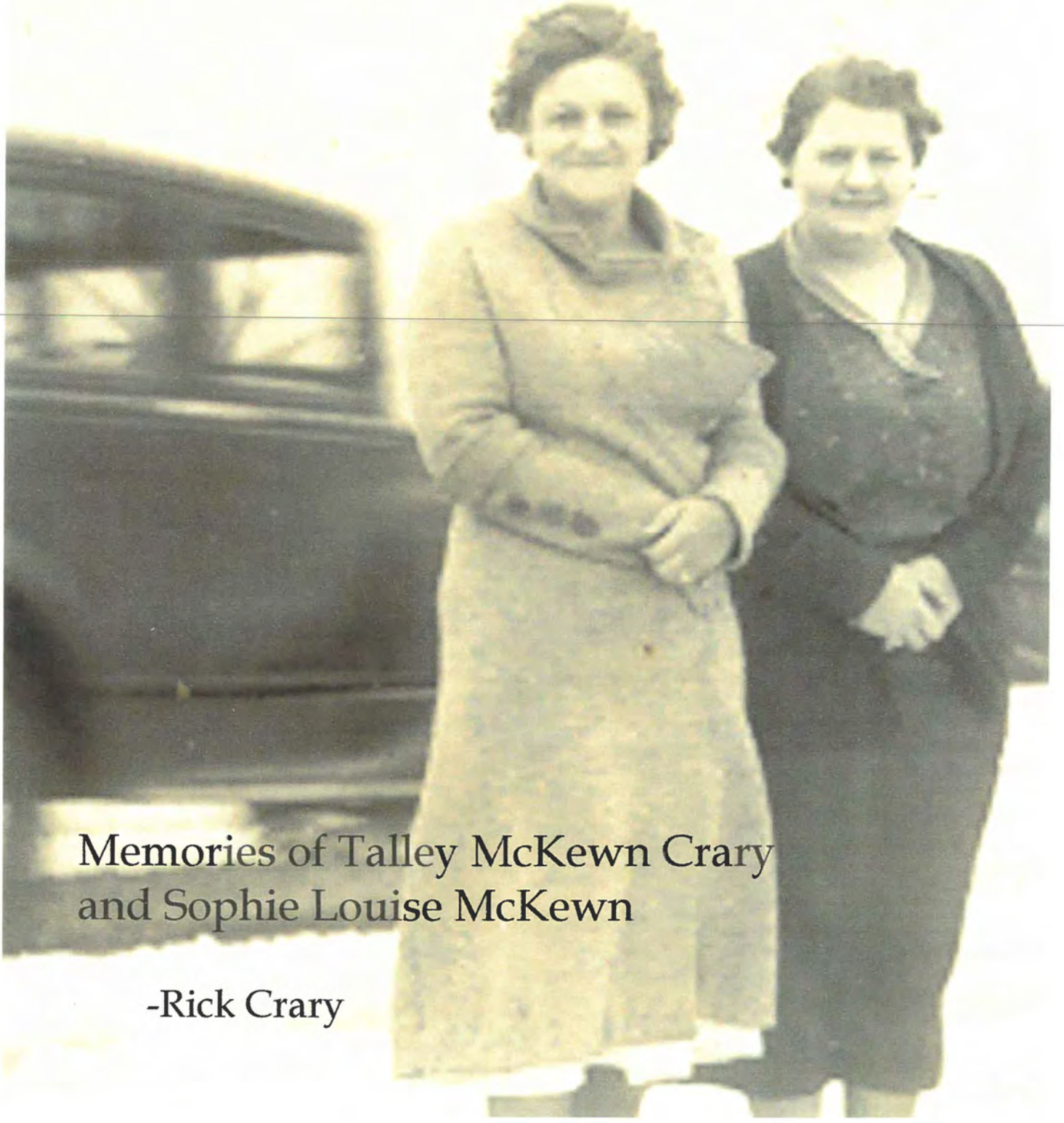
Old Times There Are Not Forgotten...



Memories of Talley McKewn Crary and Sophie Louise McKewn

-Rick Crary

I wish I was in de land ob cotton,
Old times dar am not forgotten,
Look away, look away, look away,
Dixie land....

-Dan D. Emmett, *Dixie*, (1859)

The past began to renew itself; the sun shone on the old days and gave them an illumination which they lacked when they were new. Time's perspective gave them a mellower tone, and they possessed, at least for me, that element of mystery which seems to attach to whatever is venerable.

-Joel Chandler Harris, *Gabriel Tolliver*, (1902)

CONTENTS

Foreword.....i

Photos.....iii-xviii

Transcript One: Old Stuart and Tallahassee.....1

Transcript Two: Family Memories.....12

Transcript Three: 1907 Golden Wedding Anniversary Photo.....37

Sharing Recollections (a poem).....60

Afterword.....67

Foreword

Many families have oral histories, but they vanish eventually unless someone records the information passed down through the generations. For the span in which they are remembered, private histories tend to become flawed by those unintended revisions we sometimes perpetrate with our faulty faculties. The only lasting remedy we have for such dilutions is the written word. Tapes deteriorate all too quickly, as I have discovered. A cassette of one of my interviews with my grandmother taped in 1985 has already been destroyed by time. For that reason, I have finally transcribed three other interviews I conducted in the mid-1980's with my grandmother, Talley McKewn Crary, and my great-aunt, Sophie Louise McKewn.

The transcriptions match the original conversations, though I have omitted some of the *ums*, *uhs*, giggles, and guffaws except in those places where I felt they might add meaning to the text. With regard to certain details my grandmother had a tendency to hold onto her cards closely, whereas Aunt Sophie would almost always show her hand. Some pauses, I think, reveal possible evasions which the reader may find interesting. For instance, Grandmother reluctantly opened the door to some of the more brazen facts concerning her mother's early history, and Aunt Sophie boldly offered her corrections. Those who knew those two colorful ladies can well imagine the look of displeasure Talley was casting in the direction of her older sister when she said more than Talley wanted me to hear. In the years that followed those interviews, I was able to elicit more information from my grandmother in some of our unrecorded conversations, but I sometimes had the impression that she was not telling me everything she knew.

Typing the interviews was exhausting work and took many more hours than I had imagined. On the tapes, Grandmom and So talk much faster than my fingers can dance on the keyboard. While I considered having a secretary do the typing, I recognized that few people outside the family could have understood their intriguing, somewhat unique Southern accents and pronunciation well enough to have caught all of their words. I missed two or three. The arduous task of transcription was a chore I put off for years, but once I launched into it I could not stop. Grandmom and So have had such an immediate presence in my life for so many years, it almost seems as if they have not gone. I especially felt their entertaining presence again as I typed and corrected the transcripts.

I chose the subject matter of the interviews with a mind to preserving the distant past. About

those things occurring during my own lifetime, I feel sufficiently qualified to make my own observations. In fact, I have my own handwritten journals extending to well over fifteen hundred pages; much more than anyone—including myself—would ever want to read. Someday maybe I'll complete typing all of those pages for my overburdened posterity. Some additional material gathered from conversations with Grandmom and So is included in those journals.

My interviews inspired a poem which I have included herein, for what it's worth. It is the prerogative of compilers of family histories to throw their own feeble compositions into the mix. I wrote the first draft of *Sharing Recollections* in 1994 and revised it when my grandmother was on her deathbed in July 2002. Many references in the poem can be found in the transcripts, however, I have added footnotes to aid the reader. At some point over the years, I began to feel as if my grandmother's recollections had—in a way—become my own. Certainly her views of the world greatly influenced my life, especially when I was young.

As generations pass, pictures also become nearly meaningless, because people forget to write names on the backs of photographs. We are left to wonder which relative was which. I have appended copies of a number of interesting photographs my grandmother helped identify for me prior to losing her eyesight. Because most people prefer looking at pictures to the toil of trudging through the written word, I have placed the family photos in the beginning.

This little book was originally intended as a keepsake for family members who knew Grandmom and Sophie well. However, Robin Hicks-Connors and Susan Duncan asked me if I would mind giving a copy to the Elliott Museum. Because of the personal nature of some of the reminiscences recorded herein, I wrestled with the pros and cons of letting people outside the family read it. While I was trying to make up my mind, I located a third taped interview I misplaced years ago that deals with a little bit of Stuart history. Perhaps that transcript could be of interest to people outside of my family. In spite of the intimacies in this book, I decided the best way to preserve this manuscript for the future would be to let our local museum retain a copy. I hope my descendants and some few curious readers will be able to catch a glimpse in these pages of what my grandmother and great-aunt were really like. Genealogies are always so disappointing. They only give us dates of birth and marriage and death. Unless we take the time to make a written record and preserve it, a treasure house of memories will die with us.

William F. (Rick) Crary, II
Palm City, Florida
May 2, 2003

Old Times There Are Not Forgotten
Copyright 2003 by Rick Crary
All rights reserved

Excerpts herein may only be used upon obtaining permission of the author
Rick Crary
722 S.W. Keats Avenue
Palm City, Florida

Other unpublished books by Rick Crary:

When the Muse Begins to Sing (a collection of short stories)
Lost in Luluville (a novel)
One Year of My Life (an autobiographical journal)
Torrents of Late Summer (a collection of poems)
Paintings and Sketches—1977 to 2003

1907 GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



1st (bottom) row: Walter Dukes, Ebba Dukes, Earl Dukes, Syril McKewn, Frank Dukes, Ella Dukes, Merle Smoak (Bethea), Ora Smoak, Gussie Way Dukes (Seifert), Blossom Dukes; 2nd row: Pansy Dukes Wannamaker, Lois Dukes, Lou Lowman Dukes, J.W.H. (Bubba) Dukes (holding Buster Shecut according Grandmom and So, but Nannie's notes say it was Jack Wannamaker), Sophia Johnson Dukes, John Henry Dukes (holding Sophie McKewn), Lillian Riggs Dukes (holding Arthur Dukes), Lily Dukes Smoak (holding Angie Pearl Smoak), Gussie Dukes Stroman, Aggie Lightfoot Dukes, Deleen Dukes Rhodes, Blanche Dukes Shecut (holding Lou Alice Shecut), Rev. M.M. Fergueson; 3rd (top) row: William Talley McKewn (holding Talley McKewn), Maggie Dukes McKewn, George W.(Uncle Jinks) Dukes, Dr. James Oliver (holding Jim Oliver), Pearl Dukes Oliver (holding Mildred Oliver), Archie L. Dukes, J. William Smoak, Julian Leroy (UncleRoy) Dukes, Manly Dukes, Wade Hampton Dukes,Orrin B. (Uncle Doc) Dukes, Ed Rhodes, Dr. L.C. Shecut



John H. Dukes, Sgt. 5th S.C. Cavalry,
M.C. Butler's Brigade



Possibly Sophia Janette Johnson Dukes
circa 1860 according to the Internet



John Henry Dukes (Papa Dukes)



Sophia Johnson Dukes (Mama Dukes)



Mama Dukes and her daughters (Maggie at her lap)



Dukes family in the 1880's (Maggie at left)



The Dukes family circa 1898 (Maggie leaning on Papa)



Margaret (Maggie) Dukes



Maggie with her baby Syril



Syril and Maggie



Mama Dukes with Syril



George Robert McKewn (Grandpa McKewn)



Mamie Steadman McKewn (Grandma McKewn)



Maggie & Wm Talley McKewn with baby Sophie



William Talley McKewn



Maggie Dukes McKewn & Wm Talley McKewn



Talley, Syril, and Sophie McKewn



The McKewn home in Waldo, Florida



Sophie and Talley McKewn in 1914



Sophie, Talley, and Syril



In Waldo, Florida



Alice Lewis



Uncle Doc (Orrin Bowman Dukes)



Alice Lewis Crary, Evans (Sr.), Lala, Perley Frederick Crary



Lawrence Evans Crary (Sr.)



Evans Crary (Sr.)



Laura (Lala) Crary



Lala, Perley, Alice, & Evans Crary



Lawrence Evans Crary (Sr.)



Talley McKewn (Crary)



Talley and Evans



Talley and Evans at the beach



Talley McKewn in 1925



Sophie leaning on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier



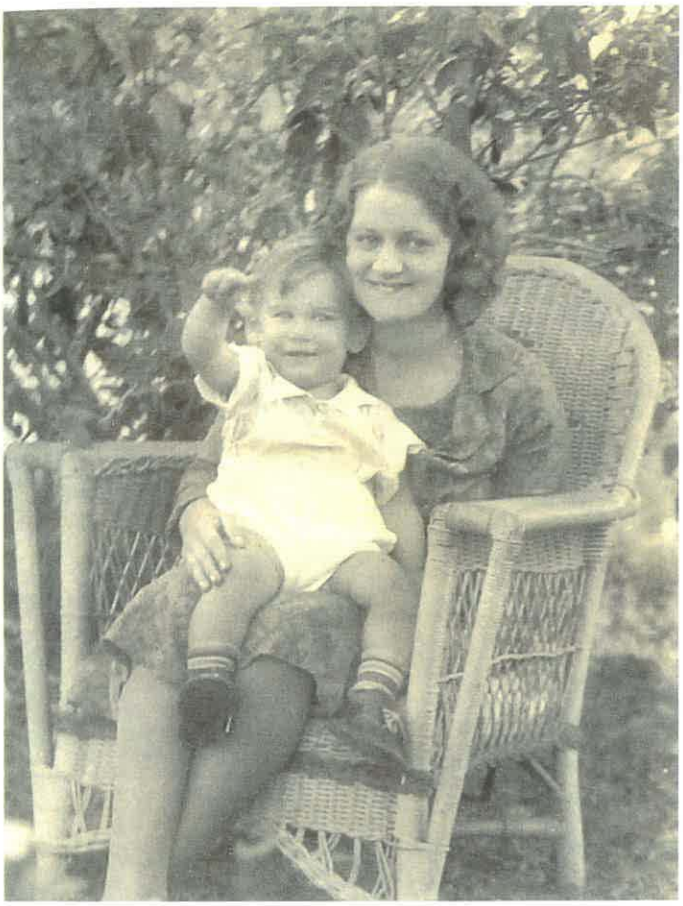
Talley traveling in style in 1929



Sophie, Evans, and Talley at Niagra Falls (1929)



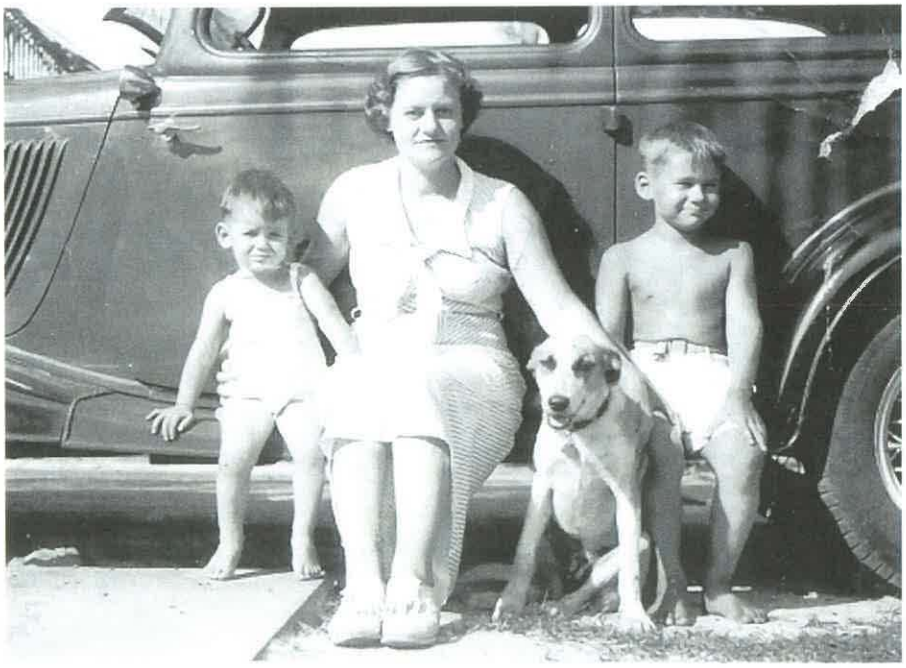
Evans & Talley Crary with Maggie McKewn, 1929 road trip



Talley with Sonny (Evans, Jr.)



Buddy Crary (my father Rick)



Buddy, Talley, and Sonny



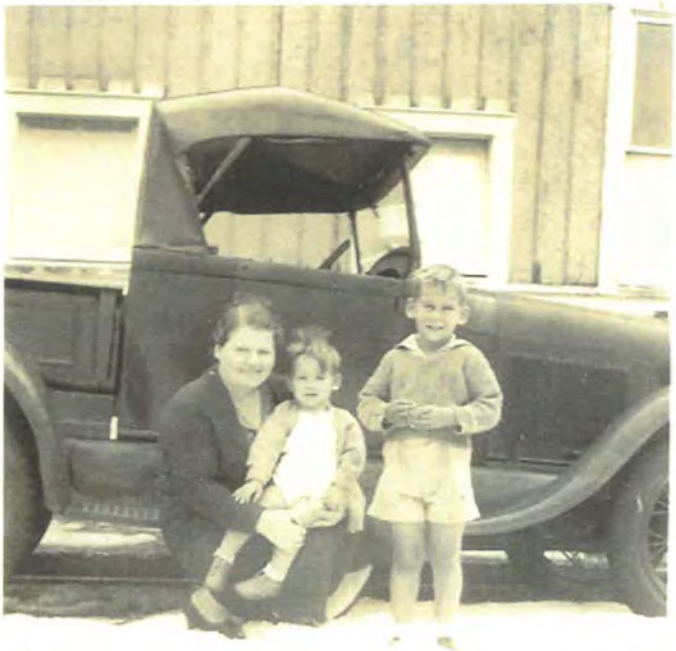
Buddy, Evans, and Sonny



Talley with Buddy



Talley & Sophie after the great hailstorm in Stuart



Sophie with her nephews Buddy and Sonny



Evans Sr. (Speaker of the House) & Talley (1945)



Talley in her parlor on Cardinal Way in Stuart, Fla.



Pork barrel politics



Sonny, Sophie, Uncle Doc, Nannie (Maggie McKewn), Evans Sr., Talley, and Buddy



Talley and Evans Crary, Sr. at home in Stuart, Fla.



Rick Crary and Aunt Sophie at Bok Tower



Aunt Sophie and Grandmom



Grandmother at her 90th birthday party

Transcript One: Old Stuart and Tallahassee

I interviewed my grandmother, Talley McKewn Crary at her home at 311 Cardinal Way in Stuart, Florida. I had misplaced this tape and did not include it in the original booklet I prepared for family members.

Rick: It's April 17th, 1985. This is Rick Crary II here with my grandmother Talley McKewn Crary, and we're going to start off with her recollections about when she first moved to Stuart, Florida.

Talley: That was in May of 1928. I don't remember the exact date, but um...

Rick: Was that the first time you ever came to Stuart?

Talley: No, I came to Stuart to visit Evans[1] in April and that was when we decided that I'd come down in May.

Rick: What was it like here?

