

Interviewee: Mrs. Elizabeth Pollard (EP)

Interviewer: Stacy Gould (SG)

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SG: You said to me a minute ago what your full proper name was, can you repeat that for me?

EP: Elizabeth A. Pollard. The "A" stands for Alexander.

Gould: Oh, I like that! Now, I have some shaky grasp of a little bit of the outline of your connection to Governor Pollard and to the College...

EP: I married his son.

SG: Charles. Now Charles was the younger son?

EP: Charles.

EP: The younger of two.

SG: He had three children, there was a daughter...

EP: A lovely daughter called Sue Boatright. Eventually Boatright. And Garland, Jr., and Charlie.

SG: Did you meet Charles at William and Mary? Did he go to school there?

EP: No, he didn't go to school there but... I met him at a party at Carter's Grove. I had been hearing of him from his father for years. His father was my longtime friend. I was his hostess for several years. And he always said, "When you grow up, I want you to marry one of my beautiful sons." So I didn't meet his beautiful sons till all of a sudden at a party at Carter's Grove. Now this was a funny episode. If you live in one of those old houses they are targets for people to walk in whenever there's a crowd going in and snatch things or get pictures you don't want them to get. So, the friends of the family, the particular friends, are told, please, watch out for the people that don't belong here. So I saw a young man I never saw before, standing over there all by himself, and I went over and said, "Did you understand this is a private party?" And it was Charlie, and he said, "I am so flattered to be included." Soon as he spoke, I knew he was his father's son. His father had been my friend for four years I guess but I had never seen Charlie, or Garland, or Sue. Anyway, we were engaged before that day was out.

SG: You got engaged the same day you met him?

EP: Yes. Well I was already in love with his father and he sounded just like his father. So, there you are.

SG: Oh my!

EP: And it was a romantic marriage.

SG: Well, I must tell you that I found some of your letters in the Pollard papers. Letters that you wrote to Mr. Pollard and Mack, and letters that he wrote back to you, and letters that Charles wrote to his Dad.

EP: How interesting.

SG: And yesterday I spent the afternoon reading your correspondence.

EP: Goodness gracious, I would have written them so much more carefully! If I knew they had a future!

SG: They were very indicative of a loving and close family.

EP: It was a good, good family to marry to. I promise you. It was very good.

SG: And obviously Mr. Pollard adored you. It just comes through those letters! And I know that he was tickled when you took your interior design class.

EP: Heavens. They were way back.

SG: This would have been, I think, the early thirties.

EP: We were married in 32 and I was in New York five years. During those years I took those courses. 32 to 37, I guess, or something like that.

SG: When you worked for Mr. Pollard, you said you were his hostess...

EP: Well it started because he came to dinner at my family's house and he thought I did my part very well and I was I think seventeen...

SG: Oh my, very young...

EP: As a politician he had to go to a lot of parties where he didn't know anybody, but must have a lady.

SG: This was before Mack.

EP: Oh goodness, yes.

SG: Okay.

EP: It was well before I was married, Mack was married maybe five years later than that. I can't remember when she married him, but his other wife was still alive but was dreadfully crippled up, invalid. So, he needed a lady right away and traveling all over the state to campaign for governor.

SG: This was the Democaratic campaign in 1930?

EP: 30 maybe.

SG: Yeah. He left the College in 29?

EP: Yes, and went straight to the Governor's mansion. So, what else?

SG: So did he ask your parents if you could come to help him out?

EP: Oh, indeed he asked them, he kept calling. Indeed he did. But that was another day. The boys don't do that now, but they did in my young girlhood. They did ask. So, we were married in 32, but all the time we were waiting for Charlie to get his law degree. Had to wait for that.

SG: Where did he do his degree?

EP: In Washington, at what's it called? George Washington...

SG: George Washington University?

EP: Yes. Um, all that time I was tooling around the country with his father and we'd both say what a wonderful boy Charlie was. Just an exciting boy. He agreed every day. His other son was very severe sort of person. You didn't know either one of them?

SG: No M'aam. I didn't have that privilege.

EP: Charlie was a cuddly soul and his brother was exactly the opposite. He went ahead and got more degrees. He went to Harvard till he was thirty years old. And I just don't know how he classified all those degrees, but he announced one day, "You must call me Dr. Pollard from here on." So we did. Quite a different sort of fellow from Charlie who was fun-loving and cheerful He was serious. Charlie's father told him when he got to be thirty, "This is all the education I plan to pay for" and Garland said "No, no!" He couldn't stop here, this was in the middle! And Charlie's father said, "Well go to work then. Go to work and pay your own bills." So then the misunderstanding yet, it lasted several years and then Garland forgot it and the Governor forgot it, I think. So, that's all I can say about my marriage and courtship, I think. But we went as soon as Charlie had his degree, we went to New York to live and to work, him to work.

SG: In New York City?

