

Jane Grant deMcCarty
Interviewed by Tom Purdy at St. James,
6/17/1977

Warren Lucas: Good evening everybody and welcome once again to the historic St. James hall located on 116 and 124, at Close's corners in North Salem. My name is Warren Lucas; I'm president of the North Salem Historical Society and the date is June 17, 1977. After more than a year of stop and go planning the historical society is happy to present your neighbor and friend Jane deMcCarty. A granddaughter of our late President Ulysses S. Grant. Jane is going to share with us tonight the memories of living, growing up, and life of Merryweather, the former Grant homestead in North Salem. Our interviewer, Jane's cousin and former past president of the historical society, is Thomas L. Purdy, Jr. I would like to turn the mic over to Jane and Tom on one condition, that I be able to ask the first question. Tom or Jane. As a kid I learned who was, what color Washington's White House was, but I never did learn, actually, who was buried in Grant's tomb.

JG: General Grant

TP: Good afternoon, good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Certainly, Mrs. Jane Grant deMcCarty needs no introduction to people here in North Salem, particularly the older residents. She's lived most of her life here in town. In fact, she went to the one-room school house, which is located between here and the town hall, right on 116. And a number of years ago she moved over to Connecticut, just a half a mile over the border. So, unfortunately, we can't claim her as a resident, or at least a legal resident of our community any longer. But she always has been and always will be a big part of our community. It's rather hard for me to refer to Jane as Mrs. DeMcCarty, because my brother, who is a great deal older than I am, my oldest brother, he really took the place of my father who had died years before, married Jane's mother back in 1925. It was a second marriage for both of them. And Jane and I, in 25, of course, were very, very young, and we were more or less brought up together. So, that is our relationship. Now, just in case there is any doubt in anybody's mind here just where the property is, that we are going to be discussing this evening, I would like to explain that it is just about a half a mile south of here, between Route 121 and 124, on the other side of the Titicus River. Now the large house now is owned by the Beckwiths. The place known always as the schoolhouse is the Armstrong's home. And until recently the house that was always known as the cottage which is right on the corner was the Lippmanns' home. The farm was a large part of it is now known as the Dansker property. There's some doubt in minds of us all in the community as to who owns it but it is referred to as the Dansker property. Now over on the other side of Route 121, there's an even larger parcel of land that went up and included the home that Maria Spate now has. Was also in the Grant Farm. It was really a very large piece of property. Now I would like, I have a number of questions, as Warren mentioned, that I want to ask Jane this evening, and it pretty well covers the Grant place and the family that lived there. But if that, at the end of the questions that I have, if anybody has any questions I'm sure we have the best authority right here to answer them, as far as Grant questions are concerned. Now, Jane, my first question was, which I'm sure everybody knows, was your relationship was to General Grant and we all know that you are his great-granddaughter. I'll go on and ask where was

the General born, and just where and when, if you recall or know exactly.

JG: Well, first of all, I'd like to acknowledge your introduction to me and just to introduce a slight note of humor, I'm beginning to feel more and more like the Navy fellow my husband picked up to drive him to the base at Quonset. And he was all dressed up and my husband said, "My goodness you're dressy for an ordinary Monday, working morning." And the kid said, "Well, I had to get all gussied up because they are going to give me the Purple Heart." Just the way I feel.

TP: Going to get the Purple Heart.

JG: Anyway, General Grant was, you all know from the history book as much as I do about it, really, but he was born in on April 27, 1822 over in Claremont County, Ohio. And Ohio figured largely in his life. Most of his life. And what was your next question?

TP: Well, then, the, I wondered how long did he live and when did he die?

JG: He died in 1885, so he didn't have too many years, you see, to enjoy visiting at the, that's how we've been called, the Grant place, at Merryweather Farm.

TP: He had quite a number of children, didn't he? I've heard a lot of this time and again, but I've forgotten, so a lot of this is new to me as it is to everyone else. Now he had, how many children?

JG: Well, he had three boys and a daughter. Three sons and a daughter. Fred and Ulysses, Jr. and Nellie, the girl, the daughter, and Jesse.

TP: Ulysses, Jr. was your grandfather, that's correct. Now, there's quite of, I believe, a good deal of, something that interested me, not just Ulysses, Jr., but the person that he married, and, his in-laws, could you tell us a little about that?

JG: Well, when my great-grandfather was President, after he had been General, and had been in the White House serving two terms, by that time his oldest son Fred, I think had gone to West Point. And my grandfather was a Harvard man. And then Jesse went to Cornell and, of course, Nellie, the daughter, was terribly spoiled and wouldn't stay in boarding school in any case. So, what did you ask me?

TP: I asked you, about your

JP: Oh, who he married?

TP: Who he married? Ulysses Grant, Jr.

JG: Well he had married, Fannie Josephine Chaffee, who was the daughter of Senator Jerome B. Chaffee, who was in pretty, fairly prominent, quite prominent, I would say, and I can't tell you the date, that he was instrumental in bringing Colorado into the Union as a state. And I can't tell you the date of that, but my son, who is a history buff could tell you. It

was what, 1869 or 68 or something like that? 88. Well anyway, she was Fannie Josephine Chaffee. The place was bought by her father and given to them as a wedding present

TP: That is the Grant place here.

JG: Grant place here

TP: Was bought, not by the Grants, but by Senator Chaffee for his daughter.

