

Memoirs of Growing Up
by
Van and Dot

GROWING UP YEARS OF D.Parr de F.

We lived in a house in Brooklyn, N.Y. It was attached to a row of similar houses in a section of the city called Flatbush. This was not "down town", nor was it quite the suburbs. We had a small lawn in front and a "yard", as we called it in back. The yard had a center area of grass surrounded by a border of flower beds, in the care of which Mother slaved and struggled and never gave up.

Dad and Mother and Van and I comprised our immediate family. Then, for a time, Mother's brother Uncle Billy, starting out as an M.D., had his office in our house too. This was very exciting for me. I at once declared that I wanted to be a doctor, only to be told that girls couldn't be doctors, could only be nurses. I was crushed by this. Pronounced it UNFAIR.

Van and I walked to P.S. 92, our grade school. I think Miss Castle, our excellent principal, knew every child in that school. Since the main business of the First Grade was the teaching of reading, and since we already knew how to read, we started in the Second Grade. Classes were mixed, boys and girls, in the early grades. Then, along about grade 5 or 6 or so, boys and girls were in separate classes.

There were no family relations on our street, but we did have aunts and uncles in nearby parts of Brooklyn. Uncle Joe and his family lived on Carroll Street, and Aunt Lottie and Uncle Herbert farther out in Flatbush. Aunt Louise and Uncle Gene and family lived up in New Rochelle. We loved to visit there because they were near Long Island Sound and we could go swimming there. Another plus was that one of her daughters, Gena Valentine, had become a bacteriologist, which I then thought I might try to be since I couldn't (PACE, Uncle Bill) be a doctor. . Meanwhile I enthusiastically smelled up the cellar with my Chemcraft chemistry set. To get to New Rochelle, we took, of course, the train.

In order to pursue my medical ambitions, however elusive, I set up a little hospital with my dolls. Put them all in bed and dosed them vigorously with liquids of my own concoction. I enjoyed this thoroughly. Unfortunately the dolls then fell apart.

Dad's father, Granpa Linden, also lived on Brooklyn. and was, we thought, a great asset. He had a CAR! It was a Maxwell open touring car with driver's seat on the right and headlights to be lit by hand. To start it, one had to go to the front and crank it up by hand. We greatly enjoyed going for rides in it. Granpa didn't bother about traffic rules or other driving conventions. (For one thing, there were not that many cars on the road.) Also, when policemen stopped him for some infringement, it turned out that they knew him because he had been their music teacher in school. Or so Dad used to tell us.

We lived near Prospect Park, a fine big park still much in use today. We would walk over to the park to go ice-skating in winter or to have picnics or to play what we fondly called tennis. Beside the park was the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, then a mostly open stretch of lawns surrounding a big greenhouse. Mother loved to go there and often took us with her. Now the BBG has become one of the top horticultural centers of the whole country.

We used to go as a family to a nearby movie house called, I think, the Bedford Rest. There we watched Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, etc. Talking movies hadn't arrived yet. But there was always a pianist who accompanied the film and could play absolutely anything. He -- or often she -- would ad lib the quieter scenes gently, then break into furious gallops for the chase scenes. (There was always a chase scene.) Though we took them for granted, those pianists, long since vanished, were artists at their jobs.

When we were 9 years old World War I broke out. We were encouraged to hate the Kaiser. I remember that in school the German songs were pasted over in our music books so that we could not sing them. And at a block party on our street an effigy of the Kaiser was burned, to the accompaniment of loud cheers.

One day in school the teacher said that anyone who had a violin could have a lesson for 25¢. Twenty-five cents !! This must be something terrific. Van and I took a violin we found in the attic (I don't recall where we got a second one.) and our money and began lessons. I don't know how the music teacher stood it. Contrary to my dear brother's report, he stood outside when I was practicing so no one would think he was making those awful scratchings. I kept on with the violin, shifting to a lovely teacher who lived just across and enjoying playing in school orchestras and trios and quartets for practically the rest of my life. .

Radio began to become popular during those early years. At first it produced only dots and dashes, and we had to try to learn Morse code. Van had made a contraption that seemed to be a cylinder around which he had wound some wires. It seemed to me incredible that this thing could pick up dots and dashes from somewhere else and send them to us. But it did. Later on words could be sent over the air -- I don't really understand it yet --- and we listened to programs like Amos and Andy.

Our family summer vacations were usually -- no, practically always -- spent at the Beaverkill Trout Club, where Dad liked to fish. He got us small - sized rods and had us practice casting. Van became an expert dry-fly trout fisherman, which he is to this day. I mostly fell in.