EP: Um hum. Now in Gramercy. I keep wondering if it's survived this great terrorist thing.

SG: Yeah. It's pretty upsetting. I have friends who live in New York... in Manhattan, it was a little scary.

EP: I don't have any now but I certainly feel sorry for those I don't know. Well, now. What do I get on to?

SG: When you lived in New York, did you have an apartment?

P; Yeah. Oh yes. It was the smallest apartment that was rentable. In that day and time, they didn't pay much for a ...I mean they didn't pay much to a young lawyer. They were a dime a dozen. So we had a very small apartment. Fifth? floor, nine Gramercy. Fred? I thought I heard you. Come in.

SG: This is Stacy Gould again, and Mrs. Pollard and I have been joined by Chaplain Fred Hunt, who is here visiting this morning. So tell me again, your mother was a Galt?

EP: Um hum. They are forever Williamsburg. Except now I don't believe there are any of them. Except me.

SG: We have the Galt papers in Special Collections.

EP: Have you?

SG: All but...particularly the nineteenth century. It's been an absolute goldmine of information about the early days of mental healthcare and about Williamsburg history. Since they are sort of bound up in it.

EP: It was a Doctor Galt who built the very first senior...he called it a home for the poor unfortunates...

Fred: We now have that home right here!

EP: He likes to say this is a home for us, poor, unfortunates. We don't have...

SG: Pretty nice home, actually.

EP: Well, it's nice in spots.

Fred: The home is fine, it's some of the extraneous activities that go on with the help.

EP: Just not nearly enough help.

SG: I know that feeling.

EP: I had that little Russian girl in here just now connecting this thing which had become disconnected. And she said, "tresh, tresh." She kept saying, "Tresh." T-R-E-S-H, I presume. And I kept saying "No comprende, Je ne sais pas." I tried everything I know, I couldn't get that "Tresh, tresh." She was saying trash. Did I want her to empty the trash. I always learn when she's gone what she was trying to say.

SG: Where is she from?

EP: Russia is all we know.

Fred: Southern part of Russia...

EP: You never heard where in Russia?

Fred: No, I haven't. You were talking about the Galt family.

EP: The Galt's, well...

Fred: She might be interested in...

EP: The Galt house downtown...

SG: Yes, M'aam...

EP: And uh, my mother was a little girl there. Not all her life, but a whole lot of her life was there. That was the homeplace and when ever family got in trouble, they went there...rescue spot. And, my Grandfather, her father, Church burned down, and a minister can't leave his parish, he's got to stay there and work. So they farmed out the children, and mother was sent, age seven, down here. To Williamsburg. She had the adventure that she remembered till the day she

died. The greatest adventure! Her two old maid aunts, who lived in the house then, there were seven other children staying there, Mother's cousins, whose parents were in trouble and had to get rid of them a while. Seven little children living there and the two old girls would pile them all in a rented farm wagon and take them down to Jamestown to dig for foundations, and this had gone on for more than a year. When my Mother, age seven hit the first foundation! She hit one of those little... You've been to Jamestown?

SG: Yes, M'aam.

EP: You know the little piers that stand out, supporting houses. Well, Mother unearthed one of those, with her trowel. And, my great Aunt Annie rushed up to the farmer's house and said, "We want to buy this corn field right now." And he named a price and she said acceptable. And then she rode that farm wagon back to her own neighborhood and went up and down the streets saying, "You've got to help me, I haven't got that kind of money." So they all helped her and she finally had title to it. And as I say, mother had hit the first foundation that had been unearthed since, what three hundred years before? She didn't forget that a minute she was alive. When she died at eighty-three, she would tell you the thrills she had when she unearthed Jamestown.

SG: Wow! She was seven years old when she found it and she was eighty-three when she died? Do you remember what year she passed away? Or what year it was that she...

EP: I could figure, she was eighteen when she was married in 19.., in, yeah, 1908, so we can figure that.

SG: So it would have been late, 1890s, I mean it would have been the 1890s when she found the foundation.

EP: Not, oh yeah, when she found it. It was either 90 or 91. I'm not sure which.

SG: That's exciting. I know I make a point of taking my nephews out there to see Jamestown Island, and all of the work that they have done. We get...

EP: It's messy now though, there are too many ice-cream stands and all kinds of things around...they've all come in my years of living here which are not, well, fifteen years, I think I've been here this time...yeah. All those ice-cream stands and things that really don't belong when you're coming to see sites. Things to buy and eat. All different. Different roads, they're changing the look of the old island.

SG: Yeah, well, it's growing up quickly around here I know in just the five years that I've been here, Jamestown, I mean James City County, has just exploded with these new roads and these new subdivisions and they've just, at the rate they're going, there isn't going to be a green space left. It's somewhat disturbing. But, I can imagine what it must have been like in 1890. That's before...

EP: Oh just real country, what was not a paved road into Williamsburg.

