May 16, 1975
INTERVIEWER: Stephen Kerber
INTERVIEWEE: Mrs. Leonard Wallace Riggins

K: Today is Friday, May 16, 1975. My name is Steve Kerber, and I'm going to
interview Mrs. Leonard Wallace Riggins, R-i-g-g-i-n-s, 2719 Fairmount Avenue,
Lakeland, Florida 33803. Time is approximately 4:30 p.m.

[InterVIEW begins]  

Mr. Mesmer, I have written to him twice, and then you were kind enough to
call him when I wrote you, and he still hasn't written me back. Now, I've
heard from several other people, in fact Mr. Woodall even took the trouble
to call me, and uh... but Mr. Mesmer himself hasn't answered me yet, and so
I think I'm going to try once more to write him, and if that fails, just go
and see him, but I hate to just force my way in on anybody.

Well, I don't... I think in that case it wouldn't be forcing. There must be some
reason. He told me that they had a lot of trouble with mail, out there, he
said he lives on a rural route and doesn't get half of his mail. He was most
appreciative of

K: I'm sure he...

R: ...and he seemed very anxious to get in touch with you, and he was most, most
complimentary of Park Trammell, and just thought he was a marvelous person,
and had influenced his life greater than anyone else, he said, and I think I
told you in the letter...

K: Yes ma'am.

R: ...he didn't quite understand why he never was adopted legally by him, but in
discussing it, I said, well, evidently you have a very fine background, and he
said yes, and I said, well, I'm sure that's why he did not do it, and he said
he thought so, too, because that would be a good reason, of course, not to change

the name.
PT-2A
Continued(page 2)

K: Yes, definitely.

R: But he was anxious to talk with you, and very enthusiastic about it, and delighted that someone was doing this research, and by the way, this Mrs. Cloud...

K: Yes.

R: I gave you her...

K: Yes.

R: ...her grandson is writing a thesis on this same subject. He goes to school in, I believe somewhere...

K: It's in another state...

R: Oh, it's in another state.

K: Yes, I got a nice letter from her and I met another young man...I forget his name but he's also from Lakeland, he's an architecture student, and he is a friend of her grandson and he's in Gainesville, and he is also interested. Let me explain to you just briefly how this works. I'll just be asking you a few questions which are designed possibly to prod your memory a little, but if you think of anything you just want to interject that's fine, too, and what happens with the tape is I take it back to Gainesville and we get it typed up, and then we send you a typed copy of the conversation so that you can check it, if you wish, to see that it's all correct or that there's anything in discussing it, that we got a little mixed up or what not. Then after that, there are two things that can happen to it. Usually people are agreeable that a final copy is typed up from whatever corrections you make, and then one copy is given to you, just, whether you have any great desire for it or not, just in gratitude for undergoing it, and then the other is put in the University Library so that other people in later years will be able to come back to this kind of material and use it for whatever scholarly purposes they have. So, if you don't want it to wind up in the Library, what happens is that I just refer to our conversation
K: in the footnotes of my own dissertation as a confidential communication, and your own name needn't even be mentioned if you prefer.

R: I mean, whatever is better for you because I don't care about any claim or publicity about it, I mean, I'm just glad to help you out...

K: Most people feel that way, fortunately, but some do...

R: ...and of course he was a great person and a great Lakelander, and...this is not being recorded now, is it?

K: Yes, that's why I started it a moment ago.

R: Well, I'll cross my t's and dot my i's.

K: Oh, well, you needn't...as I said before, if there's anything at all you want to take out before it's typed up in final draft, you can do that. Okay, let me start out by asking you what is your full name, and what your maiden name was.

R: Yes. My name was Mary Conrad, and I married Wallace Riggins, and I was from Jacksonville, and I came to Lakeland in 1917 as a bride, but I lived here when I was a child. I lived here when I was eight. My father was a banker, and...

K: What was your father's name?

R: Thomas W. Conrad, C-o-n-r-a-d. And he was a banker, and we lived here three years on Tennessee, two doors from the corner of Tennessee and Linne, and Park Trammell lived two doors from us.

K: Would you happen to remember the addresses? It's not that important...

R: No, but I tell you, the Peninsula Telephone Company is there now...

K: Where you lived, or where Mr. Trammell...

R: Where I lived. There were three houses there, where the telephone company is now. Our house was the second house, Haggedorns were next, and the Trammells next house. Then Park Trammell's sister lived on the corner of...of...I guess that would be Orange...Orange and Tennessee. I was only eight years old.
K: Yes. Do you remember which sister it was?

R: One of his sisters... there were two sisters that lived there, and one of them was a Trammell... and what the other one was... right now, I can't remember what her name was, that evades me.

K: Okay.

R: You know, at that time I just didn't have to remember. Then one of his sisters later went... Anna, Anna... that sister later went to a nursing home in Davenport, I think it's the Holly Hill Nursing Home, as I recall, it's an Episcopal home. I think that she died several years ago, but I'm not positive. In fact, I went up to see her one time years ago. But, I noticed in your correspondence with me, we called his wife Miss Persia Darby... Persia. Now, what... I was just a child, whether we mispronounced it, or what... and you gave me another name.

K: Her given name was Virginia.

R: Virginia?

K: Yes, ma'am.

R: Well, she was known in our neighborhood, I don't know how far-reaching that was, as Persia. We called her Miss Persia Darby. My mother was a very philanthropic soul, and very neighborly, and she was ill, and the neighbor on the next corner was quite ill. My mother made some soup and said, take this up to, and I had been up to Miss Persia Darby's before, and I probably was paying the proper attention to take this soup up there, and I took the soup up there, and when I came back my mother said, who did you see? And I said, I saw Miss Persia herself. And she said, well, I didn't send you there, and I said well, you sure did. And she said, no I didn't send you to... I forget what that lady's name was... and she said, now, you've been very careless. You go back and tell Miss Persia Darby that you have taken the soup to the wrong place. Oh, I said, I can't do that, I'd be so embarrassed. She said, well, bet-
R: ter you be embarrassed than I, because I've already told this other that
I was sending you. So, I had to go back up there, and to begin with, she said,
to begin with, they have some help there, and the other neighbor has no help.
Well, that was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life, to go back and
ask for the soup, you know, to take it to the other neighbor. And so that was
always outstanding in my memory, and when I reared my family I said, now you
love pay attention to where I'm sending you. But she was a very person, a very lovely
lady, and he was a very charming gentleman and we were neighborly. Of course,
I was only eight years old, you know, so you don't remember too much, but our
families were friendly, and Lakeland was small enough that everybody was neigh-
borly and friendly, and I knew a lot of his family.
Right now I've forgotten whether it was his cousin or what...Clyde Trammell
used to go to the University and I used to date him. I think he was a cousin.
Then there was Lola Trammell and Emma Trammell, but they lived over on Lake
Weir, and some of those names that I gave you, they would have known just who
they were.

