

INTERVIEW I

DATE: January 22, 1975

INTERVIEWEE: DORRIS POWELL (MRS. HUGH POWELL)

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: LBJ Library, Austin, Texas

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G: All right, Mrs. Powell, we're recording.

P: I had the opportunity of meeting her because my parents lived in the house where Mr. Taylor later moved, and that's the house in which Lady Bird was born. At the time that we first met Miss Minnie, as we called her--her name was Minnie Lee Pattillo, and all their friends and my mother called her Minnie and I called her Miss Minnie--she had been in a hospital. She wasn't a well woman at all, and she had been in Battle Creek, Michigan. I think now that what troubled her most, her health problem, was she had migraine headaches--as we think back now, but at that time I really didn't know. I was only eight years old. But I remember her bandaging or tying a scarf tightly around her head and having these terrible headaches. She came from Battle Creek, and the two boys were in Alabama with Mr. Taylor's sister, Miss Ida, Mrs. Howard. Miss Minnie came home to Karnack, and Mr. Taylor asked if she could stay at our house, because he was boarding with one of his clerks down in Karnack. Now the Brick House, as you may or may not know, is some three or four miles from the little town of Karnack. We were living at the Brick House, my two small brothers and I. My oldest brother was only five years old, and my baby brother, I suppose, must have been hardly a year old.

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So Miss Minnie came. Mr. Taylor met her and brought her there, and I loved her on first sight. The first thing she did that pleased me tremendously, she asked me to brush her hair. Well, I thought it was great. I loved to play with hair, you know, doll hair. I thought it was just marvelous that she would ask me to brush her hair. She was so kind to me. They had the upstairs bedrooms--my parents--and we children lived downstairs, but there were three bedrooms and a large bathroom upstairs. But he would bring her down the stairs, carry her in his arms down the stairs and up the stairs because somehow they seemed to think that whether it was a spinal trouble or what, it tied in with the headache, you know.

G: Was this before her fall?

P: This was before her fall. Actually, the dog ran under her feet and caused her to fall, the collie dog. We were not living there at the time.

So we lived there. The boys were in school, and it was the middle of the school term. I was in school in the little Fern School in the grove in front of Dr. and Mrs. Baldwin's home. My little five-year-old brother was going to school with me because he cried every morning when I left, and the teacher said let him come along. But that was before Lady Bird's brothers came home, and it was my first memory of Miss Minnie. Later, at the end of the school term when the boys came home from Alabama, my family moved back to Karnack. Then Mother and Mrs. Taylor had become great friends. It was some years later or so that Lady Bird was born--I really don't know; I don't know the dates, and I can't be sure about that. But I remember my mother's going out there to see Miss Minnie when Lady Bird was born, and the talk about it, and how thrilled I was.

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There is a gap there, because I went to Marshall High School. I was away from home a good bit in the summer visiting relatives in Marshall, and I even spent one summer in New Orleans with Mother's brother and uncle. I don't remember too much about Miss Minnie in there.

I picked up again when Lady Bird was a little thing. When Miss Minnie died, I was in college. I came home, and I went to the funeral and was heartbroken, because during this time, from time to time, she would give me books to read. She read them to see that it was the kind of literature that I should read. I remember some of those books. Eleanor Meade wrote some books like *Girls of the True Blue*. I remember *Girl of the Limberlost*. Saints above, when I was fourteen or fifteen years old, she gave me *Saint Elmo*; I read it and cried. I read it through three times, I think. Oh, it was great! But Miss Minnie introduced me to *Saint Elmo* and romance in literature. She was a very booky person; she had quite a library. She liked good music. She had some marvelous records--she liked operas--and I remember Enrico Caruso's records, those Red Seal records as we called them. I don't know what became of them. I wish I knew, but they were marvelous.

G: I understand she would attend the operas in Chicago every season.

P: No, if she did, I never knew anything of that. I don't think she was ever quite able after she came home and Lady Bird was born. You see, I think Lady Bird was about four-and-a-half years old when she passed away. I believe that she did not go to Chicago during that time, nor did she go back to the hospital. I remember visiting out there before Lady Bird was born when we lived in Karnack and she was at the Brick House. I remember

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Mother's driving out in the buggy. Mother had a rubber-tire buggy and a buggy horse, and we traveled to and from and visited. Miss Minnie came to our house on occasion once or twice, but it was so long ago. I don't know the dates.

