

Sam Gibbons & Martha Hanley Gibbons
by Bonnie Powell
May 27, 2003

[START TAPE 1, SIDE A]

This is an interview with Sam and Martha Gibbons, currently living in Tampa. [Tape skips] This interview is being conducted on May 27, 2003 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons. My name is Bonnie Powell. We are conducting this interview to collect more information about Town N' Country for our oral history program.

Bonnie Powell (BP): *[Background noise] Martha Hanley Gibbons and Sam Gibbons, residents of Town n' Country, Florida.*

Martha Hanley Gibbons (MHG) and Sam Gibbons (SG): *No, we weren't.*

BP: *Oh, you never were residents.*

SG: *We never lived there. No.*

BP: *Well, my first question is--*

SG: *Town n' Country was still a ranch when we built this house.*

BP: *Well, my first question is, What was the area called when you lived there? Did it have a name? [Pause] What was your address?*

SG: *The Hanley Ranch.*

BP: *Just the Hanley Ranch?*

MHG: *I don't know anything else.*

SG: *Or West Hillsborough Ave.*

BP: *When did you live there?*

MHG and SG: *We never lived there.*

BP: *You didn't live on the ranch?*

MHG and SG: *No!*

BP: *Where did you grow up?*

MHG: On Watrous Avenue and--

BP: *Oh, in South Tampa.*

MHG: Yeah. Tuton Avenue. Watrous and Tuton.

BP: *So that's where you went to school?*

MHG: I went to school at Gorrie and Wilson, and Plant High School.

BP: *Oh, wow!*

SG: And Forrester.

MHG: Oh, yeah. I graduated from Forrester College for Women.

BP: *What was your major?*

MHG: Economics.

BP: *Good for you. That's an unusual major for women.*

MHG: I know!

BP: *Good for you.*

MHG: But I didn't know what else to do.

BP: *That's fun stuff- economics.*

MHG: Yeah, [Laughter] if it comes out right.

BP: *From what I was able to get from the history of the courthouse, Mr. Hanley bought about 5,000 acres in the 1930s from the LaSalle Bank. What () the property?*

MHG: What was the name of the bank?

BP: *LaSalle Bank.*

MHG: I thought it was the First National Bank.

SG: It was the holding company for the real estate that the First National Bank owned. Was it First Union? I don't know what it was.

MHG: Well, she called it--

SG: They had a lot of holding companies. You see, banks were not able to hold in their own name, under law, real estate, because they were not supposed to be real estate speculators. And so when they had to foreclose mortgages, that's for us how the First National got control of it. They foreclosed a mortgage on this during the depression, and Mr. Hanley bought it from them.

BP: *[Tape skips]* What was done there- do you know? Was it livestock, was it agriculture, or a crop?

MHG: Mostly it was for (). There were two--. I mean, I know there were two horses there ().

SG: Some cows there.

MHG: Some cows out there--

SG: Beef cattle.

MHG: --but not many.

BP: *Did anyone live on the property?*

SG: We had a caretaker, yes. I've forgotten the names, but we had a caretaker. (). Remember? Right there off of Hillsborough Ave.?

MHG: Oh, yes, yes!

SG: We had some people that lived on there and took care of the place. If () property. Mr. Hanley was very much a hands-on person, and so he got involved in everything. And--.

BP: *Was your father native to Tampa?*

MHG: No.

BP: *Where did he come from?*

MHG: Chicago.

BP: *Oh! Me, too.*

MHG: Oh, really?

BP: *I grew up in Chicago and in Florida.*

MHG: Well, he did, too.

BP: *Was he a Cubs fan? [Laughter]*

MHG: I don't remember.

BP: *Oh! [Laughter]*

SG: Well, he--. Of course, he'd be far older. He would be 100 now. Older than that- he'd be 106, something like that. 109.

BP: *Oh!*

SG: So--. And there were a number of people whose family () went into the--, became a wholesale food broker, dealing in fresh vegetables. So he would tour the country, buying fresh vegetables at the auctions, and-- [Tape skips]

BP: (). *When you lived in Tampa, did you spend time in--? When you went out to Town N' Country, do you have any idea--, do you have any memory of the infrastructure of Town n' Country- schools, roads, banks, people? Just West Hillsborough is the only street?*

SG: Yes. It was both sides of the street; that was the only thing out there. Of course, the old Memorial Highway was there.

