

AUNT GINNY TELLING ABOUT MOBILE, NEW ORLEANS, KETCHUMS, DENIS, ETC.

A. Ginny:and these rugs were just magnificent. The living room was sixty feet long, if you can imagine that!, with marble mantles on either side. The ceilings were fourteen feet high -- I think these are ten feet high -- and they had, uh, murals that were just magnificent. The whole house was just lovely, and these chandeliers were there as well as a lot of the furniture that we have.

So, uh, these girls were very pretty and very popular - the girls- and they made their debuts.

Well, in 1864, the oldest daughter, Clara Anna -- the one that you see in the portrait that's in the dining room (the large one) -- married Col. Denis from New Orleans. So she moved to New Orleans and Col. Denis now was the head of a military installation down there. He was president of the Germanica National Bank. He was head of the police commission. He was a very, very prominent man in New Orleans.

Well, the other three daughters lived in Mobile.

Well, when the war was declared, Major Ketchum became -- organized his own battery and he was the head of Ketchum's Battery and that is written up. Well, he was sent to Corinth, Mississippi and he fought under Gen. Beauregard and I have so many, many letters I finally sent to the University of North Carolina because they were fast coming apart. All the paper that they could get -- I suppose you would call it long fool's cap paper and they would write up one side and then down the other. So you can imagine with all of those years, that the ink-- that the letters were sorta falling to pieces.

So, uh, the University of North Carolina had been asking Cud'n Willey for these letters and she didn't want to part with them.

So, after I moved to -- to Homewoods, one day I looked up and there was this very distinguished looking gentleman riding up and I was down in the woods with my wild flowers and so forth. So this gentleman rode up and I walked up

And He said, " How do you do? Well, I have just come from Mobile, AL and I have traced you."

And he said, " I've been trying for years to get Miss Creagh and her sister to give me all these papers that are very historic papers and we want to keep them at the University of North Carolina."

And he said, " I am -- my name is Dr. Hamilton.

And I said, "Well, Dr. Hamilton, my brother, Cliff Glover went to the University of North Carolina ."

And he said, "Cliff Glover?" said, "Was he a KA?"

I said, "Why, yes."

He said, " Well he's been in my home many a time." Said "My sons are KA's" and he said, "I remember Cliff very pleasantly " and said, " Cliff, as I recall was a, uh, the bantam boxing champion" which he was.

Bill: Bantam weight champion?

A.Ginny: Bantam weight. What did I say? Bantam weight.

Bill: You said bantam, that's right, bantam

A. Ginny: Well, but anyway, Cliff played football on the Newnan team in high school, but he was too small when he went to college. He didn't have a chance but he wanted to excel in something, so he decided to take up boxing, but that was a deep secret from Mother 'cause she would have just had a double duck fit! But Daddy knew about it and Daddy was just tickled to death. We all knew about it but no one would mention it.

Well, Cliff went to New York and with his team and he won, so his picture was in the New York Times. Well, of all things, some of Mother's friends decided that they -- that she would be so proud of it, so they cut out the picture and sent it to Mother and Daddy!

Well, when Mother saw it, she said, " Howard, did you know this? Our son is boxing!" And that was just oh,--that was just like wrestling or something terrible! She said, " The idea of Cliff doing a thing like this!" And so Daddy just -- Daddy was so proud of all his children and expected the best and he said, "Of course I expected him to win!"

Well, anyway, that was that! So Dr. Hamilton said that he knew Cliff and knew all about him and I said, " Well, Dr. Hamilton, I'm inclined to agree that these papers should be saved -- all of the correspondence because it was just telling about the battles and how Major Ketchum felt.

He'd write and he would say, " My darling wife, the cannons are booming all around me" said " There's nothing but the sounds of war going on " and he said, " We are so badly outnumbered, there is no chance of us winning" and said " I expect that this very probably will be the last letter that I will write you and take good care of the girls."