It was a happy childhood. Mother was full of imagination and fun, and so were her brothers, Uncle Bill and Uncle Harold. Mother liked to celebrate holidays. On St. Patrick's Day, the table would be decorated in green; on the 4th of July, red white and blue. And on April Fool's Day anything could happen.

I remember consulting Mother when there was a big flap about allowing women to vote. Was she for it? She said yes, she was, but she suspected that, for a while at least, they might just vote the way their husbands told them to. The 19th Amendment was passed when I was 12 years old.

It seems to me now, looking back, that my days outside of school were spent riding my bicycle. I loved my bike. I also jumped rope with other girls on the block. I put great effort into trying to be accepted on Van's sand-lot baseball team. Mother didn't approve of this at all. She wanted me to be more lady-like. Then at last in high school I discovered field hockey, and enjoyed that even into college. I do not seem to recall much embroidering or knitting, let alone tatting, which in those days many ladies did.

I liked Erasmus Hall High School a lot, and always thought I received a good education there. Dr. Low, our principal, had somehow persuaded the City Board of Education to give him the power to select and hire his own teachers. Thus my Latin teacher was Dr. Scott, and three of my other teachers also had their Ph.D.'s. When my class graduated from Erasmus, only a third of them were going on to college. And of that third, only about one fourth were girls. I can still remember Dad saying, "If the boy can have college, then the girl must be able to have it too, if she wants it." That was very advanced of him for those times, and I was grateful.

Dad never sang. Perhaps Granpa Linden had told him he didn't have a good enough ear. What Dad did do, though, was to quote from books he had read and never forgotten. What a memory he had!

"It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done" he would announce in tones of triumph. Not until much later, when I read "The Tale of Two Cities" for myself did I realize where he got that from.

Or, adapting Mr. Longfellow a bit, he would say, "Let us fold our tents like the Arabs, and as silently steal away" when it was time to go collect the family and go somewhere.

As Mother went about the house attending to various domestic duties, I remember her as always singing. Gilbert and Sullivan were her special favorites.

"My object all sublime", she would sing
(while, say, mashing the potatoes.)

"I shall achieve in time.
To make the punishment fit the crime,
The punishment fit the crime."

She also liked "Three little maids from school are we", which she sang, as always, to the right tune.

She was also full of practical ideas. Since our kitchen had a "set tub" right next to the kitchen sink, she saw no reason why the dishes couldn't be washed in that. Dad made her a wooden rack to fit the tub bottom. She fitted the dishes into it, connected a hose with a spray nozzle to the kitchen faucet, put it in the tub with the dishes, closed the lid of the tub, and turned on the hot water full force. Unfortunately, the lid of the tub had no latch, and the water pressure was very strong. The hose stood straight up, like a serpent, forcing the lid open and spraying scalding water all over the kitchen. Dad dashed down the cellar to turn off the water at the main. Still, the basic principal was exactly as that of the modern dishwasher. As Dee's husband Al said, "She was years ahead of her time".

That episode is, I think now as I look back, a real family plus. Disasters were not disgrace. Things sometimes went wrong, of course they did. That happens to all of us. But we were never told we were hopeless flops. Instead we were encouraged to pick ourselves up and go ahead and try again.

VAN'S RECORD OF HIS MEMORIES OF HIS GROWING-UP YEARS

The first home I have any recollection of was at 150 Sterling Street, Brooklyn. It was a two-story brick with stone front and a small set of steps, usually called a stoop. There were two doors on the outside of the vestibule, on each of which the number "150" had been applied in gold leaf. These numbers did not quite match, a variation I had directly caused. I played a game of "point" -- usually with a tennis ball. If the ball was thrown against the point, which constitutes the top edge of a stone step, it would come back in the air, and, if caught by the player on the fly, he scored points. If it hit the vertical face of a step, it would come back and be caught on the first bounce. The player lost his turn if he did not catch the ball on the fly or the first bounce. If the ball bounced from the point against the door, the player also lost his turn. One day I was playing with a hard rubber ball the size of a golf ball and marked with bumps, and of course the ball hit too high on a point and broke the plate glass door. When replaced, the man who put on the gold leaf could not, or at least did not, match the configuration of 150 on the other vestibule door.

There was a central foyer the width of the house (it was an attached house in a row of similar homes) and the staircase ran against one wall. There was a landing at the bottom of the stairs and one or two steps into the room with a railing at the landing. Beyond the railing was a small corner with seats on two sides which were kept covered with cushions. This corner was the right size for a bridge table and in fact was so used. Dorothy and I used to enjoy getting up to the top of the stairs and "flying" down over the railing and into the cozy corner, landing safely in a pile of cushions. We have very clear memories of this, and it is no use telling us this was all in our imagination.

