

INTERVIEW I

DATE: July 23, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: MRS. TOMMY WURTSBAUGH GLICK (with occasional comments from her sister, Mrs. T. J. Taylor, Jr.)

INTERVIEWER: DAVID McCOMB

PLACE: Mrs. Glick's home in Jefferson, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

Mc: To straighten out the family connection, you are the sister of Mrs. Tommy Taylor, Jr. And were you raised here in Jefferson?

G: Yes, I was.

Mc: And you went to high school here.

G: Went to high school here, yes.

Mc: And did you marry here too, then?

G: No. I married in New York.

Mc: Okay. How did you get to New York?

G: Well, the war had a great deal to do with that. That's how my path and my husband's path crossed. During the war I was in the Red Cross, and he was a surgeon in the Army.

Mc: Oh. And so you went to New York with your work and met him and married there?

G: Well, while I was working I met him. Then the war was over just about that time, and I went to New York and was married there.

Mc: And you lived then since then in the New York area?

G: That's right.

Mc: Didn't you say Long Island?

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G: Long Island. Great Neck, Long Island.

Mc: And your husband still practices there?

G: Yes. He's an orthopedic surgeon there in Great Neck.

Mc: And when did you meet Lady Bird Johnson?

G: That would be hard to say, because I've known Lady Bird for so many years, or known of her as a child even perhaps before we met. Her family was so well known and then early in my life, her family became part of our family when my sister married her brother. We used to spend a great deal of time, many happy days in fact, down at the Brick House in Karnack. I guess my brother-in-law Tommy Taylor and his father, Mr. Boss, were two of the most important men, next to my father, in my life. What a rare experience to know both of them.

Mc: Just out of curiosity, why did they call Tommy Taylor's father Mr. Boss?

G: Well Tommy Taylor called him "the Boss." And when Tommy Taylor and my sister Sarah started going together, Mr. Boss didn't like to be called Mr. Taylor. He used to say, "You call me Mr. Boss." Ever since I was a teenager I didn't really know what to call Mr. Boss, and it just developed into Mr. Boss. I think he enjoyed that. Then my niece Susan Taylor, when she began to talk, began to call him Mr. Boss, too. And it seemed to be just the right name for him.

Mc: What kind of man was he?

G: That's hard to put that into just a few words. I think he

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was one of the most extraordinary men I ever met -- one of the gentlest, the kindest. And no doubt he was tremendously talented in business and a very intelligent clever man. But I think more than that he was a man probably who lived, well -- at a deeper level than most human beings. I think he had a feeling for people. I know as a child I loved him. I mean I loved to go down there. I think of him as laughing and enjoying the people around him -- the children. We had many happy occasions down at the Brick House: Thanksgivings. When I'd come home from school later on, from college, when I was at the University of Texas, we'd have Christmas dinner down at the Brick House. It was a very gay happy time, and he was just the center of it all. I think anywhere, anyplace Mr. Boss would have been a very special sort of human being.

Mc: Were Lady Bird and Mr. Johnson often there also?

G: Not while I was there. I know they came and visited, but I don't recall ever being at the Brick House at the same time that Lady Bird and Lyndon were there. I was off at school. But I knew that they were there at different times, knew that they had been there and so forth -- at least that Lady Bird had.

Mc: Do you recall when you first met Lyndon Johnson?

G: Let's see. I'm not exactly sure. I don't think it was here. I think perhaps it was in Washington when I was there. Oh, I think I met Lyndon probably for the first time when I was in Washington with Red Cross. I was at St. Elizabeth's Hospital there with the

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American Red Cross for a certain period. You know you moved around with Red Cross. I was a psychiatric social worker and attached to different Army hospitals. We'd be six months in one place, and eight months in another. I was in Washington for a while and had dinner with Lady Bird, and I believe that was the first time I met Lyndon. I'm not exactly sure.

Mc: At what point in time would that be? In what year?

G: That would have been in 1945, probably.