And he told her, he said, " Now we have the slaves out there who -- a lot of them I know we can trust to look after Moss Grove, but" he said, "You must never go out there alone by yourself--you cannot live out there -- too much unrest. So, do not go back out there" and said, "just stay in Mobile 'cause you will be safer."

So, Cud'n Willey -- Great Aunt Willey -- was living in Mobile when late one afternoon, she got a note and this letter was written by Gen. Camby, who was the Yankee general who had --

Pardon me, Uncle Ed, for saying Yankee but that's what he was - -- it's not a bad word -- no, it's not any worse than rebel and we were rebels -- Uncle Ed, I'll have a little libation, please -- We're in the midst of battle.

So he said, "You must evacuate your house immediately!" Said "We're going to take it over as headquarters."

(Why don't you just fix me another one and I'll sip on this one.)

Said, "We will -- You have to be out by six o'clock."

Well, Great Aunt Willey was just frantic. She had no where to go with those three little girls. Major Ketchum's children had, by that time, married.

Well, uh, Cud'n Willey was born in 1850 and this was -- she was about fourteen, sixteen and eighteen and the oldest child had already married and moved -- the oldest daughter had moved to New Orleans so

Bill: She had married Col. Denis?

A. Ginny: Col. Denis and she was living in New Orleans. 'Course Col. Denis was off in the war, too.

But Great Aunt Willey sent a note to Gen. Camby and said, "Would you kindly come by here and let me discuss the situation?"

So he came by and she told him she had no where to go -- had these three little children and said, "Would you let us live up in the attic?" She said, "We won't bother a thing."

And he said, "Well, you can't stay in this house, 'cause my men -- the men under my command-- are very rough men and your daughters just wouldn't be safe with them, but I'll see what I can do."

So he wrote back -- wrote her a note a little bit later on and he said, "Well, I have commandeered the house across the street for my staff and there will only be three of us here -- those second in command." And he said, " You're welcome to stay here in the attic and if you keep house, plan all of the meals and so forth and so on."

So, all during the war while Gen. Camby was there, Great Aunt Willey sat at the head of the table and he sat at the foot and she presided over everything and planned the meals because she already had a storehouse full of food which they could have taken anyway, but it was safe as long as Gen. Camby was there. So she provided the meals.

Well, one night, her husband slipped through the lines from Corinth, Mississippi. He had been slipping through every now

Sally: He went behind the lines?

A Ginny: Well, I mean yes -- he went across the Yankee line because the Yankees had taken over Mobile but he didn't know it. He had been slipping through and going to see his family. So when he got to his house that night, he was arrested.

And he said, " Oh, but you can't arrest me. This is my home." And they said, "Oh, but no longer." Said, " This is Gen. Camby's headquarters."

So he said, "Well, let me speak to Gen. Camby."

So they took him in. They had guards on either side. Gen. Camby was the Yankee.

Bill: He had taken over the house

A. Ginny: So he saw Major Ketchum and saw he was quite a gentleman. So he said, "Well, all right, you can go up and see your wife" but said, " but you are under arrest but we will let you go back to your army but you cannot come back anymore."

Sally: Was the war still going on?

A.Ginny: Yes, the war was still going on.

Sally: And they let a general come in?

A.Ginny: Major--Major Ketchum

Sally: How come they didn't just catch him?

A.Ginny: Well

Sally: He was someone from the other side.

A. Ginny: How can you catch a Ketchum? That was his name.

Sally: That doesn't make sense that they let...

Bill: Well, it was cause Great Aunt Willey had worked the general over and instead of the general taking Great Aunt Willey's house, she could at least stay in the attic and he was a lot more humane than Gen. Sherman.

Sally: It still doesn't make sense that he'd let a major from the other side get away.

A.Ginny: Well, it doesn't but he did let him stay there and they escorted him out and let him get back to Corinth, Mississippi.

Well, after the war was over, strange to say, Major Ketchum came back home. He got through the war and all of these letters that I have which are now, I told you are at the University of North Carolina, describe in detail all of the horrible battles and all of the things that they went through.