We moved from 150 Sterling Street to 274 Lefferts Avenue, one street further south and one avenue further east, in 1915, when we were seven years old. This involved no change from P.S.92, and we simply took our lunch that day and came home after 3 to the new house. The Sterling Street house had electricity. The Lefferts Avenue house had gas when we moved in, although electricity subsequently came down the street and was installed.

Grandpa Linden had lived with us for a while in Sterling Street, and after he remarried, which Dad could not understand, "Uncle" Will Heaton lived with us for a short while.

Will Heaton was a close and musical friend of Dad's, played the organ and was a choirmaster, as was Dad. Both of these jobs were not full time, but a weekend moonlighting job to earn extra income. The most notable thing about Will Heaton was that his collars and shirts had to go to the St. George Laundry, although Dad's collars and shirts (high, stiff collars and starched cuffs, of course) went to the Pilgrim Laundry. Both laundries picked up and delivered, and it was only necessary to get the right bundle to the right truck.

Years later, shortly after forming Wellman, Smythe, and Lowenstein, I was trying a condemnation case in Federal Court in Brooklyn. Going over from one week to the next, we had a new clerk to mark and record exhibits. This turned out to be Will Heaton, who knew the other lawyer and tried to introduce me to them, adding, "I don't think I know your name". I responded, "Of all people in the world, you should know it best. You're my godfather". He hadn't seen me for 15 years or more, but came right back with the test: "Then recite the Apostle's Creed and the Ten Commandments".

Will Heaton never married, and seemed to move his choir and organ from one church to the next. Running into him at Joe's bar in Brooklyn after Prohibition was repealed, it occurred to me that he probably

had an alcohol problem and that Dad's inquiries about his health, when he visited us, were probably an euphemism for inquiring about excessive binges.

There were variations on Dad's friendship with Will Heaton which we never understood. They had been musical friends, going to operas together and both playing the organ in church. Will Heaton was at St. Matthew's about two choirmasters before Dad was there. Although Will Heaton had lived with us and frequently came to dinner, I have no recollection of Dad going out with him to musical or other stag affairs after we were old enough to notice. As a matter of fact, Thursday night, when Dad went to the Hyatt Lodge meetings, is the only night I remember him going out without Mother. Grace Ebry frequently came to dinner on Thursdays for that reason. Later, Dad would sometimes play in a Title Company billiards tournament, but Will Heaton was not a billiard player.

Will Heaton was a natural musician. Dorothy wrote a song when in high school or college, and Will Heaton read it through and played original music to it. Dad could not play by ear, he was a result of practicing, as Grandpa Linden had made him sit at a reed organ and practice. He was reported to have said, "I will not have a monotone son." Dad made more money from music than any of his brothers, although they, particularly Uncle Joe, could make music more readily. But except for Uncle Lin, who played the organ in church, they did not have the attention to training which Grandpa gave Dad.

I didn't realize how critical Dad must have been about Grandpa marrying Agnes. She was a regular baby-sitter for us after Grandpa's death, or a very few years after he married Agnes, perhaps only one or two.

When Dad and Lill (Lydia Kouwenhoven Buys, whom he met in Dorset and whom we found to be delightful) were to be married, Dad went to unnecessary lengths to explain to me how this was different from Grandpa Linden's marriage: - that Grandpa had been much older (72 or 73 the newspaper clipping said) than Dad, who was then in his late fifties. There must

have been a need for justification, although Dorothy and I had no such feeling about it. We were fond of Lill and only sorry she did not live long after Dad and she were married. Dad had been such a lost soul after Mother's death that it was good to see him take an interest in anything again, vacations, concerts, theater, etc.

Uncle Bill lived with us on Lefferts Avenue, having his office there. The front parlor became his waiting room, and the upstairs front bedroom his office. He joined the Army in World War I in 1917 and was away until 1919. Shortly after returning from the army (he was a medical officer - mustered out as a Captain) he married Blanche Davies and bought a home on Park Place in Brooklyn where he had his office.

The dining room in Lefferts Avenue had a round table - I believe Dorothy had it cut down vertically and now uses it for a coffee table. It had a chandelier over it, originally gas when we moved in, later electric with a coloured glass shade. After dinner and doing dishes, a combined effort of all four of us, the felt top, green felt with elastic around it was put on and we would do our homework while mother sewed and dad read or helped us with homework. One night an algebra problem proved to be a stickler and Dad, Dorothy and I were working on it together. Mother looked at the problem and promptly wrote the answer down in front of her and put her thimble over it. She said she had done it "by inspection" and when we finally solved it, she showed us her answer under the thimble which was right.

