

AN ORAL HISTORY

with

CHARLES HARRY GRAY

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with Charles Harry Gray and is taking place on May 19, 2008. The interviewer is Bethany Klapwyk.

Klapwyk: This is an interview for The University of Southern Mississippi Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project. The interview is with Charles Harry Gray and is taking place on May 19, 2008, at around 10:30 in the morning in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. The interviewer is Bethany Klapwyk. First, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to talk with me today, and I would like to get some background information about you. So I'm going to ask you, for the record, could you state your name please?

Gray: Charles Harry Gray.

Klapwyk: And, for the record, can you spell your name?

Gray: Both? Charles, C-H-A-R-L-E-S. Harry, H-A-R-R-Y. Gray with an *a*, G-R-A-Y.

Klapwyk: OK, and when were you born?

Gray: March 5, 1934.

Klapwyk: OK, and where were you born?

Gray: Waynesboro, Mississippi.

Klapwyk: OK, and, for the record, what was your father's name?

Gray: Harry Hezekiah Gray.

Klapwyk: And your mother's first name and maiden name?

Gray: Molly May Copeland, C-O-P-E-L-A-N-D.

Klapwyk: OK, so where did you grow up?

Gray: Waynesboro, and I also went to Mississippi Southern [The University of Southern Mississippi], that was in the 1950s.

Klapwyk: OK, and can you maybe tell me a bit about your childhood?

Gray: Hmm. Best of all possible childhoods. Waynesboro was one of the most beautiful little towns in my youth. Paved streets, oak trees, old families, five thousand total—five thousand people. Everyone knew everyone else. An ideal childhood. I loved it.

Klapwyk: What were some things that you liked about your community as a kid?

Gray: Probably just the people more than anything because everyone was related, and no one—we didn't have a great deal of problems, crime and that sort of thing, because everyone knew everybody else and their possessions. I once visited the Island of St. Helene, and they said they had never had a crime problem, didn't have a [police] force, because everyone knew everything that was on the little island, and therefore, if someone stole something, it was immediately known who took it. (laughter) This was virtually true in Waynesboro. It was a very relaxed period. Of course, along came a thing called World War II and made a change to that. And then the discovery of oil in 1943 in the county brought in people from outside.

Klapwyk: OK, so do you maybe want to elaborate on how World War II changed your community?

Gray: Well, Waynesboro was a very old, family-type town. There were nice homes. The money was based on timber. The timber families lived well; limited, by today's resources, but had more than one ever needed by any means. Then there was very little money. People didn't buy extravagant things. They lived well, they ate well. But it wasn't until World War II and everybody went off to work in the defense plants that real money came into town, then followed by the oil money, and we got a few millionaires out of that.

Klapwyk: Um-hm, and how did that change the community?

Gray: Well, for the worse; money very often does. The old homes in the beautiful downtown section were abandoned. Today there are only two of the old homes left standing; my mother's and the Odom's home. Everyone else moved to the hilltops around town and built subdivision houses closer together than they were in the downtown section that they were fleeing. The town's not nearly as pretty as it was fifty years ago.

Klapwyk: Is it a lot bigger? Did it grow a lot?

Gray: Not a lot. I don't know what the population is now; I would guess seven or eight thousand, but it's scattered all over the hillsides, three or four miles. What we knew in those days as Lover's Lanes are now major streets with all of my classmates' grandchildren building homes on them.

Klapwyk: So how long did you live there?

Gray: Well, basically until I went off to college, but my family stayed on. My baby sister, Judge Martha Love, was the city judge for twenty-five years. She died last Thanksgiving.

Klapwyk: So how many people did you have in your family?

Gray: Two sisters. My older sister, Dr. Mary Lee in Jackson, and my baby sister, Judge Martha Love in Waynesboro.

Klapwyk: OK, and then you went to university?

Gray: Went to Southern, and then after Southern I volunteered for the draft. Went into the Army, was Secretary Commanding General of the Tenth Division in Germany—1956, seven, and eight. I came back to Mississippi Southern for half a semester. I went to New Orleans to a New Year's party and stayed thirty-three years. (laughter) I did not go back—

Klapwyk: How does that happen?

