

Edwin Gaines

January 13, 1999

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Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is January 13, 1999. I'm in Rockbridge Baths with Edwin Gaines, and I'm just thrilled to be here, finally. You are the son of the very famous Francis Pendleton Gaines. How old were you when he became president of Washington and Lee?

Gaines: I believe I was about fifteen months old.

Warren: So what's your earliest memory?

Gaines: Earliest memory is arriving at the Lee House in our car, rushing out to the back yard, and having my mother yell at me because there were two muddy wells in the back yard, uncovered, as I recall.

Warren: In the back yard of Lee House?

Gaines: That's right. I suppose we talked so much about going that the arrival, it's first thing I remember, period, I think.

Warren: So what was it like to grow up in Lee House?

Gaines: It couldn't have been more wonderful. There were so many rooms. Traveller's stall was my clubhouse. We had tunnels underneath the house. For instance, the porch is raised. I even kept a groundhog underneath there for about a week. I would go in and feed him, and I finally brought him out, and he never hurt me. The Lee House, it was very comfortable, very large, and it was just right for boys, too. There would be ping-pong tables, even a pool table, electric trains, and the attic and the basement were open to whatever we wanted to do.

I might say there was a spirit that I sincerely felt that General Lee was there, and I felt that he also had a sense of humor, because to put up with us in his own home, you know. No telling. The library, in which we entertained most of the time, Mrs. duPont gave us a slot machine—not a slot machine, a pinball machine, because she heard we wanted one. They were new at the time, and so for about a year we

kept the pinball machine in the library. But, unfortunately, somebody kept filching the nickels, and so it finally died. But the Christmases and all that were wonderful.

We frequently had unusual things happen. We didn't lock the door or at best, we said, "Last one in, lock the door." Of course, you never knew whether you were the last one or not, so we never locked it. On occasions we'd find tourists wandering through. I remember specifically this group. My father was trying to tell them that this wasn't a museum and it wasn't open, and they persisted, and just said, "Just tell us what in the house belonged to General Lee that's still there." My father said, "The radio." And they thanked him and seemed to go on their way. [Laughter]

Warren: [Laughter] That's great. That's great. Tell me about your sense of the spirit of Lee being there. How did you feel that?

Gaines: Well, I suppose one of the things, I kept a daily contact when I was young. First I took my bear, which was a bear on four wheels, and he used to travel down to the Lee Chapel. Then when I was older and had a tricycle, I used to go to the Lee Chapel. I'd go in and talk to Traveller, if nothing else, and then return to the front steps of the chapel and return the VMI cadet salutes when they came. They used to salute every time they walked by the chapel, saluted General Lee. I assume about twenty years ago they stopped that. But I would stand on the steps and return their salute, and they would either laugh or something like that.

But anyway, I was in contact with, if not Lee and his belongings, even Traveller or something, as I say. I think the test was if I did something questionable, I'd either say, "Is it all right, General Lee? Just please overlook this," or something like that. He certainly didn't replace the deity or anything, but I felt he was there most of the time.

Warren: Well, he's certainly a presence. I'm certainly aware of him being around. I guess you were too young to really remember your father's inauguration.

Gaines: I was. I've since read it, and I think it's just magnificent. You've probably seen it.

Warren: Yes, of course. But now, an event that happened when you were still pretty young and we started to talk about, is when they unveiled the McCormick statue.

Gaines: The McCormick statue, yes.

Warren: Tell me all about what you remember of that day.

Gaines: Well, I remember that Mrs. McCormick from Chicago and another lady—well, anyway, she usually sent presents to the children, that is, to my mother and father's children. But the McCormick had been very nice to Washington and Lee,

and, of course, the reaper was invented there, and the reaper set the pattern for the Northern agriculture, as you know, so that they had foods and could ship foods to starving places, and it offset the dependency on cotton that the cotton gin had established in the South.

But anyway, the McCormicks were important people, they were coming, and the governor and one of the senators from Chicago came. I remember we had our entire congressional delegation, senators and so forth, and there was the McCormick family. The highlight, of course, was the dedication of the statue that everyone—or most people mistake for General Lee that haven't been on campus. And they were all assembled, and my father was, I'm sure, attempting to give his best, and when he nodded at me, I was to pull the ribbon and the shrouds would come off the statue.

And so he was going along and wound up—and may I add finally that Cyrus McCormick was one of the dearest souls that ever graced the face of this universe. He nodded to me, I pulled it down, and right in the crook of Cyrus McCormick's arm was a great big empty whiskey bottle, to the horror of everyone. And Dean Gilliam could not quite reach that point. He was trying to reach up and get it out. It was so high. But that did little—I think my father recovered very graciously with, "Maybe we'd better use some of this corn for something else besides just [unclear]." But that was one of my highlights as a kid. I think that was when I was about six.

Warren: I've seen an album from that day, and there was a pageant that took place out at the farm, the McCormick farm.

Gaines: Yes.

Warren: Did you go out to that?

Gaines: I didn't. My brother did. And they also had the—you remember they had the stamp, the McCormick stamp commemorating—that was—I don't remember what it was. But had you heard about that?

Warren: No, I don't know about that.

Gaines: Yes. They opened the sales right here in Lexington. That was in the thirties sometime.

Warren: No, I didn't know about that.

Gaines: I'm pretty certain it was a Cyrus McCormick memorial stamp.

Warren: Interesting. I'm going to pause for just a moment.

[Recording Interrupted]

Gaines: Well, I guess Mrs. [Edith Bolling Galt] Wilson, and then, of course, we have pictures all over of Mrs. duPont and Mrs. Evans. I remember when Mrs. Roosevelt

came down. And then there was Ma [Frances] Perkins, the first lady in the cabinet, Secretary of Labor. She came down.

One of the perplexing things was we had upstairs my room and my father's room on one side. On the other side was the Green Room and the Rose Room for guests. The Green Room was right across the hall from my father's room, which was—there's a big hall, by the way, which was on the front of the house. My mother had a little bitty room that she made right at the end of the hall. It was the smallest room upstairs, but we used to get eight people in there sitting on the floor and everything.

But my mother would go down, when we were having dinner, about fifteen or twenty minutes in advance to make sure everything was all right. Inevitably there would be a call from either the Green Room or the—"Help! Help! I need some help." My father would go over there, and it would be one of these ladies that needed someone to zip up their dress. Well, it became—all right, Mrs. duPont knew the deal and Mrs. Wilson knew the deal, but then some of the others—and I'm almost certain that the Secretary of Labor, Ma Perkins, and Mrs. Evans, I know, they also experienced the thing. My father got so he would just listen, you know. As a matter of fact, they had buzzers in their rooms, but they wouldn't use them, that went down to the butler's pantry.

When General Lee was there, he had chimes, and they would pull these things in the bedrooms, and the bells would ring in the kitchen, and they memorized that. I remember we replaced it because nobody could memorize the tones and put in one, two, three, four, five, six buzzers. Anyway, my father did this so often that he declared at one point that he was thinking about writing a book entitled *Women I Have Zipped Up*. [Laughter] And I told him that wouldn't go over. It would have to be, this day and time, *Women I Have Zipped Down*.

He was quite a human person. We thought he was dying of strep throat one time. He was confined to his room. Nobody was allowed in except for his food and doctor. He wasn't supposed to get out of bed. I remember going to the door to see him, and he slipped to the window. I didn't know what he was going to do. And he opened the window, and here was his favorite tomcat, and he let him in, pulled the window and went back and jumped in bed like he'd never been out of it.

But, you know, the roof to the Lee house, the cats used to get up and come in. When we had been at Penn Robin, we would not have a key to the Lee house in the summertime. We would go up this big wisteria vine right by what is now the parking space at the Lee house, get on the roof, and we had one window that we

kept the screen unlocked. So you'd see the Gaines boys crawling up on the top of the Lee house.