Mother had left school at the time of her mother's death to stay home and take care of Uncle Bill, then about six or seven, and Uncle Harold, five years younger. Throughout their lives both Uncle Bill and Uncle Harold were throughly devoted to mother. She had been mother and sister to them, although she was in fact a half sister, her mother having been married to a man named Landers before marrying Grandpa Skidmore who was Uncle Harold and Uncle Bill's father.

Although she left school in the grades, mother read a great deal and was thoroughly educated and cultured. She always sang in Dad's choir as well as in two women's choral clubs, "Mundell" and "Chaminade". She was active in a women's club called "Chiropean" which appears to have been the leading organization of that type in Brooklyn. She believed in enlivening minutes with comment and asides and her minutes as recording secretary of this club were fun for an outsider as well as a member to read. As an illustration, one set of minutes ended:

"Lives of secretaries remind us
Into fame our pens may dip
And departing leave behind us
Samples of our penmanship"

While we were in college, mother was President of Chiropean and as such tried to get McConaughy, then President of Wesleyan, to speak at a club meeting. He responded that he usually received an honorarium of \$150 for such occasions. Mother had to reply that the club budget could not stand an honorarium and McConaughy had avoided giving a speech which would do him no political good without having to say no.

Uncle Lin was the oldest of the six children of Grandpa Linden and as Dad was the youngest there was quite a few years difference in their ages. Uncle Lin was also an organist, by moonlighting hobby, but by the time I remember him he had ceased playing the organ. He was a salesman but apparently traveled less than Uncle Joe. Uncle Lin and Aunt Ella lived in Ridgewood, New Jersey and we went to visit them a few times. There was a sort of estrangement between Uncle Lin and Aunt Ella and Mother and Dad. The Linden Parr Jrs. had a daughter who died at about twelve years of age before Dorothy and I were born. Aunt Ella had the bright idea that Mother and Dad should give her Dorothy, it was unfair to have two children and no one needed two children and Dorothy could take her deceased daughter's place, and besides, they could afford to bring Dorothy up with many more advantages than Mother and Dad could give her and Mother was being very, very selfish in refusing Aunt Ella's request. The fact

that Uncle Lin and Aunt Ella were too old at the time to cope with a baby seemed to be overlooked. I suspect the talk about relative difference was overdrawn also. Uncle Lin died a number of years before Aunt Ella and I remember Aunt Ella's last apartment on Halsey Street in Brooklyn as being pretty dull and gloomy. I never heard of anyone inheriting anything at all from Uncle Lin (his assets probably went to Aunt Ella) or from Aunt Ella.

Aunt Ella was generally believed to DYE HER HAIR because she was never gray and her behavioral aberrations, which amounted only to selfishness and perhaps a sharp tongue, were generally ascribed to the fact that the dye must have penetrated into her brain. This, of course, was offered as a generally believed thesis needing absolutely no scientific authority.

Grandpa Linden taught the alphabet and numbers to us, he would draw men or toy soldier type figures for the letters and we learned to read at a very young age on that account. He did not try to teach us to play the piano, but did sing to and with us. He had a little ditty starting:

"A, B, C, D isn't it easy to sing"
and ending
"So sing the words, the beautiful words and you'll get the air outside".

This is probably the oldest pun I remember. The tune or melody was then usually called the "air".

Grandpa Linden wrote a number of ballads, usually sentimental in nature. One of these was entitled "Little Effie's Hoople" and had to do with a rolling hoop standing against the wall, never to be rolled again because Little Effie had died. Whether this was inspired by Uncle Lin and Aunt Ella's daughter's death (her name was Charlotte) I do not know. Apparently this lachrymose ditty was very popular and made quite a little money.

Not so popular was another entitled "Don't drink my boy, tonight". This was addressed to J.C.S. which were Uncle Joe's initials, but I never heard of drinking being a problem with him. They were also the initials of Grandpa Linden's father and I believe that perhaps they immortalized a father's advice.

The lyrics for Grandpa Linden's ballads were written by our grandmother Sarah Catherine Van Siclen Parr, and the sheet music always reported "Words by S.C.P." This was distinctly downplayed in relation to music by LINDEN L. PARR. Women's lib was a long way off.