JG: As I understand it, it was made up of two farms, at least two. One belonging to the Cables in North Salem and, I believe, the cottage had been brought over from the east side of the road, 121, I believe, and put where it is now.

TP: Now, you told me something that was very interesting the other day about the people who had previously owned the place and what was there, on the Grants' property

JG: Oh, bought from the Libby canning people. And they owned that, too. I'm a little fuzzy on that, too. I think it must have been, I think it had to have been around 1880.

TP: About 1880. I think that it is very interesting that, of course, they are very well known later - industrialists, canning business, that they owned the place before the Grants did.

JG: They did, and it was lovely.

TP: And before, actually the Chaffees, and gave it to the Grant girl. Well, then you have the, talked about U S. Grant, Jr. He was the first, he then, U. S. Grant Jr and his bride, Miss Chaffee, who married him, were the first people actually to live in that place. Is that correct?

JG: Well, the Libbys lived in it....

TP: The first Grants, I should say

JG: Oh, yes, while they were remodeling it they lived over in Waccabuc. Now this fascinates me because, of course, there's no sign of it now, but there had been a hotel, a summer-type hotel, at the edge of Waccabuc, just opposite where the Mead Chapel is, on what we always called the shallow end of the lake. And my grandparents lived there while it was being, the Libby place, was being remodeled. And, of course, it had been, ya, I think you have a picture of it, Warren, as it was, a very large, completely stone building.

WL: Warren - You mean the original?

JG: Yes

TP: This was the picture of the place called

JG: Inland Vale

TP: Inland Vale, before, when the Chaffees, when Senator Chaffee bought it for his daughter. That's correct, yes?

JG: That's correct. They were city people, my grandparents, and so when they came up and did all this remodeling, the house was remodeled to be as city life was, with a basement kitchen and all of that. I think that's interesting to people who now come out to the country because they want to live in a country house and it was not so in that day.

TP: Well, let's pursue the family a little bit, that lived there. We have General Grant's son and his daughter-in-law, there now. Now what was there, they were the first Grants really to live there. And, did the General ever really live there or did he, what was his association?

JG: Well, he came up and spent time visiting as people do, you know. But, as I said before, he didn't have very much time. Between the time he had finished his world cruise, world tour, and the year he died which was 1885. So he didn't have an awful lot of time to spend there. But he did spend time; he had his horses, his very beautiful, prize horses, which he expected to develop into quite a horse farm, I guess you might call it.

TP: Now you tell me something quite interesting the other day about where he got those horses.

JG: Now, there I don't know for sure.

TP: Well, now you told me the other day

JG: It's all hearsay

TP: You...most everything we know is hearsay

JG: I'm just scared. The history books have told such dreadful things of my poor, great-grandfather that, some story has it that the whiskey people gave it to, gave him these horses. He was very much in trouble with the public over that and I just don't know. You all know more about that than I do. Cuz, I wouldn't tell a scandal on the family.

[laughter]

TP: I thought you told me that the Sultan of Turkey gave him some horse

JG: I heard that.

TP: That he had and he bred horses.

JG: He did. He did do that. And he had some beautiful horses and lovely carriages. And when we came on the scene there still were a few carriages and some tack. You know, the silver bridle and silver buckle with the USG on them. The monogram.

TP: What was the,...he had his own special horse there.

JG: Linden tree, by name.

TP: Linden tree. That was his

JG: Big, big, looked like a dapple, I don't really know, I've only seen a picture of it, big dapple gray. Arabian.

TP: Now was that a, well, what area, also, I'd like to fill a little bit about the family that were there. Now, we have General Grant's son and his wife, now how many children did they have and from which one are you, which one are you descended

JG: Well, they had five children. Girl first, and then a boy, the boy being Chaffee Grant, my father.

TP: He was the first, the oldest.

JG: No, Miriam was the oldest.

TP: Oh, that was the girl.

JG: Another girl, Julia, and then another girl Fannie, that you know about. And the youngest one was Ulysses, IV. And the reason that he was Ulysses, IV., being the son of Ulysses, Jr., does sound a bit peculiar. But, the oldest son of General Grant, Fred Grant, had before that time had a son and he named his son Ulysses. And that one had to be, couldn't be Jr., of course, he had to be III. So, that's why my little uncle had to go through life with the weight of number IV at the end of his name

TP: Well, I would just like to go onto something here that might be of interest. Jane mentioned Fannie, one of the daughters.

JG: Oh, I didn't know he was going to tell that.

[laughter]

TP: That I know about. Well, Fannie was my oldest brother's first wife. I mentioned that when he married Jane's mother. That was his second marriage. But his first marriage was Fannie Grant. And his second marriage was Jane's mother. And Jane's mother's first marriage was Chaffee Grant. So, my brother and Jane's brother, ah, father, married, mother, married brothers and sisters .

JG: I told him he shouldn't have done this.

TP: Gets very confusing.

JG: His brother is my step half uncle, actually.

TP: ...not cousin....You had quite a big family that lived there in, or, not you, but the Grants,

had a pretty big family that lived there in the house. And can you tell us a little bit about the house itself. You mentioned to me that, you said that the Libby's bought it and you can see the picture of it as the Libby house. I think the artist took quite a little license with the hills and things around it and the photography here, but the general appearance of the house has certainly changed a good deal. And, who is responsible for that change?