Warren: You mentioned Penn Robin. Explain what that is.

Gaines: Three or four years after my father came here, he decided it might be nice to have a place, a summer home, and so we spent a couple of years looking. We almost bought one place right here where the interstate is now at Kerr's Creek, a big hill and [unclear]. But he finally found this one place with 320 acres or something, and he restored that. Some of the board members helped him restore it. It was a really sort of mansion. You've seen pictures of it.

Warren: Did it belong to him or did—

Gaines: No, this was my father bought this.

Warren: It was personal.

Gaines: And then restored it, and it became something of a showplace in the county. There are not too many big homes then. We had a tennis court. We had two log cabins. One of them was, they think, in the 1750s. The house burned down and was rebuilt in 1802. And you know, the boys, we had one wing, three bedrooms and a small maid's room, and on the other wing was my mother and father's.

My mother built just beautiful gardens. They were terraced. They went up to what we called the Taj Mahal, which was a big house. We should have a picture of that. And then the big barbecue pit up there. We could see sixty miles of mountain. They had some awful nice dinners and things up there. The dining room, I think, was something like fifty feet long. It was a whole side along the house.

Warren: Whoa. That's huge.

Gaines: The living room was what we called the "morning room," and then my father's room was the whole length of one side. All the rooms were huge. But that's where we loved and we considered home, and we lived there in the summer and lived in the Lee house in the nine months of school. Then when they retired, they lived there for a couple of years and then moved into town and sold Penn Robin.

Warren: I see. So it was sold within his lifetime.

Gaines: Yes, it was.

Warren: You also were around for another huge event, and you were awfully young, but do you remember the fire when the law school burned?

Gaines: Oh, yes, absolutely. My uncle was living with us at the time, and he went through the law school, my mother's youngest brother. So I got a little bit on it. I think—was that fire in '35 or '37?

Warren: 1934.

Gaines: '34. But I remember everyone concerned about the lumber company over there, and it was burning. Then, lo and behold, the law school was on fire, that ugly building, and everybody went from there. Now, I could see from the Pink Room—the Rose Room, I guess it was called—upstairs. I had a perfect view of the law school. And then I remember Cabot, who was president of the law school for a year, my uncle, I remember him saying something to the effect that, “You notice nothing of importance burned.” The story I had at the time was that the law students disliked the building so much and thought it was such an [unclear] that the fire had been started by some students to draw the fire department’s attention over there, and meanwhile over at the law school they’d carried out all of the documents of importance, and all of a sudden it erupted, the school. I couldn’t swear to this, but that’s the story that went around at the time.

Warren: There are a lot of stories around that fire.

Gaines: Had you heard that at all or not?

Warren: I didn’t hear that anything was saved except a few of the law books. I think it was a pretty disastrous fire, but apparently it was pretty dramatic, too.

Gaines: It was.

Warren: So you remember the original Tucker Hall and how ugly it was.

Gaines: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. But I don’t think they ever really established or put the blame on anybody for that fire.

Warren: No. No, they never figured either one of the fires. They determined that both of them were arson, but they never figured out who did it.

Gaines: It was a tremendous blaze. Well, I guess the library would have been.

Warren: Now, when we talked last summer, you were telling me some wonderful stories about various people who were visitors at Lee House. You mentioned Mrs. Wilson. Was that Mrs. Woodrow Wilson that you have been talking about?

Gaines: Oh, yes. She was at—

Warren: Tell me about her connection to your family.

Gaines: Well, Mrs. Wilson had been a friend of Mrs. duPont’s. Now, I think they all came from Virginia. Mrs. duPont had been a schoolteacher there in Wytheville, I believe it was, and I believe Mrs. Wilson also had—this is the second Mrs. Wilson I’m talking about, Edith B____. Anyway, Miss Edith and my mother and father hit it off pretty well through Mrs. duPont, and she used to come down. She came down to my wedding. A lovely person.

This is one story I want you to remember, if you will. When President [John F.] Kennedy was elected President, then Mrs. Wilson, as was customary for the

wives to give a dinner for the incoming President's wife, this was a tradition, and Mrs. Wilson, I assume when she went there she'd been given a dinner by the ex-Presidents' wives. So she gave this dinner for Jackie, and she invited my mother. She even sent, which I foolishly gave away, diagrams of where each person was going to sit. There would be Mrs. Wilson, there would be Jackie, then she put my mother right next to her. The cabinet wives were also invited. So they're all there, but she knew my mother wanted to talk to Jackie and put her there.

Came back after this was over, and I asked my mother, "What did Jackie have to say?"

She said, "Oh, she just said, 'Do you think eight years in the White House is going to spoil John-John?'" Well, At that point nobody knew.

I think one morning I walked down into the library, and here was Alexander Korinsky [phonetic], I believe it was.

Warren: I don't know that name. Korinsky?

Gaines: Korinsky. Right before the Communists came in, he had a position in the government of Russia. Then he had to leave, and he went to New York and lived and toured the country lecturing, but he was head of the Russian government for a little while. But, I mean, that was typical of who might be there. I have a list of most of the people that came there, and they signed the guest book and so forth, if you'd like to see it.

Warren: Oh, let's get that out. We're going to pause just a moment. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Go ahead, please.

Gaines: During the Bicentennial, I remember Jimmy [F.] Byrnes, who was one of my father's closest friends—they'd grown up together in South Carolina—came down to make the address. [Harry S] Truman had promised my father he would, and then he couldn't. At least he said he couldn't at the end, so he sent his Secretary of State, James Byrnes. During one morning just before lunch, we heard a great commotion during the Bicentennial up in the Green Room, but couldn't find anybody. Finally we heard the voices go again, and even some threatening voices, and went in the bathroom of the Green Room, and here were Jimmy Byrnes and Sam Rayburn about to come to fisticuffs. Byrnes was breaking—he used the occasion to break with Truman and denounce the welfare state. But that was a little bit of a Bicentennial that—I think that the biographer of Sam Rayburn mentions it in his—

Warren: So this is in 1949.

Gaines: That's right. I was in there helping separate them, and Byrnes was a great friend of mine, too. I didn't know Rayburn very well.

Or you can take the case of Henry Luce. We were all in my mother's room. The upstairs telephone was there. Luce had put in a call to his magazine. You know who Henry Luce was.

Warren: Yes.

Gaines: You know his wife, anyway, I'm sure. But he got hold of Whitaker Chambers, who had just announced he had been a Communist but who had named also that—and Henry Luce, we started to leave the room, and he said, "No, I want you to hear this." And he said, "Are you telling me you've never been a member of the Communist party, and you have, and I'm firing you."

Well, you remember Whitaker Chambers was an Alger Hiss—he put the thing on Alger Hiss, which is right interesting. My father was appointed to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. My father had been more or less a protege of Nicholas Murray Butler while my father was studying at Columbia. Nicholas Murray Butler was president. He had won the Nobel Prize. And for some reason or another he liked my father. I remember my father telling me how he, himself—how Nicholas Butler gave him his German test for his Ph.D. Anyway, they went on, and when Butler retired, he wanted my father to succeed him as the president of Columbia.

Father had offers at Tulane, Rice. I think there were fourteen or fifteen universities. But the Columbia one, they sent down—one of the Dodgers, I remember, stayed in the weekend. They told my father, "We can't tell you that we'll name you president. But we'll tell you this, if you will accept it, we will offer it to you." So you may have seen—all these things came out in the paper last fall, just things of fifty years ago. That's [unclear]. But my father wasn't interested in that.

Warren: Why do you think he was so devoted to Washington and Lee?

Gaines: Oh, he was the keeper of the tomb. To him, Lee was what Arthur was to his keeper of the tomb, I think.

Warren: Tell me more what you mean by that.