In our early days at P.S. 92, they had a violin lesson class. Two violins were dug up and Dorothy and I started group lessons. The noise from this group was astounding. Dorothy, however, was pretty proud of her playing and not very complimentary about mine. We "practiced" at separate times at home and when I practiced, Dorothy always went out to play in the street in front of our house. This was not because she wanted to get away from my less than mellifluous music, but because she boldly, if not blatantly announced that she wanted the neighbors to know she was not the one making those awful sounds. I subsequently took piano lessons, first from Uncle Harold's wife Aunt Betty and later from "Uncle" Bert Weston whose wife "Auntie" Cora was Dorothy's godmother. I solved the problem on being urged to practice very early in life. I always woke early and would go downstairs and practice at the break of dawn. If I chose to miss a day's practice, the family was delighted with the extra sleep and never remonstrated. Of course, the fact that today Dorothy plays violin, viola and everything from guitar to trumpet and piano much better than I can, is clearly due to natural ability which rudely settled on her and missed me. As proof, her children are demonstrably more musical than mine. A poor rationalization is better than no logical reason to avoid criticism for little diligence.

There was a drug store at the corner of Lefferts and Rogers Avenue, Grant's, a half block from our house, where we bought ice cream, ice cream cones, and sodas. One summer day we begged for money, five cents a piece to buy ice cream cones. Mother said, "But you just got your allowance". Dorothy's answer was that allowance was saving money, not spending money. Our united front prevailed, notwithstanding differences between ourselves if our parents ever took exception to actions, requests, demands, etc. from either of us as we always created a united front. It could be Dorothy vs. Van, but was always Dorothy and Van vs. Mother and Dad. I never remember a time when one of us said either of our parents was right and the other one was wrong.

On this particular Sunday afternoon, Dorothy was given ten cents and went to Grant's to get two ice cream cones. Why, I was so foolish as not to go I'll never learn. Anyhow, Dorothy arrived home with one ice cream cone which she was happily licking and an empty cone which she insisted was mine. It seemed that on the way home (half a block) the ice cream fell out of the cone she had decided would be mine. Hers was intact and being enjoyed by her.

WESLEYAN 1925

I had never visited Wesleyan before going to Middletown to enter in September, 1925. At that time, anyone who came reasonably near to meeting entrance requirements was admitted and if college work was unsatisfactory, he flunked out, most of them to go to Rutgers, Lehigh, or North Carolina. About half did not make it and this prompted Dean Nicholson to say to our class, "I have been called the gloomy dean because I predicted to earlier classes that half would not graduate; this year I will be the optimistic dean and predict that half of you will graduate." It seemed mildly amusing in September, 1925, but turned out to be true as half the class did graduate and some did not. It was not until a course in logic in sophomore year that we learned that half will graduate did not negate that more than half might graduate.

I had all requisite entrance requirements except that having rushed through high school in three and a half years to avoid a January graduation, and what seemed then a wasted six months. I had only three and a half years of Latin so I had a Latin condition and was advised that I would have to take an examination in Virgil at the beginning of my sophomore year. This I did and was told by Professor Hewitt, "I guess you passed - anything looks good compared to what the freshmen hand in."

That was the only examination on the order of entrance - exams I had to take for the rest - the Regents examinations sufficed. I had had four years of English to double up and graduate in three and a half years from Manual Training High School in Brooklyn.

During the summer of 1925, I received letters from various fraternities asking me to have "first dates" with them. This meant one went to the

"first date" fraternity, stayed there during rushing season and ate there for a day or a day and a half. After that, the freshman was delivered to the "second date" fraternity for lunch, the "third date" fraternity for lunch the next day, etc.

I am still not sure why I accepted first dates at Chi Psi. Surely I knew no one in the fraternity at Wesleyan or elsewhere. Perhaps it was because it was the first letter I received, perhaps I was intrigued by calling it a "Lodge" rather than a "House", or perhaps the quality of the writing paper or the handwriting of the brother who happened to write the letter (I discovered later it was copied from a form) impressed me. Anyway, I went to Chi Psi for the first dates and base and had later dates at Deke, Delta Tau, Gamma Psi, Sigma Nu, and that is about all. No one on campus heard of me except that Ted Studwell, 1925, a Delta Tau at Wesleyan, who had been a member of a high school fraternity I was in, wrote about me as did Dr. Downey, a former chairman of the Wesleyan board and a Deke.

Pledging started immediately and after a man was pledged, Chi Psi would have a walk around and cheer for the new pledge. It was good psychology and I am sure many, as I did, yearned to be the object of such a demonstration. I was not impressed by Deke, whose members seemed to me to be crude, or by Sigma Nu, or Gamma Psi, whose houses were cramped, converted private homes and I did not receive a bid from Delta Tau, which Ted Studwell said was my fault for pledging too fast. At any rate, I was pledged to Chi Psi, ninth of a delegation of twelve, largely I later learned because of my scholastic promise and the need of Alpha Alpha to improve its scholastic rating. When I had finished my scheduled dates, I was assisted by fraternity members to move my clothes to my dormitory room - not a very subtle hint that I should stop occupying space in the Chi Psi Lodge.