BP: *Oh!*

SG: And you see some remnants of that. That Memorial Highway was built right after World War I, and it was the principal access route until Hillsborough was extended and joined up with it.

BP: *It must have been [Tape skips]*

MHG: It was just uncluttered. It was just--

SG: ().

MHG: It was.

BP: *Just thinking about it, it must have smelled wonderful.*

SG: Pine trees, palmettos, big cypress, palms, and things of that sort. It was low and flat, and it was like the bay- was beautiful.

BP: *Oh! Still is.*

SG: And there was the low highway.

MHG: () just a little--. It was an access road.

SG: He had to get to the back part of his property, and so he built Hanley Road--

MHG: --which was nothing but a shell.

SG: Well, he rented a road grader from Cone Brothers, and he got out there with the road grader and graded the road himself.

BP: *[Laughter] That sounds marvelous!*

MHG: He was an interesting man.

BP: *I'll bet!*

MHG: But I don't know--. All I remember is that--. I don't know when it was developed.

BP: *Do you have some siblings- brothers, sisters?*

MHG: One sister that's not living.

BP: *Oh, I'm sorry. Oh. [Pause] Oh--*

SG: She's got seven grandchildren and three sons and three daughters-in-law.

BP: *There's a wonderful expression that I don't think any other language touches: "Mazel tov." That's Yiddish.*

SG: Yiddish, yes.

BP: *It means good luck; that's wonderful; congratulations.*

MHG: Oh, good!

BP: *Much joy. It's all in one expression. There are certain languages that have better words than others. Mazel tov. Seven grandchildren; that's terrific.*

MHG: I know!

BP: *But still, Christmas must be very expensive.*

MHG: ().

BP: *Yeah, just (). [Laughter]*

MHG: Yes, yes, yes, yes!

BP: *Mr. Hanley bought the 5,000 acres, but that--. Was it called the Sweetwater Ranch?*

MHG: He named it that.

BP: *OK, he named it the Sweetwater Ranch.*

MHG: Because of the Sweetwater Creek. There's a creek there.

SG: Of course, there was a creek in those days. And then, her father turned it into a ditch. He didn't do it- it was still a creek when he sold it.

BP: *A Mr. Webb, around 1944, bought--*

MHG: I want to tell you that I had a--. I was in high school. I don't know how many years Daddy owned all that property, do you?

SG: I thought it was later than 1944. I thought it was in the '40s, but I thought it was later than '44.

BP: () *500-plus acres in 1944, and LaMonte-Shimberg started in the late '50s.*

SG: Yes, that's right; I remember.

MHG: () when I was in high school.

SG: () that must have been the first part of the deal, because he sold Webb all that he owned out there, as I recall. But I--

MHG: Do you remember where? ().

BP: ().

MHG: Yeah, but he bought it first from Daddy.

BP: *Oh, so he bought all of it.*

SG: That's what I recall; I could be wrong. I was not--. I was in--. I was out in Europe at that time, during World War II. I thought that--

BP: (). *[Laughter]*

SG: As I recall, he still owned all of it when you and I were married.

MHG: Yes.

SG: And he was negotiating with the Webbs. Maybe he had sold Mr. Webb, the father of the family. You know, Webb was a minister of () profession. And he bought that land and turned it into a dairy. And his sons, Wayne-- who was one of them-- and had another son, who I think got killed--. I'm not sure- Wayne would remember that far better than I do. And--. But there may have been a number of sales to Webb. But I was under the impression that Mr. Hanley had sold it all to Webb. But I wasn't intimately involved in those kinds of affairs. And he and I discussed it, but I thought we ought to get more than he got for it.

BP: *[Laughter]*

SG: He said, "You know, Sam, I think it's a pretty good markup." He said, "I bought it for \$5 an acre and sold it for \$100 an acre."

BP: *That's what we were able to find.*

SG: Yeah. And he said, "That's the way to make that kind of profit." And he said, you know, "I could have all this and be greedy, but ()."