R: Miss Emma married, also, a banker, named McDougall, and she still lives
in Tallahassee.

R: She's still living?

K: Yes, she is, but evidently, she's something of a recluse, and she doesn't like
to see outside visitors, so I haven't been able to talk...

R: Even though...well, do you know Betty McCord, the one...she told you...

K: She sent me the letter about you.

R: Yes, well, I was going to say, anybody in the world, Betty could meet with
her, because Betty has that very few people have. She has a very
charming personality...do you know her personally?

R: No, ma'am, I don't know...
R: Well, she's very personable. She really should have been a politician. I think
had she been a politician she would have been governor of the state by now,
and I think that she could see Miss Trammell. She would know...she has the
know-how.

K: Well, I have to get in touch with her...

R: Do, because I feel sure she could do it.

K: You were saying that Virginia, or Persia Darby Trammell was sick. Was this
a frequent thing? Did she have poor health generally?

R: Yes, yes. Now, as I told you, I was only eight years old, but I'm impressed
now with the fact that she was delicate, you know, and I know my mother went
door to door, every time the church went and they always had little get-togethers
and so forth. But she was never able to go. Now what was wrong with her,
frankly I don't know.

K: You said they had help in the house. I suppose it would have been a colored
maid, or something?

R: Well, I think so. I don't know whether that or someone in the family, I just
don't know, but my mother felt that she didn't need...she'd been sending things
there, see, and I had taken them, but this time I just didn't listen correctly.

K: You mentioned that you also knew the Darby family?

R: No, no...

K: You didn't...ok.

R: I did not, no, somebody else, no, I did not, no. But we just all of us called
er her Miss Persia Darby, and so I just wondered if that was a nickname, or what,
but you know, at eight you don't reason things out. I was here from eight
years old until eleven...my father died here, certainly, and then we left, so I didn't
come back until I...Ginger,you might be able to fill in some of these things...

G: There's just one thing I know. At Florida Southern College I was looking up
PT-2A
Continued (page 7)

G: some material on Park Trammell, and I found a dearth of it. Practically nothing...

K: Yes, I've been there and I was very impressed by that fact, that they have absolutely nothing.

G: I found one biography of him, in I believe it was the Dictionary of American Biography.

K: Yes, there's nothing devoted to him, himself...

R: That, I've never understood, from the standpoint of being a Lakelander, and of course, it's largely my fault because I didn't promote it, I mean, somebody else should have promoted it, but I was talking to the Boswell girls--have you met them?

K: No, ma'am, I wrote to Mr. Clarence Boswell, I believe it was, Sr.

R: Well, he had two sisters, and as I told you one of those sisters has Park Trammell's gold-headed cane, and I tried to buy it from her, but she collects canes, and she's very history conscious and particularly Lakeland history--they're an old Lakeland family--I married to an old Lakeland family, but I'm not...I'm from Jacksonville.

K: Tell me something about that cane. Was it of any special significance?

R: Frankly, I don't know. I believe...I don't think he carried it for a physical reason, I think back there that gentlemen carried canes. That's my impression.

K: Just a fashion?

R: Just a fashion, uh huh, of that period, because I remember I had a couple of uncles who did...and uh...might have had a physical reason, but...she has quite a collection of canes, and she...I talked with her several times...I said, as I told you, I'm seventy-eight...

K: Yes, ma'am.

R: ...and I've had serious surgery last couple of years, so I sort of slowed up. I said to these girls, if I were twenty years younger, I would get behind...this
R: ...I said we've never paid homage to Governor Trammell, as we should, as a city, because you've probably visited his grave, have you not?

K: Yes, ma'am.

R: And it's marked alright, but the city should do something about it, you know. But I said, I can't take the initiative now, and these girls, they're frail, one of them's particularly frail, but someone definitely should, and I'm sorry I didn't, you know, a few years back, because my family, well, the Riggins family, who were an old family here, they would have been quite interested. I had a sister-in-law who never forgot anything. Unfortunately, she has died since, but she had a great memory, and she would have done it. But you know how you put things like that off...

K: Surely.

R: ...but Lakeland certainly should do something to honor his memory, and mark his grave in some way. After visiting Coolidge's grave, you know, and several others, you just would never know they were there, but I think from the standpoint of the city, we ought to, you know, be more proud.

K: It would be nice.

R: Yes, because he was a great person, and his son...I think I told you in my letter, his son, step-son said he was the most honorable gentleman that he ever knew, and he respected him more highly than anyone he ever knew. That was a lovely thing for a son...

K: Indeed.

R: For a step-son to say. I never did know his second wife. Well, I met her socially, but never did know her well, and I think I called on her once when they moved out to Grey Locks.

K: Now, where exactly was this?
PT-2A
Continued(page 9)
Grey Locks?

R: Well, this is Lake Hollingsworth here. And to the right, you turn, and you will come to Crystal Lake Road, which goes towards Bartow. Well, on the south of that, which would be on the left as you turn, there's a complex there called Hollingsworth Villas. Well, now, that was all Grey Locks, a beautiful, beautiful wooded section—the most gorgeous trees, beautiful old colonial home back there, with the lovely, big archway in the front, marked Grey Locks. Well, Mrs. Mesmer, I think, had some money, and I think this was bought mostly through her money. That's what we heard, and I called on her once but I never did see her after that or know her. He said, this boy said, you know, Park Trammell was such an honest person and he never lived beyond his means, and he never looked anybody, and he died penniless, which I did not know. But I had heard it said that had it not been for what his wife had, he wouldn't have gotten on as well as he did.

K: Now, the second Mrs. Trammell, Beatrice Mesmer...