SG: Were the ruins of the Church still left there?

EP: Yes, they had ruins down to, a standard point, maybe fifty years or more before that. It was a wreck in the Civil War time, the church. And then it's in my lifetime they made a part of it useable again. You can walk down a little aisle and sit in a pew now, that was not there until my time of living down here now.

SG: We're getting ready for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, in 2007, that's only five years away.

EP: That's amazing.

SG: I hope that it will be as big a celebration as it was in 1907. We have a lot of papers in the collections dealing with the celebrations in 1907 and then again in 1957. And I know an awful

lot of people have been coming out to do research. So, I hope that this is towards the goal of ...you know...Now did you Aunt hang on to that land of Jamestown Island?

EP: No, uh, no. I think Jamestown Island itself incorporated, or whatever you did, in 19, 1891, I think Jamestown itself got to be an entity that could own things. Because what she did do was go home and form the APVA, did that that same afternoon. Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquity.

SG: They do a great job.

EP: Now maybe the deed was given to them.

SG: She might have given it to the APVA, yeah.

EP: I don't really know who owns it now, or who she turned it over to.

SG: I think now Jamestown Island is owned by the federal government, it's a federal park. Like the battleground at Yorktown. But the Jamestown Settlement and the Yorktown Victory Center, I think those are completely separate entities. I don't think they have anything to do with each other in terms of who owns them or who runs them.

EP: I never had occasion to think about that. I don't know who they turned it over to.

SG: You said you came to Williamsburg about fifteen years ago, in 1987, and that was the last time. When did you come back before? If you were living in New York in, in the mid 1930s...

EP: We moved, when did we move to Williamsburg? Body and soul. From New York. It must have been...now Charlie died twelve years ago, and I think he had eight years kickin' up his heels around here. I believe we probably came in 1980, to live here. Otherwise all visits, never to stay here.

SG: Correct me if I'm wrong, but were you not in Connecticut for a while?

EP: Well, I, you've found some of my letters. We rented a place, rented a place for the summer, two summers. In Connecticut. But then we lived in Rye, New York the greater part of our time up there. In the City five years and then in Rye.

SG: Is Rye out on...isn't that out on the water?

EP: Yeah. Not my side of it. Yeah. We didn't live on the water. It's great...beautiful estates. We were inland, where the working people lived.

SG: But, it's sort of off Long Island Sound, isn't it?

EP: It's, yeah, it's truly on Long Island Sound. It's a great thing and the sound is out there like that and we were back here like this. Nice place to live though.

SG: It sounded like it.

EP: She's read our letters. Way before I heard of you. Gracious! I'd love to see them myself. I can't think what I wrote.

Fred: Probably something you shouldn't have.

SG: No. They had...when you were in New York, was this when Governor Pollard became ill?

EP: Yeah. Yes. We lived in an apartment in New York City then. He lived in Washington and died there.

SG: Oh, he had left Richmond to go to Washington.

EP: Yes.

G; Okay. What was... did, after he left the governorship then, did he go into the federal government?

EP: No. He always had small little jobs to do for the state or for the federal, that would last maybe six months and then he'd do another one. Somebody was always asking him to see about something and he would do that. And always begging Mr. Roosevelt to let him go and have a private job. And Mr. Roosevelt would say, "Big things are waiting for you, you just stay right

where you are, for forty years out you are going to have a job you love. I'm thinking about it all the time." Well, he never was thinking about it apparently, because the Governor died, his wife said, of a broken heart. He was just so distressed, having been all keyed up, first and during his job down here as a Professor, at the College, and then progressing to the Governor's Mansion. It was a lovely kind of a life for him, it was what he really loved. And then to get up there and have to sit on his fanny while an enthusiastic Roosevelt said, "I'm going to take you very shortly now to do a big job for me." But he never did.

SG: So he just kept him hanging on for a few years and...

EP: Two, three years, not that long...

SG: And Mack said that's what...

EP: Not as long as two or three years, I think that it was less than a year, because he was just devastated. So.

SG: Doesn't seem like...

EP: I wanted to put in a little touch, I think the Pollards interest you more than the Galts...

SG: Actually it's about half and half. We're interested in both because we have both family's papers, and one of the things the College is trying to do is sort of fill in these holes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Williamsburg history, because Colonial Williamsburg really only cares about the eighteenth, and before, and that's fine... That's a big enough area.

EP: Indeed they do. And a bit of it, not sticking to facts. I guess you hear that a lot to.

SG: Yeah.

EP: But there was one small thing I wanted to call your attention to if the Pollards are that important. You know that statement, "Ask not what your country can do for you?" When Charlie's father was connected with this College, he didn't have any textbooks to tell them to buy. He wrote a great column as the first page of a notebook and gave everybody that notebook and each sentence across there was what topic would be taken up that week. And you come down about to number eight, it says, "Don't ask what your country can do for you..."

Fred: No, what your government.

