines have to be kept separately that are purchased on those four accounts.

HOGAN: Must be quite a bookkeeping task.

LINCOLN: To say nothing of the bookkeeping. And then of course this office orders – if we need more sheets, I go out and buy them. If we need to order uniforms for the maids, they come down and give us their sizes and measurements. Also butlers uniforms....

HOGAN: Were the things like the maids' uniforms and the sheets something that Mrs. Kennedy would take a personal interest in?

LINCOLN: Well, she would take a great deal of interest in – the uniforms I think were pretty much standard. The maids wearing white during the day, just plain white, tailored uniforms. And then in the evening they wore black with white aprons and cuffs. But she took a great deal of interest in the linens – trying to, sort of, you know, see that we have something extra nice for when we have guests from all over the world coming to stay here.

HOGAN: And would these be left in the White House?

LINCOLN: These are left in the White House, yes. They come out of the White House annual budget for the running the house. She was interested in every detail of the house. I mean there was the redecorating and once you redecorate you want everything else to fit in. I mean, upstairs for instance, we didn't have decent hangers in the guest closet. Just small details, but time consuming and she took an interest in everything of that sort.

HOGAN: Even down to what magazines are in what bedrooms?

LINCOLN: Yes, again there was never a vision for any magazines in the guest rooms. So we now have weekly magazines that go in the rooms but before that sometimes you'd find something that was seven or eight months old. And also she, I think, had eventually we finally would have been able to do the same thing about keeping current books available.

HOGAN: I think I saw that she had American Heritage put in the Lincoln Room.

LINCOLN: Yeah, we had American Heritage...

HOGAN: Which shows her sense of history.

LINCOLN: Yeah, she had a great sense of history. She was very concerned about details. Everything from how the pens work to what kind of note paper she wanted, and writing paper, pen holders and [inaudible]. I mean, you probably saw it in those memos that...

HOGAN: Well for a house that has 52 or some odd rooms, the concern is detail, about each detail in each room is quite a time consuming job.

LINCOLN: It was. And fortunately we met the – had to be finished. There were a few more things on the third floor, a few more things on the first floor to get done. But the whole redecorating was pretty much...

HOGAN: I think she wrote you a number of memos about ashtrays? She seemed to have an obsession with ashtrays.

LINCOLN: Oh, she did. That was another thing. Well we always have a great ashtray problem here because they get broken and she would get certain sets of ashtrays and then one would be broken and then another would be broken and then we'd have to sort of start in all over again on that room. And this went on throughout the house. Fortunately, we still, I mean we had a stack inside of some that she went out one day with [inaudible] and bought about thirty – and they're sort of lead bottom things - to be used because we had such a high breakage. Now it seems those have been removed. Ever see those [inaudible] reproductions?

HOGAN: No.

LINCOLN: [Inaudible]

HOGAN: I think she was concerned that as many be put back together as possible.

LINCOLN: Sometimes I'm afraid the ashtrays were - we shouldn't have had as good ashtrays as we did because we just have too high a breakage. People get into rooms that are crowded and get pushed off...

HOGAN: Most of this was on the first floor, the State Rooms? Not in the living quarters?

LINCOLN: The first floor, not in the living quarters, within the State... When they had large parties [inaudible]....

HOGAN: And the problems with guests dropping ashes in the White House I

think was something that bothered her?

LINCOLN: Yes, that was another thing. They were the first, I believe the first president and his wife who permitted people to smoke here at large receptions or cocktail parties. And there are people, as you know, who just have consummately no respect for anyone else's property.

HOGAN: Even in the White House?

LINCOLN: Even in the White House.

HOGAN: Was this something would just irritate her or was it really...?

LINCOLN: Yes, she'd see somebody standing at a reception with a cigarette and then just literally flicking ashes on the carpet.

HOGAN: And she'd want to go get them an ashtray.

LINCOLN: And she'd like to go running up and give them an ashtray but you can't do it when you've got 300 people in the room.