JG: Oh, Grandpa, my Grandpa, -father Grant, had Stanford White, somebody in Stanford White's office deal with the changes and it was done in the style of that day and age which is many cupolas and a lot of super? structures, with wood and shingles and all. And, we never thought it was as pretty if he had left it alone entirely, but then what difference.

TP: I think it is very interesting that Stanford White did it. He was probably the outstanding architect in the country at that time. That he, they had something here in North Salem that he

JG: They really did a good job. The house is beautifully built.

TP: And you were, on the outside, telling us a little bit about the way he did the house about the doors and stairs and things such as that. I think people would be, that haven't been in the house, would be interested to know a little bit.

JG: Well it is obviously impressive to everybody because it is a huge house, with very large rooms, and all the doors are oversized doors, but just push with your fingers and they closed quietly and evenly instead; I've never been in a house with doors that functioned like that. But that's just one thing. The wall papers on the walls had been put on, well I'll say, 1880. And as far as I know, I do know that up to 1945 when my mother sold it, the wallpaper, there wasn't a crack in it. It was just like leather on the walls. And no floors were out of line, it was just a marvel, because, you know, now-a-days you have a warped floor and a crooked beam here and everything.

TP: Well, I remember years ago the parties that we used to, you, the family used to have there and it seemed to be no end, the people would come and, there never seemed to be very much of a crowd. It was

JG: It was pretty large; the rooms themselves were large, and another thing that might interest the distaff side of the audience is to remember and consider the fact that there was no electricity, which means that that house, with all these rooms had to be lighted with kerosene lamps. And, if you can picture the number of kerosene lamps that it would take, for the globes to be washed and the wicks to be trimmed. Just think of it.

TP: We were discussing it the other day and we thought that a conservative number would be something like fifty kerosene lamps that

JG: At least,

TP: At least that. And you can imagine the job of just washing and cleaning and trimming the

wicks and washing the chimneys and all the other kerosene lamps would be quite a job. And then you mentioned also some of the other sultries in the house. You said that it had an infinite number of closets.

JG: Oh, many, many closets. Some are even on the stairway going up. And cubby holes under the stairs where you could put I don't know how much wine or cigars or whatever as a halfway stop between cellar and dining room. It was a fantastic house to play in.

TP: I remember we used to have a great time up in the third floor that, that, at the time, well, we're getting a little bit ahead of ourselves here because I want to trace a little bit more the history of the house. Getting back to Ulysses Grant Jr.'s children who lived there, Jane's father is when he was a youngster. They lived there in the house up until approximately when did they live there with the house fully furnished and you mentioned some of the furnishings that were really Edwardian style,

JG: Yes, the Edwardian

TP: I understand they are in the style on which the Grants had become accustomed

JG: Well, let me see, at least until 1888. They were there through the blizzard of '88 and I think they stayed another five years, and then they couldn't stand it any longer.

TP: You said the blizzard of '88 sort of punished them.

JG: Yes, that was really a killer. Because you think, you know how you plow the roads, it must have been a team with a funny pie-shaped thing that dragged along.

TP: Well, they lived there until about, oh, say 1890, you are not sure of the exact date. Then the house, after that, what was, what happened?

JG: Well, my grandmother was an invalid at that time, by that time, and so grandma thought it would be a good idea for them all to go out to California and try the more salubrious climate. And they did and fell in love with San Diego, particularly, and stayed there and they never came back. They just never came back. They left it in charge of an old fellow and his wife who just took care of it, that is to say, just to see that nothing happened to it, that vandals didn't break in.

TP: Well, now, something that is just a little side life, something that is rather interesting. You mentioned that the old fellow that took care of the house, mentioned where he lived. He lived first on the Grant place, but then where did he spend the last years of his life and tell us a little bit about his wife like you told me the other day? Remember

JG: Oh, he lived over across the road, across what is 124. The house is burned down now, just a stone side of it shows, I think it's still showing. Anyways, he had been the coachman, and he married the woman who had been brought out of New York City by my great-grandmother, Mrs. U. S. Grant, the General's widow, as her, he had been her laundress in New York, she had been her laundress. So, Sophie just stayed there and did

that thing - all time, everyday type job. And she and Dick kind of lived on the place and were caretakers and then some years later, I think, where Jimmy and Tommy is, they lived over in the what was called the ??? Farm, where the Whitmans are.

TP: They lived, they moved over....I just think that it is interesting that General Grant's laundress was one of the people who, one of the people who many years ago, in addition to Ogden Mills, lived in the house that the Whitmans, that Helen Whitman now owns. Ogden Mills lived there, of course I presume most everybody knows and that's the reason why we have Mills Road there. But, in addition to that it was Sophie Hunter who happened to be General Grant's laundress, which is just a little history. So, but anyway, now, you mentioned to me another thing I thought was quite interesting, in the way of life, in those days, they had a number of, quite a staff, to run the place and you mentioned the very modest facilities that they had. And, I think that people would be interested to know what you told me. Laugh I just think it's interesting.

JG: The servants, and there were I think four. There were four bedrooms on the third floor. And they were nice, pretty shape; everything was alright about that. But, there was no bath provided, no toilets, nothing, provided for those people, except in a little hallway - I think you call it a set-tub, which had running hot and cold water, and they were supposed to make due with that and go down, clear down to this basement to a terrace, or outdoors, to an outdoor one, and it's just, you wouldn't have people live that way now. You couldn't get away with it this day. And it's just fantastic to think that the work that those people had to do, for just a roof over their heads and, of course, four squares.