Talley: Well, it was very formal. Stuart—the people here dressed for dinner, I mean really, in dinner clothes. People were rich on paper, but they couldn't really afford to buy gasoline for their cars, some of them. They were driving Packards—at the time the status car was a Packard. If you had a Packard you were really somebody, so you know what *we* were—we had a Ford Model T Roadster. But um, they would have dances, formal dances, some of them.

Rick: Where did they have them?

Talley: At the American Legion Hall which was on the river down near the Pelican Hotel, and at the Pelican Hotel—and that was a lovely place to eat and a lovely place to entertain. And I knew no one here, of course, when I came, except your granddaddy. But he had been here since June of 1927 right after he graduated from law college [at the University of Florida]. He'd gone and become interested in the Epworth League

---

[1] Lawrence Evans Crary, Sr., born June 25, 1905 in Tampa, Florida. He'd moved to Stuart the year before. Talley and Evans got married in February of 1928.

at the United Methodist Church—it wasn't *United Methodist*, it was just called First Methodist Church of Stuart. So, he had quite a number of acquaintances and friends in there, and all the little girls were crazy about him. Oh, they thought he was the most wonderful thing they ever saw, and they hated me on sight when I arrived.

We immediately formed friendships with Carl and Irene Hoyek (sp?). Carl Hoyek was the County Agent; and Ralph and Naomi Marr. Ralph was the City Manager. And Don and Macy Egbert—Don being the County Engineer. And Barbara and Webb Ordway. Webb was the manager of the East Coast Lumber & Supply Company. Patsy and Ed Menninger. Ed had a newspaper. And Boyne and Isabel McPherson. Boyne was the station agent—FEC station agent. And Earl and Florence Ricou. Earl at that time had an automobile business. In fact he had three of them.

We used to go every Sunday night, they would have entertainment uptown at the band shell. And the band shell at that time was at the end of the Holleran Building, which is where Green's Department Store is now. And there were other stores along in there. And I don't know what Mr. Holleran sold in his store. But at the end of the building on this vacant lot in town was the band shell. It was a volunteer band, and they would play and we would stroll along on Sunday evening. There was a fountain in the middle of the area there. One of the things that amazed me so, in the summertime, the cars would be screened to keep out the mosquitos—it didn't do much for the sand flies, but it did keep out the mosquitos.[2] We continued doing that [going to see the band on Sunday evenings] until about 1932 when things really got bad financially. Then people just couldn't afford to go anywhere or do anything much.

Everything was in downtown Stuart as to shopping. There was the Piggy Wiggly store there, and the A&P Store was up next to where the courthouse is. And we had two banks. By this time they had failed, but it was the Seminole Bank and the Farmer's Bank and Trust Company—they were uptown. And then where the Kanaraks had the Stuart Department Store was known as Kitching & Eckess.

I wish you could have known Stanley Kitching and his wife Naomi. They were really characters! Stanley was a cousin of Uncle Walter Kitching. He lived in a big house on the river right in back of where the Stuart Department Store is now. He was somewhat of the—what would I say—the patriarch of the town. And besides that

---

[2] Talley later told me that the main thing she remembered about Stuart when she moved here was that all the stores downtown were filled with the smoke of burning insect repellent. "If you ordered an ice cream sundae, it tasted like Bee Brand insect powder," she told me. Mosquitos were everywhere. Her first week in town when she was standing at the counter at a grocery, an old man behind her said, "I can tell you ain't from 'round here." "How's that?" she asked. "'Cause you swat 'em," he explained. "Most folks here just *bresh* 'em off."

somewhat of the—what would I say—the patriarch of the town. And besides that was also Broster Schroeder. And there was a Mr. George Parks. He ran the feed store. But they were all somewhat of the oldsters that had been here, and sort of told the others what to do.

It was interesting, and yet I *hated* Stuart. I had never lived in a small town like this where everybody knew everybody else's business and talked about it. And Evans finally getting into politics, I had to be somewhat like Caesar's wife—above reproach, and I wasn't constituted that way. If I wanted to do something, I did it, which, of course, would bring the house of cards down on my head every time.

You know, the Haney Circle that's in town now—that was originally there, and I wish you could have known Mrs. Haney. I understand that she traveled with Carrie Nation when Carrie Nation had her little hatchet out breaking up bars. And she [Mrs. Haney] was also very involved in getting the vote for women. Now Mrs. Haney really was a character! She had a facial tic, and also got excited when she talked—she would expectorate on you all the time. And the men just hated to see her coming and tried every way they could to avoid her, but she would fly up to them and grab a hold of their lapels and hang on, and talk to them about things that she was interested in. She was really *great* to be around.

At the time we moved to Stuart there was a—well, habit is not the word—a custom. The winter visitors when they'd go back north in the summertime would ask those who lived here permanently to live in their houses while they were gone, to sort of protect it and take care of it in case of hurricanes, or something. And so that Evans and I lived quite a ways out from town in what was Captain Plum's house.[3] At first I thought he was the one that drew a cartoon called Ella Cinders, and I'm not sure that he wasn't, but he also was a bootlegger! Every night, almost, while we were there—which was for about three months one summer—Negroes would come to the house and ask to buy a quart of liquor, and they wouldn't believe that we weren't selling it for Captain Plum. And right down the road was a two story house right on the river, and in that house lived a woman by the name of Christian, and she was a rumrunner—had her boats—and she was selling whiskey all the time. And they would come in at night. She had a garage that opened up—a boathouse that opened up so that the boats could come in. And I never could understand how they could come in without people being arrested—the Pro-Hi's [Prohibition agents] were around all the time—until I watched her flagstaff. I noticed that when the boats came

---

[3] Talley told me that the sand flies were unbearable on the river at night. There was no air conditioning in those days, so they had to keep the windows open. To keep the sand flies from getting through the screens, she had to rub the screens with crankcase oil. She remembered the nights of her first summer here as being miserably hot, buggy, and smelly. When Evans and Talley bought their own house, they moved slightly inland to avoid the sand flies.

in, the flag would be all the way up completely to the top of the staff; but if it was down a little bit from the top, there would be no activity whatsoever. So Evans would take the car and go to the office everyday and leave me out there. And it was nothing but a dirt road and a lot of palmettos and no near neighbors. So I spent my day watching the flag to see when there would be some activity with the rum-running.

Stuart was, I think, almost like Peyton Place. Now, I had never heard of Peyton Place at that time, but everybody had swapped wives. I say everybody, but I mean quite a number had, so that you didn't know who had been married to whom, and whose children were whose. So, it was really interesting, and I think I could have written a very good novel that would have sold extremely well, had I only thought about it at the time.

We had one woman here that was really a character. Her name was Ethel T. Porter and she sold real estate, and she had the most attractive house that I think I have ever seen. It looked to me like the House of Seven Gables, only I think it only had four or five. It was right down on the waterfront. One night she called Evans and invited us to come to her house for dinner. When we got there we found that we were going to go aboard a boat to have dinner—it was called the *Blue Angel*. It turned out to be a boat belonging to the McCoys, who were rumrunners. That's how they got *the real McCoy*, because they sold good whiskey. It was not, you know, some of this terrible bootleg stuff that they had. And I've never been so scared in my life! I can't remember what I ate or how long we stayed. I just knew we were going to be arrested any minute. But they were really charming!

I had some very interesting times here. Especially after we got to know Francis Langford and Jon Hall. We knew Jon first, and he was really a free soul. It was before I knew Francis, and Jon used to come and he'd always have a girlfriend with him. And he'd always land at our house, and we had a delightful time. And then I met Francis.

Rick: Who was Jon Hall?

Talley: Jon Hall was a movie actor. He played in—one of the celebrated movies that he was in was called *The Hurricane*. He was from Tahiti originally and really the best-looking thing you ever saw. Then he and Francis divorced and she met Ralph Evinrude of the Outboard Marine Corporation when Ralph followed her down here in his boat and he ran aground in Salerno when he was trying to get into port. And from then on we had a *wonderful* time with them. They've taken us on beautiful cruises. We even joined them over in Naples and went from there to the Greek Isles with them. They have been very wonderful friends. So they made Stuart—ha, ha—made me enjoy living here a little bit better.

owned by a family—the Hancocks. I think there was a Mr. Hancock, but all I remember are Momma and the son. Now, the son was not married at the time that we came here, and he was really Momma's boy. And they ran the picture show. And she played the organ, and always with a big hat and feather—sitting down in front. And when there would be a gunshot in the picture, seconds later she would punch the right thing on the organ, but it would be two or three seconds in back of the original gunshot. But we watched her more than we watched the movies. Fred Hancock was the son. Finally, he decided to marry—Billie Hancock, who was a legal secretary to Judge Kanner—Judge A. O. Kanner—and E.J. Smith—lawyers. And his mother never quite got over that. She just couldn't believe that Fred had gotten out from under her thumb and married Billie. And I don't think Fred could understand it either.

When we first came here, your granddaddy was working for Edwin Brobston, who at that time was the City Attorney. And he hadn't been here very long when Ed Brobston, who was the City Attorney, decided to leave and move to Tampa. And so he left your granddaddy here with various cases that had already been paid—the fees had been paid—but your granddaddy had to carry them to conclusion, which he did. We really had a time making ends meet, I can tell you that! We took all kind of fees: fish; fresh vegetables; credit at various stores. I wore dresses like I had never worn before in my life.[4] But, you know, we had a perfectly wonderful time. We really didn't lack for anything. We ate a lot of swamp cabbage and we ate a lot of mullet; but that's good eating at any time!

Well, after Ed left, and Evans' secretary that they had at the time moved back to Indianapolis—her name was Betty Waters—I went in and worked as Evans' secretary, since I had been a legal secretary before we married. And while I was his legal secretary, the City Clerk quit, so they asked me to be interim City Clerk until one could be appointed. Everybody said, "Oh, my heavens, you don't want to do that! There's a man on the commission by the name of Ralph Willet, and he *really* is a mean thing!" Well, I didn't have any problem at all. He was very nice to me. In fact, he called me Miss Sunshine. And I suppose I acted in that capacity for about a year, I really don't remember. You know, my memory is not too good anymore. But they begged me to stay on.

Now, I want to tell you a funny thing. My name is Talley Crary, and I was acting City Clerk, and they brought in a City Clerk named Callie McCrary. Now if you don't think that was confusing? To this day there are a lot of people—if they're still living—think that I was the City Clerk all of those years. I don't mind being blamed for what Callie did, because she was a little, meek, mild somebody—but I feel so

---

[4] Talley spent most of her early years—perhaps most of her life—missing the city life back in Tampa. She visited her mother and sister over there fairly often.

sorry if everybody thinks she did what I did.[5] She was married to Dale Hipson's uncle, Charlie McCrary. Now, I won't say that Charlie was not bright—but he left something to be desired. But he fell in love with me! And he would follow me all around town, and I'd come around a corner and who would I bump into but Charlie. And he talked funny, he'd say [imitating a silly-sounding voice] "Hello there! How you doin'?" Ha, ha. And I said, "Oh heavens above, can't somebody else find me attractive other than somebody like that?"

Then after I was City Clerk and Evans was able to hire a secretary, he went into partnership with Herc Wise—H. M. Wise, who was an attorney here from South Carolina. And so they went under the name Wise & Crary. And Herc was really something out of this world—a great *big* fellow. And he—he wasn't immoral, he just was *amoral*—he just was Herc. He was married to a girl by the name of Mercer. And she was absolutely the antithesis to Herc's way of living. Mercer was in a—we had a club—Ace High Club—a bunch of us belonged to, and we'd meet every Wednesday and play bridge and have a luncheon. At that time Evans had gone into Rotary. He was one of the charter members of the Rotary Club, so he would go to lunch on Wednesday, and Wednesday was my day off, because he came home for lunch all the other days, except Wednesdays when he'd go to Rotary. And after Herc—Herc decided to go up to Jacksonville and go into partnership with Fred Voss, who was quite an outstanding lawyer there, and sort of a power behind the throne. He wasn't in active politics, but he sort of pulled the strings and was a king-maker, if we could say it in that fashion. And in 1934 Evans decided to run—I think it was '34—back in the early 30's—to run for City Judge. And he was successful in that race, and he was City Judge until he decided to run for the Legislature in 1936—and was successful and was elected, and served his first term in 1937.

I hadn't decided to go to Tallahassee to stay the whole time that he was up there, because of the children—Evans, Jr., whom we called Sonny, was in school. I thought I would have to be here, and Evans would come home, you know, and I would stay here. But he made the mistake of taking me up to the Legislature for the opening of the session, and I saw all of those hungry gals hanging around there, eying all the men, hanging on to them, and I decided, "Well sir, he was elected to represent the people, and I was going to go up there and represent myself as a wife, 'cause I could see that maybe something would come down on around our heads if I weren't there." And I was one of the first wives that ever went up and stayed the whole two months, much to the disgust of a lot of the old men who were in the Legislature.

It was really exciting, but I was terrified. You know, all my life I have really lived in

---

[5] Off the record my grandmother told me that Callie McCrary was the victim of an indiscrete assault of some sort, and Talley was mortified to learn that the local rumor mill had the facts wrong, so many in the community mistakenly thought the incident had happened to her.

somewhat of an anxious state and a fearful state—always hoping that I would do good and fearful that I wouldn't do good—and I *dreaded* meeting people. I was very shy. Nobody believes it, but I was and still am to some extent. So Evans said to me, "Talley, you can't be that way." He said, "You've just got to be outgoing more." So he told me—I was getting ready to go to a party that was given at Mrs. E.M. Lively's—one of the *real* old timers of Tallahassee—lived in this beautiful old home. So Evans said, "Now look, when you get there, you go in and you look around, and if you see somebody standing over by herself, go over and introduce yourself, 'cause she's probably just as lonely as you are." So with that tucked away in my mind, I went in—and I looked around and I saw this very lovely person standing over there, and I rushed over. I know it must have scared her to death! And I started talking ninety miles an hour. Come to find out, she was one of the hostesses! Ha, ha! But the ice really had been broken.

Tallahassee really is lovely. The entertainment for the ladies—I don't know what they're doing now. I understand that there is quite a change, that it isn't as lovely as it was back in the early days when we were there. But the women just bent over backwards being nice and entertaining and doing everything in the world they could to see that we had a pleasant time there. Now, I stayed all of the time, but the other wives would come in and out to visit on special occasions. You know, they had a—in May—they had a real maypole. You don't see a maypole dance anymore, but they would have it down in the park, and it was just beautiful. Tallahassee is a lovely place with lovely flowers—with wisteria in the spring, and all of bulbs blooming, and the azaleas and the dogwood—and it's a lovely time! The Legislature always opens in April, which is the spring month up there. And I truly enjoyed being there. Now that's the only part of politics that I liked. And I was Evans' secretary. I made six dollars a day and he made six dollars a day. But I worked. I wasn't one that just drew my check on payday and then didn't appear anymore until the next payday. I went to work every morning. And Evans drew up his own bills. A lot of the legislators had the Attorney General's Office draw their bills for them, but Evans always drew up his own bills, and I would type them for him. And it was a marvelous experience, and I got along beautifully with the legislators. In fact, when they'd have a party, I'd be about the only woman that was around. I guess they thought I wouldn't let Evans go by himself, and maybe I wouldn't, I don't know.

There was one very colorful legislator, and I think a lot of people sort of looked down their nose at him—Bernie Papy from Key West. They called him the King of Kai-ah-wigh-sel (sp?). Bernie—he was another one of these persons that what he was, he was—he had no pretense about what he was going to do, or what he wasn't going to do. If he liked you, you knew it; and if he hated you, you knew that also. And Bernie would always have a big home up in Tallahassee, and he had a housekeeper and cook called Clara. Now, Clara worked for all the various people in Tallahassee, except when Mr. Bernie was coming to town, and then she would quit and come and

be with him. And we used to have a perfectly marvelous time at his house. He'd have all this seafood flown in from Key West, and it was *great*!

We used to go down to St. Marks to have seafood. Then there was a place [in Tallahassee] called the *Silver Slipper* where everybody went for dancing and eating. And we went out with a lot of lobbyists. Now, I know lobbying sort of has a dirty significance to it, but we have known some wonderful lobbyists, and really enjoyed them and they have been very dear friends of ours. As Evans used to say, "If a lobbyist thinks he's going to buy my vote for dinner or money, he's crazy!"

We used to go to Seeley (sp?) Springs on the weekends, and that's a place near Marianna, Florida. And it's sulfur water, and we'd take the baths and sort of get the tobacco out of our system and drain out a little bit of the alcohol, too.

I sound like the legislators didn't work, but I'm telling you they'd be locked in. Now, they don't lock 'em in now. They would not be able to leave until sometimes three and four o'clock in the morning until certain bills had been brought up and had either passed, or had failed to pass.

There was one boy—O'Neal Levy, who was—I don't know if he was a sort of a spastic. He had never been taught to read and write. But he would come down, and he would be a messenger, and he would stay in the legislative halls and run errands and stay there all night long, too, with the legislators. And run out—bring 'em in coffee; bring 'em in things to eat. But he never was on the payroll until Evans became Speaker of the House in 1945 and he decided to give O'Neal a job as a special messenger. And if you have ever seen a happy somebody, that was O'Neal. He just worshiped Evans for that—and he did one of the finest jobs that has ever been done as a messenger in the Legislature. He was always on hand. And you know, he couldn't read and he couldn't write, but he had a certain way of remembering—his memory was phenomenal! I have to tell you, at one time he worked for a taxi company answering the telephone, and they would tell him where they wanted a taxi, and he had stones—various stones and varied colors—colored stones. And one of them would be like for 319 Park Avenue, and he'd put those stones down—and he never got a one of them wrong. He knew exactly where the taxi was to go. And no one could quite understand how he did it, but he did.

Rick: How did Granddad get to be Speaker of the House?

Talley: Well, you know—I don't know. And I don't think he quite knew exactly right off, because he was not of the Old Guard, so to speak. He was from a small county that couldn't furnish many votes for anything. But Evans was very well-liked. And I think Bernie—and I was trying to think—there was an attorney from Jacksonville—Mabry Carlton was the attorney from Jacksonville—and Archie Clemmons from Clearwater

or Tarpon Springs, one or the other—Tarpon Springs, I think Archie was from—He wanted to run and when he found out he could not be elected, he threw in with Evans. And so, Evans was elected unopposed to be Speaker in 1945. But I don't know who the instigator was, really.

Rick: Was he friends at all with any of the governors?

Talley: Oh yes. Leroy Collins[6]. Fuller Warren[7]—we all were very close with. And Millard Caldwell[8]. And Spessard Holland[9]. Spessard was in the Senate when Evans was in the House. And we had just a realm of friends—very outstanding. Bob Sikes—is he still in Congress? Anyway, he was in the House when Evans was. And he was a very good friend of ours, and he was very outstanding. We knew he would go on to bigger and better things. Dwight Rogers was also in the House and he went into Congress. In fact, when Dwight resigned they wanted Evans to run for Congress, but he had already given his consent to be Speaker of the House in '45, and so he didn't run. He turned his support over to Paul Rogers, who was Dwight's son, who we all know was a very valuable member of Congress and did a wonderful job.