HOGAN: But instructions were given to the butlers to watch the ashtrays and the empty drinks?

LINCOLN: I think one of the funniest stories about all of this at big parties was one night she saw one of the guests slip a Vermeil knife into his pocket.

HOGAN: Oh no!

LINCOLN: Yes. And after dinner she asked Charles [Charles Ficklin] to check the Vermeil. A guest slipped one of the Vermeil knives into his pocket so she asked Charles, the head butler if he would check the Vermeil to see if there was anything missing and Charles reported that this was missing. So she went right up to him and asked for it back.

HOGAN: Did he give it back?

LINCOLN: Yes, he did.

HOGAN: Did he just hand it to her?

LINCOLN: The reason I really bring this up is this business - we talk about

ashtrays. It appalls me that after one luncheon we had we were missing 15 silver teaspoons, 2 silver knife dishes and 4 silver ashtrays.

HOGAN: I hope the White House is insured.

LINCOLN: We're not insured. But people come here with the idea that this is their property, so they just help themselves. I gather over the years that this has been a constant problem, I mean demitasse spoons and teaspoons are the one thing that disappear. I just think it's terrible.

HOGAN: They should get insurance.

LINCOLN: Well we couldn't get insurance, on the basis of that?

HOGAN: I guess you couldn't.

LINCOLN: [Inaudible] Vermeil.

HOGAN: There was quite a lot of newspaper coverage on the fact that the White House started printing their state menus in English.

LINCOLN: Well that was a constant problem. Naturally when anything comes from Rene, it's in French.

HOGAN: Well traditionally it was...

LINCOLN: Traditionally, well no, the Eisenhowers' [Mamie Dowd Eisenhower and Dwight D. Eisenhower] menus were in English.

HOGAN: Oh, were they?

LINCOLN: Yeah. In so far as you can have English when there were French names to a dish and some of them you couldn't possibly – it wouldn't make sense being put in English. But when Rene came originally we did most of the menu in French and then I think the President felt that here were just too many people who didn't understand it. So it got to the point where it was half French, half English. And then finally towards the end we were doing them pretty much, everything – I mean there were certain words like *au bon* which cannot be translated but on the whole anything that could be made clear in English we did. So there really wasn't anything very startling about it. That's the press for you.

HOGAN: But I think that everyone thought that this was the President who wanted to do this. I noticed in one memo to you Mrs. Kennedy said that she definitely wanted everything in English and she had always been against this being in French [inaudible]. I wonder if it was ever....

LINCOLN: I don't know if she was.....But he probably just got up after one meal and was [inaudible] "Let's have it all in English". I don't think she was against having it all in French because after all, she spoke French fluently and it would never pose any problem to her. I think it was probably the President who felt it was maybe more democratic to have it all in English. Although when it comes right down to it if you go to any good restaurant the menu had to be, [inaudible] was in French.

HOGAN: Many of the memos she would write to you she used the phrase that I'd like this done quickly and efficiently. Was she always demanding in this way? I think she had a right to expect that...

LINCLON Yes, I think that they both were that way. In fact, I know they both were. When they wanted something done they wanted it done right away not six weeks hence or even a week hence. I think if it was something that could be done right away, you did it right away.

HOGAN: Did she ever run into any problems in the staff with people who weren't able to

LINCOLN: No, I don't think so. But when she said she wanted something pronto, she meant just what she said. But I know I don't remember any time when she was fussing about how long it took.

HOGAN: Did you have anything to do with any of the President's trips abroad?

LINCOLN: Well, one trip abroad we went down to Costa Rica. She did not go on that trip. And I gather that the facilities at the embassy there such that we had to do most of the planning and also send most of the food and the china and silver from here. And also we had to have tables built for a luncheon. It was quite a production but we just did not have the facilities down there to cope with a state luncheon so we sent all the basic things for that particular party.

HOGAN: And Rene?

LINCOLN: I don't remember if Rene went or not. I can't remember, I honestly can't remember.