EP: Your government.

SG: So J.F.K.... borrowed that.

EP: He borrowed it. I saw Bobby Kennedy at a party down here once and I said, "My family is awfully happy that they could produce your mottoes for your family." And I said, "Remember, 'Ask not...' You know where your brother got it?" He said, "Out of his own head, of course." "No." I said, "Long before he was around, Governor Pollard, of Virginia, put that into writing. Not hearsay, it's in writing. I could show it to you if you go home with me." He said, "Oh, yeah I remember we heard he was pretty good and we sent for all his books and that's where we got it." So, okay, now we know.

SG: That's interesting.

EP: But the Governor could think of little slogans like that. He had a very active, great mind, Governor Pollard.

SG: You said he really enjoyed teaching here at the College.

EP: He loved every minute he was down here. The first assignment they gave him was such a difficult one. In 1920, the war was over, they boys were pouring in here like sand on a mountain. The girls were allowed to come for the first time. The place was swamped in every sense of the word. And a few of the new professors standing around, that was when the Governor was hired. Then, what was his name, not Tyler. The name of the President of the College at the time....a

good friend of our Governor's anyway. Said, "A good thing for you to do for me would be to go out and call on all of the new professors."

SG: Oh, J.A.C. Chandler.

EP: Chandler.

SG: Yes, M'aam.

EP: Um, call on the new professors and see if they are comfortable and all right. The first one he went to see was the greatest tragedy he said he'd ever run into. There were no boarding... what we might call rooming houses around this town, you had to go in with a private family that would take you. No hotel room, nothing. Um, so, they had rung doorbells until they found somebody with a vacant room and moved in. The first one he went to see was a young couple with a new baby. Living upstairs, the only bathroom in the house was downstairs. The only thing that resembled a kitchen was downstairs. Heat those bottles in the middle of the night. Um, it was a terrible thing. And when he got there, the little bride was sobbing. She didn't even want company to come in because it was so crowded up with the baby's crib, added to their bed, added to a make-shift desk, jammed up so that there was no place for the Governor to sit. But he got the message in a hurry. And I think he did the best thing that ever was done in Williamsburg. He said, "Within six months you are going to have a good house. I'm going to build it." Nobody much had cars then, you had to try to build in walking distance and the only piece of land in walking distance was what they now call Pollard Park.

SG: Oh, yes M'aam.

EP: He went out. I think they gave him the land. It was declared unusable land in Thomas Jefferson's day. Um, I don't think he had to pay anything for the land. He didn't hire an architect, they cost money. He didn't hire a professional builder. He called some men he'd come to know, who worked well. Bricklaying, siding, stuff like that. And he directed them, and they had the first house finished in a little less than six months. And I think there are fifteen of them, I'm not sure how many houses are there. But, in short order he got them all up with an edict that only college professors could live there. This was to get them out of the private homes and get them into their own place in walking distance. And not very long ago it was declared a heritage landmark.

SG: Yes, I know when they came to look at some of the drawings for Pollard Park that we got. There are some in the Pollard Papers, but also some in the law firm here in town, used to be Getty, Harris and Getty, you know Steve Harris? Or any of those boys? Well, they turned some papers over from their offices which they had inherited from a former lawyer here in town who sometimes acted in those days as general counsel for the University. And they turned them over to me last year and we found some drawings for Pollard Park in there along with some notes having to do with the deeds and things involved from the houses there. Did Governor Pollard also, did he have anything to do with the College Terrace? Or...

EP: I don't, I never heard so.

SG: You don't think so... Okay. Because Pollard Park was an amazing undertaking. I mean it really was. I know what, I read accounts of what it was like back then, no hotels, no boarding houses, it was a pretty quite little town, wasn't it?

EP: Pretty quiet little town. But they didn't even have running water in the College, a very few years before that.

SG: Wow!

EP: It must have been a mess. No bathrooms. No, any of the pleasures.

SG: Oh, my! And they let the women in 1918. That fall. I know Martha Barksdale was in that class, where Barksdale Field is named for her, there off Jamestown Road. But no bathrooms, no running, oh, boy. That would not have been good with co-eds on campus.

EP: Well, of course, they may have got some kind of thing for the co-eds, but there never had been bathrooms...

SG: Before.

EP: James Blair, was that his name? Who designed it and got it up in the first place?

SG: Oh, he was the first President.

EP: Knew nothing about bathrooms.

Fred: They had ...

SG: Pardon?

Fred: They had...

EP: I don't know how they would look if they were to take care of a big building like William and Mary. They'd have to be all over the place, wouldn't they?

SG: We just had our, I guess it must be fifth or sixth renovation now, of the Wren Building, the main building of the College. It was just finished last year. We had to go in and replace a lot of the mortar, particularly in the basement, where it's crumbling. And they replaced the H-Vac system and redid all the venting and all that kind of thing because we were worried about the long term effects, so went in spent a few million on the Wren Building.

