

“GUARDING AN IMPULSIVE MOVER”

A Developmental History of the U.S. Secret Service Command Post

**LBJ National Historical Park,
Gillespie County, Texas**

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ABSTRACT

The story of Lyndon Baines Johnson's Texas White House at his ranch along the Pedernales River also includes the story of the Secret Service and its commitment to protecting the president. Because President Johnson frequently returned to his home during his tenure in office, the Secret Service maintained a command post in a small house on the ranch that overlooked the Texas White House. From that building, agents guarded the Johnson family from the 1960s until the death of Lady Bird Johnson in 2007. The National Park Service can use the building to interpret the involvement of the Secret Service both in the wider story of presidential protection and in the personal story of Lyndon B. Johnson and his interaction with the agents.

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PERSONNEL



Figure 1. Left to Right: Dan K. Utley, teacher; Michael McFadden; Joshua Weber; Christi Westbrook; Jaime Espensen-Sturges; Madelyn Patlan; Kendra DeHart; Jennifer Paul; and Jennifer Cobb

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SECTION I: PROJECT OVERVIEW

A. Introduction/Scope

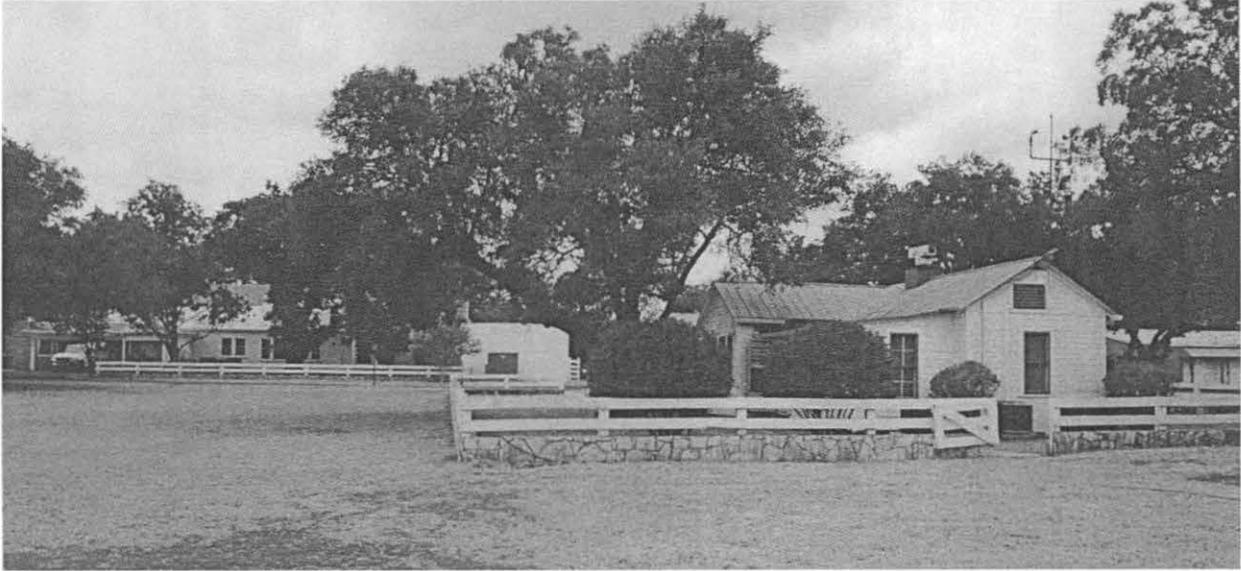


Figure 2. Secret Service Command Post in foreground of the Texas White House at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park, Stonewall, Texas.

In December 1964, a *Los Angeles Times* article noted, “President Johnson is showing signs of presenting the Secret Service with the biggest problem of all. He is a very impulsive mover, prone to put on his hat and depart on five minutes’ notice.” That statement conveys a broad contextual image of the task facing the Secret Service in the years following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. It was a transitional time for the agency, as well as the presidency and the nation. It was a time of action and significant change, and the working and professional relationships that developed between Johnson and those who guarded him set the tone for the administrations that would follow. Much of that transitional interface played out at the Hill Country White House, President Johnson’s beloved ranch along the Pedernales River near Stonewall, Texas.

This report represents a focused study of the Secret Service Command Post at the ranch during President Johnson's presidency and the years that followed—to date, the longest presidential assignment for the agency. This report is on one level a site-specific study that centers on a small frame house that evolved from a rural home to a ranch foreman's headquarters and finally to an operational command post where important decisions were made daily about ongoing efforts to protect the president's family and their guests. On another level, though, it is also a representational history that affords a broader interpretation of the presidency in general and of a federal agency charged with maintaining peace and order within an often dangerous and complex society.

The Public History Project Class of Texas State University-San Marcos undertook the task of compiling this report with the understanding that it will serve as a foundation for future interpretive planning by the staff of the National Park Service. Throughout the course of its assignment, the class worked to develop a broad-based representation that would provide the staff with ample context, storyline flexibility, and a diversity of sources. Members of the class are indebted to the National Park Service for the opportunity to partner on this important study, which has enriched their individual research skills and scholastic interests, and built on a longstanding historical connection between the university and the Johnson family.

B. Methodology

1. Introduction and Background

Public history students in the Department of History at Texas State University conducted the work associated with this report through under partnership with the Lyndon B. Johnson

National Historical Park and the National Park Service's Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystem Study Unit Program in Tucson, Arizona. The report was produced during the Fall of 2011. A team of eight students under the leadership of Professor Dan K. Utley took up the task of researching, documenting, and evaluating the Secret Service headquarters building located on the Lyndon Baines Johnson National Park grounds near Johnson City, Texas. The NPS commissioned this project to determine whether the building and its place in the historic context of the park warranted funds for restoration and interpretation. The building at the time of the project lay in poor repair and in need of restoration. NPS staff provided the team with as much information as they had about the building, as well as information on President Johnson and his relationship with the Secret Service. From there, the team used the fall semester to produce this report.

2. Data Sources

Researchers used a variety of sources to compile this report. Sources came from archives located at both the headquarters at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, as well as online archives, books, magazines, and newspaper articles from Google Books, National Archives materials available online, etc. A complete list of resources used in this report, as well as those that may be useful for further research can be found at the end of this report.

3. The Process

General Breakdown: The class split into two teams. The first team studied the Secret Service and its relationship with Lyndon Johnson before and during his presidency when he

resided on the ranch. It looked into the historical development of the Secret Service as an agency, the changes in presidential protection duties over time, and what role the Secret Service played in day-to-day operations at the ranch. This team compared all of these findings to determine if Lyndon Johnson in fact created a unique situation during his presidency regarding protection at the ranch.

The second group was in charge of documenting the house itself—its origins before it came to the ranch, its occupants, and its role during Lyndon Johnson’s presidency. This team also researched the physical layout of the house, including floor plans, aerial view photos of the home on the ranch, and the security features and amenities it included.

Steps Taken: The two teams met at the LBJ Presidential Library in September to attend an archives orientation and to conduct initial research. At this time, each team member took a specific type of resource—books, magazines, newspapers, pictures, etc.—and found as much useful information as possible. They reported it to team leaders in order to develop a broad preliminary bibliography.

After going through the recommended files provided by the NPS and archivists at the library, the teams expanded their search to find more resources. This research included searching through transcripts from oral histories already conducted, conducting new oral histories with people such as Lyndon Johnson’s former secretary, Jewel Scott, and contacting those known to have dealt with the house. The teams also made a site visit in September to conduct hands-on research in the form of touring the home, taking pictures of points of interest and structural qualities of the home, and discussing possible sources with NPS staff. The teams maintained a database of all research, and key components will be included as an addendum to this report.

Once the research was collected, divided into appropriate categories, and assigned to team members, the teams collectively decided on a format for the report. Each team member was given specific parts of the report to complete and return to their team leaders for final compilation and presentation to the NPS.

4. General Questions and Purpose

Researchers sought to answer numerous questions for the park staff. The main question was whether or not the Secret Service Headquarters qualified as a historic structure significant enough to warrant preservation by the NPS. Secondly, the teams sought to discover what stories existed about the house and its residents in order to aid the park staff in interpreting the house for the public if it was deemed worthy of preservation. This report and its findings will answer these questions, as well as conclude with recommendations for further research and action.

C. Maps

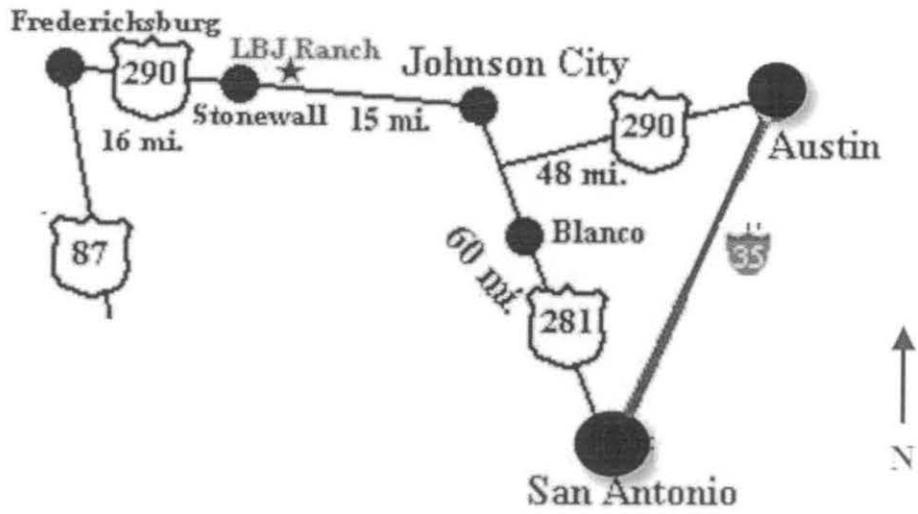


Figure 3. Directional map showing Stonewall and the Lyndon Johnson Ranch National Historic Park in relationship to Johnson City, San Antonio, and Austin.



