

INTERVIEW WITH ELEANOR CASE GRACE AND HER SON, BILL GRACE

This is Joyce Ratliff and I'm a volunteer at the Koreshan State Historic Site and this is Wednesday, March 10, 1999, and I'm talking today with Eleanor Grace and her son, Bill Grace. Bill is a Fort Myers attorney. We are in Estero, Florida at the Koreshan State Historic Site and we happen to be in the Founder's Home. I just want to get a little bit of background about your family before we start. I thought maybe we would start with yourself. I don't know—do you give your date of birth?

Eleanor: Oh sure.

Joyce: Okay

Eleanor: 1-16-20

Joyce: 1-16-20. Okay. And last time... a couple years ago when I interviewed your son, he told me that your husband's name was Angus Douglas Grace. And when were you married?

Eleanor: In 1940.

Joyce: In 1940. And your husband is deceased?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joyce: And when did he die?

Eleanor: In 1973

Joyce: In 1973. Do you happen to know—well first I'm going to ask you who your parents were.

Eleanor: Well my mother's maiden name was Ada Grier. G-R-I-E-R

Joyce: All right. I have her birth date as October 23, 1890.

Eleanor: Right.

Joyce: And do you happen to know her date of death?

Eleanor: Hesitates. Can't think of it.

Joyce: If you can't, I will leave something with you and maybe you could send it to us.

Eleanor: All right. I'll be glad to do that. Cause I can work back to it.

Joyce: Okay. And your father was Harold

Eleanor: Henry Carlton Case

Joyce. Henry Carlton Case. Okay.

Eleanor: I don't know where everybody got that Harold.

Joyce: Well, I don't know, but that's listed on the membership list too. Do you happen to know his date of birth?

Eleanor: July 3, 1885. He was five years older than mother.

Joyce: That would be right then. And do you know his death date?

Eleanor: No. He died the next year after mother died and I can bring that.

Joyce: Okay. His parents were?

Eleanor: Milia and William Henry Case. M-I-L-I-A Streeter. Milia Streeter Case.

Joyce: He was....

Eleanor: He was William Henry Case.

Joyce: Okay. And the Grier family----Her parents were...

Eleanor: Matilda.....I don't know what her maiden name was.

Joyce I don't know.....

Eleanor: And John Grier.

Joyce: John A. Grier. I have a name written down as Raney. R-A-N-E-Y.

Eleanor: That's it.

Joyce: Is that right? I may have got that from you when you was here before but....

Bill: Unintelligible...

Joyce: No? Well I don't know where I would have come up with it then.

Eleanor: That's positively it.

Joyce: That's positively it. Well that's good.

Eleanor: Good Irish name.

Joyce: Good Irish name. And she was born the 23rd of October in 1890 and you will get the death date for me.

Eleanor: All right.

Joyce: I think we will probably.... to keep these two families straight... since you had both families living here. We'll just talk about the Grier family and remembrances you have about them.

Eleanor: I remember mother saying.... no I did not know them.

Joyce: You did not know them?

Eleanor: The only members of her family that I knew were an older brother, but he came to visit from California back when I was like 13 years old or something like that. He came to Fort Myers to visit us. That was the first time I ever remembered him. And his wife, of course, went to take care of mother when she broke her leg and had me. And then mother had twin sisters, Bess and Jess. And I think they came originally with mother and her mother.

Joyce: Bessie and Jessie?

Eleanor: Uh huh.

Joyce: I have the two names here, but I don't have them....

Eleanor: I think they came originally, but they didn't stay long.

Bill: That's true.

Joyce: They were the twins though.

Eleanor: They were the twins.

Joyce: Okay.

Eleanor: I knew one of those. The other one I only saw one time. One came to stay one winter with us down here one time, so I knew her... Jess.

Joyce: Another...I have a James E. Grier who was born on February 1886 and the reason found that is that I have started working on the Chicago census last summer and I ran into his name. So he was living in Chicago at that time and the 1900 census happens to give both the month of birth and the year of birth, which is a great census to find if you don't know any of these particulars.

Eleanor: Jim, was the closest of the children in age to mother. And she was very fond of her brother, Jim.

Joyce: Oh, was she? Okay, and then I found a Grover Grier; Homer, Harry and then your mother.

Eleanor: That's right.

Joyce: And your mother...I think you said in your interview that she was the youngest?

Eleanor: I think she was the youngest.

Joyce: You think she was the youngest of the children.

Eleanor: She was the youngest.

Joyce: Okay. Do you know how this family happened to meet the Koreshans and happened to join with them?

Eleanor: I do not. They were living in Oklahoma. And then Grandfather sold the farm in Oklahoma and moved them back to Kansas. And then I don't know why he went to Chicago, but he went to Chicago and he met the Koreshan Unity and became interested in it there. So he went to Kansas and got his remaining family that wasn't married and gone and took them to Chicago, which was mother and the girls and maybe Jim.

Joyce: What was his occupation at the time?

Eleanor: I don't know. He was a farmer

Joyce: He must have been a farmer. And so then, your mother, was she a... how old would she have been about this time?

Eleanor: Well, she tells me about being in Chicago when she was 13

Joyce: So she was old enough to know what was going on.

Eleanor: Un huh.

Joyce: Was she happy about this move?

Eleanor: No.

Joyce: No. Was she ever happy living with the Koreshans?

Eleanor: No not with the Koreshans.

Joyce: No. What about her mother?

Eleanor: No. And I only know this from my mother telling me that her mother was miserably unhappy.

Joyce: Okay. Did she give you a reason?

Eleanor: Well, not really other than that she felt, Grandmother Grier felt that.... Of course she died before I was born so I never knew her. But according to mother she felt like she had been abandoned to strangers.