R: That's the one I'm speaking of.

K: Was she originally a Padgett, do you know?

R: Yes, yes she was, because I asked this boy, and I think I gave you the names of the two sisters that she has here, and a school is named for this Padgett family here.

K: Yes, ma'am. And they were a very prominent, early family?

R: I think...yes. They were prominent so far as old families, I think...rural families, I don't think from the standpoint socially, but from, you know, old families, that they were.

K: They were here early, and I suppose they had many groves and...

R: Well, now, that I couldn't tell you...

K: Okay.

R: Because as I said, I came in 1918, and I had a family of four little children very
R: soon, so I just didn't go...but as I said, my sister-in-law never forgot anything. She had the most marvelous memory, and it's so fortunate. But she didn't have things to crowd out, because she was a single woman, and I had these four little children to crowd out my memory.

K: It takes up time.

R: Yes.

K: You say that you visited Mrs. Beatrice Trammell at Grey Locks. What did she look like, and what kind of manner did she have? Do you remember?

R: This is on tape, isn't it?

K: You can change it later, if you wish.

R: I would not say that she was a cultured, elegant, lovely person, like the first one was. I could not say anything adverse about her. I was impressed that she was not of the born, but that she was probably a good companion for him, particularly when he needed her financial aid, but I was never close, you know, close to them. I just called on them, that was the time that you called on people, left your card, you know, you don't do that anymore.

K: Yes.

R: But I really never did know her personally. I doubt if I ever saw her after that. I can't recall that I did. I do know that the first Trammell's you know, that first that I knew, his first wife and her family, they were lovely, elegant people. Now of course, her family might have been too, but I just didn't know them.

K: Okay, I have heard it said that the first Mrs. Trammell, the one you call Persia, even though, as you say, she was sickly, she took a great interest in her husband's career. Have you heard that kind of thing?

R: Yes, I have.

K: And that she was very conversant and knowledgeable about politics?

R: Yes, right. And they were a very devoted couple, very, very devoted. No children,
R: and he was a very handsome man, you know. Very, very handsome, and she was a
nice-looking woman, very nice-looking, pretty woman. But I don't recall how
long they were married, because as I said I came here when I was eight and I
moved away when I was eleven, and I didn't come back until I was twenty-one,
so those intervening years I just don't know exactly.

K: I think they were married twenty-one years, because she died in 1922, and I
think they were married in 1901. Did you...

R: Excuse me. I'm anxious that you see this Louis Mesmer, because he's anxious to
see you. He's very, very interested in this, and he thinks it's a marvelous
tribute...and he spoke beautifully of it. As I told you, he gave me his business
address, so I feel sure that it's not any lack on his part that he hasn't...I just
don't feel that he's gotten the mail, because he said he had a terrible time. If
you'd like I could call him again.

K: Well, I went by his business establishment twice this afternoon, and he wasn't
there either time, although the man who ran the lawnmower place next door said
he thought he might be coming back. So, I did try to get in touch with him and
I definitely will be, one way or the other, you can rest assured about that.

R: Well, I feel sure it's not indifference with him, because he had ...you know, he
didn't have to put up any front with me, because I don't even know him, though
he was most appreciative of the fact that this was being done.

K: Mrs. Riggins, do you know, or did you ever hear any mention of any other ladies
that Mr. Trammell might have courted in the long period from 1922 to 1934, when

he was a widower?

You mean when he was a widower?

R: No, let's see that was 1922--I was here at that time. I was married in '17. As

I said, I had four little children so...

K: Which kept you busy.

R: ...yes, so I wasn't conscious of things of that...but no, I never heard his name
R: linked with anyone else. It could have been, but... have you ever talked with Mrs. Mabel Moore? I think I gave you her name.

K: I have had correspondence with Mrs. Moore, and I don't know if it's because I approached her the wrong way, or what, but she just did not feel that she knew that much about Mr. Trammell and that she did not wish to be interviewed.

R: Well, I tell you, I think, psychologically, what's wrong there—you see, her father...

K: Mr. Herbert Drane, yes.

R: ... was Congressman Drane, and there might have been some little irritation there, I don't know.

K: I'm sure that's possible.

R: But she is normally that type of person, But it would seem now that with her father gone and all that she would be glad to help because Mr. Drane's name here. Well, she doesn't think so much so far as that's concerned.

K: Well, I'm sure that that can be said about both of them, without question.

R: Yes, that's true, because I know Mr. Granger and my husband were good friends and he gave my husband a beautiful picture likeness of himself and his wife too. I asked his granddaughter one day, I said I have these beautiful pictures, would you like to have them, because my children didn't know the Dranes. She said, yeah she'd come by. But she never did, so I gave them to the Museum here, and I told Mabel, Mrs. Moore, and she was very pleased that I did because she said the city has never paid him any attention, and I said well, it's up to you to do that. You should have furnished some information on that.

K: It surely would have helped, to get something started.

R: Yes, well, I think she's a little reticent about...

K: Being approached by outsiders?
R: Yes. I don't know why she should be, but I think that's just her nature. Now, she has a sister, too, Mabel, she might... I don't mean Mabel, Josepbine Passmoore.

K: Josepbine...

R: Passmoore, Passmoore.

K: P-a-s...

R: P-a-s-s-m-o-o-r-e, Passmoore.

K: And she lives here in Lakeland?

R: She lives in Lakeland. Would you like her address? I'll get the telephone book.

K: I think we can do that a little later. I don't want to ask you to get up right now.

R: I think it's James Passmoore, but he should be the only one in the book. Now, that's Mr. Passmoore's second daughter, and you might get a little information from her. She's a little younger than Mabel, but as I said, Mabel kind of carries a chip on her shoulder, politically, you know. For instance, the man that succeeded her father, J. Hardin Peterson--did you ever hear from him?

K: Mr. Peterson is willing to talk to me, and I hope to set up an appointment in the next couple of days.

R: Yes, well, I'll tell you, you'll get more information out of him, because he's a great person. He's a dynamic person, and I don't think he's ever forgotten anything in his life.

K: Really?

R: And he's very interested in politics, and he's interested in helping everybody, so I think he could really give you information, and be glad to do so.

K: Well, he expressed that in his letter.

