

Trimble, Genevieve_2016 JAN 11 1149AM

CAVE: [00:00:00] What is your name?

TRIMBLE: Genevieve, or Gen, as most people call me, Trimble.

CAVE: And how do you spell that?

TRIMBLE: The whole thing?

CAVE: Yeah.

TRIMBLE: G-E-N-E-V-I-E-V-E T-R-I-M-B-L-E.

CAVE: And I'm Mark Cave with the Historic New Orleans Collection. It is Wednesday, January 11, 2017. We're here at your home in Uptown New Orleans, and we're talking about your life and your memories of the French Quarter. When were you born?

TRIMBLE: Oh, I'll have to tell you, because when my book came out, it was in the headlines, my age, so I can't -- everybody knows. I'm 95.

CAVE: What year were you born?

TRIMBLE: Nineteen twenty-one. July the sixth, 1921.

CAVE: Talk a little bit about your mother.

TRIMBLE: My mother. Should I talk about both my mother and father?

CAVE: Yeah.

TRIMBLE: They were very interesting people. We did not live here, when I was born, in New Orleans. As a matter of

fact, the first few months of my life, I was in Havana, Cuba. My father was a graduate of LSU, and he went down there during World War I and worked in the Cuba cane sugar industry. I was not born there. My mother came up to Louisiana. I was born in Baton Rouge, and then we went back there for a short time. Then when I was about nine months old, we came back to the States. My father was -- we're very intertwined with LSU, because my father, at the time when he graduated from LSU in engineering, sugar engineering, he designed the sugar factory at LSU, and he was the dean of sugar engineering there when I was a baby there. We stayed there, and my mother was a very diligent mother. She was a wonderful mother all through her long life. She did not work. She stayed home and took care of me, as she did all through my life. We stayed in Baton Rouge for some time. Then my father met these men who wanted to form this sugar company. My father and the men bought up all these plantations down in lower Louisiana, in Lafourche Terrebonne Parish, and around Franklin and New Iberia, and they began to raise sugar cane. My father was the one who designed all the factories there, and it was called the South Coast Sugar Company. My father became the CEO of it. We lived in Houma, H-O-U-M-A, down on the bayou. My mother never -- she had lived in Baton Rouge,

but in Feliciana, north of Baton Rouge, and she never really got used to the bayou country, but she made the best of it, and they lived there. I went to school there, lower school, at a little -- I'm just running on. I don't know whether you wanted me to stop.

CAVE: No, it's good.

TRIMBLE: I went to school at a little school called [Lawton?] Preparatory School, which was originated by these three maiden ladies, the [Wandas?]. I went to school there beginning my first grade, and finished when I graduated. I went that one school. There were three ladies teaching me. I graduated in the largest class that the school ever had, nine people. So, you see, I was used to being in close quarters. It was a great transition, when I finished Lawton, that I went to LSU. That was going into the big world for me.

CAVE: What was your dad's name?

TRIMBLE: Joseph Jones Munson. He was very distinguished. [00:05:00] He was a brilliant engineer, and he was a brilliant teacher at LSU. He designed much sugar cane -- as a matter of fact, he invented the sugar cane harvester. It was called the Munson Sugar Cane Harvester. He did the centrifugals. He designed and invented the continuous centrifugal, and all of these things that revolutionized

the making of sugar. His family -- his company -- family thing -- they produced something called white gold. That was the name of the sugar. Morrell, my daughter, who lives now in Washington, she says that she saw that someone had used that name under "white gold" and was selling sugar, but I never see it here. But it was since dissolved, that company. My father was there until they did that.

CAVE: What was your mother's name?

TRIMBLE: Her name was Emma Harvey, H-A-R-V-E-Y. She had been, when she got out of school, she was, for a brief moment, a teacher, too. She taught. But that didn't last long. She married my father, and then she never worked again. In Houma, she was very active in church affairs and in community affairs, so I had a very blessed life as a child, and an upbringing that has stayed fast with me all my life.

CAVE: What was your dad doing in Cuba?

TRIMBLE: He was the chief engineer for the -- see, he was not long out of school, out of LSU. He was the chief engineer, both in Puerto Rico and in Cuba, the Puerto Rico and the Cuba Cane Company. He was chief engineer down there. They came back when the war was over, and then that's when my father began to be teaching at LSU, and designed that little sugar factory. It's still there, you know. I tried, for a while, to see if I could get it named for my

father, because he had designed it, when I was just a baby. It [resolved?] into such a rigamarole to get it named that I gave up. I decided, I won't pursue that. But I would like, someday, maybe before I die, to have it named the Joseph Jones Munson Sugar Factory. It's still there. I went to see it not so long ago. I don't think they're making sugar, but it's there sort of as a monument to those times.