Figure 4. Aerial view looking west over the Texas White House (large central building) at the National Historic Park in Stonewall, Texas. The Secret Service Command Post is marked in the upper right.

SECTION II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. Lyndon Baines Johnson's Early Political Career

On August 27, 1908, Lyndon Baines Johnson was born in Stonewall, Texas to Samuel Ealy Johnson, Jr., and Rebekah Baines Johnson. Despite Johnson's later notion of a poor upbringing, he and his family lived a middle class lifestyle when they moved to Johnson City. Both parents encouraged all five Johnson children to attend college after completing high school. Lyndon Johnson was precocious in school and graduated from high school in 1924 at the age of fifteen. Because he believed success was the most important accomplishment, Johnson left for California to practice law under his cousin's tutelage. After realizing his cousin promised more than he could deliver, Johnson returned home as poor as when he left and soon realized the only job he could get was that of a day laborer on a highway crew. Desperate to work with his brain rather than his hands, the twenty year old decided to enroll in the normal school at Southwest Texas State Teachers College, now Texas State University, in San Marcos. Although only an average student during his college career, Johnson excelled outside the classroom, organizing a series of successful campaigns in student politics and working in Cotulla, Texas, as a school principal for a year in order to pay for his education.¹

After graduation, Johnson made his way to Washington, D.C., working as a congressional secretary for Texas's 14th District. In 1935, Johnson became the director of the National Youth Administration (a New Deal agency) in Texas, and in 1937, he won election to the House of Representatives via special election. In 1941, Johnson ran for the United States Senate in another special election but lost to Governor W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel. Based on his appointment to Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve on June 21, 1940, Johnson went on active duty after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, signaling the U.S. involvement in

World War II. Johnson was subsequently awarded the Silver Star for his participation in a bombing mission against the Japanese.²

In 1948, Johnson ran in a Texas Democratic Primary for Senate against Coke Stevenson, winning by 87 votes and earning the nickname "Landslide Lyndon." He attained the position of Senate Majority Leader in 1955. After suffering a heart attack that same year, Johnson returned to the Senate in January 1956 convinced that the Democratic Convention would choose him as the party's presidential nominee. Realizing he would not receive the nomination in 1956, Johnson worked and pushed for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, thereby making him a leading candidate for the 1960 Democratic primaries. Although he lost to John F. Kennedy, Johnson was nominated as a Vice Presidential candidate in order to unify the Democratic Party voting base.³

On November 8, 1960, John F. Kennedy won the presidential election. Despite personal tensions between the two, Johnson worked to serve his President, determined that the administration would not be divisive. On November 22, 1963, following the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Lyndon Johnson took the oath of office as the 36th president of the United States on November 22, 1963.⁴

B. Early History of the United States Secret Service, 1865-1961

The history of the United States Secret Service begins with the story of modern U.S. currency. In the 1860s, counterfeiting threatened to undermine the United States economy. Before the U.S. Civil War, individual states, and in some cases individual banks, printed and issued money. Inconsistency in printing, style, and denomination made counterfeiting an easy and profitable trade. As a result, public trust in the money system, specifically paper notes,

declined. In an effort to stem the epidemic, Congress passed the Legal Tender Act of 1862 and created uniform U.S. legal tender.⁵

The first use of the term “Secret Service” came from an unofficial spy network created during the Civil War. The organization’s second director, L.C. Baker, and his band of detectives, had many investigative duties, including combating counterfeiters. However, he failed to stop one of the United States most prolific counterfeiters, Peter McCartney, who by 1864 had circulated more than \$100,000 (nearly \$14 million in today’s economy). Although the war ended in 1865, the economic threat to the reunified nation continued.⁶

On July 5, 1865, the United States Secret Service became an official organization. Secretary of Treasury Hugh McCulloch swore in the first director, William P. Wood. The new agency’s mission was to “restore the public confidence in the money of the country.”⁷ Its investigative abilities proved to be so successful that their responsibilities quickly broadened to include combating fraud against the government, as well as smuggling, robbery, and even human rights violations.

Over the years, support for the United States Secret Service waxed and waned. During the presidential administrations of Andrew Johnson and Ulysses S. Grant, the agency grew both in size and scope. By 1871, they were tasked with guarding Sen. Oliver P. Morton, who was threatened by a “gang of robbers and counterfeiters” who had planned to rob his home and kill him if needed.⁸ But in 1880, Congress ordered the agency to return to its original mission: to combat counterfeiting. It cut the agency’s budget and its staff, the latter nearly in half.⁹ Despite the lack of budget, men, and public support, the Secret Service persevered, and by 1883 they were “officially acknowledged as a distinct organization within the Treasury Department.”¹⁰ By

1890, the agency was back in favor with Congress and poised to expand its agents' duties to encompass guarding the nation's leaders.

In 1894, during an investigation in Colorado, Pres. Grover Cleveland received threats against his life. Following so soon after the recent assassination of Pres. James Garfield, the incident prompted Secret Service Chief William P. Hazen to assign two agents to protect President Cleveland. That summer, the president's family also became the target of threats, and Mrs. Cleveland, without informing her husband, asked Hazen for protection at their summer home in Buzzard's Bay, Massachusetts.¹¹ This continued during the next summer—still unapproved and still unofficial.

A disturbing trend was developing. From 1865 to 1963, four presidents would be assassinated in office, and three more would suffer near-fatal attempts on their lives. Staggeringly, one in five presidents was killed, and assassination attempts made on the lives of one out of every three. At the turn of the twentieth century, the President of the United States was still expected to travel the nation, unguarded and unhindered. This became more difficult with the increasing threats to presidential safety in the modern era. In 1901, Pres. William McKinley attended the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, and stood in a reception line to personally greet visitors. And although three Secret Service men unofficially accompanied him, they were not in a position to assist or protect him from an assassin passing through the line. McKinley's assassination resulted in Congress "officially" allowing the Secret Service to protect the president informally. While the Secret Service improved its ability to guard the president, Congress argued for five more years before developing a permanent and official solution. One line inserted into the Sundry Civil Expenses Act for 1907 provided the funds and power for the Secret Service to protect the President of the United States.¹²

The Secret Service, however, did not cease its other activities to focus on protection of the president. In 1908, it uncovered and successfully routed one of the largest frauds perpetrated against the federal government. The agency's success in investigating western land fraud led to the return of millions of acres of land to the government. Once again, success also had a downside; it demonstrated the need for a national investigative and counterintelligence group, giving rise to what is now known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Over the next five decades, the Secret Service would wrangle with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to maintain its control in guarding the president.

In 1913, the Secret Service obtained more extensive protective orders from Congress, which had to be renewed every year until 1951. Their role as official protectors became even more prominent in 1922 when President Harding and his administration became embroiled in a scandal. This resulted in Pres. Warren G. Harding dismissing the Washington, D.C. police force assigned to guard the White House. He then created the White House Police Force, comprised of personally chosen individuals designed to keep secret the "affairs" of the presidential home.¹³

Pres. Herbert Hoover found the White House Police Force lacking. In 1930, a curious citizen walked past one of the officers and into the president's dining room. He ordered the Secret Service to take control of the White House Police Force. In 1933, an attempt on Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt's life, and a subsequent flood of hate mail and death threats, proved that a full protection detail was necessary. A bloody gun battle between a pair of assassins and Pres. Harry Truman's Secret Service agents finally provoked Congress to act. The passage of the Public Law - 82 - 79 in 1951 permanently and officially authorized the Secret Service to protect the president, his immediate family, the president-elect, and the vice president, if he chose.¹⁴

Over the next few decades, guarding the president and his family would become increasingly difficult. The president had always been expected to be accessible to the people, and as travel became faster and easier, his duties came to include tours not only within United States borders but worldwide. Even the Warren Commission recognized the “protection of the President of the United States is an immensely difficult and complex task. The protective task is further complicated by the reluctance of Presidents to take security precautions which might interfere with the performance of their duties.” This characterizes the attitudes of the presidents and the nature of their security in the twentieth century.