Rick: Who were Granddad's closest friends up there?

Talley: Well, you know, your Granddad really hung around with—I suppose just he and I were always together. He never went out, so-called, "with the boys." If he went anywhere, he took me with him. As I say, I was the only gal at most of the parties, but I had a good time. We used to go down to Panacea. Judge Clark from Monticello had a place in Panacea, Florida. And we'd go down there on a Sunday afternoon and have crab meat and shrimp and just sit around and have drinks and talk and have an awfully good time. But he never had anyone with whom he was—except, maybe Dick Pickerel from Orlando, who had some cocktail lounges in Orlando and was with the liquor lobby—and, as I say, Bernie Papy. And, um, well some of the various—Bill Platt, who was from Collier County, Everglades City. We were close to him at the time when he was in the Legislature. And Johnny Junkin, who was from—where in the world was Johnny from? Oh, he followed Bill Platt from Collier County, Everglades City. So, I think the different ones as they would come in, we'd be with them. And we were close with the Yeagers up there and the Collins'—Leroy and Mary Call Collins. And Dick Simpson and his wife, and right now her name

---

[6] 33rd Governor, 1955-1961

[7] 30th Governor, 1949-1953

[8] 29th Governor, 1945-1949

[9] 28th Governor, 1941-1945

escapes me.

Rick: Was there much of a difference once he had gone in the Senate from the House?

Talley: Yes. At that time Senators were sort of, you know, up on a pedestal. He was sort of "big dog" in the House, but when he got in the Senate, you know, it was sort of a—well I wouldn't say a come-down—but I didn't enjoy the Senate near as much as I did the House.

Rick: Why is that?

Talley: Well—um—I don't know. I guess it was because we had been ten years in the House and we had formed such close, you know, associations. And when you went into the Senate you didn't hobnob with the House. You were just sort of on a different plain, a different elevation. And I really missed a lot of that.

Rick: What was the extent of Granddad's political ambitions?

Talley: Well—at one time—it was thought that he would go on to become Governor. But, you know, he was not a politician per se. He was more of a statesman. He was—it was hard for him to compromise. It was hard for him to say one thing and mean another. He just couldn't do it. And um—I don't know. A lot of people were disappointed, they thought surely he would go on and run for Governor. Maybe I didn't encourage him to. But, umm—that just didn't come to pass.

Rick: How was it that he first decided to run for the Legislature?

Talley: Well, now let me see—A.O. Kanner was appointed to the Senate and that left a vacancy in the House, if I'm not mistaken. And I don't know who asked Evans to run.

Rick: Did you support his decision then?

Talley: Well—I had to! He just told me he was going to do it. I *hated* politics. I still do.

Rick: What did you hate about it?

Talley: The insincerity of it! The people that would just flatter you, you know, and you knew that it was for only one purpose, and that was to get what they could—to get to first base. And I suppose I really wasn't old enough, or wise enough to take it as it was. A lot of people enjoyed it—politics. I know that Bob Sikes' first wife Ellie did. She'd get into almost fistfights uptown and just had the greatest time in the world when Bob was running. But I couldn't stand the things that were said. I could not

put them out of my mind. They became real. If you said 'em, you meant 'em. I know Evans had an awful time with me. I never went with him on any of the campaigns when he would be going around. I never went with him anyplace. I *just* could not take it! And I don't know how he ever got to where he was, 'cause I sure didn't help him.

[The interview ends here]

Transcript Two: Family Memories

This interview was recorded at the home of Talley McKewn Crary at 311 Cardinal Way, Stuart, Florida. The interview of Talley Crary and Sophie McKewn was conducted by Rick Crary (William Frederick Crary II). My wife, Donna Choate Crary was also present.

Rick: It's April 1st, 1984. I'm here in the living room of my grandmother Talley Crary together with my great-aunt Sophie McKewn. I thought we'd start out talking about Papa and Mama Dukes. Could you all tell me what you recall about them?

Sophie: Well, usually Mama was dressed all in black, kind of like a shirtwaist and skirt, but we never did see her much moving around, you know, she was just more or less in a chair sitting. And of course, we were kind of small. And then they had the Golden Anniversary—the wedding anniversary.

Rick: This was up in Orangeburg, South Carolina?

Sophie: In Orangeburg down at Papa's place. It was in the yard out under a big magnolia tree.

Rick: Why don't you tell me a little bit about what his place was like.

Sophie: Well, it was a house—I don't know what year it was built in, but the house was never painted and it was a whole story off the ground, and underneath he kept buggies and horse carriages and things like that, and sometimes supplies. Well, years ago, before our time, they had a kitchen downstairs, but during the years we remember being up there, the kitchen was upstairs, but it was like a separate room off with a passageway which was open—and then you went around the passageway to the porch and down the back steps. But I'd say there was twenty-five or more steps from the ground up to the front porch.

Rick: Do you remember anything in particular about it, Grandmom?

Talley: Well, I remember the home—but I remember Papa Dukes more than I remember Mama, because she died in 1909, when I was about four-years-old. And I really don't remember the Golden Wedding occasion. The only actual remembrance I have of Mama Dukes was one Christmas we were at my aunt's house—and there was a tremendous, big Christmas tree. We were in the parlor. I was sitting in Mama's lap and she gave me one of the ornaments off of the Christmas tree and I thought it was the prettiest thing I had ever seen. It was made out of spun glass. And I remember being held by Mama. Papa I remember quite well, because we would go back every summer and stay there. The house was very intriguing—it was all bricked around the bottom, and there were these long steps that went up to the main floor.

Rick: Now was it a plantation of some sort?

Talley: Yes.

Rick: What did he grow?

Talley: Cotton. And he had acres and acres of ...

Sophie: And corn.

Talley: ...of cotton, and they referred to it as "the bottom land." They would always go down to the bottom lands early in the morning, and it was really an exciting time for him to say that we could go with him. And we would leave practically before day in a horse and buggy, and he would ride down through all the cotton fields and see what all the *hands* were doing.

Sophie: Sharecroppers.

Rick: Now Papa Dukes had been in the Civil War.

Talley: Yes.

Rick: His name was John Henry Dukes.

Talley: John Henry Dukes—and he had an old slave, who we called Uncle Adam. And Uncle Adam accompanied him through the War. And he would always come back and let Mama Dukes know that Papa was all right—and get some supplies to take back for him to have.

Rick: Uncle Adam is the one who made the two slave chairs you have.

Talley: Yeah. And he lived several months after Papa Dukes died, which was in 1917. And

in Papa's will, he had a provision made that Uncle Adam would be cared for until his death. And really, he was sort of like just a member of the family. We loved him very dearly—and we thought he was great!

Rick: Now, you all have told me before about sitting in Papa Dukes' lap.

Sophie: Yeah, we used to go up there in the summertime, you know, when school was out. Well, back in those days, we had four months vacation, 'cause school was only eight months, not nine, and we'd go up there. Papa Dukes had a long beard, I guess it was way down here, and Talley would sit on one side—he had a big rocker that had a foot rest on it, you know, and he rocked in it. So, we'd get up on the arms of the chair, and Talley and me would part his beard. And Talley would take half of his beard, and I'd take the other half. And sometimes we'd braid it, or we'd try to curl it and all. And he'd sleep. We played with it for hours at a time on end. And then on Saturday, or Friday—or Saturday, I guess it was when all of the hands were paid off, Papa always went in town and got the money, and he had a long bench—it didn't have a back to it—just a long bench on the front porch—and he would count out the money for the different hands. And he always put a little pile out for Talley and for Syril[10] and myself. We always got paid off the same time the hands did. And we thought that was the most wonderful thing to see all that money, you know, all spread out and everything.

Talley: And the way that they would get their money was they would come to the bottom of the steps out in front in the yard, and my Uncle Doc, who was the overseer sort of like, would call the name of each hand, and he would come and doff his hat like, you know—a ceremonial bow, like, and then come up and get his money and go back. We thought we were just royalty, you know! And they were always happy. And we loved going down to the *quarters*, which were about a quarter of a mile in back of the house. Also, when the grapes were ripe, going from Papa's house to where the...

Sophie: Hands.

Talley: ...Negro hands were, you had to go through the grape arbors with the white and black scuppernong grapes. And they were most delicious! And then we would go down to the hands' houses. They had the best things to eat—things we didn't have at Papa's, because he wouldn't have corn meal in the house.

Rick: Why was that?

---

[10] Grandmother spelled her older half-sister's name *Cyril*, but her mother spelled her daughter's name *Syril* on the back of several old photographs

Talley: Because during the War that's all he had to eat was hoe cakes, which is cooked on the hoe. So, when he came back he said, "No more corn meal—ever!" But the Negroes could have it. And their yards were always swept clean as anything. No grass, no nothing. They had what you call switch-brooms made out of the little switches of trees. Little limbs—little switches of trees bound together, and every morning they would sweep their yards clean. And it was great, I just felt—I thought everybody should have been born in the South and had that. And one thing I do remember about my grandmother's place: she always had a garden of herbs—different kinds of herbs. And her garden—she didn't plant it in rows of this and rows of that. It was all mixed together, and it was oh, so wonderful to go out there and just lie in there and pick off anise seed or something like that.

Sophie: Also in her garden she had a lot of Narcissus bulbs and all kinds of tulips and all—kind of like that. And it was usually down from there from her house to the *little house*—the outhouse—that all these gorgeous flowers grew. We always had to go through all these flowers and herbs to go to the *little house*.

Rick: What was her name?

Sophie: Sophie.

Talley: Sophia Janette Johnston[11].

Sophie: Right in front of Papa Dukes' house was the Southern Railroad. It went from Columbia on down to Charleston. And Papa had a picket fence out in front with a gate to go out—I guess to keep dogs, because we always had a pack of dogs—And every time the train would go, we'd run to the gate or the fence to wave *hello* to the engineers. So after Papa died, Uncle Roy, the youngest of the fourteen children, tore the whole house down and built a house for his family...when he moved there—he did it when he was a boy, but he kept the same thing up in his old years—he would get up even at two or three o'clock in the morning, whatever time that train, or freight train, or passenger train would go by—if it was nighttime he'd flash a flashlight at 'em and let 'em know he heard them blow—'cause they all blew for him regardless of whether there was anything on the crossing or not. So, Uncle Roy would always go out and wave to 'em, or else wave the flashlight at them. I think that was really something.

Rick: I think you also told me while Papa Dukes was the sheriff, he used to have a lot of people stay at the house. What was that all about?

Talley: Well—if they'd have to come in for court, or things like that, and had no place else

---

[11] Her last name was really *Johnson* according to the most reliable family records.

to stay they'd always—everybody—was welcome at his house. And we would get up sometimes—you never knew who was going to be asleep on the front porch. They'd just come and stretch out on the benches, or sit in the chairs or something and go to sleep—and always, they could get a meal.

Sophie: He was known in the county as Uncle John, and she was known as Aunt Sophie. Uncle John and Aunt Sophie—you could always get a free meal there—or sleep.

Rick: How about your father's folks—where were they from?

Talley: They were from South Carolina.

Rick: Whereabouts?

Talley: I believe that daddy was born in...

Sophie: Blacksville.

Talley: Blacksville?

Sophie: Mmmm-hmmm.

Talley: South Carolina—but I don't know where Grandma was born—do you Sophie?

Sophie: No.

Rick: What were their names?

Talley: Her name was Steadman—Mamie Steadman—and his name...

Sophie: Mamie *Louise* Steadman.

Talley: And his name was George Robert McKewn. My father's parents were originally from Orangeburg County, but when I remember them, they lived with us every winter and would live in the summer with my father's sister Belle...

Sophie: Butterworth

Talley: Butterworth—in South Hill, Virginia. We dreaded to have our grandparents come down—we called them Grandma and Grandpa—and they were very stern and would always try to run our lives. If we wanted to go to the picture show, they would always remind our mother that we had already been maybe one time that week and there was no reason to go again. We didn't seem to be as close to them as we were

to Papa Dukes, but they were very cold-appearing, and I'm awfully sorry, but I don't know too much about them.

Rick: Well he was in the War, I think you told me.

Talley: Uhn-hunh—and he was hit in the knee with a minnie ball. And he fought the War until the day he died. He was furious because my grandmother would not consent to move to South America after the South lost. And so, he was bitter until his death, and always—anybody come to the house, he'd always ask them if they were a Yankee, and if they said they were born above the Mason-Dixon Line, he would have nothing to do with them, and he would want them to leave.

Rick: How about telling me a little something about your Mom and Dad?.

Sophie: Well—Mother and Daddy were married on a Christmas Day [1900]—and we were all—all of Mother's children were born in Orangeburg. Back in those days the daughter always went home—the girl always went home to have her children with her mother, so we were all born in the old home in Orangeburg. And we—soon as we were able to travel, we came back to Florida. And they were living, I think, in Orlando when I was born

Talley: When I was born[12].

Sophie: When Talley was born we were living in Orlando, but I don't know where we were living when I was born.

Rick: Before we get too far, why don't you give me their names.

Sophie: Mother? Mother's name was Maggie Dukes McKewn and Daddy's name was William Talley McKewn.

Rick: Do you know their birth dates?

Talley: Mother's name was Maggie Millicent Dukes.

Sophie: *Margaret* Millicent Dukes.

Talley: And she was born July the 6th, 1874. My daddy's name was William Talley McKewn and he was born May 28th, 1874.

Rick: Now he was a railroad man.

---

[12] Talley was born on April 7, 1905 in Orangeburg, S.C.

Talley: Yes.

Sophie: Conductor on the Seaboard.

Rick: Is that what he did—he was a conductor all his life?

Sophie: Yeah.

Talley: As far as I know.

Sophie: His father used to be section foreman—Grandpa McKewn—was section foreman for Southern Railroad in South Carolina—I guess Orangeburg, I don't know. And Daddy used to go along with the family on the train. So, when Daddy grew up to be a man and go out to work, he started to work with the Southern Railroad in South Carolina and then he went to work for the Seaboard in Florida. And he worked for the Seaboard twenty-one years until when he died in 1922. Now, we used to think we owned the railroad, because we rode free, you know. And every time we'd get on the train you'd have thought we , you know, was the head of everything on there. We'd act just like we owned it. But we always managed to enjoy all the trips on the train.

Rick: Now you all moved to Waldo when you were about how old?

Talley: I don't know exactly how—We left Waldo when I was eight-years-old.

Sophie: Well now, you were in Waldo when you went to school.

Talley: I started...

Sophie: Talley started school when she was five-years-old. So that must have been about 1910—when we lived in Waldo. I think we lived—we lived there though three different times in Waldo. And we lived in Cedar Keys at one time, too. But in Waldo we first lived at Miss Annie's house—that was kind of on the outskirts of town. And then we lived in the Renauld house which was right downtown. When they had the big fire there, we were right there a block from it. And then the last years we lived in Waldo, we lived in what we called Lilly Villa. And Daddy owned the house.

Talley: And it's still there! You can see it!

Sophie: It's a little ten-acre farm.

Talley: We had pecan trees and all the various kinds of animals you have on a farm. And Lilly Villa was beautiful and we had a playhouse that he had built for us out in the

back yard, and it was furnished so beautifully, and when we were moving to Tampa we were heartbroken because we couldn't bring it with us. We wanted him to put it on a flatcar and have the railroad bring it down for us, and so we always felt like we left a little part of us in Waldo, because our little playhouse had to stay behind. But we had a wonderful life. We just had great times. We didn't have a lot of money, but we weren't poor.

Rick: When did you move to Tampa?

Talley: In 1913.

Sophie: And Daddy—Daddy was on a run between Jacksonville and Tampa, and the layover was in Jacksonville. So when he'd take his train—and it was called One and Two—and when he'd take the train into Jacksonville in an evening—he'd get back into Jacksonville about I don't know what time—about six or seven o'clock, or eight—and then he would take the midnight freight down that would leave Jacksonville going to Tampa at midnight, and he'd *deadhead* on the freight from Jacksonville to Waldo and then get off the train. Well, when Daddy wasn't—he was gone maybe two nights and a day, I guess—Anyway, when Daddy was not at home, Mother always slept in the room with us, 'cause we had two double beds in there, and she always had a pistol—and so, when she'd sleep in our room, she'd bring the pistol in there, because we had no close neighbors.

Talley: But we had a lot of gypsies that would camp out near where we were—and they would steal the hay and steal the chickens, you know, and so Mother always kept a pistol handy in case someone broke into the house.

Ssophie: She wasn't afraid of anything though—Mother wasn't. So, the night that—Mother always had the front door unlocked so Daddy could just come on home, you know—and we had a room called the *parlor*—and that's where the piano was. And so, we only used the parlor when we had the preacher or company—and then Syril, our oldest sister would always go in there to practice. She was taking piano lessons. So when she went in there—it was in the summertime—and you had to put the windows up and put the screens in because we didn't have screens that were all the way in—so, when—that night, Mother—we were all upstairs and Mother never went to bed the nights that Daddy was going to come home—and of course we had those duplex shades where you couldn't tell there was a light on in the house from the outside. So, Mother was sitting in her room reading the Bible and we three girls were in our bedroom—and so, after a while, just not too long before the time for Daddy to come home, Mother heard something go like they slammed this screen shut—and she waited a while, and then after while she could hear 'em hitting on the furniture—knocking furniture over and all—and the steps were concealed, they had a door down in the dining room—and so, she heard 'em opening the door and start

up the steps. Well, of course we just had lamps there. So, Mother got up with the Bible in her hand and went out in the hallway where the steps came up to the upstairs and she said, "If you come another step farther I'll blow your brains out! Just come on! I'm ready for you." And with that, whatever—whoever it was—he turned around and went on back out the same way they came in. So, after Mother waited a while, Mother came in and woke we three girls up and she asked Syril if Syril had left the windows open in the parlor, and Syril said she sure did. Mother said, "Well, evidently the dogs"—we had two bird dogs in the yard—said, "evidently the dogs have knocked the screens in." So, she got a lamp and we all four of us went downstairs and sure enough there was the screens sitting shut just as nice in the window. So then, Mother fixed the windows down and locked the windows, and we went on back up the stairs. And so, when Daddy came home that night, Mother told Daddy that she was tired of being brave. And so on July the 13th, 1913 we moved to Tampa.

Rick: At that time you all didn't have an automobile.

Sophie: Oh no, we had a horse and buggy.

Talley: And that horse's name was Blanche. And Blanche went down to Tampa with us. Also, this young Negro boy went with us named Martin. His mother had been our cook or helper, and so she sent Martin to cook for us and to clean. He lived with us. How many years did we have Martin?

Sophie: About ten.

Talley: Until he was grown, you know. He did all of the cooking and all of the cleaning.

Rick: Do you know what his last name was?

Talley: No.

Sophie: No.

Talley: The only thing I knew was Martin.

Rick: Uncle Doc hadn't moved down with you by that time.

Talley: No. Uncle Doc moved down with us in...

Sophie: 1919.

Talley: ...1919. No—yes, 1919. We had gone to South Carolina for Christmas.