CAVE: When you were a child, did you come to New Orleans often?

TRIMBLE: To here? Yes. Particularly when I grew up in teenage. My mother was very fond of coming here, and my father had belonged to organizations here, so they came quite frequently. My mother loved to shop, and so I would go along with her, and we'd go down. I remember that it was a joyful experience for me to have mother. Mother and I would go to the old Monteleone, which was quite a place there, across from this place called Solari's, which was a very famous grocery store right there at the corner, right across from the Monteleone. We would have -- I loved coming into New Orleans. I always loved it. But I never dreamed that I was really going to live here. I thought I would be going someplace else. But I did come here, finally.

CAVE: Talk a little bit more about your childhood in Houma.

TRIMBLE: In Houma? Well, it was -- I think about it now, because it was really very lovely, peaceful. Most of the people around there were either fishermen or they were sugar planters. There was quite a few sugar plantations there, and my mother was very [00:10:00] close to all of these people. It was a close-knit community. My mother, as I told you, was very, very, very religious, always. She was sort of the pillar of the little Presbyterian church, because most of the people there were Roman Catholics. Some people were Episcopalians, and then there was this tiny little church, the Presbyterian church. That's where I grew up, in that little church. I loved Houma, and I hated to leave it. Up until just a few years ago, when my mother had died and my father had died, we still had property and things there. I would go out every Friday and meet this man who was taking care of my family's affairs at the bank there. We'd go across the street on Friday and get wonderful gumbo. I remember that particularly, and I was sad that he died, finally, and I moved everything in here. I haven't been to Houma in a long time, but I think about it, and how idyllic place it was to live. It was so peaceful, and everyone knew each other. You said hello on the street. It was -- lovely memory.

CAVE: Why did you leave?

TRIMBLE: When I finished college -- I met my husband in college.

We were both in the journalism school. We both got our degrees in journalism. His name was Morrell Trimble, and mine, of course, you know. We fell in love there, and we were both editors of the *Daily Reveille*.

CAVE: What college was this?

TRIMBLE: The university, LSU, university. It's still going on, *Reveille*. We were editors of it our senior year. He was from Natchez. We would go up to Natchez. I'd go to meet his family up there. They had a lovely house called Linden up there, which is still -- it's 1790 house, but it's still there. I love that. When we finished school, another war came. I was a senior [then?] Bud was. He had joined the Navy. He was not active, but he had joined when he saw what was coming. I was on my way to graduate school at Columbia University. I was going to go and do that. I had always thought I would do that. When the war came -- Pearl Harbor. I can remember it as if it were yesterday. When that day came, he immediately went into the Navy. He was shipped off somewhere, and I decided that I wasn't going to go to Columbia. I had a job offered to me in Chicago, in an advertising agency. So I went there. That's the first time I'd ever been out of Louisiana, I think, and the first

time I'd ever encountered snow when I arrived. I think it was like this when I took off at the Panama Limited, and mother and father saw me off. When we got to Chicago, it was five degrees. Quite a shock. I stayed there all during the war, World War II, and he went off soon enough to -- he was, for a while, at Northwestern there, in Midshipmen School, and then he became a captain of a PT boat. The PT boat was made right here in New Orleans. Andrew Higgins made that. I remember he came down to get that, and I didn't come. I had that job. But my mother and father came in and went out to the lake where [00:15:00] the PT boat was and saw Bud off. He went down through the Panama Canal, into the Pacific. I did not see him again for two years. I corresponded with him as best I could, and he with me, but he didn't come back until he had a lot of encounters over there. It was rough over there in the Pacific. But he remained unscathed and came back at the end of the war, just about the end of the war, and came on to Chicago. We stayed there for a while. I was doing freelance writing. We had always thought that we were going to -- our dream in college was that we were going to get a little country newspaper, and we thought we'd get the *Houma Courier*, which now, I think, is owned by the *New York Times*. That was what we were going to do, just sell that.

But when Bud came back -- I remember the day he got in from California and he came. I went to the train station at Chicago to meet him. The first thing he said, "Gen, I've got to tell you, I've changed my mind in the two years that I've been out there in the Pacific. I don't want to go into journalism." And so he didn't, and he later on went with Merrill Lynch. When he died, he was the manager, vice president, the manager of the Merrill Lynch office here.

