

MATHESON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interviewee: Charles Dell

Interviewer: Mary Ann Cofrin

Transcriber: Ruth C. Marston

February 6, 2004

- C: My name is Mary Ann Cofrin. I am interviewing Charles Dell for the Matheson Historical Museum here in Gainesville, Florida, on February 6, 2004. Would you please state your full name and birth date for the tape, please.
- D: My full name is Charles Alexander Dell. I was born February 2, 1925, here in Gainesville. I've always been told that it was at the old Day Edwards plantation, but it was a private hospital. There was no public hospital, and I've always understood it was over where the new P.K. Yonge is. That's where I was born. I think a number of other people were born there. Jo Ann Getzen was one.
- C: You gave a name for that place?
- D: Yes, Day Edwards plantation.
- C: I never heard that name before. It seems like there was another birthing place in Gainesville.
- D: I don't know, but I know that's where I was born.
- C: It's not there, of course, any more.
- D: No, P.K. Yonge is there.
- C: What home were your parents living in? Do you know where it was?
- D: Yes, I do. My mother was married to Dr. Jim Maxey Dell. They lived on the corner of West Main and the street that runs in front of the old Post Office, where the Hippodrome Theater is now. The house was across the train tracks from Maggie Tebeau's.
- C: East Main or West Main?
- D: West Main. That's where the train tracks were, and that's where Maggie Tebeau's was.
- C: Across the street from there. That's where they brought you home.
- D: I don't think so. My sister told me I never lived in that house. I think by that time the marriage was collapsing, if not collapsed, and my sister, Sunny Harper, my mother, and I stayed for a while with the W.E. Baker's. Mr. Baker was Mother's lawyer for the divorce. There are a lot of connections of friendship here. Anyway, eventually we moved over to an apartment northeast of the Duck Pond. Go up just one block east from the Duck Pond, right up that hill. Do you know where Eleanor Matherly used to live a long, long time ago, not when she lived on The Boulevard?

C: No, I don't know about that.

D: Anyway, it's right out there. It's where Ina Jo and her mother lived for a while. That's where we lived. I don't really know the history of this, but when I was about a year and a half old, Mother and George Dell got married. I assume we moved immediately into the house on University Avenue, where the library is now. That was the house that was next to the First Church of Christ. A tiny little church. You could sit on the porch and you could hear everything going on in the church. It was really pleasant. I hardly remember it, but I do remember that that's where I went to Sunday School if I went to Sunday School. That's where I remember learning that Jesus loved me and that sort of thing. That was all firmly implanted at that First Church of Christ. I've always had a warm heart for the church and for the Colson's. I think they were the pillars of that church. That's Barney's family.

There was one of the Colson's, and I don't know her name. She taught Sunday School and was always so sweet and kind. Even into my adulthood, I would encounter her coming down East University Avenue, and I swear I could see Jesus in her. Sorry, but that is the truth.

C: They lived down the street from you.

D: Past the Matheson Center.

C: Tell me about your family – the Dell family – that came to Florida.

D: Well, there were three brothers. One of them was Phillip and one was my great-great-grandfather, by Daddy's line, by the George Dell line. His name was Bennett Maxey Dell. Maxey is a family name. We're descended from some of those Maxey's. I think they were from South Carolina or North Carolina, up there somewhere.

C: The great-great-grandfather was one of the three brothers.

D: The one that settled here in what is now Alachua. Nobody settled in Gainesville. There wasn't any Gainesville. This was back right at the turn of the century, in the early 1900's or late 1800's, right around in there. They were coming back and forth and doing this and doing that, but they were from Georgia. That was the way they came through Georgia from North Carolina.

C: Were they farmers?

D: Oh sure. I don't know what else they could do but farming.

C: So that was your great-great-grandfather.

D: That was my great-great-grandfather, and his name was Bennett Maxey Dell. He married a Miss Boston, and there are all these Boston's up there.

C: In Alachua?

D: In Alachua. Oh, if you go to the cemetery there, I guess they replanted them, or however you say that but there's a long, straight line of new headstones and it's Boston, Boston, Boston, one right after the other.

C: That line, too.

D: That line, too. There's a whole lot of lines, you know.

C: Of course there are. Then your great-grandfather was?

D: My great-grandfather was John Boston Dell. He lived up there. He lived in Hague. Hague, for us at least, always became the homestead.

C: Is there a home there that you've ever been to?

D: I've been by the place but it burned down.

C: But you know where it was in Hague?

D: Oh, you can see where it was.

C: You should show it to your children.

D: Well, I will. If I haven't, I certainly will. I think I've shown George A. or Liddon about everything. Liddon says to me, "Daddy, if you call me George A. one more time, you know I'm going to kill you." Liddon won't kill me. He loves me almost as much as I love him.

C: So they stayed there, and that's where George Dell, your stepfather was born.

D: Yes, he was born in Hague, but he was not born in that house. Now I am probably the only one that knows this, but Daddy took me up there and when I say, "Daddy," that's George Dell. That's the only daddy I've ever known, the one I just worshipped. He's just a special person. He took me up there really because he wanted to go, and I can remember us going out into the woods. It was kind of like a log cabin – it looked like all the logs had been burned to me. I was really a little boy and it impressed me, first of all because it was small and second of all because of the way it was. I'm not really sure that he was positive but he decided that's where he had been born.

C: So he spent his childhood in Hague.

D: He spent his childhood in Hague. That can't be true because his father was – I think they called him the Town Marshal, but I think he was a policeman. I don't know that it made any difference, but I know when he died I saw his obituary from "*The Sun*".

C: Your grandfather and his name was?

D: His name was Charles Maxey Dell. It's interesting to see it because there's lots of statistics.

C: Do you know what year he died?

D: I think it was 1911. I think the Dell's moved into Gainesville when it became the county seat. All of that history is well recorded. Sometime in the future, I'll hone in on that period of our family. It is rich in family news.

He had married a woman named Ruby King. Ruby King and Charles Maxey Dell lived in Gainesville. The only thing I know is that they lived next to the Bishop's. The only reason I know that is because one of the Bishop's told me so. Charles Maxey Dell had a heart attack at 41 years old, and died. He left five children and a pregnant wife. I have heard that Daddy was about 12, but I think maybe he was more like 18. Whatever it was, Daddy took over the family. Grandmother Dell, Ruby, had to give birth to the child she was expecting, who was Lartique. His name was H.N. Lartique. He was named for old Dr. Lartique, who was married to Charles Maxey Dell's sister, Allie.

Dr. Lartique and Allie have a history of their own. One of their daughters, Dorothy, married Professor Joseph Brunet, who eventually taught me Greek and Latin at the University. We were very close and later his son Etienne (Kenny) and I became very good friends.

C: Maybe we'd better skip back to your mother's family a little bit. Her maiden name was?

D: Her maiden name was Liddon. I don't have a really good hold on it, but I know they were from west Florida and around here, too. Maybe Marion County. My mother was born in Branford on a farm on the Suwanee River – she always loved to say that – but she grew up in Ocala. I'm not positive about this but I think that her father had a livery stable and also was involved in road building. I know that they had livestock and mules and that he was also involved with naval stores.

C: Then she came to Gainesville.

D: She came to Gainesville as a bride. She was 20 years old.

C: She met Dr. Maxey Dell.

D: Obviously she must have known him before that. They were married in 1905. I think that's the same year that Sam Dell and his wife, Olive, got married. They all lived there in that house across the street from John Boston Dell. They lived in a little house where Olive grew up.

C: On the old Roper Street, which is now 7th St.

D: Across the street is a great big old 2-story house and that was John Boston Dell's house. I think in your records you call it the Lassiter House, but anyway, he did marry a Mrs. Lassiter. I don't know when that could have been because I have that family business here between the Jim Maxey Dell that lived in that house that you know where Olive lived – the house across the street.

C: That was James Maxey's house.

D: Olive's was James Maxey's house. It's awfully hard.

C: Yes, it's very confusing to keep them all straight.

D: I don't see how you do it.

C: Your mother's first husband, was he James Maxey also?

D: James Maxey Dell, Jr.

C: He and your mother lived in the house across the street.

D: All of them. Olive's mother and daddy lived there. Not in the big house. In that little house. All three of them.

C: Who was the third one?

D: Well, the mother and father and Jim and Sam

C: Jim and Sam were brothers?

D: Yes. Then across the street was John Boston, who was the brother of Olive's grandfather. I've got it all. I knew it by heart, you know.

C: You might want to write it down and put it with the interview. That might be interesting rather than for us to try to figure out all the names. Make a little chart, if you feel like it.

D: Behind that house there was a house. To me this is interesting. It is the house that Daddy built. That's the first house that he built. It's behind his grandfather's, John Boston Dell's, house. Daddy built that house, and it's still there. Old Dr. Miller Leake bought it and he lived there all through his career here. It was way down at the end of Roper. Do you know where they moved the Hodges house?

C: No I don't. Anyway, that was quite a bit south of University Avenue.

D: Do you know where E. Baird's house is?

C: Oh yes.

D: Is it E. Baird?

C: Well, it's the Baird House that they've made into a bed and breakfast.

D: That's right next to it. There's one little funny house between them. It's not funny, but it's different.

C: But then the house your daddy built was behind it.

D: It was behind that big house.

C: So it's just off of Roper.

D: Yes. Then back in there, of course, is the Odd Fellows Home.

C: Do you remember living in that house?

D: No. I never lived in that house. When Mother and Daddy got married. . .

C: I thought you were talking about your daddy, but you were not? You weren't talking about James Maxey?

D: When I said, "Daddy built the house," I meant George. George built that house for his mother and his siblings.

C: Oh, I see. So that was before he was married to your mother.

D: Sure. When he married mother, he had already lived on University Avenue. Do you remember Dr. Abbott and the First Church of Christ? Well, that's where the house was, next door to the First Church of Christ. It went kind of in an L. Daddy liked horses and Mother learned to when she married him, so they had the stables right down there in the middle of town.

C: What was your father's occupation?

D: He was a grocer.