EP: Goodness, goodness, goodness. And when you think, was his name James Blair?

SG: The first President, yes, M'aam.

EP: Was able to get all the money for the first building in his pocket.

SG: I'd heard that. It's amazing. When Governor Pollard taught at the College, did he teach government courses or law or?

EP: It had no title. It always was called just, Dr. Pollard's class. And the printed thing he gave me had Dr. Pollard's class. And the first year, oh, maybe five or ten people signed up. The second year all of them did, and quite a number more. It was a one year thing, but everybody that took it would take it again and again and again. And his last two three years, they put him in an auditorium, which was all the way jammed every session, and he'd have everybody laughing. He'd make his point about a very serious matter and then say something absolutely ridiculous that was pertinent, and people would roll with laughter. He was a real clown, and a great man.

Fred: When they do that they always remember what he said. When you end up with a joke or something, you always remember that.

EP: I've searched and searched to see if I can find a copy of his statements but you have them, you don't need them

SG: We may have them in the Papers, if there are things in there. I didn't look quite that far, because I only had yesterday afternoon to sort of say, "Well you know, perhaps I ought to read a little bit about Mrs. Pollard before I go and speak with her."

EP: Well, Fred was helping me hunt, and I didn't find what I know is back there. My husband never threw anything out and we went through a couple of places that things might have been but they weren't there. But if you have them that's all right. But you would see, that whole sheet of paper, big as this, with one, topic for the first week, two, topic for the second week, and you come down to eight, there's, "Don't ask."

SG: Well, I think he must have been a very eloquent speaker as well as a good teacher.

EP: He was indeed, and he knew more jokes, he published several joke books. His grandsons are getting some of them republished now. They ought to work for a living some way, but...



SG: I kind of got the feeling too, when I was looking through that correspondence from the 30s that Dr. Pollard was also a devout man.

EP: Very, very. He wouldn't miss church on Sunday for the world. Ofttimes took the pulpit. Great on getting up and doing a sermon.

SG: Do, was he affiliated with any ....

EP: Baptist.

SG: Baptist.

EP: From King and Queen County everybody was Baptist in that county.

Fred: Even the Holy Rollers were Baptists. Have you told her about what the Governor said about Charlie, that he wanted one of his daughters, I mean one of his sons, to marry you?

EP: Yes.

SG: Yes.

EP: He said that over and over and over. He always called me, "Little girl, we ready to go aren't we? Little girl," so and so...

SG: In one of his letters...

EP: One of these days. We had long automobile rides, ride up to Philadelphia to make a speech. Ride to, all over the place. Um, he'd say, when conversation flagged, "When you grow up, I want you to marry one of my sons." And he never did bring them around. I had to meet them out in the world.

SG: At Carter's Grove. I think in one of his letters to you, that I found, it must have been 1934 or 35, he said, "I know Charles is going to go places and make something of himself because he has you to manage him."

EP: To manage him. That's funny.

SG: Do you remember, did Dr. Pollard and Mack get married in the late, early 30s?

EP: I can't think when....

SG: Did they, I just was...

EP: Not that soon. Let me see, Mrs. Pollard died thirty-six weeks before I was married, which was 32, and I know he would have waited at least a year, that was gentlemanly. But I don't remember when he decided to marry his secretary.

SG: Mack was his secretary?

EP: Um hum.

SG: Okay.

EP: It was a great upset to the family, but in a while they got to enjoy her very much. But she wasn't his quality of level of education at all. She mused up the English language a little. Um, she was a good woman, and he needed a good woman. She looked after him awfully well. Because he was failing fast.

SG: When did he pass away?

EP: We were still living in New York and I can't think when. There was no funeral in Richmond. She had come from Calgary, Canada, and they sent her back there for burial. So there wasn't any service in Richmond, or we might have come down.

Fred: I think here's the guy that's after my car.

EP: Oh, oh, goody. Can I help, your cane's right there.

Fred: I know. I sat too long without moving.

SG: Oh, my knees get so stiff I can hardly get out of a chair anymore when I sit too long.

EP: Can I open this door for you? No, your coat's there, better go that way. Okay.

SG: Mr. Hunt, it was nice meeting you.

Fred: I'll probably, if you don't get away too fast, I'll see you before you get away.

SG: Okay. Well, I usually like to do a series of interviews rather than keep you talking forever and a day because it wears people out. But, and so I would like to...

EP: Come back.

SG: Come back if I may.

EP: I should like you to come back.

SG: I think usually I try to keep each interview down to about an hour, an hour and a half, because I figure, even if you have the most fascinating life in the world, you get tired of talking about it if you don't want to. And I think sometimes more comes out in a series of interviews.

EP: I bet it would.

SG: And you get to know the person better and then of course, then I have to come back with the transcripts and bug you about editing them!

EP: Well, I shall listen eagerly.