G: What did she look like in appearance?

P: Oh! She looked more like Luci--cameo face, blue eyes, light hair. Luci's is unnaturally darkened; it used to be light when she was little. Miss Minnie had light brown hair, almost on the blonde side. She was tall, willowy, slender, but small bones, delicate hands, feet, features, you know, and small hands and feet. She had a long, thin nose. Mother said she had a patrician nose; I've often wondered what it meant when I was growing up. On one occasion Mother was talking about Miss Minnie and she said she was an aristocratic-looking person. Someone was asking about her. And truly she was. If you have ever seen a sketchbook of Charles Dana Gibson's sketches called the Gibson Girl, with little high neck fichus at the neck, the blouses are blousy, and a wasp waist. It was called the Gibson Girl, the hourglass figure, only Miss Minnie was so slender. But she did look beautiful in those blouses and slender skirts that were full at the bottom. She wore white a great deal. She had a Hudson Super-Six automobile and a chauffeur named Ransom Horne. The boys, Tommy and Tony, loved the car, and Tommy eventually learned to drive it. Miss Minnie was very indulgent. She would take the children over to Shreveport to good shows and plays, and if they had opera in Shreveport in those days, I'm sure that's where she attended opera. I remember we had to spend the night--it was 35 miles by muddy road getting to Shreveport from where we lived. She would drive over and spend the night, they would attend the play and bring them back. There was a

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play called *The Bluebird*. I've no recollection of who wrote it or whether it was good or bad or indifferent, but it stands out in my memory, and I can almost see some of the scenes in it now. The children liked it--we thought it was great.

She was very kind and indulgent to the black people around her. She even gave them a party, a dance, entertained them in much the [same] fashion that the plantation owners used to let their help, the people who lived on the premises, have their parties and so forth. She gave them a party at Christmas one time, and they really did have a nice affair. We enjoyed it; we liked to watch them dance. There was a log cabin built onto the back of the Brick House, huge logs and a great fireplace. It was what you would call now a den, because the rest of the Brick House was rather formal. It had the wide hall. Have you been there? It was just the average southern home: two story, brick. It seemed to need a casual room or playroom. It was just adjoining the kitchen over on one side and at the end of this long porch. I remember it was torn away rather soon after she passed away; I don't know why or when. I think Lady Bird might remember it.

So much for Miss Minnie. Then comes little Lady. She was sent to Alabama, and she came back and Miss Effie came with her. Tony would say Aunt Effie would not crush a violet or kill a fly. She was very delicate and something of an invalid. (Laughter) Actually, I won't say what Tony actually thought, because this isn't Tony's interview. Tony loved Aunt Effie, but Aunt Effie was, well, not really of this world. She had sort of an ethereal quality about her. She loved the spring, and she loved the flowers and nature. We used to ride through the woods and look at the redbuds and the dogwood in the spring, ride through the scenic parts. And around Caddo Lake it was very beautiful

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and untouched, sparsely settled at that time. She liked poetry and caused Lady Bird to read quite a lot and read to her. Each time we went somewhere as Lady Bird grew--they were living at the Brick House when she attended Marshall High School. She had her own little automobile, a little Chevrolet roadster, I believe, or coupe, maybe, as they called them. She drove over those muddy red clay roads, and sometimes, when there would be a real rainy spell for a week, she would stay with some friends in Marshall, one of them being Helen Byrd, the Episcopal rector's daughter. She stayed at the rectory. Helen later was with her in St. Mary's College, but that's another story--St. Mary's College in Dallas. When she graduated from high school, she was so young--I think she must have been fifteen--and she wanted to attend the University of Texas. Mother thought that she was much too young to be allowed to attend the big university, and they thought of St. Mary's College in Dallas, a girls' school. And Mother, being an Episcopalian and reared more or less with governesses and private school, thought that would be--

G: This is your mother?

P: Yes, Miss Minnie's friend. They were very close. You see, my mother was reared on a plantation in Louisiana, and Miss Minnie was reared on a plantation in Alabama--southern plantations--and their lives were similar. The planters had pretty much all of the same life style, their homes and families.

So Miss Lady attended St. Mary's College. I visited her there on one or two occasions. She and Helen Byrd were so glad to see me, because with a monitor or sponsor or chaperon, I believe you would say, you were allowed to leave the school, so

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we could do all those little things they'd been saving up they wanted to do when I came to town.