C: From the very beginning?

D: Yes. When he first started earning money, Mr. O'Neill had the store. Have you ever heard of the O'Neill Grocery Store?

C: No.

D: Well, that was here in Gainesville, and Daddy worked there as a little boy. He would go around with the cart and take people's orders and come back to the store and fill them and then go back and deliver them. That's my understanding.

C: Was it a cart with a horse on it or could he just walk around pulling the cart?

D: I know he didn't pull the cart.

C: O'Neill's Grocery Store would have been across the street?

D: It would have been up on the square. It probably was over there on what would be the east side. I'm just guessing. I don't know why I never found out for sure, but I know Mrs. O'Neill lived down on East Main. I know where that house was, and her son, I think, was Clarence.

C: Oh, that O'Neill. Clarence O'Neill worked at the City Hall with my father, Sam Harn. That was maybe a different O'Neill, I don't know, but there was a Clarence O'Neill, and this could have been his father, I guess.

D: His father was dead. I remember her. She lived down the street. She lived north of the Methodist Church, in that area.

C: So your Dad, after he was grown, bought the store?

D: He bought the store from Mr. O'Neill, and I guess he paid Mrs. O'Neill until he got it paid for.

C: So he was living on University Avenue and he was right down the street from his store.

D: Sure.

C: We moved into our house on Florida Avenue in 1928. I was four.

D: Well, see, I think I was four when we moved into a house on the same street. The house was already there, and they only rented it, I think. I'm almost positive, because they wanted to build a house out on the west side. It is interesting that a condition of renting the house was that a sleeping porch be added on the rear. That seemed to be part of our culture – having a sleeping porch. We always had one.

C: You lived there a long time on Florida Avenue, didn't you?

D: I'm saying that I was nine – that would be five years.

C: Was that all the time you lived there?

D: I think I might have been a little older. Let's see.

C: What year did you move out on the west side of town?

D: George A. knows that better than I do. Let's see, '37 or '36 somewhere around there.

C: So you were ten or eleven by the time you moved down on the west side of town. So you lived on Florida Avenue until you were ten or eleven years old, and you went to what we called the East Side School?

D: I didn't go the first year because my birthday is like Eleanor Matherly's, in the middle of the year.

C: After December 31st, right.

D: Yes, in the middle of the school year. I've forgotten who tutored Eleanor, but anyway Miss Ruth Peeler tutored me, so I went on into the 2nd grade and I had Mrs. McCormick. Did you ever have her?

C: No. I thought you went to 2nd grade with me. I had Mrs. Free Duncan.

D: No, I had Mrs. McCormick.

C: So we weren't in the same 2nd grade?

D: I was always put back because we had the tutors and everything. It's like 2nd grade B or whatever you wanted to call it.

C: Well, Miss Peeler was your 1st grade tutor so you never really went to 1st grade at Kirby-Smith or East Side School. Then you went to 2nd grade and 3rd grade there.

D: Yes. Then 4th grade was over at G.H.S.

- C: Oh, that was because you had moved to the west side of town?
- D: Yes.
- C: Did you have Miss Lucretia Thompson for 3rd grade?
- D: I don't remember having her.
- C: That's who I had.
- D: But you don't remember Mrs. McCormick.
- C: I didn't have her, I guess.
- D: She's the widow of the first minister of the First Presbyterian Church.
- C: Okay.
- D: Have you ever heard of Lucius Raines?
- C: That name rings a bell.
- D: He was the son. They lived over there on let's call it Railroad Street, but it's West Main.
- C: Okay, well tell me about your memories of living on Florida Avenue.
- D: Well, let me start with University Avenue.
- C: Okay, yes. Please do.
- D: There are one or two memories. I remember that I tripped over my wagon and then I cut my knee and I still have the keloid.
- C: You didn't have to be stitched up, did you?
- D: I guess it was stitched up. I think I told you this. Josephine Stock lived there. You know there's this little gully kind of thing, what is that called? Sweetwater?
- C: That's Sweetwater Branch.
- D: Well, where the Matheson Center is, that's right. I was up there playing in the yard with the hose. This was at Josephine's house. When it came time to go home, I told the nurse, you know, that I wanted to be dressed. She said, "You can dress yourself." I said, "No, I can't." I grabbed up the rest of my clothes and

- ran stark naked back home, which was practically to Courthouse Square. That's always been something I've just cherished.
- C: You must have been three or four, a little kid?
- D: Yes.
- C: Josephine Stock is now Baumer. She lived up the street. Who else lived there? Barney Colson, you mentioned, lived up that way.
- D: Those are about the only ones that I really knew. At that time I didn't know anybody.
- C: So then you moved over to Florida Avenue and you think you were about five.
- D: They wanted to get away from the square and they wanted to get their horses out on the edge of town, and they weren't ready to build. Eventually, they moved to Florida Avenue, and that's where I really have childhood memories. You had a playhouse that the three Harn girls had and we used to play in it.
- Do you remember Bobby Leach? He was an announcer for years for WRUF, and he lived at the absolute end of Florida Avenue. He had a real sweet mother.
- C: Now your horses were back in that area?
- D: Yes, right there.
- C: Did you ride as a five or six year old? Probably not, but your parents did.
- D: Oh, I did ride. I had a pony. There's a picture of Bobby Leach and George A. and Bill Hadley – the four of us on the pony. The Hadley's lived across the creek.
- C: You're talking about the Hadley's when you moved west.
- D: No, they lived right there. They didn't live on Florida Avenue but across the creek and they would cross on that little stone bridge.
- C: You mean down on The Boulevard. I didn't know the Hadley's ever lived there.
- D: Sure, they did, and I have that picture of the four of us. We played together.
- C: That street, I guess, was paved when we lived there. There were sidewalks. I know we roller-skated. That was one thing we did.
- D: They were paved. That place was all developed with the idea of being a development. I think the Parrishes developed it.

C: I think they did, too, although that isn't who built our house. Fritz Hartman built our house.

D: Oh, is that right?

C: Yes. We had already lived in that area before we moved over to Florida Avenue. We had a good time in that neighborhood. You did go to school to Kirby-Smith, and you walked?

D: Walked and walked.

C: We walked a lot.

D: I don't think I walked all the time, but I did walk.

C: And we rode bicycles.

D: I was a great one for picnics. I loved picnics. We went out by the old airport.

C: I remember the old airport.

D: They would have fires out there. The pine trees were all slashed so that they were collecting turpentine and they would catch on fire or somebody would set it.

C: I don't remember that at all. We had a good time over there in that neighborhood. Except for Bill Hadley and us, I'm trying to think who else was in our neighborhood when we were little. I know who was there when I was a teenager because I lived in that neighborhood longer than you did, but I don't remember too many young people.

D: Well, that Parrish boy – Walter Parrish. He was older than we were.

C: Yes, he was.

D: But he lived there.

C: And Ann Parrish. Was she there when you were there? She's younger than we are.

D: She must have been because George A. knew her.

C: George A. is your brother.

D: And he's three years younger than I.

- C: His full name is George Alexander, the same as yours.
- D: But they're different. My name is from my maternal side because my great-grandmother was Miss Ann Alexander, and George A. is named for his father and is a junior. I don't know where that Alexander came from.
- C: Some ancestor probably.
- D: George A. was born on University Avenue.
- C: He's just three years younger than you. He was born in '28 then if you were born in '25. He was born in March. Okay, so that pretty much is your memory about your early days.
- D: Let me see. I am trying to think of things that might have been interesting over there because on the corner of Florida Avenue and The Boulevard, when you and I lived there, there was a foundation there and we used to play up there. It also had a basement. Do you remember that?
- C: I remember we used to go down in the bottom of that place and eventually there was a house built there.
- D: Two houses, I think.
- C: Dr. Maines's house was one of them. The other one I don't know who that belonged to.
- D: I believe it was General Greer, a military man. I'm pretty sure his name was Frank.
- C: Of course, President Tigert's house was across the street, but that must have been after you moved, or was that there?
- D: Oh, it was the President's home then. The story is that I went down there and pulled up all of the pansies that were there. For years after that, when they would have a function we'd send over a great big tray full of gardenias to Mrs. Tigert.
- C: I remember Mrs. Tigert well, and I've told this before and I'm not supposed to interject anything.
- D: I want to hear it.
- C: I sold Mrs. Tigert a subscription to the "*Saturday Evening Post*," so I could get a pair of skates. That is very vivid in my memory. Of course, we sort of looked up them. He was the President of the University with the big house on the corner.

- It's still there, and it was Mark Barrow's home but he sold it. He and his wife lived there and restored it, and it's a very lovely home.
- D: Is he a historian?
- C: He is and he's done a lot for the Matheson Center. He really got that place going.
- D: You have to realize, of course, that I don't live here and have been gone for thirty years, so I'm not in on all these names.
- C: So you moved out to the west side of town. You must have been in the 4th grade because you went to school at G.H.S. P.K. Yonge opened in '34-'35 when we were in the 5th grade. 6th grade was '35-'36 and 7th grade '36-'37.
- D: They sent me off to military school in the 8th grade. I would have been twelve.
- C: I didn't know that. Where did you go to military school?
- D: It was called at the time Florida Military Institute and was down in Haines City. I was down there for a year.
- C: In 8th grade.
- D: When I came back, I was in the 9th grade. I've always been glad I went because I learned a lot there. I learned a lot about English, about arithmetic. It's kind of where I grew up, I think. My story is that Mother and Daddy said that I was growing real fast. I was getting stoop-shouldered and they wanted to get me straightened up, so they sent me off to military school.
- C: We have lots of fond memories of our days at P.K. Yonge. Talk about some of your friends out there.
- D: The first thing that I remember when I got back there were these two strange people. I had never seen them before. They had kind of dark complexions and were definitely brunettes, and there was something attractive about them. One of them was Lorraine Kelley. She danced and she would do this and she would do that, you know, and the other one was Johnny McFarlin. I had never seen anybody that looked like Johnny McFarlin. He was what I would call a cute little boy.
- C: We all got together at the class reunion in 1992.
- D: Lorraine wasn't a particular friend of mine, but Johnny and I were Aran Akbars together.