HOGAN: In the memos at one point she had said that she had wanted all 3 cooks to go and then...

LINCOLN: I don't know how it ended up, I just can remember. He may have gone, but I have to ask him, I have to ask him, I don't...

HOGAN: Later in about June of 1963 she wrote you a memo saying she didn't want anything ever lent out of the White House again, such as silver. Were there any problems with the silver...?

LINCOLN: I don't know – I can't remember what happened but I think people in the West Wing would decided to have a little party and would send over for glass and china and...

HOGAN: At their homes?

LINCOLN: No, no, no. I mean right over in the offices over there. And I think maybe I may said something to her about it, that I didn't feel we should be sending White House property over there and that maybe the maids should look after them and that's why she probably wrote and said we were probably in agreement with something I may have mentioned to her. But the Costa Rican trip was the one and only one I can remember where we sent china and silver and linens.

HOGAN: Did the President personally take an interest in all of this or...

LINCOLN: No, I think you may have gathered from the memo she was concerned that the President's party would run as smoothly as possible and be as nice as possible. But I don't think the President has any idea what was involved.

HOGAN: During most of your year, or at least 7 months of your year Mrs. Kennedy was pregnant. Did this have any noticeable effect on how she ran the White House or on her interests or...?

LINCOLN: No, it didn't. Actually, I didn't have any inkling that she was pregnant until the day before or the day that is was announced to the press in Palm Beach. And she called me from Palm Beach because she wanted someone to come down there, and said "I've got to have all my clothes let out." And it was on the tip of my tongue to say, "Why do you have to have all your clothes let out for? Are you going to have a baby?" But that was none of my business. And that afternoon was when, right after church on Easter Sunday was when I believe Pierre announced that she...

HOGAN: But she didn't tell you over the phone?

LINCOLN: No, I didn't say anything. I mean she just said, well, she just wants somebody to come down and let out her clothes for her. So, you know, that was that.

HOGAN: Having had 5 pregnancies before and losing 3 was she apprehensive about this one or was she hopeful or, did you notice this at all?

LINCOLN: No, I didn't. She was in very good spirits and you see – well let's see, the last time I saw her before Patrick [Patrick Bouvier Kennedy] was born was I think the end of – it was the end of May that she came in here and we were talking about linens and things to order. And then I went off on my vacation and picked up the [inaudible] and came back and she had gone to the Cape so I never saw her again until that following fall. I spoke with her on the phone a number of times, but that summer, I mean, really didn't hear too much from her in Hyannis.

HOGAN: Had a nursery been prepared here?

LINCOLN: Yes, that was very sad. We had everything set up. There's a little sitting room upstairs which was off the room that John was in and we had that all fixed up as a nursery. Actually she had just written me a note to go out and buy some baby hangers about 10 days before Patrick came. And that was one thing I postponed because I knew she wouldn't be coming back with Patrick at least – I think Patrick wasn't expected until mid September and he came in mid August, if I remember correctly.

HOGAN: August the 6th.

LINCOLN: So I fortunately hadn't gone out and bought the hangers. But the whole room was fixed up and I know the second when Patrick died I know we got up there just as fast as we could and took everything out and put it all away and even tore down the little clothes poles we put up for the baby clothes so the President wouldn't see it when he came back.

HOGAN: Did you see him very shortly thereafter?

LINCOLN: I saw him the following, I can't remember. I think he came back here the following Monday and then he left again on Tuesday to go back to be with her and I saw him then. But we wanted to get that room cleared out just as fast as we could.

HOGAN: Was his attitude and feelings about this very noticeable at that time or was....? [Inaudible] or maybe he didn't allow himself to show it?

LINCOLN: No. I did not see him nor did he call for any reason. Although the person who told me, Dave Powers [David F. Powers] said he had taken it very, very much to heart. But I didn't really have - I mean I saw the President walking through the halls but not to talk to or anything.

HOGAN: How about Mrs. Kennedy when she came back?

LINCOLN: She was fine when she came back.