I roomed my first year with Harold Poole, a sophomore and a Sigma Nu from Brooklyn who looked me up, was disappointed that I had accepted first dates with Chi Psi, and was even more disappointed that I did not pledge Sigma Nu.

I was happy with Chi Psi and particularly with the members of my class who were on my delegation. Don Nicholson, Bob Trevorrow, Howard Kennedy, Ray Johnson, Dick Staelin, George Smith, Wilbur Tetley were all fun to be with. I did not have so much rapport with Paul Coons, who graduated or with Stan Virkler, and Kim Hitchcock who did not.

When the winter season came along, I went out for basketball and swimming and made both freshman teams. I also was given a part in the varsity play (a woman's part) probably because my voice was not very deep. The dean called me in and suggested that with an entrance condition that was really too much and I should give up on one the sports. Both Dale Lash, the basketball coach and McCurdy, the swimming coach, encouraged me and I finally gave up swimming. After several weeks of practice, it became evident that I would be just another basketball player on the squad, not first string, while I would be first string and one of the better swimmers. So, I went back to swimming and thereafter played interfraternity basketball.

CURRENT REMINISCES

Although these reminisces were intended to cover history that might otherwise be lost in antiquity, it seems to me that some current events deserve to be recorded before they are either forgotten or relegated to the limbo of events that never happended.

Grant Van Siclen Parr, our son, born in 1942, went to Essex Fells School and then to Caldwell High School. In two years at that educational institution, we have no evidence that he did any studying other than his prescribed class work. As a result, his marks were B's and C's - respectable for a boy (boys were not supposed to get high marks there) but surely not the best of which he was capable. I raised an objection and Mommy agreed and PUT HER FOOT DOWN, the most definitive thing that could happen in our household. As a result, various prep schools were visited and after two years at Caldwell, Grant went to the Hill School at Pottstown, Pennsylvania. There it was to do your best academically and Grant had top marks. He made the Cum Laude Society (prep school and BK) but only because his perspicacity noted that Mr. Chancellor had given him a 2- which the office translated to a B-. Mr. Chancellor was a very logical man and with a marking system where 1 was top, 2 was a B, 3 a C, and 4 a D; he felt that 2- was a better mark than 2 as being nearer to 1. Getting this translation corrected was what Grant needed to make Cum Laude - Wesleyan admission then caused no problem, nor did admission to Cornell Medical School.

Recently (1981) Grant received a letter from Caldwell High School noting that he had left that fountain of learning after two years and if he would like to have a high school diploma, he could take evening courses or they would give him a course of study and he could take final examinations, which if he passed, could be the basis for granting him a high school diploma. This was addressed to Dr. Parr and came after four years of college, four years of medical school, two years of internship, seven years of residency in heart (cardiovascular) surgery and three years of fixing peoples hearts at Hershey Medical Center. He

showed it to a fellow surgeon whose comment was, "See, Grant, that is what I've always said - drop out of high school and you'll spend your life working with your hands.

Not too long before the letter from Caldwell High School, Grant had operated on a black man who was an expert in lining ovens with refractory high temperature (that is probably redundant) brick. It may have been a valve replacement but at any rate was a serious heart operation. Two days after, Grant stopped by and asked the patient how he was feeling. This black patient (who had in his late teens worked for a Jewish family in New York, who habitually spoke Yiddish to each other) replied with a Yiddish expression. Grant, who is fluent in German and had picked up a fair amount of Yiddish at Cornell Medical School in New York City, answered in Yiddish and soon the two were conversing in Yiddish much to the amusement of another doctor present who said, "Now I've heard everything! A black and what must be the ultimate WASP conversing in Yiddish!"

HOW I ALMOST BECAME A MILLIONAIRE

In the spring of 1984, Mr. Bradford Fenlon arranged an appointment with me at 419 Mt. Kemble Avenue. He and an associate, Andrew B. Schiffer, who came with them were salesmen for Douglas Elliman Knight Frank, a respected and large real estate firm, working out of the Secaucus office. They were interested in selling our 27 acres for the administrative headquarters of a business firm and talked about a price of \$150,000 an acre. Even without a pocket calculator, that came out in my mind to \$4 million plus, an intriguing amount. Without much delay, we talked about a one-year option to get rezoning or a variance from the residential zoning with a \$100,000 down payment to apply on the purchase price if the option was exercised, to be kept by us if the year ran out without exercise of the option, and subject to a \$50,000 return if the option was surrendered within six months.