SG: Well, I figured we could do something like that, where instead of you having to read through them, we can simply read what we've typed to you and you can stop us and say, "No, I meant to say, no that's not who I was talking about at all."

EP: Fred will want to do that. He's great on correcting. He says I think your memory's failing. Well, I guess it probably is. I'm 91 now.

SG: You're 91 Mrs. Pollard? Well, many happy returns.

EP: Gonna be 92 in another six weeks. But I, I think memory does begin to leave you then, if it hasn't already.

SG: I hate to tell you this, but I'm 43 and mine's already taking little hikes.

EP: I know about that. But mine did not very much until real lately, and I'm not sure, that it wouldn't now if I didn't have him checking up on me all the time. I didn't say that the last time. I didn't dare let him talk... He's my indispensable person though. He lives across the hall and everything that I need he can do. This thing got unplugged this morning and I couldn't see where it ever was meant to be plugged. But he did. One of many things.

SG: It's nice to have a good friend that close.

EP: And they serve our plates in the kitchen, put them in front of us and I've no notion of what's, I always say, "Tell me what I've got to eat here." Other people at the table think that's funny. Because I can see a person, but I can't see a little item like that or that.

SG: Little details. Yeah. Well, I just went to the Doctor's last week and was informed that I have to get my first pair of bi-focals, so I am now officially middle-aged.

EP: Oh, me! I never reached that!

SG: I think it's, you know because of...

EP: You have to use your eyes all the time...

SG: That's the problem, I spend almost all of the day reading either in manuscript or book form or on the computer and it's a bit of a strain. But you know, wouldn't trade it for the world. Oh, go ahead.

EP: I was just going to say, earlier you said you liked antiques.

SG: Yes, M'aam.

EP: I've got one in here that I think is for the books. It's a wonderful find, love to show it to you.

SG: Okay. Yeah and I think that...

EP: You know it wasn't when I was a girl, you didn't send you child to William and Mary unless you were flat broke and couldn't do another one. It was poor then, very poor. The professors were way under scale.

SG: Things haven't changed.

EP: But you wouldn't come out knowing a whole college term's worth of stuff. They weren't good professors. They weren't comfortable in the classroom. Everything was breaking down, breaking down, breaking... Now that's eighty years ago.

SG: 1920...

EP: My sister was ready to go to college, older than I by a year and a half, and mother wanted her to go back to her beloved Williamsburg. "You can live in the Galt House, they'd love to have you." Mother got investigating, and found that Emily would not get the education she wanted her to get. It was not up to par at all at that time.

SG: What did your, where did your sister end up going to school?

EP: N.C., N.C.C.W., it's called. North Carolina College for Women, was it in Greensboro? Oh, so long ago! I believe that's where it was. And she did get an adequate education for her needs. Fred? Did somebody come in?

SG: I didn't hear him. Did you have other brothers and sisters or just Emily?

EP: Four brothers after. She's oldest, I'm next. Four brothers stringing on out.

SG: Yikes.

EP: And Emily's gone. One brother, made fame, he's really a bright fellow to have for your brother. You know that huge building at Cape Canaveral? One of the world's biggest. Brother Bill was designer and engineer in charge of doing that building, and his next one after that was doing a subway for Atlanta. He's just a great builder. There were a lot of smaller things, but those two feats are the ones that got him the most publicity. He lives down in South Carolina now, and he's quite crippled up like Fred is. I don't think he'll ever get back up here and I can't travel now, I can't see to travel. Um, then I've got, Chip, a little brother, we three are a year apart, pretty much, Emily, Bill. And then Bob, is eight years later and he was pet of the world. Cute and bright of talents... A child that's petted a lot I believe gets brighter and brighter, because he does. He had to go to war and bring back a bucket full of medals he did well, flying.

SG: Flying, and this was?

EP: World War II. And then he stayed in the military for quite a while and then he joined Legg Mason, not Legg Mason, a brokerage firm, and sold and bought stocks and things. Made a good adequate living.

SG: And when, you left New York, you decided to retire here in Williamsburg?

EP: No.

SG: What brought you back is what I'm asking.

EP: Yeah, we left New York to retire. Charlie had got to be sixty years old and we thought that was retiring age. So, we came down to a gruesome little apartment.

SG: A gruesome little apartment. Here in Williamsburg? Where was it?

EP: What is it called, Boundary Street?

SG: There right off of, that crosses, at the point, where Jamestown and Richmond Road, yes, I know Boundary Street.

EP: Miserable place to live. But you don't find, well probably do now, can't just find apartments around and we had adequate space, we did all right. Hired a builder. We'd been drawing plans for that house for twenty years, and put it up, out in Queen's Lake.

SG: That's a beautiful neighborhood. Tell me about this house that you built in Queen's Lake.

EP: Oh, it was so nice. Big bend in Queen's Creek, and we were right in the middle of it, fifty feet up. Very high piece of land to be right there. Marsh, and then charming little Queen's Creek.