CAVE: When did you come back to New Orleans?

TRIMBLE: Right after the war. We came back, I would say, about six months afterward. We made a decision. We came down. We would always come down for Christmas and things like that. We were waiting for -- you didn't fly those days. You went on the Panama Limited, overnight. We went down in the Quarter, and we went to the Cafe Du Monde and got coffee, and went over into Jackson Square and sat there. I remember it was a beautiful night. It was just -- we were going to take off, I think, around five o'clock, and so we had gone there. We sat there with the coffee, and we were looking at the cathedral, and we said, you know, this is where we belong. Our family is here, our forebears, and we should not be up in Chicago. So we made the decision sitting there in Jackson Square, drinking coffee au lait. Shortly afterwards, about five or six months later, we came

on down here.

CAVE: Where did you live when you came down?

TRIMBLE: I lived in the Quarter. We lived at 730 -- well, we lived, for a while, in the 800 block, and then we moved. The [Dickson?] had a very lovely antique shop, and they owned this house at 731 Royal. It's there today. It had a lovely court, hidden. I don't know how I made acquaintance with Mrs. Dickson, but we moved there, and we stayed there until we bought a house. We stayed there for some months back there. It was delightful. I loved -- and that was my really first encounter of being down there in the Quarter, and I loved it.

CAVE: Talk a little bit about what the Quarter was like in the '40s.

TRIMBLE: I go down there now often, because I belong to [Liberty Sala?], and I'm down there quite often. It was vastly different in my memory then, because it was much quieter, and you knew a lot of people on the street. There were a lot of interest-- I'm sure there are a lot of interesting people now. I know some of those interesting people. But you knew people. I would walk a lot in the Quarter. I'd go down to that place, Solari, where I could get lunch. I'd walk down there. I'd walk on Royal Street. Bourbon Street was much more [00:20:00] quiet and sedate at that

time. It was a lovely environment. Then we moved. We bought 835 Chartres Street. We moved from the Dickson's and bought a house there, at 835 Chartres Street. It's right almost at the head of Madison Street that went right there. We loved it there, but things -- life changes for you. We had been married quite a long time, and we found out we were going to have a baby, and Morrell was born. We knew that our house at 835 was a lovely house, and it had a little courtyard and all that and everything, but it wasn't big enough for us with a child. So that's how we came here.

CAVE: Talk a little bit about Solari's.

TRIMBLE: Solari? It was an institution. You would go there. People went there a lot for lunch and sat at the counter, and it was really just like one of these stores now here, but it had a lot of charm. They had everything. Big barrels of olives that you could take olives out of, and all sorts of things that were very intriguing. Wonderful coffee. People gathered there a lot. Went there for lunch. I miss it right today when I go down there and I don't see it there. I wish it were there still.

CAVE: Were there street performers in the Quarter? Were there street performers?

TRIMBLE: Yes, there were. There were all sorts of street -- and

more than performers, Mark. I remember street characters. There was a woman, and maybe you've heard about her. For a long time, she was there. She was called the -- I don't know whether it was -- I can't remember whether she was called the Duck Woman or the Goose Woman, but she carried a duck. She would walk in front of our house on Chartres, and she'd walk all the way in the Quarter. I don't know where she was going, but she was carrying that duck, and they called her the Duck Woman. There were so many interesting people that I knew down there. There was a place, and it's still there today, the Coffee Pot Restaurant. You know where that is? It's on -- isn't it Dumaine it's on? Yes, I think. I went there a lot. I would meet people. I was writing. I was doing freelance writing. Bud was at Merrill Lynch. I would meet people at the Coffee Pot. For example, I knew Tennessee Williams when he was working there, and I liked him very much, and we'd have coffee together a lot. There were so many people like that, that were working, writing, down there. It was interesting, stimulating to me.

CAVE: How did you meet Tennessee Williams?

TRIMBLE: I met him through a group that Bud and I met down in the Quarter who were living there, and Tennessee was writing, and I think maybe he was writing the *Streetcar*. I

believe that was when he was doing *A Streetcar Called Desire*. When I'd go in there to have coffee, a lot of times I would sit with him. He had several friends with him, and I got to know all those people. Then Harnett Kane was another person that I met down there, and who became a very close friend of mine, and he was writing. There were all sorts of people like that. Later, not early, but a little later, Frances Parkinson Keyes bought the house down there, and I knew her very well. There were so many interesting people that I knew. It was stimulating. I loved it. It was like a little colony of people. It stimulated me, because I was writing then. I was doing freelance writing, but I was writing short stories [00:25:00] for *Seventeen Magazine* and things like that, and it stimulated me to meet people. I had a friend, Alice Walworth Graham, who wrote a number of books. She was a relative of Bud's. She was writing. It stimulated you. I was living not far from the Petit Theatre, and I became active in that. I didn't do acting, but I did stage managing and all that, and I knew Ethel Crumb Brett, who was very famous. She was the director of that little theatre.