C: Right. We had two high school fraternities and two high school sororities, and that was a very active part of our social life. The boys started in the 9th grade. The girls were 10th grade. We had a lot of activities that made it fun. I'm not sure it was a good idea for the folks that weren't in it.

D: Well, it probably wasn't and I know that feelings were hurt.

C: Oh yes.

D: Those feelings were hurt, and there is enough trouble growing up without introducing that at that early age.

C: I think it's a good thing they outlawed it, as much as I enjoyed my time in it.

D: We had functions, you know, and a lot of people had homes on the lakes and we had these functions at the lakes.

C: Hayrides.

D: And we had dances. We'd sponsor dances to make money. As a matter of fact, we had many dances down at the Matheson Center.

C: It was the American Legion Hall, and, as everybody knows, we had dances there. Then we had them at the Gainesville Woman's Club.

D: Have you told them about the Little Women?

C: Oh yes, when we talk to different females, we get a lot about the Little Women. Anyway, you stayed on at P.K. Yonge until you graduated.

D: Two things happened in that academic year of '41-'42.

C: Our senior year.

D: That was our senior year. I had gotten interested in Catholicism. Josephine Stock and Ann Ziegler – I don't know whether you were in there or not, in the little reading room off of the library. We learned how to say the rosary there.

C: No, I wasn't there.

D: Ann came back from South Carolina and she had been visiting her Catholic cousins. They taught her and she came and taught Josephine and me. I think Josephine sort of let it go and I did, too, but at any rate, on December 7, 1941

C: Pearl Harbor Day.

- D: I came into the Catholic Church. I was baptized in the little church down there at the north end of East Main Street. It's a wonderful church. Of course, it's an old one.
- C: Now, you got interested in the rosary, but was there some other person who influenced your converting to Catholicism.
- D: Everybody thinks it was Aunt Carrie (McCollum) because she, of course, was a national figure in the church with the women. She was actually the national president of the National Council of Catholic Women.
- C: But she did not influence you?
- D: No, I didn't even know she was a Catholic.
- C: Just learning the rosary wouldn't make you become a Catholic. You had to do something else. You had to talk to somebody, didn't you?
- D: Well, I made the sign of the cross one night. We always said night prayers and I was kneeling there by the bed, and I made the sign of the cross. My mother looked at me, and she said, "Do you want to become a Catholic?" I was fifteen years old, so I wasn't a little boy, and I said, "Yes, I do." She said, "Well, I'll call Aunt Carrie." I think she was the only person she knew that was a Catholic. The next day they had me down there.
- C: They did?
- D: Well practically, yes.
- C: And your parents didn't object?
- D: No. Nothing but supportive.
- C: What about George A.?
- D: George A. came in on his own. He gives me lots of credit, but I wasn't even here, of course. I had to go off. First of all, I wanted to be a priest, so I went off that year immediately to a seminary in North Alabama.
- C: Now that was in December '41 when you became a Catholic but you stayed on in Gainesville to be graduated.
- D: I did graduate, but you see I didn't graduate formally. I may have done it, but I left P.K. Yonge and went to the University of Florida. They gave us a test. Hart Stringfellow and Jimmy Bryan, I think, and many of my friends took this test and went to the University as Freshmen.

- It was a godsend to us, academically and intellectually, because I was exposed to many things. I drank and I joined a fraternity and I was wide-eyed and bushy tailed about learning. So all those things were going on.
- C: You had to be a bright student.
- D: You had to be in the upper tenth percentile or the twenty-fifth.
- C: You were one of the younger ones in your class.
- D: Oh yes, I was. We didn't think too much about that. There wasn't much competition. We didn't have intellectual competition. We didn't think about that.
- C: Well, I think there were some very smart people in our class, and you were one of them.
- D: Oh, there were, but we didn't compare. All of us had something. I had very serious things going on in my mind and in my heart because I was drawn to God. I really was, and I loved social life, just absolutely loved social life. Unfortunately, I also loved liquor. I came about it naturally because at that time that was a part of being – how do I say that? I don't want to say sophisticated. It was part of being cultured. My mother was determined that George A. and I would be cultured. She exposed us to as much culture as she could, and Daddy, too. He was right there pushing and pushing.
- C: We have hardly talked about either one of your parents. I don't want to skip over anything, but you joined the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.
- D: All those things happened at one time: The Roman Catholic church, Pi Kappa Alpha, going to the University. All of that happened at one time, and the country was at war. The campus just emptied out. I was there as a Pike. My mother and father said, "We want you to move to the Pike house so you'll have the experience of going away to school."
- C: And you did that.
- D: I did that.
- C: They turned you loose too soon.
- D: Yes.
- C: You had a good time.

- D: Oh no, we talked seriously. It must have been a birthday or graduation, but one of my Pike brothers named Henton Baker sent me the essays of Montaigne and on the inside said, "Think long and deeply, Charles." That's wonderful. I tried.
- C: Yes, those were wonderful days for you. Let's backtrack to your mother. She was such a lovely person. You talk about being cultured. She was the epitome of culture. She really was.
- D: She was. She read! George A. and I have often talked about how could she read all of that stuff. She knew things, and how did she have access to the knowledge?
- C: Because she probably didn't get to go to college. Most of our parents didn't.
- D: Oh, no, she didn't. She got married.
- C: She got married as a young girl. We didn't even mention your half-brothers and sisters, James Maxey Dell, the radiologist.
- D: Maxey Dell, Jr. was really Maxey Dell, III, but I guess that was a little affected for him, so he was Maxey Dell, Jr. Maxey must have been close to being the first real medical student at Emory in Atlanta.
- C: And then your sister Mary Virginia.
- D: You see, we just can't call them stepsisters and brothers, because that's not what they are. They are so full-blooded siblings to George A. and me. As a matter of fact, Maxey's daughter is going to have this wonderful party tomorrow night for Sunny, George A. and me. All of our grandnieces and nephews will be there.
- C: Well, they were your full brother and sister, anyway. They were George A's stepbrother and sister.
- D: I think all of us have decided we feel like brothers and sisters. George A. and I were reared together. We look alike. We talk alike. We think alike. What's that called? Telepathy that brothers and sisters have? It's very strong in George A. and me.
- C: But Sunny and Maxey . . .
- D: They grew up probably with the same feeling. They lived with their father. Now Sunny came and lived with Mother and me, I guess until Mother got married. I was a year and a half old when Mother married.
- C: Right, so then Sunny went back and lived with her father. He never married again?

- D: He did marry again. Do you remember Sonia Evans?
- C: No, but did Sunny live with them then or did she just visit back and forth?
- D: No, he didn't marry her until we all grown.
- C: So she lived with her father. Well, she would have been quite a bit older. She would have been a teenager by then probably.
- D: Well, she was eight when I was born, so you add it all up.
- C: She was still a little girl.
- D: I can remember Mother every morning would get in the car with me and we would go and pick up Sunny and take her to G.H.S. That was the big thrill of my life. I thought she was the most wonderful thing. She was always so active and popular, and she was a cheerleader and she had a purple sweater with the big G on it and all that. She is still a wonderful person.
- C: Oh, she is. But your mother was very active in the women's organizations in Gainesville, the Woman's Club.
- D: She might be a founder of the Woman's Club. I'm pretty sure she is.
- C: She was a very highly thought of lady.
- D: Yes she was. She was highly respected. With just the intimation of a problem, you could see what an incredibly strong woman she had to be, but how gentle she was. I just can't imagine with all that going on. George A. and Sunny and Maxey and I. Maxey's children are more like my brother and sister than they are my niece and nephew. Mother just had that knack for holding our family together.
- C: She was a wonderful lady. Now, your dad. We haven't talked about the grocery store.
- D: Oh my goodness.
- C: The grocery store there on University Avenue, which so many people have fond memories of.
- D: Yes. My first memory of the grocery store was over on the east side of the square. There was a store there, and it had an upstairs. As a child, I used to play up there with the children of the black men that worked there.
- C: It must have been right near where Baird Hardware was.

- D: There may have been a store between them, but it was right in there. I've never figured that out because Piggly Wiggly was there later, and I don't think that was in the same spot.
- C: Maybe not, but that was the first store.
- D: They moved over one block east of the square. It was in the same block with Vidal's.
- C: On the north side of the square.
- D: The building that housed Vidal's store and Miss Bessie Rutherford's. When those stopped, then the store started. Do you remember Olive Briggs?
- C: Yes.
- D: Well, Olive Briggs is the niece of Annie Scarritt. The Scarritt's are an old, old family and had a wonderful old house there on the corner of University and Virginia Avenue. The first street after Main Street. Who was the dean at the law school?
- C: Trussler.
- D: Yes. Anyway, Mrs. Trussler and Olive Briggs sat out in the middle of University Avenue and painted pictures of Daddy's store. Olive brought me one, and it is beautiful. It's a work of art. She had been up in Athens, Georgia, and learned the technique for making paintings out of natural things like vegetables, like all the purple from eggplant. It's a fun thing.
- C: You have the painting?
- D: I did have the painting but now I have only a picture of it.
- C: That would be fun to have in the file. We can scan it and make a copy of it so you could keep your copy. If you give me a copy, we'll scan it.
- D: I'll send you one.
- C: Oh, you don't have it here. Does George A. have it?
- D: George A. has another one. He has the one Mrs. Trussler did. She wasn't that talented.
- C: Well, we'll wait and get yours.
- D: Get them both.

C: Did you work at the store as a young man?

D: As a child, I didn't. Off and on I did work at the store. Daddy's sisters and Daddy's brothers all came through the store, working. They all helped. I guess I was good when I worked there, but I guess I was so involved with growing up and everything.

C: How old would you have been?

D: I must have been in high school.

C: Tell them the unique thing about your father's store – that you could place an order.

D: Oh yes. All of that, I think, developed right out of his very beginning with the store. He was going around and taking people's orders as a boy.