TP: Well now, something else that I think is interesting that you mentioned - where did they get their water from for this...

JG: Oh, it was all from springs across the road and up the hill and two small lakes, they were called lakes but they really were more like ponds. And it was a gravity system, and the water for the big house came in and was brought up to the top floor and put in, was stored in rather a large tank. Their other houses, I believe, were at lower enough levels so they didn't require a storage tank. But there was loads of water, enough to take care of the farm, and the three houses. And did you mention the fact, or did you want me to mention the fact that the house the Armstrongs now own had been the schoolhouse on the place?

TP: I was going to come to that in just a minute. You mentioned the thing that was interesting about the tank. I always, the thing that, one of the things that really impressed me about that place, as I remember it years ago, is the lovely, lovely plantings there. And you mentioned certain nuts and certain shrubs that they had.

JG: Yes, judis I think it's called. Or, red bud as it's called in the South. At that time there were no red bud trees in this area. They all, I mean that there were, were up and down the Hudson River, at those large estates. It was General Grant, I understand, who insisted upon bringing pretty things in and that was one of the things that he had brought in.

TP: Another thing you mentioned is the number of driveways, the extraordinary number of driveways into the place, that serviced it

JG: Five entrances.

TP: You could come in from five different directions, and they weren't just driveways, they were beautiful trees on either side, just an avenue of trees, going into them. Particularly the one coming from 121, from the north, if I remember, was a lovely...

JG: Yes, that was maybe the longest one.

TP: That was a lovely, very, very impressive. Well, you were going to mention the house that our friends the Armstrongs live in now. Could you tell us a little bit about how that happened and how it took its sort of unusual shape.

JG: Well, it was, it's French in character and appearance and they had to have an ice house to service the big house, as we call it, and I don't know what else, so, the house that the Armstrongs have, called schoolhouse, the long? room, it's on, facing 121 was the school room, and the governess was put in residence there. And she just had the children come down and they went to school with her, in that building. And she lived there and the rest of the house, was a very large, right up to the ceiling, ????room, they could have dancing and an orchestra. And the local people, children were invited to come in, share the fun and take dancing lessons. And a dancing master come out of New York periodically to teach them how to dance, how to behave themselves. And the orchestra played and they had quite a nice time, I guess.

[laughter]

TP: Then, as I remember it, you lived there at one time.

JG: Well, I've lived in all three, that is interesting to me. I don't know whether it would be so fascinating to other people. It was a bit strange

TP: I remember particularly I think that was part of the last, the three that you lived in, as I recall.

JG: Right...We lived in the cottage in the winter and then we moved north for the summer. And either rented the cottage to some people out of New York City who rented it every year. And the schoolhouse had been rented by the year to some people who lived in it, oh, for a long time. And that's the way we had, we carried on. It was very nice.

TP: Well, now, speaking of the cottage, you told me something that's fascinating, but, at least it was to me. I have a consumed curiosity about bones and places such as that. And, where was that was that built there, or where did that come from?

JG: Now I understand that it had been a cottage on the Cable land. The Cables apparently owned quite a farm across 12?, across the road from us there, to the east. And, some of the orchard still stood when we came East and took that property over from my grandfather's family. But, it had been brought over and then added to, I'm sure it had to have some sort of an addition because it had been very small. But there again that is hearsay. Now Mrs. Cable told me, and I believe I am remembering it correctly, that it had been on her father's or uncle's property. So even then they were moving houses around,

you see.

TP: Now you mentioned that when you came there, when we were discussing the family, long ago, we sort of left them high and dry.....having vacated North Salem to California, San Diego, to be exact. And here you are back again here

JG: Kicking and screaming, I might add.

TP: In North Salem, will you sort of explain that situation. How you happen to, I mean your family, your father, and mother, how they came back and took over the place from the caretakers.

JG: Well, nobody wanted it. That was quite obvious. My grandfather and grandmother did not, and none of the other members of the family who been living in the east. So, my father was persuaded to buy it from his family and he sold whatever he had as holdings in San Diego and he bought it. And we came east, and the year that we did that was, what, 1916, or something like that.

TP: 1916

JG: And, you know, innocense, we thought if you're going to try and be a farmer you better get there when the spring is at its height. And so we left San Diego and landed at Purdy Station at the end of March in a snow storm. It was ????. Shall I tell about you being brought to call on me?

[laughter]

TP: Ah, let's leave that for later. Ah let's, I never sort of, jumping around here, and, let me get back to....you were talking about the cottage, and you still have a number of things that you told me about that. You mentioned that there was quite an interesting person who lived there.

JG: Oh, Mr. Comstock. Is that who you mean?

TP: Mrs. Comstock

JG: No. Mr. Comstock and his wife. They were some kind of kin to my grandmother. And they had come from Adrian, Michigan, where my grandmother was born and where her family seat had been. And, Simply brought there because he was so amiable and he lived in the cottage and was caretaker and as I like to describe it he kinda was a moppper up of childrens' tears, you know. And everybody loved him. And anyone in the town who was here that long ago will tell you how widely loved that man was. They lived there until they died, in the cottage, I meant. But I don't know how interesting they were outside of that.

TP: Well, you mentioned that he was so amiable that your family, I believe, that they wanted him to, him and his wife, to come there as long as somebody, on who's shoulder they could all cry.

JG: Yes, yes that's about it.

TP: Put in ?????? Crying time...