CAVE: Talk a little bit about Harnett Kane. How did you meet him? Talk a little bit about his life.

TRIMBLE: I guess I met him through this group of writers. We would get together and we knew each other. I really liked Harnett, and we were close friends. He was a very prolific writer. He wrote all the time. I went to Europe with him, Bud and I did, on two occasions. It was very nice. We went and toured some places in Europe with him. He became, later, the president of the English-Speaking Union down in the Quarter. They were very active. I don't know whether they're still --

CAVE: What is that, English-Speaking Union?

TRIMBLE: It was an organization that had people who were of English origin. They would meet and have lectures. A lot of them were writers and so forth. I think it's still going on. Of course, after I got up here, which was a totally different environment, living Uptown, I gradually fell away from that. But for a long time, I knew Harnett. They used to say that the rare -- he was very prolific. He wrote loads of books on Louisiana. They would say that the really rare book was the one that he hadn't autographed. If you could find one that he hadn't autographed, it would be rare. They teased him about that.

CAVE: Was there a bookstore in the Quarter that you would go to?

TRIMBLE: Yes. Wait, let me see if I can -- I knew her very --

and I met her, and she later came up here, right up here, and had a bookstore. Bess... Bess. Isn't that funny? That slipped my mind. But she knew all the writers, and she would have book signings for them, and kept us together. Bess --

CAVE: Was it the Basement Bookshop that's up here?

TRIMBLE: Yes, the Basement Bookshop.

CAVE: But they had one in the Quarter, or she --

TRIMBLE: Yes, they had one there for a while, and then she was right up here, right near Newcomb and Tulane. I knew her forever. Sue Hayes, who was a friend of mine, had her book signing there when she wrote a book and all that, and Alice Graham, who was writing. All these people, Bess would have parties for them. That's how we all stayed together, all these writers and everything. That was a very pleasant memory, and I always feel that when I go down in the Quarter, I relive those associations and memories. But it is different now. But times have to change, and it's very bustling now. A lot there that wasn't there before.

CAVE: Did you know Lyle Saxon?

TRIMBLE: I did not know him personally, but I knew him very well, his writing. I had books of his and all that. But he wasn't a close friend of mine.

CAVE: Talk about Frances Parkinson Keyes and how you met her.

TRIMBLE: Yes. She was very -- I liked her very much, but she was a very -- you knew who she was when you met. She would come to the salon down the street there -- or up the street. I got [00:30:00] to know her very well. Then the house there, this garden club that I belonged to, we adopted her garden and have been keeping it up for years. We do that as a project.

CAVE: Talk a little bit more about your work with the little theatre.

TRIMBLE: Ethel Crumb Brett was her name, and she was -- everyone knew Ethel. She was the director. Bud's family knew her, and I knew her very, very well. We lived very close. She was living in the Pontalba apartments right across -- almost across -- the square from where the little theatre was. I got very close to her, and I began to do a lot of stage managing for her. I would go there and do -- because I love the theatre. I'd go and help her with that. She just died. That's the trouble of being 95 years old. Everyone dies. But I shouldn't complain about that. My mother had a long life, and she would come, in her later years, here. She's lived in Houma, always in her house. She would never leave her house in Houma. That was a good thing, I know, in retrospect. You should stay in your own environment if you want to live a long time. Don't move

too much when you're old. Mother would come here, and we'd go in the living room there, and we always had a big fire and a tree, and we'd sit there, and Bud would fix us old fashions, which we would drink. He would say, "Here's to you, mother," something like that, a little toast, and she'd say, "I am going to drink to -- this is my last Christmas," and she started saying that when she was 80. Every Christmas, she would say, "Well, Bud, we're going to drink to my -- this is my last Christmas here. I love it, and I will remember it." She lived to be 100. Just about a few weeks short of 100. I think I've inherited her longevity, because I'm just five years away from 100.

CAVE: How did you get involved in the salon?

TRIMBLE: With what?

CAVE: The salon.