C: There was no other place you could do that.

D: No, and you had two phones. One of them was 46 and the other was 47. You could call those numbers and they had little pads and would take your order. It was duplicate, so the duplicate went with the order. The delivery boy – and I did do this – I delivered, particularly anything on the west side, but I delivered to everyone. He had two trucks.

C: And you drove a truck.

D: No, I couldn't drive when he had those trucks. They were great big square things. Of course, you had to get as much use out of something like that as you could. I can remember when the truck got old, he got two new ones. I remember they had "George Dell" on the side of it. They were new Chevrolets and I was so proud of those trucks. Colored men worked there. I guess I should say, "Black men." They were black, and they were wonderful.

C: They drove the trucks?

D: They drove the trucks. What I started to say was that when they delivered, they would go right into the kitchen and unpack the box. If there was nobody there, they would put the milk in the icebox and the butter in the icebox, or whatever it was.

C: Nobody had to lock their doors.

D: Nobody locked their doors, and those men weren't interested in pounds of butter! Anyway, it was different. A different era, and wonderful. The only place I ever

- ran into that was when I was in graduate school at Johns Hopkins. There was a store between where we lived and the campus, and it was operated exactly like Daddy's. It was a lot smaller, but primarily it was nothing but calling in and giving the orders. There were a lot of elderly people, you know.
- C: That was a wonderful service. Well, your father stayed at that store. What happened to the store finally?
- D: The location became Citizens Bank, so Daddy had to buy another place. He leased some property and built a store.
- C: Where?
- D: Right by a Church of God on East University Avenue.
- C: Okay. That's just across from where the Matheson Center is. Was it on the corner?
- D: No. There was a filling station on the corner, and then Daddy and then there was a church there.
- C: So he stayed there as long as the store was open?
- D: As long as he was alive.
- C: When did he die?
- D: I was teaching at the University of Colorado.
- C: That would have been after you were married. You were married in what year?
- D: '51.
- C: So he died after '51, and that was the end of the grocery store.
- D: We can figure out pretty much when he died because he died about the year that Liddon was born, so that would be '55.
- C: So your father died in '55 and that was the end of the grocery store.
- D: We closed it and Mr. Borland, who had Piggly Wiggly, helped us clean it out. We had to call all the customers and tell them they could have things at half price, or whatever.
- C: He helped you, and he already had Piggly Wiggly.

- D: He still was in business. He was very fond of Daddy. They were very fond of us. Fred Borland and his wife.
- C: Anyway, skip back to your days on Hilldale Road when you lived out there and finished high school and went to the University.
- D: That's an awful lot of time right there.
- C: We've jumped into a lot of things, haven't we?
- D: Well, there's a lot to jump into because I'm in my 80th year.
- C: Anyway, you had some fond memories of that area, but I think we've pretty well covered the things you did in high school and then going off to college.
- D: The main thing, I think, is the social atmosphere that was created by us. The thing that held us together all these years. That would include people like Jim Bryan and Hart Stringfellow and Ballard Simmons, whose father was the principal there.
- C: And Dick Mehrhof, and Fred Bryant. Some of them went to G.H.S. We sort of had a split there. Some of us went to the new school and some of them stayed at G.H.S., but we still maintained friendships. And Byron Wise. He's moved back to Gainesville, by the way.
- D: I know. I saw him at our 50th reunion in 1992.
- C: Anyway, we did have a wonderful high school experience at P.K. Yonge. I think we had a really good time.
- D: And we learned about living with other people. I think we did.
- C: I have to interject. One of my memories of you is how you used to get tickled about something.
- D: I hate that story!
- C: He would get so tickled that he would have to get up and leave the room. I remember it particularly in 6th grade in Grace Stephens' class.
- D: She had a son named Billy.
- C: Right. Then Eckrol Olson, and Miss Clara Olson was our Latin teacher.
- D: Eckrol still lives here, I think.

- C: I didn't know that. Another possible interviewee.
- D: He loves to talk, so I've been told. My son came up to see Eckrol because of the business that he wanted to sell. I think it was growing things, a nursery.
- C: Okay, we've pretty well finished with high school, and we've gotten you through just one year of college. Then what did you do after 1942?
- D: By 1942 I was in the seminary. I wanted to be a priest.
- C: You didn't have to go into the war.
- D: I wasn't thinking about the war.
- C: You were very involved with your religion.
- D: Right. The war was on, and I was young, 17, so wasn't even eligible to go to war. I went to St. Bernard Abbey School in Cullman, Alabama. That was a blessing because I really wasn't well instructed in my faith, but I got a marvelous foundation for the rest of my life. But the business about the war and about not being in the Army and being 4D, they called it, so I came home for the summer and then I went back during the summer because I needed to work on Latin. Then I came back to Gainesville in '43. I must have just turned 18.
- C: That's right.
- D: Anyway, you know how you had a trunk rack on the back of your car. When you went away, you had to go with a steamer trunk and I had my steamer trunk. John, the man who worked for us, had it on the car and I decided I wasn't going back. I went out and I said, "John, take the trunk back in the house. I'm not going back." Then I, of course, immediately went down to Selective Service and got myself reclassified and got myself examined. I had had heart problems, so they said I couldn't go. I had to do something, so I went to Catholic U.
- C: Where?
- D: In Washington. Catholic University of America. It's a big school, and it's an important school to Catholics. I got up there and I got the mumps.
- C: Now this is in '43?
- D: Yes. And by the way, both Sunny and George A. caught my mumps.
- C: It's very hard on adults, too.

D: Yes, and it was particularly hard on me. It didn't have to be that way, but it's what they called going down on you. Anyway, I came home and then I went down and told Selective Service that I was back and wanted to volunteer again. They sent me out to Camp Blanding.

C: They decided your heart was okay?

D: No, I had to have another physical.

C: I know, but they decided you were okay.

D: Yes. You see, it depends on the need of the Army. They needed me more then. I went to Camp Blanding, and it's so funny. Half of us wanted to go away from here, and half wanted to go to Camp Blanding. I wanted to go away from here, and I was sent to Camp Blanding. The boy that I was sitting next to wanted to go to Camp Blanding, and he was sent to Texas!

C: So you really didn't stay at Catholic University very long.

D: No, I didn't. I stayed there three months. I went into the Army during the winter of '44.

C: So from '43 when you got the mumps at Catholic University, then it took you a while to get back and get into the service. That was in the fall of '44.

D: I went overseas in '45.

C: But you stayed at Camp Blanding for boot camp, I guess. That lasted six or eight weeks?

D: Yes. I was home for Christmas that year. I remember that. I took one of my pals home for Christmas. He lived in Washington.

C: Then you were sent overseas?

D: We went to England in '45.

C: What was your job in the Army?

D: I was what's called a Browning automatic rifleman.

C: And your rank was?

D: I was a private and they made me a corporal eventually.

C: Did you see any combat?

D: No. We got credit for combat because we went overseas. We landed in Scotland and came down through England and were there for maybe a month. We crossed over and when we got to England, they split us up. Half of us were sent to the front and half were sent to western France. The half that were sent to the front were killed, and the other half survived. It was around the time of the Battle of the Bulge, I think.

C: So you stayed in the service.

D: To me the service was a wonderful experience. I hate to say this, but I've said it before. Everybody was so nice to me. They really were. I was a little buck private, but I became a corporal, and after the war I was sent to Berlin.

C: That would have been?

D: '45-'46, right in there. I was back here in school in '46.

C: VE Day was in June '45, was it?

D: June 6th.

C: Then you were sent to Germany and you stayed there as part of the occupation. For how long?

D: I was six months in Berlin, and I don't know how many months in Germany, what we called West Germany. I was there long enough to enjoy it. I did guard duty and that kind of thing. In Berlin I was a supply sergeant.

C: Then you would have been promoted to sergeant.

D: Well, not really, but that's what I did. I was the only supply sergeant that they had. That place was located on Wannsee.

C: Was that the town?

D: That was a lake. Then there was a development of grand houses, which are still there – and still grand.

C: That was a real experience to see Germany and some of the foreign areas you never had been to.

D: We had all kinds of experiences. Berlin was divided into four sectors, so they brought the ballet company from Moscow. We were trucked over there with guards and everything into the Russian Zone to see the ballet. They wanted us to have as many opportunities as we could have. Life was so different then.

C: That was wonderful. Did you learn German then?

D: No.

C: But you had no problem?

D: I was looking at the ballet, for sure.

C: No, I'm talking about your everyday contact with the German people.

D: Oh, there wasn't any fraternization, at least not for me. Plenty of others had apartments.

C: When you came home, you were mustered out?

D: Before I went to Berlin – this is what is so wonderful about our country – they set up after the war two schools to help us intellectually. You got university credit for it. They set one up in Scotland and one in Biarritz, France. Biarritz is one of the most beautiful cities you've ever seen. It's really one of the great resorts in France. It was founded by one of the Bonaparte's and his wife.

C: So you went to school there. It was taught in English.

D: It was taught in English. There was a professor there named Phipps. I didn't take any mathematics, so when I was walking down the street and I saw him, I said, "Aren't you Dr. Phipps?" He said, "Yes, and you're Charles Dell." I said yes. He said, "I remember you from the University of Florida." I was there, you know, for that first year.

C: Sure. So he had been a professor at U.F. and was sent over there.

D: His wife, I think, taught English at G.H.S. He was a math professor at the University of Florida.

C: What an opportunity for them.

D: Oh, it was. It was an opportunity for me, too.

C: How long did you attend that school?

D: It was ten weeks, I think.

C: What did you study?

D: I learned how to type. That was welcome. I took history. I took four things.

C: You were allowed to have those credits transferred when you came back to this country and were mustered out in '46 sometime.

D: Right. I went back to school. It had to be '46 because I graduated in '49.

C: So you started back in the winter term after Christmas? Were you home for Christmas in '46?

D: I don't think so.

C: So you were mustered out sometime in '46 and started back at the University of Florida. You would have been starting off as a sophomore.

D: I had some credits. They weren't too high.