We figured that even with no or a very small cost basis, we could pay a \$100,000 capital gain tax, accept the loss of a new cost basis that the children would get if we owned the property at the time of our deaths, buy a condominium at Sea Island, or the like, and still have two million to invest to provide income to run the condominium and to accept the possible loss of income from trust commissions.

Fenlon and Schiffer later returned, suggesting a sale price of two million. I told them that was not very intriguing. Actually, it was reminiscent of the man who asked the girl to spend a week with him at a resort or on a boat and he would set up a million dollar trust for her benefit for the rest of her life. This sounded attractive to her and receiving a positive answer, the man suggests tomorrow night for ten dollars. "What do you think I am?" she replied. To this the gentleman (?) replied, "We decided that a minute ago, now we are negotiating a price."

The salesman stated that Carteret Savings wanted to pay two million and if this was not acceptable, I should come back with a counter offer.

After talks between the two of us and some calculations, I called Douglas Elliman Knight Frank to find that Fenlon had left to form another company and Schiffer would come to see me.

He arrived at the house one afternoon (by appointment) and I told him why I thought two million inadequate and how about three million. He agreed to submit that to the potential purchaser and left. I never heard from him again.

For the record, our cost basis in this property goes back to a Levitt House in Manhasset we bought in 1940 for \$12,500. On this we built an extra room over the garage for \$2,000. We sold that house after buying the Essex Fells house (4 acres there) for \$42,500, taking advantage of the non-recognition of gain provision when the proceeds of sale of a principal residence are put into another principal residence.

The same provision shielded us when we sold Essex Fells and bought the Morristown property for \$59,000 spending quite a little to fix it up and subsequently \$8,000 to buy a land-locked 5 acres adjoining on the east.

As of now we are land poor and expect to remain so.

March 6, 1988

We have a new contract to sell our Morristown acres and home for \$4,290,000. We do not expect to spend any part of this until we have closed title and the money is in the bank.

"There's many a sloop twixt the hook and Peck slip" or something like that.

105 YEARS

Eleanor (Schrade) Peay's mother celebrated her 105th birthday on March 4, 1988. A telephone call to Eleanor's husband, Bob Peay, confirmed that Mrs. Schrade was well, although deaf and somewhat blind and that a small birthday party on the 4th had been attended by her two surviving children - Eleanor Peay and Alice Vandervoort and a cousin whose name Bob did not know. He did not attend having recently suffered a slight stroke. I did not speak to Eleanor as she was outside shoveling snow. Not being a Chi Psi, Bob did not know the song we used to sing in the Lodge, most often at house parties:

"In our family there are ten
All good, strong and husky men,
Who beneath the covers always like to - LURK
If it's only shoveling snow,
Just to hear her puff and blow
How we love to watch our dear old mother - WORK"

POETRY

When we were seven or eight years old, we were given two typewriters. These had a standard keyboard, but the little round spots were not to push, but to center a socket into which the first finger was placed. This located a sliding bar which centered a letter (they were all upper case) in a space between ink pads, and when the whole carriage was pressed, the letter printed on paper which moved along in the standard way.

I believe Uncle Bill Skidmore gave us these typewriters. He was a bachelor - a doctor making his home and office with us and he spoiled us beautifully. I recommend bachelor uncles to young children.

One of the things we typed on these typewriters was poetry. Dorothy, of course, grabbed all of the poetical and musical ability at the time the two eggs were grabbing chromosomes and I am the first to admit that I received little or none of this talent. Nevertheless, I tried.

Dorothy wrote some very fine poetry at this stage and my competitive chromosomes refused to admit that anyone, even I, could not do as well. To prove this indefensible thesis, I came up with these unforgettable lines:

"Hello" said a pig to an old-looking wig.
"Why have you that spade?"
On the soldiers we raid
They will jump upon us
and thump upon us
with their great big guns
for eats we have buns
Have you not heard?
"Oh yes! From a bird!"

This was very neatly, or at least legibly typed followed by FVS Parr, age 8.

In 1977, on a visit to us, Dorothy mentioned an interest in dactylic poetry. Shortly thereafter I went to Iceland to try to annoy some salmon into taking a fly. While waiting for my turn to fish (we were on a rod sharing basis) it occurred to me that the pig and wig poem was written in dactylic, and at 8 years old - The result was the following poem dispatched pronto to twin sister:

Dactylic Incunabula

The dactyls that Long fellow used
In portraying Evageline's times
Are geared to the epics heroic
Much more than to jingles and rhymes.

The poem that's epic has dactyls
(They rhythm of waltz in reverse);
It has war and primordial emotions
And non-speaking things can converse.