C. Lyndon B. Johnson and the Secret Service, 1961-1969

According to legislation passed in 1951, Secret Service protection for the vice president operated “at his request.” Vice President Johnson, like Richard Nixon before him, was reluctant to compromise his privacy and often chose to forego heavy protection. Special Agents Rufus Youngblood and Stuart Knight, who was later promoted and replaced by Special Agent Jimmy Kivett, were often his only agents. The vice presidential detail, being intermittent, operated out of the Washington field office. Agents were not as involved in his day-to-day movements and routines; instead, they primarily accompanied him on long trips. Johnson often reduced his detail in response to opposition politicians who expressed concern over the amount of taxpayer money it required. Since the agents were present solely at Johnson’s request, he felt was always cautiously aware of the cost.¹⁵

Vice President Johnson was known for his sudden destination changes or decisions to mingle with people he met. Johnson often acted on his desire to “press the flesh” or get into crowds to shake hands.¹⁶ Occasionally, he would just get in the car and drive across town to go

to dinner at a friend's house, expecting the Secret Service agents to wait outside. This impulsiveness complicated his agents' logistical planning. At the same time, spontaneity in his movements meant that those who might pose potential threats did not have time to find out where he would be. He could also be rough and resistant to the agents' presence, often yelling at them. Sometimes he would be open and welcoming, inviting them in for a burger and a chat, but he could just as easily be "chewing them out" for something they may or may not have done.¹⁷

Vice President Johnson's Secret Service detail became more significant when President John F. Kennedy began sending him on overseas tours on which his job was to "establish personal contacts for the new Administration."¹⁸ To prepare for these trips, Johnson's agents performed advance work, establishing logistics by contacting local law enforcement. The security of many of these trips was, however, essentially low-key. Marie Fehmer Chiarodo, Vice President Johnson's secretary from 1962 to 1963, described the laxity of flight and hotel arrangements. The Secret Service agents had no authority to block off an entire floor of a hotel for these visits. The best they could do was to block three or four rooms close together, assigning the middle room to the vice president and Lady Bird.¹⁹

The first overseas trip on which the Secret Service accompanied the vice president was to Senegal to celebrate that country's independence. On another important trip that would have later significance for Johnson, the vice president met with South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem. On one of his drives out in the Vietnamese countryside, he once again demonstrated both his impulsiveness and his agricultural interests. He spotted a dozen cattle, asked to stop, and, accompanied by Youngblood, got out of the car to go inspect them. They retreated when the herd chased the pair back to the car.²⁰

Last minute itineraries were common, and the agents had to be flexible in fulfilling their job assignment. They had to call the vice president's secretary every day to find out if he would be requesting their service. One morning in the summer of 1961, the agents discovered that they were scheduled to fly to Berlin that same afternoon. On that trip, Johnson wanted to go to the Autobahn to watch American troops entering Berlin, and he defied the State Department representatives who argued against it: "Who says I can't go out there!" he demanded. "The hell I can't! With Stu and Rufe I can go anywhere!"²¹

The vice president also became involved in wide-ranging domestic travel as he went stumping in fall of 1962 for the off-year Congressional elections, sometimes accompanied only by Rufus Youngblood, and often without some of the members of his staff. His Secret Service agents sometimes found themselves with unexpected responsibilities. In October 1962, before a Los Angeles fundraising dinner, Paul Glynn, the personal assistant who normally did the clothing preparation, was not present. Special Agent Jerry Kivett tried to help out. Youngblood reported:

I opened the door and there stood the Vice President, red-faced, one trouser leg on while he hopped around trying to get the other one on, as Jerry crawled around on the floor picking up studs and cuff links. LBJ almost fell over him and then he plopped down on the bed. 'Damn it, Jerry, you'd make a hell of a valet! It'll be midnight before I get dressed!' Jerry drew himself up in righteous response. 'Well, sir, you have to consider that this is the first time in my life I have ever dressed another full-grown man!'²²

On October 14, 1962, the day before the Cuban Missile Crisis began, President Kennedy signed H.R. 6691 into law, "giving statutory responsibility to the Secret Service for the protection of the Vice President on a full-time non-request basis" and expanding Johnson's permanent detail from two to twenty-six agents. Part of the reason for this was the continued

importance and increasing frequency of the vice president's overseas trips due to "the President's extensive use of Lyndon Johnson as his personal emissary."²³

Vice President Lyndon Johnson's relationship to the Secret Service changed on November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas. In the motorcade that day, Johnson was in a car with Lady Bird, as well as Rufus Youngblood and driver, Texas highway patrolman Hurchel Jacks. Three agents along with a staffer and the driver, another Texas highway patrolman, rode in his follow-up car. As the car turned the corner, Youngblood heard the explosion and saw odd movements from Kennedy's car and among the follow-up agents, so he hauled Johnson to the floor and jumped on top of him. On the way to Parkland Memorial Hospital, Youngblood refused to let the vice president sit up; he and the other agents were still highly cautious because they did not know at that time if the attack was part of a conspiracy and if the route to the hospital had been marked out and stalked for an ambush. In that car, covering the vice president's body with his own, Special Agent Rufus Youngblood was the first person to tell Johnson, "It may be necessary for you to be Acting President." Johnson replied, "Okay, pardner, I understand."²⁴

Youngblood was suddenly the principal agent protecting the new president. He immediately realized some of the implications of the day's events and began planning to add new protective details for the Johnson daughters, Luci and Lynda, who had not had details while their father was vice president. He also knew that he needed to get Johnson out of Parkland Memorial and onto Air Force One at Love Field, as it was a secure location connected to the White House. Johnson wanted to put as little pressure on Jackie Kennedy to move out of the White House as possible, so he requested that security as well as communication capacity be increased that would allow him to use The Elms, his own home in D.C., rather than moving into the White House immediately.²⁵

When the entourage landed at Andrews Air Force Base, Youngblood recalled:

As the ambulance moved away, the President glanced around the stateroom [on Air Force One], obviously looking for something. 'Rufus,' he said, 'where's my hat?' 'Your hat, sir?' 'It was in the car during the motorcade.' 'Then that's where it probably still is, sir,' I said. 'I didn't get it.' 'Well, get the damn thing! Call back to Dallas and have one of your men get it!' His *hat* at a time like this? Then the incident struck me as the first indication of a return to normalcy. This was LBJ, the President, giving me a chewing out...He had been forceful, but cooperative, and now the safety valve eased open for a moment, and I had the dubious honor of being the first to be chewed out by the new President. But it was more than that. It was a brief object lesson in not forgetting the little things. You really had to know Johnson to understand this. 'I'll see to the hat, sir,' I replied.' The hat arrived in Washington two days later.²⁶

At this time of crisis, President Johnson maintained his composure and professionalism in order to inspire and hold together a nation threatened by panic. In testament to his close relationship with his Secret Service agents, he found himself able to release some of the tension and frustration that surrounded him. This incident demonstrates his trust of his agents and their loyalty to him.

Rufus Youngblood became one of the four top supervisors of the White House Detail, which absorbed the then unnecessary Vice-Presidential Detail. In December 1963 and January 1964, agents including Jerry Kivett, Woody Taylor, and Jerry Bechtle, all of the Vice-Presidential Detail, became Lady Bird's protective detail because she already knew them. They dubbed themselves the "KTBC" group for "Kivett, Taylor, Bechtle, and Claudia" (Lady Bird's given name).²⁷

After facing the horrors of having the first official, President Kennedy, assassinated under the supervision of the agency, many things changed for the United States Secret Service. Despite two officers, Clint Hill and Rufus Youngblood, receiving Exceptional Service Awards for heroism, the Service encountered accusations of negligence or failure. Seven days after Kennedy's murder, President Lyndon B. Johnson created the President's Commission on the

Assassination of President Kennedy, also known as the Warren Commission, to evaluate all evidence and to present a full report on the assassination to the American people.

On September 24, 1964, the Warren Commission delivered its final report to the president. In the report, the commission recommended reform in presidential security, offering specific recommendations for protecting the president.²⁸ The commission's findings resulted in a larger operating budget and a dramatic increase in technology, computer equipment, and data management, as well as an approximately fifty percent increase in active agents. To avoid the inconvenience of having to borrow a reinforced vehicle from the FBI when they returned to Washington, the Secret Service also worked with the Ford Motor Company to obtain several specially-designed, armored Lincoln limousines.²⁹

In order to provide a more effective means of supervision over an agency that had nearly doubled in size to 950 employees, the Secret Service changed some of its methods in the years following President Kennedy's assassination. In March 1965, President Johnson requested \$8.75 million for the Secret Service for the next fiscal year. Despite the President's request, a special White House committee asked Congress to appropriate \$12,627,000 in order to make improvements within the agency. Based in part on recommendations made by the Warren Commission, the Secret Service increased its number of special agents assigned to presidential protection, expanded the training of special agents, increased its liaison with law-enforcement and other federal agencies, improved communications systems, and added new technical security equipment and automatic data processing.³⁰

Administrative reorganization of the Service, recommended by Secret Service Director James J. Rowley and Special Assistant to the Director of the Treasury David C. Acheson, took place in November 1965, creating positions that included two assistants to the director and four

assistant directors in charge of specific activities within the agency that included heading the offices of Protective Operations, Protective Research, Investigations, and Administration. Rufus Youngblood, who was put in charge of the White House detail shortly after Johnson took office, was named assistant director in charge of protective services, putting the White House detail under his jurisdiction. As a result, assistant head of the White House detail, Thomas L. Johns, replaced Youngblood as head of the detail. Thomas J. Kelly, a former inspector, was chosen to head the section that investigated counterfeiting and government check forgeries while Walter H. Young was put in charge of protective intelligence. This made Young responsible for keeping track of potential assassins. Director James J. Rowley, whose title had been chief before the administration reorganization took place, gained Jackson N. Krill and Burrill A. Peterson as his assistants.³¹

In the same year, Congress authorized permanent protection from the Secret Service for former presidents and their spouses for the rest of their lives while their children received protection until they turned sixteen. This meant Rufus Youngblood, in charge of protective services, was not only responsible for the protection of the presidential family but for former presidents Eisenhower and Truman and former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy and her children as well. Congress also increased the Service's law enforcement responsibilities, authorizing agents to make arrests without warrant for crimes committed in their presence.³²

Despite the progress made by the Secret Service to keep pace with its mission of protection during President Johnson's first term, his second term in office would be rocked by increasing threats and violence, as well as a number of assassinations. The combination of violent events, increased expectations, and demands placed on the Secret Service would push the agency to the breaking point.³³

The Secret Service faced an increasingly difficult task of fulfilling its primary role of law enforcement and its new role of protecting public officials and their families from 1967 through 1969. Counterfeiting increased due to the Secret Service's lack of funds and work force to cover both responsibilities. The violence of the late 1960s generated a demand of protection that continued to challenge the Service. Because of the violence in American society and threats to the president, the Secret Service received funds and an increase in power to serve both roles of enforcer and protector beginning in 1967.