Well, Gen. Camby was very, very fond of the Ketchums and he visited them and he brought his family down to visit.

Sally: Did he give them their house back?

A. Ginny: Oh, yes. After the war was over. And he didn't bother anything -- so everything was just fine.

Well, these books that I have tell about these things and then I also have a lot of clippings from the papers in Mobile.

Bill: Well, Gen. Camby came back to New Orleans to visit them?

A.Ginny: Oh, yes. After the war -- and they remained friends up until the time of his death.

Bill: Is that right? Well, this is one of the chandeliers out that house, didn't you say?

A. Ginny: Um Um.

Bill: This one and the one in the dining room, too?

A. Ginny: Uh, Uh. Well there were five like this. Now one of them is in New Orleans and the two matching ones -- one is in the dining room ---(Ed, if you're ready for lunch, honey, she

can put it on) --but anyway, it's real interesting to read all of these things and in this little booklet that I am working on gradually, I have a lot of clippings describing this beautiful home of Great Aunt Willey's and how they got the furniture. Now this set of china that we have, they bought has K on there. There were twelve dozen of everything instead of one dozen. There were 144 dinner plates, breakfast plates, cups and saucers and they did not have after-dinner cups but they had chocolate cups which can be used for that. They had twelve tremendous soup tureens. They had everything -- oh just everything was just beautiful china and they entertained a great deal and they said that on Sunday night, they never knew whether they would have forty-five or ninety people for supper!

Sally: You mean people just came over for supper?

A. Ginny: Just came over -- they had open house. And they had plenty of money fortunately 'cause the confederate money was just worth nothing after a while but Major Ketchum was a very, very good business man. He was what they called a cotton factor. He bought and sold cotton.

Ed: Cotton broker

A. Ginny: But they called him a factor

Bill: The factor -- seems like he would finance the other guys and he'd get his money whether or not they speculated right or wrong.

A. Ginny: Well...

Bill: That was even smarter.

A. Ginny: Yeah, well, it was and he was well-to-do and then Grandpa Glover was well-to-do.

Now Grandpa's first wife Amanda died in 1857. married his wife's sister-in-law and her name was Fanny Briscoe and she got along just fine with the family.

Meantime, Grandpa had built another home down Alabama. That is a town that is now dead and gone the old towns, but it was a county seat and I have place, -- to White Hall.

Well, Great Aunt Fanny got along fine with the family but she did not live long 'cause she was in a horse and carriage and the horse was frightened and the horse ran away and turned the carriage over and she was killed.

So I have been to her grave in McKinley and Mother and I, when we were getting ready to build Homewoods out in the country, I wanted to go to one of these old Glover places and get a brick, if possible, you know, to put in as a corner stone .

So Mother and I went -- why how in the sun we got around those country roads or found these old places, I don't know but we got there and this was most interesting. We stopped in McKinley --by that time there was just about one store there, nearly all of the houses were gone and, oh, it just broke your heart to see these magnificent old country homes that were just -- that had just fallen into decay because, you see, the slaves had all gone. There was no cotton. There no longer any industry of any kind.

So Mother and I found this little country store and we said , "could you possibly tell us where White Hall is?"

And this man thought we -- 'course this was -- that was way back in the 1850's, I suppose 1858 that he lived there. So he told us said you'll find it in very terrible condition but I can tell you where it is. So we went out there and really and truly it was a most fascinating place. It was a beautiful old country place. It did not have a long porch, like this one but it had four columns with a, you know, with a smaller porch. And it was built in the typical old southern fashion. And it was strange to say that people used to have very unusual ideas of the greenery around the house. instead of having a lot of boxwood. In that part of the country they had crepe myrtle. They had tremendous hedges of crepe myrtle--all around everywhere.

Well, when we got to this place, there it was. The house needed painting. The whole place was very run down. And billy goats were running all over the place, Well, I'm not generally scared but I don't just fancy just walking, you know, among the billy goats. But I had an umbrella in the car -- which I always carry one -- so I took the umbrella and left Mother in the car --Mother was scared to death.

