

Lyndon Baines Johnson

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

William P. Forster



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The Formative Years

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Illustrated by Boyd Saunders



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PREFACE

The story that follows is an account of the Texas hill country; the people who pioneered the land only a few short decades ago; and the forces, both human and physical, that shaped the destiny of young Lyndon Baines Johnson, a child of the brush-covered hills that form the rimland of the Great Plains of western America. Early in 1964 the late John G. Flowers, then president of Southwest Texas State College, suggested that there was a need for such a work and projected the original plan upon which this study of Johnson's formative years is based.

As is true with all historical monographs, this book is the product of the labor of various people. In giving credit to whom credit is due, our obligations are many, but several merit special mention: Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt of Austin, who opened her home and made her family scrapbook and records available; the late J. R. Buckner, professor of modern languages at Southwest Texas State, who spent several days in travel about the region of Gillespie and Blanco counties in search of source materials; Ava Johnson Cox of Johnson City, who took time from a busy schedule to recount stories of a happy childhood along the Pedernales; Willard Deason, Jesse Kellam, and Dr. Alfred H. Nolle, former dean of the college, whose recollections contributed materially to the reconstruction of his college days; Helen Weinberg, colleague of Johnson at Sam Houston high school and respected teacher of history in the Houston public schools until her recent retirement, who gave generously of her time and knowledge and through whom other valuable sources were made available; and Welly H. Hopkins of Washington, D. C., senior counsel for the United Mine Workers of America, whose account of his political association in 1930 and 1931 with the future President, comprises a significant chapter in this book.

To numerous others, many of whom are cited in the pages that follow, we are deeply indebted. Particular thanks are due Dorothea Bright Askew of Houston, whose memory of Johnson as a young man added much to the development of this narrative;

L. E. Jones, Jr. of Corpus Christi, star debater at Sam Houston in 1930-31, who provided excellent materials concerning Johnson's teaching career; Kitty McLaughlin and Paul Cotulla for arranging interviews with former colleagues and students of the President in Cotulla; the late John G. Flowers; James H. McCrocklin, president of Southwest Texas State College; and Leland E. Derrick, dean of graduate studies, who served as coordinator of the project.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to Beverly Conrad, Merry FitzPatrick, Barry Bascom Hayes, Hennie Pinkston, Everette Swinney, and Sarah Jeannette Pool who assisted in the detailed tasks of preparing the manuscript for publication.

September, 1965

William C. Pool
Emmie Craddock
David E. Conrad

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