Joyce: Well, I can understand that.

Eleanor: Because Grandfather was kind of a wanderer. He came and went. Why he came and went, or what he was doing I have no idea, but he came and went.

Joyce: You mean after they moved down here?

Eleanor: Uh huh. And apparently before too because they had lived in Iowa and when she was born they went in a covered wagon to Oklahoma and then they went back to Kansas and then to Chicago so apparently he was one of these moving around men.

Joyce: People don't think about that going on that many years ago but since I've been doing this research with my family and everything, people moved around a lot.

Eleanor: Yes, they did.

Joyce: Yes, it wasn't like you stayed in a house and lived there forever, some families did. But there were a lot of them that moved a lot.

Bill: Right. That's not what the stereotype we think is.....

Joyce: No. You don't think about that. You think that's kind of a new phenomenon that came about.

Bill: Right. Yes

Joyce: But people moved around a lot, but it would have been traumatic to just pull up housekeeping and move in with a group of people like this and I'm sure that.....

Eleanor: It was traumatic to her and to my mother and she never got over it.

Joyce: She never got over it. Well, when did they move down here then?

Eleanor: Well, they came down when there was nothing and he brought them all down to Punta Gorda and they had to get on a boat and come to here. And there was.....

Joyce: So, they took the train down like the rest of the group did... do you think... to Punta Gorda and then the way Vesta described it, she was on a sail boat and went to Mound Key and then they row boated up the Estero River.

Eleanor: That could very well be. That very probably was the way they did it.

Joyce: So what year would this have been, do you know?

Eleanor: I'm sorry but I do not know.

Joyce: That's okay.

Eleanor: But she was very young. She was like 15 or 16 something like that, maybe. I don't know how long they lived in Chicago. She never did tell me that.

Joyce: I do know from some of these Community Current Events in The Flaming Sword that Mr. Grier, John Grier, in later years did come down here in the summer time and work.

Eleanor: Yeah, he did.

Joyce: He came down, in fact, I think, later on there were a lot of people who came down and worked in the----just like we (volunteers) do----get a place to live.

Eleanor: (Laughs) Yeah. I can remember Grandfather would come down. He would just suddenly show up. He would have been up with one of his sons. They were all farmers up in Iowa. He would just show up all of a sudden sometimes.

Bill: This would have been in---like the 30's?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joyce: In the 30's.

Eleanor: And the 20's---in the late 20's too. And he would just show up in Ft. Myers and then he would come down here. I can remember one year he lived in the caretaker's cottage over at the Rugg's----I mean over at the Boomers.

Joyce: Yes.

Eleanor: And he took care of their place. You know, but he would only do things like that for a few months at a time and then he would be gone again.

Joyce: I have several---and I have not added every item that I found in Community Current Events. I'm just beginning to add these to my data base, but I have found in some of them, in fact one of them said that he went---here is one of them in January of 1930. "Speaking of beautifying the grounds, we wish to note the good work of Brother John Grier. Another winter visitor has been doing in the Unity Park since his return from Iowa where he spent the summer. In trimming some of the date palms, he has revealed a beauty we were not conscious of before." So I feel like he was spending the (winter) like the rest of us---going up north for the summer time and coming down here in the winter.

Eleanor: He was up there in the summer. I'm sure he was helping his son's farm probably.

Bill: Did he ever talk about Teed? Did Grandfather Grier ever talk about Teed?

Eleanor: No, Grandfather Grier never talked about him. He could have cared less.

Bill: Did he ever talk about the Unity?

Eleanor: No, not to me.

Bill: Did you ever talk to him?

Eleanor: Yeah. He stayed at our house---much to Mother's distress. (Laughs)

Joyce: In this one—in May 1931, Mr. And Mrs. L. M. Boomer and children, who had been making their home at River Bend for some weeks, have returned to their home in New York City. And Brother John Grier will act as caretaker of the River Bend estate during the summer.

Eleanor: Yeah. I came down with Mother to see him when he was there at the caretaker's cottage.

Joyce: In September of 1933, it said, "Brother John Grier is at home again after spending the past six weeks in Fort Myers at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Carlton Case, while she and her family attended the fair in Chicago and visited other northern points. Have you read any of these?"

Eleanor: Yeah, we did.

Bill: I showed them to her.

Joyce: There was another one in September 1934. "He had some visitors from Iowa which consisted of Mrs. Grover Grier, Miss Margaret Grier. Who would she be?"

Eleanor: That would be Grover's daughter.

Joyce: Grover's daughter and Mrs. John Pearson. Is that a family?

Eleanor: I don't remember her. They all came to the house one summer. They arrived---we had just come home from the mountains. And when we got home, Daddy said, "Your brother and his family are here." So that was the only time I ever saw them.

Joyce: Did you ever visit the family in Iowa?

Eleanor: No.

Joyce: I was born and raised in Iowa.

Eleanor: Mother went up when her mother died. She died up there. One of the twins, I think it was Bess, had her at her house.

Joyce: What part of Iowa? What town of Iowa?

Eleanor: Something that starts with a G. I want to say Griffin, but that's not right. It was a G-u something.

Joyce: There's so many little

Eleanor: Grinnell. I think it's south central Iowa.

Joyce: I lived in the southeastern area, so I'm not really familiar with the whole state.

Eleanor: Yeah. That's where they came from.

Bill: When did Grandmother Grier leave the Unity?

Eleanor: She left shortly before 1910. And when I say shortly, I mean shortly in years, maybe. I don't know what year, but she left and like one year before. Grandmother Case took mother to live with them in town until she and Daddy were married.

Bill: Gram took Casey and her Mother?

Eleanor: No, her mother went to Iowa with one of her sisters---one of her twin daughters.

Bill: Did Ada and Grandmother Grier leave at the same time?