G: What did you do?

P: I don't know whether this would make good reading or not. Halfway between Dallas and Fort Worth, there was a night club, a huge sort of building. It looked like a castle over there on the side of the hill, and those girls were dying to see inside. Oh, it was just something that they had heard, probably, stories about; I don't know whether they had or not. But we simply got in the car, and it was daytime, and we drove by that place and tried to get in just so they could see the interior. I saw no reason why they shouldn't at least see inside the building. It was closed, you know, in the day. I don't know. It was closed and kind of disintegrated; I don't know what ever became of it. But that was so many years ago. But they had heard of it, and they wanted to do something fascinating that they were not allowed to do. You know, they were pretty well regimented there in school. They liked to dine out; especially, Lady Bird liked cafeterias and liked to have three desserts and fruit salads, or something sweet.

G: Did she like going to school in Dallas, do you think?

P: I think she was happy there. Aunt Effie was ill, and she came and settled in the little private hospital near the school. She could visit with Aunt Effie, and still it wasn't too far away. They allowed her that privilege of going to see Aunt Effie and visiting with her.

G: I hate to retrace our steps here, but I was going to ask you if you remembered--

P: Well, I've rambled so I think we'll probably have to do it again.

G: --if you remember the Taylor household at the time of Lady Bird Johnson's birth.

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P: Yes.

G: Were you there when she was born?

P: I lived in Karnack, three miles away--my parents did.

G: Do you recall first seeing the baby?

P: Oh, yes. Indeed I do. Mother went out there. I remember visiting with Mother, and she [Lady Bird Johnson] was crawling. Guess what? She'd pull a chair up to the dining room table when she wasn't over two or two-and-a-half years old, climb in the chair, and then get on the table because the sugar bowl was left in the middle of the table. She would sit there and eat sugar. They had to watch her and to keep the chairs far removed and to keep her off the middle of the table and the sugar bowl! So many of her little habits. She was a precious-looking child, as I think back. In those days, you did not buy ready-made clothes. My mother sewed for me, and she made some pretty things for Lady Bird, and she might have made some for Miss Minnie, I don't know. We were rather isolated out there. Frankly, there were tenant farmers, and they farmed and fished--they were fishermen, and they lived near this lake. Mr. Taylor sold fish. He would send his wagon or buggies down to the landing, and the fishermen would bring their fish and weigh them, and they would give him a bill for groceries for the next fish day that they would bring fish out. My father was a claim agent for the MK & T Railroad, and he had a pass on the system, you know, all over the place. He went to St. Louis and established fish markets for Mr. Taylor. He shipped fish from there and eventually to Fulton's Fish Market in New York City. I don't think Father went to New York to establish that market, but one way or another they did come in contact. He sent fish eggs from a

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certain kind of fish, which were sold for Russian caviar. It was a long, peculiar fish called a spoonbill. It had a long scoop of a bill like this. It was a total waste: they cut the fish open and received these layers of eggs almost as large as a liver, and it was the color of gunshot, sort of steel grey in color.

G: I understand that Mrs. Johnson would spend the day down at her father's store after her mother passed away, is this right?

P: She did. On occasion they would bring her there. She loved coming to the store. Mr. Taylor was truly a dealer in everything. He also had coffins upstairs where they kept furniture, cast-iron stoves--the cook stoves and then the heaters--and iron bedsteads, mattresses, springs, and coffins, dressers, a class of furniture that a tenant farmer would be likely to have to buy if he were setting up housekeeping. Lady Bird would get tired, and I think on one occasion she actually crawled in a coffin and went to sleep. She was very familiar with the coffins up there and had no fear whatever of them. I used to say, "Well, anyone who would sleep in a coffin without fear can do anything!"

G: What was Captain Taylor like?