Sophie: December of 1919.

Talley: And we were at our aunt's home—Lilly Smoak—and all the members of the family were there, but Uncle Doc, and our father wanted to know where he was, and there was sort of a hush-hush, you know, and well—Daddy said, "If Doc isn't good enough to come to Christmas dinner, then I don't want to have any Christmas dinner either." So, I think they went out and got him all cleaned up. He was an alcoholic.

Sophie: No, he didn't come.

Talley: He didn't come?

Sophie: No, but the next day Daddy found him and took him and bought him...

Talley: ...new clothes...

Sophie: ...and took him to the barber shop, and bathed him...

Talley: ...and he said, "Doc, can you give up drinking?" And he always called our father *Captain,* and he said, "Well, why?" He said, "Well, if you'll stop drinking, I'll take you home to live with us." And he did—he stopped drinking. I think he may have drunk vanilla, or something like that after that, but he was not a drunkard anymore, and he lived with us then until he died in...

Sophie: '54.

Talley: 1954.

Rick: Did he work at all?

Sophie: Mmm-mm.

Talley: Well, he used to—uh, yeah...

Sophie: ...clean yards...

Talley: Yeah, he used to mow. You know, and he was quite a character...

Sophie: Had a dog named Sammie.

Talley: ...Sammie.

Rick: Now, Uncle Doc was your mother's brother.

Talley: Mother's brother.

Sophie: He was the only one of the fourteen children that never married. He was an ole bachelor. We used to hate his—you know what!

Rick: Why is that?

Talley: Well, when we'd go to South Carolina—on Sundays all the family came home to eat—and they were, gee there were a jillion people! And we children used to have to wait until all of the grown people had eaten. So, our mother decided that that was ridiculous. So we would fix our plates, and we would take 'em out and go and get in these tremendous, big cotton wagons that were drawn up in the side yard underneath the trees.

Sophie: Two-horse wagons.

Talley: And we loved to sit on the tongues of the wagons and ride up and down, you know, and they had chains on them and they'd make this delightful music, we thought. And Uncle Doc would hear us and he would come and run us away. He couldn't stand for—he couldn't stand me, he loved Sophie and all those—One time he told me, he said, "I want to tell you something: We're damn sorry to see you come, and damn glad to see you go!" And I said, "And I'm damn glad to go, too!" But, uh...

Sophie: He really was a pistol. We hated it that Daddy had, you know, asked him to come live with us, because Daddy would let us use the car, you know, and we'd go and ride what we called "drag the Main." We'd go turn around at Lafayette Street and ride back down to Zack and turn around at Zack and go back up to Franklin Street—maybe a hundred times during the time, and when we'd come home, the next morning at breakfast Uncle Doc would say, "Captain, did you know the girls drove over sixty miles last night?" And we couldn't stand that. I tell you, we got so mad!

Rick: When did you get your first car?

Talley: Oh, it was a Hudson and it was...

Sophie. 1914.

Talley: When we lived—in 1914 it was, wasn't it? We lived on Park Avenue. And it was a great big touring car.

Sophie: Yeah.

Talley: What sort of trips did you all take with it?

Sophie: Well, we never went any distance. The first time we ever made any kind of a long distance trip in a car was—we had a Reo, and so Daddy decided he was gonna drive to Orangeburg, you know, to see the family up there. So, we left Tampa and went up the Seaboard which was like Lutz and on up to that way up there—and sand beds!

Rick: Was it dirt?

Talley: Yeah.

Rick: Was it dirt roads?

Sophie: Yeah—sand beds and all. And we didn't get any further than Lake City wasn't it or Live Oak?

Talley: Live Oak the first night.

Sophie: Live Oak the first night. We drove from Tampa to Live Oak. We thought it was a wonderful thing, you know. So then, everybody wanted us to bring them water from the Sewannee River, 'cause nobody had seen the Sewannee River. So we got bottles and Daddy stopped for us to go down to the Sewannee River and get water in the bottles to take with us to Orangeburg.

Talley: The first thing we did, though, was we got a string and tied on the bottle 'cause we were gonna let it down from the bridge. And for heavens sakes, the bridge was way up there and the water was way down, so we had to go down and get the water. It was so hot while we were traveling—it took us three days to get to Orangeburg. And it was so hot the ornament—the hood ornament—a camel that was on the car—melted off!

Rick: What year was this?

Talley: Sophie, do you remember the year?

Sophie: No—I sure don't.

Rick: About?

Talley: The Reo. We had the Reo when we lived...

Sophie: ...on East Francis.

Talley: Did we?

Sophie: Mmm-hmm. Don't you know, that's when they all came to visit us.

Talley: Must have been...

Sophie: Must have been about '17.

Talley: 1917.

Rick: So Papa Dukes was still alive?

Talley: Yes, he died in 1917.

Sophie: So this must have been '17. But anyway—it took us three days, but when we got to Orangeburg, they almost everybody let out to see us, because we had done a feat, you know, by driving from Florida all the way to Orangeburg.

Talley: And you know what we used? We didn't have maps. We had what was called a Blue Book put out by the Automobile Association. And someone had to sit and read it all the time, because it would say, "And you go down to a fork in the road and turn left and there will be a red barn—or a big tree"—or something like that, and it was just as exciting reading the book to see where you were going without looking outside to see where you'd been! It was really great!

Rick: What sort of gas stations did they have?

Talley: Isn't that strange! We carried our gasoline.

Sophie: No, we didn't.

Talley: We didn't?

Sophie: No.

Talley: Where did we get gasoline? I don't remember ever stopping for gas.

Sophie: I don't remember ever stopping for gas.

Talley: Isn't that...?

Rick: You had to.

Talley: I—isn't that strange? Didn't we carry it on the back? On the luggage rack?

Sophie: No.

Talley: I don't remember.

Rick: What was Tampa like when you first moved to it?

Sophie: A little town. The streets were not paved. Only a few streets were paved.

Rick: Did they have the trolley yet?

Sophie: Yeah.

Talley: Yes—street cars.

Sophie: We were just two houses from the street car on Jefferson. But when we moved to Tampa—Daddy being connected with the railroad—he got boxcars to move in. So, we had stuff on one end of the boxcar and on the other end, and where the doors open on each side they fixed it up so the horse could stay there and get air, you know. Well, when we unloaded the boxcars and started up, Sauders, a moving company, was there, and they had horse-drawn wagons, I mean...

Talley: Drays.

Sophie: ...to haul the furniture and—and the road was so sandy and the load was heavy, that the Humane Society came out and got after the Sauders Transfer Company, because they were being cruel to the horses, you know. And our bicycles—we all had bicycles—and as soon as they unloaded our bicycles we took off to take to the town. And we went down on Ross Avenue and Palm over what they used to call the Ross Avenue Bridge over the Hillsborough River and the Tampa Electric Company had a power house right there across the river—and we used to have linen suits, you know—midi-briahs (sp?) and skirts—and so, we all three of us rode our bicycles down there and we parked and went down under the bridge and we found a boat. So, we thought we'd get in the boat and just push out, you know, as far as the rope would let it go—and uh, Syril hit the rafter...

Talley: With her head!

Sophie: ...with her head, and we all fell in. So, we came out of the river and got up under the bridge and took our clothes off to dry 'em, so 'fore we went home—and when we went back up to the house, the first thing Mother said when she saw us was, "What'd you all do, fall in the river?" Course, she could tell by the wrinkled dresses, but we didn't think about that. But I tell you we had *some* good time!

Rick: Now you were just little girls then—you were born April 7th, 1905 Grandmom...

Talley: Yeah.

Rick: ...and you were born....

Sophie: December 6th, 1902—we were all born in Orangeburg.

Rick: Can you tell me anymore about your Mom and Dad when they lived in Tampa that you can recall?

Talley: Well.

Rick: Did you all get along real well with your parents?

Talley: Well—yes. We had a father who was *very* stern, *very* profane—and you'd think he was going to kill you, and he had a heart of gold and he was just a real softie. I would do something to annoy him, which seemed to be all the time, and he would say—he always called me *Pete*—and he'd say, "All right, Pete, you can't leave this house for a week. You come home from school and you stay here!" And it didn't upset me at all, because I knew every night before he'd go to bed—to sleep—he'd call me in and he'd say, "Pete, you made your old Daddy mad today. I didn't mean it. You don't have to." So, I got by with everything. Sophie was the favorite one though.

Rick: Is that true, Sophie?

Sophie: No.

Talley: Yes it is...

Sophie: I don't think so—maybe, being the middle child. I don't know.

Talley: Mother—Mother was the most understanding person in the world. You could tell her anything and she never appeared to be shocked. She was very tolerant in her views about things. She would tell you that, "I wouldn't do that, but then you're going to have to decide what you're going to do." And she was someone you could always depend on, and take your troubles to, and you knew that she would somehow understand even though it hadn't happened to her. She was beautiful. She was really a saint. I—I'm sure.

Rick: Now your father passed away when?

Talley: In—December the 19th, 1922.

Rick: And that was before you got married?

Talley: Yes.

Rick: What were the circumstances of his death?

Talley: He had a ruptured appendix. And when they operated on him, he had kidney failure, and they discovered he'd had Bright's disease. And he was operated on a Friday...

Sophie: Friday, yeah...

Talley: And he died Tuesday.

Sophie: ...operated on Sunday night.

Talley: Sunday night—that's right. He was taken ill on Friday—They operated on Sunday night. And the strangest thing—When they were rolling him out to take him to the hospital, he said to the attendants, "Hold up a minute, boys!" he said. "I want to look around, because, you know, I'm not coming back." And sure enough he didn't. But—he had a very violent, quick temper—but it was over in a flash, and he never could understand why you felt he'd done anything wrong. But he was the first one to always help anyone, or go to anyone in need. Mother never turned anybody away from her door, just like her father and mother had done. We used to sit on the front porch and watch—back in the days of when tramps and hobos were, you know, numerous around—we would see one coming down the street, and he would pass the house on the corner and turn in our driveway and come around to the back door and knock and always ask for a handout. And Mother...

Rick: Was this in Tampa?

Talley: In Tampa—and Mother asked one of them one time, "How is it you always come to *my* house?" And they said, "There is a certain mark that is always made that is recognizable where you can always depend on getting something to eat." And we went out and we never could find what it was that they saw. But it was just—it was just unbelievable. Just—they just marched right on down.

Rick: Maybe your Dad told them while he was working on the railroad.

Talley: I don't know. To tell you about how my father was, he was on a run from Tampa to Venice, Florida, and one day this woman got on with a box of guavas. And it was hot. And the guavas started smelling. And my father said, "You cannot take those with you. You've got the throw them off the train." And she said, "I'm not going to do it." And he said, "Well, if you don't, you're getting off the train!" He almost lost

his job over that. Ha! He made her throw the guavas off, because he couldn't stand the smell of them! (laughter).

Rick: When did you meet Evans Crary?

Talley: Well, I had seen him—we moved down two doors from him—three doors. And he was about the color of split pea green soup, and he was bowlegged, and he'd walk by the house and I thought, "Isn't he ugly!"

Rick: How old were you then?

Talley: I was—fourteen? And uh—he thought I was terrible, because he was going to junior high school and I was going to high school. And um...

Rick: And you were just two months older than him?

Talley: Yeah. I didn't know that for a long time though. And so, one day I was out jumping rope and he stopped the car—he drove—he had a Buick—well, what kind of Buick would you call it, Sophie? I mean, you could put the top down, and it was like an open...

Sophie: Touring car.

Talley: Touring car.

Rick: This was two or three years later?

Talley: No.

Rick: How old were you all then when he was driving?

Talley: Well, he was about fourteen. He had been driving since he was eleven or twelve. Sophie drove...

Sophie: I started driving at eleven. A Model T.

Talley: You didn't have to have license or anything then. Anyway, he stopped and he asked me if I wanted to go for a ride. And I said, "Yeah." So I *really was* picked up. And uh—he was eating an apple and he didn't offer me a bite, and I thought he was the rudest thing I ever saw. And then I fell madly in love with him. And so, we went all through high school, and then after he got out of college and was out for a little while we got married.

Rick: What did you think of him—and the rest of the family—what did they think of him?

Sophie: Oh, everybody liked him...

Talley: Except Daddy.

Sophie. Well, Daddy didn't like him because he didn't want any of his children to marry and leave home. He said he wanted to be dead, you know, before the home was broken up.

Talley: So, he *was*.

Sophie. He died in '22.

Talley: But I—one night I heard Mother—I was—I wanted a date with—had a date with Evans and he said I couldn't go. And I heard Mother say to him, "Talley, you better not tell her she can't meet him. She is *your* child, and she'll do just like you would do, and she'll sneak off to meet him. So you just as well let him come to the house!" So before he died in December—on Thanksgiving Day he invited Evans to come to Thanksgiving with us, and Evans came *scared to death*! Ha-ha-ha! But he used to come up on the porch and he'd say, "Hello, Mr. McKewn." And he [Daddy] would say, "Hmmmph!" So, he [Evans] would come flying in. But it was great. He really was fairly nice to him before he died.

Rick: When did you all get married?

Talley: We were married one Saturday afternoon in Brooksville, Florida. It was February the 4th, 1928.

Rick: What were the circumstances?

Talley: Well, that was funny. I had been going with him seven years. And he came home—he had graduated from law and had come to Stuart, Florida to work with Ed Brobston as a law clerk. And he had to go to Jacksonville on some law matter, and he called me up and said, "I'm coming by Tampa for the weekend." So, on his way down, he stopped by the University of Florida—by the fraternity house and went in and one of the boys said, "Evans, my girl and I got married secretly last night." And so Evans came on home, but before that he'd broke down—his car broke down at Dunellon, Florida. So he caught a ride in and called me to come pick him up downtown. We went to a place called King's Drugstore because it was open all night. So, he said, "Do you s'pose..."—I was working then as a legal secretary—And he said, "Do you s'pose you could get off tomorrow?"—which would have been Saturday—"and get your car, and drive me up to Dunellon,"–I think it was to pick up

his car, and he said, "We'll get married in Brooks ville on the way up." And I said, "Why you can't do that! The courthouse will be closed." And he said, "Well, we'll see about it." So, I couldn't get off all day. I got off a half a day on Saturday, but Saturday noon we started out and we went up. When we got to Brooksville, sure 'nough, he stopped at the courthouse and went in, and when he came out he said, "Come on!" We went in and Judge Russell married us. And I spent my honeymoon pulling his car back to Tampa.

Rick: Why did you get married in secret instead of having a wedding—church wedding, or something?

Talley: (Sigh) It—well—

Sophie: No money.

Talley: No money—and—uh—he was afraid—I was afraid I'd lose him and he was afraid he'd lose me—and just—I don't know!—It just seemed to be exciting—you know.

Rick: What did your mother think about it?

Talley: Well—I told her that night. And bless her heart, that's why I say she's so wonderful. She said, "Well, I would rather you not have done it that way, but if that's what you want—why that's all right."

Rick: You just came back? Where'd he go?

Talley: He went to his house. You see, they lived two doors down from me. And then we announced it in May. I think he made a fee—about ten or fifteen dollars. And we had a house that we could live in—free. People back in 1928 that used to come down for the winter—when they'd leave in the summertime they would get people to come live in the house and take care of it while they were gone. And uh, Captain Plum, whom later we found out was a rumrunner and a bootlegger, had this little house out on the St. Lucie River, or right across the street like from the houses on the St. Lucie River—and so we had that for what? Three months, Sophie? Rent free. So we lived there.

Rick: Did you come over, Sophie?

Sophie: Oh yeah, we were there the time they had the hurricane. Bessie Chiles and I—a friend of ours came—and Daddy Crary—we brought Daddy Crary over, Evans' father. And we all three stayed there. They only had one bedroom and had a roll away kind of a settee in the front room they made into a bed—so—we had twin beds in the bedroom. So, we tied the twin beds together, so Talley and Bessie and I slept on the twin beds

and Daddy Crary and Evans slept out in the living room. Well, this night of the hurricane it was so bad and Talley said, "I'm not going to stay in here, 'cause I wanna be with Evans if anything happens." So there was poor ole Daddy Crary with nowhere to go. So, the beds were still tied together, so I said to Daddy Crary, "Well, come on in here and get in bed with Bessie and I!" And so, Bessie says, "All right, Sophie, but you've got to sleep in the middle!" I said, "All right—I'll sleep in the middle." And we all three slept in there during the hurricane.

Rick: What year was that?

Sophie: That was '28.

Talley: August of '28.

Sophie: August of '28.

Rick: Now that was Perley Frederick Crary?

Sophie: Yeah.

Rick: What do you all recall about him?

Talley: Well—(sigh)—I think one of the things I remember about Daddy Crary was that he was—uh—who was it that said, "Most men live out their lives in quiet desperation"? Well, that's how I thought of Daddy Crary. He was originally from Cincinnati, Ohio—or Norwood?—just outside from Cincinnati. And I do not know too much about his background at all, but he had come to Tampa as a young man when he was around 21-years-old. And he went to work as a bookkeeper for a cigar factory, and he attended classes—Spanish classes—at Centros Churiana (sp?) there in Tampa, and then taught English. And he became—oh, very proficient in Spanish—he spoke beautiful Spanish. And he was a dear man in a lot of ways—very, very frugal. And he married Alice Lewis.

Rick: Where did he meet her?

Talley: She had come to Tampa. Her oldest sister ran a boarding house, and Daddy Crary lived with Aunt Grace.

Rick: She had come from Sanford, Florida?

Talley: Longwood, Florida. Mother Crary's parents— mother's parents, I think—came and their homestead was where the Orange County Courthouse is now. And her father's name was George Washington Lewis. And I think they were originally from North

Carolina, if I'm not mistaken. And so, Aunt Grace had—ran a boarding house in Tampa , and Daddy Crary lived there, and Mother Crary wanted to get away. She never could stand being around children and always having to help with the younger ones and all. So she decided she'd go down and get herself married and wouldn't have to do anything for the rest of her life. And I don't know what in the world attracted her to Daddy Crary! Ha, ha! I think it was an out. It was a way to get away.

Rick: So they didn't get along too well?

Talley: Well, he called her *Miss Sugar*. And he just loved her to death! And she—I don't know how to explain Mother Crary—uh—if I were to tell someone that I thought she was rather cruel and, you know, unloving—they would look at me like I was crazy, 'cause everyone thought she was wonderful, because she had this wonderful facade.

Sophie: Dr. Jekyll and Mrs. Hyde.

Talley: She could put on this, you know—an act. But she was really—and yet, I have to admit she was a good housekeeper, she was a marvelous cook, she loved parties, she loved picnics, she loved people. She just wanted to go, go, go. And Daddy Crary was the antithesis of all this. He didn't want to go anywhere; he didn't want to do anything. He went to his work. He was very wealthy when I met Evans.

Rick: Didn't he start some sort of business between Honduras and Tampa?

Talley: He was what I guess you would call a *factor* for the Hondurans. As their boats would come in, he was their agent in Tampa—and took care of all of the business for them in Tampa. And he had—a real estate business, and had started subdivisions. One especially: Evelyn City—it's still called Evelyn City, isn't it Sophie?