Gaines: Well, he saw a great deal of inspiration in the life of Robert E. Lee. If you study most of the heroes in America, Abraham Lincoln, at the height of his power, he was assassinated, and he never had to live with Reconstruction or something like that. I frankly believe it would have been a hell of a lot better if he had lived, I mean, obviously. So he became a hero. Same thing with Kennedy. He really hadn't—he had a few months, but he hadn't blossomed, and he was killed right at

the height, and so people can imagine what they have to. And this was true with others.

But General Lee, I think, is the most inspiring person, or one of the most inspiring persons, because he had to live with defeat, and the manner in which he did it helped us to heal up our wounds and get together, we'd lost. It was a very difficult thing, and yet people loved him as much after that as they did before or during the war. He had to live with, really, defeat. If you wanted to, you could say, "Look, here are 600,000 people dead because of you," of something. When he was fighting to repel the invasion. But we all have our problems. But even if General Lee went to Greenbrier or something like that, he was the first to get up and go and ask the wives of the Northern ex-generals to dance with him and that sort of thing.

Mrs. Lee had a cottage right—you've probably seen that cottage down in Rockridge Baths there that they call the Lee Cottage, where she came out and stayed when she took the baths. And he was a devoted husband, and the house was built with the porch around it for Mrs. Lee, so her wheelchair could go around there. He spent plenty of time [unclear]. There's no comparison to the way it is now with some of our leaders.

Warren: So all of this was very inspirational to your father, and it's what held him in Lexington?

Gaines: I think so.

Warren: Did he talk about it?

Gaines: Yes. It almost went without saying. I mean, when they first came here, they'd get up at six o'clock in the morning and started walking the streets of Lexington. That's the way they met everybody. Once or twice when he received offers, I think my mother thought about going. She liked the idea of going to Tulane and living in New Orleans, but my father just kind of—he talked her out of it. I don't think my father would have been happy in New York. I don't think he'd have been happy. He was a small-town boy.

He was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy Board by the President and at one time served as chairman of the Patent Committee. He couldn't screw a light bulb in very well, you know. [Laughter] He was what was so tremendously inspiring and philosophical, humble in the best sense of the word, treated everyone the same way with great deference, and yet, you know, there were some things, he was just like a kid. I'm the same way. He couldn't read instructions, how to put something together. [Laughter]

He was a member of a number of clubs. One of his favorites was the Alfalfa Club, which you've probably never heard of, but it's in Washington, and I think it's even more prestigious than the Gridiron Club. They have, I think, what they call the two outstanding people in each of fifty fields or something like that. My father was a member of the Alfalfa Club. I remember Ben McKelway was editor of the old *Washington Star*, and he had two sons that went to Washington and Lee. One of them was my classmate, and one was my brother's. He nominated my father for president at the Alfalfa Club, which they did every four years.

So my father went up there, and he nominated him, then my father made the speech. Now, this was a speech that was to be humorous to the Alfalfa Club, and he really wowed them. His slogan was "Gird up your loins, we're going to win." They had to take Felix Frankfurter out physically. He got hysterical. The next day, the papers, which I would love to get—this is 1948, I believe it was—the *Washington Star* had the headline "Gaines Nominated for Presidency." You know, it was all part of the thing. So they've had two presidential candidates in this town. I've often wondered if I could write—I'm sure I could—and get a copy of that paper. My mother had one. But Ben McKelway, being editor, he could do what he wanted to.

Warren: Oh, I'll bet we could track that down. You were starting to tell me about the famous visitors, and you had this list. I thought maybe if we opened up that list, that might spark your memory of some other great stories. There we go.

Gaines: Lejeune and quite a few of them are—Harold McCormick and Jessie Ball duPont, she was my godmother. She was my godmother and Cy Young was my godfather. He couldn't be at that time more Washington and Lee than anybody in the world.

Warren: Tell me exactly, what's the connection with Jessie Ball duPont? How did that start? Tell me about their friendship.

Gaines: If you'll see the picture, they simply adored each other.

Warren: Tell me what you remember.

Gaines: I remember they'd been schoolteachers together. They hadn't been schoolteachers together. I mean, she had been a schoolteacher and he had been a schoolteacher. I guess it was through mutual friends. I don't remember whether it was Patrick Hurley [phonetic], who was ambassador to China, but they met, and Mr. duPont loved my father, and they got—I think they were in some government things together. Maybe it was that Committee for the Endowment for International Peace. I don't know.

But then, I think, after Mr. duPont died my father became the man she relied on most of all. She had a brother, Ed Ball, who was a ruthless individual, made a lot of money, and when she died, he took over the—she put my father on the St. Joe Paper Company board, which handled all these—Mr. duPont, if I can back up, was the biggest stockholder of duPont Company, but he had three nephews that could outvote him when they put theirs together, so he went to Florida and made another fortune there, and this was when Mr. Ball took over from Mrs. duPont. She put my father on the board because he was the only one that could control Mr. Ball, Ed Ball. I don't know whether you remember it, but right before he died, he was putting armed guards on all the trains that went through Florida because the unions were blowing them up. It was one of those things that happened.

So, the more they met each other, the more they loved each other. They spent most of their vacations together. For instance, the last time I was in Epping Forest, which is Mrs. duPont's place in Jacksonville, I was the host and she was the hostess, and that's the way she would have it, you know, and we'd all dress up. You'd drive into her estate and be met. People would take you out, usher you to her *salon*, and she'd be there, come in, and we'd have a drink or two, and then she'd say, "Okay, now, everybody get dressed for dinner," which was always formal, "and be back down here now." And you'd go back, and your suitcase would have been opened, all the clothes pressed and hanging up in there. It was quite funny. My first wife had a large foot, so she put her shoes with my outfit and my shoes with hers. [Laughter] But that's the way it went.

But before that, my mother and father, they'd travel on the *Minnie Moocher* [phonetic], which was one of her yachts, and I think they eventually gave both yachts to the war. They crossed the ocean in it one time. Mrs. duPont became more and more dependent on my father on things, and, of course, there were a lot of things that—for instance, my father, because he knew her and because he was interested in her children's hospital, the first in the United States, in Wilmington, Rockridge County became one of four counties that had priority for any of their children to go up there. The other one was in Wilmington, and one was in Florida. I've forgotten where the other one was. So people from Lexington could go up there and get priority. But it just worked in different ways. I remember she had the bowling alley under her [unclear], which was a small version of Versailles. She had the gates to Catherine the Great's place I remember.

Mrs. Wilson loved my mother, and Mrs. duPont loved my mother. I was amazed. She was out at Penn Robin one time. My mother had—it was a hen party.

She had some other ladies there, so Mrs. duPont had them all pull the shades and said, "I want to see who can do this," and she put her leg right around her neck. I was peering through the window, you know, just amazed. [Laughter] Nobody else there could do that.

Warren: Mrs. duPont was putting her leg behind her neck?

Gaines: Absolutely.

Warren: Oh, my God. [Laughter] What a story. That's amazing.

Gaines: Oh, yeah, and, of course, everybody was talking about that around here for a long time. She kept in pretty good shape. She was tough, but she was just a lovely human being. When I was at Converse College, one brother was president of Wofford College in South Carolina, and my brother Bob was superintendent of public schools in Charleston. I was assistant to the president and director of development at Converse College. So the three of us inflicted a great deal on South Carolina before they finally ran us out of there.

Warren: I've interviewed a lot of people who had duPont scholarships, and they talked about how involved she was with the school itself. Certainly her friendship with your parents was the catalyst, but that Mrs. duPont was very involved with Washington and Lee.