R: Yes, he's a fine person. But, see, he defeated Mr. Snodgrass, and so, there's...

K: Still no feeling there, I'm sure. You mentioned, as many other people have, how handsome Mr. Trammell was. Was he really that good-looking?
R: Oh yes, yes! I was just trying to think of somebody I could compare him with. He was not too robust, but beautiful complexion, handsome and curly hair, and of course now that wouldn't be very stylish, but I think he was one of the hand-somest men I ever saw.

K: And he was a physically large man?

R: Oh yes. Not too large.

K: How tall would you say he was? Just roughly.

R: I'd say a little under six feet. I could be wrong.

K: And was he broadly built in the shoulders, that kind of thing?

R: Too, not too... rather corpulent, but not too much so, quite a polished gentleman.

K: You mentioned his health.

R: Health?

K: Did he have problems with his health also?

R: Not that I know of. Did I mention his health? I didn't recall that I did.

K: Mr. Woodall...

R: I don't...

K: ... had also mentioned that he... he didn't mention anything specific, but he said that he occasionally would like to go to certain hot springs and mineral waters, and things like that.

R: Well, now you see, he... this Johnny Woodall, he would know better than I because as I said, my memory then was when I was eight to eleven years old, so you just don't remember things like that.

K: I'm just as interested in things that you may have heard since then, when you came back to Lakeland, though, too, because you'd be surprised how little is recorded anywhere about the man, apart from the politician making his campaigns. What about his personality? You said he had a very winning kind of personality?
R: Oh yes, charming. I think when you first met him you were impressed with the fact that this was a gentleman, you know, he wasn't a commoner, he was above that—he was a gentleman.

K: He had very good manners?

R: Beautiful manners, and polish, and that, I believe, came through education and his schooling. I don't know, but as a child I was quite impressed with his beautiful manners.

K: How about the way he dressed? Was he always very meticulous?

R: Impeccably so.

K: Would you happen to know if he smoked a cigar, or pipe, or cigarettes, or anything like that?

R: No.

K: You didn't see him that frequently, I suppose.

R: I wasn't conscious, at that age, of things like that.

K: I've heard a lot about his memory, for names and for faces?

R: Now that I can't tell you about, but Hardin Peterson could. As I said, your best bet is in Hardin Peterson, because Hardin is generous enough. He's had enough acclaim himself, and comparisons are odious, but Hardin Peterson is a great person, but he doesn't...and he's one of my best friends...but he doesn't have the polish and the refinement that Trammell had. He probably had the...he probably had the knowledge, and he got along particularly well in politics, but comparing the two, they just weren't of the same caliber. But Hardin Peterson, he knows everybody in this state and all their relatives, and is always delighted, you know, to give out any information, because he's proud of the fact that he can. However, he told me the other day, he said you know, I'm getting to the place that I can't remember. I said, well, that will be the day. But he would...I'm sure he'll be glad to give you...now he hasn't been too well, so
PT-2A
Continued (page 16)

R: I would advise you to see him.

K: Get there quick?

R: Yes. He's in his late eighties.

K: Okay, I'll do that. When Mr. Trammell ran for it would have been the Senate when you came back to Lakeland, do you remember at all the kind of campaigns he ran? I'm talking in terms of whether he was more interested in standing on his record or his name, or whether he tried to advocate certain issues. Do you remember any issues that were identified specifically with him?

R: No, that I'm not at all conscious of, because I go back to this, I had four little children, and my world...

K: Centered around them?

R: ...yes, was surrounded by them, and I wasn't conscious...my husband was, but he was devoted to Park Trammell and his father, too, from the time they were here. They were all devoted to Park Trammell, very loyal to him, but now as far as his campaign, I don't even recall that.

K: Is there anything you can tell me about John Trammell, the father?

R: No.

K: Okay.

R: I don't know a thing about him. Was he a Lakelander?

K: Yes ma'am. I believe E.R. Trammell and John Trammell started out down in, I'm not sure you pronounce it as Medulla or Medulla, about 1883 or so. So they were in the area very early, and John Trammell, the father, was another Democratic politician and he, in the 1890's, was the superintendent of the hospital at Chatahootchee, which of course then was a political job, not a medical job.

R: No, I don't recall any of that.

K: Do you...did you ever meet any of Mr. Trammell's brothers?

R: Not to remember them as brothers. As I said, Clyde Trammell, I used to date him.
R: But I think he was a cousin or a nephew.

K: I think he is, yeah.

R: Red-headed, and then he had...there was a...Lola, and Irma, but now I think they were...they used to live over on the other side of Lake Weir. And this Edna Cloud knew them. I talked to her recently about this, and she's a little bit older than I. She knew those girls; in fact, I think she writes to one of them.

K: She gave me the name of another cousin...I haven't got it with me...I think in Benton, Virginia, I think that's where this lady was. I think she's a cousin. Mr. Woodall mentioned someone to me named Mrs. Craig, who was a teacher.

R: Katherine Craig.

K: Katherine, is that her first name?

R: Yes. Well now, I don't believe Katherine dates back that far. I know her well. She's an invalid, and...but not so that she couldn't converse with you. She was the head of the Latin Department here at the high school. I came here after I did, which was...I came back in 1917, so she might have, I don't know. But Katherine, as I said, is an invalid, and it would be hard...I could make an appointment, but I don't believe you could make an appointment with her. I could make an appointment for you to see her and talk to her.

K: Well, I hate to bother her if she feels that she doesn't know anything. If at some time you get the chance to talk to her...

R: Well, I tell you what I'll do--I'll call her and ask her, and then I can let you know...

K: I would appreciate that very much.

R: ...yes, and then I could set up an appointment with her. She's becoming a recluse, herself, which is too bad.

K: Yes, it is.

R: I say death's got to run me down, I'm not going to sit and wait for it.
PT-2A
Continued (page 18)

K: I admire that attitude. He also mentioned a Mrs. Florence Zimmerman, who he thought might know something. Do you know her?

R: Florence Zimmerman?

K: Does that mean anything to you?

R: There's a Zimmerman family here, and he's in the concrete business, but I don't know who Florence is. I believe Florence was his sister... I've forgotten whether... but he lives on Hollingsworth Road, the man himself, and he had a sister but I don't remember what her name was. Maybe that is her.