So I walked up to the house, knocked on the door and after so long a time this horrible looking man -- ohhh, he needed a shave, he was absolutely a derelict -- looked like he came from the Bowery. And I introduced myself. Well, I was never so surprised in my life. He had the most elegant manners, the most beautiful voice and he said, uh -- I told him, " I'm Mrs. Cook".

"Well, I am Dr. _____" whatever his name was. And he said I live in New Orleans and he said and so I told him this was my grandfather's home.

And he said, "Well, do come in" Said, "I think_____" said "You'll just have to excuse the house." He said, " I live back in two rooms and uh, but he said, " I would like to you to see just how the house looked."

Well, he was a delightful man. Evidently, Bill, he had been on drugs or something, I don't know, but anyway, a more delightful, charming person you have never met.

Bill: A happy surprise out of the blue

A. Ginny: I know it was a surprise because to look at him I thought he was a tramp. So he went out to the car with me. I said, "Mother is out there but she won't come in because of the goats." And he just laughed and said, " These are my pets." So he walked out to the car and Mother and I went into the house and we were very pleased. So I told him what I wanted and I said, " I'm looking for a brick".

He said, "Well, there are plenty of bricks, so , uh,"

As I said, the house was dilapidated condition so he went out and there were some-of the big bricks that were holding up this column. So he selected one for me and said, " Now these were hand made bricks -- hand made by the slaves on the plantation." And he said, "Are you planning to have a well?"

I said, "Yes. We're going to have a deep well."

So he said, " Well, you'll be interested to come and get a brick from the well."

And they had a most unusual well. It was circular--ordinarily, you know, they are square. But this was a beautiful well made out of the white bricks so he got me one of those. And he said, uh," Now wouldn't like to have, wouldn't you enjoy having some of the shrubbery?"

And I said " Well, we're on our way to Mobile and New Orleans and I'll just have to come back but I do appreciate it.

He said, "Well, I think that this crepe myrtle will live"

I said, "Well, I don't think I'll take it now." But that was a very delightful surprise.

Bill: He was living there just by himself?

A.Ginny: By himself. Just a derelict. So we went back to McKinley. He said, "I think you'll find an old cemetery there" and he said, " I know some of the Glovers are buried there." So Mother and I went back and we found where Grandpa's second wife was married, I mean was buried.

Well, while Cud'n -- Great Aunt Willey traveled back and forth to Europe a great deal -- while she was in Europe, she had a message that Great Grandpa Glover, who was then in his seventies, had married a sixteen year old widow!

Sally; Sixteen year old widow?

A. Ginny: Widow! Well, see girls married back in those days when they were fourteen. Fourteen, and that was nothing and the boys-men were married when they were seventeen. Amanda Glover was just fourteen and Benjamin Glover was just seventeen when they married.

Ed?

Sally: Who was Benjamin Glover:

A. Ginny: He came down in 1819 -- he came down from South Carolina.

Ed: You think this is a good time to break off?

A. Ginny: Yes, anytime. ... the one that looks like Nancy but I think two of them ... this one looks like Denis a little bit the one in blue -- looks like Denis and then, uh, the one -- that was Cud'n Amanda and then -- that's Cud'n Sally (Sarah) holding the little pet deer. I meant to tell you that they had a beautiful deer park with these pet deer.

Bill: At Moss Grove?

A. Ginny: Yes, at Moss Grove and all of these old places.-- You help yourself to bread or whatever that is-- Ya'll start on. Don't wait on me. I don't love to be hurried.

Bill: No need to hurry

Various comments about the meal....