There's a dactyl delight that is ageless
It's existed for sixty-odd years
As it tells us of armed insurrection
And logistics to feed mutineers.

With much hand to hand combat and bloodshed
And the heavy artillery speaks
Then it ends with appeal to the curious
And some ornithological leaks.

If you quote me this undying epic
And do it before you have flipped
I'll give credit that's due to the author
And send you an autographed script.

There is no one makes rhymes like my dear brother Van.
He can fit words together when no one else can.

He refreshes the language with words he invents,
And he loves them the more if they scorn to make sense.

He has dived into dactylls with gusto, with zest,
And perhaps -- may we dream? -- he will try anapest.

He has quoted an opus that celebrates war,
But has hairdressing also, plus farm-dwelling boar!

RE CHARADRIUS OR PLUVIALIS

If I ever become quite impover-
Ished, I'll have to make do eating plover.

BUT

If I never become triste and pauvre,
I'll always have truffles with plover.

KILLDEER IS TOO LETHAL

What is the way that's de rigeur
To say P - L - O - V - E - R?
If in the wind they were to hover
You probably would call it plover

If you have argued with a mover
You would never call it plover

If you are, or were, a lover
You would call it plover

If you've a yen to be a rover
You will surely call it plover

So let us call this rara avis
Charadarius or pluvialis

TOMMY

Mother had a good friend whom she always called "Tommy". That was her married name; Tommy did not boast about her husband, although she spoke of him from time to time. Apparently he was not a very good earner and might even have been quite lazy. His name was Gus, but Tommy had various names for him less flattering than Gus such as "the dream". I believe that Tommy's first name was Sadie, but she didn't seem to use this very much notwithstanding that this was before the age of Rain, Jean Eagels, and Tondelayo.

Tommy used to come to our house and "sew", an occupation that in retrospect was probably a way for mother to help her out financially, although we certainly were not rich.

Tommy used to come and help mother prepare food and other little items for a party. She was a member of Chiropean, a Brooklyn women's club in which Mother was very active, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, chairman (they did not bother with the chairperson syndrome in those days) and president.

Chiropean was reputed to be a name manufactured from the initials of the various interests that the good ladies of Brooklyn concerned themselves about, charity, home (and country) drama, (where that came in I do not know) politics (why is that different from country?) and beyond that I don't remember. Mother once said that some speaker while she was president tried to make this to be Greek, Chiro, meaning hand and pean meaning praise, ergo praise the active hand."

In order to get the young women (misses and matrons) of Brooklyn interested in joining Chiropean in the fullness of time, an organization of Chiropean Juniors was started, first with daughters of members and later with the friends of daughters. Of course, few, if any of the "Juniors" ever actually joined the club - they kept on meeting as "Juniors" until they had to stay home to take care of grandchildren while later grandchildren were appearing at the favored hospitals of Brooklyn and nearby Long Island.

Tommy frequently went to Chiropean meetings with mother and occasionally Dad would meet us and we would have dinner out, particularly if it was one of the few "New York" (ergo Manhattan) meetings.

After one of these "New York" meetings, we had dinner at "Alice Foote McDougal's", a chain of three or four restaurants being long on waffles and atmosphere and short on light. Tommy complained that there was no tea in her pot of tea and Mother, relying on the candelight and, being a natural born smoother-over, shushed Tommy saying that it was just the poor light. Tommy was not to be shushed and insisted she had no tea, just hot water, and, of course, she was right and with a little insistence was given one or two bags of tea to put in her chipped earthenware tea pot.

KNICKERBOCKER FIELD CLUB

Shortly after graduating from college, I joined the Knickerbocker Field Club, a tennis club in Brooklyn. Instead of the usual canvas tennis shoes, I had bought (for about the same price) a pair of high (above the ankle bone) white shiny buckskin tennis shoes with crepe rubber soles. When a group at the Bond and Mortgage Guarantee Company (where I worked) scheduled a pick-up baseball game at a vacant lot field in Red Hook, not the most elite section of Brooklyn, I agreed to play with them. Not that I needed much urging. I found some pencil striped baseball pants, (knickerbockers) a sweat shirt, a baseball cap, and long blue stockings. However, I could not find any spiked baseball shoes and had to make do with my shiny new tennis shoes. A good crowd were watching the game, standing about three deep as far as first and third base, then two deep for most of the outfield and sporadic spectators in fair territory but beyond the range of our bats. The first time I came to bat, some youngster in the crowd yelled, "Here he comes in his graduation shoes!" My recollection is that I redeemed my honor by hitting a double, but this may be an example of George Engelhard's aphorism, "As I get older, my memory gets better and better, especially about the things that never happened."