P: He was a man of very strong character and a hard-working man. He started from almost nothing, and he accumulated his fortune by hard work and, actually, frugal living. He was one of the kindest men I have ever known. During the Great Depression--1929, I believe, was the year when it hit hardest--Mr. Taylor brought in families from the Mississippi delta, the river bottom. They were living in cabins with dirt floors. They had nothing, and they were white people. He would send his trucks over and bring them in with their few belongings, set them up in houses. Some way, some how, he was able to

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feed them and establish work for them. I remember he had a lot of woods land, and he cleared some of it for farm purposes. He gave them a dollar a day and packed their lunch kit for them, which was probably pork and beans or bologna sausage or something on that order. But he did have a crew. Then came the Works Program, the PWA [Public Works Administration], and so many of those people were given jobs on PWA. They built Caddo State Park, but they were Mr. Taylor's tenants, largely--lots of them--because it was at a time when there was no farming or anything going on at that particular time of the year especially. But those settlers came in, and they were very poor. When a person was sick, regardless of how much money he owed Mr. Taylor, he would send him to the hospital or send him to the doctor in his own automobile, would pay their bills or stand good for the hospital bill so that they were admitted and taken care of. He never turned anyone away. I heard my father say one time, "Well, he *is* a good man. I think the way he manages is a little different from most: he lets the strong take care of the weak." If someone was going to make a bumper crop and come out with a lot of money, he'd charge him interest on his money that he had borrowed, and so forth and so on, enough that it would sort of compensate for some of the losses of those who were not so fortunate. I don't know that he did that. That's probably just hearsay. But he was a great man. This I remember about Mr. Taylor: he was a steward. He and my father were trustees of the Methodist church. Mr. Taylor came to church every Sunday morning unless he was just too ill to come. He was at the eleven o'clock service. He never came on Sunday night, and he never attended a steward's meeting. His policy was: "I'll pay half the budget; you people get busy and take care of the rest." So therefore we were not

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hard put to take care of half the entire budget until hard times came when the people just didn't have any work, and then one way or another. . . . I remember I was secretary and treasurer of the Board of Stewards. He suggested that I take the job. I would go to him and say, "Well, I'm sorry, I can't get any more. This is all that's been paid in. I've been visiting around the membership and asking for money." Mr. Taylor would say, "Hmmm. Go back and see if you can't get a little more. We'll half this." But he was kind, and I knew exactly when to deal with him and when not to. If he looked harassed and if there was a tone--I could hear him talking to someone and his voice didn't sound quite pleasing, but when I went in and spoke to him, I knew immediately whether I wanted to prolong my visit or whether I wanted to pass on through the store. I came to know him very well. As I told you I would ramble. I might go back and say this: when we lived at the Brick House and he and Miss Minnie were staying with us, he used to get me to put tonic on his hair. I would sit in his lap and put--Herpecide was the name of the hair tonic. I liked to do it because it smelled--oh, it had a delicious, wonderful fragrance to it, and I liked to smell the hair tonic. And too, he would always give me a nickel or bring me a sack of candy. (Laughter) When you're eight or nine years old and you live in the country, that's quite a treat.

G: He must have been quite fond of his daughter.

P: She was the light of his life. You know, I feel sorry for the boys, even in late years when Tony would come to visit my mother. He would always come from Santa Fe. He had tuberculosis at a very young age and was sent to a sanatorium. The theory was that a high, dry climate would cure tuberculosis, and it actually did. He grew, but they told him

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that he could not come back to the low, damp climate we have in East Texas. So Tony would say, "Well, my father was always much kinder to my little sister than he was to us."

But there was the time when he was a widower. Miss Effie took care of herself and the baby as best she could--Lady Bird--but the boys were at loose ends. But Tony was Miss Minnie's favorite. Tommy was independent, self-sufficient, and an outgoing person and turned out to be an outgoing businessman and successful. Tony was more the writer.

Well, we'll say that his finer emotions or sensibilities were more accented. You grasp what I'm trying to say?

G: Yes. I think we'd better turn the tape over now if you don't mind.

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G: We're recording again now, Mrs. Powell. We were talking about the difference between the two brothers.

P: Oh. Tommy and Tony were sent to Raymond Rydon School--Raymond Reardon or Rydon School. It was on the Hudson River, one of those boys' schools. They spent a year there. When they came home, they had grown considerably. I remember they brought home as a guest at Thanksgiving a judge's son by the name of Francis O'Dwyer. Francis O'Dwyer was Tommy's age, I think. You know, there are many municipal courts around New York City, and the father was not a notable judge, but probably one of those smaller courts. Incidentally, this is beside the point, but years later when Don Brown, a very dear friend of ours, was in France, he met a fellow who was going around buying wine for some people in New York--tasting the wine, visiting the vineyards. His name was Francis O'Dwyer. Don Brown was the artist, and painted and loved Caddo Lake, and