TRIMBLE: When I moved here and was living in the Quarter, my aunt on my mother's side was living here. She had married a New Orleanian. She was on the board of the salon. So she enticed me. She said -- here I was, very young. All these people were older people. Because when I joined, Dorothy Dix was president of it. I remember meeting the great Dorothy Dix. She was at the height of her literary life as a writer, writing that column that she wrote, "Dear Dorothy Dix." I think that's how I got in, because now I

am the oldest member of the salon. They've designated me as the oldest member. I might be oldest in years for all I know, but I have been a member for the longest time. All of my peers have died, and I'm there.

CAVE: What year did you join?

TRIMBLE: I'll have to look it up. I can tell you. It would have to have been -- I've been a member -- I can let you know. I have it, I think, in the book. Before you go, I'll give it to you. It was -- I can get it in a minute and give it to you, because I have another book. I've enjoyed that. I've been on the board for ages. I even wrote the history of the salon, which is in the [00:35:00] Historic New Orleans Collection, the little book I wrote. It's a wonderful experience, because it's in that wonderful house there. We own that house at 620 Saint Peter Street. It's a very historic house, and we keep it up. Originally, I think there were more writers and people like that when I joined, but now it's a social club. But people who are interested in literature and music and the life of the Quarter. So it's still in that category. It's right next door to the little theatre and Ethel Crumb Brett.

CAVE: Talk a little bit more about Dorothy Dix.

TRIMBLE: Dorothy Dix? She was a very -- she had a dry humor about her that I just loved. She presided -- she was quite

old when -- she died when she was 90. When I joined, she probably was about 85 or something. She would be there every Thursday afternoon, standing in line. What we'd do there, you always had to wear -- to receive people, you had to wear white gloves. It's unheard of today, but that was what you -- you went down there with white gloves. She presided very, very -- she was a formal type of person, but wonderful wit if you read her stories, her columns that have been written in between [covers?]. She just had really a very good sense of humor, and she was active up until the day she died. She was a very, very wonderful woman. I liked her. And one of the earliest big writers. When I joined the salon, she was well-known, not only in New Orleans, but New York. She had worked in New York. She was nationally known. She had been decorated in England as an [art?] of letters. She was well-known everywhere. She was the premiere -- what do you call them? What do you call that there? The columns. [Lovelorn?] columns, I guess. She wrote hilarious things on it, with tongue in cheek.

CAVE: What were some of the interesting programs that the salon did when you were first starting in the '50s and '60s?

TRIMBLE: What were the interesting things?

CAVE: Programs, speakers that you had.

TRIMBLE: We had all of these people. [Want to?] talk about Lyle Saxon, and Ms. Keyes, and all those people who were in the arts. You didn't have to be the letters, but art. There were many artists down there. Anyone that was interested in the arts, we endeavored to have come and speak to us. You learned a lot. When I look back at the people we had - - and we still try to do that now, but it's broadened a little while. For example, one of the things we'd never do is have politics. We'd never discuss politics. It's not a political organization. So when you come there, you don't know whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or what. And never religious. We would have Christmas programs, but we didn't do the [ayes and the nos?] of religion and politics. Which I think is undoubtedly what has kept it going, keeping it [00:40:00] neutral like that.

CAVE: Talk a little bit about your own writing.

TRIMBLE: My own writing? I did a lot in Chicago. Of course, I did mostly advertising. I did advertising for [Ruth Roth and Ryan?], a big advertising agency. Then I did write for magazines, women's magazines. Then when I got down here and I got involved with the salon and with all these different organizations and the community, I didn't do that much. At that time -- am I talking too long?

CAVE: Oh, no. No, it's perfect.

TRIMBLE: By that time, we were still going up. When we were living here, we were still going up to Natchez to see Bud's mother, who was living in one of those antebellum houses. We would pass this place called Afton Villa that was on Highway 61 going -- there was a big gate there, and a doorman, a gateman, there. One day, Bud said, "I want you to see this place. It's unusual." So we paid at the gate and went in, and we went down this half-mile avenue with oaks, gothic oak drive, planted with all these hundred-year-old azaleas, and all of a sudden, you'd turn and there was this mammoth gothic villa. Forty-one rooms. It was at the time when Daphne du Maurier wrote this hit, a hit book, *Rebecca*. I remember when I saw that that day, I thought, this is *Rebecca*, and this is the house. "Manderley" was the name of the house in *Rebecca*. I very seldom saw it again. We'd go by it and wave to the gateman. But it always stayed in my memory. One day we picked up the *Picayune*, 1963, I think, '63, and it said "Afton Villa has burned to the ground." Just nothing left of it. I was so sad. But we had passed it, and we could see it was going down. There were 250 acres in it. It was going down. I said, "You know what? This place is going to be sold, and somebody's going to make a big subdivision out of it." And