Mc: Do you remember what Lyndon Johnson was like then?

G: Yes, I do. I've thought, often been aware when . . . . Not that I've been around Lyndon a great deal, I've just met him sort of casually, maybe two or three times in Washington. But he always impressed me as a tremendously strong person, almost like . . . . I remember thinking once when we were visiting them when they lived in their house on -- oh, the brick house where Aunt Effie lived with them. What street was that on?

T: Oh, right across from J. Edgar Hoover. It had a number.

G: Well, it was their home in Washington for the longest period of time when he was senator. And I remember thinking after we were there one evening for cocktails and Diana -- Lady Bird's niece -- who's a very good friend of mine; I feel very close to Diana, always have. Diana was there, and my husband and my sister Clem Wurtsbaugh Sain and her husband Colonel Sain.

Mc: How do you spell that last name?

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G: S-A-I-N. And I remember Lyndon came home. We were all seated there in the living room. When he walked in the dog Little Beagle was sitting in his chair. At the sound of Lyndon's footsteps the dog just bounced out of the chair. I had the impression that the dog even stood aside so Lyndon could have his chair. No one else had sat in that chair before his arrival except Little Beagle. It was sort of reserved. But I remember when he came in everything was very pleasant, and we were all talking about Jefferson and Karnack and old times. But I remember thinking -- as I recall -- or rather feeling when Lyndon walked into the room, it was almost as if a force had come into the room. I mean his personality. I hadn't seen him for a number of years. I remember thinking that it was almost as if a force had come into the room. Everybody sort of became more alert and sharpened up, you know. But it was quite an interesting evening and a very pleasant one.

Mc: On occasions like that, what did he talk about? Did he talk about politics, or did he talk about old family times? I think you mentioned he talked about Jefferson.

G: Well, before he came we had been talking about Jefferson and Karnack. It's been so many years ago I'm not exactly sure just what was said specifically. I remember Mary Margaret was with Lyndon, and she had taken a tumble down the Capitol steps. My husband who is an orthopedist administered some sort of emergency aid at the time, but apparently it wasn't anything serious.

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It was a very pleasant evening. Lady Bird I remember looked quite stunning. She had on a long red taffeta hostess gown. I remember thinking how extremely well groomed she was at home or out of home or under any circumstances. And I remember wondering just how would one manage to be so well groomed in all situations.

Mc: Did you ever have another opportunity to meet him in Washington?

G: Let's see. We were at the White House -- the children and I and Diana's children. We just saw him briefly when we visited Lady Bird there for tea. And of course he was surrounded with reporters.

Mc: This was when he was president?

G: Yes. And I also saw him when Tommy Taylor died. I remember he and Cecil . . . . Was it Cecil who drove Lyndon? You probably remember.

T: No, it was Winston.

G: Winston, that's right. Winston met Lyndon at the airport and drove him to Jefferson to the funeral.\* They were late, and I saw them. I was sitting at the end of the row and got up to meet them at the door of the funeral home, the side door. I remember Lyndon was hurried. They'd been rushing and I guess under a lot of pressure. The funeral service had already started and I remember his saying, "Well, I thought there were going to be two funerals today because Winston got here in no time." Something like this. He came in and was, I gathered, under a lot of pressure and very busy.

\* On reflection I believe Cecil Jones drove Lyndon, who arrived late, to the funeral service. Cecil Jones worked for Mr. Boss and at one time lived at the Brick House in Karnack.

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Mc: This was when he was Vice President?

G: Yes. I remember my sister Clem got up with me, and we went out into the little side hallway. He spoke with her and then went and sat down by Lady Bird.

T: This was my husband's funeral.

Mc: Yes. Did Mr. Johnson say anything at the funeral?

G: No.

Mc: Were you also there when Mrs. Taylor and Tommy Taylor were married?

G: Yes.

Mc: Were the Johnsons there also?

G: No.

Mc: They were not there?

G: No.

Mc: But the Boss was there?