Eleanor: I think so, but I never heard her say that definitely, but I think so.

Bill: Do you know why they left?

Eleanor: Well, I think, Teed had died and I think there was a lot of turmoil at that time and I think they were very anxious to go---to leave---both of them. And I know Daddy was....my father.

Joyce: He was known as Carlton Case? He wasn't known as Henry?

Eleanor: No. He was known as Carlton Case.

Joyce: Did your mother have

Eleanor: We have another Carlton Case. He lives at Naples.

Joyce: Oh, really.

Eleanor: He is the president of the Chamber of Commerce down there and he works for Florida, he's an engineer and he works for Florida Power and Light Company.

Joyce: Is he a relative?

Eleanor: Yes, that's his Great Grandson.

Joyce: Great grandson. Well, how interesting. Does he come here to visit or has he ever been here?

Eleanor: I don't know that he has ever been here to visit. I'd like to bring Carlton here. He'd like to come. Carlton would like that. I'll have to call him and ask him if he'd like to come sometime.

Joyce: Yes. Because we are always---you know..... It's always nice when people come back.

Eleanor: He's such a nice young man and, of course, he doesn't know any of this ancient history, but he would like to see it, I'm sure. He was very fond of Mother and Daddy---my mother and daddy.

Joyce: Did your mother have friends here---personal friends?

Eleanor: Yes. I have a picture of her with three girls and her mother. And the other three girls were her friends but I don't

Joyce: Do you happen to know their names?

Eleanor: I have the names on the back of the picture---the first names only.

Joyce: We have a photograph---I think of your mother---she was up in years and she was standing in front of

Eleanor: Oh, that's my Grandmother Case.

Joyce: Oh, that's your grandmother.

Eleanor: Yes, that's my Grandmother Case and that's the mound house at the beach.

Joyce: Okay. Let me write that down---the mound house. We have a man that comes down from the library in Naples and he has put all these old photographs in the computer. We don't have very many of your family and we thought that this one was Ada.

Eleanor: No, that's Grandmother Case.

Bill: It is Mrs. Case.

Joyce: It is Mrs. Case. Yes.

Eleanor: But it's not Ada Grier Case. It's Mrs. William Henry Case.

Joyce: As far as I know we don't have any photograph, unless they are group photographs, of your folks. Do you have photographs of them?

Eleanor: I did. Unfortunately, when my husband died some years later, I remarried and I gave my house to his brother and his wife who had a growing family and needed more room. I couldn't keep a house by myself, it was too big and they needed it so I gave it to them. I left all the old pictures in the house because I didn't have any place to take them and put them and store them and everything and I thought that Doug's wife would look after them because she always seemed to kind of treasure the old things, but that turned out to not be the case. And so I no longer have pictures. I was dead wrong about that.

Joyce: So no one has the pictures.

Eleanor: Well, Bill has a few and I have a few but the few I have are in my house in North Carolina. They are not here. But I would be glad to look through them and bring whatever I do have.

Joyce: We certainly would like that.

Eleanor: If I have anything----most of the things I have would be from Grandmother Case, so it would not have anything to do with my mother, Ada Grier. It would be with the Case family connection.

Joyce: But as far as your husband, not your husband but your father and mother, you don't have any photographs of them.

Eleanor: Down here?

Joyce: No, up in North Carolina.

Eleanor: Oh. I don't have much in the way of pictures of my family. My mother didn't like to be photographed at all.

Bill: That's right.

Joyce: So do you have photographs of the family, Bill?

Bill: We have some photographs of Grandmother Case and Grandfather Case here at the Unity. She's in some of the group pictures.

Joyce: But, no individual ones.

Bill: But, no individual pictures. I don't think they took any individual pictures of anybody but Teed and Victoria and a lot of the pictures of Grandmother Case, in particular, is in the group pictures of what you've got here.

Joyce: You don't happen to have a wedding photo of them, do you?

Bill: No.

Eleanor: Oh no. I've never seen a wedding photo of them.

Bill: There's---I don't think there was one. I think they must have almost eloped.

Eleanor: No, they were married in Grandmother's house in Fort Myers.

Joyce: In this house? (Points to the picture)

Bill: No. That's the mound house.

Eleanor: No. That's the mound house at the beach.

Bill: The Case's, also, had a house in town.

Joyce: Okay. Is this house still standing?

Bill: Yes.

Joyce: Looking at that house---that looks like a house that could be built today.

Bill: It's brick.

Joyce: Look how nice

Eleanor: Isn't that amazing?

Joyce: Even the structure... Mike and I was looking at this up at the Ranger Station one day and I said that this looks like a brand new house..

Eleanor: I did at one time.....I had a picture of this house being built and Grandmother and Grandfather had.....and that big old banyan tree that is still on the property was there then. And I had, at one time, a picture of a tent with a wooden floor, a big tent with a wooden floor that they stayed in sometimes when the house was being built. If I run across it, I'll bring it.

Bill: It's highly unusual. This house is on Ft. Myers beach and in that era in Florida people were building framed vernacular houses particularly on the

beach. To build a brick house was almost unheard of particularly on a barrier island with no road to it, so they had to ship in that brick from some place. They built that house out of brick.

Joyce: So how did they get back and forth---by boat?

Bill: By boat. It was, also, the post office---the first post office on the beach.

Joyce: Really.

Eleanor: The mail boat came once a week and brought the mail and whatever supplies they asked him to bring.

Joyce: Is someone living in this (house)? Is it an individual's house now?