JG: And everybody did. Everybody ran down; the children couldn't pronounce his name so clearly so he was always called Big Tonk.

TP: Big Tonk.

JG: Unhuh, and his wife was called Little Tonk.

TP: And he was there before Ken and Lois.

JG: They died, they died before we came east.

TP: Now, one thing that I think that would be interesting. You were going to tell a little bit about life, the way it was then, and then, the graciousness, the way people lived. Would you like to explain.

JG: Oh, I don't have to think about that because I've always loved opulence, myself, and I loved the Edwardian era, and I loved family and relatives, everybody in my family has always welcomed their relatives, and back then, there were, of course, more relatives to come and stay in the summer, or the year, or five years, or whatever. So, everybody had lots of cousins and aunts and uncles to have to play? with, you know.

TP: And lots of room at the Grant place to have all the cousins from all over came there. Well, now I was going to ask you also about the farming operation there. What did, back, you said that they bred horses on the farm; did they use the farm for very much else besides horses. What did they

JG: Oh, yes. It was self maintaining. It was a, it had a cow barn that took care of, I would say, a herd of thirty to thirty six or so horses, I mean cows, dairy cows. And it had supported, of course, there must have been six or more horses to drive the, to pull the carriages. There the usual things that are on a farm. It was self-sustaining.

TP: Well, now, another question that I want to ask you, was about barns. It's a, I think that it's an interesting thing. You told me what gorgeous barns that they had there that I just barely remember. Huge box stalls that we used to play in that I believe is where your grandfather raised horses and bred horses there. And that they burned, didn't they?

JG: Yes, they did. The whole thing burned and I can't tell you what year that was either. It had been a tremendous, a lot of carriages, as I told you earlier....

TP: The other day, and I made a note of it. We figured out when it burned, that was the first huge barns they had, and it burned in 19, in the early 1920s, and they were really big barns. And then it was rebuilt, right?

JG: It was rebuilt, yes. A barn, I think I'm right about this, that had been over on your family's property, Warren, am I right about that? An old hotel or some kind of building. My step-father had it brought over.

TP: That was much later, if you recall. That was after the second fire. There were two fires, two barn fires there.

JG: No, but the second fire was really the house

TP:and the next one was in the 40s

JG: Yes, I know that, but that one that you're speaking of now was merely the .???Winter??... house and chicken house and things like that. The big, big barn, the handsome one that burned that earlier time.

TP: And then it was

JG: And that replacement is still there, except of course with modifications that Carlo Paterno did.

TP: And that was from, rebuilt from the hotel up in.

JG: Wasn't it? Would you know?

WL: That's the first I've heard of it.

JG: uhuh, it came I believe from Bloomerside. Now I could be wrong about that. And I don't know whether it was merely a carriage house, it had been near a hotel, where it was, well, anyway, I'm quite sure it was brought from there. And either torn down, or reconstructed, or whatever. But that seemed like a very good way to do; my stepfather thought that that was better than, worrying poor Mr. Reynolds about some almost non-existent insurance, you know.

TP: Now, you mentioned some other thing earlier, at least I did, back in your time, you went to a little one-room schoolhouse. Where the Dodds, I don't know if they still own it or not, but I believe everybody knows where that is between here and the town hall on 116. You went there.

JG: We walked there

TP: Could you tell us a little bit about that. You mean you didn't have a schoolbus?

JG: Not to that school; no, not we, we were supposed to be able to be sturdy enough to do that and it was just a little lane, 124, it was merely a dirt lane, you know. And we did. Mother wouldn't let me take my lunch. I had to walk home at lunch time. Can you believe it?

TP: You walked home for lunch

JG: And back again.

TP: Back again.

JG: But that was on, I think I only went to that school a year. It might have been two years, when they built the consolidated school. Then we went to that, walking of course again.

TP: The consolidated school being the school over here that burned. Well you mentioned it being a lane. I'd just like to learn something, this road, 124, between this place here which is known as Close's corner, because of the old Close house that was over here, what was his first name?

JG: Charlie.

TP: Charlie Close lived there, a great musician and piano tuner, lived there. And, the Grants Corners was one of the most lovely roads that I remember because it had huge maple trees on either side that met in the middle. And it was a little old dirt road that went down there to Grants Corners and you referred to it as just a little lane.

JG: Well our property was on both sides of it so we didn't feel as if we were getting too far afield, you know. May I speak about Charlie Close's geese. Because that was really terrifying. I was quite young, as you can imagine, and my little brother was five years younger, and that is when I first began to feel responsible for my parents and other relatives, especially my little brother. Because in grammar school we had to walk, as I told you, mother insisted on that, and in going by Charlie Close's it was a terrifying game to see if we could sneak by before the geese came out and pecked us. And I had to be so brave, not feeling the least brave, because my little brother was terribly thin and small and one peck on his legs would have done him in. So I had to pretend to be the fearless leader and believe me I was not. I won't forget that in a hurry.

TP: Well, that's very interesting. But what I'd, it's very sad about these trees, it's just too bad that when they built the concrete road, long before we knew or gave much thought about ecology and preservation and anti-slashing such as that because...[change tape] but it's a great shame that something like that couldn't have been preserved. But, would you like to ask the people here if they have any particular questions that they'd like to ask now?