HOGAN: Which was 3 or 4 weeks later?

LINCOLN: Well, let's see. I don't think she came back until - they went to Newport for a while - I don't think she came back until the end of September.

HOGAN: I think the next visit after that was President Tito [Josip Broz Tito]. Could you describe it?

LINCOLN: Yes.

HOGAN: Did she take as much interest in that...

LINCOLN: Yes, oh yes. But I think the President, as I said, I know from people who had been around him at the time, said that he had taken this very much to hear and was very upset.

HOGAN: Between all this and November did the President have any chance to call you on the phone for anything?

LINCOLN: Well the last he called was, I guess, about a week before he left for Dallas. We just had a luncheon, and he had called and said, "I like that first course we had today. It was crabmeat, wasn't it?" I said, "Yes, Mr. President." And he said, "And tell Rene the peas were overcooked." And he slammed down the receiver and that was the end of that conversation. And that's the last, yes that's the last conversation I can remember.

HOGAN: Did he often would call you mainly on food items...?

LINCOLN: No, he didn't call that frequently. I'd run into him in the hall sometimes when he was coming back from the swimming pool on his way upstairs for lunch and that's when he'd stop and chat and find out how things were going and found an interest in how the food bills were.

HOGAN: What prompted the Green Stamp saving?

LINCOLN: Oh, I think what prompted the Green Stamp was that record. Do you remember that? What was it called?

HOGAN: The First Family.

LINCOLN: The First Family. And do you remember there's one item, a little sentence about somebody saving Green Stamps? I'm sure they were both sitting upstairs listening to this and the President probably turned to her and said, "We must be getting thousands of Green Stamps." And I'm sure that's what prompted that memo, What is happening with all the Green Stamps. Because not only did she write me that memo, but she called Mr. West [J. Bernard West] the next day, the chief usher to ask him what has happened to the Green Stamps.

HOGAN: So from now on you save the Green Stamps?

LINCOLN: Now we save all...

HOGAN: Did they ever cash them in?

LINCOLN: No. I think we had about 7 or 8 books though, which I turned over to Clint Hill [Clinton J. Hill] when she left here. I said, "Here, they're your responsibility now."

HOGAN: Did you have much opportunity to observe Mrs. Kennedy with the children?

LINCOLN: Yes. I think the...

HOGAN: The public was quite aware of Mrs. Kennedy's concern to be with her children. On the other hand there is always a lot of speculation that – and figuring out that she was really out at Glen Ora [Middleburg, VA] or up at the Cape or down in Palm Beach more than she was with them.

LINCOLN: No, I think...

HOGAN: And they were sent off to the country and she was here.

LINCOLN: No, actually not. For instance on Friday afternoons when she went down to the country she invariably took the children with her. So they would ride and they did things together all weekend. When she was

here she, I think, spent a great deal more time than anyone would suspect with them. Often in the afternoons she'd take them out to the zoo or she'd invite children over and they'd play down in the [inaudible]. And, as you know, Caroline had her pony here for a while. I don't think she left them alone a great deal because when she went to Palm Beach, I'd say nine times out of ten the children went. When she went to Hyannis the children went. The children were with her most of the time, except when she went on trips and...

HOGAN: And then they did go to Italy with her.

LINCOLN: Yeah, and she took Caroline to Italy the summer she went to Italy. The only times she didn't take the children really were the State visits. And the last trip that she made in the fall '63 when she went to Greece and to Morocco.

HOGAN: That was a private trip.

LINCOLN: Now she was gone for, I think, about two weeks and Caroline couldn't have gone because she was in school.

HOGAN: Did the White House school have any effect on the staff? Did they sort of enjoy having children around?

LINCOLN: Oh yes. I think the White House enjoyed, loved having the children here.

HOGAN: I understand under the Eisenhower administration the staff was not around very much and that initially after Mrs. Kennedy came in they were always hopping in broom closets whenever the family would appear.