Bill: When did Sully paint this, Aunt Ginny? Did he paint

A. Ginny: 1850

Various comments

A. Ginny: Bill, if you will remember my hall in Mobile was marble, I mean in Homewoods and I had it modeled after this marble porch which was just like it in black and white. So I always loved that picture so I just had the -- I just want that kind of marble.... I knew this old Clara Anna --- I knew her well when she lived in New Orleans--- She was quite an old lady but she told about Sulley coming over from England and staying with at the plantation while he was doing the painting. So I recall that quite well. Now I never knew Amanda. Amanda married

Various voices including Cindy's

Bill: Well, you know, I remember the hall so well, particularly

Various voices again

Bill: I enjoyed looking at our -- the movies at Nancy and my wedding reception when we danced in the hall. It really was

A.Ginny: We did have a good time. We had the best time at Homewoods.

Ed: Was that at Homewoods?

A. Ginny: Well, see he and Nancy ..

Bill: Aunt Ginny was so sweet to let because of the two family relationship. Aunt Ginny and Mother gave our wedding rehearsal dinner party there before the wedding and then the reception was there the next night. So she played double duty. Aunt Ginny played the part of the groom and the bride.

Various comments

A. Ginny: Then we had Jenny's reception over here. We had Edmund and Carolyn's ...

Bill: Out there. Well, we really loved that double duty -- the bride and the groom. A lot of work but it was a real treat for us.

Ed: You fellows may live a long time but you'll never find another Aunt Ginny.

Bill: That's for sure

A.Ginny: Well, I have had a good life.

Ed: No more Aunt Ginny's around

A. Ginny: A very interesting life, a very happy life but sadness naturally comes along. But it was a lot of fun being the oldest child. Everybody always says the oldest child has the hardest time, have to work the hardest but I -- we all had our duties.

Various comments

A. Ginny: One thing we always had fun was on the Fourth of July. We had about ten couples that would come out....

Aunt Ginny tells about Edmund killing a water moccasin in the Chattahoochee River while all the children were barefooted playing on a sand bar and the parents were sitting on the bank watching.

Then Bill tries to get her back to telling about the various antiques.

A. Ginny:and this table had nine leaves in it and eighteen chairs.

Bill: eighteen chairs --- seat eighteen people at dinner

Sally: Must have been a huge dining room!

A. Ginny: And then the living room in there had let me see -- add eighteen chairs to that

Bill: What is this silver service right there, Aunt Ginny -- the coffee pot?

A.Ginny: Well this is the coffee pot no, now this is your coffee and this is your tea. This piece right here belonged--was part of Benjamin Glover's service! Benjamin was the one that came down from South Carolina in 1819. Now each one -- this is what was such a very bad mistake. There was just one silver service so when Grandpa died, every member of the family took one piece of the service. I mean they just split it up. This was really such a mistake.

Various comments ..

A.Ginny: You see the wild boar up there? and the pheasants ... this is what you call a hunt board. and the dogs. and this is a mast. And these are little secret drawers in here.

Various other comments ...

Then Aunt Ginny begins to read from some book which details the earlier story that she recited about Gen. Camby taking over Major Ketchum's home in Mobile during the Civil War.

The Ketchum House

It was one of James' best efforts. He was given a free hand --that was by my great, great grandfather to build this -- and was not skimped in the expenditure of money. It is indeed a fine old house. Substantial rooms and elegant inside and out as was fitting an old southern family that lived in it. According to military uses, General Edward Richard Sprigs Camby, commander of United States forces that took Mobile in April, 1865 made inquiry on arrival for a place in which to lodge himself and his military staff. When report was made to him of the Ketchum House, and he learned that it belonged to an officer at war with the flag of the general served, his decision was made at once.

Of all the houses in the quarter, the Ketchum house seemed to him most suitable and he gave order that it should be turned over to him together with it's contents except, of course, the personal belongings of the occupants. He had no use for clothing, boots and shoes and such like. All furnishings however, including tableware and in fact everything that became a mansion of its style, should remain. The government would give receipt and be accountable for everything taken but the house must be delivered intact and at once.

The order was written and was served to Mrs. Ketchum in her home. To tell the story in its proper order let it be said that he first incident apparent to the dwellers of the said house was the arrival at the door of several officers attended by the orderlies. The officers asked to see

the lady of the house. And upon Mrs. Ketchum answering, they said they would like to view the premises. They were shown about the place, upstairs and down and into my lady's parlor, also my lady's kitchen and pantry. Then they departed, saying nothing. Silently they mounted their steeds and rode away.