JG: I would be delighted if anybody could think of anything that they would like to know that they think that I might know. Please remember that it is all hearsay. All I remember are a few geese. Well, I remember my own memory. We did have a lot of fun and I do want to mention I spoke of Tommy coming to call on me. It was really quite a highlight. That was the first day I really realized that a person could live in this part of the country and enjoy it. Because I didn't have anyone to play with and it was dreadful to be brought from sunny California to this stuff. Tommy was brought to call on me and guess how. Sleigh with sleigh bells, yet. And, was it just one horse, do you suppose?

TP: Well, it depends, if father brought me it was probably in a one-horse sled.

JG: I don't remember that part.

TP: If mother did, it was with the team.

JG: I remember you sitting in, the only one in the sleigh, I'm sure. With a big coon's skin robe over your lap. And I thought, my goodness, how about that, that's better than we've got it.

TP: I still have that coon skin robe. It's old, in moth balls. I'll have to get it ...

JG: So, anyway, if anybody would care

TP: Anybody have any particular questions?

Arm: [Arm for Miss Armstrong] Tom, where, I wonder if Jane knows, where the name Merryweather came from. How did that happen that it's called Merryweather?

JG: I really think that my grandparents just thought that it was a pretty name. And the weather in those days, they say, was really pretty nice. Beginning with the first of May I remember my grandfather used to say that if you weren't there by the first of May you've missed an awful lot because it was just beautiful. Warmer than it is now and stayed warmer all through, I guess through October, and the weather was merry. I understand that is the only background there is on that.

Arm: I wonder because I had grown up since we came here with the idea that, ??storm?? Grant corner, and that everything at Grants Corner was just very, very merry and everything out side was the opposite.

JG: Is that so, maybe they just thought that it was so.

Arm: One day I watched one of our great big trees jump out of the ground eleven feet

JG: To.....across the road, yes.

Arm: So I wondered how that name came.

JG: I don't really know. I think that was it.

Arm: And the other question is, our house was then called the Ebenezer house. Do you know the name or how that came?

JG: They named everything, my father's family. They named everything, every pond, every tree, of course the horses and everything, named by the children. And Ebenezer just happened to sound nice to the children so that's what they called it. That's a fact.

Arm: I know your mother was the one that told this story, maybe you've forgotten it, or maybe I've got it misplaced. That one of the governors who lived in the house, who was the teacher, was a very cross, old gentleman, and the children didn't like him very much. So they would get up in the morning, at the big house, and look over at the schoolhouse and with ever so much, not happy feeling, would say, "well, okay, let's go over to the Ebenezer house" because they had been calling him Ebenezer after Ebenezer Scrooge.

JG: Could be, I never heard that, Ms. Armstrong. I never heard that. But that doesn't mean that it isn't so.

Unk: I'd like to ask Ms. deMcCarty two questions, slightly afield. I've read a good deal about General Grant and I recently read that his wife's journal which was unpublished and then uncovered and published within the last few years. The first question is, I associate General Grant with the summer place that he had called Mount Clemons. Is that in this area?

JG: No, no.

Unk: We spent most of my summers there. He became very sick there and I think he died in New York City

JG: No, Mount McGregor, but he

Unk: Oh, Mount McGregor. Was that in this area or was that further up

JG: No, I think it was up near Saranac, perhaps. Saranac in upper New York State. I don't know the, did you say Mount Clemons?

Unk: I thought, well maybe it was Mount McGregor. I may be confused. The other question, as you mentioned, I think an Aunt of yours who's name was Julia, was she the lady that became princess,

TP: Cantacuzene

Unk: ...pronunciation....Cantacuzene

JG: No, Cantacuzene. She's not the one. It was their cousin, their first cousin, Julia.

Unk: She died. She died within the last couple of years, a very old lady. She's not the one. She didn't live there?

JG: No, she came to visit, there again, she spent much time. But her father had been given the post of something in the delegation over in Vienna, I don't know what his position was, but it was something pretty substantial. And they moved to Vienna when that girl was only about eleven or twelve. And they lived there and they had that kind of a life and that's how she met and married Prince Michael Cantacuzene. And it was she, not my aunt. It was my father's first cousin.

JL: [JL = Jim Lundy] Tom remarks about the place being a great place to play and having wonderful driveways, put me in mind of perhaps more recent history, just very recently, 37 or 38 years ago. There was a lady I remember who lived on that place with a son, whose name was Peter Smith. I haven't seen either of them since but I remember playing with him. And I don't think Peter has changed very much....Jim Lundy, how are you Peter?

JG: Yes, same old fellow. Today is his birthday by the way.

TP: Happy Birthday

RK: [RK = Ruth Keeler] Jane,

JG: Yes, dear.

RK: I wonder if you ever

JG: I thought I heard a familiar voice

RK: I wonder if you ever realized that when my mother came to this town as a blushing bride and your mother, too, was, and they were continuously pregnant. They hated every minute in the town and they were each commiserating with the other.

JG: I remember hearing about it and your mother, being more sophisticated than mine, took mother in tow when my mother and father were going to make a trip to Europe, my mother's first time, and they stowed me away at my other grandmother's in Washington, Pennsylvania, at age, close to two years. And then mother came here again, after me being there. And your mother, Romola, took her mother in tow and they together they got mother quite a nice wardrobe, which mother never forgot. Particularly,

RK: They used to have a ball, as I, as mother tells me, when she first knew your mother, and her mother, they were living in the white house on the corner.