Bill: That's one of my present projects. It was---for the last 20 years it was occupied by a Mrs. Long and she died about three years ago. It sits on top of a Caloosa Mound and it's about a 2 1/2 acre site and the town of Ft. Myers Beach is presently attempting to purchase the property in order to preserve the historic house and in order to preserve the archaeological values in the mound because the estate wanted to sell the property to some German developers who were going to bulldoze the mound and build 18 condominiums. So we are in the process of stopping the bulldozer and hopefully developing that as a historic museum and archaeological site study center.

Joyce: I photocopied some papers from the history of Ft. Myers Beach, Florida and I ran into the Case name. Is this where the house was located on Estero

Eleanor: Yes. Back on the back bay.

Joyce: Where would that be? Just put an X about, approximately (shows diagram) where you

Eleanor: Island, American Avenue.

Joyce: Now did the Koreshans own that whole island at one time?

Eleanor: No. No.

Bill: No. The story is Okay in the 1890's all of Ft. Myers Beach was still owned by the United States government, okay. And because of the Homestead Act of 1862-1863 people could squat on federally owned land and prove it and cultivate it and if they did that for a period of years then the government would give you the land. So apparently what Teed was

doing was sending Koreshans out to Estero Island, we know that the Koreshans owned the south end of the island—that's where the sawmill was and that's where the sanitarium was. That's where Teed died.

Joyce: Oh, the sanitarium. I thought it was up here by.... Oh, it was over here?

Bill: It was on the south end of Estero Island. It was quite an elaborate structure. It was almost as fancy as the Planetary Court, if not more so. We knew that, we didn't know that he, also, had his eyes on the rest of Estero Island because if you look at this list of the early homesteaders, Robert Gilbert was a Koreshan, Hugh McPhie was a Koreshan, Leroy L'Amoreaux was a Koreshan. These were all the early settlers on Ft. Myers Beach who got the original patent from the Federal government. This was all taking place about 1908 when Teed died, okay? So that scheme _____ and Ft. Myers Beach was included in the 10,000 square mile, 10,000-100,000 whatever the square mile the city that Teed formed in the incorporated city, all of Estero Island was included in that city. I like to tell, the mayor of Ft. Myers Beach that she wasn't the first mayor, that there was a mayor back at the turn of the century. So the Mound House was the original Gilbert grant that... I don't know if the Koreshan took title----I'm going to find this out-----I don't know if the Koreshans took title of the Gilbert place or the Cases took it from the Gilberts.

Eleanor: When Granddad died we opened that big old safe of his that used to be out at your house and in it was a letter in Daddy's writing—your father's writing—your grandfather's writing that said that he had bought three government miles in the center of Ft. Myers Beach, Estero Island, from the government for \$1,000. Harold, I think, was with me when we read that.

Bill: That's not true.

Eleanor: And that may not be true, but that was what Daddy thought apparently.

Bill: The land records show, Gilbert----Case's subdivision is the Gilbert grant and I think the McPhie grant.

Joyce: I think it says that in there... I think I read over that part.

Bill: So it was three miles long from gulf to gulf. But they didn't get the original title, in fact, I got the---I got the patent out of that safe.

Eleanor: Oh, you do?

Bill: I got the original patent to the Gilbert's from the United States government.

Eleanor: Well that's definitely it then.

Bill: Yeah. I've investigated that and I know about that but I think I want to find out and I'm going to find out once we get the title into the town is whether or not title actually passed from the Gilberts to the Koreshans and then to the Cases or whether or not the Case's bought it from the Gilberts.

Eleanor: I would guess from the Gilberts.

Bill: I think so to because I don't think Teed ever... I think Teed died too soon before he could get his hands on it.

Joyce: At one time I thought they owned all of Estero Island---the Koreshans.

Bill: No.

Joyce: But they did not.

Bill: No. No.

Joyce: Now in your tape---when you (Bill) taped a couple years ago, you mentioned spending summers on the beach. Did you go to this house?

Bill: No. No. The first time I was in that house was last year.

END OF TAPE #1

Eleanor: In the early 20's during the boom in Ft. Myers, the mound house was sold to Jack Delaue (?), who was a developer and he built a huge house---he left the original house there---and then just built this huge house all around it. And I can remember Daddy taking us to see it. And, so that was his---and then, of course, the bust came---the great depression, and the house just sat there, and I don't know who owned it, but it just sat there for a long time until the Longs came along, I believe.

Joyce: So was there another piece of property there that you went to, that you said you used to go to on the beach as a kid?

Eleanor: Oh, yeah.

Bill: They owned from the bay to the gulf. So the Case's built cottages on the gulf and some of the Koreshan material there you talk about, the Koreshans going over to the Case's cottages at the beach and staying at

the cottages, so Granddaddy kept a house or two on the beach and then I guess by the time

Eleanor: All that property between the road and the bay was the mound house. It didn't have all these other places.....

Bill: Right. But it was all subdivided and sold off. The Case's subdivision consisted of about three miles between the bay and the gulf and it was all sub-divided and sold off in lots and then Granddad kept, I guess by the time I came along he only had one house---the only house he had left was the beach house—right? The one house?

Eleanor: When he died?

Bill: No, when we were kids. Estero.

Eleanor: That was your grandfather's house.

Bill: Right.

Eleanor: Yeah. But there was up on the corner of Connecticut Avenue where the Bigelow house is now, of what we always talked about—on the corner of Connecticut Avenue on the beach was Uncle Elmer and Aunt Katie's house and their sister Edith Sprower and her husband had a house next to it, so there were two cottages there then----and then on further down was our house that Daddy built and heare two houses that he built there.

Bill: That's where we would spend the summers when we were kids.

Joyce: You said it was an idyllic time of

Bill: Yeah, it was. You didn't realize it till later, but it was.

Joyce: Were you an only child (Eleanor)?

Eleanor: No, I have a brother, Harold. That's where the Harold comes from.

Joyce: Even in the Koreshan info though, they list your father's name as Harold.