K: I'll have to straighten that out with him when I get to talk with him. When Mr. Trammell married again in 1934, and married Mrs. Mesmer, according to the newspaper accounts it was kind of a surprise thing, a very low key thing. Do you remember anything at all about that?

R: Yes. I just... I have the impression, just like you said. I remember the times that I thought it was a little strange. I mean, I thought that he was not quite in his element, socially, don't you know? I hope nobody hears that. I don't mean to be unkind, but it was later explained that she was a very fine woman, and she had some money and he didn't. So I was under the impression that she bought this place, Grey Locks, and I don't think he lived there very long, if he ever did.

K: Well, they were married in '34 and he died in '36, so if they spent the rest of the time in Washington, they wouldn't have been there too long.

R: Well, that was a lovely place...

K: I'm sure.

R: A... and of course, he wouldn't have known me at all, in fact, I felt just a child when I saw you. But as I say, he was most appreciative of the fact that this was being done, and seemed most cooperative, and so as I said, he's not trying to avoid you, I'm sure...
PT-2a
Continued(page 19)

K: I'm sure.

R: He talked at length, and he said, now you call me back anytime, anytime you want to set up a meeting or you want to see me, I'd be so glad to. But he said mail, they just had the awfullest problem about mail.

K: Do you remember anything specifically about the house, Grey Locks, was it a two-story house, was it large and rambling?

R: Oh yes, big colonial home. Now, she didn't build it. It was built by, and now you might get some information from him. Let's see...Ginger, what was the name of the Stevens' out on Lake Hollingsworth, do you remember?

G: No, I don't.

R: Stevens...

G: Myna Stevens?

R: Myna Stevens, that's it, Myna Stevens, built this beautiful home, and they had no children, and they adopted a nephew whose name was Jimmy Norton, and Jimmy Norton lives in Lakeland. He lived there as a child with the Stevens, and then, when they died, I think he inherited that place. That I'm not positive about, but he would know, Jimmy Norton would know about the business transaction, because his mother and father, they were foster parents...lived there, and Jimmy lived there with them. It was a beautiful home. In fact, it was the country estate around Lakeland.

K: Was it?

R: Yes, and since I've been corresponding with you, there was a Mrs. Greffer, who lived on Lake Hollingsworth, who knew the Trammells well, but she just died recently. Now her daughter, I played cards with her daughter today, but I don't know that...she might remember some of these things, and I could give you her name.

K: Did...do you remember her name?
R: Yes, her name is Mrs. Henry Clements, C-l-e-m-e-n-t-s. 

K: Okay. 

R: And she lives in her mother's home, who would be Mrs. Addie Greffer, on Lake Hollingsworth, and right...it would be south of where the Stevens live. In fact, their properties, well, I think there's just a small tract of land between the two, and the Greffer's family, the Brockes moved to Lakeland and homesteaded this place, and they still own it...half the lakeside over there, they own...and now, this is third generation, see, Francis Clements lives there now. Mrs. Clements recently died. But she, perhaps, through her talking with her mother, would remember, because they were neighbors, and uh...the Stevens and the Mesmers. So, I think she did...she'd be a good person...

K: She's another one I'll get in touch with. 

R: Now, do you have her name? 

K: Yes, ma'am, I'll just get it right off of the tape when it's typed up. It simplifies things. It saves an awful lot of writing. Were...I guess you've already answered the question. Did the second Mrs. Trammell and Senator Trammell entertain much at this estate of theirs? 

R: If they did, I'm not conscious of it. In other words, I was never invited. They just...you see, I was a young person. They might have had younger crowds, I mean, older crowds, but I'm not conscious of the fact that they did, because I don't think she was the social type. It seemed to me, as my memory fails me at times, but it seemed to me that he wasn't very well when they lived there, and they didn't go out too much, socially. 

K: From his pictures, it seems that he must have aged a great deal in the last couple of years. 

R: I don't even know where I was when he was buried. I didn't go to the funeral. When did he die?
K: May 9, 1936, I think, and the funeral was three or four days later.

R: 1936? I'm trying to think where I was, yes, here in Lakeland...no, I didn't attend the funeral. But there in the...now, the oldest cemetery here is the Lakeview Cemetery, and my family, the Riggins family, are buried in the old Lakeview, which is north of Rose...

K: It's directly north of Rose...

R: And then this Rose...is the second cemetery, but then my lots, my husband is buried, are on Oak Hill out here on the Bartow Road. But, as I said...you have talked with this Clarence Boswell, haven't you?

K: He didn't want to be interviewed, but he was kind enough to respond to my letters.

R: I can't imagine anybody being that...now these girls wouldn't be that way at all.

K: I think, Mrs. Riggins, that people, well, I know for a fact that they often are scared when they hear about tape recordings...

R: Yes, and they think that it's a gimmick that's going to cost you something, don't you know.

K: So this is why we try to explain at the very beginning what's involved and that you do have the right, you know, if you prefer that something remains confidential or you wish to strike it out, you're always protected that way.

R: Well, I haven't said anything that's confidential, I just don't want to be unkind in any remarks that I've made, you know. I wonder if he would be in this book?

K: In this book?

R: For mean, Mr...?

K: That's probably a little more modern.

K: I think these are just contemporary books of people living at the time.

R: Probably so, I meant to look for it before you came and forgot to. I guess so, because their families wouldn't be interested in keeping it up now.
PT-2A
Continued (page 22)

K: I've always been rather surprised that none of the other, well, no one in the
family, in the Trammell family, pursued a political avocation with as much suc-

K: I remember the other...his brother Worth was a judge, and he ran for
office...

R: He didn't have a very good reputation, as I recall.

K: Oh, really?

R: No. Now, it's strange, you said that...no, he did not. I've heard it
said, repeatedly that he of the honorable account that Park was. He was in
Washington, was he not? In some capacity?

K: I believe he followed him there and got some kind of minor appointment.

R: Well, now, I've heard that, see, it just flashed through my mind. I think that
Park...

K: Excuse me, let me turn this over...

R: I think he took advantage of every opportunity that he had, educationally, and
socially, too. I think that some of the rest of the family did not, and that
frequently happens. I know one about the college president here. Same
thing—he was a very polished gentleman, and the rest of his family were rather
course and crude, so some people, you know, take on culture and some do not.
Some don't absorb it.