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was a Marshall boy and acquainted with the Taylors, with Lady Bird, and so forth. And he [O'Dwyer] said, "I was never in Texas but once, and I visited a little place called Karnack, Texas. And we went to a lake called Caddo Lake." Don said, " Well, that is the place that I'm yearning to go and that's where I live." And he remembered having Thanksgiving dinner at my house. My mother prepared Thanksgiving dinner and invited Tommy and Tony and their guest because, well, I don't think there was anyone at the Brick House--probably Cindy, the cook. So Francis O'Dwyer came home with the boys, and years later, we heard from him in that fashion. My brother Truman died, and this same Don Brown married Truman's widow a year or so later. He was a professor of art at Centenary College. That's beside the point.

Later, Tommy attended school at the University of Arizona, and Tony went to school at Los Alamos Ranch School. Los Alamos--that's where the atomic bomb was born. Isn't it strange that people from such a small town and so many things happened to them of note? Who would have ever thought it? That is where I think little W.B. Taylor took pneumonia--he was a first cousin of Tony's--he took pneumonia at Los Alamos Ranch School and died. That's Winston--Lady Bird and Tony's first cousin--Winston's brother.

Well, it was years later that Lady Bird was a small child and coming to visit Mother and spending the day. I sewed doll clothes for her and cut paper dolls. When I became a teenager and thinking of other things, she was even then more interesting than most little girls her age. And then certainly when she came to college, her letters were interesting, and she was a nice companion, even though I was older and married. And

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especially when she was in the university, the books we read! I remember our introduction to Noel Coward, and the plays and the books. And I also remember *Tobacco Road* and how we laughed and pointed out each of the characters in our own little locality. (Laughter)

G: She studied journalism at the university?

P: She got her degree, a BA degree, and then she stayed a year longer and picked up a degree in journalism. She was a nice companion. Of course, as long as I lived in Karnack I was reaching out for outside interests and so forth. And it seems that taking the school census in the school district and assessing the taxes and holding the elections and being Sunday school superintendent, there just wasn't enough to occupy one's time.

G: Do you think being at the University of Texas made Mrs. Johnson not as shy as she'd been as a girl?

P: Oh! I think that helped quite a bit. But when she came home, she brought friends with her. After this point, Lady Bird remembers, and I had rather Lady Bird would tell you things about the sorority bit. I think that's her private life, and I'd rather Bird would tell.

G: I think it was in the fall of 1934 when she met Lyndon Johnson.

P: Oh, yes! That! I think she sent a telegram--either that or telephoned, but I believe she sent a telegram to me saying, "Please go to the Brick House. We're going to have a guest for breakfast, to spend the night and for breakfast in the morning. Come out in the morning and have breakfast." So I thought, well that's strange. I remember driving out there. Cindy lived in the back yard, I believe, at that time--had a house in the back of the house. So we cleaned the guest room. Then next morning, I went out and met Lyndon

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and Malcolm Bardwell of San Antonio. Lyndon was secretary to Mr. Kleberg, and Malcolm was secretary to Maury Maverick. They were the congressmen. They were on their way to Washington. Lady Bird had met Lyndon through Eugenia Boehringer--Gene Lasseter, as she later became--and he fell in love with her. Well, this was the beginning, though. We went out; I met him; we had breakfast. We were going part of the way with them. I had driven out in my car, so Malcolm got in the car with me and Lady Bird with Lyndon, and we drove about three miles up to the crossroads where they would leave. He was kissing Lady Bird and bidding her goodbye, and I was jumping up and down looking up and down the road, "Quit it! Hurry! The Ku Klux are going to get you!" Very shocked at the display of affection, as Lady Bird would say, "in the middle of the big road."

G: What were your first impressions of him?

P: Of Lyndon? Well, I always thought that he was just in much too much of a big hurry. He just rushed in. And do you know, he was calling from Washington down over long distance. I know it must have cost a tremendous amount of money. And he showered her with attention, and he was so persistent. It was just real fast and furious, and so forth. And then, the night that she telephoned, she was also in Austin, and she asked me to come out and spend the night with her that night. Well, her room was upstairs and it was ghostly, but she had never said, "Come to spend the night. I'm a little afraid," or something. She didn't say, "I have something to talk over." But that is the time that she said Lyndon wanted her to marry him right away, and she had this little diamond ring she was wearing. I said, "No, it's just much too soon. You should know him six months

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anyway, Lady Bird. You just don't become engaged and get married overnight."