Gaines: Well, she, of course, was the first woman to be made a member of the board. She hardly made a move without consulting my father. It was after Mr. duPont died. When she gave the money for the duPont building there, that was pretty much made with my father, that decision, because they were so lacking in the arts. If she gave money, she wanted to know what was being done with it, and she helped me through school from the time I was a freshman at the university, gave me a hundred dollars a month to play, and then when I finished graduate school, I wrote her a letter saying that I thought that someone else deserved that hundred dollars a month, which it turned out didn't do me any harm at all, telling her that. [Laughter]

You can walk into the Barnett Bank Building in Jacksonville and it looked like IBM headquarters or something. You never saw such a racket going on there. So she was up on everything, I think.

Warren: I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Warren: You were just starting to talk about Mr. Pratt, John Pratt.

Gaines: Mr. John Pratt, that's right, and I'm not sure he'd ever seen the university till my father convinced him to come up here. My father used to visit him in

Fredricksburg. I think his gift was finally equivalent to 13 million or something like that.

Warren: It was pretty substantial.

Gaines: I visited him down at Fredricksburg. He put one person through graduate school, for his Ph.D., because of his interest in the ginkgo tree. The two trees in front of the president's house are ginkgo trees, as you might know, and I think they were given by the Chinese to General Lee or something like that. They're the trees, you know, within twenty-four hours every leaf's off both of them. But John Pratt, he had these ginkgo trees, must have been male or female, I've forgotten, but they were ten times as big as those trees in front of there. He had an interest in them, and he thought they had possibilities as far as medicinal things. Now I see that the ginkgo thing is all over the place.

Warren: He was a man ahead of his time, I guess.

Gaines: That's right. And Leticia Evans, she called my mother "Baby Girl." I call Miss Jessie "Aunt Jessie," but this was, "Baby Girl, what can I do for you?" She's the one, of course, that gave the Evans Dining Hall and the tennis courts before they put in the new courts.

Warren: What do you remember of Leticia Pate Evans?

Gaines: I remember she was fun. I didn't know her that well. We'd go over to Hot Springs, and she'd give us the key to her liquor closet, which was down at the dining room because they couldn't buy drinks in those days, and tell us to charge everything to her. You know, we'd have a wonderful—my brothers and their wives and myself and my wife, but we would usually go in and see and talk to her a little bit, but she didn't want to go down herself, and so she'd send us down. She loved my mother. I don't remember her as well, of course, as Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. duPont.

An interesting thing, I think when Mrs. Roosevelt came, she, of course, did not enjoy drinking. As a matter of fact, I guess her family had been ruined by drinking. So she would have a drink with President Roosevelt to keep him company at times, and that was the only reason, but when she spoke down here right before she went down to the Lee Chapel, my mother said, "Is everything all right?" She said, "Yes, but Mrs. Gaines, you wouldn't happen to have a little sherry around here, would you?" [Laughter] So she had a glass or a glass and a half of sherry. Turned out she wasn't used to making speeches to all-male audiences, and I think, though I can't swear, I think that the Secretary of—Ma Perkins [Frances

Perkins, U.S. Secretary of Labor 1933–1945], I think she also had a little bit of sherry before she went down and talked to them.

Warren: So Frances Perkins spoke here as well?

Gaines: Oh, yeah. I think she's right—oh, yes. We called her "Ma Perkins," I think.

Warren: And did Eleanor Roosevelt come at the same time Franklin did, or were they separate trips?

Gaines: No, Franklin and Mrs. Roosevelt came down and spent the better part of a day, and they were chauffeured, and she went on over here in Goshen, I think it was, and spent the night. Then she came back again separately to address the student body. And Miss Perkins came to address the student body, not at the same time as Mrs. Roosevelt.

Warren: Tell me your memories of Franklin Roosevelt's visit.

Gaines: I remember there was a big excitement. I believe his visit was in '33. I'm not sure, but I think that was it. So I would have been about four and a half. But I remember there was a big rumpus coming, and I remember guards standing on that porch. I remember that President Roosevelt was in the car, and the next thing I remember he was in the library sitting there and said, "Come on, sit in my lap," you know, and I went over there and sat in his lap. He asked me if I had a dog, which I showed him, and so forth, and then they took and ushered me out, and I came back and put a cat on [unclear]. I never remember him being crippled, and I was reading my brother's account, and he said the same thing.

Roosevelt was fascinated that Lee had spent so many days right in the bay window where the students came by each day to speak to him, and they put his horse out there so he could see him, Traveller. Traveller was very special to me.

Warren: Tell me more about that.

Gaines: Well, I think I went down to see him every day I could from our house down to the—it used to just be his skeleton, you know. And you remember the story about [unclear].

Warren: Tell me.

Gaines: Well, they used to take the freshmen in at the beginning of the year, and there was the skeleton of Traveller encased in glass, and you could see there were a lot of initials on it and everything. Then here was a skeleton of a colt right next to him, and when there was a freshman came in as part of the indoctrination, they would take him down and simply say, "This is Traveller's bones when he was grown, and these are Traveller's bones when he was a colt." "Oh, yeah. I see. Oh, you're kidding." [Laughter] But that they did then.

And, of course, it was Traveller's stall that was my clubhouse.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Gaines: Well, I think, if you'll excuse me, that's where the local girls and the local boys used to play post office. I remember putting the ladder to where the hay was. They still have the hay and water attachments in there. And then it was, you know, doing some mischief or something, but it was always a good place for a clubhouse.

Warren: Now, a lot of people say that the doors are never closed to Traveller's stable. You were playing post office with those doors wide open, or did they—

Gaines: You mean the garage doors?

Warren: Yes.

Gaines: We used to always close them.

Warren: You know, I've seen them closed, and there's this legend that they're never closed, but—

Gaines: No. No. The front door may not be locked, but we used to close them. Toward the end maybe we didn't close them as much as we used to, but I remember when we first got there, they were closed.

Warren: Earlier you were talking about some of your rather remarkable neighbors that you had. Were they members of your club. Did Edgar Shannon come to your clubhouse?

Gaines: No. Fontaine Gilliam, Dean Gilliam's son. That was Fancy Dress when we were about eight or nine years old, and the theme that year was the Kentucky Derby.

Warren: So you two dressed up. Even though you were just children, you dressed up for Fancy Dress?

Gaines: Well, we led the figure. We came out first twiddling and looking around saying, "Oh, there must be some big party going on here," you know, and then the thing came on, but we led the parade.

Warren: I didn't know that.

Gaines: And one of the beautiful things we had here at the Lee house was, it used to be whenever we had a band for the dances, they agreed to send one or perhaps three people over to our house to play for a while at a reception. You see, whenever they had a dance, we had a reception. Sometimes it was a parents' reception, sometimes it was a seniors' reception, and so forth. But here's Hal Kemp, Tommy Dorsey, Kay Kaiser, all these people who came there, and I got to know them all because I would—if it was a pianist, I'd sit right on the end of the bench. If not, I had my chair while they played in the Lee house, and I got to know them all. Hal Kemp became—he had a son that played in there, I believe, young Kemp, but he became a

real Washington and Lee advocate. Whenever he got on the airways, he'd play the "Washington and Lee Swing."

But this was a unique thing, you know, to know these people. When I was in college, we would take and bring Tex Beneke here or something over to the house at intermission, when we had some punch or something like that, and so I got to know them that way, too. Kay Kaiser was the most fun of them all, and I saw he died recently. But he started with "Evening, folks. How ya'll?" And it was Kay Kaiser's College of Musical Knowledge, and then he went to a divinity school and spent the last twenty or thirty years of his life teaching there.

Warren: I didn't know that. That's fascinating. You were in Washington and Lee at a very interesting time. You were a student with the veterans, is that right?

Gaines: That's right. Our class, 50 percent veterans and 50 percent non-veterans, and it was good. I think it helped both of us. They got to throw off a little of their seriousness, and we got to learn something from the more mature people. There's always been this myth about married students not doing as well or something, and that dispelled that, because veterans came back, got married, they just did very well. We had some—it was a good time. I remember the election of 1948. There was a lot of activity on the school.