LINCOLN: No, they weren't doing that at all. After all, when it comes right down to it the President has so little privacy that it's always been a policy of the maids not to be around on the second floor where they can be seen when he's there or when she's there and that's the end of it. There wasn't any popping into closets. But even now they're not working upstairs when somebody's in the sitting room, they're not in sight. They get into the rooms when the President and Mrs. Kennedy left and they'd go in and do the cleaning then. That's how it works.

HOGAN: The President, I think everyone agrees, wanted weekends away from the White House to get away from the desk and relax. Did Mrs. Kennedy need this as much, do you think, as he did?

LINCOLN: Yes, because in the first place, I think she loves being outdoors. I mean, she'd go out and walk in the garden here and she loves to ride and she liked to play tennis and I think she liked to get away from here too. Because, as she said, "You could never really consider the White House home, there are too many people around." And I think it was necessary for the President or anybody to have a change of air, so to speak, and I think it was good for him because, after all, his back was bothering him. It was a good chance to get away and relax.

HOGAN: At one point during the menus I see that the President was on a no vegetable, not fruit diet. What was...?

LINCOLN: Oh I don't know. He always had, as far as I could gather, a problem, a sort of a tricky – I don't know whether it was an allergy or something that was caused by nerves or what. And he used to have to go on these diets where he had all bland food. I mean things had to be in cream sauces or pureed and...

HOGAN: Sounds like an ulcer.

LINCOLN: Well, I don't think he had an ulcer. I don't really know exactly what it was. But you may have noticed Mrs. Kennedy said at one point, "I will have a salad to brighten up the all white meal." [Laughter]

HOGAN: Did this go on very long?

LINCOLN: No. It went on for periods then he seemed not to be on it anymore, but one never knew. As I remember that was only during one period but Miss Shaw [Maud Shaw] told me that for years he had been having troubles and had to go on special diets, but what was wrong I never really knew.

HOGAN: Did Mrs. Kennedy ever go in the kitchen and fix a late snack or cooked dinner by herself at times?

LINCOLN: Not that I know of. I don't think she knows how to cook or she is a marvelous cook because she knows food.

HOGAN: But she never...

LINCOLN: You can tell that she knows what things should taste like but she's just never done any cooking to my knowledge. All I know is the President

loved soup before he went to bed and we have a can opener up there on the second floor and I think it took him about 8 months to learn how to use it. [Laughter] I don't know he always did the wrong thing with it and then we'd explain it to him – that can opener cause a great deal of, I don't know, I think it...

HOGAN: Mrs. Kennedy didn't go in an open it for him?

LINCOLN: I don't think she knew how to use it either. [Laughter] But I would hear from the butlers in the morning, "Oh, the poor President had trouble with the can opener again last night."

HOGAN: I think that's delightful. Are there any more like those?

LINCOLN: Oh, no. Except speaking of this diet, they would leave out soups out for him so he could select what he wanted before he went to bed. And it seems at one point when he was on one of these diets that one of things he couldn't have was tomato. So, somebody left out a can of cream of tomato soup and he had written a great big "No tomato" on a piece of paper and left it there. So they told me about it the next morning, and I said, "Fine." But you know, we never knew, really.

HOGAN: Did the children usually eat early and then go to bed or did they all have a typical family dinner?

LINCOLN: The children ate lunch, and Mrs. Kennedy, when she was here, she ate lunch with them. And then the President came on later. He usually ate lunch about 1:30 or so. And then the children ate supper usually around 6. Then Miss Shaw would get them all ready for bed. And then the President would have them over in his office. And then some nights he would even take them swimming and she would be outraged.

HOGAN: Oh, really?

LINCOLN: Oh yes. Their [inaudible] and hair would all be wet and she'd have to dry them all off. But the children did eat early. They ate generally around six, had their supper then. Then the President and Mrs. Kennedy ate anywhere between 8 and 8:30. And if he was away, she usually had supper with the children. I mean the whole time he was in Europe on that trip to Rome and England she'd have it with them every night. And she often did up in Hyannis too when he was away. She'd have supper with them.