Well, he came to visit, and he asked Mr. Taylor. Aunt Effie said, "No, no, Bami, no! You must not! We'll have to wait and see. Let's wait and see. I like him, but let's wait." Mr. Taylor made the famous remark, "Daughter, you've brought home some boys before, but this time you brought home a man." So, that cinched it.

Then I went with her to Shreveport, Louisiana, to assemble a trousseau, and we spent the day shopping. We probably went back [for] a day several times. But there wasn't much time, and I had the announcements engraved and had to mail most of them out. J. A. Styron Engraving Company of Shreveport, Louisiana. Do you know it's still there. The same firm name.

They were married in San Antonio in the little chapel, as you know about, and went to Mexico on their honeymoon. Lyndon, by the way, didn't like the trousseau. Lady Bird was always conservative in her manner of dress. I remember this suit that I thought was just lovely. It had a cape, and I think it was a light grey and had the cape effect and was very fashionable and a very good style at that time, made by a good designer. I think he referred to it as: "it looked like the old grey mare," or something of the kind. You know, his tastes were so different. He wanted more color and so forth.

G: Did you have much contact with them--

P: When they were first married?

G: Yes.

P: Well, the first time I visited after they were married, I came to Austin. He was with the NYA, and they were living in Professor someone's house.

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G: Montgomery, I think.

P: Yes, Professor Montgomery, and he was on leave from the university, and they had rented his house. Mr. Hiram A. King was one of the vice presidents of the Sinclair Oil Corporation, and I remember that Sunday afternoon he called and said, "Come over to San Antonio and have dinner with me." Cecille Harrison, one of Lady Bird's friends who lived in San Antonio--a former friend in school, I think, at the university--Cecille met us there, and we had dinner with Mr. King at the St. Anthony Hotel. I think he came back to Austin with us that night. I'm sure he did because I remember seeing him the next morning and the conversation there at the home of Professor Montgomery. That's about all I remember of that particular visit.

G: Do you recall when he ran for Congress? Were you involved at all in any of those campaigns--the 1937 campaign or his--

P: Not when he ran for Congress. He was out of my district. All that I could do was help by remote control. The times that Lady Bird would come home to visit. She used to drive through the country. It was the only means. But in later times, she would fly to Shreveport and I would meet her there at the airport and bring her to Karnack to her father's house, where she would spend the night. I would pick her up the next day and be with her in the daytime. But I was very involved when he ran for, I suppose, the Senate, wasn't it?

G: Yes. First in 1941 and again in 1948.

P: Yes, the helicopter days. Oh, dear, did we ever work for that. We did everything, my husband and I, everything we could, and he carried our county by a large majority. My

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husband was well known. He had been a county commissioner, born and reared in Marshall, from an old family with a lot of relatives and rather well known and prominent. So he was in a position to help Lyndon.

G: Can you recall the first time that you visited them in Washington?

P: Oh, yes, I certainly do. Was it 1947 or 1949? I'll have to ask Lady Bird. I do remember visiting there in 1949, and I believe I had visited there before, though.

G: What were your impressions of their life in Washington?

P: Oh, I loved it. We went to the 81st Congress. You know, the wives have a club, I suppose you'd say, wives of congressmen--81st Congress--and there was a luncheon. Congressman Murdock from Arizona--his wife had been doing research trying to find more about Andre Brumidi, the Italian artist who, while painting in the Capitol on the last cupid in the dome, fell from a scaffold and was crippled and injured and was never able to complete the picture in the dome. I think they had others to do it, and they never arrived at the same shade of blue, and maybe because of the different kinds of paint, it has faded from time to time. But she gave the lecture that day. She told that they had found, after many years of searching, his grave, and they were so poor that he didn't have a lot of his own. He was buried in his wife's family plot in an old cemetery there, and they found it. That was probably in 1947.