The next day came the order which read as follows. (Now I have the original of this letter) Headquarters of the Military Division of West Mississippi official business. Occupants of dwelling house on the corner of Government and Franklin Streets in Mobile, Louisiana (now isn't that funny --- it was Mobile, Alabama) Officer Provost Marshall.

Ed: You're snoring, honey . You're snoring, honey. Excuse you.

General, Army and Division of West Mississippi, Mobile, Alabama April 14, 1865 .

The dwelling house, corner of Government and Franklin Streets of this city with its appertences, furniture and so forth is hereby taken possession of for military service of The United States. The present occupants are hereby required to vacate the premises without delay. Facilities will be furnished them to join their friends beyond the line if desired. Nothing must be removed except personal effects without written authority from the Provost Marshall General. Duplicate inventories will be taken. One copy will be given to the present occupant by order of Major General E. R. S. Camby; George L. Andrews; and Brig. Gen. Bols and Provost Marshall General.

One may imagine what consternation was occasioned by the receipt of such an order. To leave one's home is hard enough in any case, even if the return to it is assured. But to go out on the instance -- leaving and abandoning everything it contains and to strangers and soldiers who could be expected to show but little regard for the feelings of a hostile owner -- that was a fortune of war very difficult for me to understand and endure.

I recall in a like case I witnessed, when a small boy, that the lady of the house, my own mother, took to her bed and declared that if she went out, she would have to be carried out.

Mrs. Ketchum did not propose a like retreat to the domestic servants but she did not know what to do. The whole family was upset, the servants along with their mistress.

Moriah, the colored factor was the first to have an idea. She had heard that the General was calling on Mrs. Walker at the house up the street a little way offered to go and ask him to talk about an _____ with Mrs. Ketchum. This seemed to be as good a plan as any. So off Moriah went and actually brought the General back with her. The general was very polite. He expressed regret that the necessities of the situation compelled him to incommode, but he and his staff had to be lodged somewhere and the Ketchum houses suited their needs better than any other they had found.

Well, said Mrs. Ketchum -- and we do not quote her exact language not knowing it -- would it not be possible for her to remain in the house which was her home and very dear to her.

General Camby replied that he had a large staff and there were many officers who would be coming and going at all hours day and night and the headquarters would hardly be the place for a lady and children and manifesting her presence would likely prove embarrassing to his entourage -- rough fellows, some of them and engaged in rough work.

No, he could think of nothing to be done save to allow Mrs. Ketchum an extra day in which to move. Mrs. Ketchum said she was willing to stay in one room or do anything if not required to leave her home. But the general departed without further argument.

Afterward, however, he appeared to have thought the matter over with himself for the next day, he called again Mrs. Ketchum on his own suggestion and said he had discovered the house opposite on Government could be made to serve as the headquarters. The owner, William Stewart, being abroad with his family.

So he decided to place his staff in that resident and to make Mrs. Ketchum's, his personal home while in Mobile accompanied by only one officer, his aide, Capt. Barrett. He asked if Mrs. Ketchum would be so kind as to act as hostess and house keeper with himself and Capt. Barrett as her guests.

This was as surprising and as agreeable a solution to the problem. Mrs. Ketchum readily agreed to the terms and prepared for the officers reception and entertainment.

And so it happened Gen. Camby fresh from the scenes of battle at Spanish Fort and Blakely settled down in the peaceful comfort of this rebel home, the guest of the wife of a rebel soldier -- he at the head of family table and Mrs. Ketchum at the foot. And one may imagine the mid Victorian conversation these courteous enemies engaged in.

When Major Ketchum returned from the war, he hastened to his wife and family and was about to rush in, when the sentry at the door barred the way. Nobody could come in, said the sentry, without a permit.

Yes, but this is my home. I live here.

Get a permit, replied the soldier quite unmoved.

The tape stops here.