K: Have you...have you heard generally that the brothers were all like that, other
than Park, that they were sort of a hindrance to him, more than a help?

R: No, no, I'd forgotten all about that Worth until you mentioned it and I couldn't
say...say anything concrete except I recall that he wasn't well thought of at
all. He wasn't the same caliber. I've forgotten about his other brothers.

K: Do you remember hearing anything about his sense of humor?
R: No, no. Let's see...I know a person here in a nursing home who has a keen mind that lived about that time, and she might be...Mrs. Donny Quass.

K: How would you spell that?

R: Q-u-a-s-s, Donny Quass. She's been married twice. She was originally Donny Skinner. She knew all the old families here. She might have remembered from...she, physically, she is handicapped...she...there's something wrong with her legs. She's in a nursing home over here on Lake Hunter Drive, but you could see her, she'd be glad to be interviewed. Only thing about it, she is quite a talker. You'd have to spend the afternoon or two or three afternoons.

K: Well, that's preferable, really. It makes it much easier if people are willing to talk. Speaking of talk, did you ever hear Mr. Trammell give any kind of speech or political talk?

R: Not that I recall.

K: Do you remember anything about his reputation as a stump speaker?

R: Yes. I remember he was known as an orator, but I can't recall ever having heard him.

K: But that was the general impression among the electorate? Do you remember anything at all about the 1934 Senate race he ran against Claude Pepper, in which there was a lot of talk about his great majority in Hillsborough County, which put him over the hump, and charges that that was sort of a rigged election? In other words, what I'm trying to ask you is was he that popular in Polk County and in Hillsborough County, and this part of the state, that he generally got a powerful vote?

R: My opinion might be biased because my family were close friends, the Riggins family, and the Trammell family were close friends, and I never heard anything but good about Park Trammell, and I wasn't politically conscious at the time, so I couldn't say.
K: Did you ever meet or hear of a man named Angle, from Tampa? He was associated, at one time, with Mr. Trammell. No? Okay.

R: I think you asked about the pall bearers...

K: Yes, ma'am.

R: ...and I think one of them, since then, has died--Willard Hallam--or maybe he had died prior to that.

K: But he is deceased?

R: Yes.

K: Okay. You sort of alluded to the fact that Mr. Trammell, possibly because he was so strictly honest, did not have very much money. Was that a generally known, talked about kind of matter?

R: Yes, and it was...it was in his...the comments were in his favor...

K: Oh, definitely, I'm sure they always would be.

R: He was an honest politician, and to be an honest politician, you just don't have any money.

K: What better proof could you have?

R: That's right. I know this: Louis Mesmer paid him such a beautiful tribute. He said...Ginger, catch that for me, please...he said that his family and friends had this beautiful memory of him, not tainted at all, but he died with no funds. And he didn't say, but I've heard it said, that his mother furnished their funds.

K: Do you, possibly, remember...

G: It's___________...

R: Tell her I'll call her back.

K: Do you possibly remember how Senator Trammell might have been regarded as similar to or different from Senator Duncan Fletcher? What I'm really getting at is, some people have claimed that Senator Trammell was more a senator of the people, whereas Senator Fletcher, not in any illegal way, but was more sympathetic to
K: the interests of corporations and railroads in the early decades of the century.

R: That I couldn't say. I know I went to...I'm a Jacksonville girl and I went to his funeral, Fletcher's funeral. In my mind I compared him with William Jennings Bryan. I happened to meet...I was in college and I was introduced to William Jennings Bryan as the youngest student in the college. That was a point of honor.

K: Where did this happen, in Tallahassee?

R: No, I went to Southern...

K: Oh, you went to Southern. I see.

R: Yeah, Southern.

K: I'm sorry, I haven't been paying attention.

R: This was when Southern was over at Southerland, and William Jennings Bryan came to lecture to the student body, and my mother was Dean of Women, and they had an Academy, so I went into the Academy after my father's death. She took this position. I was in the Academy, not in the college part, and so the president introduced me as the youngest girl in the college to William Jennings Bryan, and he was quite a hero of mine. And I compared these two men—they were very similar to me as politicians and gentlemen.

K: I envy you that experience.

R: Well, it was...this is a little aside, it has nothing to do with...but my mother was a great person, I thought, and I think everybody else thought so. Very clever at repartee, always knew what to say, and the college was not in very good financial straits. It had been...this dormitory had been a big hotel, and William Jennings Bryan, very important, you know, he was walking down the veranda with the president of the college, and my mother was the Dean of Women, and so he turned to my...they came up to this cooler—do you know what a cooler is? It's a great big barrel made into a receptacle to hold water, ice water, and you turn
PT-2A
Continued (page 26)

R: this spigot, faucet...

K: I see.

R: ...and they used to have them all the time. So, William Jennings Bryan goes up to this cooler, you know, you turn it on if you want a drink of water, and my mother, I guess, I was tagging along with my mother, and the college president with him, and the president was sort of on the spot, you know, there was no water, and the college president turned to my mother and said, "Mrs. Conway, there's no water in here?" And my mother said, "No, and there hasn't been in right then, twenty years." That really taught me a lesson, because I said nobody's ever going to put me on the spot. Now I got out in the business world, you know, and that has come to my mind several times, and nobody's put me on the spot yet.

K: I'm sure Mr. Bryan got a kick out of that too.

R: Yes, he did.

K: There was some talk, I think, either in 1922 or 1928, I guess it must have been '22, that Mr. Bryan was thinking about running for the Senate from Florida, but that he felt Mr. Trammell was too strong. Do you remember anything about that?

R: I have a picture from my honeymoon made on William Jennings Bryan's porch, you know, standing...you know, he lived down there in...

K: Coral Gables, was it?

R: Yes.

K: Yes, that's a very interesting period of his life.

R: Yes.

K: Most people don't know...

R: His daughter lived there for some time afterwards. These are some things I haven't thought about in a hundred years.

K: Well, I hope you are getting some enjoyment out of thinking about them.
R: Oh yes, sure! You know, my children have often said, mama, I wish you'd sit down and write your memoirs. Now, I said, now, who would be interested?