As the public unrest over Vietnam and increasing racial strife in America caused an upsurge of violence, the Secret Service adjusted its scope of who received protection, as well as its methods of protection. Internal memorandums and reports from the Secret Service highlighted the need to protect not only ex-presidents, but their families as well. The Secret Service changed its methods and capabilities of protection via new technology. A major advancement came in the form of computers for faster analysis of threats, thereby reallocating agents to protection details. An additional improvement stemmed from sharing sensitive information and intelligence with other law enforcement agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency.³⁴

Despite the increased need of protection for the president and the First Family, the public sometimes reacted negatively to the increased presence of Secret Service agents. The Secret Service was painfully aware of the difficulties of protecting individuals who made a living getting close to the public. A combination of heightened threat levels and the agents' job of protecting those officials caused confrontations between agents and the public. Secret Service agents, for example, punched members of the media while protecting Vice President Hubert Humphrey during his speech to the New York Stock Exchange on its 175th anniversary. In

addition, agents protecting Lynda Bird Johnson during her visit to Colombia for a work assignment rough-handed Colombian media for getting too close to her while she was in a crowd.³⁵

The Secret Service implemented changes of assignments for its agents to improve secrecy and protection for those under its charge. The agency announced a new position of assistant director in late 1967 and promoted Rufus Youngblood to the post. Agent Youngblood also protected Johnson during his visits to the Texas White House. Other members of President Johnson's protective detail received promotions as well.³⁶

Despite a rise in of funding and small gains in personnel, the Secret Service's mission expanded, necessitating a division of personnel. The Department of the Treasury acknowledged an increase of counterfeiting and other crimes involving tax fraud due to the lack of law enforcement. However, the number of agents in the Secret Service increased from 350 just after Kennedy's assassination to 575 in 1968. During the same timeframe, the threat assessments to the president rose from 100 per month to roughly 7000 per month. Threats as well as the number of assassinations increased dramatically in 1968. Martin Luther King's assassination in March 1968 brought attention to the dangers of public life. Robert F. Kennedy's assassination caused President Johnson to issue an executive order on June 5, 1968, granting protection of those seeking election to the presidency. The executive order passed through Congress quickly, becoming Public Law 90-331. Congress also authorized an immediate spending increase of \$400,000 for the remainder of fiscal year 1968 and budgeted an increase of 1.5 million dollars for fiscal year 1969.³⁷

Although President Johnson's administration drew to a close in late 1968, his interaction with the Secret Service was far from over. One of the last events to occur at the White House

then was the public event held for the Secret Service detail, thanking the agents for their long and faithful service. The Secret Service received a much needed public acknowledgement from the Commander in Chief of their sacrifice to protect the president and First Family, the vice president and family, as well as other public officials. Leaving office in January 1969, former President Johnson relinquished his official duties and retired to his ranch at Johnson City, thus beginning the last chapter of the Secret Service and its protection of the Johnson family.

D. Life after the White House, 1969-2007

The former president and First Lady returned to Johnson City in relative peace and security in January 1969. As per federal law, Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson were entitled protection by the Secret Service for the rest of their lives. President Johnson received protection until his death on January 22, 1973, and the agency maintained a presence at the ranch because of its duties to protect Lady Bird Johnson.

During the 1970s, the Secret Service's mission gradually increased its protection of foreign officials in the Washington D.C. area to the entire United States, and eventually overseas protection via public laws. In addition, the Secret Service role as law enforcement increased as well. Stopping crimes such as credit and debit card abuse, investigating federally funded banking institutions, and computer fraud allegations added to its century and a half long mission of halting counterfeiting in the 1980s through the 1990s. The Secret Service received a reprieve, however, when a 1994 law passed granting former presidents a ten-year window of protection following the end of their administrations. As a result, the Secret Service no longer had to contend with lifetime protection of public officials elected to office after 1997. The most significant change to the agency was the transfer of the Secret Service to the newly created

Department of Homeland Security in 2003. Throughout the changes of the Secret Service during the latter part of the twentieth century, Lady Bird Johnson continued to receive protection from the agency. Her passing on July 11, 2007, marked the end of the longest protection detail in the agency's history.³⁸

In 2011, Luci Johnson reflected on the Secret Service's presence in her family's life:

"They were there with me on that first night in the White House in a much more immediate and intimate way than I had ever dreamed. They were there from the first moment obviously that my dad was catapulted into the presidency. They were there when I graduated from high school. They were there when I married. They were there, in the room, when my first child was born. My ex-husband wasn't even in the delivery room but the Secret Service was. They were there on January 20, 1969 standing by me when President Nixon was sworn in...Then they came back into my life as I lived in Texas and my parents were at the ranch and some of them had been around, like Jim, in other stages of our, the presidency... Then on the day that we buried my mother, many of them coming back across the years, and I realized there was a relationship there as we stood in front of that little Secret Service hut, that had spanned over half a century."³⁹

SECTION III: THE SECRET SERVICE COMMAND POST

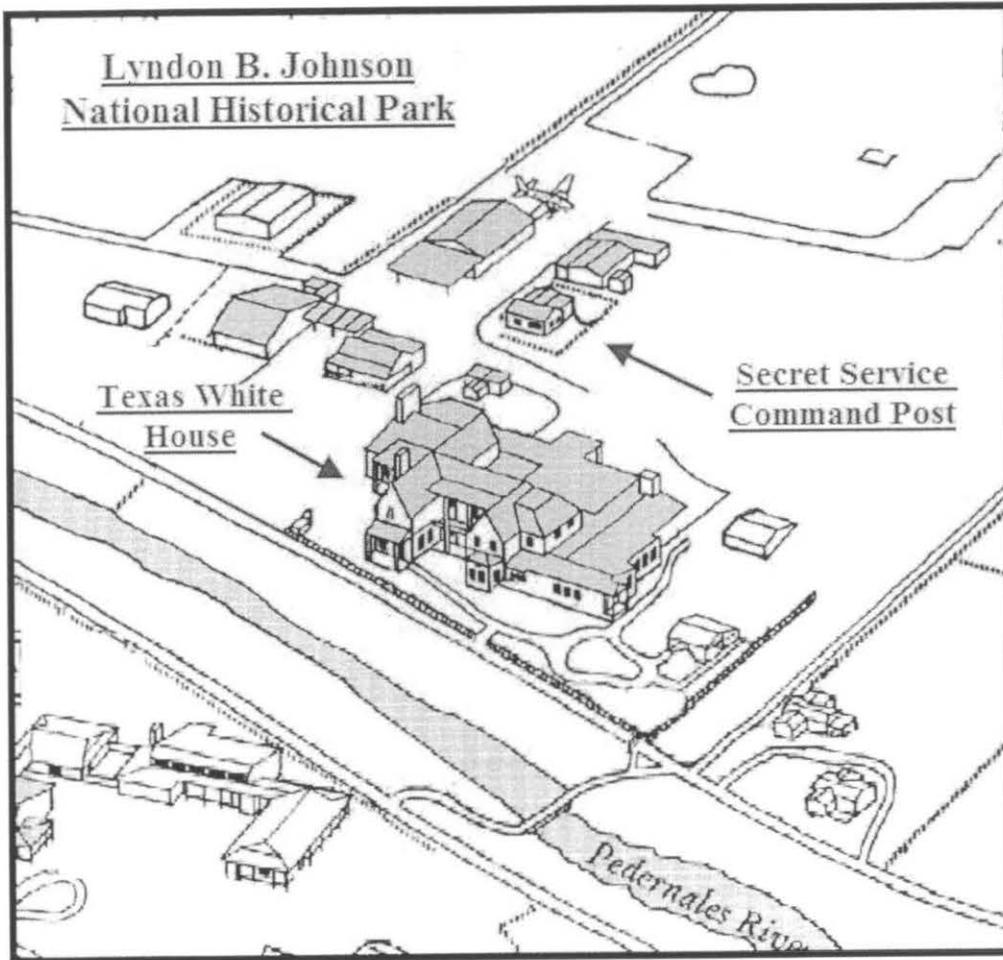


Figure 5. Aerial map of the Secret Service Command Post in relation to the other buildings on site at the Park, including the Airplane Hangar and the Texas White House.