JG: Yes,

RK: And, always the big house was in perfect shape in case their father came....?? It is really a lovely house. I wonder how many people have ever been in there. You remember how we used to slide down the banister?

JG: I won't forget any of that

RK: All the way from the fourth floor.

JG: We really had a pretty good time, didn't we?

RK: That beautiful ballroom.

TP: I think the stairs in that house are something that really impressed me the most

RK: And the risers and those treads

JG: The risers were only about like so

RK: I know, it was just marvelous. Big enough for my feet, you know, this is marvelous. Because you could put two feet on them.

TP: Mrs. Beckwith could probably tell us how high they actually are. To me it seemed that they were only about four-inches high

RK: Yes, but the treads were so wide

JG: Yes.

TP: They were great, wide treads

RK: Beautiful

TP: Six feet, at least six feet

Unk: [might be Mrs. Beckwith] More than that. I'd just run up and down hundreds of times a day and never feel it

JG: No, there were very easy

TP: Just about, I'd say about four inches.

RK: And the dumb waiter.

JG: Yes, the dumb waiter. That was another thing I meant to ?startle?? everybody with. Of course, everybody knows about what dumb waiters are, but when you consider that that house was so huge. And, just a, say, of roast chicken or something had to be all done in the basement and then brought on the dumb waiter up to the butler's pantry, and transferred to something suitable to bring it to the table. And we have, I don't know how they did that. And they didn't have a butler as I understand it. It was all done with a waitress. And cook.

RK: Is your son Peter here?

JG: Peter, right here. Peter Smith

RK: I know, but I didn't see him.

JG: He's shy

RK: He and ?? use exercise their expertise against the corporate shares

JG: They did.

RK: ??

JG: They did.

RK: Yes, indeed.

JG: We better ask about that.

TP: This gentleman over here has a question

BB: [BB = Bob Beckwith] Mrs. DeMcCarty, I wonder if you could tell us a bit more about, I'm sure it would have to be hearsay, about this mysterious period between 1890, roughly, and 1960 when your family moved back east and took possession of the house. I have heard from some families whom I met in the area, recently the, a Miss Seeger up in, of the famous Seeger family, who's descendent is the singer Pete Seeger, who lived over near Middleton??, I happened to meet her for the first time a few years before she died, just recently. She recalls very well living in the house, or, visiting, rather, visiting the house, when it was Merryweather. And she was one of several people who have been under the impression that at one time it was an inn of some sort.

JG: That's true. That's true. One summer mother was, this was before mother had the cottage rented to anyone, so we stayed in the cottage that summer and people named Miss, well, Miss Crook and her sister, Miss Hannah Crook, who lived in Ellie Lowe's, the house that Ellie Lowe now owns. For years they lived there. They decided that they would run a tearoom. There wasn't any such thing around, so they did that that summer; that's true. And I remember ?? Seeger, it was that long ago. It was only run as a tea house, I believe, that one year. Just one year. And I don't know what success it was. But, I remember how marvelously good it smelled because these people had cinnamon, you know, to put in tea. Well, we never did that. Cinnamon and lemon and the house smelled just wonderful of cinnamon and lemon.

TP: I remember the only other tea house any where around was the Port of Missing Men, remember the Port of Missing Men?

JG: Oh, you remember that?

TP: Surely. That goes back a few years.

BB: About when would you guess that summer must have been?

JG: Oh, it would have to have been 1922, maybe, even. Because

BB: After the first World War.

JG: After. Let's see, 1915, I believe is the year we came east. My father bought it. And, I think that must have been 1922, about. You said mysterious year. Did you mean what they were doing in California all this time.

BB: I'm also concerned about what was happening with the house during this time, how it managed to, whether it was occupied every year.

JG: No, it was not. It was not. And eventually the grandparents in the summer would furnish it. A good deal of the furnishing they didn't seem to want. Some of it had even belonged to the Libbys. And some of it had belonged to Mrs., General Grant's widow. And it was kind of heavy and gloomy. They didn't want it. The people in California. I have it now. But they lived in California and had preserved their own San Diego home, most as big. My father and his sisters and his brother, were, well that's where they lived, and never intended to come east again. So, they just went to school there and ????

TP: Well they built the Grant hotel in

JG: Yes, in San Diego

TP: San Diego.

JG: But the house didn't have any, any, nothing happened to it. There was a hurdy gurdy that my family had and my father was very resentful of the fact that when he came back after all those years, the hurdy gurdy wasn't there. Now, somebody took it. But I don't think we'll look into it now. [laughter] So, nothing happened to it really. There would never had been any heat. There were two furnaces, for example, two hot-air furnaces in the big building and we never in my whole experience, we never had fire one in that, in the furnaces. And we only had one or two fires on the main fireplaces. So, nothing happened to the walls, to the woodwork, to the wallpaper. Nothing happened. It was that well made, I guess.

WL: Good children

JG: What

WL: Good children

JG: Well, the children wouldn't. I don't know. Pretty good, I guess.

BB: About what time was the house no longer lived in by your family. In the winter, as I understand it, that it had not been really used as a year-round dwelling for sometime after you, after, sometime before, before we became the owners. I wonder

JG: You mean the cottage, now?

BB: No, the large house

JG: Oh, I didn't recognize you. Ah, we never, we never lived in it in the winter. We never did. We came up

BB: After that first winter it was too much for you.

JG: No, no, we just never intended to. And the water was drained out and I remember the house always smelled in the spring beautifully of kerosene until the water worked through the plumbing. It was lovely, really, I mean nice and cool and breezy and once in a while a bat would come down the chimney.