Gray: —and finish my—fell in love with New Orleans and was offered an excellent job with Texaco, and so I left an unfinished semester at Southern and never went back.

Klapwyk: What degree were you up to?

Gray: I was originally pre-med, but I went to the University of Tennessee and dropped out of that; it was not my game. I had nineteen—we called them uncles—they were Dad's first cousins, and family uncles who were doctors, and a sister, but it just wasn't my game. I came back, and I was completing a major in art with a minor in English.

Klapwyk: Hmm, OK, so you did complete it. OK. So what was New Orleans like?

Gray: New Orleans in the 1950s was wonderful; one of the most beautiful cities in the world. I absolutely loved it. I worked on Canal Street for two years at Texaco. And then I had an opportunity to buy into a partnership of what turned out to be one of the most extraordinary restaurants in the country; it was called Corrine Dunbar's. It was an old mansion on St. Charles Avenue that was by-reservation only. When I closed it thirty-three years later, we were still turning away between three and five hundred people a day. It was quite an extraordinary restaurant. My partner, Jim Plache, was dying with cancer, and my staff was old. My oldest three employees had been there fifty-five years; my newest employee had been there seventeen. Had twenty-six in service. But it was a grandeur that just outlived its time. People no longer dressed; they came, but they were not people that I was delighted to have for

dinner. I would not have invited them into my home, and running a restaurant for them didn't please me anymore.

Klapwyk: Um-hm, so then what did you do?

Gray: Retired to Bay St. Louis, which is the closest spot to heaven that you can get on earth, I think.

Klapwyk: When is the first time you went to Bay St. Louis?

Gray: That's quite an interesting thing. I had never been to Bay St. Louis in my life. Bay St. Louis is a place apart; that is this city's motto, and there's a reason for that. When the French came here in 1699, they hunted, they fished, they did no agriculture, none. They rarely went further than eight or ten miles north of the Coast. Then this went on until New Orleans was founded twenty-one years after Bay St. Louis. Once New Orleans with its deepwater draft was founded, no ships would come up the Gulf Coast for nearly a hundred years. There were forty-eight families living between the Pearl River, our boundary with Louisiana, and the Perdido, our boundary with Florida. These forty-eight families were all French Catholics, except for the Cuevas family, who were [Spanish] Catholic. And they lived with the Indians; they married the Indians a lot. They married each other a lot. They married black women who came in from Haiti as the ships came around the south tip of Florida, but they lived here. There were no schools; there were no churches. They wore moccasins; they braided their hair. They lived with the Indians. So along came statehood and, incidentally, my fifth great-grandfather, Clinch Marquis Gray, was the surveyor general for the Mississippi territory. He signed Mississippi's constitution in 1817; he's on the monument at Old Washington near Natchez in Adams County. But after statehood—well, after the territory was formed and preceding statehood, this area across the Coast was open for settlers, and in a three-year period, thirty-three hundred people moved here from Virginia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas, all of whom were Anglo-Saxon Protestants. They moved first into Mobile and Pascagoula and Biloxi and even Pass Christian across the Bay. When they got to the Bay of St. Louis, they stopped. There was no bridge over the Bay of St. Louis for another hundred and ten years, 1927, when the bridge was started across the Bay of St. Louis. So the city—the town then—of Bay St. Louis remained French Catholic and, of course, the Spanish Cuevas family, up till around 1902, 1903. I still find ledgers in stores being written in French. The language of the street, I'm told, was French until then. This is one of my favorite little stories, but I asked my grandmother once about a lady that I had met from Bay St. Louis. And she said, "Well, son, they're probably very nice people, but we don't know any of them." Well, I never knew anyone in Bay St. Louis. I owned a restaurant in New Orleans. I had a suite in the Sun-n-Sand in Biloxi. I went back and forth between the two cities. But I—in fact, there was a Frostop and a red light at the end of the bridge at Bay St. Louis, and I never stopped for either one of those. I simply did not know the rest of this little town lay down here. And in 1984 I started to Key West, Florida, in my boat, and off the Coast I picked up a radio message they were holding the Lipton Races in the Bay of St. Louis. So I turned up the Bay to see