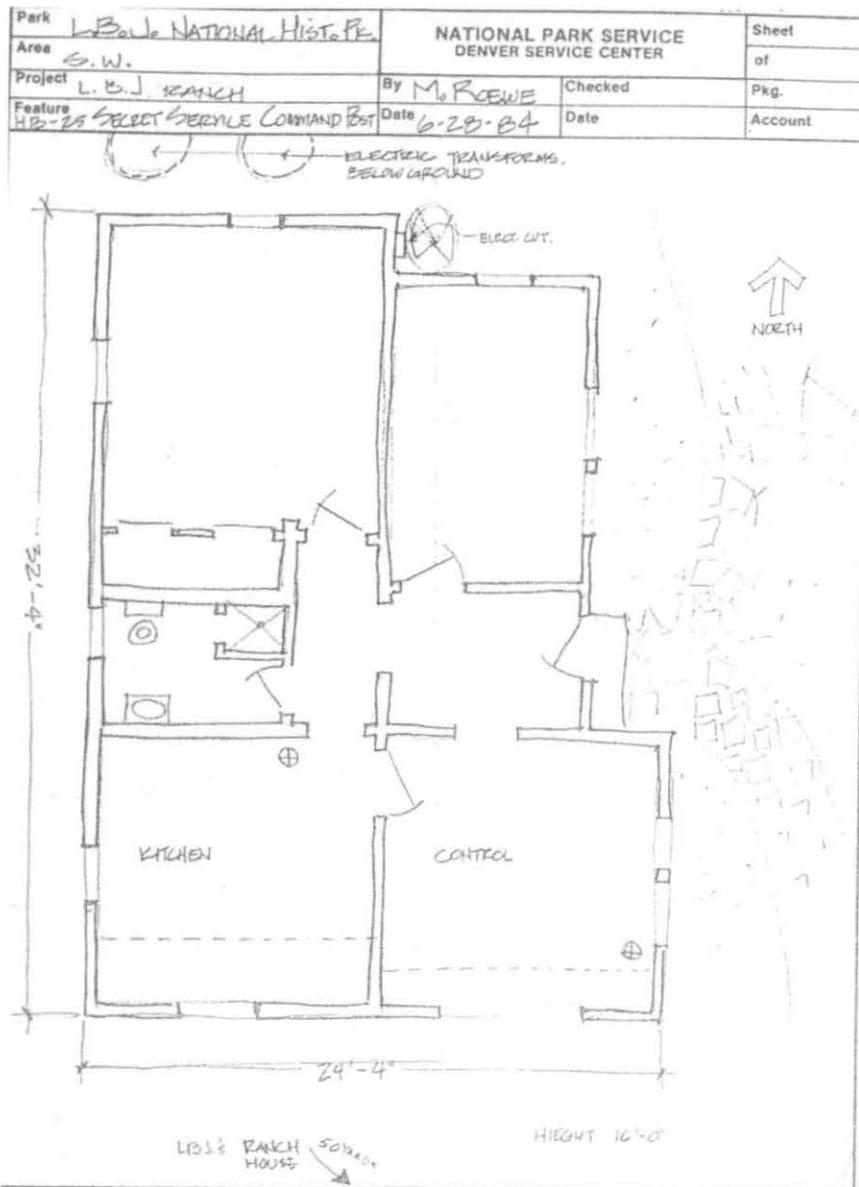


Figure 6. Floor Plan of the Secret Service Command Post at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park, courtesy of the National Park Service.

A. Historical Background of the Structure

The building that served as the Secret Service Command Post at the Texas White House has a rich history that embodies the rural values of many Texas Hill Country families during the early twentieth century. Originally located just south of the Pedernales River to the west of the

Trinity Lutheran Church, this house was the result of decades of family sacrifice and hard work. Survival in the Texas Hill Country meant keeping things simple, working with what the land provided, and above all else, never building something that could not be transformed. Living well in the Texas Hill Country simply meant “making do” with what you had, an axiom that even characterized President Johnson’s own upbringing.

The original location of what would become the Secret Service Command Post is now part of the Sauer-Beckmann Farmstead, a property owned by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Hermann Beckmann bought the land from Johann and Christine Sauer in 1900, and a good cotton crop in 1915 allowed Emil Beckmann to buy the property from his father and brother, Otis. With over 400 acres of property, Emil, his wife Emma, and their three children worked with persistence and exuberance to improve both their land and living conditions. The Beckmanns erected new buildings on the property, and they sustained themselves with what they could grow and make. Mrs. Emily Joanne Schott, the granddaughter of Emil and Emma Beckmann, remembers her grandparents fondly:

Opa was a very, very hard working man, and my grandmother, she was almost an artist in her own light—sewing, cooking, and decorating cakes. Her garden was a place to behold...We had everything...Tomatoes, corn, okra, and the fall garden too...Oma hand embroidered all our dresses and cross-stitched the bottoms. She was an excellent seamstress... She would make homemade donuts, fried chicken, and roast beef.⁴⁰

Today, Emil and Emma’s home is open to visitors that are eager to learn about the daily lives of early twentieth-century Texans. Restored to its 1918 condition, the Sauer-Beckmann Farmstead provides opportunities to discover the pride of early Hill Country residents’ ability to live off their land.⁴¹

The Beckmann family continued to grow during the early twentieth century, and it became increasingly evident that they could no longer “make do” with only one homestead. In

1938, Emil and Emma shared their home with their daughter Edna as well as their son, Elgin, and his family. Emily Joanne Schott was the first granddaughter for Emil and Emma, and when Elgin's wife became pregnant with their second child in 1939, the Beckmanns decided they needed to construct a new home for Elgin's growing family. By pulling together their resources, the Beckmanns contracted Stein Lumber Company in nearby Fredericksburg to construct a home for Elgin's family. A small, three-room house was built on the south-central corner of the Beckmann property, and Elgin and his family moved into the new home in the fall of 1940. Many years later, this home would be relocated to President Johnson's Ranch, and it would serve as the Secret Service Command Post for the next four decades.

Mrs. Schott lived in this home for her first eight years, and she remembers it as a simple building. "It was white, trimmed in green. It had a tin roof, and it was nothing fancy. It was very, very plain Jane."⁴² The house resembles the late folk Victorian architecture of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. With a gable front and wing, this form of architecture was particularly common in the Southern states. The house had a living room, a kitchen, a large hallway, and a master bedroom. There was a screened-in front porch that Mrs. Schott remembers living in during the hot Texas summer months. With no electricity or running water, there was no bathroom in the house. Mrs. Schott recalls that it was not until the early 1940s that electricity came to her grandparent's property, and once running water and electricity became available, her father converted the large hallway into a bathroom. Like many other Hill Country residents of the era, Elgin and his family transformed the house in order to make do.⁴³

In 1947, Elgin Beckmann moved his family to Fredericksburg, where his wife could work as a nurse. They abandoned the house, and after Emil's death in 1951, Edna, Emil's daughter, looked after her mother with help of her new husband, Ernest Hightower. When her

mother Emma passed in 1961, Edna Beckmann-Hightower inherited the property. Later, Edna, under increased pressure from the State of Texas, sold her family's property to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1966. Mrs. Schott remembers that it "wasn't a happy occasion for the family." She recalls:

Lyndon was very fond of my grandmother. I can remember him coming through the gate when I was little, and he would have a great big box of chocolates. He would just sit on the porch and jabber away...He wanted to take her land, but he didn't want to hurt anybody.⁴⁴

Though the Beckmann family knew it was coming, the State waited to take possession of the land after the passing of Emma Beckmann.⁴⁵

The precise moving date of the Elgin Beckmann's family home to Lyndon Johnson's Ranch is unknown; however, most accounts believe that it occurred sometime during Mr. Johnson's vice-presidential years. Mrs. Schott recalls, "My aunt [Edna] sold the house, just the house. It was after he [Johnson] became Vice President...In the beginning, he was going to use it as a cabana or something for his pool. That was what we were told anyway."⁴⁶ In another oral history, Mr. Dale Malechek, the foreman of the Johnson Ranch at the time, recalls that upon his arrival to the Ranch in 1962, the building was being used by ranch employee Albert "Pretzel" Rodriquez. Albert Weirich, a gentleman that assisted in renovating the building, also confirmed Rodriquez's occupation in the former Beckmann home at the LBJ Ranch during this time period. From the information gathered, a reasonable time frame for the house's relocation is between 1961 and 1962.⁴⁷

B. The House as a Command Post

The Secret Service did not immediately set up its command post in the old Beckmann home. During his vice presidency, security for Lyndon Johnson at his ranch on the Pedernales

River was largely an ad hoc affair. With no Secret Service agents permanently stationed on the ranch, they managed security operations from Lawrence Klein's mechanical shop or even the Secret Service cars. Later, the General Service Administration moved a trailer to the ranch to serve as a base for Johnson's security detail. Security measures were relatively modest at the time, with only a fraction of the personnel or equipment that the Secret Service would utilize once Johnson was sworn in as president. Following the assassination of President Kennedy, security for President Johnson took on an even greater immediacy that resulted in monumental renovations to the old Beckmann home in 1963.⁴⁸

The building would need to be converted from residential use and made suitable for security operation's management. In a joint effort by the General Services Administration, the U.S. Army Signal Corps, and the Secret Service, the building was refitted in preparation for the



Figure 7. Secret Service emblem on exterior door to Command Post

first visit of President Johnson to his Hill Country home in December 1963. The house's porch was enclosed and converted to office space, and the wall facing the Johnson residence was remodeled to include a large picture window to allow the Secret Service agents a greater field of vision. Leading up to the president's visit, the former ranch

house was transformed into a modern command center for the Secret Service.⁴⁹

Johnson's presidency marked the growth of the Secret Service from a "bodyguard philosophy" to an "integrated security service."⁵⁰ From 1963 to 1972, the government would spend over \$5.1 million for security measures at the ranch, including the \$65 rent that the Secret Service was required to pay to the Johnson family for the use of the old Beckmann home. A law in 1968 authorized the Secret Service to request necessary work or support from any other federal agency, vastly broadening its powers. Thirteen special officers and thirteen special agents became a normal detail to protect the president. At times, President Johnson restrained the spending of the Secret Service at the ranch. He rejected their request to appropriate \$525,000 for the building of two new armored vehicles, claiming that he would use an old, reconstructed one from Ford instead. These vehicles would be equipped with two-way radios that connected the President with thirty other sets of radios, including those of the Secret Service.⁵¹