TP: Well, see, after Jane, Jane's mother married my brother. See he lived down the road. His farm was, his house was where the Ebersol's live now. So, they moved south in the winter. They'd go down, and

JG: Farther south

[laughter]

TP: Huge place; a mile down the road. And, that was his farm, down there. So, that's where they lived in the winter. Then, in the summer they would come up and live at Merryweather.

BB: About when was that remarriage. Just for a

TP: 1925

BB: 1925

Unk: A gentlemen in the back here mentioned a moment ago about Julia Dent Grant's diary or journal.

JG: Yes.

Unk: That was recently published. I was fortunate to find a copy of it many months ago but I haven't had a chance to look at it yet. Was this diary or journal in the hands of your family or one of your relatives during all this time?

JG: It must have been made up of information that other members of the family had. I, I, nobody ever asked me about. I didn't have anything, really, except some little childish letters that referred to one thing or another. Childish letters I made of my father and sisters and that other Julia that went to Vienna, and just references to their grandmother, she was their grandmother Julia. And that's quite a nice book. She really was quite a person, I understand.

Arm: Jane, it must be interesting for some people to know, something about windows in both the big house and our house. They are quite unusual.

JG: Well, I don't know what's unusual about...the windows in your house, you mean the big long, long ones. The stained glass. Well, I guess they just thought it was pretty.

Arm: They are Tiffany, stained glass windows. And I think there are quite a few in the big house, too.

JG: I don't think there are any in the big house.

TP: I thought there were.

JG: I don't remember any stained glass windows.

TP: You would remember better than I do.

JG: No, I remember the skylight which is stained glass.

BB: ...???... The solarium, of course, has a stained glass type of window.

Arm: And they are all leaded, hand

JG: What are you speaking of as the solarium.

BB: The sun porch on the south side

JG: Oh, oh, oh, yes.

BB: I've always wanted to know I'm always 'astounded' about the exact history of that, that part of the house which is obviously an addition to the main house.

JG: Yes.

BB: Have you any idea when that addition was done?

JG: Well it was all done at the same time. It must have been 1882 or 3, something like that. And I remember when we came there were some tennis rackets and a the tennis net, which I think the children had strung across that room. It was not big enough, of course, to play the real tennis court, but they did, they played tennis in there on a rainy day. And it was just a place, you know, to keep them busy in the rain. A very nice room.

Unk: I'm wondering if we could maybe look at the family in terms of today, for example, the General was very active in public life. Does anyone in the family do public life today.

JG: My son is about to launch himself. [laughter] He doesn't want me to go into that. No I wouldn't say so. We all did make marines, navy, all of the services. That's about as important as we had ever been.

Unk: Did I read some time ago General Grant in Washington ... 'Pentagon'?

JG: Yes, he had been, he was the brother of the one that married the prince, the Russian prince, Prince Michael Cantacuzene. He was Ulysses S. Grant, III, he was, what was he

Tommy, he had a title, something to do with parks and monuments, and... I don't know what the title would be. Do you know Peter? He was very much in D.C., that's for sure. And it had to do with monuments and parks and things. But, outside of that I don't know. I really did have a commission in the army. I really was general.

TP: Charlie has a question.

Ch: Jane, I'd like to know who took down the beautiful Baroque that was on the roof, on the fore?side of the roof

JG: On the

Ch: Why did they take it down?

JG: I believe water got in there, Charlie. You know, and those things are really pretty bad. Those good ??ruins?? or whatever they are... or any kind of decoration like that. Water and snow gets in behind and it makes a horrendous leak. I think that must have been, so it was just taken off.

Ch: It wasn't gingerbread.... It was a beautiful piece of Baroque.

JG: But, if it is going to make your roof leak, better get it down.

Unk: ?Would they have stored them somewhere?

JG: What, oh, I wouldn't know. It was taken down many, many years ago.

Arm: We brought the picture that you gave us

JG: Oh, really

Arm: the entrance that you see, that Earl had shown a picture earlier. Quite lovely, I wish it were there.

JG: Well, I'm sorry. I don't know anything about it.

Arm: Make it over and put it back on.

JG: I don't believe it would be too much of a trick to do it.

Arm: Probably not.

WL: Thank you very much, Tom and Jane. I'm sure we could go on all night, and I'd like to go on all night. Maybe when we get down on the floor down there, we probably will to on all night.

JG: It's quite an honor for you to ask me to do this. I thank you.

WL: Maybe we can do it again next month.

JG: I'll have to start telling lies, then.

WL: While I have everybody as a captive audience here, I'd like to just mention that the historical society printed three books last year, oh, no, two books, excuse me. They took over another book, the original one that the kids did in the seventh grade, *When Our Town Was Young*. We have those for sale, in fact, that one's for sale. We have the one done by Helen Traeger on Pine Tree School. How did we title, what was the title of that, I always get that title bowled up. *The Schoolhouse at Pine Tree Corner*. And Helen Traeger is here tonight so I'm sure she'd be happy to sign it, if you care to buy one of those. And then the *Burial Grounds*, we have that also, by Stan [Ben] Katz. Let's see, and of course if you haven't paid your dues we'd be happy to accept those, too. We have refreshments in the back. I think, less but not least, thank you for coming. Hope you come out next month, I don't know what's on the docket for next month.

End