what a shame, because the garden is a 19th-century garden, and there are very few of them. We heard that it was for sale, and so one day we pushed open the gates when we were going up to Natchez and walk through. I can't tell you how it was on the brink of oblivion. We came home, and Bud said, "Well, I can tell you what's going to happen. Someone is going to buy that. It's big. They're going to make subdivisions. It's near Baton Rouge." I said, "But wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody would buy it not to do that, or not to even build another house there of that magnitude, if you could, but someone who would want to save this 19th-century garden?" And before we knew it, we did it. So we bought it. I've been there ever since. It's been 45 years, almost 46 years, that I've been working in that garden. That disrupted my writing, but I kept a journal of everything I did there all those years. Just about four or five years ago, when I knew I was getting old, I decided I was going to write the book about it, and I did. You haven't seen it?

CAVE: I haven't. We may have it in our library, but I'm not sure, but --

TRIMBLE: I don't know whether you do or not. I have one here. I'll show you. Oh, wait, I can't move. It's taken almost a year to do all that. I think that's why I have this

frozen shoulder [00:45:00] and this thing in my neck. That's what the doctor said, "You've been signing too many books." But anyway. It's a little late for me to start another book. I really would like to write some fiction again. But short stories are (inaudible), and that's what my forte was, short stories. The days of Somerset Maugham and all those short stories, it's gone. There are not very many places that you -- the short story has declined, I'm sad to say. There's not too much market for that. The *New Yorker* still does it, and a few, but there's not a great demand for the short fiction. They [more?] big books. I don't think I can attempt, at my age, another big novel.

CAVE: Let's jump back to your time in the Quarter again. Describe the property that you owned on Chartres Street, at 835.

TRIMBLE: What about it?

CAVE: Describe it, what it was like when you --

TRIMBLE: Eight thirty-five Chartres? Well, it's one of three houses that were built around that time. It's on Chartres Street, just about to Dumaine Street. Our house was just -- mine was one of three, and they look very much alike, a little different. It was not a large house, but it was just -- we had a nice courtyard, and we had slave quarters in the back, and we had bedrooms back there, and one big

bedroom in the house. Beautiful stairway, a curved stairway, and a lovely, long living room that overlooked Chartres Street, and a balcony. I had a letter from the man who now owns it the other day. He was asking me something about the post in the front, if we had redone those when we came in. I said, "No, we haven't." But he was having a little trouble with the (inaudible) people, because he wanted to put some other kind of posts, and they didn't want him to do that. They wanted him to retain the integrity of that building, which I think is good. As far as I know, he's living there. The other two houses -- one of them at the corner of Dumaine and Chartres, I think is some kind of store now. When I was there, people were living in it.

CAVE: Did you know any of the older French-speaking residents of the Quarter at that time?

TRIMBLE: Yes. Were there a lot of people? Yes. My aunt, for example, she spoke fluent French. A lot of people in the salon, when I first went there and joined there, were a lot of French-speaking people. They were largely people from old families along Esplanade, where all those people lived, all going all the way to City Park there. A lot of those people were old, old families, and people in the Quarter. Of course, I knew very well General and Ms. Williams,

because General Williams was a good friend of my father's. As a matter of fact, I was so touched that when my father died in Houma, General Williams came out with his chauffeur, alone, to the funeral. A short time later, he died. As I recall, he fell down the steps at -- I guess it was -- I don't think it was Trinity. I think it must have been Christ Church Cathedral. But I knew them, and they would have us for dinner at night [00:50:00] when we were down there. I loved both of them. I thought they were just -- I was trying to think of the artist that was there. What is his name?

CAVE: Boyd Cruise.

TRIMBLE: Boyd Cruise. He did a painting of the salon, and we had it made into prints, which we sold to our membership. I have one somewhere here in the house. I knew Boyd, too.

CAVE: What was he like?

TRIMBLE: What was he like? Well, he was very gentlemanly, and I thought very nice. I didn't know him very well. I just knew him -- speaking acquaintance, and I'd see him when I'd go that way on Royal Street. But he did do that -- I remember he did that very nice picture of the [David?] house, which is what our salon is. I liked him.