Sophie: Mmmm-hmmm.

Talley: Out near Sulphur Springs. But when the boom broke, he wouldn't give up anything. He tried to hold onto everything he had, and he lost everything. In fact, he lost the old home place and the new home that had been built. But he was so resilient. He really had a wonderful character in this way. He went up to Tallahassee—got a job in the government—in the State Board of Administration—bought a beautiful brick home—established himself up there, and worked for twenty years and then retired. And he was going down to live in Binaca in Hondurus. As a young man, he and two other men went to Hondurus and walked all over Honduras. And he loved Binaca, this island that was off the coast of Hondurus—and loved all the people. And they were the ones with the bananas and the coconuts and the boats.

Rick: Was Granddad very close to him?

Talley: You want to know if Evans Sr. was close to his father—There was a great deal of respect for him, but I never saw them exchange any expression of affection or anything like that. Daddy Crary didn't quite understand Evans, because he wouldn't wear high-top shoes and resole his own shoes—and that he liked to have nice things around—Daddy Crary—I would have liked to have known more of his background, because something colored it that way. Now, Daddy Crary's father disappeared. He left and we hear he went to Texas—and there are a lot of Crarys in Texas. Now whether there's any connection or not, I don't know. But he became very bitter towards his father and would not let any mention be made of him, or try in any way, shape, or form to try to find him.

Rick: When did he pass away?

Talley: He died in 1951. And I cannot remember—they were living in Orlando at the time.

Sophie: I don't remember either.

Talley: I cannot remember.

Rick: What was Granddad's relationship to his mom?

Talley: His mother worshiped him. She thought the moon rose and the sun—moon—and everything rose and set in him. And, um...

Sophie: Nobody was good enough for him.

Rick: When I say Granddad, I mean Evans Crary, Sr.—for the tape.

Talley: And he loved his mother. He was completely dominated by her. No matter what we wanted to do, if she wanted to countermand it—why, we did what *she* wanted to do.

Rick: Did she come over to stay with you very often?

Talley: No. Fortunately—I think the Lord had a hand in us moving down here, 'cause I don't think we'd have been married a year if we'd lived in Tampa. She was very demanding. And everything had to be done her way, at her time, whenever—you know. And I was a rebel. And I didn't always want to follow along. She had broken your Granddad to the halter very early in life—and Daddy Crary insisted on it too—Miss Sugar could do no wrong, and if what she wanted Evans to do, he must do it. And he was a *most* dutiful son. Really!

Rick: What were you doing all this time, So?

Sophie: Working, I guess.

Rick: When did you start working?

Sophie: I started work at Maas Brothers September 13th of 1930. And—the reason why I went to work there—I lived with Talley, you know, when Evans, Jr. was born. I came over here in August, I guess it was—of '29. And Talley was pregnant. She was sick, you know, all the time. So I came over here to live with them. And in October of '29, Talley and Evans and Mother and I—in my Model A Ford—we drove to New York. And we have a picture of us taken at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with Talley...

Talley: You're leaning on it!

Sophie: You and I leaning on it.

Talley: Not me!

Sophie: I thought Evans took it.

Talley: No! You're leaning on it!

Sophie: ...leaning on the grave, but it's not the same as it is now, 'cause it was above the ground, and the one now, I think, is level with the ground. But anyway, I lived with Talley til the next year—September of '30. And Evans was born, of course, February the 11th, in 1930, and I took care of him. And then I went back to Tampa and went back to work. And the only reason why I went to work—Mother had a little money then and I just had a good time, but this girl said one of the bookkeepers in Maas's was going to have a baby—and there was an opening—wanna know if I wanted it, and I said, "Well, I'll see about it." So, I didn't go right away and she called me and said, "Come on down," she said. "Mr. Pettibone wants to talk to you." So I did, and I got the job—and I worked at Maas's til '40. And they wouldn't raise my salary, so I got a job working for a Mrs. Addison, who I used to go on trips with. She's the one took me in 1936 to California for the first time, all expenses paid. And anyway so I went to work for her at her furniture factory—I was head bookkeeper there. And then I got a job at the School Board in Tampa and worked for them until '42. Then they asked me to come back to Maas's and they gave me twice the salary I was making and a much better deal.

Rick: So, how did Maas's do through the Depression? Pretty well?

Sophie: Yeah. They did all right. They had good business all the time. So, finally I worked there then until the last three years of my—about '65—I was head of the employee's credit union—I managed that for three years. Then, I retired in December of '68. I worked on to finish out the year, although I was sixty-five in '67, see—I worked because Mother was still living, and I didn't know, you know, about having money and all like that, so—she died in May of '68,—and I stayed on there until the end of the year, and then I retired. Then I sold my home over there in Odessa out on Sunset Lake to come over here and live with Talley.

Rick: Tell me a little about Granddad's political career and your experiences.

Talley: Well, of course I always have despised politics—and wouldn't you know it—I'd marry someone who liked it. In 19—uh—in thirty—well, you know, I can't remember dates, but anyway, in the early 1930's....

Rick: I think it was '36, wasn't it, when he ran the first time?

Talley: Well, he ran for City Judge before then. And—Gene Turner opposed him—he was a young lawyer just out of law college, and he had *lived* here, and his wife taught school here—and so, everybody said that Evans didn't have a prayer of winning. And I was in hopes that was true, but he *won*. And so, he was City Judge until 1935 when he had to resign, because he was going to run for the legislature. And that—I tell you I suffered—I *really* couldn't stand political races! They were awful here. The main question always was whether fishermen could seine, or whether they couldn't seine. It was the fight between the sport fishermen and the commercial fishermen. And Evans was always in the middle of it.

Rick: What side did he take?

Talley: He would put it up to a referendum. He said he *refused* to pass a law one way or the other—that if the people wanted it, whichever way they wanted, they would have to make a determination. And let me tell you the funniest thing in the world, they would always get petitions up—each side—for seining and against seining—and the same names would be on each petition. And we would get letters from them saying, "I hope you appreciate the fact that I had to sign each one, and for give me for it, but I could not take a stand, because I'm in business." So, Evans was re-elected. The term is just for two years. And in 1945 he became Speaker of the House. And some of the rulings he made are still in effect. We really had a wonderful time. I enjoyed all the trappings that went with it; I just despised the running for the office—and what all had to transpire in order to get elected. Then after he was Speaker, he ran for the Senate. And he was in the House for ten years and in the Senate for eight years.

Rick: You went up to Tallahassee what—once every other year?

Talley: Unh-hunhh. Every two years we would stay for sixty days. He got six dollars a day, and I worked for him, and I got six dollars a day. And we would get per diem for going up one way and coming back driving. But now, my heavens, it's a regular business, it's a career—they make plenty of money. But back then it was really a hardship. I would take the boys over and they would stay with Mother and Sophie. And they would take care of them while we were in Tallahassee.

(At this point the interview abruptly ends. I cannot recall if a visitor dropped by, or if my grandmother just said she was tired).

Transcript Three: 1907 Golden Wedding Anniversary Photo

I made a copy of Dukes family photograph taken on September 17th, 1907, at the celebration of Papa and Mama Duke's 50th wedding anniversary in Orangeburg, South Carolina. A copy of that photo is included in this booklet. Prior to my taped interview with my grandmother and great-aunt, they identified each of the people in the photo for me, and I wrote them down on the back of my copy.

Rick: This is January the 1st, 1985. I am Rick Crary the second—I'm sitting in my grandmother's house. My grandmother is Talley McKewn Crary, and she's with her sister Sophie McKewn. My wife Donna is here to listen. We're going to have my grandmom and Great-Aunt Sophie reminisce about the 1907 reunion of the Dukes family. I have a picture that accompanies the tape that has all of the people in it, and we're going to have some reminiscences about each one—whatever Grandmom and So can remember. We'll start with the front row—Walter Dukes, Bubba's son. Now this was September 17th, 1907—was the reunion?

Talley: It was really the celebration of the 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mama and Papa Dukes. It was held down at the home place called *the Oaks*, and there were more than a hundred guests there.

Rick: That's in Orangeburg, South Carolina?

Talley: Orangeburg, South Carolina. And Mother wrote that it was beautiful day, and that everyone enjoyed it so very much. [That inscription is written on the back of one of the original prints of the photo].

Rick: Okay—starting with the front row, do you remember anything at all about Walter Dukes, Bubba's son?

Talley: Yes. He ran a haberdashery store in Orangeburg. And he lived a rather uneventful life until towards the very end. And he was beaten senseless and went blind, and died rather tragically

later.

Rick: Who was he beaten by? Was it a robbery or something?

Talley: Well—gossip has it—that he was seeing—Buster Shecut's wife. And Buster was Walter's...

Sophie: Nephew.

Talley: ...nephew, and they—a lot of the family think that Buster beat Walter Dukes up, because later—and I don't know how much later—Buster killed his wife and shot —and killed himself. So they always will believe—those of us left, that Buster did beat Walter senseless and then—(pause)...

Rick: But nothing was ever proved?

Talley: Nothing was ever proved. I don't think they even tried to find out for true. It was just—you know.

Rick: In this picture he appears to be about 15-years-old.

Talley: I imagine. Next to him is Ebba Dukes Roberts. She was Bubba Dukes' daughter and Walter Dukes' sister. And Ebba lived in—where, Sophie?

Sophie: Athens, Georgia.

Talley: Athens, Georgia. And her husband was a—was he a pharmacist?

Sophie: Yeah, he was a pharmacist.

Talley: He was a pharmacist. And Ebba's daugher—isn't she the one married...

Sophie: Louise.

Talley: Louise Roberts married a McKewn boy in Tampa who worked for the Tampa Tribune in the sports department and was rather well know for that. What was his name?

Sophie: Red McKewn.

Talley: Red McKewn they called him. Next to Ebba...

Sophie: In *front* of Ebba!

Talley: Oh, *excuse* me. Why don't you say something?

Sophie: In front of Ebba is Earl Dukes. Earl was Bubba's youngest child. And he grew up and lived in Orlando, Florida. I don't know what Earl did—and we saw him—oh, 'bout 25 years ago. But we don't know—it was reported he died, but we have never, you know, been sure. Then the next is Syril McKewn.

Rick: That's your half-sister?

Sophie: That's my half-sister. And she, of course, married twice—had one son Clark. And she passed away in September 1983.

Rick: We're not certain of who her father was?

Talley: No. There have been all kind of reports of—Someone said his name was Brown. He came to Orangeburg and was the handsomest thing you've ever seen, and all the girls just fell madly in love with him. And Mother was going with our father at the time. They were childhood sweethearts and had grown up together. And—some way or other Mother went off with him against her parents wishes. Now, I *guess* she was married. Heh-heh-heh-heh! She was very, very young, because —we have an account somewhere—and I have tried to find it—of her marriage to Daddy—It was on a Christmas Day—was their marriage, and she was married at Bubba Dukes's home. He had a very lovely home halfway from Papa Dukes's home and in town, and it sat back–the surroundings were so beautiful. And Mother was married then, there—to Daddy. Next to Syril...

Rick: But anyway...

Talley: Oh.

Rick: ...just to get back—apparently her father died or disappeared.

Talley: Well, they—they said—um—they hoped they never drained the mill pond that was on the Dukes' property, 'cause they were afraid that maybe they might find bones there. Uh—Mother was the favorite one of the whole family, and the boys just worshiped her. And it is my understanding that she was treated very cruelly, and they went and got her...

Sophie: Well, he was *married*!

Talley: Ach!

Sophie: He was married! He wasn't divorced.

Talley: Oh, is that it?

Sophie: Mmmm-hmmmm. He was married, and when they found out he was married, she came home—and pregnant—and she had her baby at Grandpapa's.

Talley: And Syril. They had pictures of Syril at Mama's and she was the most beautiful—she had golden ringlets all over her—and these beautiful Irish eyes and that beautiful skin. And I always envied her, her curly hair.

Rick: Okay—and next to Syril.

Talley: Is Uncle Frank. Now you tell 'bout Uncle Frank, don't you remember...

Sophie: Uncle Frank married—um—a lady named...

Talley: Lucille.

Sophie: Lucille. And Aunt Lucille—they never had any children—and Aunt Lucille had a poodle—Dimples.

Talley: And they called it *Dimpy*!

Sophie: And they called it Dimpy. And I'll tell you, she really loved that thing. I think she loved it better than she did Uncle Frank.

Talley: And it bit you everywhere. It bit me one time on my navel and I thought I'd kill it. But Aunt Lucille, I thought, was the most beautiful thing. She was the only person I had ever seen at that time with bleached hair—and we think she was a lady of brittle virtue. Uncle Frank met her someplace—and he was quite the *bon vivant*—he was quite a drinker, as all the younger boys were. And he brought her home and no one would have anything to do with her. But later on, she would be invited to the dinners...

Sophie: Family affairs.

Talley: Family affairs—but she was never taken on in the so-called society of Orangeburg, because she bleached her hair and wore paint—you know...

Sophie: Rouge.

Talley: ...rouge—and she was beautiful—and she was sweet—We loved Aunt Lucille. I wanted to be just like her. I didn't care what she had done—I wanted to find

out—and I wish I had asked her what she really did!

Sophie: Then next to Uncle Frank is Ella Dukes, and her father was Archie. And Uncle Archie was the second son. Bubba was the oldest, and Archie was next.

Talley: He's up on the back row standing next to Aunt Pearl who is holding Mildred. And he had a grocery store and was very, very successful.

Sophie: In fact, he sold all the fancy canned goods, you know , things that you...

Talley: Would be called gourmet stuff now...

Sophie: Yeah. And he came to visit us one time in Tampa. And he was one that always everything he had was just wonderful. Like, he never used margarine—back in those days we used margarine, but we had a little bean in there to color it, you know, yellow—and 'cause margarine came in a white block. And so, Uncle Archie was coming to visit us, so I said to Mother, "Mother, aren't you going to get real butter for Uncle Archie?" She said, "No." Well, Mother always took the oleo and colored it and then washed it in milk. And it *did* taste like homemade butter. So, we had the oleo on the table, and when Uncle Archie came—we had rolls or biscuits, I can't remember—So, Uncle Archie took a big hunk out of it, you know, and we all looked at him, 'cause we knew it was oleo, you know, and he liked butter. So, after a while he says, "Maggie, where did you get this delicious homemade butter? I've never tasted any better!"And we just nearly died! And Mother said, "Well—at the store." Well, she did buy the oleo at the store—Then next to Ella is Merle Smoak Bethea. She was Aunt Lily's daughter—oldest child. And Merle is still living today, but she doesn't know anyone. She's in a—she's being cared for by someone they hired to live in and...

Talley: She had a Smoak—a smoke—a stroke—several years ago, and Wallace Bethea, her husband, is in a nursing home, and he knows no one. We never did care for Wallace. He—he kidded an awful lot. And one time I remember we were up visiting in Orangeburg, and we were supposed to go down to Aunt Lily's house for supper. And so, we were told to be there at such and such a time, which was something like four o'clock in the afternoon. So, we went to—Aunt Pearl's house where we were staying was just about a block away—so we walked down to Aunt Lily's and rang the doorbell, and Wallace answered the door and he said, "What do you all want?" And we said, "Well, we've come for supper!" And he said, "Well, there isn't any supper here tonight. We're not expecting you." And he closed the door. He was kidding, but we didn't know it, so we left. So, suppertime came and we weren't there and Mother began to get worried, and she said, "I can't understand it, they've never done this before in their lives!" And she said—and Wallace never said anything—he wasn't thinking right then. Finally, she said, "Something really has happened!" and "I'm sure

they would have minded me!" And Wallace said, "Well, they were here at four o'clock, but I told them they were not expected." And Mother said, "Oh, well then they went back. They wouldn't have—" He said, "Well, I just thought they knew I was joking and would come in." And he and Merle lived with Aunt Lily and Uncle Willie, and he drew up----had a will drawn up—I'm sure he had a hand in it, where after Uncle Willie's death the estate was not to be probated, and Wallace was the executor!

Rick: Is Wallace in this picture?

Talley: No. See, Sophie gave you—that's Merle sitting down there. She's large. And she just gave you Bethea as her married name. Next to Merle is Ora Smoak, and she married a man by the name of Pratt. Now he never amounted to an awful lot. He worked for the hardware company for a while, and then they moved to Charleston. And Ora just died about two years ago, didn't she?

Sophie: Mmmm-hmmm.

Tal;ley: Sitting next to Ora is Gussie Way Dukes, and she married a Seifert. Now she's Uncle Danny's daughter, and I don't remember Uncle Danny at all, do you Sophie?

Sophie: Uhnn-uhnn.

Rick: I thought he was the fellow who died fairly young, that's not...?

Sophie: No Robert is the one that died young.

Rick: Oh—okay.

Talley: And Johnny died at 21 away in college. And what did Danny—Uncle Danny do?

Sophie: I don't know.

Talley: Well, anyway, I didn't know Gussie Way too well either. And sitting next to Gussie Way is Blossom Dukes—Uncle Hampy's daughter. Now, Uncle Hampy was the town mortician. And other morticians would come in and open up and they'd close up, 'cause nobody would have anybody but Mr. Hampy. And he played a terrible trick one time. There was—a Negro died that was fairly well known and—they didn't do too well towards Negroes, you know—in the funeral home—but anyway, they just had all these Negroes coming in to pay their respect, and he got kind of tired of it, so he rigged it up someway so that when one lot came in, he jerked a leg up...

Sophie: Ha, ha, ha...

Talley: ...and that was the end of the viewing! Huh, ha, ha, ha.... And his funeral home is still going today. It—uh...

Sophie: Dukes-Harley.

Talley: It was Dukes-Harley.

Rick: We went there for Nannie's funeral [in 1968].

Talley: Yeah. Ummm-hmmm.

Sophie: Blossom's real name was Merita. Then sitting in the chair is Uncle Fergueson. Now, Uncle Fergueson married Mama's sister and we called her Auntie Fergueson. I don't even remember what Auntie Fergueson's name was.

Talley: Margaret!

Rick: Now, you told me Uncle Fergueson was a preacher?

Sophie: A retired preacher.

Talley: Her name was Margaret.

Sophie: Oh yeah, that's right.

Talley: Yeah, her name was Margaret.

Rick: But she's not in the picture?

Sophie: No.

Talley: Unless that is. Can you look to the side of Uncle Fergueson there? Is there anything that appears to be...

Sophie: Hmmm—mmm.

Rick: No.

Talley: Well, I don't know where she'd be!

Sophie: I don't either.

Rick: Let's move on to the middle row, then, to Pansy Dukes...

Sophie: Okay.

Rick: ...on the far left.

Sophie: Pansy was...

Talley: Bubba's daughter.

Sophie: ...Bubba's daughter—and, um...

Rick: She married Wannamaker?

Talley: Wannamaker.

Sophie: Wannamaker. J.T. Wannamaker. And next to her is Lois Dukes.

Rick: Before we go on...

Sophie: Oh.

Rick: ...when we went up to Nannie's funeral, we stayed at a Wannamaker's house. Was that...?