HOGAN: Were there often many of the nieces and nephews running around the White House too?

LINCOLN: No, not really. Steve Smith [Stephen Edward Smith, Jr.] used to come – you see it was really – Stephen Smith was more Caroline’s age. And then Sydney Lawford [Sydney Maleia Kennedy Lawford] would come with the Lawfords. And the Radziwill children [Anthony Radziwill and Anna Christina Radziwill] would come for a while. But we didn’t have too many.

HOGAN: Was the first family doing much private entertaining?

LINCOLN: Oh, I’d say about two nights a week they had...

HOGAN: Just one couple or two or three or...?

LINCOLN: Well, no, maybe two couples, three couples at the most. I mean it was mostly the old, close friends like the Bartletts [Charles Bartlett] and the Lowreys [John R. Lowrey] and people that they’d known for a long, long time that they could relax with. But most of those evenings, all with immediate family they didn’t have the large, sort of business kind of thing – that probably was upstairs.

HOGAN: They’d have one or two big parties a year? Private parties?

LINCOLN: Well, private parties. They’d have one or two big private parties which were invariably a dinner dance. And that was about it. And on the weekends they always had company.

HOGAN: House guests?

LINCOLN: Yes.

HOGAN: At once place or another?

LINCOLN: Yes.

HOGAN: In your relationship with Mrs. Kennedy, would you say that for you and Nancy and Tish and Pam that she was formal or informal? Did you often see her in or ever see her in sort of a social setting or just having lunch together or...

LINCOLN: No, not in that sense, but I mean when she’d wander around here she’d wander around here in a pair of boots and a pair of Gucci pants and a

pullover sweater, you know, that sort of thing. But as far as that, no – she wasn't formal and she wasn't informal which is a sort of friendly and easy going relationship. Of course, she had known Pam personally for many years before Pam came in here and of course Nancy she had known – had been in school together. So, I think the relationship with them was more as a personal friend than it would have been with Tish and myself because she did not know us in that way.

HOGAN: Did she and Tish clash at personally at all?

LINCOLN: Well, they clashed. But Mrs. Kennedy is very good at avoiding, let's say, out-and-out clashes. I think it was a matter of two people just going in opposite directions. I mean Tish had her concept of what she thought Mrs. Kennedy should be doing and Mrs. Kennedy had her own ideas about what she wanted to do. And that's where the conflict...

HOGAN: I think she wrote you in October that she wanted to leave a legacy of the White House that was well run and in good taste. That, along with being a mother and a wife - was really her concept of what a First Lady should be?

LINCOLN: I definitely think so, yes.

HOGAN: I think she accomplished...

LINCOLN: I do. I think she accomplished an incredible amount when you think of the relatively short time she had to do it. I mean there was a great deal to be done.

HOGAN: Not just in the restoration, in things like flowers in every room...

LINCOLN: Exactly, the flowers. And as I say it was the details. She had the shell but she certainly had nothing else. And the flowers – her interest in. All those books there are filled with pictures of flower arrangements that we had for every single function while they were here. And it's been a very nice, interesting record to have. But that was just one of many, many things that she sort of revised. Formerly we'd have stiff, formal arrangements of flowers.

HOGAN: Too big so you couldn't see...

LINCOLN: Yeah. And she wanted them to do them in such a way, well they're sort of those Dutch, you know marvelous Dutch still lifes of flowers

and that sort of thing. And the people in the bouquet room learned how to do them the way she wanted them to.

HOGAN: This would be just speculation, Anne, but she did restore the White House in 3 years, almost completely and she did manage to have it in a wonderfully efficient and smooth working order when she left. If they had the other five years, what do you think she would have put her energies in? Would she have done more of the – not the cutting of ribbons to open the thing, but do you think she would have gone to more places and more political activities?

LINCOLN: I really don't know because there was at least a year's more work here. See the ballroom hasn't been redone, although we have plans for that. And also the dining room. There were a few things, I say a few but it was about a year's work to have brought the house up to the point where I think she would have been happy. I frankly think she may have, in the next four years, done more...