Pretty, pretty, pretty. And across the way, that military thing, which I can't figure the name of. I haven't thought of any of these things for so many years.

SG: The Naval Weapons Station? Cheatam Annex.

EP: Yeah. Well, they came to down to its most secret part, it was right straight across from us, and every now and then, we'd see guards going around with flashlights, but they never did shoot anybody or do anything exciting. Um, but it was fun, they looked like little fireflies.

SG: And this was about 1980?

EP: Charlie died in 88, yeah I guess we had about eight years there. No, because he was sixty when he retired and that would have been in gone in 90, in 03, sixty-three we must have retired. We had a good long time living retired and then he died in 1980.

SG: So was that when you came to... Oh, I think Fred must be here.

EP: I can, I see he's going out in his car...

Fred: Have you told her about Roosevelt's tea party?

SG: What about Roosevelt's tea party?

EP: That was in New York when we were very young. 1932, in the Fall. He was running for office the first time. And came a day when I said, "Our families always had parties for candidates, we should do it too." And Charlie said okay, "Who's a candidate you want to have party for?" And I couldn't think of any but the Roosevelts. They lived in New York, and we didn't know anything about New York politics yet, but they were running for national office, so they belonged to us too. Charlie agreed. I phoned, and Mrs. Roosevelt said, "Of course we'd love to come for tea, next Thursday" or something.

EP: Well, so we invited the Roosevelts...

SG: To tea...

EP: To tea. And we said we would keep our fingers crossed that the little elevator didn't stop running, we were on the fifth floor. And for a week or ten days, it was a perfect little elevator, and I told the handyman there, "It must be running at four o'clock Thursday," or whatever day it was. "It must be running, no matter what. The next President of the United States will be here." He said, "It'll be running." Well, it wasn't, and I didn't know it until Mrs. Roosevelt heaved herself up the five flights.

SG: Five flights of stairs.

EP: Well, of course, he couldn't walk even one step. I said, that's all right, I'll take his tea down to him and I'll take two people with me and then I'll come back to get his second and take two other people down and everybody will get to see him, we had fifteen people there. Everybody will get to see him, and Mrs. Roosevelt would take over the pouring of the tea. Well, it worked out far better than it could have worked if he had come up, because he had people in a small audience, which was his favorite thing. And he told joke after joke, and was just as cheerful and jolly. It was a great big limousine. I think I could have stretched out, I think it was pretty nearly like this sofa, for the back seat. And he could lean like that and get his feet up like that and sleep as they traveled along. And that was how they managed. Well, he sat with his feet down like that and two people I'd bring down and then I got bringing four people, they'd sit on the two seats up here and it was a very nice thing.

SG: And you had your tea party in the back of Mr. Roosevelt's limousine?

EP: But Mrs. Roosevelt stayed up there to pour for the other people. And everybody got to see him, but not all at once, so there were maybe ten people there at all times, um, it was an all right tea party.

SG: Sounds wonderful. And what was your impression of Mrs. Roosevelt?

EP: Well, they got this craze about Charlie and me apparently. They'd invite us and invite us and invite us, and Charlie would say, "Not again, not again!" They're really awfully dull. Well, she was very much taken with all her children, and I've read since that she had not lived with him for many years. She just went along to help him and she had great sympathy for him. But they had no love affair at all. Well this was apparent, he didn't, he treated her like a servant, she acted like a servant. Great surprise to me. But they had us back a lot and it was interesting and pleasant.

SG: You've known a lot of very important people in your life.

EP: Fred is trying to get me to do a whole lot of little, single page things in the paper they call the Patriot's Press. I did one and it was pretty well received, so I guess I'll do some more.

SG: Now, you are saving copies of those for the Archives aren't you?

EP: No. I haven't even saved a copy for myself

SG: Oh, no.

EP: He may give you one.

SG: I'd like to have that.

EP: And this time they made me get a ghostwriter and I didn't approve at all of a couple of things that I liked that he took out. But if you're going to hire a ghostwriter that's what you get. Um, I would rather have dictated it.

SG: That sounds like a better plan to me.

EP: I might not have done it to sound any better, but it had to do with when I lived at Clearmount Manor. But the one that Fred is wanting to help me write now is when General Pershing made a dress for me. Literally, literally, he did.

SG: General Pershing made a dress for you? For what occasion?

EP: If we're going to write it, we can give you a copy when it gets done. It had to do with the fact that my family fell into some difficulties and placed me with their good friend General Pershing, in a hotel in Paris. He was retired. A retired General is, got aides coming out his ears, all around him all the time and I should like to put in my write-up of that I did not ever know why Generals were so surrounded with aides until this episode. All of the sudden there was an episode and it came about because the mosquitoes that summer were worse than they've ever been in Paris, which is always bad. And no screens in any windows. They would aim for General Pershing and murder him, he was all over bites. Finally, he decided somebody told him mosquito netting. He sent his man, out to get, one of these aides, out to get mosquito netting for him and he came back with perfectly handsome silk net for a ladies' fancy dress.