Eleanor: Well, they got it wrong.

Joyce: And, he's not a junior because he doesn't have exactly the same name.

Eleanor: No, he doesn't.

Joyce: Is he still living?

Eleanor: Yes, he is and he lives in Ft. Myers.

Joyce: Do you know when he was born?

Eleanor:In the telephone book. 1917 November 19

Bill: Why are there pictures of Harold at the mound house and none of you?

Eleanor: Because Daddy took Harold with him down there in the boat. Mother probably wouldn't let him take me. (Laughs) The boat was the only way to go. I don't know, but I'm just guessing. I would have been a baby then. He was like about three years old.

Bill: No, he was older than that.

Eleanor: Three or four, do you think?

Bill: I think, four or five.

Joyce: Did your Dad talk much about the Koreshans?

Eleanor: Daddy was disenchanted.

Joyce: From the beginning or later?

Eleanor: Later. Not too much later.

Joyce: After Teed died?

Eleanor: Yes. I think he was disenchanted with all of Teed's theory and outlook. It wasn't the individual people here or anything like that that bothered him. But he felt like it was a sort of off-base experience.

Joyce: Yes, I would imagine. Do you remember him speaking of friends that he had in the settlement?

Eleanor: Well, he was friends with all the young people, you know. But....

Joyce: Anyone particular?

Eleanor: No. And by the time, of course..... Daddy was not one to talk about what was. He just wanted to talk about what is.

Joyce: I think maybe that's a man's trait.

Eleanor: Yes. So most of what was, I remember from Mother telling me.

Joyce: Did your folks keep in contact with some of these people and visit with them after they left?

Eleanor: Mother did. Daddy did not. But Mother did. And she came down to see Vesta. I don't know how often—not once a week or anything like that, but several times during the year. Maybe two or three times a year she would come down to see Vesta.

Joyce: But she never brought you kids?

Eleanor: No.

Joyce: I wonder why.

Eleanor: She didn't like it here.

Joyce: Oh, didn't she.

Eleanor: And she didn't think Vesta was treated well.

Joyce: I don't think Vesta thought she was treated well.

Eleanor: No, Mother didn't think she was either and neither did my Daddy. I can remember hearing them discuss it at the dinner table. He did not think so either.

Joyce: Did you know her very well?

Eleanor: No. I didn't know Vesta real well. I knew her and saw her.

Joyce: What do you know about her—or do you know anything in particular?

Eleanor: No, I really don't.

Bill: How did you see her?

Eleanor: I would see her—she would come to town occasionally and that's when I would see her.

Bill: (Did she) come to the house?

Eleanor: One time I remember she came to the house. She may have come other times. But I can remember one time she came to the house. I can

remember just happening to meet her sitting on a bench down on First Street when I was downtown with mother.

Joyce: By herself?

Eleanor: Yes.

Bill: When would that have been?

Eleanor: That would have been in early teen years—10-12-13 years old—something like that.

Joyce: How do you think she got to town?

Eleanor: I don't know how she got to town.

Joyce: I was wondering after (a member) was once here—did (they) ever leave-- did they visit (Ft. Myers) except for supplies. I do know they went up there for supplies.

Eleanor: I don't think they were encouraged to visit nor was there a good feeling between the Koreshans and the people of Ft. Myers.

Joyce: I know that.

Bill: Do you remember Vesta coming to Casey and Granddads house in the 50's and the 60's?

Eleanor: No.

Bill: Were you aware that she did at all?

Eleanor: No. I couldn't say that she did. I wouldn't—I would expect that she might very well have because both Mother and Daddy felt very friendly toward her and felt very badly that she was in such an unhappy circumstance.

Joyce: When your folks came down here—you know, in separate families, did your (Grandmother's) children live in a separate house from what she lived in or do you remember them talking about that? You know they separated the children (from the adults).

Eleanor: Yes. My mother lived in a dormitory.

Joyce: Which would have been the old dining hall, I would assume.

Eleanor: I would assume so.

Joyce: She only lived in that one place?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joyce: Did she describe it to you?

Eleanor: No. Well it was very sparce she said. Mother never liked being here.

Joyce: Do you think she had enough to eat while she was living here?

Eleanor: Not always.

Joyce: Did she ever mention what they had to eat?

Eleanor: Yes. She said the money that the people had put into the Unity was thought by a lot of the members to be spent extravagantly on the Founder and Victoria, and they traveled extensively and had very nice things and the people who lived here---mother said she could remember times when all they had was sweet potatoes that they dug up to eat, and she said finally she became quite rebellious about it and she just wouldn't eat at all if that was all they could have. (Laughs)

Joyce: What about the rest of them. Did she say if they felt the same way?

Eleanor: I think a lot of them did, yes.

Bill: Where did Grandmother Grier live? Do you know?

Eleanor: Grandmother, I don't know where she lived, but she lived here.

Bill: Yeah—I know but

Eleanor: But I don't—I don't know. In a way it was a nice life because Mother said they had some very cultured, lovely, intelligent people. And that they taught the girls and boys and they had all these cultural plays and the orchestra and they had picnics and did things like that. She liked doing those things.

Joyce: Was your mother in the band?

Eleanor: No.

Joyce: Was she in any of the plays?

Eleanor: I don't know. She didn't say.

Joyce: I think your dad was.

Eleanor: Daddy did. He sang in them, I'm sure.

Joyce: Did he play an instrument?

Eleanor: Well, he may have. I don't know, but he did not play an instrument in front of me that I know of in my lifetime, but he sang.....

Bill: He played the piano.

Eleanor: He played the piano and he sang in Ft. Myers—the Kiwanis Club would put on minstrels once a year to raise money. It was a small town of about 3,000 people and so that was what everybody did was to go to the minstrels and Daddy always sang.