The agencies also coordinated the installation of extensive communications and security equipment to transform the Johnson Ranch into a remote White House. Five video cameras were installed, including one directly on top of the Secret Service post, which monitored such areas as the house and grounds, the airstrip, and the gates. Motion sensors were placed at the perimeter of the house and at each gate as an early warning system. Three guard shacks were constructed, providing security outposts at the east, west, and south gates. Additionally, over the course of its tenure at the Johnson Ranch, the Secret Service would utilize incidental equipment to provide a psychological advantage in protecting the president. Speakers, lights, and even mock cameras were used to give the impression that even more surveillance of the property was being conducted than was actually feasible.⁵²

President Johnson's predilection for constant access to information required significant communication capabilities at the ranch. American Telephone and Telegraph Company

microwave towers were originally used as a temporary measure but were replaced soon

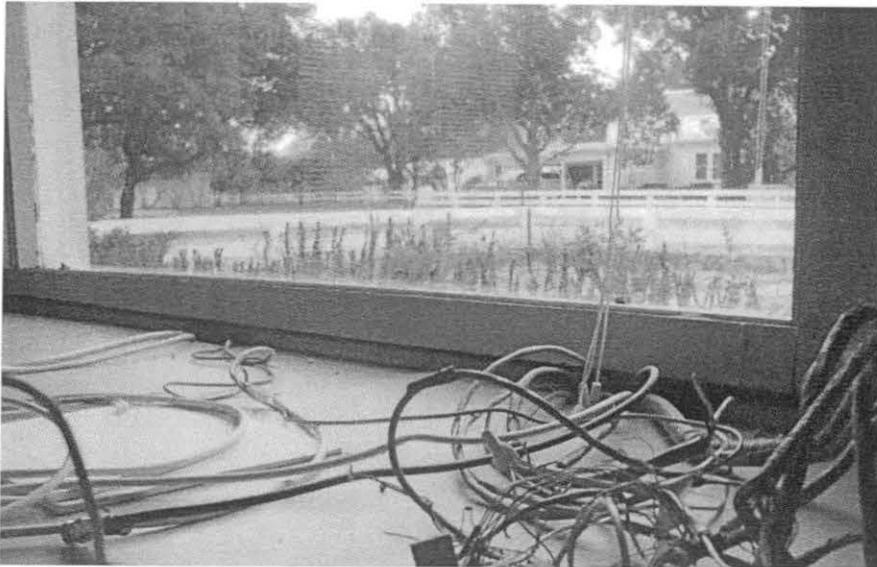


Figure 8. Bay window installed in the Command Post to overlook the Texas White House. This room was furnished with state of the art computers and monitoring equipment.

thereafter when a delay in the president's schedule allowed Southwestern Bell to lay underground telephone cables. Seventy-two phones were installed at the Johnson Ranch, as well as two-way radios and mobile telephones in the president's cars and boats.

The communications trailers housed teletype and cryptographic machines, a massive generator for auxiliary power, and the switchboard for the extensive telephone system. At the request of the Secret Service, a Weather Bureau teletype machine was installed in 1967 to keep it updated on upcoming weather concerns. The Secret Service took full advantage of anything which would allow it to better protect the president.⁵³

C. Secret Service Relationships

In the course of providing protection, Secret Service agents would become familiar to President Johnson's habits as well as the vagaries of ranch life. The Secret Service, unlike reporters and other occasional visitors to the ranch, grew accustomed to the president's proclivity to wander and to speed off in spite of his protective detail. Experienced with President Johnson's

sense of humor, agents would play along with his practical jokes. Agent Mike Howard recalls playing along when the president would use his amphibious “Aqua” car to startle guests. Responding to the president’s inquiry about the condition of the brakes on the car, Howard would answer that they may be faulty, which the president would quickly dismiss. As the president would drive toward the lake, he would claim that the brakes were not responding, and then he proceeded to drive the car into the water, with occasionally painful results.⁵⁴

Agent Dennis McCarthy also recollects that the daily dealings with President Johnson could at times be testing. He recalled that the president “treated us as if we were hired help, cursed at us regularly, and was generally a royal pain to deal with. His usual practice, when he wanted something, was to yell, ‘Secret Service!’ followed by some demand.”⁵⁵ Yet, the Secret Service also had the opportunity to play practical jokes on the president. McCarthy reminisces, “We got even once, though. Johnson had a dog named Yuki that slept with him. One miserable rainy night at the ranch, Johnson put out the dog, screaming to the agent outside: ‘Secret Service, throw Yuki back in when he’s finished!’”⁵⁶ Yuki finished his business, and the Secret Service agent did just as President Johnson ordered. He threw the wet, mud-soaked dog into President Johnson’s bedroom. The next morning, McCarthy recalls, “The President awoke to find his silk sheets quite a mess.”⁵⁷

D. Visitors and Neighbors

Protecting the president at the ranch also required Secret Service agents to contend with the daily lives of many Hill Country residents. Rural families in the Hill Country visited each other regularly, and they shared fresh fruit, eggs, bread, or whatever else they could spare with their neighbors. Before LBJ became president, neighbors frequently visited the Johnsons, and

they brought gifts to the family. After 1963, however, Secret Service agents tried to curtail this tradition. Neighbors at the ranch gate were often turned away by agents, who explained that the only people allowed to enter were those “who have an appointment with him or [are] a member of his family.”⁵⁸ Gifts left by Hill Country residents were quickly destroyed. In a memo from Agent Clarence Knetsch to White House staff in August 1964, he reports that “a sack of onions...[and] six cases of assorted pickled vegetables were received [and]...were destroyed. First family not notified.”⁵⁹ Fearing reprisal or reprimand from President Johnson, Secret Service agents often failed to mention the arrival of neighbors or their gifts to the ranch.

Additionally, Secret Service agents learned quickly that the life of Hill Country residents differed remarkably from those in Washington. One day, as President Johnson drove to his boyhood home in Johnson City, Clint Hill, the Secret Service agent who aided Jackie Kennedy in the car after the assassination of JFK, spotted a young boy with a rifle. At that same moment, a firecracker exploded. Hill jumped from the car and demanded the boy put the gun down. Once the gun was unloaded, Hill assured the boy’s grandparents that no charges would be filed against him. His grandmother promptly retorted, “What did he do wrong? What charges could they make? He was just going out to his deer lease to build a tree house and do some hunting.”⁶⁰ Indeed, no charges were pressed against the boy, as it was an honest mistake, but this incident surely reminded the Secret Service that protecting President Johnson in the Texas Hill Country had its own unique challenges and considerations.⁶¹

In addition to protecting the president and his family, Secret Service agents took on additional duties at the ranch. Utilizing cameras and microphones, agents were able to monitor the irrigation systems and were expected to assist in their repair. The ruckuses caused by Lady Bird Johnson’s peacocks required agents to usher the birds away from the main house

repeatedly. In later years, President Johnson would delegate the responsibility of caring for his prized ranch horses to Secret Service agent Howard, and he would phone Agent Knetsch for reports on the annual rainfall at the ranch.⁶²

For many Secret Service agents at the ranch, their relationship with the president extended beyond the professional. In August 1965, Lynda Johnson invited the wives of 17 Secret Service agents to a private luncheon at the ranch. Agent James Rowley recalls that being at the ranch with the Johnsons often felt "like a family affair," and he remembers that on Christmas Eve in 1967, Secret Service agents drank eggnog in the main house with both the president and the first family.

When tragedy struck Agent Knetsch's family, Agent Youngblood recalls that the Johnsons were deeply troubled. Knetsch's 11-year-old daughter, Nancy, was fatally injured on April 11, 1966 when she fell and was dragged from a horse. Youngblood describes that President Johnson was especially fond of Agent Knetsch, and he took Nancy's death hard. On the date of Agent Knetsch's daughter's passing, President Johnson's daily diary indicates that "Agent Johns and Dr. Burkley go to the Knetsch home and do whatever possible for them. And to find out if there is anything else that we could do, also leave an agent at the Knetsch home for assistance."⁶³ Later, Agent Johns approached President Johnson and the First Lady about placing a bench in the Johnson City Park as a memorial to Nancy, and both supported the idea. Because Secret Service protection necessitated close proximity to the Johnson family, deep, personal relationships developed between both the Johnsons and the agents, and even after President Johnson's death, many agents continued to speak fondly about the family and about their time at the Ranch.⁶⁴

With Lyndon Johnson's unexpected ascendancy to the presidency, the ranch became not only the home of the First Family, but it also became the setting for much of the official

entertaining required of the office. President Johnson insisted on spending as much time as possible at the ranch, which would eventually total over a quarter of his time in office. His ranch was a considerable source of pride for him, and it was his "home field advantage," the place where he felt the most comfortable and confident.⁶⁵ Consequently, the Texas White House became an alternate venue for state affairs where the Johnsons' Texas-style hospitality welcomed diplomats from all over the world.