C: Anyway, you continued on until you graduated in '49. Tell us about those years – '46 through '49. That's three years to cover.

D: Oh boy! I again was very socially conscious. I just loved seeing those people. I loved fun and loved parties.

C: And a great dancer.

D: I loved to dance. I still do. I love cultural things, and I love intellectual things. I have loved the experience of the Harn Museum. I happened to be here when they had a private devotional exhibit.

C: Oh yes, I remember that one.

D: They had a lovely catalog that came to me. I have it right by my bed now. That's what inspired me. I thought maybe they would be interested in my crucifix because when I was in Germany, I bought a crucifix there at an antique shop. It's about 10 inches tall.

C: Did you show it to somebody?

D: No, but I'm going to. I'll talk to them and if they sound interested, I'll send it to them. I'll have to describe it to them.

C: Yes, or probably send a picture to the director, Rebecca Nagy?

D: Is that the way she pronounces it?

C: Yes.

D: It may be Hungarian.

C: She's married. So you're having a grand time at the University of Florida again, dancing and socializing.

D: And studying.

C: You did well when you finished college.

D: I was studying. At that time, they didn't count those foolish things – whether you were eligible for Phi Beta Kappa or not. Do you remember Loring Ensign?

C: He was a little younger than we were. By the time you got back, he had caught up to you.

D: Yes. I told Loring one time, "If I could get Phi Beta Kappa, I would crawl on my belly over to the University." That's a silly thing to say, but I really did. Loring didn't know how to take it. Of course, eventually I was in Phi Beta Kappa.

C: Were you?

D: It was fun. I was so proud of being in it.

C: I'll bet you were. Do you wear your Phi Beta Kappa key?

D: No, I don't do that now. I do it if I'm on campus.

C: Now, you had known your wife from childhood.

D: Yes, as a matter of fact, she had her first date with me. If she didn't, I certainly took her to a Little Women's dance.

C: Well, that was way back. I didn't know you dated her.

D: She had danced with me. I didn't date her regularly.

C: That's right. This is Yvonne Cody. Is she the same age as you?

D: No, she's a year older.

C: I know she skipped a grade.

D: Actually, I was born in '25. She was born on December 24, 1923, because there's a period in there, for one month, when she's two years older than I am.

- C: She was able to start school as a 4-year old because of her birthday being before the end of December, so she started school the same year my sister, Margaret, did. Then Yvonne, when they went to P.K. Yonge, they skipped a bunch of them. Peggy Reynolds and a few other people that Yvonne grew up with. Did you date Yvonne in high school very much?
- D: Just occasionally, but I definitely did date her and did take her to the Little Women's Dance. What was the name of that?
- C: They called them Little Women's Dance.
- D: Don't you remember on New Year's Eve?
- C: Oh, Confetti Club. That was every New Year's Eve.
- D: That's where I took her the first time.
- C: If we haven't talked about the Little Women in other interviews, it was a club sponsored by the Gainesville Woman's Club.
- D: And the only reason we're talking about it when I'm here now – a man – is because they had dances and I liked to dance.
- C: The girls would plan the dances and then they would invite a date. They had two other invitations to send for stags, so we had three fellows for every girl at the dance.
- D: And every girl could count on being cut in by at least two people.
- C: Or more! It was a fun place to grow up.
- D: Yvonne said that I had the name, "Duty Dance Dell" because I would always dance with everybody at least once.
- C: Good for you, Charles.
- D: I'm glad she told me that because I think that's a good character flaw.
- C: A very good character flaw. All right, but we're back now to 1946. You came back to the University of Florida.
- D: Back to the University of Florida. I'm still a Pike, but I never went over to their fraternity house again. I was interested in learning and culture.
- C: Where did you live?

D: Life was still pulling on me. I lived with my parents in their home on Hilldale Road. I studied.

C: But you said you had some social life.

D: Oh, I had lots of social life. I used to socialize with Yvonne. There were a lot of people in Gainesville who had a social life. I wasn't the only guy running around having a good time.

C: Oh no, no. I was gone, so you didn't have any with me. I was married and gone. You just saw Yvonne and called her up, or do you remember exactly how you started?

D: My first memory is that they used to have these temporary buildings over there, from the war, and we had our classes in one of those temporary buildings. She must have been in one. As a matter of fact, she may have been teaching already.

C: She could have been because she would have graduated already.

D: She was way ahead of me.

C: That's right because you went in the war. Anyway, you and Yvonne started dating.

D: We did date then. And Edith. I saw Edith Ellett.

C: That's when you dated Edith. She was Edith Owens.

D: Those were the two that I dated. Mary Alice got married.

C: She got married the same year I did, in '47.

D: I was here.

C: You were here in '47. I was married in April and Mary Alice was married in June.

D: I got home in '46.

C: You probably came to our wedding. I hope you came to our wedding. Well, we won't pin you down on whether you came or not.

D: I remember Margaret's wedding.

C: Margaret was married before me, in '45.

D: Do you know what I remember? I'll never forget it. It's the first time I ever saw a man in tails, and it was your daddy. He was like a Dutch prince. It's the truth.

C: He didn't wear tails at Margaret's wedding.

D: Then it was at yours. The wedding was so impressive, and you had the reception at your grandmother's.

C: Yes, we both did. Margaret had hers there and I did, too. That was April '47. So you and Yvonne dated during that time and you got married in what year?

D: We got married in '51.

C: So that was a long time.

D: I did a lot in between, and so did Yvonne. Yvonne was running all over the place, living in New York, going to graduate school, and I don't know what else.

C: But you kept up your contact.

D: We've always been friends. I don't know that there's always been any grand romance, but we've always been friends. We like the same things.

C: You graduated in '49. What did you do then?

D: Then I went to graduate school at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. I was there for a year. Then the Korean War broke out, and Mother and Daddy wanted me to come back, so I came back. I wish I had stayed another year, but I came back. Again the pull was there – the religious life – so I went to the Trappist Monastery outside of Atlanta, in Conyers, Georgia, and I became a Trappist novice.

C: So you became a Trappist novice.

D: I wasn't there very long, but I was there. I was what they called a vestition, a novice in the Trappist order, in the Cistercian order of strict observance. I went in '50 because I was in Europe in '49-'50, and when I came back I went there. Anyway, I decided that was not what I wanted to do, so I left.

C: You stayed a few months?

D: Yes. Five months.

C: So you got back in town?

- D: I got back in '51, so Yvonne and I decided we wanted to get married. These things go rather quickly, you know, when you are talking like this.
- C: You were married in what month?
- D: I came home and the pastor says, "No, you have to wait nine months." I'm such a dummy it never dawned on me why we had to wait nine months.
- C: They were afraid she was pregnant.
- D: I guess. I don't know. Anyway, it never even dawned on Yvonne or me. We waited and we got married in September of '51.
- C: You were married in the Catholic church?
- D: We were married in St. Patrick's Church. A friend of mine came up and witnessed our wedding..
- C: Did you have a big wedding?
- D: It was big for us.
- C: So your witnesses were like groomsmen that we have in other churches, is that right?
- D: The witness is the priest. The best man was my father. Yvonne's maid-of-honor was Elaine. Edith was bridesmaid. Those are the ones I remember.
- C: Was George A. here?
- D: No. They were in St. Louis.
- C: He was married and gone.
- D: Yes.
- C: So you and Yvonne were married.
- D: Yes. My groomsmen were Earl Taylor, Frank Spain, Cramer Swords, and Carlos Harper. We were all good friends. Carlos and Yvonne and I were good friends. Carlos was always a friend of mine. All those Harper boys.
- C: (We'll interject here that his sister, Mary Virginia or "Sunny", had married Osee Harper and lived here in Gainesville, so this was Osee's younger brother Carlos who was in Charles's wedding.)

- So you and Yvonne stayed in Gainesville?
- D: We stayed in Gainesville until I got my Master's degree in German. Then we went to Johns Hopkins after that.
- C: I'm going to ask you a little bit about you. All through college and graduate school, you studied mostly history or German?
- D: Languages. You see, I wanted to be a priest and, of course, you had to have Latin and you had to have Greek. I had been in France, and as an educated man at that time, you had to have French and another language, either Spanish or German, and I chose German. So once I got into German, all of a sudden I had all these courses in German and I was very interested in it so I majored in it.
- C: So then you and Yvonne went to Johns Hopkins after graduate school as a professor?
- D: No. I went there as a – what did they call it? They had a name for it. I taught there, but I was a student. I was there because I wanted to get a degree. I was there as a graduate student.
- C: Another graduate degree in another subject.
- D: No, the same subject – German. I wanted a Ph.D. That was a failure. I did not get it. That is the great lacuna of my life – the great void.
- C: Anyway, but you had one year at Johns Hopkins?
- D: Two. Those were a wonderful two years. I got exposed to real learning.
- C: It's a big, wonderful school.
- D: Yes. A big, wonderful school. The only trouble with Johns Hopkins is they are not as much interested in teaching for themselves as they are in studying. It's more of a research institution than a teaching institution. This was fifty years ago, and Johns Hopkins has changed, I know.
- C: You and Yvonne lived in a house in Baltimore?
- D: No, we lived in an apartment after we were married. I'd be painting outside the house or painting the inside. I always tried to make the ambience of wherever we lived as attractive as possible. I painted the whole apartment, and we've always had beautiful furniture, which always went with us. Mother and Daddy gave us all our furniture.
- C: When was your first child born? Up there?

D: Right there. We lived right behind Union Memorial Hospital. I sat in my kitchen window and looked up at it. Alexis was being born right in front of me.

C: Alexis. Does she have a middle name?

D: That is her middle name. Her first name is Ioleen.

C: That is Yvonne's mother's name.

D: That is also Yvonne's name.

C: So your daughter is Ioleen Alexis. She was born in what year?

D: She was born in '52. There wasn't any fooling around, you know.

C: No, not in those days for most of us. Anyway, you stayed there two years, you said.

D: Two years. We had a wonderful, wonderful time. As I say, I was exposed to real intellectual things.