the races, and just at the mouth of the Bay, where it narrows across from Henderson Point, there was a beautiful, beautiful 1840 Greek Revival mansion sitting on the bluff with a huge For Sale sign on the front of it. And I thought, “That is the most beautiful house I have ever seen with a For Sale sign on it.” So I put in as closely as I could—I had a six-foot draft on the boat—and studied with my binoculars the sign. I radioed the realtor, and she told me the price, and I laid on my deck and kicked and screamed for about an hour, and then I radioed Whitney Bank in New Orleans and said, “Put a man on the road to meet me at the Bay-Waveland Yacht Club in two hours with authority to buy me that house.” And I owned that house by sundown that evening.

Klapwyk: Same day.

Gray: It was built in 1840 by a man named Gregnon, and it was a house that was a preservation rather than a restoration. It had always been maintained. So I went the following morning to see inside my house, and I asked the lady, who was already packed and loading into a Mayflower van when I came that morning, why she was selling the house. The old mansions on the beach rarely ever went on the market in those days. And she looked at me very seriously and said, “I haven’t been invited to a black-tie party since I’ve been here.” Well, this is not black-tie party territory. I gave a few and brought in people to attend them, but this is a beach community, it’s a retirement community, and it is absolutely extraordinary. The twenty-nine years preceding that, I had spent six, seven, eight months out of every year cruising the world. I’d been through 159 countries and some of them twenty-five or thirty times apiece, and if there were a nicer place on the face of the earth, I’d be there. I have only one sister left living, no other immediate family. I can live anywhere in the world I want to, and this is by far my choice, even following [Hurricane] Katrina. The connection to me, the historical society, and eventually Katrina is quite obvious. I bought an 1840 house. I started researching it. Most of the history in Bay St. Louis was not recorded because New Orleanians used this as their summer home. They went back home, and they documented Momus and Comus and Rex and all of the Mardi Gras things. They wrote down very little about spending the weekend on the beach in Bay St. Louis. Bay St. Louis was founded on August 25, 1699, though the fort wasn’t built until December. It was incorporated in 1818, the first act of the first legislature for the state of Mississippi. The intention was to make it the capital of the state of Mississippi. At the afternoon session, one of the delegates changed a vote. The capital went to Natchez for two years and then to Jackson. The reason for problems with Bay St. Louis is the Mississippi Sound is about ten feet deep. At the time Iberville and Bienville came *Le Marin* and *La Badine*, their two ships, drew twenty-nine feet, and there was no way in the world they could get supplies and things in without transferring them to traversiers and bringing them in in small boats. So Bienville eventually gave up and twenty-one years later founded the city of New Orleans. Pensacola, Florida precedes us by three months and Biloxi by, perhaps, three weeks. But it’s a fascinating little city with an ancient history by local standards. So once I learned a little about the history of the Bay, I started researching it and I joined the Hancock County Historical Society, which at that point had six members. I was number seven.

Klapwyk: When was it that you joined?

Gray: That was in 1984, and the society was formed in '77. And today we have 1,040 members. We're one of the largest civic organizations on the Gulf, mainly because it is a retirement community for New Orleanians, and they are all history oriented. We have a very, very active membership. Currently we have over thirty thousand photographs of old Bay St. Louis and Waveland. As you may have noted back when I mentioned the name to begin with, we are the Hancock County—not the Bay St. Louis—Hancock County Historical Society. On my left here are a row of perhaps forty, fifty volumes of photographs; it's a photograph of every house in the city of Bay St. Louis, alphabetically by street, numerically by number on that street. The upper row has the volumes on the city of Waveland. The county photographs of people, alphabetically by name. A six thousand photograph collection from a professional photographer. A series of albums on the hurricanes back to 1915; we have photographs. And currently we are recording the cemeteries. In the last two months we recorded forty-eight cemeteries scattered around the county.

Klapwyk: How many are there, do you guess?