CAVE: We, of course, keep the Williams's house as it was when they lived in the Quarter. Do you remember anything about

your dinners with the Williams there? Anything about the decorations? Anything that might stick in your mind.

TRIMBLE: I just know it was very lovely. We ate in the dining room, and very well-served and all that, and beautiful furniture.

CAVE: What was Kemper Williams like? What was his personality?

TRIMBLE: I thought he was -- I really always thought that he was a lot like my father. He was very smart, and he was dignified. I really didn't see a lot of them, but we kept up an acquaintance, because he knew my father and all that. And I knew her, too.

CAVE: What were some of the other places that you and your husband would go to in the French Quarter?

TRIMBLE: Some of the other places? I guess I pretty much covered the Quarter. Bud and I were very fond of discovering the Quarter and all that. There was a woman named Elizabeth [Stegeman?], and she was married to Phillip Stegeman, who was an Englishman who came here. They lived at the corner of Dumaine and Royal, right there, right around the corner from us. I liked her very much. There was [Anne Strong?], who is now Anne [Ikeman?]. She was living around the corner. There were so many -- and who was that? There were several writers that I knew around

there, especially around in the Pontalba apartments. I would go there a lot. There was a little place called the -- I think it's still there. It was the -- what is it called? It's on Bourbon, back there. It was quite a place that people gathered. Can you remember what that was? I think it's still there. I should remember that. It was a blacksmith shop or something.

CAVE: Oh, Lafittes. Lafittes.

TRIMBLE: Do you know where that is?

CAVE: Yeah.

TRIMBLE: That was very popular. People would go there to have drinks at night and sit around, and people who would come in town would be drawn there. It was a very popular place. Then, of course, I covered all the eating places, Antoine's and...

CAVE: Was there still a big Sicilian population in the Quarter? Was there still a big Sicilian population [00:55:00] in the Quarter?

TRIMBLE: Yes, there was. There was. There were a lot of people who were coming into the Quarter. You see, when we came, I think people were just moving down. It had been regarded as a bohemian place, kind of a little out of limits for more conservative New Orleanians. But when Bud and I came down to New Orleans -- that was at the end of the war --

people were moving more and more down there. There were just lovely -- it was a lovely colony of people who had residences there. I imagine you could say that today. But I have gone so far away from living in the Quarter. I don't know much about it now. The French market was still there, flourishing, and a lot of those little antique shops, [Henry Sterns?], and [Casey and Casey?] was one of them that was so nice. Most of those houses -- Ms. [Fryerson?] had a lovely building in there, and she had antiques. It was very small. Her granddaughter is one of my best friends now. She's Mrs. Fryerson. There were lots of very stable people living down there, particularly as you go back toward Esplanade. I imagine it's that way today. I don't know very many people who live in the Quarter. There are several of them who belong to the salon that I know are members, but not living there, I don't see them very often.

CAVE: Did you know the Sterns, Edgar Stern and his wife?

TRIMBLE: I knew them, yes. I knew Ms. Stern. For a long while, I was on the board of Longue Vue, and I knew Ms. Stern very well, and Edgar, too. I volunteered out there for a long time, and then I moved on to the botanical garden, which I helped to restore. I raised the money for the pavilion out there, and I was president of the foundation out there. So

I didn't do much of Longue Vue after that. I was full-time out at the botanical garden. We did the conservatory. I worked out there for 25 years.

CAVE: Talk a little bit more about that.

TRIMBLE: I know a lot about doing that. It was like Afton Villa. It was about to go down, and so I became interested in it. I did that when I was living here, not in the Quarter, though.

CAVE: Talk a little bit more about that. Did you always have an interest in horticulture and gardens?

TRIMBLE: Yes. My mother was quite a plantswoman, and she loved -- they had a beautiful garden out in Houma, right on the border. I didn't take too much interest in it, except to admire it, all that. But she loved her garden and all that, and I guess it transferred to me, just quietly. I didn't realize I was absorbing all of that. But it was not -- and then when we moved here, this was just about gone, too, and so I took an interest in this, and then Afton Villa. I got very much interested. I belong to the Garden Club of America and all that. But that has sort of robbed me of my first love of writing. I was so glad that I did do this book before I died, because I had always wanted to write. I did short stories and everything, but [01:00:00] got away from that. So this book -- I don't know what made