Joyce: Did he ever leave Florida after he came down here? Did he go north and visit?

Eleanor: No. No.

Joyce: How did the Case family (his parents)—how did they get tied up with the Koreshans? Do you know?

Eleanor: Well, no I do not. Grandmother was a very religious woman and her whole family was. And they lived in Vermont and Grandfather Case, I think, just came with Grandmother. I think she was the moving force.

Joyce: Did they move to Chicago with the group?

Eleanor: I think they went to Chicago, but I don't think they lived there. I think they went there.

Joyce: So do you think that's where they met them?

Eleanor: Maybe met them there. Maybe Teed had been over to New England recruiting new members or something and they had met him that way. I think that's a very strong possibility because I don't think there would have been any other reason for them to go to Chicago to investigate the Koreshans.

Joyce: But how (did) the Koreshans at that time get around through the United States and how (did) they start all these colonies and how (did) they

recruit all these different people? They all seemed to be well-educated and moneyed people. They weren't just run-of-the-mill.

Eleanor: No. But he had—apparently a man of great charisma. And I would have said that he probably had a personality kind of like Billy Graham's and everybody thought he was so wonderful. But he didn't have—he wasn't the same kind of person—he was a different kind of person. And I think a lot of them felt they had been taken advantaged of.

Bill: Didn't you tell me that Case and Granddad met in Chicago—at the Koreshans?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joyce: This was your dad though.

Eleanor: Yes. That was my father.

Joyce: So he may have gone to Chicago and his parents may not have (gone).

Eleanor: When he was 16-18, he said.

Bill: The parents went to Chicago. You know that don't you?

Eleanor: Yes. I didn't know that for a fact, but I would assume that they did.

Bill: The only thing you know for a fact was that Granddad met Casey in Chicago at the Koreshan Place.

Eleanor: Yes, I know that for a fact.

Joyce: How was life in Chicago? Did your mother mention—was it better in Chicago than it was down here?

Eleanor: You know my whole feeling about what she did have to say was that she and her mother were not a bit taken with being taken into the Koreshan Unity—neither one of them.

Joyce: What about the rest of the children?

Eleanor: Of course, I don't know how Aunt Bess and Aunt Jess felt—nor Jim. The rest of them were older and were gone. So I don't know how they felt about it. I don't think they felt any warm feelings for it. Aunt Jess spent the winter with us one winter and she never wanted to come down here. She came with mother down to see Vesta. That was all she wanted to do.

Joyce: I wonder why Vesta stayed.

Eleanor: She didn't have any money and couldn't go anywhere else. She didn't have anywhere else to go. If she'd had some place to go, I think she would have.

Joyce: Of course, at that time you know, a young woman assumed that she was probably going to be married and maybe she (Vesta) just didn't have the opportunity here and where does a single woman go with no money at this time in her life. But she lived here longer than anyone else.

Eleanor: Yes, she did.

Joyce: She came down here at 15 and she lived to be about 95. Her mother joined when they were living in California, so she had a long stretch. Was she happy before Teed died—before Hedwig came—would you say she would have been happy then?

Eleanor: Yes. She was all right. It was all right until then. But when Hedwig came that was the end of all being able to get along.

Joyce: Did you meet Hedwig?

Eleanor: No.

Joyce: You never did.

Eleanor: I heard a lot about her, but I never saw her.

Joyce: Did your husband meet her?

Eleanor: My husband? He didn't have anything to do with any of it. He was a doctor and he practiced medicine. He didn't know anything about any of it—didn't want to.

Joyce: What about your dad?

Eleanor: Yeah, my dad.

Joyce: Of course, when did he pass away?

Eleanor: About '69. Something like that.

Joyce: Oh, in '69. So he would have been around when she was here.

Eleanor: Yes. He was here when she was here. He thought she was terrible. I remember that. (Laughs)

Bill: Did he say that in relationship to how Vesta was being treated or just in general?

Eleanor: I think in general. He felt that she had come and taken over everything. I think at that time wasn't Larry Bubbet, Laurie Bubbet—wasn't he still here?

Joyce: I think he was kind of in and out too. He came back when Hedwig was here and the way I understood it is that they both (Hedwig and Laurie) lived in the Planetary Court.

Eleanor: But, see Hedwig—they all felt she had never been a Koreshan when Teed was here, and they thought there really wasn't a Koreshan community about the spirit of the community that he started after he died. That ended that. And she never came here until much, much later. And she never knew Teed. But she knew a lot about valuable property, everybody thought when she saw it.

Joyce: When was the first time you came here?

Eleanor: Me? My mother and daddy lived here—in Ft. Myers.

Bill: No. She's talking about the settlement.

Joyce: I mean the settlement.

Eleanor: When I first came to the settlement?

Joyce: Yes.

Eleanor: When Bill brought me about five-six years ago was the first time I had ever been in here.

Joyce: What did you think?

Eleanor: Well, I thought it was real interesting. You walk around where Mother had been as a young girl---Daddy, and I thought it was historically interesting. But I could see that they had great hardships to live under.

Joyce: Well, Vesta said, when someone did the interview with her in '72, which is kind of the run-off of the oral history I do of her in the Ghost Walk she said, "I existed one winter on nothing but peanuts." I think you (Bill) mentioned something about chickpeas in your interview (oral history), and

I thought—I wonder if the peanuts Vesta mentions living on could have been chickpeas.

Bill: Yeah, I think so, cause that is like a staple. I don't know that I learned that from Casey, I think I learned that from reading about what they were..... maybe Allen Andrews, some of Allen Andrew's stuff, that was one of their staples. I'd never heard the sweet potato thing.

Joyce: I hadn't either.