G: Yes. Mr. Boss was there, and Ruth his wife.

Mc: Did you ever have occasion to go visit the Johnsons at the LBJ Ranch?

G: No, never got down there. Years ago Lady Bird asked us to come down, but my husband was terribly busy. We just never were able to do it.

Mc: Did you have occasion to meet the Johnsons any other time? Did you happen to see them, for example, after he had a heart attack? That was in 1955.

G: Yes. Well, the evening I mentioned when we were there for

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cocktails at their home, I think that was after his heart attack. And I had lunch with Lady Bird in Washington after his heart attack. I remember we were in the Senator's dining room. Lady Bird has always seemed so charming, and, well, everything was efficient and well organized. But I remember thinking during lunch -- although it was very pleasant -- I felt she must have been worried. I don't know, it was not too long after his heart attack. I remember asking Lady Bird then how Lyndon was, and she said, "He's doing very well, but I do wish he would take better care of himself." And I had the feeling that she would have liked for him to have gotten out of politics then. Now, again she didn't say that. I may have been reading my own thoughts into it. But I came away with the feeling that she would have very much liked for him to retire.

Mc: Did Mrs. Johnson, Lady Bird, enjoy politics, do you think?

G: Well, I wouldn't be able to say. I couldn't judge that because I just couldn't say what her feelings were.

Mc: What kind of person is Lady Bird Johnson? Is she a fine hostess? Is she talented?

G: I think that's well established. But from my own standpoint I guess when I speak about Lady Bird, not that I've been around her a great deal, she's always been someone whom you've heard about from family, you've thought about, and you've known as a very fine, special person. I think she is an extremely well motivated person towards everybody, especially those whom she's had responsibility for. That's been my



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impression. Of course, I grew up as a child, you know, hearing stories about Lady Bird. And I took piano lessons from Mrs. Walter Dolan, in whose home Aunt Effie lived for many years. So I've heard stories about Lady Bird. I just grew up with the feeling that she was a very special wonderful person. Well, [through] my relationship with Tommy Taylor and knowing how much he loved his sister and thought of her, and then when I met her on certain occasions, I guess the feeling I had already sort of been conditioned to certainly was confirmed by my meeting her.

Mc: Did you ever hear the story about how she got her nickname Lady Bird?

G: Yes. From her nurse.

Mc: That's a true story?

G: Well, I'd always heard that.

T: I heard two stories. Mr. Glen Comb [?] told one and the nurse.

G: Well, what was the other story?

T: Mr. Glen Comb [?] you don't remember him. I do. But they both looked at her, and whichever one it was said, "She's just so pretty she looks like a little lady bird."

Mc: I also asked her if Lady Bird had ever said anything about her nickname, whether she liked it or not.

G: I've never heard her say.

Mc: She didn't know. Mrs. Taylor didn't know. You've never heard either?

T: No, I've never heard but I always said it stands to

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reason since they've carried the LBJ through for the children that she maintained the name for the initials probably.

G: I think the name Lady Bird, particularly to northern ears or eastern ears -- having lived up in New York and the New York area so many years -- sounds strange. People, some people I know, perhaps thought that was a little saccharine or strange, or the name sort of rang strangely for northern ears. But I think it's very much a southern type name. I think you'd have to be able to appreciate southern charm or the wit that's native to this part of the country, especially East Texas and Louisiana. I think it's more or less a typical name or nickname. They don't use nicknames in New York to the extent that we do down here. I know when I've heard people say, "Well, that's a strange name. How on earth they can call a child Lady Bird." I've said, "Well, it's very charming. If you've grown up in that area it would have meant an entirely different thing to you."

Mc: Have you or your husband had any political connections with the Johnsons such as helping the campaign or consulting as an adviser on any committees or anything like that?

G: No.

Mc: It's been a family relationship?

G: I would say that as friends we always voted for Lyndon, and we would have voted for Lady Bird, too. I surely would have, and, I'm sure my husband would have, too, if she had ever run for office.