MHG: () when I was in high school. And () got to ride the horses, take some horses out there. And we just had a great time. That's the only part I really remember, I think. So I invited some of my high school friends, and we had some kind of food. I can't remember what, but everybody was anxious to ride the horses--

BP: *I'll bet.*

MHG: --and they did.

BP: *What a lovely place to have a party.*

MHG: I know!

SG: You know, you and I were married, Martha.

BP: *May I ask what year you were married?*

SG: We were married in--

MHG: '46.

SG: --September the 14th, 1946. And--

BP: *Fifty-seven years. Do you still like each other?*

MHG: Yes. Yes. [Laughter]

SG: It takes hard work- you know, both sides. [Chuckle] But we--. Mr. Hanley- I don't think he talked about selling the place when we got married, because oh, about six months after we were married, we were home for Christmas time or something.

MHG: He was in law school.

SG: We went out to the ranch and drove around. And Mr. Hanley said, "I want to show you a great place out here on Rocky Creek." When we got there, he got out, () and he said, "I'll give you all of this, if you want to build a home out here." And Martha and I talked it over, and she didn't want to live this far out in the country, so we didn't take him up on his offer. But if Martha had wanted to live out in the country, we'd have been living out on Rocky Creek. [Chuckle] Rocky Creek was beautiful in those days.

BP: *Parts of it still are.*

SG: Yeah, it was beautiful. It was--. I remember it so well.

BP: *But we used to say--. The last time I was () Rocky Creek, I saw an otter.*

SG: Mm-hmm.

BP: *Oh gosh, they're cute. (). She sat up and saw people watching (), so she did otter-like things for a few minutes, and then disappeared.*

MHG: Oh, no!

BP: *It was quite a thrill to see them out ().*

MHG: Yes. I wonder where they came from.

SG: (). [Chuckle]

BP: *I've seen--*

SG: They're native to Florida too, Martha. Of course, you don't see too many of them.

BP: *No, unfortunately not.*

SG: Civilization has run them off.

MHG: Well, that was interesting.

BP: *Yeah. We have--. Right now, there is a beautiful linear park that runs along Channel G.*

MHG: Oh, really?

BP: *And it's very lovely. And I'm really pleased to say we have some--, a red-tailed hawk that seems to be nesting there now, because we've seen two of them in the neighborhood. And Linear Park has got quite a lot of animals living there. It's fun to do, because you can see bunnies, raccoons, and wonderful critters.*

MHG: Really?

BP: *And even armadillos, and--*

MHG: What's the name of the park?

BP: *It's the Linear Park along Rocky--, along Channel G.*

SG: Oh, yes. That's off the bay. Yes. I know where that is.

BP: *It's the vote--. It's something we had to fight to get.*

SG: Yes.

BP: *But we did. We won. And it's a lovely place. It's--. We all go--. My husband and I usually go through and do our () bike ride, because it's a very lovely area. Have you been back to Town n' Country at all?*

MHG: Well, everything's built up.

SG: Yes, that's where one of our grandsons-- our oldest grandson-- went to the Montessori school out there (). [Phone rings]

MHG: Excuse me, but I don't know where (). Excuse me.

SG: Oh, you've got plenty of time. When we used to (). He went to Montessori School for () years on Hanley Road. And then our granddaughter-- his younger sister-- had some friends [Tape skips]. Oh, well, isn't that pretty wild. [Chuckle]

BP: ().

SG: Yeah.

BP: *When you retired, sir, I'm sure you got a barrage of thank you notes. I'm one of the people who wrote you a thank you note.*

SG: Oh, yes, I did. And I almost () University of South Florida (). I started a collection out there. I turned everything I had over to them. () make some sense out of it.

BP: *It's a good place for it to be.*

SG: Yes, it is. And they've done a good job.

BP: *Oh, it's a wonderful school. The medical school is one of the best.*

SG: We founded that, too.

BP: *Yeah. USF is a very fine addition to the university system.*

SG: Yes, it is. () [Tape skips] Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, you name it.

BP: *I will tell you sir, I ran into a couple of doctors in Estepona, Spain, who graduated from the University of South Florida.*

MHG: Oh, no!!

BP: *And--*

MHG: Isn't that something?