SG: He didn't know the difference.

EP: And when the General picked it up, "That's not mosquito netting that's..." He shoved his fist through, up to the elbow, through two layers of that beautiful material. Well then the aides all jumped to. "Oh, let's go to a movie. Let's..." All of them saying things we could do right now that would be better. And then one of them said, "Let's make Miss Elizabeth a dress." And the General stopped this thundercloud expression and beamed and said, "Let's." He got right on the phone and called a number he already knew by heart, and I wish I could put in my writing why he knew it by heart. How did he come to know it? He called the outstanding dressmaker in Paris

and I believe it was Dior, but I can't say that because it might be Dior wasn't born yet, um, this was about 1930.

SG: Dior didn't hit really the top of the fashion scene until the early 50s, he was the one who did those tight wasp waist dresses with the big skirts, the Dior look. 1930, it could have been, Chanel...

EP: I don't know.

SG: Or...

EP: I have nobody to remind me, I have no idea.

SG: I'm trying to think of all of the designers that were there at that time, it'd be {?}, or Chanel, or, goodness me, Balman {?}

EP: I really won't remember if you say it, it just isn't in my mind. But, he, a man arrived, and he was the one whose name it was, not a lady. The General had said over the phone, "S'ils vous plait, deux petits mains," little hands, they are the seamstresses that you never hear of and sew like that a mile a minute. So, Mr. What-Ever-His-Name was and his two petits mains, came along, and, oh, he was to bring a long a length of white satin, enough to be under this net dress, white satin, white net, um, anyway, they pinned the material on me, then they kept using their eye to cut the net, maybe because they had such a ton of it they could waste some and he'd already wasted a bit with his fist. Um, in due course, I could stand here resplendent, they took the dress home, all basted together, they took it home to stitch it right, um...

SG: That's amazing.

EP: They were there no more than an hour and a half. During which time the General was standing over saying, "No, no, no, no, make that fuller, no, no, no, the skirt..."

SG: He had definite opinions!

EP: So, that was the dress. I wore it on shipboard. Next time I went to a party in New York, my dress danced past me. Somebody had copied my dress, because they were designing it as they went along.

Fred: The first time she wore it was Bastille Day.

EP: Oh, yes, I left out the most important thing. He had to make a speech at midnight Bastille Day, July 14. Um, and he said, "You're going to wear this dress, because you're coming out there with me. We're going to carry a big envelope out." Well, we learned this is not the custom. The speaker comes alone. And said the General, "Not this one. Miss Elizabeth comes with me." And he was a very decided, decisive sounding person. So I went out and stood beside him while he made not a very long speech, it wasn't bad.

SG: How exciting. That's amazing. And this was Jack Pershing. Was his first name Jack?

EP: Was that his name?

SG: General Pershing's first name, Jack?

Fred: John, John. John J. Pershing.

SG: John J. Pershing. I wanted to make sure I had the right guy.

EP: I believe they did call him Jack, didn't they?

SG: I think they called him Jack Pershing.

Fred: They might have, but his real name is John J. Pershing.

EP: I never got intimate like that with him, he was just Mr. Pershing, a god-like creature.

Fred: General of the Army, Mr. Pershing?

SG: Well I think, um, for today I'm going to take this as a natural stopping point. Okay?

EP: Good, good.

SG: Before I tire you out.

Fred: Let's finish one quick thing, the dress was given to William and Mary Archive.

EP: Oh, yeah, we should have brought that up because she can check and see if it's still there.

SG: The dress was given to William and Mary?

Fred: To the drama department.

SG: To the theatre department.

Fred. They used it for a while and then it got a little raggedy and everything and they were going to throw it away and somebody said, "No, you can't throw that dress away. That was General Pershing's dress." So they put it in the museum downstairs with Betty's name on it, Pollard's name on it. Somebody said it was still down there.

EP: I'd love to know if it truly is still there.

SG: Well, Mrs. Pollard, I will try to find out for you. Um, I wonder if it's been turned over to the Muscarelle, but I will make inquiries and I will find out.

EP: Why would it go to Muscarelle?

SG: Because the artifacts and the art objects including textiles, would be more likely to be in the Muscarelle Art Museum than it would be to be in Special Collections, because what we collect, although we have a few artifacts, mostly what we collect are people's papers. Their papers, or their tapes, or their, in these days, computer disks. Um, and photographs, and more sort of documentary evidence as opposed to artifactual things. So, but let me see if I can track it down and if I, if I....

EP: If I just know the next time somebody...

SG: Next time I come out to visit I'll see if I can't bring you some news about that.

Fred: It's your phone, Betty.

EP: Oh, excuse me.