Talley: That was Mildred. But I don't know if there was—was there a connection?

Sophie: No—it was a different one.

Rick: Okay.

Sophie: This Wannamaker worked for a drug company. Uncle—mister—uh...

Talley: Jack Wannamaker?

Sopohie: Uh-hnnn. Jack—he was a salesman for a drug company.

Talley: But oh, Aunt Pansy was *pretty*! She was uh—just uh—

Sophie: Always dressed so nice, too.

Talley: And she had a daughter—Shibolette (sp?)—and she married an Isler. And she was a darling.

Sophie: Mmmm-hmmm. And Jack, Jr.

Talley: And Jack, Jr. But Shibolette—oh, I just thought if I could ever grow up to look like her. And you know, she's one of the first victims of a mugging and killing. She was killed in her driveway.

Rick: Pansy was?

Sophie: Pansy's daughter.

Talley: No. Pansy's daughter. In Columbia. In Columbia, South Carolina—years ago. Are we confusing you thoroughly?

Rick: No. Not at all.

Talley: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Sophie: You know who I don't see in here?

Talley: Who?

Sophie: Marguerite.

Talley: Oh...

Rick: Well, let's move on to Lois Dukes, next to Pansy.

Talley: Yeah. Well—I don't know—Lois...

Sophie: Married a McCants (sp?). And she lived out from Orangeburg down in Camron or somewhere down in there. So, we didn't get to be with Lois too much.

Talley: We just knew we were kin to her.

Sophie: ....and Sister Lou. She was a Loman and married Uncle—well, Bubba was what we called him. He was J.W.H. Dukes.

Talley: ...H. Dukes. And Bubba had a livery stable?

Sophie: Yeah.

Talley: And he was a drunk of the first water!

Rick: He's the one with the most kids there.

Talley: Yay-ya. And no wonder! I guess that's why he drank so much. Anyway, he was never put in jail, or anything like that—and he was never really rowdy or anything like that—except, he got very happy—and he'd come down the road saying, "Old man Dukes is drunk again!" So, they'd all go out and get him in before he could disgrace the family entirely.

Sophie: Who is Bubba holding?

Talley: Bus—um...

Rick: Buster Shecut.[That's what they had previously told me, but other information indicates the toddler may have been Jack Wannamaker, Jr.].

Talley: Buster Shecut.

Sophie: Oh, Buster Shecut his grandson. Next to Uncle—uh, well—er Bubber as we called him—is Mama Dukes. Her name was Sophie Janette

Talley: Janette...

Rick: And this was two years before her death?

Talley: Johnston—Johnston, was her maiden name. [All written records other than notes in Grandmom's handwriting say she was a *Johnson*].

Sophie: Yeah, Johnston. And her—I could see her stomach with her hand on it.

Talley: Mmmm-hmmm.

Sophie: Next to her is Papa Dukes. J. W. Dukes. And Papa was certainly...

Rick: I thought it was *J.H.*

Talley: J.H.!

Sophie: I mean J. H.—John Henry Dukes. That's right, I'm sorry. He was sheriff of Orangeburg County for about—eighteen years?

Talley: Oh—some long time. He was in the legislature, too.

Rick: Oh, was he? You never told me that.

Talley: Uhnn-hnnn. He was in the legislature, I don't know how...

Sophie: And wasn't he the one that was in the War?

Talley: Oh yeah.

Sophie: Tell him about that!

Talley: Well, of course Papa was in the cavalry, and—you've seen that picture of him in his uniform and all. When Papa was in—he had a Testament he carried in his breast pocket. And that saved his life one time. A bullet hit there and if he hadn't—that it would—I don't know what kind of—it couldn't have been too powerful or something—it didn't go through this little pocket Testament, but it saved his life. And accompanying Papa through all the War was one of his slaves—um..

Rick: Uncle Adam?

Sophie: The slave was known as Uncle Adam.

Talley: Yeah, we always called him—for a minute I couldn't think of his name—Uncle Adam. And he'd come home and give news to Mama as to how Papa was getting along. And I think maybe I told you this in the other thing—why we never had cornbread? I'd never eaten cornbread, 'cause he'd [Papa Dukes] vowed that if he ever came back alive, he'd never eat any cornbread, and he'd never have any cornmeal in his house—and he *didn't*. That's Sophie Louise, Papa is holding.

Rick: What did you say, So? Go ahead!

Sophie: When they used to ask me what my name was, I'd say, "Sophie Louise, I do as I please."

Talley: And she *did*! And sitting next to Papa Dukes is Lily Dukes, who is Uncle Archie's wife. And Uncle Archie is standing right in back of her. And Lily is holding Arthur Dukes, one of her sons. Later she had another son—John who was *handsome*!

Sophie: Never amounted to a row of pins.

Talley: No, but he *sure* was good-lookin'—he'd didn't have to amount! Then next to her was our Aunt Lily Dukes Smoak. And then back of her is Uncle Willie, her husband. Now they were the—Uncle Archie and Uncle Willie and Uncle Hampy were the most successful—materially-wise—and I venture to say they were all equally as rich, wouldn't you, Sophie?

Sophie: Mmmm-hmmm. And she's holding Angie Pearl.

Talley: Aunt Lily had a beautiful old home sitting on a lot up—it should have been in a vaster space than it was, but it was just gorgeous! The bathtubs, you know, had cherubs that the water came out of—and all the fixtures were all silver. And oh, I loved to go there! But only to see it, because you couldn't touch anything. And Aunt Lily is holding Angie Pearl. Now, Angie Pearl is two months older than I and she was born February the 4th, 1905.

Rick: I met Angie Pearl when we were up at Nannie's funeral.

Talley: Yeah—and do you know about Angie Pearl now? She knows nobody. They have to have around the...

Sophie: Clock.

Talley: ...clock nurses.

Rick: Was she Mimi's mother?

Talley: No, Mildred is Mimi's mother.

Rick: Oh, okay

Talley: That's up on the back row.

Sophie: Next to her is Gussie Way Stroman.

Talley: Gussie Dukes...

Sophie: No...

Talley: Gussie Way Dukes Stroman. That was Uncle Danny's wife...

Sophie: Gussie *Dukes* Way Stroman!

Talley: Pardon me! But I don't remember her at all. And next to her is Aunt Aggie, and I tell you, she was something!

Rick: That's Hampy's wife?

Talley: Uhnn-hmmm. Uncle Hampy and Uncle Hampy is in back of her. It had to cost a lot of money or Aunt Aggie wouldn't buy it. So every time she'd go into a store, they'd all whisper, "Aggie's coming! Here comes Mr. Hampy's wife." So everything was upped. And, you know—in price. And she was *thoroughly* satisfied, 'cause she had

paid a lot for it.

Sophie: But Aunt Aggie always was glad to have us. She didn't care for a lot of the children to come there, 'cause she had a lot of beautiful knickknacks—beautiful figurines and things—and she always would let us come and visit her and stay with her because we never meddled. Mother taught us, you know, not to meddle.

Talley: We could look, but we couldn't touch. We always had to have our hands down, or in back of us like this...

Sophie: ...and she always wanted us to come. And she made the best fruitcakes of anybody I have *ever* eaten!

Talley: And that's where Deleen got it—her daughter.

Sophie: Next to her.

Talley: Next to her is her daughter Deleen. Now, Deleen married a Rhodes and they went to Atlanta and opened up a bakery. And I often—Deleen's younger sister was Blossom Dukes, whose real name was Merita. And I wonder if that is where the Merita label started for bread.

Sophie: Well, they called their bakery Merita Bakery.

Talley: Uhnn-hnnn.

Sophie: Instead of Rhodes' Bakery. And they—her husband is behind her.

Talley: Yeah.

Sophie: And next to her is...

Talley: Another daughter of Bubba's—Blanche Shecut. And she's holding my cousin Lou Alice. And Lou Alice died several years ago.

Sophie: And she [Blanche] married Dr. Shecut who was the family doctor for years and years and years.

Talley: He's standing in back—and I don't remember Uncle Lynn looking that nice, but I guess he *did*! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sophie: Okay now. Start on the back row?

Rick: Yes.

Sophie: And that's William Talley McKewn.

Rick: And that's your father.

Sophie: Our father—and he's holding Talley *Orth* McKewn.

Talley: I will never forgive you for that!

Sophie: Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh.

Rick: Ha, ha!

Sophie: You didn't want to do that? That's all right. And Daddy worked for the railroad.

Rick: What did you used to say to Grandmom to tease her?

Talley: Oirty, Oirty, don't get naughty.

Sophie: Heh-*ha-ha-ha-ha*! And next to Daddy is Maggie Dukes McKewn. And Mother lived to be 93—she would have been 94. She died the 6th of May [1968]. If she had lived to July the 6th she would have been 94-years-old. And up until March she was in fairly good health.

Talley: And next to Mother is Uncle G.W. We called him...

Sophie: Jinks.

Talley: And he—we loved him.

Sopohie: George Whiteman Dukes.

Talley: But he was always our Uncle Jinks. And he married Mamie—Aunt Mamie...

Sophie: Harley.

Talley: ...Harley.

Sophie: But and Uncle George just kind of went from one job to the other—I mean, he worked for the city, and he'd, you know, do things like that.

Talley: And he drank rather well, too.

Rick: Why was it you felt so close to him?

Talley: He was home—see, Uncle Frank and Uncle George and Uncle Doc were the ones left down at the old place.

Sophie: Uncle Roy.

Talley: Well, Uncle Roy was off in college.

Sophie: Oh yeah, that's right.

Talley: But Uncle Doc was frumpy and —that's not the word—frumpy is when you don't look—well, he was *fussy*, and he didn't like *me*. Uncle George *liked* me!

Rick: I see! Ha, ha.

Talley: Heh-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Rick: That makes a difference.

Talley: And Uncle Frank was rather sweet, too, but he just wasn't as—Uncle Jinks just had a delightful sense of humor—and I just thought he was great!

Rick: And who's next to Uncle Jinks?

Talley: Uncle Jim—Dr. James Oliver. He was really a medical—had a medical doctor's degree, but he couldn't practice medicine—he couldn't operate on anybody or anything, so he went in to become a pharmacist in Orangeburg. He's holding Jim, Jr. And next to him is Aunt Pearl and she's holding Mildred Oliver.

Rick: Do you know anything about Jim?

Talley: Uncle Jim?

Rick: Jim, Jr.

Talley: He died over in Winter Haven several years ago.

Sophie: He married twice. His first wife lived—um I don't know.

Talley: He married a girl who had quite a bit of money and they lived up north and her folks had a newspaper, didn't they...

Sophie: Uhnn-hmmm.

Talley: ...or something. Anyway, she died very suddenly and had no intention of leaving her money to Jim, but she unfortunately didn't make a will. So, he got all the money. And then he married money again. He married this woman who had been—was she injured in an automobile wreck, or something?

Sophie: Ummm-hmmm.

Talley: ...was rather crippled up, but very wealthy. For pastime and for fun they clipped coupons off of their bonds, you know, and cashed them. And that's what they did, and they lived in Winter Haven.

Rick: How about Pearl? Where were Pearl and Jim from? They are from Orangeburg as well?

Talley: Aunt Pearl?

Rick: Yeah, she was one of the Dukes girls?

Talley: Oh, she was Mother's youngest sister.

Sophie: She was the youngest girl. Lily was the oldest girl, Mother was the middle girl, and Pearl was the youngest.

Rick: So, Mildred was the one that I met in Orangeburg?

Talley: Ummm-hmmm. And we stayed at her house for Nannie's—when we went to Nannie's funeral.

Sophie: And had that steak for breakfast!

Rick: Boy, wasn't that the nicest breakfast I ever had that I remember!

Talley: Well, Mildred isn't in too good of health, but she at least is ambulatory and seemingly has her right mind. So Angie Pearl and Sophie and I...

Sophie: No, Mildred and you and I...

Talley: I mean Mildred, and you and I—Angie Pearl is debilitated, and so is Merle—Ora's dead...

Sophie: Syril's dead.

Talley: Syril's dead.

Rick: Let's run on through the rest of these on the back row.

Talley: Oh. Well, then next to Aunt Pearl is...

Sophie: Uncle Archie.

Talley: Yeah and we've—I was skipping back and forth on Uncle Archie. Then Uncle Willie...

Sophie: Smoak.

Talley: Uncle Willie Smoak.

Rick: Know anything about him at all?

Talley: Well, he had a —Ma Smoak lived with him, and his Aunt Angie...

Sophie: Wilson.

Talley: ...Wilson—she was an Ayres—You know, back in those days in big old homes the families all lived together, you know. And Ma Smoak—she really ruled the roost. Aunt Angie—we loved to go in Aunt Angie's room, because she did beautiful work. Didn't she do embroidery and all, stuff like that?

Sophie: And Battenburg (sp?).

Talley: Battenburg lace and all. We use to love to go in there, but Ma—we sort of stayed clear of her. Next to him is Uncle Roy. He graduated from Walford (sp?) Law College, and he was quite a successful lawyer in Orangeburg...

Sophie: He was too young when he graduated to practice—he had to wait a while, 'fore he could get to practice law.

Talley: And he had a Bible class. He was...

Sophie: Active in the church.

Talley: And with his men's Bible class for years. He weighed over 300 pounds!

Rick: Really? He doesn't look too heavy there.

Talley: No. And Aunt Margaret whom he married always had him on a diet and could not understand why he never lost a pound. And the whole town was just laughing because Uncle Roy would eat what Aunt Margaret had them prepare for him for breakfast, and then he would go to the café up town and order a great *big* breakfast and eat that before he'd go. And he died quite young, didn't he? Wasn't he 60-something when he died?

Sophie: Yeah, ummm-hmmm. Now next is Uncle Manly. Uncle Manly married late—real late in life.

Talley: His name was Basil Manly Dukes. See, Papa was English and Mama was French—English-French—so that accounts for some of the names that run through the family.

Sophie: Uncle Manly was a good lumber man. He could go in a forest and tell them how many houses—or how much lumber they could cut out of...

Talley: Board feet they could cut.

Sophie: ...board feet out of the forest—and he was noted for that, he would go all over, you know, for that. But he married Sarah which was —she was kind of...

Talley: Below the salt and on the other side of the railroad tracks. Her father had a sawmill, wasn't that...?

Sophie: Yeah. And they had two sons.

Talley: Really, they weren't intentionally cruel. But there was just—an order—a social order that you didn't marry below your so-called station in life, and Uncle Manly did, but I think he was lucky to get Sarah. He was...

Sophie: A *drunk*!

Talley: Don't put it so bluntly! Ha-ha-ha. Here sits Donna and we come from a bunch of drunks!

Donna: Ha-ha-ha-ha.

Talley: But there was nothing to do up there for young boys whose fathers were quite well off.

Donna: No entertainment!

Talley: You know! But Uncle Manly had two sons. What was...?

Sophie: Eugene—B.M.

Talley: They called him B.M. Ha-ha! Basil Manly. And he taught school in Riviera Beach down here for several years. He married a girl named Pops. And they had their first child—a little girl—and they named her Talley! So she's living back up...

Sophie: B.M. died.

Talley: B.M. died and Pops moved back to Monck's Corner in South Carolina and she's living there and she teaches school.

Rick: So, was Papa Dukes one of the wealthiest people in Orangeburg?

Talley: Yes.

Sophie: And he had worlds of land!

Talley: Land holdings.

Rick: He had a cotton plantation.

Talley: He had a cotton gin. Ooooo, that was fun to go up there and jump down in the cotton seeds! Oh, golly, that was a lot of fun!

Sophie: Next to Uncle Manly is Uncle Hampy. The undertaker.

Rick: Wade Hampton Dukes.

Sophie: And he only had the two girls, and neither one of his two son-in-laws was interested in the funeral business—so he had two Harley boys...

Talley: Helping him.

Sophie: ...helping him. So, when Uncle Hampy decided to retire, he gave the funeral home to Isaac and...

Talley: Clifton.

Sophie: ...Clifton Harley. And it still carries the name of Dukes-Harley. I don't know who's running it now, 'cause both of them are dead.

Talley: And then comes Uncle Doc. Now he was the...Hee-hee.

Rick: That's Orrin Bowman Dukes.

Sophie: He was a doozy. He lived with us from 19...

Talley: 19.

Sophie: 1919.

Rick: Now he was the fellow that you didn't particularly care to see when you went up there.

Sophie: He never married.

Talley: Oh—I couldn't *stand* him and he couldn't stand me! It was mutual. We used to love to go out and get on the wagon tongues, you know, and what in the world could we do to hurt them? Here we were—I had to walk twice in the same place to make a shadow—so I couldn't have hurt a thing. And we would ride up and down on them, and the chains would clank. And he would come a-flyin', but we caught on to him, because his shoes squeaked. And they squeaked louder than sometimes when we were on the wagon, so we could run and hide. He was in a very sad state. We went to Orangeburg for Christmas of 1919, and we went to Aunt Lily and Uncle Willie's house for dinner and all the family was there who could be there , except for Uncle Doc. And my father—who your Uncle Evans, Jr. resembles in temperament very much—he's sort of like, you know, Don Quixote tilting windmills all the time—well, anyway my father said, "Where is Doc?" And there was some, you know, little nervousness—and they said, "Well, he wasn't invited." And my father said, "Well," something like, "If he isn't good enough to be invited here, then I'm not going to stay and eat."—which caused a terrible stir. I can imagine Mother almost fainting. But he went down—Uncle Doc lived—he had a place down—when Papa died he left all Uncle Doc's holdings—they were entailed so that he couldn't dispose of them—sell them and drink it up. So he was living in—I never did know exactly where it was. Anyway, it wasn't very desirable. Anyway, Daddy went down and he said, "Doc." Oh no, he got him all cleaned up. Didn't he clean him up and bring him back for dinner?

Sophie: Oh yeah, I guess he did.

Talley: For Christmas dinner, much to Aunt Lily and Uncle Willie's consternation. Anyway, after it was all over my father said, "Doc, can you stop drinking?" And he always called Daddy *Captain*. And he said, "Why Captain?" And he said, "Because if you stop drinking, you can go home and live with us."

Sophie: Never even asked Mother.

Talley: No—or us either.

Talley: He lived with us until he died '53.

Rick: Did you all ever get any closer?

Sophie: Oh, well...

Talley: Oh, well they always loved Sophie. She never got caught in anything.

Sophie: Ha-ha-ha-ha.

Talley: I always got caught—my big mouth, you know.

Donna: Sophie's always at the right place at the right time.

Rick: So, who is that next to Uncle Doc?

Talley: Next is—well—where am I?

Rick: Ed Rhodes.

Talley: That's Delene's—Hampy's son-in-law is Ed Rhodes.

Sophie: They're the ones who ran the bakery in Atlanta.

Talley: And next to them is Lynn Shecut who is—was Bubba's son-in-law—the doctor...

Rick: Buster's father.

Talley: Mmmm-hmmm.

Sophie: Now, Uncle—Bubba and Sister Lou had another child, Marguerite and I don't see her in here so she must not have been born yet. But anyway, the funniest thing is when Ebba died, Marguerite was an old maid and she married Robert.