SG: () doctor's offices and see their graduation certificates from USF.

MHG: ().

BP: *Yep, they both graduated from USF. And we were living in Estepona, and I went to them in particular, because they graduated from US medical school.*

MHG: Yes.

BP: *When you're away from the US, you're very careful--*

SG: Yeah!

BP: --about where you go, and you look for graduating doctors from US schools.

SG: And you found them overseas?

BP: Yep. Sailors are a gossipy lot. Everybody knows how to contact--. Every bit of information, everybody shares.

MHG: Nice!

BP: (). What's the best event you remember in Town n' Country? I'm sure that high school party--

MHG: Yes, that's what I remember.

BP: What was the worst one?

MHG: There wasn't any worst one.

BP: Some people talked about terrible storms, hurricanes, floods. Do you--?

SG: You know, that area is prone to floods.

MHG: But we all experienced nothing, Sam--

SG: No.

MHG: --because we lived away from it.

SG: One of the sites that was considered for the University of South Florida () put it there (). () get the money [Tape skips]. And we supplied () west of Memorial Highway. And I took [Tape skips]. () awful lot of money in dredge and fill.

BP: Well, I think the area where it is, is beautiful- a beautiful campus. It really is [Tape skips].

MHG: --pines, tree stumps, and--

BP: [Laughter]

SG: (). I hope you've got a lot of tape.

BP: [Laughter]

SG: Now, the University of South Florida site--

MHG: Now, don't--. You're not talking about the university.

SG: --was in an orange grove.

MHG: We're not talking about it, Sam.

SG: ().

BP: *[Pause] It's a thing to be proud of.*

MHG: Yes, but we're on this subject.

BP: *Yes, we're supposed to focus on Town n' Country.*

MHG: Yes.

BP: *Do you have an opinion about the changes in Town n' Country?*

MHG: There are no changes to me; it's just been more developed.

BP: *Did you know, by the way, that Town n' Country is one-- according to the 1990 census-- is one of the ten most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the United States?*

MHG: No!

BP: *Yeah.*

SG: I didn't know that, either.

BP: *It's a wonderful area.*

SG: Yes, ().

MHG: Well, what do you () Town n' Country?

BP: *[Sigh] Town n' Country officially, I believe--. The boundary is the bay on the south. North might be Linebaugh.*

SG: Linebaugh, yeah.

BP: *The east would be Sheldon, or the west would be Sheldon. And the east would--, depends on different people have different decisions.*

SG: Yeah, it's--. It was named by the Shimbergs.

BP: () Shimberg.

SG: They named it what they wanted from way up (). That's where the Town n' Country name comes from.

BP: *All of the Shimberg ().*

MHG: Yeah!

SG: Jim Shimberg and Hinks. You all don't have them in, do you, for an interview? Nice folks.

BP: *What happened is all the people on the board of the library- we got a list of 25 names, and we all drew straws. And everybody is--. Different people are being interviewed by different people.*

SG: They're both very alive.

MHG: () brother, so whoever does one brother ought to do the other brother--

SG: Yeah.

MHG: --since they were both in it.

SG: Hinks Shimberg, and-- that's his nickname, but that's what he goes by-- and Jim Shimberg. And--

MHG: And they're older, so you might--

SG: I don't know where Hinks lives. He used to live right over there along the golf course. But Jim lives out on White Trout Lake.

BP: ().

SG: Yeah, yeah, ().

BP: *[Laughter]*

SG: I think they still own the sewer system out there, or something.

BP: *Most of the sewer system was--*

SG: Taken over by the county?

BP: --taken over by the county, I'm thinking, in 1970-something--

SG: Yeah, well--

BP: --for which I'm very grateful.

SG: Yes.

MHG: Yes.

SG: Sure, it's good to have () stability.

BP: I think so. I, I-- [Pause] It makes it a little bit safer for residents.

SG: I know it does. Safer, and, and--

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[START TAPE 1, SIDE B]

SG: --clean water that's going to be some ().

BP: One of the things we learned in our travels is there's no place like US grocery stores.

MHG: Oh, I know, I know, I know. [Chuckle]

SG: Well, you know, there's no place in the world like a US grocery store.