C: You made a lot of friends?

D: We made some friends.

C: You and Yvonne like to do the same things.

D: We like to do the same things, and we have no problem. We don't have to have friends, and we don't have to go look for company. We enjoy each other and we do things together. We still can.

C: Was it a traumatic thing to have a daughter, a child, all of a sudden, for somebody that had never grown up around little children?

D: You know what Daddy did? He called up there and he said, "We want to have somebody come over and take care of Yvonne and the baby," so they had a woman who did this in Baltimore, so Daddy had this woman come over. Her name was Josephine Tate. I think Ioleen may have even been up there, too. She was up there when the baby was born. Josephine stayed there. She lived there in the apartment.

C: How long?

D: Just a month, I guess. It was long enough.

- C: By then the baby slept through the night and you didn't have all those terrible – well, you don't remember all that.
- D: No, I don't. The only thing I remember about the baby is that I did the diapers. I did it because the washing machine was downstairs, and it was spooky down there, so I went up and down the steps.
- C: So you stayed in Baltimore.
- D: We stayed there, and then I got a job at the University of Colorado.
- C: What year was that?
- D: That was in '54. That's right, because Liddon was born in '55 and we were out in Colorado.
- C: So you moved to Colorado, to Boulder, at the University of Colorado, and you taught there.
- D: I taught German there for two years. My son, Liddon, was born just as we were leaving the University of Colorado.
- C: Was that the beginning of '56 or the summer? Do you remember?
- D: I would have known that just right off the bat.
- C: If I hadn't asked it! Anyway, you were getting ready to leave at the end of the school year. You were going where?
- D: We were going to the University of Alabama.
- C: Okay. How did you like Colorado? Did you like living out there?
- D: I liked it, but it was brown or white. To me, I didn't like that. I like green and I like it kind of wet.
- C: It can be very dry out there.
- D: We had a wonderful time. We made lots of friends on the faculty. There were a bunch of us. They had faculty housing for the new members. We also bought a house there. Several of us bought houses in the same neighborhood, and that was nice.
- C: So you stayed there two years and then moved to Tuscaloosa and you taught German at the University of Alabama.

D: We settled in there. I think we lived there nine years. Well, Mary Ann, I didn't get my degree, my Ph.D. Everybody knows that teaching a language you need to have your Ph.D.

C: How much did you lack?

D: The final thesis, dissertation. As my daughter says, the ABD, all but the dissertation. Very painful thing to even talk about.

C: Sure. Everybody has a regret.

D: It's kind of a public embarrassment, you know.

C: Oh, it shouldn't be.

D: I know. Everybody says that, but then I needed it. On top of that, they haven't been given the wasted advantages, you know, and I was so embarrassed in front of my mother and father, after they had given me so much. I didn't do what I should have done. Of course, I became an alcoholic. You know that. That compounded the whole thing. Are we going to talk about this?

C: When did you become an alcoholic? It's gradual.

D: It's gradual, but Hazel, my sister-in-law, Maxey's wife, says it all started over at the Dolphin Restaurant over at Marineland. Do you know Marineland?

C: Of course.

D: Well, we went over there in two cars.

C: When? This was as a young man. College age?

D: No, I think I was fourteen or fifteen. Anyway, they were having mango pangos. Of course, the attitude towards the alcohol business then was highly social.

C: It was social, right.

D: I wanted one, and of course I could have one. I drank it and I just put my head down on the table and laughed. Hazel got me up and walked me around the grounds for a while. She says that was the beginning of my alcoholism. Of course, Hazel was an alcoholic, too. I don't know whether Maxey would ever say that, but she was.

C: Anyway, as far as really being an alcoholic, it was a gradual process in your adult life.

- D: During my last year in Tuscaloosa, a neighbor, who was the president of a food service company, asked me, "I can see you're interested in food. Would you be interested? We've got an opportunity to open a food service at The Racquet Club in Tuscaloosa." It hadn't even been built. He said, "You go out there and just build it from the bottom up." So I did.
- C: Charles was always a good cook and loved to cook. So you left teaching.
- D: I left teaching. I had very nice letters from everybody, including Fred Connor. He was our Dean.
- C: He was also a University of Florida professor.
- D: He was and then went to Tuscaloosa. Then he went down to Birmingham, and became the President of the University of Alabama at Birmingham.
- C: So you started this food service at The Racquet Club.
- D: They had a wonderful dining room and a great cocktail lounge, a beautiful vision of all of the tennis courts and everything. That was a success. Then Edith Ellett's husband was a friend of the man who had a Dobbs promotion.
- C: Dobbs was a food service company.
- D: They wanted to know if I would be interested. They were going to open a series of gourmet restaurants. I said yes, and I did go with Dobbs and was with them for three years. I had what you might call training in Richmond, Virginia.
- C: So you moved there.
- D: No. Yvonne stayed in Tuscaloosa until I was ready to move to my first assignment. It began with a bottoms up – from the ground up operation in Baltimore.
- C: So back to Baltimore.
- D: Back to Baltimore. We had a house right next door to the restaurant, so it was great. I think we lived there for three years.
- C: Did you buy a home there?
- D: No. We had to pay the rent, but the home came with the property.
- C: That was a confining business, you found out.
- D: Oh yes, it was.

C: You stayed in Baltimore how long?

D: You asked me about how did I know that I was an alcoholic? That probably all began developing because I worked long hours and there was a lot of alcohol. I worked there three years and then I went to a private girls' school for a year to manage the food service.

C: Where was that?

D: The name was Hannah Moore.

C: That was a school in Baltimore?

D: Yes.

C: So it was a college preparatory school.

D: It was a girls' school. It was Episcopalian.

C: And it was the Dobbs Food Service?

D: No. By then I had gone to a food service company called Servamation Mathias. I never cooked in all of this. It was always management. After I was there a year, they said, "Now, we understand you have some connections in Florida. We have a chance to take over the food service at the University of Florida. Would you be interested in going there to be the director of food service at the Reitz Union?" There were three levels of food service. Up at the top was this grand restaurant called the Arredondo Room. Then the President had his own private dining room on the third floor. Then they had a cafeteria. A really wonderful cafeteria. Then they had kind of a beer place, the Rathskellar.

C: So you came back and were managing the food service at the University of Florida.

D: I had a wonderful time. I threw my heart into it, and just about that time, Stephen O'Connell was President of the University. Rita was wonderful. I just loved her. She was not just lovely; she was a wonderful friend of mine. They would give these dinners in the President's private dining room. When the Ambassador from Sweden came, we had a grand party for him. The tables seated 36. On that occasion I had twelve little silver after-dinner cordials lined with enamel. George A. had twelve, and Sunny had twelve, so we put them all together and we passed a bottle of aquavit frozen in a form of ice.

C: That was a wonderful occasion.

D: It was, and not only that, but I brought all the figurines from the house. We had these beautiful breakfronts and nothing in them at the Union.

C: So you decorated as well as furnished the food.

D: We did the whole thing. It was a big occasion.

C: Rita and Stephen were probably very fond of you.

D: She was. He was, too, and that was it.

C: So you did that for a few more years.

D: I did that for three years. They wanted me to go into catering, but I hate catering. I didn't want to do it, but I turned around. I did the first party and that was for a social group at the Pinkoson's. We planned the menu and everything. There was champagne there. When I got there, I had some champagne and I had no business having it. The champagne was on my breath, and the upshot of that was the next morning I was relieved of my duties.

I was desperate for something to do so I went down to McDonald's and got a job down there as the manager of that location. I was the boss down there, down by the campus. I was very successful and made lots of money down there. Then alcohol caught up with me again, so I was terminated. I tried to recover from that psychologically, which I think I did. I give credit for all that to my brother, George A.

I love beautiful things, and I opened a shop that traded in beautiful, contemporary things. Not an antique shop, but there were things that were compatible with antiques. It was displayed on antique furniture.

C: And the name of it?

D: My name, Charles A. Dell.

C: How long did you have that shop?

D: I had that shop for three years. That wasn't the first shop I opened. The first one I opened was down on the square.

C: You had the same type of shop?

D: Same type of shop, but it was in an old store. It was right on University Avenue, right where Miss Bessie was. You don't remember where Miss Bessie was, do you?

- C: Yes, I do, but I thought that was on Main Street behind Wilson's.
- D: Oh, that's another place. This goes back to before that.
- C: Your shop was on University Avenue.
- D: There's a charming little story about it because there was a black woman came by there one time when I had it and she says, "Miss Bessie had beautiful things, too." Things like that I just cherish because I loved Miss Bessie.
- C: Yes, Bessie Rutherford had a fine gift shop for many years in Gainesville. Charles's shop was where Miss Bessie started.
- D: Then I moved it to the Millhopper Shopping Center. My drinking continued, and as a matter of fact, I served sherry when I opened up the new shop. Harvey's Shooting Sherry, and it was delicious. Interesting people would come by, and we would sit and talk and I set up a table out on the sidewalk there. I tried to have beautiful, interesting things, and I really worked hard at that. It's not all that easy to get these topnotch items, you know, and people were all so receptive. It's incredible. Then one night when I came home and got into bed, I saw this knife dancing in front of me. I realized that I was going to commit suicide. I went to the phone and called this friend of mine from church.
- C: Where was Yvonne?
- D: Well, you know Yvonne. She was out in New Mexico or one of those places with some of her friends. My friend said, "You're not an alcoholic, and I won't have a thing to do with it." I said, "I am!" He said, "No, you're not an alcoholic. I don't believe that." I called George A. and he had me in the hospital with John Stiefel in 45 minutes. I was out at North Florida Regional and stayed there five days. I came home and didn't need anybody to support me or anything. I drank fruit juice and ate fruit and things like that and quit drinking. I quit smoking, too. Of course, I had medication.
- C: Dr. Stiefel was a psychiatrist. So that got you clean and sober.
- D: I felt like I could have died. It got me clean and sober. Actually I came to life. You have to go through all of that to reach sobriety. It turned out to be a real blessing.
- C: To get over it, of course.
- D: Anyway, I sobered up. I had my psychiatric treatment and I got my system all cleaned out and I began to read and that sort of thing. I came up against some material about Yvonne – correspondence and stuff like that. I already knew about it, anyway.