K: I know I would, for me. I tell you, this is the painless way to do it, to record it if you don't just want to sit down and write.

R: Well, I guess that's so, particularly when you told me you could cut out, because I don't...I have a philosophy...I don't like to say anything to anybody's back that I wouldn't say to their face.

K: Well, as long as you feel you're being honest and sincere...there's nothing, no malice intended.

R: No, no malice, but I mean it's a little unkind, but they're factual, you know, as far as I'm concerned.

K: Well, attitudes are just as important as facts in a study like this, how people thought about Mr. Trammell.

R: Well, he was certainly beloved in Lakeland. And as I said, I could be a bit biased, because my family, the whole Riggins family, they were here devoted to him and his family, and they all grew up together, reared their families all together, so I've never heard anything adverse about him, except that he didn't make any money. And really, that was not to his disadvantage, because people didn't contribute towards campaigns then like they do now, did they?

K: Oh hardly...at all. Do you remember at all how he might have tried to raise money for his campaigns? Were there prominent people in Lakeland who would help him out a little?

R: I think they would have, yes. I know that my family...

K: Your father would have?

R: My father-in-law.

K: Your father-in-law, I'm sorry.

R: Yes, my father, he died three years after I moved here. I'm sure that he would
R: have, because he was that type, if it had been honorable, but because... but he was very honorable man, himself, and a very... he was very spiritual, and religious, and it might have been against his religious principles, and then he wouldn't have done it. But as a friend I'm sure he would have.

K: Especially knowing his circumstances.

R: Yes.

K: Can you think of any other men who might have been likely to have been the ones to help out? I realize that's really asking a difficult question.

R: Well, I was thinking about that kind of monied people here. C.W. Deen was a rich man.

K: D-e-a-n?

R: D-e-e-n, he's dead now. He has a daughter living here, but his daughter is the age of Virginia, here, my Virginia, so she wouldn't have any idea of it. This Donny Quass, as I said, if you could talk with her, and it wouldn't be any hardship on her physically... I think it would mean a lot to her, because she's invalid and she... I know she's always calling our church, we belong to the same church, and telling them how to run the church. Of course, she has some good ideas, but she's at that nursing home, you know, and she has so much time on her hands...

K: You get very lonely, and it's so depressing when you don't have anyone to talk to.

R: Yeah, and she calls me and I feel terrible because I don't go to see her often at all, so she would be delighted, and she would remember a lot.

K: I'm sure that should be a...

R: And now, I was just trying to think about... think about... of course, professional people, Dr. C.W. Love lived here. His son, Judge Love—now, Judge Love might be a good person to talk to. His son, William—K, I believe it is, Love, and
PT-2A
Continued (page 29)

R: his...they lived near Park Trammell. I believe they lived on Tennessee. There is a teacher here, retired teacher, Georgia Pelham...

K: How would you spell that?

R: P-e-l-a-m-m, Georgia Pelham. She dates way back there, and she's retired. She lives on Lake Morton Drive, and...I think she would date back as far as Park Trammell. And there's another family, they live right across the street from her, but I think they're all dead now. There's a son, but he's an alcoholic and I don't believe he could give you much information. Just right off, I can't recall. I'd have to think back.

K: Well, you've given me so many names I surely appreciated them.

R: Well, I'm delighted to because I...

K: If you think of any others I'll be happy receive them, too.

R: Yes, and you know, you don't think of...until you plant a little seed there, and it comes up. Because my memory is not as keen as it once was. At the time, you know, those things just don't impress you...

K: They don't seem all that important...

R: ...no, they don't seem...

K: ...it just passes by.

R: ...that's right.

K: As far as you remember, the only two places that Mr. Trammell lived are the ones you've already mentioned to me--the house that he lived in with Persia when you were a child, and then Grey Locks.

R: Now, if he lived in other places, I don't recall, because, you see, we left there because my father died suddenly from a stroke. We left Lakeland when I was eleven years old, and Park Trammell still lived there. So, I didn't come back until I was twenty-one, so where he lived in the interim I don't know.

K: I believe they lived here until 1909, which is when he became attorney-general,
K: and they would have moved to Tallahassee. Alright, there's just one other thing that I'll bother you with today...

R: Oh, it's no bother. I'm thoroughly enjoying it.

K: ...there's a professor, a friend of mine at Florida...

R: Excuse me. Let me fix you all something to drink.

K: ...Oh, no, please, please don't bother.

R: Coffee, tea, wine...

K: No, thank you, we have a dinner engagement in Orlando with a friend of ours, so... not...you know, there's no set time we have to be there, but we won't bother you for that.

R: Well, I'd be glad to.

K: We appreciate that. Anyway, this professor is interested in immigration history in Florida, and evidently right around the time Mr. Trammell was Governor, around 1910-1911-1912, there was an effort to bring foreign laborers, agricultural laborers into Florida, especially in South Florida. There were some Japanese farmers brought in to the area which later became Boca Raton, and a few other incidents like this, and I told him that I would ask everybody that I talked to if you remember if this ever was discussed as an issue, whether these people should be brought in to Florida, and whether Mr. Trammell was involved in any of it.\textit{all}

R: I wasn't at all politically inclined at that period in my life, but I...

K: It just doesn't ring any bells?

R: ...doesn't ring any bells, no. I have a daughter who lives in Tallahassee, and... well, of course, you're not in Tallahassee, you're in Gainesville. My daughter was secretary to Leroy Collins.

K: Oh, really?

R: Loved that Tallahassee life. Most interesting.

K: A very unusual kind of town, I think.
R: Yes. And I didn't know whether you knew Betty McCord...now, her brother married my daughter, but, oh, Betty is a...you must know Betty.

K: I've never met her; I look forward to meeting her.

R: Well, you should meet her; she's a great person. I would say, to me, she's the most outstanding woman that I know. She has so many potentials and she's clever and she's friendly and...well, there's just nothing bad you can say about Betty.

As I said, if you want an interview with this Mrs...

K: McDougall, Emina.

R: Betty could get there, she just has that way about her.

K: Well, I'll look into that, if you think it's a good way to approach it.

R: Definitely.

K: I got involved with her because Mrs. Mack, I believe the great-aunt of Elizabeth Alexander who comes from Bartow...

R: Oh, yes.