Talley: She had always been in love with him and she finally got him.

Sophie: And I talked to her one time and she was still living—he had passed on, but she was still living in Athens. Now whether she's still living I don't know.

Talley: No, no, no! Marguerite came out and was living in the Methodist Home out from Orangeburg.

Sophie: That's right.

Talley: She died several years ago. Now!

Rick: Okay—we've been through all of them. Is there anything you forgot about any particular one in there?

Talley: Well, I think we've really emphasized their shortcomings, but we were a very loving family. Ha-ha-ha. And they were—everyone that could would every Sunday come down to Papa's for dinner.

Sophie: His table seated 24!

Talley: And you know down the table—all the way down the top of the wall was a long paper fan that was slit-like and a little Negro boy pulled the rope and that fanned back and forth to keep the flies off...

Sophie: 'Cause see, we didn't have screens at Papa's house. And you never knew who was going to be there on Sunday. And so, when we'd go, they used to feed the children last.

Talley: We'd be nearly starved to death! They'd have two or three sittings at the table, you know.

Rick: What church did you all go to up there?

Talley: The Methodist.

Sophie: First Methodist Church then—it was...

Talley: Methodist Episcopal Church South, and then when they joined with the north they quit and went to the Episcopal Church. They wouldn't belong to the Methodist Church anymore because they joined the Yankees! But some of them—Aunt Margaret and Uncle Roy still stayed Methodist, but Mildred went to the Episcopal Church...

Sophie: Yeah.

Talley: And Angie Pearl did, too, didn't she?

Sophie: No, she went to Methodist.

Talley: Did she?

Sophie: Mm-hmm. Next to Bubba, Uncle Roy had five girls. Bubba had...

Talley: Two, three, four, five—he had six or seven.

Sophie: Yeah, but he had mixed. He had...

Talley: Girls and boys.

Sophie: Uncle Roy had five girls.

Talley: And one of them is living in Charleston—she's never married—Margaret—she was the oldest, and she has a home in Lake Juneauluska—and we see her in the summertime. And then he had Virginia, Janette, Grace, and Lillian.

Rick: What happened to Papa Dukes' plantation after he passed on?

Talley: It went to Uncle Roy. Now, Mother—they think Mother got the choice property—which is now where the fairgrounds is. Mother sold hers.

Rick: Uncle Roy was the attorney?

Talley: Yeah.

Rick: And what did he do with the land?

Talley: He tore down the house and built a house for his wife when he married—and not a closet in the house!

Rick: Did he continue to operate the farm or plantation.

Talley: No—it was all divided up. And what was left I rather imagine he sharecropped. In back of Papa's house between the main house and the Negro quarters was a long row of scuppernong grapes—the white and the dark—and oh, they were the best things in the world! And so when the grapes were in season all the family and everybody would go down to get some. So after Uncle Roy inherited the place, he had 'em all cut down.

[The interview ends here].

Sharing Recollections

by William F. (Rick) Crary, II
copyright 2002

I.

The house in Orangeburg[13] pictured in my mind
exists for me but by analogy,
for I was never there, but she was there;
her words have made it clear enough to see.
In fabled tales my grandmother[14] told to me,
in Papa's horse-drawn carriage we rode high.
I saw plantation days long since gone by:
the well-swept yards of Negro servant hands,
and cotton blooms turned fields to cloudy sky.
As Papa Dukes sat in his rocking chair,
his child Maggie's[15] girls both upon a knee,
Talley and Sophie[16] each took half his beard
and braided the long summer day in play,
as the old Confederate[17] slumbered off
down south in a Dixie that slipped away.

I've heard that Old South singing in shanties
on full-moon nights with bonfires blazing high;

---

[13] John Henry Dukes' (Papa Dukes) plantation home in Orangeburg, South Carolina, which my grandmother visited every summer. Papa Dukes was my grandmother's grandfather.

[14] Talley McKewn Crary.

[15] Maggie Dukes McKewn, my grandmother's mother.

[16] Sophie Louise McKewn, my grandmother's sister.

[17] Papa Dukes had served in the 5th South Carolina cavalry.

I've shaken music from the wagon chains,
as sour Uncle Doc[18] bewailed our fun:
He who was "damned sorry to see us come,
and damned glad to see us go."

II.

----------Memory
by some inscrutable transformation
turns experience to recollections,
and recollections are spun into tales.
Who knows where the spoken word will travel,
what baggage it picks up along the way,
and what it discards for better interest?
The train of thought hauls many different cars....

Her daddy[19] was a railroad conductor:
Jacksonville to Tampa was his run.
Mama[20] put a bold front on time spent alone,
like the night when a thief mounted the stair
and Maggie stood bravely, Bible in hand,
"Another step and I'll blow out your brains!"
The faceless intruder chose his retreat
on out of our lives and into our lore.
Lore, like the night of the great Waldo fire,
which Great-Aunt Sophie remembered so well,
as if we were passing the buckets still,
in vain attempts to quench the greedy flames.

We had a playhouse in Lilly Villa[21]
there under the shade of the pecan trees...
We left that playhouse and part of ourselves
when time brought us down to our moving day.

---

[18] O. B. Dukes was my grandmother's least-favorite uncle.

[19] William Talley McKewn.

[20] Maggie Dukes McKewn.

[21] Lilly Villa was the name of the family's home in Waldo, Florida.

III.

Even Blanche, the family's horse, rode the train
across an undiscovered Florida,
which must have looked like Eden undisturbed,
until the city's outer limits spread
before the view of curious little girls
who, as their parents moved into the house,
biked, in white linen dresses, through the streets:
sylphs, soon to be naiads by unplanned fall
in the waters of the Hillsborough River.

I've taken rides in just-invented cars
and watched my never-met great-grandfather[22]
change tires in mud and profanely decry
fate's inconvenience on a Sunday drive.
A mischief-making little girl could rile
a man of temper, Irish to the core,
whose outbursts would be followed by remorse,
"Pete[23], you made your old Daddy mad today—
I didn't mean the things I may have said."
Stern he was, but he had a heart of gold.
He, in secret letter, promised to love
a child of Maggie's who had not been his
(and that in hush-hush Victorian days!);
And in an attic box, the letter found,
the girls learned of their sister Syril's[24] past,
and wondered at their mother's untold love.

Aunt Pearl[25] once whispered tidbits of the tale,
"A tombstone salesman used to come to town—
a dashing man desired by all the girls;
and he was married." Pearl said his name was Brown.

---

[22] William Talley McKewn.

[23] My grandmother's father called her "Pete."

[24] My grandmother's half-sister.

[25] Pearl Dukes.

Young Maggie ran away and then returned
when Brown had let his anger turn to blows.
Her brothers then took up her tearful cause.
"And what fate met her lover no one knows,
except the boys had one time winked and said,
'Don't ever drain the mill pond; Brown is dead'."

Her Papa was the sheriff; did he know?
Or was it even true, or only talk?
None has ever dared to ask the question,
and Maggie never told her girls a thing.
Still, witness was the letter and half-sister
so unlike them both in her fierce anger—
so much to trouble daughters, much to fear
through decades of silent curiosity.
Their questions then were questions raised for me,
of things more than a century removed.
What Talley heard and Sophie said, I see:
Their memories are now my memories,
though inexact, as one not there must say.
And always I have pressed to see too far,
to know the things the family tried to hide,
and once again I'm beckoned to forget.

IV

I, an unseen passenger in the car,
rode with my grandmother, still but a girl,
on those back-road trips with Blue Book[26] in hand.
"Find a fork in the road by a red barn...
It says turn at the next big tree, Daddy!"
And somehow in that crooked rut-road maze
we found South Carolina and holidays,
loaded with souvenir water bottles
from the then song-famous *Swannee* River.
I guess we drove back the same way we came,
back to the horse-drawn-trolley-town Tampa.

---

[26] A Blue Book was a roadmap guide of some sort used in those early days.

Our houseboy, Martin[27], cooked-up breakfast...
I can almost hear the bacon crackle
and smell biscuits in the wood-burning stove.

Talley sits in hidden corners and reads,
and as she reads, she thinks and dreams and learns
things she will teach a grandson yet unborn,
with no idea that I will ever be
resulting from love's fateful choice of mate:
the "pea-green bowlegged boy"[28] of two doors down,
or was it three?—it doesn't matter now.
The schoolboy, who at first she hardly sees,
by mysteries of destined feelings, touched
by the hand of the deft, designing God,
becomes the loving sharer of her fate.
And I have followed that young lawyer's course
I've ridden on the coattails of his fame:
political ascension and trials won...
An heir, who proudly carries on a name
he gave to my grandmother when they wed.

Brooksville was the scene of their elopement[29].
His car broke down and was in need of tow,
"And so, why not get married on the way?"
With such frivolities life can be set,
and all the unplanned future starts its course...
Then two sons[30] born and raised and sent to school:
a mother's lifetime of care and worry.

V.

Third-person accounts turn truly firsthand,

---

[27] Martin was a black servant who lived with the McKewns.

[28] My grandmother's description of what she thought of her future husband, Lawrence Evans Crary, Sr. the first time she saw him.

[29] Talley McKewn and Evans Crary eloped to Brooksville just north of Tampa when Evans had arranged for a judge to marry them.

[30] Evans Crary, Jr. and William F. Crary.

as I, still young, saw people she saw young
grown old, like Maggie, who's Nannie[31] to me:
my saintly great-grandmother full of love
and all the sweetness that true faith bestows.
But to see the girl and her mystery
one must hearken back to memory's dreams
and tales once shared with an older child,
who wants to see life as it really is;
not to dispel its treasured mystery,
but just to know as best it can be known,
and then return it to the realm of myth,
perhaps in measured lines of poetry.

VI

The romance of our memory is disturbed
by stains of human drama in the past
suggesting saints and loved ones were too frail
to be the icons of our yearning hearts.
But should we rather choose imagination
and bury all the disconcerting facts,
as artists paint their portraits without blemish
to feign a beauty for their subject's pride?
Ah, vanity will have what she desires
paying but the price of restless tossing
in sleepless darkness. But truth is ever prying
and insisting, and cannot be untold
when it is known, though hidden deeply well,
buried in the close of attic boxes
and silenced in dark waters of a pond.

Life has always been this mix of potions
as sweet as candy in our child-like dreams,
embittered by the taste of all our fears.
But why not drink our recollections down
well-flavored with a love that stomachs truth?
If love is canceled out by human failings
why then our love's in love with only dreams,

---

[31] Maggie Dukes McKewn was called Nannie by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

or so it seems to me, but who am I
to dabble in a past before my birth?
And yet it was my lot to nurse upon—
it was my study and my education,
and with it she has taught me much too well.

I know she'd want me now to mis-remember
and let some memories die upon the vine
but I have been made bearer of the mystery
and recollections that were hers are mine.

AFTERWORD

-by William F. (Rick) Crary, II

"She's a reee-ahl faaahr-cracker," Joe Keller[32] said to me in his long, drawn-out Kentucky brogue. He was describing my grandmother, Talley McKewn Crary.

Joe and I were sitting together at my sister Robin's wedding rehearsal dinner in 1980 listening to my grandmother entertaining a table full of guests at the lodge in Pennyrile State Park. A few minutes earlier she had launched into one of those animated performances with which she enlivened every gathering graced by her presence. Though you always had to drag her to any social event, as soon as she arrived a light would flash on in her eyes—and the show would begin. Though she had some favorite comments and vignettes she frequently drew from her stock-in-trade, she was not overly repetitious. Most of her material was usually fresh, but even her old stories were always entertaining because they were so good and because her delivery was flawless. Joe was laughing at one of her favorite tales about a breakfast she shared with my cousin Larry when he was a little boy.

"One time we had taken my oldest grandson Larry to the mountains," she said. "He was about six years old at that time. We first went by South Carolina and stayed there a couple of days, and then we went on to North Carolina to see the mountains. And he was—oh—excited to death, and we had a wonderful time. One morning on the way back home—we were at some place in

---

[32]Joe Keller of Dawson Springs, Kentucky was the brother of my sister Robin's first husband.

Georgia—it was Dublin, I think—and we went in this restaurant to have breakfast. Larry, as I said, was six and he had just learned to read. So—we ordered our meal which was grits and country ham and eggs. The waitress wrote down grits, country ham, and eggs—and then she dittoed the three other orders. And we ate our breakfast, and when she brought the bill, Larry said—he called me *Bammer* then—he said, 'Bammer, can I see it?' And I said, 'Yes!' So he got it and stood up and he said, 'One grits, country ham, eggs; one little prick, little prick, little prick—one little prick, little prick, little prick—one little prick, little prick, little prick. Bammer! Who ate all the little pricks?' Well, of course the restaurant was filled with men, and they just died laughing—and we all got out of there in a hurry!"

As always, her audience erupted into laughter at the end of that story, even those of us who had heard it many times before. So many elderly women of her generation were handicapped by a stern and prudish disposition which leaves all company feeling ill-at-ease, but this fine Southern lady could always break the ice with an unexpected declaration—often bordering on the risque.

"When I was a young girl," she said from time to time, " I was half afraid the white slavers would get me, and half afraid they wouldn't."

New acquaintances were caught off guard by such confessions, because something about Talley seemed positively Victorian. She was so prim and proper and mannerly, and yet she poked fun at the formalities to which she professed allegiance, as if to get even with the social conventions which restrained her.

"I've always been a rebel," she'd announce, excusing herself whenever she felt she may have taken a step or two beyond the border of propriety.

To new brides, including my own, she always gave a word of insightful advice. "To be a good

wife you have to be a cook in the kitchen, a lady in the parlor, and a hussy in the bedroom!" With such counsel coming from a fine lady in her eighties and then nineties, listeners could draw the conclusion that maybe the days of long ago were not quite as drab as so many other elders made them seem.

Talley was truly the life of every party she attended. Visits to her house in Stuart, Florida or her cabin in North Carolina were turned into parties, too. She was a great master of the fine art of conversation, because she understood that conversation is a team sport. Everyone present needs to be a participant, no matter how inept they feel. She knew how to make even the dullest company appear to shine and feel good about themselves. The most lackluster comment from a guest was warmly received by her with encouraging delight. She would laugh with melodious glee whenever a guest said something halfway humorous. Talley seemed to want to inspire the world to get on with the business of making social occasions more fun. But few of us a could be so entertaining, and so it always fell to her to take center stage. And she knew precisely how to delight her listeners with those intriguing stories, slightly-naughty jokes, and those insightful comments which peppered her conversations. Only the most careful listeners could pick up on the prickly points of her dialogue, which she always buried under a generous covering of humor.

She had a lot of practice entertaining. For forty years, Talley had been the wife of a man who became a prominent politician.

"I always have despised politics," my grandmother said on many occasions. "And wouldn't you know it—I'd marry someone who liked it."

Her husband Evans Crary, Sr. spent nearly 18 years in the Florida legislature. At the pinnacle of his career in 1945 he became Speaker of the House, and afterward he was a state senator. There

were countless cocktail parties and political events, and of course a politician's wife must always be on stage. Talley loved all of the "trappings" of politics as she called them, but she despised the campaigns and what it took to gain an office. Like so many other aspects of her life, she had a kind of love-hate relationship with the political world and all of its attendant deceptions.

In her day, the wives of most of the state's political leaders stayed behind at home, but not Talley. She frequently boasted of her decision to accompany her husband to Tallahassee, where she served as his secretary for a salary of six dollars a day. She often said when she first went up there, she took one look at all the fancy girls lined up in the Capitol waiting to entertain the legislators, and she knew she couldn't leave her husband alone. He was hers and she didn't plan on sharing him with anyone. With a wife as entertaining and as memorable as Talley, it's no wonder Evans' political star rose quickly.

Of all the descriptions I've heard of my grandmother's social persona, I think that Joe Keller's was the one that really hit the mark. Talley was indeed "a real firecracker" in public. But as all great performers know, there is a life behind the scenes. Talley was not just a one, two, or even three-dimensional personality. She was a tangle of complexities which, at times, even she could not unravel. Solicitous to her stellar reputation to a fault, she kept her world behind the scenes almost entirely private. For Talley, being in the presence of others was nearly always synonymous with being on stage—but a part of her grew so weary of the show.

"Oh, good Godfrey, who is that?" she'd cry out whenever she heard someone pulling up in her driveway. But as she was complaining that she wasn't in the mood for company, she was automatically patting the curls of her gray-and-white hair to make sure they were all in place. Moments later the intrusive visitors would enter her TV room, where they were hospitably

entertained. Sometimes everyone would move out to the cushier furniture in the living room, a place she often called her *parlor*. Even when her guests stayed long beyond their welcome, she never seemed to tire.

Talley always wanted to live in a perfect world. It was a world embellished by the romantic traditions of the Old South. As she entertained you with her charm, she would draw you in to that world and make you believe in the forgotten splendor of days long since gone by. I lived in that world when I was a little boy. In part, I am almost certain Talley helped me learn how to run away to that more beautiful realm where the ugliness of the ordinary world cannot claim you for its own. Of course, I believed in my grandmother's ideals, and I assumed they were nurtured in the idyllic settings of her childhood. When I was young, I imagined she had lived in some Garden of Eden the modern world destroyed before I was born. I joined with her in lamenting its passing, and I was homesick for a place I had known only in our shared imagination.

Every now and then Talley would make statements which seemed out of place with the picture I'd acquired of our perfect past. The first, as I recall, was when she told me, "When I was a little girl, I used to hide in a corner of the house and read." She said she would always run away into her books. She said she told herself when she was a child that she must have been adopted or kidnaped by the McKewns. Surely, she couldn't have been a member of their family. They were so different from her, she told me. I began to wonder about thorns in the rosebushes of the perfect garden, but my probing questions elicited few details and no clear explanations.

Over the years we talked so many times about family history—about her past. I really thought she had told me practically everything, but less than two years before her death, she surprised me with some new revelations about her father. When she was about fourteen, she and her family moved into

my grandfather's neighborhood in Tampa. Their new house was two doors down from his. For most of her life, her future mother-in-law was her nemesis. They never liked each other. Every now and then Talley would mention that the Crarys looked down on the McKewns. Having learned that Alice Lewis Crary was the daughter of a backwoods stagecoach driver and that she met my orphaned great-grandfather Perley Frederick Crary while she was working as a waitress in a boarding house, I wondered what it was that the Crarys could have possibly found so distasteful as to think themselves superior. The picture of her father which Talley always presented to me was that of an upstanding citizen—a bit profane and hotheaded at times—but a sober model of fatherhood just the same.

"How could they have possibly looked down on the McKewns?" I asked.

"Well," my grandmother said. "My father was a gambler. He played cards all the time and sometimes he wouldn't come home, and we'd worry that he might have lost his paycheck again. And how would we eat? Well—he won that last house we lived in. He won it in a game of cards. The man who lost the house—well, his son lived there. And Daddy evicted him with a crowbar. We were sitting in the car and Mother screamed, 'My God, don't kill him!' And we thought Daddy was going to kill him, but he moved out and we moved in."