Warren: What kind of activity?

Gaines: Well, there was a mock convention.

Let me say several things that may change the subject before I forget. You know, my father came there in 1930, and he had the Depression to fight. They had to reduce salaries a little then, but on the other hand, they never went to the chit system that, say, the University of Arizona and other places, where they paid them in little things that the grocery store would honor most of the time. But he got through the Depression. I remember I got a penny for each light I cut out that somebody else had left on.

And then he walked right into World War II. Now, when you have a university of nothing but male students—the student body went down below ninety, I remember, but my father was able to get the School for Special Services in, and that was delightful. I mean, these people all had talent, and every church that wanted a performance of a play, or more often they liked the comedians, they were always here. I remember the folks gave a reception for each group that came through, and my father made some very good friends. The next governor of Texas was there. They had all these people there. And it seemed to please everybody. [Telephone rings. Tape recorder turned off.]

Warren: You were talking about the School for Special Services.

Gaines: Oh, yeah. A lot of people. And just one of the surprising things that happened was that Red Skelton went through that school, and he showed up at the reception with a girl that—well, anyway, I didn't know her, and she was a—I don't know how to put it in a nice way, but if Lexington had any bad girls, she was one of them. [Laughter] And he showed up at the reception with her, and I remember my father broke out laughing, and my mother was about to cry.

Warren: So how old were you at that point, when the School for Special Services was there?

Gaines: Oh, I guess—I was away at prep school most of the time, but I was in from the tenth to the twelfth grade or ninth grade, something like that.

Warren: You went away to prep school?

Gaines: Yes. I went one year to Lexington High, and then I went away. You see that picture of Pat Robertson? We started out together here. He was one of those that jumped the seventh grade. Then we both went to Lexington High for a year, and then he went to McDonough outside of Baltimore, I believe it was, for a year. I went to McCauley [phonetic] in Chattanooga, Tennessee. His father, the Senator Robertson, got dissatisfied with Pat and sent him down to McCauley, requesting he room with me, and so we roomed together one year at McCauley, and then we went another year, and we didn't room together.

Then we went through Washington and Lee together and in the summers went down to the Marine Corps, Quantico, to get our reserve commissions. Then we graduated and went to—as a matter of fact—well, anyway, it doesn't make any difference. Anyway, we graduated from McCauley, and subsequently McCauley has a picture of the two of us graduating and receiving our lieutenantships or something like that. Then Pat and I went to Korea together. So I've known him a long time. When we got out of the Korean War, I was at Virginia and he was going to Yale Law School, so each time he went home, he'd spend the night with us or something like that. But I haven't seen him since his court trial with McClosky, I guess it was.

Then about ten years ago—I think it was when he was talking about running for President—that he sued Pete McClosky for defamation of character. McClosky said that Pat didn't get into any combat because of his father, which may be true. I don't know. But Pat called me to tell me that he was suing, and I haven't heard from him since.

Warren: What was he like as a student here at Washington and Lee?

Gaines: Well, I mean, our grade point average—we were both Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa graduates. There couldn't have been more than a tenth-of-a-point difference or something like that, but he was a hell-raiser. Not that I didn't do my share, too. [Laughter] But he was—well, I don't know, but he didn't mind driving his father's car with the congressional license on it and telling people, policemen in Washington, where to get off, you know, because they wouldn't arrest the senator's son. I don't mean to be hard on Pat or anything, but I think everybody that knows him agrees that that's the way it was until his conversion.

Warren: So were you in a fraternity?

Gaines: Yes. I'm a Delta Tau Delta.

Warren: You're a Delt?

Gaines: Yes, Roger and I were—Roger Mudd. And there were a bunch of us—the Rowe brothers that were in journalism. We had a good group.

Warren: You had some interesting people who went through Washington and Lee with you. You were there at the same time Roger Mudd was, but he was a veteran. So he was a little older than you?

Gaines: I guess he was. He came in, and he was a fraternity brother of mine, and we were good friends. I went to the last class reunion. He and I had lunch together. So, yeah, we did.

Warren: And John Warner was here with you?

Gaines: Yes, and he was one of my—see, he was down at Quantico with us. Pat and John and I had what we called the "Thursday Night Supper Club." We would leave Quantico, go up to Washington and have dinner and maybe stay up there all night, come back just in time for work on Friday, struggle through Friday, and then be dead during the weekend or something like that. That was our Thursday Night Dinner Club, we called it.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Washington and Lee. I had one brother that didn't graduate for reasons I won't go into, but it started at Washington and Lee. He's the brother that became president of Wofford. Another brother—sort of a pyrrhic victory. Mrs. duPont wanted to send him to med school, but he never could pass chemistry. It's not because of his intelligence. There were 4,000—you remember that V-12 or V-2 during World War II, where they took the college students and made them naval officers or something in ninety days? Well, Bobby scored higher than anybody that took that test. They even sent up a general to make sure that it hadn't been—stuff he wasn't interested in, he didn't [unclear], but I remember him reading the Encyclopedia Britannica when I was about five and he was ten. He'd

spend hours reading it, and he had tremendous ability. He just had a weakness toward drinking, and he died when he was about fifty.

Warren: There was one other classmate—well, not classmate, but person—well, actually, was he your classmate? Was Tom Wolfe your classmate? He was there at the same time you were.

Gaines: A year behind, I think.

Warren: Yes, I think so, too.

Gaines: He was a St. Christopher boy or something. I knew him. I wasn't as close as I was, say, to Pat and John. But Tom was a very nice guy. I like his eccentricity, too.

Warren: Was he eccentric when he was there?

Gaines: He was. He belonged to one of the small fraternities, you know, and everybody thought, well, that's just a group of misfits or something over there, or something like that. But I believe that's true. Do you know which fraternity he joined?

Warren: I don't remember.

Gaines: It was one of the small ones. To tell the truth, it was the same fraternity, I think, that some Washington and Lee boy many years ago got in a fight with his wife and she didn't have enough money, so he blew himself up in an airplane over Charlotte or something. It was a commercial plane that killed everybody, but I remember that guy was in the same fraternity.

Warren: Oh, my gosh.

Gaines: It was nice to have the people that didn't fit the mold, because the mold was so much the same in many ways. But my father, when he came in there, it was more—he was looking for the rocks to shine and make them gems, and there it looks like all the gems are coming in before—

Warren: Now, one of the gems about Washington and Lee that I ask everyone about, that I think is so special about Washington and Lee, is the Leticia. What did the Leticia mean to you? Growing up, did it have an influence on you as you were growing up?

Gaines: Absolutely. The Leticia was something not to be toyed with. We had Freshman Camp, I think as you know, which was primarily designed to instill in people what the Leticia was. The Leticia sort of confirmed for me that there are absolutes, that there is honor and there's dishonor. There were a lot of freedoms we had by observing the Leticia.

I had at least two fraternity brothers that went out of the university because of the Leticia. I never got put in a position—it was a very tough thing to point out one of your friends and say, “You broke this, and you’re out of school.”

I served on the Honor Committee at the University of Virginia. I was president of the graduate school and on, first, the Student Council and then on the Honor Committee, and there was a reaffirmation when I was over there. McCauley had an honor system, too. Of course, Virginia and Washington and Lee are about the only two that don’t give you a second chance or something like that. But I’ve gone through too many of those “[unclear] give me a second chance. So-and-so got a second chance.” I think that’s fine in prep school, but I don’t think it’s a real honor system. The system I think is entirely different, both at Virginia and Washington and Lee, from the service academies, which are sort of a joke, I think.

Warren: The honor systems at the service academies are a joke?