Mc: I've always read that Lady Bird was a big aid to her husband and

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helped him in his political career. Was that true from your observation?

G: I think Lady Bird, no matter whom she was married to, would be an aid. I think this is the sort of person she is. She's extremely intelligent and capable. All of these things are already well established. I think she'd do a good job or be a great help to anybody she was associated with or cared about. I think this is the sort of person she is.

Mc: Do you think that it's made any difference in your life having had this connection with Lyndon Johnson?

G: I don't think I've had much of a connection with Lyndon. I think my connection, what it has been, has been with Lady Bird. It's been just at fleeting times.

Mc: But the path of your life has not been diverted then, or changed?

G: No, I don't think so. But it's been a very delightful friendship for me the few times I've been around Lady Bird, and very warm. From that standpoint it's been a very lovely association each time I've seen her. And of course it's been quite an advantage when we were in Washington to have gone to the White House and to have seen it from a little more personal, intimate standpoint. The children -- my son John and my daughter Betsy -- are close friends of Diana's children, Alex and Lisa. We were all at the White House and swam and had tea with Lady Bird.

T: In the family quarters.

G: I believe this was in the Daniel Webster -- the Green Room. Is that

the Daniel Webster Room?

T: I forget.

G: It was very delightful. Lady Bird told them certain things about the furniture and the history connected with certain pieces, and I think it was quite meaningful. I don't think the children will ever forget it. Of course, it was lots of fun to swim in the pool. Lady Bird is very charming. She was very busy and had another appointment. We had tea with her and then swam, and I don't think any of the four children will ever forget it. But those times we've been there -- and then we were there another time for a birthday party for Lisa -- I think this was very meaningful to the children. It was to me also. And again, it was lots of fun. And besides which -- just being in that House you just feel the past history of it while you are there. You couldn't help thinking about all the other people who had been there before you. I think the children felt this same thing.

Mc: Well, is there any other connection that you've had with the Johnsons that I should ask you about that I don't know about?

G: I remember when Lynda and Luci were little and used to come here to visit. And I remember down at Tommy Taylor's camp on the lake, on Caddo Lake. By the way, have you seen Caddo Lake?

Mc: Oh, I just saw a little bit of it last night.

T: He had dinner at your place last night.

G: Oh at Mrs. Bruce's? Lake View Lodge?

Mc: Well, this was at Shady Glade.

G: Oh, now that was a different place. Mrs. Bruce has the best fish

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dinners on Caddo Lake.

Mc: What's the name of it?

G: Lake View Lodge. She's a wonderful woman. Well, she's up in her seventies. It's a most unpretentious place, pretty primitive. But she has wonderful dinners, and she's quite a rare character. She runs the place and goes deer hunting, up in her seventies! But Caddo is one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen in my life when the water lilies are in bloom, acres of lime yellow water lilies and green pads. It's lovelier than a Cezanne painting I think. I go down there and sketch oftentimes -- row around.

Mc: And the Johnsons would go down there on their vacations?

G: Well, I don't know.

T: Now she loved it. Now if he ever went, I do not know. Certainly not with us. But Lady Bird has gone many times with Tommy Taylor.

G: But what I was saying before I got sidetracked on Caddo. I remember when I was home from college and Tommy Taylor and Sister always had big barbecues down there, and half the people in Jefferson would be there. Mr. Boss and Granny Ruth were with us, and we had pallets spread out on the screened porches after the barbecue. Oh, there were lots of people there and quite a few cabins. I remember Lynda was just a little girl, and I was home on vacation. I remember hearing sniffles during the night. Mr. Boss, and Granny Ruth and I, Sister, and Tommy Taylor and Lynda were out on one of the screened porches. I heard sniffles, and I heard my sister talking to Lynda Bird.