With such a violent stir, it's no wonder the neighbors had a bad impression of the new Irish family on the block. The incident also sheds some light on many of those questions I always had about why Talley wanted to run away from reality when she was a little girl. Her favorite grandfather—the one she loved—had a plantation in South Carolina. Whether it was half as grand as Tara in *Gone With the Wind*, or whether it was just a big farm in the middle of nowhere, it always seemed so much better than home. The old Confederate soldier, Papa Dukes, wore an air of nobility she craved. Maybe it was the way he sat at the top of those tall steps as his dark-skinned

sharecroppers bowed before him on payday. My grandmother always belonged to that plantation with its ambience of regal antebellum days. If she knew any facts to tarnish the image of John Henry Dukes, she buried them well. In stark contrast, however, her other grandfather, George R. McKewn, had no redeeming qualities in her eyes. He was one of those propertyless whites who fought the War until the day he died. Crippled by a minnie ball, bitter and lacking class, she found the old soldier's crassness embarrassing—and she made her detestation known. In fact, she was forbidden to attend his funeral when she was ten or eleven, because she boldly announced she would dance on the old man's grave. He was the ne'er-do-well grandfather who came with his humorless, priggish wife to spend long months with them in Florida and spoil her fun.

Along with her maternal grandfather, her mother Maggie Dukes McKewn was a veritable saint—the icon of all the greater virtues of womanhood, or so my grandmother presented her to me ever since I was old enough for memory to attach itself to consciousness. It was not until sometime shortly before I conducted my second taped interview with Talley and Sophie that I learned of the secret flaw which so troubled my grandmother all of her life. It was then she told me of the day that she and her sister Sophie were rummaging through their attic. They were still young girls. In a box they found a letter. It was from their father to their mother, and he said how he would always love their eldest sister Syril, as if she were his own. Well, I was as shocked as they must have been when they first learned the news. Their sister was a child of another father. Who was he? My grandmother claimed to know so little, but Aunt Sophie turned out to know much more. For all of their lives, neither daughter ever discussed the matter with their mother, but Sophie learned the secrets from Aunt Pearl, one of their mother's sisters.

Grandmother tried hard to believe her mother must have been married to Syril's father, but

Sophie insisted that was not the case. Both told the tale of a handsome traveling tombstone salesman named Brown who came through Orangeburg. All the girls wanted him, but Maggie turned his eye. Contrary to her parents' admonitions, Maggie ran away and came home pregnant. How long she was away was never clear. Sophie said Brown turned out to be married, and he mistreated their mother. After she returned, Brown met with an untimely death. According to family legend, his bones may lie at the bottom of the millpond—or so Maggie's brothers said. Did their father, Sheriff Dukes, investigate the matter? The dark secret troubled Talley for all her life—but there were more mysterious facts swept away in silence.

It took me years to make some simple calculations. When I was a child Grandmother told me her mother had her first baby when she was only sixteen, but if Syril was born in the late 1890's and Maggie Dukes was born in 1874, to whom did she give birth in 1890 or '91? I did my math too late to ask Sophie to get a fuller answer. Sophie had already passed away. My grandmother only mentioned a child named Johnny who died in infancy. When I asked if the child's father might also have been Brown, she said she didn't know. Further questions were unwelcome and met with vague replies. Reluctantly, I deferred to her sensibilities and let that mysterious history die.

There was never any need to think that Maggie's past disqualified her for sainthood. King David had Uriah and Bathsheba to plague his conscience. Maggie Dukes had Brown. But unlike so many whose checkered pasts incite them to point a prosecutorial finger at motes in other people's eyes, Maggie was always understanding of her fellow human beings. She displayed those humbler qualities Jesus wanted us to have. She never judged anyone harshly. Even the most errant sinner was excused with a phrase our family has always identified as her own: "He means well." And when twelve-year-old Syril was dying with scarlet fever, Maggie bargained with God. "If you let her live,

I will never complain about my daughter again." Well—Syril lived and Maggie kept her pledge, though she certainly was tested for her bargain. Syril went half mad sometimes with anger and cussed her mother up and down, but Maggie would just look away out a window and sing a hymn and smile. Of course, I never witnessed such events, but I do remember my great-grandmother's beatific smile so well. It was always on her face whenever I saw her, so many years ago when I was very young.

There were too many unpleasant details about life, which didn't fit into my grandmother's perfect world. But she always had that distant vision of Papa's place in Orangeburg which never ceased to appear ideal. Sometimes I have wondered if that faraway world was ever real. Was it ever more than early morning carriage rides with Papa through the cotton fields in the bottom land to the well-swept yards of the Negro hands? Was it more than that sweet, delicious taste of the scuppernong grapes—white and black—in the arbors along the way from the main house? Was there something else to fill the days besides her endless playing in unhorsed wagons? The details of that distant splendor now seem scant as I review my notes and tapes and memory. I have stood in Orangeburg on a summer day a few short years ago and tried to see the glory of the past, but the present of the place did not lend itself to that greater beauty. It was hard for me to see the magic of the setting. To find it once again, I had to hearken to my own brief, childhood memories of the place.

In May of 1968, my cousin Larry and I joined our fathers and grandmother on a trip to Orangeburg to attend my great-grandmother's funeral. A grave was dug for Maggie Dukes McKewn beside the resting place where her husband had been interred since 1922. I was thirteen years old and not so grown up as I imagined. The solemness of the mournful occasion did not rub off on me. Instead, I soaked in the aura of a sleepy Southern town whose existence had mingled itself with dreams my grandmother lent to me. Papa Dukes' plantation was no longer there for me to see

firsthand, nor was his house or his cotton fields, but something about that vanished world still lingered.

We stayed in Mildred Wannamaker's house, which was to me the finest house in which I had ever spent the night. Maybe it was just an ordinary two-story house in an ordinary Southern town, I can't remember enough facts to be objective now, but to me it seemed so much finer than anything I had ever seen back home. It was full of fine furnishings and things you could not touch. Outside, Larry and I played catch with a ball, while the grown-ups took care of grown-up things inside. That evening we were invited to join the family's conversations in a cozy, wood-paneled room, where we ate Chipsters—a potato snack—and we laughed about old times the grown-ups told us about.

In the morning, the wonderful aroma of breakfast reached me in my upstairs room, where I lay ensconced in the cushy luxury of satiny sheets in a big poster bed. The aroma quickly drew Larry and me down to the dining room, where a chatty black maid was setting out a spread of food on silver platters glistening in an ornate dining room. For all of my life it has seemed to me to have been the finest breakfast I ever had. Oh—there were mornings at my grandfather's house in Kentucky when our oatmeal tasted like the loving comfort everyone always longs for, but this was something far more grand. It was the essence of the culture I had nursed upon in my dreams of antebellum days. The steak sausages and cheese grits and eggs I feasted on have never tasted better.

After breakfast we dressed in our finest clothes and went to the funeral at an old church somewhere. There had been riots in Orangeburg. It was part of the unrest which had taken hold of our beloved South, as it wrested itself from our Old South dreams. On the way to the church I remember seeing three large wreaths in a park, and I was told they stood at the place where three young Negroes had been killed in a civil disturbance. For a moment I felt some indescribable sense

of fear and alienation in the presence of those temporal monuments to early death. I did not understand the notion of civil rights at the time, or why our world was crashing down. The funeral service for my great-grandmother did not burn itself as deeply into my memory. Of that, I have only the vaguest recollection of a droning voice and my efforts to sit still or stay awake.

Afterwards, we gathered at the cemetery beside a tall obelisk bearing the name of Dukes—the largest monument in a quiet field of tombstones. It bore witness to my grandmother's claims to family prominence in the town where she was born way back in 1905. Years later I would return to read the inscriptions, but at that time I could barely be bothered, nor did the ceremony command my attention. Somehow, Larry and I were permitted to wander away to be the young boys that we were. We played in the small forest a few hundred feet away, hunting about for treasures and throwing bits of dried clay at a fallen tree. And that was all—some idle hours in an idle town—but it seemed like so much more, because it offered a brief respite from school and troubles at home. It is by such distant analogies that we experience another person's world. And now it makes me think that maybe I saw—if only just for a moment—the special place where my grandmother always lived in her imagination.

A month before that day in Orangeburg, her brightest hopes had ended. My grandfather, Evans Crary, Sr. died. Talley worshiped Evans, and when he was gone, she worshiped his memory even more. In the spring of 1968, he had lingered in a hospital bed at home for weeks while cancer marched through his body doing its killing business. On the night when he stopped breathing, we got a call at home, and my father and I rushed over to my grandparents' home on Cardinal Way. I was instructed not to look in the TV room, but of course, when Dad and Grandmother were distracted by their conversation, I walked to the door and peered inside. It was a frightening scene for me to

gaze at the breathless body, but I understood that the kind man who had suffered so much in recent months had finally found some peace. Grandmother could not bear the thought of spending that night alone, and whether I volunteered, or my father suggested that I spend the night, I can't recall. But I so clearly remember the long hours in the dark where the faint light of the moon or a nightlight reached us as my grandmother sobbed and gasped uncontrollably. All I could think to do was pat her back, but it was little comfort for a wonderful woman in so much pain. In the morning, the sunlight brought no promise of happiness to come.

For four or five dark years my grandmother rarely consented to be cheery, but sometime after her sister Sophie moved into Talley's home to relieve the loneliness, she began to reacquire the cheerful face she put on for the world. Soon she was her old, entertaining self most all of the time.

My grandmother never remarried, though she would have made an elderly man a wonderful bride. As the years went by she retained a hardy youthfulness and seemed to grow more beautiful. Once, on a trip with her longtime friend Francis Langford, Talley had a wonderful time with a widower—I think his name was Harry. But she felt too guilty for her fun and would not hear of suggestions to continue any such companionship. Her mother bore her widowhood for forty-six years, and Talley endured hers for thirty-four.

Sophie moved in with her sister sometime around June of 1972 and the two of them became such a famous pair that their names seemed inseparable. It was always Grandmom and Sophie—or Sophie and Talley—or Mimi and So. How could they ever be apart? And yet, there was a mild tension underlying their relationship, which often bubbled to the surface. It was not really sibling rivalry. Sibling rivalry is a more serious concern and has to do with a secret—sometimes malicious—envy, and a powerful fear that your family competitor will outdo you in some important

respect. But Sophie never seemed to begrudge the younger sister she called *Doodle* or *Doo* for the prominence she had gained, or her superior ability to entertain a crowd. In social situations, Sophie generally played a supporting role, and she truly admired Talley's notable talents. But there were small domestic battles over tiny concerns, and in those things Sophie was nearly always victorious. Though seemingly strong-willed, Talley generally backed down in the face of a determined opposition. Sophie always knew how to get her way. She'd had a lifetime of experience and knew precisely how to direct her malleable sibling.

In February of 1985, my wife Donna and I drove Grandmom and Aunt Sophie up to Port St. Joe, Florida for them to pay one last visit to my Great-Aunt Lala, Evans Sr.'s sister. Sophie, Donna and I all spent the night at the Port St. Joe Motel, a rather unimpressive lodging with noisy plastic coverings beneath the sheets on the lumpy mattresses. It was, however, preferable to being cramped together in Aunt Lala's trailer a few miles away, where Grandmother was staying. Sophie and I always shared the same spirit of Wanderlust, and in the morning she was anxious to join my wife and me on a drive through the backroads to Panama City, Wewahitchka, and several obscurer destinations I'd found on my map. Before we left on our excursion, I thought it would be best to call Grandmom to report on our plans. When I got her on the phone, Grandmother said she wanted us to drop Sophie off at the trailer.

"Grandmother would like to talk to you," I said to Sophie. "She wants you to stay with her."

"That's too damn bad!" Sophie insisted, waving the phone away. "I'm going to Panama City!" And she did.

We always had a great time with Aunt Sophie. She was one of the most cheerful people I have ever known. Though she sometimes described herself as an "old maid," her decision not to

marry never hindered her happiness. Yet, one time she told me the tale of her only love. His name was Grover Cleveland Morgan. They dated for a time and then he asked her to move out west with him—to someplace in California. She thought about it and struggled with her decision.

"I couldn't leave Mother and move so far away," she told me. Tears welled up in her eyes. She never saw her boyfriend again.

Above all, Sophie was a traveler. She visited every state in the Union except for six. Her biggest regret at the end of her life was that she would never live to see New England. At least one of her trips across the country was made by bus. One time on a cross-country trip a man was sitting next to her. As the long hours drifted by, he fell asleep and his head dropped to her shoulder for part of the night.

"Mother, I slept with a man," she reported when she returned home to Tampa.

"Sophie Louise!" her mother cried. "I'm surprised at you!"

Then she laughed and told her mother about the small event on the bus.

One of Sophie's proudest days was when she was crowned queen and sat on a throne on the Maas Brothers float in the Gasparilla parade. In spite of her obesity—she was five feet tall and very rotund—Sophie beat out the more attractive employees and gained a glory she savored forever.

"I got the colored vote," she explained.

Talley and Sophie both had mixed feelings about African-Americans. In many ways they had difficulty coming to terms with changes in the harsh social order they had known for most of their lives, yet whenever they saw a black contestant on *Wheel of Fortune* or *Jeopardy*, they were always pulling for him or her to win. Talley told me one of the political differences she had with her husband Evans, which caused her anguish when he was in politics, was that he favored eliminating segregation

long before she could begin to accept a new way of looking at the world.

The thought of ever voting Republican also made Sophie turn red in the face. She was a Yellow Dog Democrat until sometime during the Reagan Revolution. Strom Thurmond was born in her home state the day before Sophie was born—before the Wright Brothers got their plane off the ground on a beach in the other Carolina. When Strom switched parties, I think Sophie began to realize that Ulysses S. Grant was no longer the spiritual leader of the party the South once hated. Eventually, we could discuss the pros and cons of all the candidates without her getting upset.

In the summer of 1992 my wife and I spent a week with Sophie up at the cabin in the Smokies while Grandmother was away. Her eyes were failing due to macular degeneration and she could no longer get around on her legs very well. Nevertheless, she lost none of her optimism and she loved to go on country drives with us as much as she always did. On the way to Cherokee when we were taking her to one of her favorite buffet restaurants, she looked out with her dim peripheral vision at the flowers on the side of the road and then she noticed a new cabin on the side of a hill.

"That's what I love about this drive," she remarked. "I'm always seeing something new that I've never seen before."

More than anything I would like to capture her childlike sense of awe and hold fast to it for all of my days. If she was ever glum for more than a moment, she hid it well from me. I visited her in the hospital after she had had her gall bladder removed. She was moaning softly with pain.

"How are you doing, Sophie?" I asked.

"I'd have to die to feel better," she said, and tried to laugh.

After she came home from that operation, she and I were sitting together at the dining room table in Grandmother's house. She told me she was supposed to stick with a new diet.

"The good part is," she said, "the doctor says I can eat all the lettuce I want!" Then she stuck our her tongue and made a funny face. It wasn't too long before she was lapping up spoonfuls of gravy like she always had before. She loved country ham and fried chicken and biscuits and anything with hog jowls in it.

Sophie continued to tell Talley what she was and was not going to do. Sometimes the tension in the TV room could get pretty high. I always stayed out of the middle of it. Most arguments usually ended with Grandmother huffing, puffing and surrendering in silence. Her only recourse was to hope for some future retreat into solitude, which she'd express to me sometimes when she'd follow me to the door as I went out after a visit.

"Honestly—I don't know what I'm going to do," my grandmother would whisper desperately. "She's driving me crazy."

"You're going to miss her when she's gone," I'd say.

Sophie left us in December of 1994. About a year later, Grandmother said, "You always told me I'd miss her—and I do."

The last time I saw Sophie was two or three days before she died. Grandmother called the office and my cousin Mike and I raced over, expecting to see Sophie taking her last breath.

"Hey there, love!" Sophie said to me, as I entered her bedroom. She was lying still and barely opened her eyes. "Could you go get me a Lotto ticket?"

"Of course," I said, and sat down beside her on the bed while she dictated her six numbers to me. I drove over to the convenience store nearby and brought her back her ticket. I'm sorry to say that her numbers did not come in.

In those last few years alone, Talley became increasingly distraught. I'd still see that same

happy performance if other company dropped in, but for me, she always poured out her troubles. I made suggestions of ways of combating difficulties, and many times she would turn that light on in her eyes before I left—but on my next visit I would find her troubled as before. This was a major role reversal. During much of my adolescence, she had been my counselor through years when I was depressed and unwilling to be consoled for more than hours at a time.

In her mid-nineties, my grandmother told me she had finally realized her mortality. I was surprised. For me, Death has always been lurking in a dark recess just down the block—and for as long as I can remember, I have never thought I would tarry here in the sublunary realm for very long. I marveled at my grandmother's ability to make it for over nine decades without thinking the woeful bell might soon be tolling for her.

When Grandmother was nearing death in July of 2002, I didn't want to let her go. She had been such an important fixture in my life for all of my forty-seven years. On top of that, she was my last living link to the distant history of my family and those faraway roots to which I felt myself anchored. I couldn't help but feel there were memories I had not captured. There were truths she had not told, and things I still had failed to comprehend. On my last visit to her, I sat on her bed and held her hand. Her eyes were closed much of the time, but she was waking up from the effects of some strong sedative.

"Is there anything you haven't told me, Grandmother?" I asked.

"Ask me a question," she said.

Well, there were so many questions I still had revolving in my mind, but somehow it no longer seemed appropriate to dig deep enough to solve anymore family mysteries. Instead of searching for new details, I thought it best to simply hearken back to old stories she had always told.

"Tell me about Orangeburg when you were a little girl," I said.

"We went there every summer," she said, dreamily.

"How did you get there?" I asked.

"On the train," she said. "We always rode on the train, except for that time we went up by car. That was quite a trip! My father got so mad. The car engine got so hot, the hood ornament melted. The first day we made it to White Springs. [She had always said it was Live Oak before]. We wanted to get water from the Sewannee River—for souvenirs, but the bridge was much too high. We tied strings to the bottles, but the strings weren't long enough."

"Where did you stay that first night?" I asked. "Was there a hotel?"

"We camped out," she said.

"Where did you make it to the second night?"

"I can't remember," she said, and for a moment she seemed to be falling back asleep.

"When we got to Orangeburg," she continued, "everyone came out to see us. We'd accomplished a great feat. I don't know how we ever found our way. We didn't have roads like today, and some of the rivers didn't have bridges..."

As we arrived in Orangeburg once again, I decided to leave her to rest with her pleasant childhood memories.

"I just can't imagine a world that doesn't have you in it, Grandmother," I said, in parting.

She opened her eyes halfway and a tear rolled out. "I'll always be with you," she said. "You just keep on being the same swell boy you've always been."

Grandmother squeezed my hand tightly and I squeezed hers, and as we let go of one another's grasp, I realized we were saying our final goodbye. But I wonder—are there ever any real goodbyes

for those few special people in our lives whom death can never take away? No—I don't really think there are. In a way, I feel like Grandmom and So will always be waiting for another unplanned visit— just a little bit down the road.