BP: Oh, no. Oh! Listen, I am such a big US fan. So anything that I've shared--, that I haven't asked you that I should?

MHG: [Pause] It was beautiful; it was plentiful. The land was plentiful. It was mostly () palmetto roots and scrubs of old oak. Oh, I don't know- just oak and scrub oaks out there and live oaks and boil oaks.

SG: Oh, yeah!

MHG: And the horses that, that Daddy had and the cows that he had- I remember those. Not that he had a big operation- I don't know what the numbers--. Do you know what the number was of the cows?

SG: No, I don't. [Tape skips] He never, he never asked my opinion, and I never had a very informed opinion.

MHG: I just remember that it was so pleasant, and there weren't any roads. You couldn't see anything.

SG: You could see the river out there.

MHG: You couldn't see anything, except the--

SG: --the palm trees and cypress trees, and oak trees.

MHG: Cypress trees and palm trees.

BG: *Oh! What a beautiful time.*

MHG: And that was on Hillsborough Avenue. [Laughter]

SG: (). Hillsborough had been built as a part of the military setup. The extension of Hillsborough had to do with the development of Drew Field, a huge air base. [Tape skips] My grandmother and grandfather built a house in Indian Rocks in 1914. And the only way you could get there was first on the train and then by Memorial [Tape skips] lots of time driving down Memorial Highway with my grandmother and grandfather. Their car [Tape skips]. Hillsborough had been extended, along with Dale Mabry. Dale Mabry had been built during the war, and--

MHG: Oh, it was just a shell road.

SG: Supposed to be, ().

MHG: Dale Mabry, which is a shell road-- ().

SG: It wasn't even a road. When we went to high school, Plant High School, Dale Mabry didn't exist. It wasn't even a road. There was something over there called Vera Avenue, but it ended just about a block off of Bay to Bay.

MHG: Oh! Do you believe that?

BP: *Yes!*

SG: They extended Vera and renamed it to Dale Mabry.

MHG: And that's just since 1940.

SG: 1942, '43. I remember I came home in '42, and I think they had just finished it or something. [Tape skips]

BP: *I love Town n' Country.*

SG: Good.

BP: *My husband and I chose to live there when we first came back to the US, because it just felt right.*

SG: Good.

BP: *It's a lovely, pleasant area.*

MHG: All the people ().

BP: *Yes! One of the things that we liked in Town n' Country when we chose Tampa was that--, its absolute lack of pretension. People there are not pretentious at all. People are friendly; we all know our neighbors. Where we live, which is off Webb Road--. I live near Webb and Elm. Once a year, the whole neighborhood gets together and has a yard sale, then we have a pot luck supper.*

MHG: Oh, how nice.

BP: *And we all schmooze. It's very friendly, very pleasant. Everybody knows everybody. All the children are known. And it's just a--*

SG: Well, that's good. That's the way a community ought to be.

BP: *Well, it's a very special neighborhood. We enjoy it immensely. We're very proud of our little neighborhood.*

SG: Well, on that list of people you've got, do you got Dan Weatheral? D-A-N-W-E-A-T-H-E-R-A-L. He was the ophthalmologist or optometrist who had a vision place there in the shopping center near Hanley Road.

BP: *He just recently closed the office there.*

SG: Yes, he just (). He and I grew up a couple of house-door neighbors from each other, and I had known (). And he would have a good insight into that stage of development of it, because I think that's the first place he opened an office, and he--. He was, like you say- he's just--

BP: *Just--. The office just recently closed.*

SG: And then there's a fellow by the name of Herb Swarzman, who I think owns the shopping center.

BP: *That's a name I don't know, so--*

SG: Swarzman. He's an investor, and--

MHG: S-C-W-I-T-Z--

SG: S-W-A-R-T-S-M-A-N, I think.

MHG: I don't know.

SG: I've got his, I've got his--

BP: *We can--. I believe we--. If you give me the name, we can take it from there.*

SG: Yeah, he would be in city directories and things like that. I'm not real sure where he lives. He's--.

BP: *[Pause] One Mr. Shimberg. And I'm not sure; I love the name Hinks Shimberg. I'm looking forward () that one.*

SG: He's got a nice wife, too. Both of them have nice wives.