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She was homesick. She missed her mother. And I remember hearing my sister petting her, and then Mr. Boss said something reassuring to her. But at that time Lady Bird was traveling with Lyndon, and, I don't know, I guess in a campaign. I remember my sister giving aid and comfort and hearing the sniffles, and I thought, "Oh, does she miss her mother!" She was just a little thing. But, as I recall, daybreak came and she was out and playing again. But I knew that she missed her mother very much at that time.

Lady Bird sometimes came here and stayed with my sister or with Mr. Boss.

Mc: Do you recall any other events in connection with the Johnsons?

G: Well, I don't know any.

T: Now I remember you went to a luncheon in New York shortly after they became president. I never shall forget how you worried about that.

G: Yes. I remember writing you about that, and you sent the letter on to Uncle Tony.

T: They came to scoff, but they stood up and applauded.

G: Yes, well, you know how New York audiences are.

T: There's just been so much . . . Now what was that?

G: And you sent that letter on to Uncle Tony, I believe. I was so proud of Lady Bird. But this was a Democratic luncheon, and Anna Rosenberg Hoffman spoke.

T: Mrs. Roosevelt?

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G: No, Mrs. Roosevelt was dead then. But Lady Bird was a speaker, Adlai Stevenson, Margaret Truman was there, and some of the Roosevelt men. Let's see, was James or John there? There was a reception for certain people before this meeting began. It was a Democratic luncheon and enormous. Oh, there were thousands of people in the New York Hilton Hotel. Adlai Stevenson and Mrs. Rosenberg were in the receiving line with Lady Bird and I remember meeting quite a few interesting people before the luncheon began and the talks later. Lady Bird spoke, Adlai Stevenson did, and Mrs. Rosenberg. A southern accent does grate on northern ears. There's no question about it --

T: I sound just like Donald Duck.

G: -- and I remember feeling a sense of tension when Lady Bird got up to speak. Mrs. Rosenberg had spoken very beautifully and said a few very pertinent things. Then, of course, Adlai Stevenson was charming, and needless to say spoke beautifully also. And then when Lady Bird spoke, I remember feeling a sense of tension. I was thinking about her southern accent, and it really came over as a southern accent. But as she spoke the audience, instead of, you know, sitting back with this feeling that so many New York audiences have. You feel it in plays at the theatre, they sit back and the feeling is, "All right, now show me."

Mc: Anything.

G: And I don't think any audience in the world is as much like this, as critical

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as a New York audience. But as she spoke I believe the people there really forgot her southern accent and the difference between them and her. They were with her. She was a third through her speech, or her talk really, when they were really with her. I think her personality, her character as a woman, as a person -- came right across. And I think many people that came to criticize or came just to see, really were actually quite taken with her.

Mc: Do you remember what she said? What was her topic?

G: Now that's a good question.

Mc: You were obviously impressed with her captivating the audience.

G: I remember she quoted the classics at one point in her speech.

I have a general impression of her talk as relating to doing a job and doing it well, and what this means under difficult circumstances. I mean this is a general feeling that I have now of what she said. Specifically, I don't remember. But what she said in this context--I remember she used an illustration from the classics to reaffirm what she was saying, and I thought she wove it in beautifully. I remember thinking, "Now, did Lady Bird write this? Did Liz Carpenter?" And I thought, "This is too much like Lady Bird. I think Lady Bird really wrote this herself."

Mc: Yes.

G: But she had that audience with her by the time her talk was finished. And as my sister said -- those who came to scoff did not do so. They applauded.

Mc: Did you happen to see her after the speech?



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G: No.

Mc: Or did you ever happen to call her about this?

G: No, I didn't get a chance then, because after the luncheon was over she was driven right back to Washington. But I spoke with her before, you know, at the small reception and got to chat with her for just a moment. Of course there were just scads and scads of the press there and lots of other people, and a great many notables. So it was very exciting to meet such interesting people. It was quite a special event for me and a privilege. I remember telling her when I went through the receiving line how happy I was to be there. Oh, I remember she said something. She said, "Oh, I'm so nervous!" So I said, "Well, you certainly don't show it." And she said, "Oh, thank goodness!" This was just before things began.