HOGAN: Things like the symphony and the cultural center and...

LINCOLN: Yes, and that sort of thing.

HOGAN: And architecture in Washington.

LINCOLN: I also was very much surprised that I read she was going to Dallas. Because as you know, I know she was pregnant in 1960 again but I know she didn't do much campaigning then. But when she said she was going on that trip, well Nancy told me she was going on that trip to Dallas we were rather surprised because I thought, "Well, I didn't think she would be involving herself in the campaign." But it seems that she told Nancy that she was going to go on a lot of trips with him.

HOGAN: Do you think this was her idea?

LINCOLN: Yes, I do.

HOGAN: And at least according to all reports she enjoyed it up until that moment?

LINCOLN: Yes and I think she probably would have done a lot of campaigning but it's so hard to speculate. As I say, I think once the house was

finished then she probably, as you say, would have gone on with the cultural center or other aspects outside of the house of the arts.

HOGAN: Were you involved at all in the after dinner entertaining at State functions?

LINCOLN: Well, not really involved - how the entertainment – as you probably know it was usually Mrs. Kennedy who had about 17 different ideas about what kind of entertainment she wanted. And then it was just a matter of Tish getting on the phone and getting a hold of the manager or whoever the [inaudible] was and after that all we ever did was they'd come down and tell us how long it would take and we'd have the programs printed up and that sort of thing. The stage, of course, had to be pulled out when needed, but that was something done by the ushers office.

HOGAN: Was she ever disappointed in any of the performances?

LINCOLN: Not that I can remember, really. At least if she was we didn't hear about it.

HOGAN: Was she the type of person that was very appreciative of everything that people did or did most of this go unnoticed?

LINCOLN: No, I don't think she was unappreciative. She was the first one to notice is anything went wrong, but by the same token if things went beautifully she'd be the first one to say so, that she was pleased.

HOGAN: Did you [inaudible] to the maids and the butlers and to the cooks?

LINCOLN: Yes, sometimes she'd say, "Would you please type up a memo and post it on the bulletin board." That sort of thing. But then she would, when she saw Charles or if she saw Rene, she would tell them that she thought dinner was splendid or had gone beautifully. I must say I think she was the first one to praise when praise was due; and again the first one to criticize when things had gone wrong.

HOGAN: Anything more than just breaking the ashtrays or if drinks weren't going as smoothly as they should have...?

LINCOLN: Well, for instance, the service has always been a problem at State dinners because they seemed to be getting larger and larger. And she'd be the first one to say, "Let's see that service is as fast as we can

possibly get it.” Also another thing she’d let me know, “The first course wasn’t as warm as it might have been. Tell them to rev up the warming ovens down there.” And that sort of – she’d notice. I mean even down to the kind of candy that was on the table.

HOGAN: Really?

LINCOLN: Oh yes. At one point, we had some things wrapped – pink candy or something like that. She didn’t want pink candy, so, you know those little sugar candies...

HOGAN: Do you think this is contrast to other first ladies?

LINCOLN: I think people concern themselves with areas that they are personally interested in. I think some person could sit down at a table and wouldn’t know what it was set with or what the fruit looked like or what the flowers looked like or what the candy looked like and another person would notice every detail.

HOGAN: And now that the details are running so smoothly...

LINCOLN: And she would notice, that’s the type of thing that she would notice and write you a note about it to please change it.

HOGAN: Was the President aware of the new pieces of furniture and the new acquisitions alone or would she bring them to his attention?

LINCOLN: I know she’d bring them to his attention and I think she’d tell him about the story of the various pieces and where they’d been. But I don’t think on the whole he was really concerned.

HOGAN: Please with the finished product?

LINCOLN: Oh, I think he was pleased with the finished product but when it was in the works I don’t know that he had too much idea of what was going on. She probably showed him sketches of how the rooms would look. I just don’t think he was particularly interested in that phase of the house.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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