And then I know that I visited them in 1949, because very much to my surprise, after I came home, I had this telephone call from Mr. Wright Patman asking me if I would be assistant supervisor of the census enumeration in our congressional district. I thought I detected Lady Bird's hand in it. I've never asked the question, but I think they

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wanted me to get out and be better known and do some traveling around the district, which I most certainly did. Don't ever, ever be the assistant; always bid for the top man. He's the one who gets the money, and the assistant does the work. (Laughter) I think Lady Bird and I went to New York to visit. Lyndon took an afternoon off and carried Luci, who was about two or three years old, and Lynda Bird, and my Diane out to a carnival or a circus. But he spent the afternoon with those children. There were boats, and he wanted to take them riding in this boat. And Diane cried and wouldn't get in the boat; she was afraid. When we came back, he was telling me that I should work on that. He said, "I think we have a problem child. She's afraid of too many things." Which was probably true. She was very timid, and I did have to work manfully.

G: Did Mrs. Johnson enjoy returning to Karnack to the Brick House?

P: To see her father, whom she dearly loved, and he loved her. He loved her better than anyone in the world and he didn't mind saying so.

G: What did she like to do when she would return to her childhood home?

P: To Karnack? Oh, it just seemed such a joy for her to be there and to be with him. She liked to go to Caddo Lake. We'd had so many good times on Caddo Lake. I would chaperon house parties there. Hugh's uncle had a house on the lake; we didn't have a house on Caddo. I never would have one. I lived so near that I didn't want it. It would have just been too much trouble to keep. But we did give house parties for her on Caddo Lake, and she brought friends from the university: a Nell Collian [?] of Waco--I think she might still live there. I don't remember too many of the girls. One was Emily Crow, who is in South Carolina, little tow-headed Emily. I think she had four girls, and we

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spent the night at the house, and I had the young men from Marshall: Clayton Fields, Jr., Jack Staples, Pressler [?]. Now let's see. I think Clayton, Jr. died. He was an attorney and rather prominent. And Jack Staples had a job with the government, regional director in the Post Office in Dallas, and knew Lady Bird all the way through. I think he still lives there, but he had retired. I don't remember the other boys.

G: I think Mrs. Johnson would return frequently during the 1960 campaign, when her father's health was failing, is that right?

P: Yes, she did. And I remember being in the hospital and going to a room across the hall from Mr. Taylor's room. Didn't Mr. Rayburn want Lyndon to announce for the presidency, and we listened to it over the television.

G: That is correct.

P: Lyndon didn't want it. He wasn't ready for it; neither was Lady Bird. But we listened to that. I was at the hospital with her. Now was that the time of his death?

G: I think he died later on in the campaign, that fall.

P: Yes. He didn't live to know that he was elected, did he?

G: No.

P: Well, we were so busy at that time going to political meetings and forming our own little groups by correspondence and every way that we could. Wherever there was a button that could be punched or an *entré* where we thought we could be effective, we were reaching out for it.

G: Mrs. Powell, I don't want to tire you out. We've gone quite a ways.

P: I have rambled so. I think that we will probably have to go over it.

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G: Is there anything else that you would like to add at this point before we stop, anything that we've left out?

P: I have always been reluctant to talk about Lady Bird or to tell very much about her private life and the things that we have done and the things that we do together. I feel that it's encroaching upon her privacy. She can remember, and she can tell those things that she wants people to know about. I actually don't know what she wants of me.

G: Well, I think you've done splendidly so far.

P: I think it has been a most rambling sort of thing. I've never done this before. I hadn't even thought of it or given it any thought in relation to time. I've just been picking thoughts out at random from early childhood. There are so many things I remember. My two brothers were about the same age of Lady Bird's brothers. One of my brothers died of a heart attack when he was 42, and the other one died when he was 52. There were so few years' difference--I think three years' difference in their ages. But they've been gone so long, and Tommy was our very dear friend. He had the Jefferson Wholesale Grocery, and as long as my husband and father were in the grocery business, they saw Tommy once a week or oftener. He came to Karnack because he wanted to see his father, Mr. Taylor, too. We were very close, and we visited in their home with Mr. Taylor and Ruth. We'd go over to see Tommy and Sarah and have Sunday night steak supper or something with them often. And the men would talk business and so forth. Tony, on his visits, from the time he and Elizabeth were married, he would always come and spend a day with my mother. He'd say, "Now, Mrs. Odum, let's have our day." And Mother would set the time. He would go and have lunch with Mother. She always cooked his favorite

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food and planned for it. We left them to visit, and they'd talk about his mother.

G: Well, Mrs. Powell, I certainly do thank you for taking this time. If there's anything more that you'd like to add, as you think of it we can do it. I'll stop recording now.

End of Tape 1 side 2 and Interview I

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DORRIS POWELL

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