An invitation by the Johnson family to the ranch was the "highest status symbol of all" for countless foreign heads of state and American leaders.⁶⁶ A month after the assassination of Pres. John F. Kennedy, West German chancellor Ludwig Erhard was one of the first foreign diplomats to receive an invitation to the Johnson's Hill Country home. Since the location of the ranch was in the heart of the historically German Hill Country, Erhard was particularly delighted with his visit to Texas, and the Johnsons organized a formal black-tie dinner just for the occasion. Mexican President-elect Diaz Ordaz and his family also received the honor of visiting the presidential family at their Hill Country home, and many more, such as Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol and his wife, Canadian Prime Minister Pearson, Bolivian President Ortuno, and numerous congressmen and senators, enjoyed the Johnson's Texas-style hospitality. Johnson frequently handed out ashtrays and cream-colored cowboy hats to guests as souvenirs, and he often insisted that "formalities [of his houseguests] be held to a minimum."⁶⁷

The 1967 visit of Latin American ambassadors illustrates how the visits to the ranch were often tailored to the guests' native cultures. The Friendship Fiesta, as the celebration was called, featured a recreation of the Fort Griffin Fandangle, a portrayal of the settling of Texas put on by a group from Shackelford County in West Texas. After their performance, the entertainers were spontaneously thanked onstage by the Johnsons in the tradition of the *abrazo*, warm embraces

that typified strong friendship. This gesture was not lost to the Latin diplomats, and it further solidified the relations between the nations. Johnson's "barbeque diplomacy" served not only the purpose of hospitality, but it also positively influenced pivotal meetings with leaders of foreign



Figure 9. 1967 Friendship Fiesta Barbeque event along the Pedernales River at the LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas.

nations.⁶⁸

While the increasing number of prestigious visitors to the Texas White House may have escalated anxiety in the tasks of some Secret Service agents, they were not responsible for protecting visitors to the ranch. Rufus

Youngblood remarked that though they would keep an ever watchful eye on gatherings that the Texas White House, they primarily focused their protection to the president and his family. It was not until 1971 that Congress "authorized Secret Service protection for visiting heads of foreign state or government or other official guests."⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Richard "Cactus" Pryor, an Austin radio and television personality, as well as part of the Johnsons' Texas social circle who was master of ceremonies and program director of many of these diplomatic events, knew the Secret Service agents were diligently watching. He recalled, "You'd also have Secret Service men behind every tree. They would try to disguise them to make them as inconspicuous as possible, but they always stood out like a sore thumb."⁷⁰

As the red carpet was rolled out at the ranch for diplomats and heads of state, local folks who had previously had relatively easy and casual access to the Johnsons now found themselves

limited by enhanced security. Visitors had to be approved, and hundreds of requests by ordinary citizens to visit President Johnson's ranch poured into the White House. Knowing that White House aides could not grant all the requests, early letters denying access to the site took a more diplomatic and cautious tone. Visitors were simply reminded that the president could not grant every attempt to visit the ranch. Yet, as the social and political climate of the 60s began to shift, the responses to these requests took on a tone that was more guarded, and they increasingly cited reasons of security rather than the president's limited availability.⁷¹

The Secret Service also had to contend with visitors that were not officially invited to the Johnson's Hill Country home. During the 1960s, numerous social and political movements surrounded his presidency, and advocates for change sought his attention even at the ranch. In one incident, a small group from New York camped on Ranch Road 1, not far from the president's residence, in order to protest the distribution of antipoverty funds. This incident escalated when the group refused to leave and defied several law enforcement officers, including the Secret Service. All four of the protesters from the Syracuse People's War Council were arrested and jailed in Fredericksburg. Bitter over the incident, the protesters called a press conference and railed against the "manhandling" of protestor Stanley Gluck. An official apology was issued from White House aide Jacob Jacobsen, and Secret Service agents escorted the protesters to San Antonio to catch a plane back to New York.⁷²

In 1965, a larger, more peaceful group of nearly a hundred local protesters held a Christmas vigil near the ranch hoping to influence the Johnson Administration to initiate a peace conference in Vietnam. The demonstrators made no effort to gain entrance to the property or to secure an audience with the president, and the demonstration ended without incident, yet the protest prompted an increase in Secret Service personnel at the Texas White House. In

anticipation of another anti-Vietnam protest on Ranch Road 1, White House aides requested that 22 agents be assigned to the ranch.⁷³ The increase of Secret Service activity at the Texas White House did not go unnoticed by many Hill Country residents. Since the Secret Service closed Ranch Road 1 while President Johnson was in residence, many businesses claimed that security measures crippled the area's tourism. Mr. Cline, owner of a service station and tourist shop outside of Stonewall, stated his sales plummeted during such times. In a 1964 article for the *New York Times*, Cline reported that "the day before they closed the road, I had \$81 (in sales)," and "the day after I did \$2.15—that's quite a drop." Others in the area did not fare even that well. Robert Coderli, the owner of the Little Red Barn, claimed that after the loop road was closed, he "didn't have any business."⁷⁴

Those not affected economically by Secret Service activity occasionally felt socially ostracized. Lela Martin, a long time neighbor and friend of the Johnsons, tried to extend her congratulatory salutations to the president after his re-election in 1964. Trying to enter the ranch's gate, Mrs. Martin was turned away by Secret Service agents. Distraught over the incident, she wrote a letter to President Johnson expressing her concerns about the increased security measures in the Hill Country. She writes:

It will be necessary for me to contact some one of your local employees for one thing or another...Whatever it might be I am sure should not be neglected by the interference of some individual who knows nothing of farm and ranch life and its many problems. Please ...issue me a passport so that we country folks can go from one neighbor's house to another without too much delay. If things get any worse, we may need an Act of Congress to get out of our yard.⁷⁵

Mounting resentment of neighbors toward heightened security activity was prevalent throughout the 1960s and 1970s. By creating a Texas White House, President Johnson inadvertently cultivated bitter sentiments among his Hill Country neighbors who were the unintended targets of escalating security concerns.

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SECTION IV: SUMMARY

A. Statement of Significance

The Secret Service Command Post is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing element of the LBJ National Historical Park nomination. It is the researchers' opinion that the criteria used in making that assessment can serve as a guide for current considerations of historical significance, which can in turn frame the development of an interpretive plan. The site's association with President Johnson, his family, and the era of his presidency make it capable of presenting a substantial and unique addition to the park's narrative. Likewise, the command post, in combination with further research, has the potential to yield meaningful information regarding Secret Service operations on the Johnson Ranch, as well as the agents' relationship with President Johnson. These characteristics qualify the Secret Service command post for inclusion in the National Register through criteria A, B, and D.

Though it served as a safe haven for the president from the pressures of Washington, the Johnson Ranch experienced its share of the tumult of the 1960s. Protesters grew more common through Johnson's presidency, and it was the responsibility of the Secret Service to mitigate such demonstrations onsite. In addition to protecting President Johnson, Secret Service agents were responsible for securing the protection of visitors to the ranch, from White House staff to foreign heads of state. Operating out of the command post, the Secret Service agents witnessed significant moments in our national history. This association meets criterion A of the National Register guidelines.

The Secret Service command post building provides a basis for expanding upon the story of the Texas White House through the experiences of the agents stationed there. Exploring

Johnson's relationship with his protective detail will allow park interpreters the opportunity to present yet another facet of the president's history and personality. The deep connection between the Secret Service agents, their status at the ranch, and their association with the president, all of which can be interpreted through the command post, means the structure also meets criterion B of the National Register guidelines.

By its physical presence on the ranch, the Secret Service Command Post affords the possibility of gathering further information about the agency and the president. In combination with further research, the building provides the basis for augmenting the story of the ranch to include a more specific focus on the Secret Service. It also offers a unique opportunity to look into the experience of the agents at the ranch through their actual headquarters. This opportunity for further information meets criterion D of the National Register guidelines.

With some preservation, the Secret Service command post will retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as called for in the National Register criteria for evaluation. It will thus be able to illustrate the experience of the Secret Service agents on the ranch with a greater degree of immediacy and depth.

B. Analysis

In addition to its physical value as a contributing element within the broad story of Lyndon Johnson's Texas White House, the Secret Service Command Post is also a unique structure in the context of presidential sites operated by the National Park Service. With multiple layers of history that relate to presidential security, Johnson family history, and the built environment of the Texas Hill Country, it has the potential to greatly enhance the visitor experience at LBJ National Historical Park. The following items reflect the research teams' sense

of the salient points of the research associated with this project. The general findings are that the Secret Service Command Post:

- Serves as an integral component of the park, both in terms of its physical presence and of its historical value to the broader interpretation of the site;
- Allows visitors to learn more about the role of the Secret Service;
- Provides a historical backdrop for interpreting the evolving nature of presidential security measures through the years, from 1865 to the present.
- Aids in an understanding of political eras, especially the turbulent period of the 1960s;
- Contributes to a sense of the impact a presidential home or retreat can have on the surrounding community;
- Allows for the interpretation of the personal side of the Secret Service story, with particular emphasis on how agents interacted with the Johnson family;
- Contributes to a better understanding of the Johnson presidency and of the way President Johnson utilized his heritage to foster greater communication and to influence political change;
- Provides a venue for discussing the human side of the president;
- Contributes to a better understanding of the role technology of the era played in presidential security in general and how President Johnson in particular relied on its communication value for his own objectives;
- Serves as a focal point for a focused, site-based oral history project about presidential security measures in the 1960s and 1970s; and,

- Serves as a unique artifact for interpreting the Hill Country setting through its vernacular architecture and the essential rural practice of recycling or repurposing known simply as “making do.”

Overall, the analysis shows the interpretive potential of the Secret Service Command Post is unique, dynamic, multi-layered, and invaluable. The site is therefore worthy of preservation, but also of continuing efforts to document additional history that will aid in its future interpretation.

C. Recommendations for Further Study

In the course of the work associated with this project, researchers conducted site visits and extensive reviews of historic photographs, oral histories, and archival materials. In the course of their investigations, they identified several key gaps that might be addressed in the future. These fall outside the immediate scope of work related to the command post project, but they may well serve to enhance the story of the structure and its historical relevance, not only as part of the ranch and Lyndon Johnson’s presidency but also in the larger contexts of remote White Houses and the related evolution of Secret Service presidential details.