me decide I was going to put it down, the history of that [garden?]. So that robbed me of doing -- but I was working at the botanical garden when I was writing that, too. I just recently resigned from my post there when I got too interested to keeping this, and keeping that garden, because we have now -- we have it opened year-round, almost, from March 1st until July 1st, when it gets too hot. Then we'd have it from October to December 1st. Six months, we'd open it. We have loads of people come through, tours, and we do have lots of weddings. People love to get married there. Morrell, my daughter, she works up in Washington for Senator Dole, Bob Dole. She said that she's getting more and more people calling every day -- I don't know why -- to be married there. That seems to be quite the thing, to be married in a garden, I guess. We have five big weddings in March, and we have four in April, and then it goes on like that until we close. I have a lot to do with that. I have to keep a staff going up there. That takes a lot of my time. I own this house right there where you parked, the one that's on -- because we have our swimming pool there, and I have someone living in that house.

CAVE: Talk about this house. You moved here in 1950. Talk about who built this house and the history behind it.

TRIMBLE: When I bought it, what it was like? Dr. [Weiss?], who lived here, he -- to be quite old. He never married. He lived here. But he would spend a lot of time in Europe, too. He would go into Europe. So that's why this house has that French look. Richard Koch, who was a well-known architect here, built this for him in 1927. I think I told you at the beginning that Milton [Nussbaum?] was this man who worked for Henry Stern at the antique shop where I bought some of my furniture. He was the one who told me, when Dr. Weiss died, he said, "You know, there's a house up there. It's hidden away. It's behind gates. You would never know it was there. I think you and Bud would love that house." That's how we bought it, through Milton. He called up the family, because Dr. Weiss had no family. He never married. The Weiss family said -- they were connected, the Weiss family was connected with the Natchez, so when they found out Bud was from Natchez that sealed the deal. They wanted us to have it. They thought we were a nice, young couple and that would be nice for us to have it. So we bought it from the state. This was just a screen place in here, so we did this, and then the garden was just about gone, and we did this. But when we first bought it, this was just all we had. We didn't have that parking lot where you parked, or that house. Mrs. Moore

lived there, and her son. Later, as we grew older, and she died, Albert wanted to sell that property, and so we bought it and put our pool and pool house over there, and then started renting that house. That's a pretty big house. It has five bedrooms. [01:05:00] But it's nice, because it protects -- people have always wanted to say, "Don't you want to sell it?" and I think, I really would, because I don't need any more property. But it protects me here, because I can protect my house down here at the dead end. If somebody was living there, I would have no control over it. So it's very good, as long as I can continue to do that. That's it. I'm still in the same town after all these years.

CAVE: I don't have any other questions. Is there any big part of your life that we didn't talk about that you wanted to?

TRIMBLE: I think I've told you just about everything. Can you think of anything that you -- I only have one child. She works for Bob Dole, and she's right hand up there. But she's married, and I think they're going to -- when Bob Dole dies -- because he's 93 now, and he's not well. If anything happens to him, I think Morrell and Fred will come down here. They have a little -- I told you, they have a little condo on [Miller?] Street. I think -- she works.

She's very involved in Rex and Comus. She puts on the Rex and Comus party, the Queen's Supper, that is the end of carnival. Morrell does all of that from Washington. Now she's doing the -- she does calligraphy, and she does all the 600 or so invitations by hand, and she calls up people, and she arranges for the flowers, the menu, everything. I don't see how she does it up there. But she comes down here -- well, she comes about every three weeks and stays a few days and helps me. We go up to Afton, because we have a lot going on there. We have -- I love having her here, because she helps me a great deal. So that's that. I would love for you to meet her, and for her to meet you and your new wife, because she's very wonderful. That's her picture there. You see? We're in the...

CAVE: Is that at Afton?

TRIMBLE: That's at Afton, where the tulips -- they're planting tulips today. We always plant tulips. I plant about five to eight thousand tulips every time at this time. But we had that tornado touch down there a couple weeks, on Monday, when we had all that rain. I'm just frightened as to what we're going to be able to do now. You see, the tulips -- it was very cold there, and now it's warm. It's just like this up there, and it's bad to be planting the tulips in this warm weather, but we have to do it. The men

are doing that right this minute, trying to get all those tulips in the ground. I hope it's going to -- you never know when you're fooling with flowers and horticulture. You don't know -- you're at the mercy of God. I don't know what that tornado did to the azaleas, because I don't know how -- they had been showing the buds, like these are, and to have a tornado get down in there, I don't know what's going to happen this year, but we are going to do our best. So Morrell and I just are really going up there. She's coming on the 21st, and we're going to go on up there. I have this friend, who I'll show you this --

END OF AUDIO FILE