C: Correspondence that you and Yvonne had when you were separated?

D: No, that she had with other people. She had telephone conversations, and she wasn't very discreet about it. So I knew there was something. I went to my psychiatrist and said, "Well, it's like this." He said, "Charles, you knew that anyway." This was just a confirmation for me. So Yvonne was out there in New Mexico. As a matter of fact, what happened was, after Christmas, I said, "Yvonne, I think you should go on a retreat." She said okay and she did.

C: What year was that?

D: That was in 1976.

C: You still had the shop in Millhopper?

D: No, I had closed it and I was just trying to get my ducks in a row, as they say. Anyway, it was obvious that I was not going to be able to live with Yvonne. I picked her up when she came back from her outing. I sat her down and gave her lunch and said, "Yvonne, I'm going to leave." I went to a motel and stayed there for a week while I made whatever arrangements I could make. A priest made the arrangements for me to go and sleep in the monastery in South Florida, which is what I did. They said I could stay for ten days. Then he said, "You can stay for ten weeks." He went out on a limb.

C: The priest in Gainesville?

D: No, the priest in charge. He was supposed to take a vote on all this, but he didn't. He just said I could do it, so I did. Later on, he said, "You know, Charles, I let you come in there without getting anybody's approval. I just wanted to tell you this. You always made me look good." It was a wonderful thing for me. He said I could stay as long as I wanted to. I stayed for ten years, and after that the Provincial, who is the boss of all the monasteries, called and asked me to move to Holy Family Monastery.

C: Was this a retirement monastery?

D: Oh no, it was very active.

C: But you were not a monk.

D: No, I wasn't, but I wanted to know more about God and keep close to God and practice a religious life. I wanted to live a religious life even though I was married because I was married. We hadn't divorced. Finally, in March, I think it was, in a matter of months as I went down there on the 7th of January, 1977, and

- we divorced March 7, 1977. It was quick. It wasn't contested or anything. S.T. was Yvonne's attorney.
- C: That's Samuel Tucker Dell, who was a cousin of yours.
- D: Willie O'Neal was my attorney. He was a friend, and I chose him because he was. We sat down at the table, and I said, "I'll just leave everything to Yvonne. I have no interest in any of it." I didn't have any money. I had lots of friends and lots of possessions.
- C: Did you request that she share them with the children or did you just know that she would?
- D: I thought that she would. I did tell her that I knew she would always be fair, and she said, "Thank you, Charles."
- I said something to her about giving the punch bowl to Liddon. She said she would do that.
- C: You've got two wonderful children.
- D: I have. They love me.
- C: I was going to ask you to tell me a little about Liddon and Alexis. Alexis is an M.D. and lives in Gainesville. You have one grandchild named Anna, who is now 14. Your son, Liddon, and his wife Shelley.
- D: She has two children of her own, and they are my grandchildren, and they love me and I love them.
- C: They live in?
- D: They live in Palm Coast.
- C: South of St. Augustine.
- D: Yes, on the east coast. They are very, very active. All of their adjustments to life. Liddon is the international market manager for Hawaiian Tropics.
- C: They make sunscreen for one thing.
- D: Liddon goes to Hong Kong and travels all over the eastern part of the world. He enjoys that.
- C: Well, they're both fine children, and you're very proud of them, I know. We're back in Miami, and you've got your divorce from Yvonne.

D: Actually, we're back in North Palm Beach.

C: This monastery's in North Palm Beach, and the name of it?

D: That's right at the northern tip of Lake Worth. It's called Our Lady of Florida. It's a Passionist monastery.

C: They allowed you to stay there, you said, for ten years and you could have stayed on, but you did not.

D: The present pope was elected at that time, so the first thing that he wrote was on matrimony. We have what are called the encyclicals. Those are teachings, what that pope wants the faithful to know. All of it was on matrimony. I read all that, along with a lot of other literature from what we call the Patristic Period. Those are the early church fathers. I read some of that. Everything I was reading right at that time was saying to me, "You have to go back." I hadn't done everything I could to save my marriage if it was viable.

C: Oh, this was before the divorce?

D: No, this was after the divorce.

C: They said you had to go back.

D: They didn't say I had to go back. I was reading. This is my interior life, you see. I just decided I needed to go back to Yvonne and come back to Gainesville, which I did. I stayed a year and a half. Yvonne had this whatever her connection was out there in Santa Fe, New Mexico – the problem was out there. The personal involvement that Yvonne had out there. Do you understand what I'm saying?

C: I knew she liked to go out there and I knew she acted in plays.

D: She had a personal involvement out there for seven years and I didn't even know about it. I said, "You've got to get out of that area. You've got to get out of there entirely, whether we can get together or not. That's got to take place." We drove to Santa Fe and I picked up everything in a rental truck and drove back to Gainesville. Yvonne was driving her own car. We went through New Orleans for some reason. I moved everything back and it was not too long before I realized that this was not going to work. I had been back a year. I went to see Father Baker, who is now the Bishop of Charleston. He was here at the Student Center Parish. I asked him to find something for me to do. He said they wanted to fix a place up to help homeless people here in Gainesville. They had a place called the St. Francis House, not where it is now. Do you remember where Mr. Thrasher's Drug Store was by the high school, on the little side street? I went down there

- and went out to Sears and a couple other places and got this and that. I worked down there for six months.
- C: Where were you living?
- D: I was still living with Yvonne. Sometimes I spent the night at this place. It really wasn't students. It was for homeless.
- C: Right. It's still going. You did that just as a volunteer kind of thing?
- D: Only as a volunteer. I told Father Baker, "For six months I'll commit myself." I did, and when it was over, I called the superior down at the monastery in North Palm Beach and said, "Can I come back?" He said, "Of course you can." I was out of here in maybe twelve or twenty-four hours.
- C: And you drove back down there.
- D: In the meantime, Cramer came back.
- C: We haven't talked Cramer Swords yet.
- D: Well, you're going to have to talk about him.
- C: Tell us right now.
- D: He was a local artist, a fine artist. He is "degree'd." He taught at the Ocala Junior College for a number of years. He had two sisters, who lived here. They all lived here. His father worked at the University, and his mother had this wonderful boarding house here. They're all cousins of mine. They're all kin.
- C: Are they cousins through your mother's side?
- D: No, my father's.
- C: Your father's mother's family?
- D: Yes.
- C: They would be second cousins or something like that.
- D: I don't know. They prefer to be simply cousins. Mrs. Swords had a boarding house.
- C: She just served meals. I remember eating there. She was right near the old Thomas Hotel, which is now the Thomas Center, on Virginia Avenue.

- D: It was on the corner of Virginia Avenue and Lassiter Street.
- C: So Cramer was a good friend.
- D: He was a cousin and a good friend, and he was also interested in Catholicism. He converted and became a Catholic, and George A. was his sponsor.
- C: Soon after you and George A.?
- D: No, it took him a little while longer.
- C: Age-wise, is Cramer your age?
- D: Oh, he's much older. I've forgotten the class that he belongs in.
- C: Maybe five or ten years?
- D: I would say ten years older.
- C: We were talking about Cramer being down in Ocala.
- D: He was a fine artist.
- C: Yes he was. He gave art lessons, too, I think.
- D: Oh, he did give private art lessons. He had a studio here. That was before he taught in Ocala. There was some reason for bringing Cramer into the conversation.
- C: You were talking about your going back down to North Palm Beach. Anyway, Cramer was an important friend to you.
- D: He was a very important friend to George A. and me, as well as Yvonne and Shirley. He was a wonderful friend. He loved the friendship as much as we did.
- C: We didn't mention that George A., your younger brother, married Shirley Allen, a local girl, and we're all very fond of them and their family. They have three children. We've mentioned just about everybody, but we've got to get you back down to Palm Beach. Did you ask to go down there?
- D: Oh yes. I returned from Gainesville to Palm Beach. When I got down there, they said there is a status, a state, in the religious life called the oblate state. It comes from oblatio, which means sacrifice. What it means is that a person wants to give his life, sacrifice his life, to God. It means sacrifice. Anyway, when I got down there, they said, "Right now you are neither fish nor fowl." I wasn't a religious man and I wasn't a layman. I was living down there as a religious man. So they

- had what is called a vestition. That was with the Trappists, and this is now with the Passionists order. So they put the habit on. I still have the same habit. I wear this habit and look like a monk in it.
- C: But they call it?
- D: A vestition. It was a very formal service with lots of singing and praying and vow taking.
- C: They call the habit you wear a vestition's habit?
- D: No. It's an oblate's habit.
- C: That's interesting. I never would have known all that.
- D: Anyway, what comes with that oblate's status is that you have as much membership privilege as anybody, except you can't vote. That's the only thing. You can't vote.
- C: What is it called?
- D: It's an interior movement. It's a gesture. Let's put it that way. It's a sacrificial gesture on your part. You give yourself over. You take the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. That means that you don't have any of your own private wealth. You don't have any physical love and you don't have any money. Obedience means that when the head of the order calls you on the telephone and says, "Charles, you've been down there for ten years now. What would you think if we moved you to Hartford?" When I became an oblate, they told me that you have in religious life something called stability and that means that they never move you, but this order doesn't have that. This order does not have stability.
- C: You mean that Our Lady of Florida, that particular monastery?
- D: No, the whole order. Nobody in the order. You don't have any stability.
- C: What is an order?
- D: An order is a group of men, who follow certain rules.
- C: So certain monasteries are in one order, and other monasteries are in another order? So this monastery is a Passionist Monastery and they don't have this rule that you can stay indefinitely.
- D: They don't have this rule of stability.
- C: They like to move you every ten years.

D: It's not ten years. They can move you anytime they want to. Some of them have been there for thirty and forty years.

C: If they ask you to move, you are obligated to move.