Gray: That's all we know of at the moment, though there certainly are many more. We have references to many people being buried on their farms, in the woods, but we've documented all of the known cemeteries. We have eight or nine hundred reference books for people to come in and read. We have all the births, deaths, communions, baptisms from the Catholic church from 1840 to on. We have the censuses. We have many volumes on family genealogy. We are a historical society and not a genealogical society, but history was made by people, and we have their records, and so anyone is welcome to come in. And we have an incredible Web site that's called hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com, all written out. The lady, Miss Plume, who did the Web site for us, said, "You know, you could abbreviate that." And I said, "One could. I won't." So it's all written out; type it out once and put it on your favorites and you can click back on it, but—

Klapwyk: Are the pictures on there?

Gray: Right now we only have about eight hundred photographs which are currently houses, though all of the others will be uploaded onto it shortly. Miss Plume's only been with us about two months, and she has done an incredible job of putting this together. We have a walk-in vault. We have a meeting in the building the third Thursday of every month, a luncheon, good speakers. My next door neighbor for years was Steve Ambrose [author and historian]. Steve used to lecture for me anytime I had a failure of a speaker to arrive. All of that is bringing us up to Hurricane Katrina. I love the city. I have crawled through the basements of the beachfront homes. I know them, every one that was here, in detail. There were 728 houses on the National Register of Historic Places in the city of Bay St. Louis.

Klapwyk: What makes a building a historical building?

Gray: Well, there are any number of reasons; either the building serves some civic function that was important, or sometimes only because they're more than a hundred years old. In our case, the buildings had buildings interspaced between them that were not of great significance, but because they were in the historic district, were listed on the National Registry. Back in the '70s and '80s, buildings were rated, within the district, either a primary or on down to the lowest rating was intrusion—that it was on there simply because it was there. It was included simply because it was there. But the big beachfront houses were beautiful. Our oldest one was 1787, built of brick baked on the spot and still a private home, 708 South Beach Boulevard, known as the Old Spanish Customs House. And then up on the north beach was Elmwood Plantation, built—well, probably begun around 1704 and finished by the end of the War of 1812, '17, '14, '15, somewhere in there.

Klapwyk: Wow.

Gray: So it was built out of brick, West Indies, probably the finest piece of architecture in south Mississippi. It was built out of ballast brick from—

(brief interruption)

Gray: Don't know where I was with that, but about the—let me think a moment. Hmm, I don't know where I was, but I will go back to the—oh, the founding of the society.

Klapwyk: Um-hm.

Gray: We had seven members—six members, then I was number seven—and they made me first vice president. I picked up an article discussing the Battle of the Bay of St. Louis, though it was not called that. And I didn't know anything about it. Well, it turns out it was the beginning of the Battle of New Orleans. The English, on their way from Ship Island to Chalmette, came through here—were fired on at least once by a cannon on the beach. And then a ship that was in the water here trying to offload munitions to take to Andrew Jackson in Chalmette was hemmed in, into the Bay, and though it sunk or badly damaged seven of the English boats, it was finally scuttled and blown up rather than surrendered. They took the munitions down to the end of the Bay and waited for the British the next day and fought them for several hours, and it delayed the British movement to New Orleans for at least two days. So it was an historic event, and so we did a reenactment on the beach, and by the end of the day we had sixteen members, and from that our population—

Klapwyk: When did you say this was?

Gray: That was—I don't remember the year—

Klapwyk: Approximately.

Gray: —it would've been '86, probably 1986.

Klapwyk: OK.