BP: *Other than the Shimberg houses that Mr. Shimberg developed, Town n' Country [Pause] expanded Tampa--*

SG: Oh, yes.

BP: *--in a different direction.*

SG: That's correct; that's correct. Then the rest of it out there finally caught on, I suppose.

BP: *I know. There's very little country left. [Laughter]*

MHG: ().

SG: Between there and Oldsmar, yeah.

BP: *Do you have any memories of restaurants out there or shops or banks or--?*

MHG: Oh, nothing, nothing!

BP: Nothing was there?

MHG: Nothing, nothing, nothing.

SG: It was--. There was really nothing.

BP: *So none of it really developed 'til like 1960?*

SG: That's correct. When the Shimbergs came, it really began to develop. And they--

MHG: Slowly.

SG: They built the houses and sold off land for the shopping centers and things like that () develop as a community.

MHG: There wasn't anything out there.

SG: (). Part of that, you know--. Other than the Webbs, was, when some of them was out there, (). They turned it into a dairy farm.

MHG: Yes, yes.

SG: And Mr. Hanley built the dairy farm for them.

BP: *[Laughter]*

MHG: He moved the cows in.

SG: He built the dairy farm.

BP: *Your father sounds like an absolutely fascinating renaissance man.*

MHG: Oh, he was! He was!

BP: *But it's fun to grow up with someone like that.*

MHG: It's true; it's true. He was a big man.

SG: He was 6'4", weighed 250. He had a neck--. His neck and shoulders and arms were so big that he had to have his clothes specially made.

BP: *[Laughter]*

SG: Big Irishman.

MHG: He was a big Irishman.

BP: *Oh, was he charming?*

MHG: Yes.

SG: Yes. Had snow white hair.

MHG: Lots of it.

SG: Martha gets her hair from that side.

MHG: Snow white.

BP: *I was looking at your hair and just thinking, Oh, please, let me do that.*

MHG: Oh! I hope so.

BP: *It's-- You have such beautiful hair.*

MHG: Thank you.

BP: *I'm sure you've heard it all of your life, Mrs. Gibbons- you are a beautiful woman. You always have been; you always will be.*

MHG: Thank you.

BP: *[Laughter] You're very lucky that way. You know, that's not anything you can do anything with; it's the way you were born.*

MHG: I know.

BP: *And if you're lucky, you're lucky.*

MHG: Thank you.

BP: Yes.

SG: You don't have much choice about that.

BP: No.

SG: You just get it. [Chuckle]

BP: *Well, but you can't. But if you want to do the best you can with what you've got--.*

SG: That's right. ().

MHG: () answer that question. Do you remember what the question was? Do I have any remembrances of anything?

BP: *Any specials.*

MHG: There wasn't anything there.

BP: *I did liberally began in 1959. Mandell Shimberg became--. He's nicknamed "Hinks?"*

SG: Hinks, yes.

BP: *I love it. [Laughter]*

MHG: I don't know where it came from.

SG: You know, they're from Chicago, also. But my Uncle Arthur represented Mr. Hanley. When we were lawyers and I was in the family law firm--

MHG: There was a big family Gibbons law firm.

SG: Yeah. And he represented Mr. Hanley when he sold the land to--

BP: *Mr. Webb?*

SG: Mr. Webb. And then when the Shimbergs showed up, he represented Mr. Webb to sell the land again. Yeah, they're lawyers- at least Jim is. [Tape skips] sure about Hinks. Jim was a lawyer and (). But he knew the Florida lawyer, and so he employed Arthur, too. So Arthur retired ().

MHG: [Tape skips] for 34 years we were in Washington, this was home.

SG: We'd take the children up there with us.

MHG: They went to school up there.

SG: Put the house on hold down here. And they went to school up there. When we were in the State Legislature, we did the same thing. ().

MHG: Every spring--. Every other spring. The--. Not the Congress. The Legislature would meet in Tallahassee, and we'd take whatever boys we had.

SG: Really, all three of them.

MHG: Not the first time.

SG: Well, no, the first time it was two, because one of them was very young then.