Bill: But that would make sense, cause that is a very easy thing to grow and that's a good food for them.

Joyce: In some of the information we have, they say that most of the vegetables were grown out on Mound Key, so wasn't anything cultivated here? I know that they had farm animals.

Eleanor: I thought they gardened some here, but I don't know that for sure but I always had that impression.

Joyce: Yes, I thought that too. But I ran into something the other day—I think it must have been in the Community Current Events. It said that the garden and the vegetables were grown on Mound Key.

Eleanor: I don't know why that would have been when they had all this property here along the river with fresh water readily available.

Joyce: Did your mother talk about anything else—about the dining hall—about eating there?

Eleanor: Yes. They all ate there and they were all expected to mind their manners--and behave like young ladies and young gentlemen.

Joyce: Did she attend one of the Koreshan schools?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joyce: She did attend school here? Where was that located—do you know?

Eleanor: I think in the Art Hall.

Joyce: You might be right. Now at one time, they have said, that this building, this Founder's Home, had a school room right where we are sitting. There was a dentist's office in one end and Victoria had the other end and that Teed's space was upstairs. Then I have run into some other information that said Silverfriend or someone was one of the teachers in the Art Hall.

Eleanor: Yes, Henry Silverfriend.

Joyce: Evelyn Horn mentions a school that was somewhere else. Well, there was a school on Mound Key for some of the children out there and then there was another school. I don't know if it was out here on the highway or not.

Eleanor: There was a---when I was in the late 20's. I know there was a school across the road going down to the Floweree Grove.

Bill: It is still there.

Joyce: Which would be the Estero School.

Eleanor: The Estero School.

Joyce: Now did your dad go to school---was he educated with the Koreshans?

Eleanor: No. He may have attended some classes, but Daddy had received his education, his primary and secondary education, in the schools in Vermont. And in those days they went to school until they were about 16, I think. And then he went to Boston and worked as a night clerk in a hotel that started with an L. I forget now the name of it. But anyway he worked as a night clerk in a hotel, and he waited tables at Harvard during the day. And for that he had the privilege of their library. He could use the library all he wanted to. And he was great on self-education. And he read the entire Harvard five-foot shelf of books a number of times. He had read the Bible three times, all the way through. And he had taught himself how to do shorthand and how to do typing and he learned all the business courses that they had books about—things like that and was really self-educated.

Joyce: So what was his occupation when he left?

Eleanor: Well, I don't know. Daddy did everything. (Laughs)

Joyce: Entrepreneur.

Eleanor: He was an entrepreneur. He started out---my recollections of hearing about what he started out doing was that he was secretary to Mr. Heitman—Harvey Heitman in Ft. Myers. And through him he met the Flowerees who owned—and the Wallaces and the Viele's, who owned the Estero Grove and the Alva Grove, which is now Murphy Groves. At that time they were the biggest grove of grapefruit in the world. It was big business and they used to barge fruit down the river into town and the packing house. So he met them and they asked him if he would supervise

their groves for them. Well here he is a New Englander, but Daddy never said he couldn't do it. And he said sure he would be glad to do it. (Laughs) And he learned how and by the time I was a small child he had Mr. Horne—John Horne—living on the grove and his wife and children. They lived on this grove in Estero and then he had somebody else, I don't remember who, living on the grove up at Alva. So he did that and he had the Palm City Brick and Tile Company, which, I think... . Bill was showing me these rocks out here in these walls that they had built the---I mean the tiles, and I think that must be what got Daddy started during the boom with the Palm City Brick and Tile Company, which he started and ran all through the boom years till deep depression. I think he must have probably worked here a little bit in that. He hired some people who had been here and had left or something because he ran that Palm City Brick and Tile and made beautiful tiles, decorative—very decorative stuff and all the roof tiles.

Joyce: I think the Koreshans had a cement works and they were doing a lot of work like that and it looks like they were enlarging this building here. (Founder's House)

Bill: That's what they were doing.

Joyce: And then Teed died and they just....

Eleanor: I think that's maybe where Daddy got the idea for starting The Palm City Brick and Tile Company. Anyway it was a very successful until the depression came.

Joyce: Then he had to start over.

Eleanor: Then he had—well he still did the groves and he had The Builder's Supply Company and he had the bank downtown and he had a grocery store. And he did all kinds of different things. (Laughs)

Joyce: And he got his start from the Koreshans.

Eleanor: (Laughs) He would die if I said that. He would really turn over in his grave....that old Sister.

Bill: He called mother, Sister, which I think is interesting. He called Vesta, Sister Newcomb, Sister Vesta and that brought in---the Koreshans called one another Brothers and Sister.

Eleanor: Well I think old timers did tend to call their children sister and brother.

Joyce: Yes, but he may have—they probably called her Sister Ada or whatever here, and I bet that's where that started.

Bill: Might be.

Joyce: Now she didn't refer to him as brother though.

Eleanor: No.

Bill: Or Uncle Harold wasn't Brother Harold.

Joyce: Are you familiar with any other Koreshan families in St. Myers—any descendants?

Eleanor: No, I'm not—only just the one I told you, Ruby, who has a daughter and a granddaughter. I don't know whether her daughter is still living or not. She might not be, but her granddaughter is, I know.

Bill: Did Case and Granddad ever talk about.....

Eleanor: I wonder if Ruby was—somehow or another when you said Allen Andrews, that kind of stuck in my head. I wonder if Ruby Powell had been Ruby Andrews, maybe.

Bill: No, I don't think so. Was Allen Andrews married? I don't think he was, was he?

Joyce: No. He never married. I was trying to think if he had a brother who would have been married to.... I'd have to look up his chart to see if he.....

Eleanor: I don't know—when I knew her, her name was Ruby Powell and she lived in Ft. Myers, but mother had known her here. That's all I know.