Gaines: I think so. I travel around to the Naval Academy. They just had their—not the Naval, I mean the Air Force academy. They had a dean’s meeting there, and they’d just gotten through with a big scandal, and the little people there were saying, you know, the captains, “This can never happen again because we’ve legislated this and that and the other.” Got home, and within a week there week there were about fifteen or twenty new things, had done exactly what that guy said they never would do. [Laughter]

Warren: Having grown up in Annapolis, I know what you mean. The whole idea of the demerit system, some of the things people got demerits for, if you were at Washington and Lee you’d be gone.

Gaines: That’s right. It applies throughout, whether it’s women or whether it’s writing or stealing or whatever.

Warren: One thing we’ve mentioned briefly but I’d like to hear more about because you were a student there at the time is the Bicentennial in 1949. That’s a whole yearlong event.

Gaines: Well, ours, it was more a spring event. I mean, I remember the dedication of the stamp, which was a coup, and I think they passed a law in Congress afterwards that they never could honor a university again, as I recall, because they immediately got 400 or 500 applications for stamps. But I was in charge of selling the stamps at the Bicentennial, and so that had several areas there. We were trying to raise 10,000 dollars, which doesn’t sound like much now, but the students were going to raise it themselves to honor the World War II veterans and form a scholarship, which at that time [unclear] we raised [unclear].

Art Wood, who's another alum who's a good friend of mine, he was president of Fancy Dress our senior year. He made me a vice president. He was King Arthur. We were—but he went around to—I think there were forty or fifty of these comic-strip artists, and asked them if they would do one for Washington and Lee's Bicentennial. You know, not a one turned him down. He turned out this little booklet, it was just great, you know, with all the great comic-strip artists doing this, and some of them, you know [unclear]. So we were the two students that really participated in that thing. They didn't have much then.

I remember—it seems, unless I'm crazy, I hadn't thought about it, but I believe out at Penn Robin they put up a huge tent. I went out there one night almost as the climax of it, and I remember they had people parking the cars and all that thing out there. They had a pavilion, I guess it was, out there. Then I remember they—I don't think I went to some of the occasions, but they gave, what, twenty or thirty honorary degrees.

Incidentally, my father's received fifteen honorary degrees, but I know at one time he told me that he had been offered three times that many. One person wrote, which I thought was rather clever, "Dr. Gaines had fifteen honorary degrees, only exceeded by the number of invitations to become president at other schools." If you look through there, you can see the list of them. They tried to get him even over on the West Coast, big [unclear]. But he wanted to be keeper of the tomb, I think.

Warren: Keeper of the tomb.

Gaines: He wrote a book on a Southern plantation in about 1922. It was his thesis for Columbia, dissertation, and it was "The Southern Plantation in Fact and Fiction." So he did this. All but one of the reviews were good.

But then they asked him—they had what they called "Every Man's Edition," and it was sort of like the Book of the Month Club. I have one right over there. And they asked my father to do the introduction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was rather ticklish at that time. He was teaching at Furman University. And he did that introduction, which is on this *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It's one of these books that I have. I guess it's right over there. I thought you might want to look at that some time.

But the gist was—his was that, yes, you could find any of these infractions, abuses, or what have you, in slavery in the South, but instead of all being in one place like this, you'd have to look at a newspaper one day at abuse over here and another paper for abuse over there, but it was very rare, if not nonexistent, that you would have all this happening on one place. And it seemed [unclear]. But this was seventy years before they first started questioning about the old conceptions of the

plantation, because after the war, many people in the North reproduced these homes, Southern homes, tried to become dressed-up people in garbs and this, that, and the other.

I remember my father went to one party up there in New York, and everyone was dressed in togas, and they thought the moonlight was a little yellower there and everything, and they dressed them up in togas, and I remember Father saying he was standing by the host, and this man that was assisting with the drinks and everything came up and said, "Oh, my Caesar, the gin done give out." So that was a part of it, the Reconstruction of the South in the North, or at least what they thought was a Reconstruction.

Warren: I have one more question about the Bicentennial. The person who chaired it is someone I expect you got to know fairly well, John W. Davis.

Gaines: If you had asked me who chaired it, I would never have dreamed it was John W. Davis.

Warren: What was he like as a person?

Gaines: I never was that close to him, but as far as I could tell, he was a man of great principle and extremely gifted. I mean, I think he would have been a great president of Washington and Lee, too.

Warren: Did he ever come to visit at Lee House that you remember?

Gaines: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I'm sure he's in there. I remember him coming [unclear]. Well, he was on the board of trustees, and so the board came periodically, but I didn't—I was too young at the time. Marvin, my black friend and I, would be eating in the back someplace, the one I showed you the picture of.

Warren: Yes. What was Marvin's position in the household?

Gaines: Well, we'd go to Mississippi two or three summers, and Marvin and I played. He came up—he was five years older, and he came up primarily to be a friend of mine and to try to make sure he received an education.

Even at that time—let me go back. There was always back there several of my black friends living in the Lee house. When my mother and father came, they brought two maids from Mississippi, Bea and Blanche. Bea became my nurse. She lived with me. In the morning she would come in before I got up and put my clothes on the radiator so when I got up they would be warm, then she would come back while I dressed and listen to my lessons and so forth. We would go all over Lexington collecting tinfoil and making tinfoil balls or something. But I loved her, I'm sure, as much as I loved, if not more, my mother at the time, because I saw her all the time.

When the Lindbergh trial of the Lindbergh baby was stolen, all of a sudden, Bea, who lived in the back, appeared in my room, which was next to my father's, put her mattress down—if it weren't for the walls, it would have been ten feet from my father's head—and every night would stay there because she didn't want me to get stolen. After two or three weeks, they convinced her to go back. She was about ten years older than I. She was a young girl. I loved her to death. Some of the funny things I remember that we did [unclear].

Warren: Oh, tell me.

Gaines: Oh, I remember I had a lot of trouble. There was an enema in the house that they'd used on me, and Bea asked them if we couldn't get rid of it, and so they told her yes, and so she took me and we went over the footbridge and threw this thing into [unclear]. But I mean, I never will forget that, that she was going to get rid of that thing because I didn't like it. I loved her to death. Blanche lived there about three years, and we just found out a couple of years ago that she left because she was pregnant. She was sweet, but Bea was the one I really loved.

Then Bea left and Marvin moved in, and, of course, my uncle lived back there, too. I remember happy times now, great jokesters. Sitting at the table, it was hilarious.

Warren: Oh, do tell me. Tell me what you mean by that.

Gaines: Oh, just witticisms that would come through. I remember one time my father was telling his little niece, said, "I think you're a cold potato. That's why you don't have any dates." Then he said to me, "You're the little potato," and this, that, and the other. I said, "Yeah, and my mama's the dictator." Oh, he thought that was— [Laughter] That was a very poor example. But particularly at Penn Robin, you'd be crying at just the spontaneous jokes that [unclear]. And there was a big fight. Everyone wanted to get the floor. "Can I have the floor for a minute?"

Warren: And they'd actually say that?

Gaines: Oh, yeah.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

Warren: This is Mame Warren. It's January 13, 1999. This is tape two with Edwin Gaines.

Gaines: To tell you the truth about the Bicentennial, you know, the guy that really ran it was Milton Rogers. Have you ever heard of Milton?

Warren: No. Tell me.

Gaines: Well, our father hired him. He'd known the family. His wife and my mother had been friends in Mississippi, and Milton, my father had known him, but

he'd been a successful, I believe, Wall Street investor. So my father hired him, or the board did, to come down. He really ran the Bicentennial.

Warren: And what was his name?

Gaines: Milton Rogers, I think. He did the dog work for it all.

Warren: So he was not an W&L man. He was brought in from the outside to make it work?

Gaines: That's right. I don't know exactly how big it was, but I know that when my father wanted something done, that was the guy he went to.