Mc: Have you had occasion to see her or Mr. Johnson since they left the presidency, that is, recently?

G: No, I don't believe so. I've seen Lady Bird on television.

Mc: I've also noticed down here in the Excelsior House there is a Lady Bird Room.

G: Yes.

Mc: Did either one of you happen to be here when that was dedicated?

G: I wasn't. I was hostess in the Lady Bird Room last year at the pilgrimage, but I wasn't here at the time it was dedicated. But you and Susan were here, and was Lyndon here at that time?

T: No, I think not. He was here about--she's been here a couple of

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times since, but he was here.. Was it last fall, or two years this fall? His grandfather was a Baptist minister, and he thought. . . . Oh, was the church down in Minden, Louisiana, or Houma, Louisiana?

G: Somewhere around there. I remember reading about it in the papers here.

T: I had gone to the hundred years' dedication of that church, you know. His grandpa, the first Lyndon Baines Johnson, established the church. They came through here, and he was here then. Now she's been here once or twice since then, and that's the last time I remember him.

G: I hope you have seen or plan to see Uncle Tony, because he's one of the rarest people I've ever known in my life, really fascinating. Have you seen him?

Mc: I interviewed him about a year ago in Santa Fe. He's a fine man.

G: Yes, isn't he delightful?

T: They were in touch more with the President, the presidency, than anybody for this reason: they both speak Spanish fluently, you see. It was a great help with the Texas-Mexican relation. [They] used him as an interpreter at fiestas and things, you know.

Mc: Is there anything else you want to put on this that comes to mind?

T: Can you think of anything else? I think we've covered the waterfront.

G: No, I can't. Offhand I can't think of anything. Except I hope while you're here you get to see Caddo Lake, because that's one of the most beautiful spots on this earth.

Mc: Well, then, let me thank you for your time.

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G: Well, you're more than welcome. It's been a real pleasure meeting you. I'm sorry you had to take your shoes off.

(Interruption)

M: You were talking about visiting you at Tulane?

G: Yes. As I was saying, I went to Tulane after the University of Texas. I think one of the high spots of the two years I was there was when Mr. Boss and Granny Ruth and Tommy Taylor and Sister--

T: No, Tommy Taylor was not there. He stayed home with the baby.

G: Oh, somehow I have an image of Tommy Taylor being there.

T: No. . .

G: Well, nevertheless, Uncle Tony and Matianna came, and they stayed at the Roosevelt Hotel. I would go down from school to visit them and have dinner and go out in the evenings. And of course we took in the French Quarter. And Mr. Boss, I think he enjoyed himself more than anyone. I remember when I first went down to meet them at the hotel after they arrived. I saw this man with a serape, very tall man, very dignified. I got a fleeting glance of him as I walked in the lobby -- a man with a sombrero and a serape across his shoulder and a business suit on. I took a second look, and I thought, "Oh, good grief! That's Uncle Tony! And he's attired like that." And then came Matianna looking like a model right after him. But Uncle Tony always cut quite a figure, no matter where. He was always such fun. We went to this one particular night club, the name of which I forget.

T: It was out on the lake.

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G: Out on Lake Pontchartrain, that's right. We stayed there so long --

T: And it was during the war.

G: -- and we had such a good time that the hours slipped away, and we couldn't get a cab back to town. There was an oyster truck going in with barrels of oysters and clams. In fact, there were two or three trucks, and we had to divide because there was not room for the whole group in one truck. And I remember Mr. Boss and Granny Ruth and I sitting on these kegs and riding into town. But I remember Mr. Boss laughing, and how much he enjoyed himself.

T: Now, this was three or four o'clock in the morning, riding about fifteen or twenty miles into town.

G: Mr. Boss, of all of us I think, could have still kept going. He was quite extraordinary. The rest of us had caved in by that time.

M: Well, thank you for that story.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview 1]

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