D: You've supposed to move, yes. That's just what I told them. When I became an oblate, I agreed to this and I'm going to go. They said, "Do you want to take a month off for Christmas and go home?" I said, "No, I want to go home for three days and then I'm going straight to Connecticut." So I did. I told everybody goodbye, and I was gone.

C: So you came to Gainesville. Where did you stay when you came to Gainesville for three days? With George A.?

D: I don't really remember, but it wasn't with George A.

C: So then you went up to Connecticut.

D: I went up to West Hartford, and I've been there ever since.

C: How many years is that?

D: Seventeen.

C: And they haven't asked you to move.

D: No, they won't any more. They move you to places where you can be of service, and we're all retirees.

C: What were you doing down there in North Palm that you're not doing up there?

D: For one thing, I was studying very hard and I was also running the dining room in the sense of seeing that tables were set and the help was there. I pitched in and helped. I would take the service and all.

C: So when you moved up there, they didn't give you those obligations?

D: No, I was up there for a long while and finally the cook up there said he hated to cook. I said, "I know how to cook. Why don't you let me cook."

C: Was the cook a monk?

D: Oh yes.

C: How did he happen to be cooking if he didn't like to cook?

D: Because he has obedience.

C: He knew how to cook then.

D: He had been trained to cook.

C: Okay, but you were still an oblate up there. You'll always be an oblate.

D: Always.

C: I haven't written down the name of the one in West Hartford.

D: Holy Family Monastery.

C: In West Hartford, Connecticut. And you've been there for seventeen years.

D: Seventeen years.

C: So you cooked for a while.

D: I've been doing it for ten years, at least ten years.

C: Quite soon after you went up there.

D: Well, let's see. I arrived in the wintertime, in December '86. I was up here for Christmas and I stayed here for that time. In the fall of '87, Sunny came up and spent ten days there with me. We drove all over New England. By that time, I had gotten myself established here, so they were really nice to "Titoo." I'm sorry, but that's what I call her. I couldn't say sister when I was a little boy, and I've called her that ever since.

C: So you like living up there and you're very happy there.

D: Mary Ann, the minute I got here, I never once thought that I would not be here. I went swimming every day in North Palm Beach and to the beach and everything. I took my nap on the beach every day, and I just loved it, but once I got up here, about 15 seconds and I was like a Connecticut Yankee. It was as if I had been here all the time except, of course, with my language. That's still a problem because you can go in a place and they'll say, "Say something else. I want to hear you say it."

C: Because of your Southern accent.

D: It always sounds affected if I try to. I am very articulate when I talk because, for one thing, I deal with so many foreigners. Everything should come out just right.

- C: Tell me a little about what you actually do up there now that you don't cook any more. I hope they have somebody that likes to cook now.
- D: We have a real problem. It's too complicated to go into. With my knee replacement and heart attacks, I was knocked out anyway.
- C: So you couldn't do that any more. You do volunteer work with people in West Hartford.
- D: No. I'm not a volunteer person.
- C: What do you call it? You see these people. You help these people.
- D: They just find out about me.
- C: How do they find out about you?
- D: Because I take people to the hospital, you see, and then you become friends. Of course, I can't deal with people unless there is a relationship, but it's just automatically generated. There are all kinds. Polish people – I'm really very fond of them and I help them a lot. Get them naturalized and all that sort of thing.
- C: You find things to do for people.
- D: I do, but it's no big deal. That's just part of walking down the street. I've been very successful in a few dramatic situations here.
- C: Tell us about it.
- D: Can I tell you one of them?
- C: Sure.
- D: The man that called me a minute ago here? He had a neighbor who was from Togo.
- C: Where's Togo?
- D: Togo's on the west coast of Africa. Martin Sronvi is his name. He's a Roman Catholic. My friend said to me, "I want you to meet him." So I met him and we talked. I didn't notice anything. Then my friend said to me, "Didn't you notice his eye?" I didn't but his eye was all the way down like this and he would fall over. So I said, "We're going to have to find somebody." Of course, I have to operate on no money. Money is something we just don't have. I went around to the Catholic services – Catholic charities, you know. They're really interested in

- counseling divorced people and stuff like that. That's the only thing I found, so I went to the hospital, which is a Catholic hospital. I went down in the basement and I looked and I did this and I did that and I got him into the clinic down there. The upshot was that he had myasthenia gravis. When they could diagnose what it was, they were so excited. You should have seen them. I was down there when it happened. They gave him one of those artificial drugs first. Then they gave him this other thing. All of a sudden, his eye pops up like this.
- C: Like it was supposed to be. Myasthenia gravis is like a droopy eye, I guess.
- D: It's more than that because you're falling over.
- C: It makes you fall over. You lose your balance.
- D: It's a very serious thing and it's for life and they have no cure for it.
- C: He was cured, wasn't he?
- D: No, he wasn't cured, but he was diagnosed and then you had to get the medicine. Of course, he's illegal. He doesn't have any money, so what are we going to do? I paid for the first month. I bought him the first month's supply.
- C: Where did you get the money? You said you don't have any money.
- D: Well, now Mary Ann, I'm 80 years old. When I came in, I didn't have any money. When I moved up here, I turned 62, and all of a sudden here came this \$600 a month so I could spend my money, and the order let me. They wrote it into my contract that I could have the use of my Social Security. I can do all kinds of things for people with that money, for myself too.
- C: Well, that's wonderful. I just had to get this clear because you vow you have nothing and now you're spending money.
- D: Well, poverty is something.
- C: I know. It's relative.
- D: Let's not get involved in that.
- C: They would call you below the poverty level if you're living on Social Security.
- D: My friends might call it baloney but anyway! Only people below the poverty level know.
- C: You'd be able to help them.

D: I was able to help him and I've been able to help others. There's a Polish guy that I hired a lawyer for. It cost \$3500, but I could pay it off. I'm able to do things like that.

C: That's wonderful.

D: Anyway, to show you how wonderful our country is, we worked through a woman at the hospital, who worked with this drug company. They set it up so he can have his drug as long as he can turn in evidence that he still has the disease and he doesn't have to pay for it. I think it's \$120 a month for his medicine.

C: So you've had a wonderful life up there.

D: I've loved it. Of course, I could have run the kitchen. You have to have help and you always use young boys. Of course, that's a bad sounding thing right now in the church. But I love them and they love me, and they were boys and they were 15 and 16 years old. Of course, now they're grown men and they've all got families. We've all kept up our friendships. They have babies and they're so cute, and I get to see them. They'll come in.

C: Do you ever go outside of the monastery to visit them?

D: Oh yes, I can go out to see them. I always call ahead. Mrs. Tietgens taught me that. Do you know Pat Duell, a niece?

C: No.

D: Oh you do. With the boat up in the front yard over there by Eleanor Matherly's.

C: Boat?

D: They had an artificial boat out there in place of a playhouse.

I'm sure we've forgotten lots of important things, but I'm up at the monastery in West Hartford and I was telling about my young friends up there who are no longer young. They're in their 30's now and they have families of their own. I'm proud of all of them. I really am.

The monastery, of course, has changed, too. It's no longer really a monastery as such. It's more for retired people. It's a retirement monastery for retired priests or monks. Monks are priests and brothers and one oblate. It's the only one in the eastern part of the United States.

C: How interesting. Why is that?

D: It is not something that they pushed, you know. There are different categories of oblature is what I call it. It is being an oblate. Anyway, the monastery always has a retreat house, and one of the largest retreat houses in the country is there. It's Holy Family Retreat House.

C: Is that another building?

D: Well, it's a separate building but it's all joined. They just had a drive. They're trying to raise two or three million dollars. We have these community leaders. A guy gets up and he says, "Everybody here knows at least two people who can give \$5,000." I thought I know more than two or three, but I would never ask anybody. They don't have anything to do with my monastery. If I wanted to go out and make two million dollars 27 years ago, I could have. I wouldn't ask anybody to donate anything to that. I would not do it. I made a pledge of \$300 a month for 33 or 34 months. That takes care of me. I give it all away anyway so what's it to me. That's about where it is.

The monastery has changed now from an active monastery to a retirement monastery. They are all older, and we get along incredibly well together. At 4:45 we have our afternoon prayers. They have their cocktail hour from 5:00 to 5:30. I never drink, but I could go and eat something if I want crackers or something. They also keep alcohol-free beer for me. Anyway, my life has leveled off. For a long time I was ready for death. I really wanted to die, but I changed my mind.

C: Do you think it was because of your knees and your heart problems and you didn't feel good?

D: No. I don't even think about this any more. It's there, but I don't think about it. But I was unhappy with my wife. I described to you my embarrassment but that's just half of it. Any jackass could have figured that out, but I was embarrassed. All that's over now. Take me, leave me, drop me off the roof, or whatever you want to do.

C: Take me as I am.

D: Take me as I am. You're right. I just don't think anything about it. Nine times out of ten I don't. I am so happy, Mary Ann. That's the thing.

C: I can tell you're happy, and I'm happy for you. We have a lot of fond memories and I've had a wonderful time talking to you.

D: I'm so glad you asked me.

C: We can talk again. The next time you come, we won't have an interview but we'll just sit and talk.

- D: That would be fine. There's no telling where we'd get.
- C: That's true. As I said earlier, we'll edit this and we'll give a copy to you and to your children or whoever else wants them. I know they'll enjoy it at the Matheson Center. They tell me that people come in and read these interviews.
- D: I'm flattered that you asked me. You told me that Maxey's and Hazel's were there.
- C: They were done but not by us. They were done by the University of Florida.
- D: But they're down there.
- C: I know that Jimmy Dell has copies. I don't remember about Sunny, but Jimmy is my dentist. I asked him about them and if he would like copies. I'm pretty sure he's got them. Maybe you'd like to read them. Get him to loan them to you.
- D: You know I don't see Jimmy. As I told you, Maxey's children were like my brother and sister when we were growing up, but I don't see them too much. He's doing dentistry all the time.
- C: That's a different field.
- D: I do see them any time I come. Anyway, it has been fun.
- C: It has been fun. Thank you very, very much.