Warren: Interesting.

Gaines: Milton Rogers and his wife Lucille.

Warren: Now, I can't leave here without our talking about what your father was best known for, and that's being an orator. What are your memories of your father as an orator?

Gaines: When I was so very young, I got so nervous I would walk out of his talks. Then when I got older, I heard him talk, particularly during the war, and then, of course, when I graduated from Washington and Lee, and he also came down and spoke when I graduated from McCauley. I never heard anyone, as far as I was concerned, that even approached his ability. I heard some good orators.

At the age of seven, he made his first public speech in Wytheville, Virginia. It was explaining the Constitution. At age ten, he was filling in for his father, who was a Baptist minister. He had read Milton, Shakespeare, everything by the time he entered public school, which was the fourth grade. He went to Fork Union for a year or two, and then he went to Richmond, where his brother, Uncle Eddie lived.

Well, I think he had, one, the knowledge of the Bible, the experience in talking, and then when he went to his Shakespeare and his comparative English, he taught a course for twenty-some years at Washington and Lee while he was president, and his course was Literature of the Bible, which he did not want me to take, which he did not want to give me an A on, but which he did when my mother said, "If he deserves it, you can't keep it away from him." But it was one of those courses that, you know, you had to have a B-plus average to get in.

It was just inspiring. His sense of timing and his knowledge—his timing was tremendous, and his intonations from boisterous to just a whisper, and his complete knowledge, and yet he was about as humble a person as you'd ever see. I remember being over at the Homestead and he gave a speech, and this doctor came up to him after, just weeping, "Poor General Lee. Poor General Lee." [Laughter] And my father would always pooh-pooh when people would—he would pooh-pooh

them when they would tell him how good he was. I don't think he ever really knew that he was.

Warren: I've heard a couple of tapes of him talking, and one thing that impressed me was how he always would work a joke in.

Gaines: You've heard this expression, but they'd be lying in the aisles laughing one moment and crying the next moment, and he had a beautiful way of telling tales.

Warren: Do you remember any of them?

Gaines: Oh, yeah. Other people who knew him remember. He had a wonderful speech called "Writing Your Own Letter of Recommendation." He took off on that. I remember I used to—ended up with what—this is twenty or some years now. [Unclear] people picked up one of them, but it was about these two young youths in a country far away. They were very upset with the seemingly over-expressions—let me start that again.

"There were these two young men that were envious of this old man that lived in the town that all the people respected. And these two young kids, they didn't see why. The guy wasn't strong, he didn't look like much, and yet he was revered by all the people. So they decided they would challenge him to a meeting and show that this old man wasn't so wise and so forth.

"So they came upon a plan in which one of the boys would confront the old man and say, 'Old man, if you're so smart, what do I have in my hand?' And then he would have a bird. And I would say if he should, just by some hook or crook, say that it was a bird, then I would say, 'Old man, is that bird alive or dead, if there is a bird there?' If he said it was alive, I would crush it and drop it to the ground. If he said it was dead, I would open my hand and let it fly out.

"On the appointed day, all the villagers did come out to see how the old man and the two boys would make out. And this boy went up and said, 'Old man, if you're so smart, tell me what I have in my hand right here.'

"The old man said, 'You have a small bird.'

"Well, that shook them up for a little bit, but they had [unclear]. So the boy then said, 'Old man, if it is a bird, can you tell me if that bird is alive or dead?'

"The old man looked at him and said, 'As you will, my son, as you will.' And I tell you high school graduates, it's up to you, as you will, as you will."

But I heard him tell that the first time at my high school graduation. There were stories such as that.

Warren: Well, people certainly remember him. They remember him so well.

Gaines: You're sweet to say that, Mame.

Warren: Oh, I know so. I've interviewed a lot of people, and I know how influential he was.

Gaines: When I was in Arizona, and he came to visit us right before he died. He was with us when Kennedy was assassinated, so upset, and then six weeks later he was dead. He died about twelve o'clock at night. I never knew whether he died on the last day of '63 or the first day of '64.

Warren: When I heard that he had died on December 31st, I thought, well, he died dramatically just like he lived dramatically.

Gaines: That's right.

Warren: Do you have any more stories that you would like to share, any particular ones that you remember?

Gaines: Oh, I'm sure as soon as you leave I'll think of more.

Warren: I heard one about him going to a garden club that I would love to get on tape.

Gaines: Now, that's—did Jim [Farrar] tell you that, or did Rob [Mish] tell you?

Warren: Rob did.

Gaines: If you won't hold it against me—I mean, I don't know whether it belongs on tape. Maybe we ought to turn that off and then you decide whether it does.

Warren: Oh, why don't you tell it. We'll censor it from the transcript if—

Gaines: Would you mind if I had a cigarette?

Warren: Not at all.

Gaines: Are you sure?

Warren: Yes. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Gaines: This was in the forties. My father was invited to speak to the—I believe it was the West Virginia Garden Club. I'm not sure whether Mr.—how he was put in that position, but he had two members of the board from West Virginia, and I believe the chairman of the [unclear] was the one that suggested he talk to the garden club.

At any rate, this woman that introduced him had done her research on him and was all prepared, and she came in to introduce him. We were sitting on the stage in the West Virginia Garden Club, state garden club was out there. She started off, "Now, we have Dr. Francis P. Gaines speaking today, and I know something about Dr. Gaines that not a one of you know in this room, something very personal about Dr. Gaines, and not a one of you knows what, and I'll tell you what it is. Dr. Gaines' *Who's Who* is nine and a half inches long." [Laughter]

Warren: Well, obviously you heard the story from your father repeating it when he got back.

Gaines: Well, he never repeated it in public. I'll say that. Yes, I did.

Warren: So what did he think? Did he get a good laugh out of it?

Gaines: Oh, he said he was about to die up there when she said that. [Laughter] He did, but it was a long while afterwards.

Warren: I think that was a very funny story.

Gaines: Well, I'm glad you don't—I couldn't believe it when I heard it. But it is a funny story.

Warren: Oh, I thought it was very funny.

Gaines: Of course, you have to speak to a group that know what a *Who's Who* is.

Warren: You know, it occurred to me when I heard it, I said, "Rob, I don't know if kids today would get it. I'm not sure that they would understand what a *Who's Who* is."

Gaines: That's right.

Warren: It doesn't have the clout that it once did.

Gaines: You know, I didn't talk to my mother about it, but after my father died, a man came up to her, and I knew that this was going on and thought it was legit, and said that they were doing a *Who Was Who*, and that he was to be included in it, and I never heard any more about it at all. I remember they were doing these *Who Was Who*, and had people that died between the ages of such and such. Have you ever run into that or not?

Warren: I've seen the volume, but I—

Gaines: Well, I found one, and it looked like it was the date, but it didn't have my father in it.

Warren: Maybe his entry was too long. Nine and a half inches. It was probably longer than that by then. [Laughter]

Gaines: [Laughter] That's right. He was a member of the Cosmos Club and all these things. Alfalfa was really the most interesting.

Warren: Okay. We're going to wrap thing up here. I'm curious, and I don't know the answer to this. What happened to your mother after your father died? Did she continue to live in Lexington?

Gaines: She did. About three years before my father died, they built a little house right across—I say a little house—right across from the building where we were talking about the school on Washington Street.

Warren: On Washington Street.

Gaines: Well, they lived at 1 Estill Street, which is the street that just goes out from that.

Warren: Oh, really.

Gaines: And it's a little white house that looks [unclear], but by the time they got through with it, there were four bedrooms and five baths upstairs and two bedrooms and two baths downstairs and all these other rooms. It was really something.

Warren: So it wasn't such a little house after all.

Gaines: [Laughter] No, it wasn't at all.

Warren: Well, after Penn Robin, I can't imagine them after the Lee house—

Gaines: That's right.