MHG: Well, anyway, so we--

SG: [Tape skips]

MHG: They were only in session two months every two years.

SG: Sometimes they ran longer.

MHG: Sometimes they ran over, and we just moved up with him, help him.

SG: We'd rent a house up there.

MHG: Took the maid with us; it helped. And we changed maid. We knew we [Tape skips].

BP: *So there was continuity.*

SG: Yeah, well, in those days, if you were able to have a good () maid, then you'd have to be rich to have one. [Tape skips]

BP: *No, actually, he was a mechanic- an auto mechanic. And they saved all their money for years and years. And then their son won a scholarship to college, because their daughter graduated from teacher's college. And the son won a scholarship to college. Pearl said, "I don't have to work anymore." So they got both their kids through college, they saved their money, and he bought a gas station in Tenness--, in Mississippi.*

MHG: ().

BP: *Yeah. Oh, I always thought they were terrific people. But I'm very grateful for her. ().*

MHG: Yeah.

BP: *I remember when I was thirteen, Pearl said to me one day, "It's time for you to learn how to take care of the house." And she taught me how to iron and how to clean house and how to do things and take care of myself- that I should not "grow up useless like my sisters." [Laughter]*

MHG: Oh, how terrible!

BP: *I laughed so hard, but I realized she was absolutely right because things were changing- that Pearl's daughters would never do what she did. Her*

daughter graduated from teacher's college. And that it was time for women to be self-sufficient.

MHG: Well, there was a change then.

BP: *Yes, exactly right. It was a fascinating time. [Pause] Whoa. Is there anything that I should be asking that I'm not? Do you have any--?*

SG: No, you--

BP: *Then I would ask a question that has absolutely nothing to do with Town n' Country. Mrs. Gibbons, who is the most memorable person you ever met, because you have met so many fascinating people?*

MHG: Oh, my goodness, I've never thought about this. [Chuckle]

BP: *One of my idols in the world was Eleanor Roosevelt.*

MHG: Oh, yes.

BP: Yes.

SG: We didn't know Eleanor. I () one time with the President ().

BP: [Laughter] *Which president?*

SG: Roosevelt.

BP: *Oh, dear. Oh, my. [Laughter]*

SG: Also suppered with Winston Churchill. [Laughter]

BP: *Wow! Wow! [Laughter] Oh. Another one of my favorite people in history.*

SG: Yeah. Oh, yeah. He's mine, he's mine, too.

MHG: ().

SG: I'm sorry Roosevelt didn't live to write, because he would have written real well.

MHG: All the presidents I was thrilled to death to meet and get to know ().

SG: You knew eight of them.

MHG: Oh, eight of them- that's right. Wow. But that was so exciting, beginning with Kennedy with president [Tape skips]. Sam was in it with him.

SG: I rode in the car with him.

BP: *Down Lafayette.*

SG: Oh, yeah, and down Dale--, down Dale Mabry and down Kennedy, you know, and [Tape skips].

MHG: That was one of the exciting things. Some of them--. Like Nixon I never cared for. But most of the rest of them [Tape skips].

BP: *Do you look up to the office of the president?*

MHG: Oh, yes!

BP: *You might not feel a great affection for the holder of the office at the time. Just the office itself was--.*

MHG: Correctly.

SG: As I said, we didn't know but eight of them. And I think the real trait that they all had [Tape skips].

BP: *() personal opinion. I'm having a little difficulty now, because I don't feel like we have a conscience. And of course, we--, usually at different times, there have been people who have been the conscience to remind everyone else of who we are. And I'm a little frightened that now we don't have a conscience.*

SG: We don't have as many people in the Senate who are well-known and are respected as having some opinion and leadership approve it [Tape skips].

BP: *Or who have the guts to stand up as you did, sir, and say, "Shame on you."*

SG: [Chuckle]

BP: *That was--. That phrase was heard around the world. I don't remember where we were living at the time. I think we were living in Cypress. And just all the Americans went crazy. Everybody was laughing and cheering and "Isn't that terrific," that somebody actually had the guts to stand up and say that.*

SG: ().