Gray: And our membership has gone progressively up since then. Well, the old houses on the beach, I individually interviewed the owners. I looked up their records through their history and so on, and we started photographing and put them in the albums. Then many hurricanes came. Camille had been through here, had damaged many houses. I have two volumes here with photographs of every house on the beach the day after Camille, and every *house* is the operative phrase there. I have a photograph of every *lot* on the beach after Katrina. There are sixteen houses left standing on Beach Boulevard and five commercial properties, and just unbelievable, the 261 houses along the waterfront that are just totally gone. And then into Waveland, there isn't a single house standing all the way down to the end of the Bay at Bayou Caddy, and probably twelve or fifteen miles inland from there. My house set back from the water. I had a warehouse on Washington Street filled with antiques, the second property back on Washington Street, 107. And the warehouse building was originally a Model T Ford assembly plant built out of twelve-inch terracotta blocks and sitting, oh, I don't know, five hundred, a thousand feet back from the water. Never in my wildest dreams did I dream that a hurricane would affect it more than minor damage—window, roof, something like that. Even Camille had not flooded that property. So I intended staying, but my younger sister kept calling me and insisting I come up, so I walked out and got in the car and drove up there thinking I would be back the following day. Well, this hurricane came all the next day and the next day, and then we could get no radio or television connections to Bay St. Louis. Every bit of the news media was centered either a little on Biloxi, but 99.2 percent on the coliseum [Superdome] in New Orleans. Well, after several days of this, I could find out nothing about here. We couldn't get a phone call through. There was never a mention on television that was available to us. My older sister who was in Alaska got better coverage than we did, and she would telephone me. Well, I decided I would do a flyover, so I went out and rented an airplane, and when I filed my flight plan, they said it's a no-fly zone, helicopters lifting rescue. So I called Pensacola Yacht Club and asked to rent any yacht available to bring me to the Washington Avenue Pier—Washington Street Pier—and they said, “Mr. Gray, we can take you to the Ship Island Channel, but the Coast Guard won't let us into the Mississippi Sound.” So, I got my car and drove down to Gulfport, and they turned me back. And I came the third time down to Gulfport, and finally a policewoman told me that she had heard [Highway] 603 was open, so I cut through the woods. I know the back roads in south Mississippi. I grew up here. I've spent seventy-five years on them. So I cut through to 603 and, indeed, the center of it was open all the way down. Then I drove Washington Street to the beach. They'd run a bulldozer down it and had an eight-foot-wide path down it. When I got to the beach, nothing was left of the warehouse; nothing was left of Beachwood Home. And so I came immediately over to the historical society. We set a block back from the beach, on the back, the far side, the west side of the Hancock

County Courthouse, which I'd done a great deal toward protecting the building. Protected is an overstatement because the roof was missing and a thirty-five-foot section of the wall was missing, and the ceiling had fallen in the reference and research room, and I thought the building was gone. I was standing in the street in absolute despair; both my properties on the beach were gone, and this one seemed gone. And a man came over and he said, "Can I do anything to help?" So obviously I looked, appeared in distress, and I said, "Well, if you can do anything to save my building." And he said, "What do you mean *if*, you mean *when*?" And I said, "Well, when?" And he said, "Oh, twenty minutes." And he walked away. About an hour, he came back with a truckload of lumber and a platoon of men, and they jacked the house back up, put foundation blocks under it; they jacked up the ceiling and put in a thirty-five-foot wall, covered it with plywood, put a plywood roof on this building, put tarp over it, and then gathered all the tin in the neighborhood and nailed on the top of it. But more importantly they restarted my air conditioning system, and we didn't get arising water into the building; we only got rainwater. The file cabinets, although the files inside were damp—they didn't stick together. The air conditioning dried them out. They're still very functional. We did not lose one single document or photograph.