Warren: And I presume—did they continue to entertain right up to the end?

Gaines: Oh, yes, they did.

Warren: And how much longer did your mother live?

Gaines: She lived till '73, I believe it was. So she was alone almost twenty years, I guess.

Warren: Ten years after he died.

Gaines: Ten years after he died. And the last time I saw her, I was a visiting professor at the University of East Anglia in '71-'72, I guess, and she came over and visited us for a while, and I was the last time. I was so glad that she did have a chance to spend that time with us.

Warren: I asked you this question before we turned on the tape recorder, and I've always been intrigued by her name, Sadie duVergne Gaines. Can you explain for me the family name?

Gaines: The DuVergne came from the French part of us. One of the first Huguenots came over and settled in Charleston. We were descended from them, my mother's line. The DuVergne is part of a royal name in France which I've never understood, and, as I say, my mother's name was DuVergne, Sadie DuVergne, as a matter of fact, Sadie DuVergne Robert, and the Roberts came, of course, from the Huguenots that came from France.

Warren: And was she always called Sadie DuVergne? Did anyone just call her Sadie?

Gaines: No one called her Sadie, I don't think. It was Sadie DuVergne on occasion, but more it was DuVergne, and my father called her Babe.

Warren: Oh, how charming. He called her Babe all the time?

Gaines: That's right. He referred to her as DuVergne, but called her Babe.

Warren: So would someone like Mrs. duPont call her DuVergne?

Gaines: No. Let me think. Sadie DuVergne [unclear].

Warren: That's always how I've heard her referred to.

Gaines: Most [unclear]. I guess I named one of my daughters after her, we did, and she's DuVergne Robert Gaines. But everybody thinks she's a boy. They don't know about the DuVergne, and then the Robert must be a boy.

My mother and father used to have coffee each morning. He kept a little coffeepot in the—it was demitasse, but they'd have five or six of them. He'd bring it in to her, and that's the way they started off the day. For about ten years, though, they started off each day walking around Lexington, to get to know everybody.

We used to take a Sunday ride, and we'd come out the Midland Trail, which is 60, and we'd get out to where Fitzpatrick's—no, where Snyder's swimming pool was. This was the early thirties, and that was the only swimming pool around, a concrete swimming pool. Then we'd go out to what is now Frank Gaines' store, which was another store at the time. But on Sunday afternoon they would have funny papers waiting for us, and we'd have soft drinks. Then we'd drive around by Big Spring, come back in by the road at East Lexington, which went next to the house of many cats and next to the swinging bridge, and then the weeping willow where I used to weep. They'd tell me I could have a weep, and I'd pull one of those.

Warren: Where was the house of many cats?

Gaines: Well, I'm trying to think. If you went down here to Frank Gaines'—you know where that store is?

Warren: No. On the Midland Trail?

Gaines: Yes. You come out of Lexington about five or six miles, and it's the only grocery store back there.

Warren: Okay. Before Big Springs, right there with Big Springs?

Gaines: Yes. Now, you go by Big Springs. That was much smaller at the time, and it had ponds, lily ponds on it, and then you keep going to the right there and come into Lexington that way. The cat of many houses (sic) is about halfway there to Lexington, from Big Springs to Lexington [unclear], and right before you got to it was the swinging bridge. Well, we have swinging bridges down here, but at that time I didn't know anything about them. And they had the willow tree. And then we'd come into Lexington.

After we'd been here about five or six years, a filling station there, I think we had a tire go bad. They didn't usually do business on Sunday. So the guy fixed that

tire for us, and I asked my father who he was, and he said, "My name's Frank Gaines."

He said, "Where are you from?"

He said, "I'm from Lexington."

"What was that again?"

"Well, Francis Pendleton Gaines."

"From Lexington? Well, you know, I've lived here about fifty years. I thought I knew everybody that lived in Lexington. I've never heard of your name." [Laughter] He'd tell that story on himself.

Warren: That's great.

Gaines: But I was there, and I remember it was true. He said, "I thought I knew everybody in Lexington. I've been here fifty years, and I never heard that name."

Warren: So were there any Lexington characters that you particularly remember?

Gaines: Oh, yeah. Oh, Lord! Herb the dog man.

Warren: Tell me about Herb the dog man.

Gaines: He used to sit right there by the entrance to campus by the Episcopal Church, and there used to be a letter box back there. Well, he'd lean up against that and have these puppies go in there. You'd buy a puppy, you know, for a couple of dollars, and the thing would disappear, and you'd come back, and here it was with Herb. [Laughter] He was notorious for that. But he was good. There were—well, I knew all the people. Watt Smith [phonetic], who worked at Washington and Lee.

Warren: Who was Watt Smith?

Gaines: He was the plumber for the entire university, strong as a horse. He'd walk around with trunks under one arm and another one like that. There was Boss, who was in charge of the grounds at Washington and Lee. He had the only electric mower, or gasoline mower, I guess it was. But they were unusual at the time. But when I say—Smith, Watt Smith, when I say he was in charge of all the plumbing, he was the only plumber. When I say Boss, a wonderful black man, a wonderful man no matter what color. And I say he was in charge of the grounds. He was the only one in charge. And the same way with Mr. Agnor. He was the only carpenter. He was the carpenter for the whole school. So the support group was very small at the time. In fact, there were only about two people in the business, three people in the business part of the university when my father came, I think. And there was Rotten Apples.

Warren: Who was Rotten Apples?

Gaines: I don't remember, but I remember there was another guy that made his own shoes with burlap and so forth, and he kept money in the bank, and he would take it out and go to New York, and they would arrest him because they thought that he would—and then there was one time, I think, even the Chief of Police went up to New York to get him back, because he just—he didn't believe in dollar bills and things, and he'd walk around with these silver dollar things.

And there was always a fight at Washington and Lee between the locals that believed that they stole their cats, or somebody stole their cats and sold them to the science department over at Washington and Lee. There was always a bunch of friction at that time.

One of the most embarrassing things, I suppose, that ever happened when I was small, I was going across that longest non-suspension concrete footbridge in the world, supposedly, if you know which bridge I'm talking about, and I proceeded to put my head between a couple of those posts, and when I tried to retrieve my head, it wouldn't come. So we had about forty-five minutes and 500 people and everything, and I finally got my head out from between—

Warren: Oh, my gosh. That would be a memorable day.

Gaines: That was. That's right. That was right above the train tracks that used to be there.

Warren: Do you remember the train coming in?

Gaines: Oh, yes. Absolutely. Even when I was in college, I think, it still backed in about three times a week or something like that. When we were at Penn Robin, we'd take the train from Buena Vista—a lovely overnight trip. You'd leave Buena Vista at eight at night and get in New York at seven the next morning. The same way coming back. But they've done away with it.

Warren: You could get on the train in Buena Vista and go all the way to New York without changing?

Gaines: Oh, yeah. It was a perfect overnight trip. Get on at eight, get in bed, get up about 6:30 and Penn Station at seven.

Warren: Sounds good to me.

Gaines: And the same schedule coming back. It was neat. So there was a lot of traffic, and we used to see a lot of shows and things. We'd go up at Christmastime.

Warren: I wish we could still do that so easily.

Gaines: Yes, I do. I do. I'm scared to even try to get a room in New York now because the—

Warren: It's a challenge.

Well, I want to thank you. I'm going to unhook you so you have freedom, you can move around all you want, and we'll just keep chatting, but I'm going to wind up the tape.

Gaines: Good. I'm so, so delighted to meet you. I really am.

Warren: Well, I am so thrilled to get your stories on tape.

Gaines: Well, I don't know how they stack up or anything like that.

Warren: I can tell you. I know better than anybody. They stack up just great.

Gaines: Thank you.

Warren: Thank you.

[End of interview]