K: ...and is the librarian in the Florida History Library, so suggested that I write Mrs. Mack.

R: Yeah, sure, I know her. And mother is Lucille Alexander in Bartow. I know her well. Well, now, Mrs. Mack's son married my daughter.

K: I see, that's the connection.

R: Ted...in Tampa. And he is a Federal Court Reporter, and he's now on the Gurney trial.

K: Oh, really?

R: And...it's his sister that I think Betty. And I not only think a lot of her, I admire her, So, as I said, she, Betty just has the know how. I was fortunate enough, years ago when Leroy Collins was elected Governor, and they had the Governor's Conference in Miami. They asked a good many people...through...it was through my daughter because she was secretary, to
R: be hostesses, and I was fortunate enough to be one of the hostesses at that Governor's convention down at the Americana Hotel. Betty was head of the reception committee, and she also was...worked with Governor in some capacity...we were all close friends. And I marvel at Betty. I enjoy Betty more than anything...she met every...she met one of the governors, she met all their wives, and then she introduced them to the receiving line and she did not miss a person.

K: A single name? That's remarkable.

Yes,

R: Yes, she's really great. Betty is a great person. And I said after...and she had something personal to say, you know. Then she went out to California to the Democratic Convention and she was great out there too. So, as I said, she just has the know-how to get people, so this lady...don't let that be a lost cause because Betty can get...she'll get an audience here.

K: Would you happen to know or heard of Mrs....I believe it's T.S. Combs, in Tallahassee? Her husband was, I guess, he was an admiral, and anyway, when she was a young woman she worked for Mr. Trammell. She's another lady who's still alive but who doesn't really want to be interviewed.

R: Well, there...let's see...there's a Combs family here...

K: I don't know if there's a relationship or not.

R: ...Combs...it seems to me that Combs married into the Henleys and...

K: I think she was Tallahassee girl.

R: ...they all lived on the north side of town, the Combs, and the Henleys, and the Trammells. Not Park, but some of his family. No, I don't know about...

K: I may get her to...

R: Now, let me give you another name.

K: Sure.

R: Grace Murrell.

K: That's M-e-r-l-e?
R: M-u-r-r-e-l-l. Now, she's younger than I, but she lived on the north side of town, right next to the Travelodge, but anyway. The family lived over there for years and years, and she lived close to the other Trammells. She is younger than I...and she would remember a lot of these Trammells and she might, I don't know that she knew Park Trammell well, but she might know some of these relatives. She now lives on Orange Street. I'll give you the exact number if you want to put it down...

K: Well, I have a Lakeland phone book. If you think she's in there, and you've given me her name...

R: Yes, Grace Murrell.

K: ...it should be simple enough.

R: M-u-r-r-e-l-l. They were originally from Williston, but they came here before I came here in 19--, let's see, I can't think back, but anyway, I was eight years old, and I was born in '96. They were living here at the time, and as I said, the other Trammells lived close to them on the north side.

K: Do you remember which street that would have been? That these other Trammells were living on?

R: The other Trammells lived on Lake Weir Drive. And the house is still standing there.

K: Is it?

R: Yes. Now, she would know. She'd know which one of those houses. I don't believe it's been torn down, because some of those houses have been torn down. They are widening...that's on the other side of the lake, though, but she would know... Miss Murrell would know.

K: What about that first house that Persia and Park lived in?

R: Now, that's gone. You see, the telephone company is there. It was a small house, attractive, one story, not pretentious at all, but neat. And then his
R: sister lived on the next corner. Now, I don't know whether they...I think one of his sisters married a McDonald. He had...does that ring a bell?

K: Let's see. There's Emma, that married McDougall.

R: No, that's McDonald instead of McDougall, I believe. Did they have a son named Kenneth?

K: I'm not sure about the son. The names...I've got a couple of married names...Mrs. Walter Jenkins, Mrs. Graham Harrison, and then I've got the maiden names of the other sisters—Miss Lois, Miss Pearl, and Emma. So, I think...

R: I don't believe that's McDougall, I think it's McDonald, because the McDonalds lived on that corner when we lived there...

K: Do you remember what his name would have been?

R: Well, this McDonald's son was named Kenneth. And Kenneth was the age of my husband, because they went to school together. My husband graduated from the University and my son did too. I've forgotten what year my husband graduated...Pi K A, and my son graduated, I've forgotten what year, he was A T O at the University. This is something interesting. It has nothing to do with this, whatsoever, but Ted Mack graduated from the University, too, a law student, and was quite brilliant as a student. And my daughter has been very interested in the University and they go back, because her father graduated from there, and her brother, and her husband. So when they were tearing down this law building, she's quite interested in restoring old houses and like that, she saw this beautiful brass doorknob and lock and all, and so she knew they were going to tear that building down, so she wrote to the President of the University, and said that due to the...because her father, and brother and husband and so forth had been there, she'd like to buy that, because they were doing over their home, and she'd like to buy it from the University. And he wrote her the...the President wrote her the most beautiful letter, and sent it to her. Anybody
PT-2A
Continued (page 35)

R: that was that interested in the University, he wanted to make her a present of it. Now she has it installed on her front door. To us that's interesting.

K: I think that's very interesting. I guess that would have been Mr. O'Connell, probably?

R: I don't recall. It's been about six or seven years ago.

K: That would have been right.

R: I just don't recall, but that was really nice, wasn't it?

K: It surely was.

R: You know, when you have sentimentally-attached things, I have so much sentimentally-attached things, a lot of people don't, but you can tell with the old clutter that I have, I like it.

K: Well, the universities have so few friends today that I'm sure Steven O'Connell and all the rest of us appreciate that kind of gesture.

R: Well, you're teaching there, are you not?

K: No, ma'am. I work for Dr. Samuel Proctor, who is the editor of the Florida Historical Quarterly, and I have gone to school there and completed all my classwork for the Ph.D., and within the next year I hope to finish this, and then I'll have it. But my... the duties that I have in relation to the University are on this historical journal that is published by the Florida Historical Society, and not in teaching.

R: Well, that probably put you on the faculty, then. doesn't it?

K: Well, I'd like to think so, but the way the budget is, that may not work out that way. Well, I want to thank you very much, Mrs. Riggins and...

R: Well, I certainly enjoyed...