Joyce: I will check on that.

Bill: Did they ever—did they have any other friends in Ft. Myers who were former Koreshans?

Eleanor: Not that I know of. Except that you told me and I hadn't been aware of it that the Turners had been.....

Bill: Okay. Weren't there some.....

Eleanor: They were real good friends with the Turners.

Bill: Walter Turner.

Eleanor: Walter Turner. Walter and Helen Turner.

Bill: Walter Turner is on one of those deeds to the ten acres down at Coconut.

Joyce: Oh, really?

Bill: That's where I turned that name up, but what about the people that, I forget the name, they left here and they opened a laundry in Fort Myers.

Eleanor: Gay

Bill: Were Case and Granddad friends with the Gays?

Eleanor: No, I don't think so. They knew them, of course, everybody knew everybody. I know they knew them.

Joyce: They do mention the Gay group that left and moved to Fort Myers and started a laundry.

Bill: Right.

Eleanor: This is when Ruby Powell went to Fort Myers. So maybe she was a Gay, I don't know.

Bill: Well laundry people married laundry people. (Laughs)

Eleanor: I have no idea. We had Gay's Laundry for a long, long time and then Frank Prather bought it and your granddaddy loaned him the money to buy it. The bank wouldn't loan him the money to buy Gay's Laundry before World War II. And the banks wouldn't loan him the money and your granddaddy loaned him the money and Frank told everybody that all of his life.

Bill: No, kidding.

Eleanor: Yeah. To buy Gay's Laundry and it turned out—it was just a wonderful thing. Prather's Laundry was—World War II came along and it just went. (Laughs)

Joyce: You know there were very few young youngsters here that really stayed. Vesta stayed, and there were some of the men who stayed but did they expect these children to stay here the rest of their lives or did they expect them to go off and marry?

Eleanor: No, I think they expected them to stay here and that they would replenish it by getting new members, really, because every time they got new members, of course, they had either property or money or whatever.

Joyce: Your folks weren't the only ones who left here and married. There was (Claude) Rahn who left here and married Imogene Bubbet.

Eleanor: Oh, I can remember mother talking about Imogene.

Joyce: And, she married a Rahn. So there were others who left here. You know when you've got young kids around here you're going to have boy friends and girl friends. I wonder how they handled situations like that?

Eleanor: Well, I don't know. I don't think there was much coming and going between the Koreshans here and the people in Fort Myers, if any, because they were looked upon as askance, very, by the natives there in Fort Myers. So I would think there would not be much if any mixing but maybe some of the people who lived around here and farmed or whatever it was that people did around here to make a living—it must have been farming---in those days. They might have mixed with local people here in Estero.

Joyce: Did your mother tell you a lot of stories?

Eleanor: No. It was not a happy memory for my parents.

Joyce: So it was better "out of sight out of mind" I suppose.

Eleanor: Yes. It was not a happy memory, especially with Daddy. Mother was willing to talk about it. Being an unhappy memory, Daddy didn't want to talk about it at all. (Laughs)

Bill: Did Casey have any mementos other than the photographs?

Eleanor: No.

Bill: Anything that she had here....?

Eleanor: that she cherished, you know? No.

Joyce: Now who do you refer to as Casey?

Eleanor: That was my mother.

Joyce: Your mother?

Eleanor: All my children and all my friends and all her friends called my mother Casey.

Joyce: Really. I heard him say that before.

Eleanor: They didn't call her Ada, they called her Casey. All of her friends called her Casey too.

Joyce: How interesting. She acquired that name after she left here?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joyce: Well I certainly appreciate you coming down...

Eleanor: Well, I enjoyed talking with you.

Joyce: If you think of anything else...

Eleanor: I'll get the pictures. Well, Joyce I'll look through the pictures that I have when I get back to North Carolina and I'll try to get a copy of that snapshot for you.

Joyce: When do you leave?

Eleanor: I'll be going in April.

Joyce: In April.

Eleanor: And I'll try to get a copy of that snapshot of mother and her mother and mother's three friends that was taken here.

Bill: We have that and you have a copy. I brought a copy down and I wrote the names on the back. It's a laminated picture.

Joyce: Okay. Did you do that recently?

Bill: A year ago.

Joyce: Okay. Because Mike did not mention it to me. I know we talked about that a couple years ago. But was it after our interview?

Bill: It was around that time. If it's not there I still got it, I have one cause...

Joyce: I'll talk to Mike when he comes in.

Bill: I'm sure it's there. Although you know how that is with park people coming and going. I may have given it to Larry and ...

Joyce: Yes.

Bill: And who knows.

Joyce: Well, they are pretty good about that and Mike does a really good job with that program.

Bill: Yes, he does. Yes, he does really.

Eleanor: This is a nice volunteer job you do.

Joyce: Thank you.

Eleanor: It's so nice of you.

Bill: It really is.

Joyce: It's a lot of fun and I've learned a lot. Eight years ago I didn't know this place existed. We just came down here on vacation and were looking for a place in the warmer weather to camp and ran into this and that's how it started.

Eleanor: Well, that's wonderful. I'm so glad.

Joyce: Is there anything else either one of you can think of?

Bill: No, I guess what stands out with us is how much we don't know as opposed to how much we do.

Eleanor: We really do not know.

Joyce: It is really to bad that they haven't done oral histories, you know, years and years ago. They didn't....

Bill: Yeah.

Eleanor: Yeah. All the Turner family is gone now. There's nobody left.

Bill: Joyce---not Joyce

Eleanor: Louanza (?)

Bill: Louanza (?)

Eleanor: I don't think she would know anything about it.

Joyce: Well, we'll be glad to see you again. I hope it doesn't take you so long to get back here.

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