- **REMOTE WHITE HOUSES STUDY:** Prior to President Johnson’s terms in office, some presidents spent time away from the official residence in a variety of settings, such as President Truman’s Little White House in Key West, Florida. Several presidents had more than one retreat, such as the Kennedy compound in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, and the family home in Palm Beach, Florida. Whether at a primary residence or at vacation homes, presidents undoubtedly carried out at least minimal work, if not more important official business, while there, and they and their families had to be under protection by the Secret Service. An expanded study of these

“alternate White Houses” would provide an important context for interpreting not only the execution of presidential duties while away from the office, but also the role and duties of the Secret Service when presidents were on vacation.

- **SECRET SERVICE COMMAND POST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT:** Many oral histories are available regarding President Johnson’s administration, and more were conducted for the specific purpose of this focused study of the command post at the ranch. However, there are still a number of groups that have yet to be contacted for possible interviews regarding the structure. Many people came in contact with the ranch and the president and would possibly have more information to share. Neighbors, family, and ranch employees might have historical information regarding the command post building, from the time of its relocation to the ranch on through the senatorial and vice-presidential years. Secret service agents who served at the ranch prior to and during the transition following the assassination of President Kennedy, and technical specialists, such as those who installed security and communications, could be interviewed about the conversion of the house from employee residence to Secret Service Command Post. Finally, many visitors, from the familiar to the noteworthy, were guests at the ranch, along with accompanying personnel such as aides, transportation people, and reporters. Even if some of these have been interviewed already, chances are that the subject of the command post was not one of the subjects discussed.
- **ENHANCED PHOTODOCUMENTATION:** Photos of the structure from at least the utilization period of the Secret Service are available, but the house’s history stretches back beyond its current location at the ranch, and photos of the house at

prior locations or even of the locations after its removal could be available to give greater depth to the story of the structure itself.

- **POST-ADMINISTRATION STUDY:** We also recommend a more in-depth study of the Secret Service Command Post, from the years 1973 to the present. A look at how the former First Lady used security, as well as the impact the additional agents had on the community, might be of interest. A contrast between the use of the Secret Service during President Johnson's administration and post-administrative years might also be insightful.
- **HISTORICAL RECORDS:** We encourage pursuing declassification of pertinent documents. A systematic review of the records from President Johnson's administration could reveal documents that can now be declassified and yield more research opportunity. Opening these records would be helpful to further investigations into the technological and security uses of the command post.
- **ARCHEOLOGY:** Research on the Secret Service Command Post might also benefit from a complete archeological study of the original site and the land where it sits today. Studies conducted at the initial construction site may offer more insight into the construction of the building and lead to more information about its original use. Archeological studies of the site at the ranch will better detail the evolution of the site and perhaps some of the uses of the land where the command post now sits.
- **PRESERVATION STANDARDS:** We recommend that any future work on the command post follow the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction guidelines as noted in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. This will provide the best advice on how to restore and protect

the historic property. It is our understanding that a report has already been filed with the Texas Historical Commission.

In addition, the Park might consider submitting a formal drawing of the floor plan and façade, both before and after the building's use as a Command Post, to the Historic American Buildings

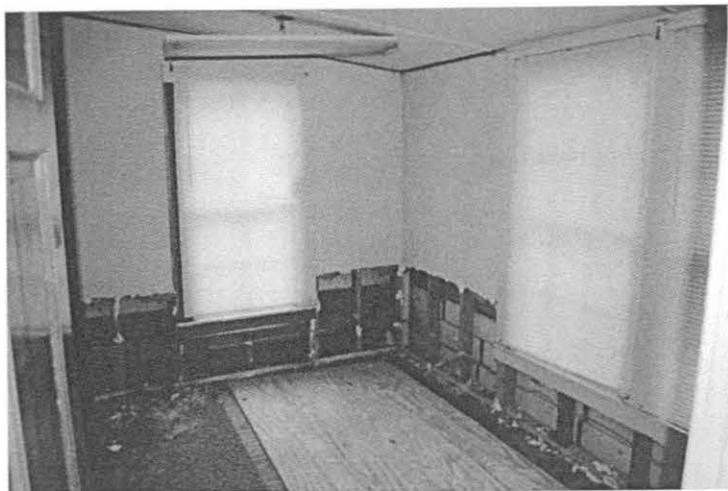


Figure 10. View of current state of interior deterioration in the Command Post.

Survey (HABS) Collections. A set of measure drawings and

photographs might accompany the written historical information and create a record to be stored in the Library of Congress for service and preservation. The American Institute of Architects often cooperates with the National Park Service and can serve as advisors.

- **HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY PROJECT:** We also recommend that the National Park Service consider funding a formal study of the building, both before its use as a command post and after, in association with the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). A set of measured drawings and large format photographs would accompany a detailed history of the structure, thus creating a unique and significant record to be preserved in the Library of Congress. The American Institute of Architects often cooperates with the National Park Service on such projects and might therefore serve as advisors. The Secret Service Command Post at the Texas White House of the LBJ Ranch has a dynamic history. Further

study into the repurposing of this building and the alterations of its uses throughout the years may yield more information, and enhance the research value and interpretation of the site.

D. Conclusion

The Secret Service Command Post at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is a unique structure within the setting of a presidential site. While small in comparison to other buildings within the expansive ranch complex near Johnson City, it nevertheless affords significant opportunities to convey far-reaching stories to park visitors. A multi-layered approach to interpretation could provide a behind-the-scenes understanding of the role the Secret Service played in protecting presidents during the site's period of historical significance, but it could also serve as a backdrop for stories that relate to the president's daily work, the agency's relationship to the family, and the personal side of protective details. It is a focal point for making the various connections between the Texas Hill Country and the Washington White House that were integral elements of the story of the presidency during Johnson's term of office.

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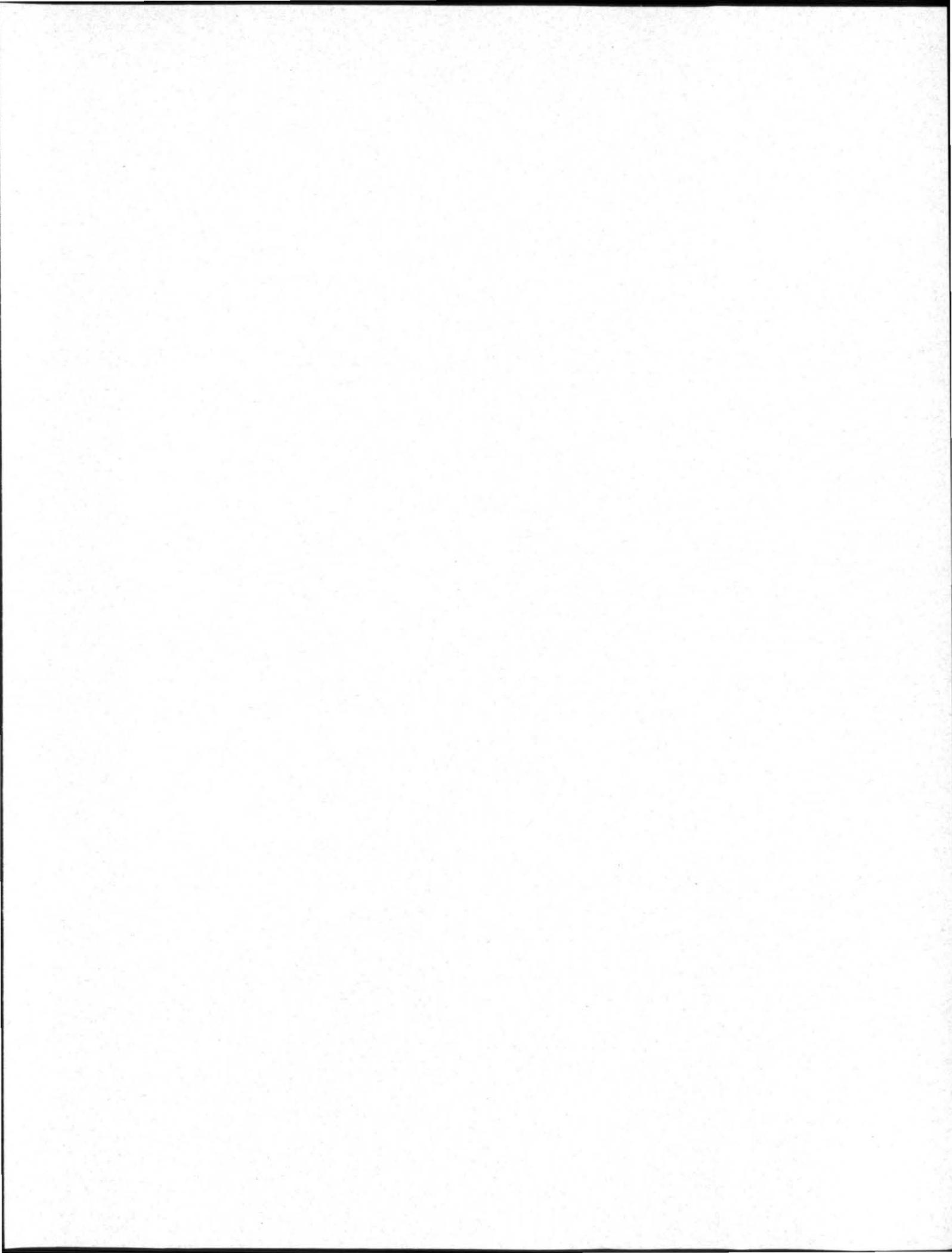
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