BP: *I will tell you, sir, that you were toasted all over the world by Americans. [Laughter]*

SG: I walked on the floor the other day, because I'm allowed to go on the floor. And I ran into one of the members who I'd served with, and he said, he said, "I still feel that you turned this thing around when you told () sit down [Tape skips]."

BP: *That was the right thing to do, sir. There are times when that's the right thing to say.*

SG: ().

BP: *Who was your most memorable woman?*

MHG: Lady Bird, I think.

BP: *Oh! I love her. I love her!*

SG: She's lovable.

MHG: And she's so bright, and yet so human. I remember one time I was with her, and Lyndon was () her speech or something. Oh! It was down here, I guess.

SG: Yeah.

MHG: And she put on this coat (). Now, what did she want?

SG: She used to--, she used to carry little cards in her pocketbook. She had a large pocketbook, and she--. They were prompt cards. [Tape skips] speeches--

MHG: () card.

SG: --so you'd know what town he was in, you know.

MHG: Oh, yes!

SG: Then he'd have--, she'd have different people's names that he should mention. And you know, the different topics that were supposed to be the message that day. And she'd pull them out there, and then finally, she realized he wasn't paying any attention to her. So Martha was sitting there on the platform with me, and Lady Bird just reached over and pulled his coat tail-- pulled it a little hard so he looked down-- she flashed him a card. [Chuckle]

BP: *Doing what wives do.*

MHG: Yes, yes.

BP: *It's such an interesting thing to realize, though, that--*

MHG: --they would do that, as high up, high up as they were.

SG: Well, everybody used to--, from Texas used to fear Lyndon, but they loved Lady Bird, and they still do.

BP: *I'm one of her fans.*

SG: Well, unfortunately, she's going blind now. And one of her granddaughters, Lucy [Tape skips].

BP: () *a miracle. I think that's one of the best campaigns of any ().*

SG: Well, you know, that, that was killed-- no, wounded badly-- by the Republicans, who just did it to spite that.

BP: *There's a lot of spitefulness, but--, as you know. [Chuckle]*

SG: They wanted to embarrass the president, and so they figured that was a good piece of legislation. Pressure points of the--. The president had invited us all down to the White House to celebrate the passage of that bill. [Tape skips] finally passed.

MHG: Yeah, and then everybody came to the White House.

SG: Everybody. Yeah, but you know, the trouble is, they wounded it badly. Some of the billboard laws got () in that.

MHG: But after that vote, we were ten minutes--, we're already waiting at the White House.

SG: Oh, yes.

MHG: The wives, mostly. And then when the session broke up, they all--, the men came, filed in. And I remember that.

SG: Oh, yeah. And they--, we celebrated, but we--, sort of muted, because we realized the Republicans, by their obstinate opposition, that they were--, wounded the piece of legislation more than we anticipated. Because, you know, [Tape skips] lasting effects on our society.

MHG: We never partied for the 88th group- we're the 88th Congress group selling them out. And now it's up to 100 and [Tape skips]. She and Lyndon had a party at their home, including all the freshmen. And I'll never forget that. That was a beautiful party. ().

BP: Yes, I can imagine. And she was gracious. [Tape skips]

SG: She was a beautiful lady.

BP: Lady Bird.

SG: Came in with her hair curlers still in her hair- she'd forgotten.

BP: [Laughter]

SG: What was, what was her name?

MHG: Oh, it was ().

SG: She was in the receiving line with us, and Martha had to ().

MHG: No, not Mann, but [Tape skips] McNamara.

BP: Robert McNamara. [Laughter]

SG: Yeah, she was a real nice lady.

MHG: It was McNamara's wife.

SG: Still had her hair curlers on.

MHG: I'd forgotten that.

SG: Forgot to take them out when--. She missed a couple of them in the back.

BP: Oh, my!

MHG: Yes, she had it. They were in the back, right here.

BP: Oh, oh, that's a wonderful anecdote! [Laughter]

SG: One night I brought this little plug up there. They was having a Christmas party, I guess it was. Wasn't it a Christmas party?

MHG: Maybe. I don't know what you're going to--

SG: Dr. ().

MHG: Oh!

SG: Dr.--. The computer manufacturer- he was Secretary of Defense then. They were having a party there, and Martha was to pay all the servers. And they were handing these packets out, and--

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]