Klapwyk: What did you guys do before the storm, did you—

Gray: Well, I had sent the mainframe computer to the Naval Station, and so I knew it would be all right, but not half the things we had were digitized at that point. They are now. We've been working two years at that. We have a large walk-in vault given to us by Lykes Steamship Company in New Orleans. They sent it over in a crane to lift it over the house and put it in the backyard, and I had to build a room around it, but it's now inside. And we had a lot of the things in there, though the water didn't rise, so it's protection, more protection from wind. I'm certain it's not waterproof were it underwater. But all of the documents are here. We did reprint out some of the photographs that were rather badly wrinkled in their frames. But we are across the street from the courthouse, and their electricity was back almost immediately, and therefore we were able to get our air conditioning going. We have a kitchen with two stoves, sink, refrigerator. We have two bathrooms. So we were used as a camp by [Mississippi Department of] Archives and History, and the Humanities [Mississippi Humanities Council], and several groups that came down. And we didn't try restoring the building for two years because it was more important to host the People Helping People and to record the danger that was done. On the second anniversary, July 29, 2006—'07, I'm sorry, of '07—we had the ceiling replaced and the carpets, well, we had had those dragged out anyway. They were soaking wet and full of mud, but we put in new carpet and now no longer have to run extension wires across the building. So we are probably the luckiest—well, we *are* the luckiest historical society along the Mississippi Coast, even as far east as Pascagoula and Gautier. They had severe damage to their collections. Pass Christian was totally wiped out, as was Long Beach, most of Gulfport, parts of a great deal of Biloxi, and Ocean Springs. So we consider ourselves, by far, the luckiest of the group here. We did not lose a single document.

Klapwyk: Um-hm. So all the houses that you had pictures of, do you have pictures of what they look like now or after the storm?

Gray: Yes, I'm on the Preservation Ordinance Committee and any new house being built in the old historic district, the plans and descriptions have to come across our desk before the Building Department will issue a building permit. So, indeed, we have a photograph of every house that was there and every house that's going back. Now, there are a lot of social and civic changes that I hate, but they're necessary evils. I can't rebuild Beachwood Hall; financially there's no way in the world I could rebuild it, and I couldn't find the workmen here to do it—mahogany carvers for medallions and crown mouldings and staircases. And I've talked to my friends who owned other homes on the beach, and most of them say, "We can't afford to rebuild in kind." Many of them are building smaller homes on the back of the property with the intention of having, in some future time, of being able to build or having a child who will rebuild a major home back up front. There are very few properties on the beach in Bay St. Louis for sale. The old people who loved it, love it. They're coming back. I could've moved away very easily to somewhere else, but Bay St. Louis has a remarkable sophistication because of its proximity to New Orleans. The people may be sitting on the beach in shorts and thongs and a very unattractive straw hat, but they know Broadway shows, they know theater, they know opera, they know current books. It is a remarkably sophisticated town. It's fifty-six minutes into New Orleans, and periodically I drive in for a cup of coffee and a beignet at the French Market, the Café du Monde. New Orleans is still an incredible city; it will *never*, certainly not in my lifetime, return to anywhere near the ambience or the volume it had, but the French Quarter's intact, and the Garden District, and some of the other—Metairie Ridge and some of the other lovely sections. So, the sections that I really knew when I lived there look very much the same. Today, two years and what, several months after the storm, after Katrina, you can drive down Main Street and other than for the first block here in the Bay, you're not aware that a hurricane has ever hit. The homes are built back; they're painted. There's some new ones stuck in among them, and there's some missing ones, and there's the one tile-roof one over here that is in pathetic condition, but very soon it too will be replaced. The magnificent beach is still here. See, the bluff in front of Bay St. Louis is thirty-one feet tall; this is the highest bluff at water's edge on the Gulf of Mexico. So there's the beautiful bluff being rebuilt, the homes from Main Street to the highway, the sixteen that survived, are all in that section, so it's certainly good to see the egg for beginning new architecture. To the south of us, St. Stanislaus College is standing and rebuilding. And Our Lady of the Gulf Church, they have done a spectacular renovation on it. It is as magnificent as it ever was; it's perfectly beautiful.

Klapwyk: Are things being renovated imitating what they were before?

Gray: Yes and no. Two years ago I would have fought to have people replace what they lost, but after talking to my friends, there's no way they can. Nine hundred, 904, I think is the number, but it's the Quarter House on South Beach Boulevard at St. Charles Avenue, owned by the Frey Family in New Orleans, and their house is almost

identical. The windows are contemporary, and that bothers me. I can see from the beach that they're those thermal windows with the muttons in between the glass rather than on the outside, but the house is rebuilt from its original design, and it's a great asset. I am thrilled to have it back. Anyone who knows architecture won't mistake it for the original house. You can always tell differences. I've rarely seen a replica that was convincingly the original building, but they made a valiant effort. Several of the houses are actually more attractive than the ones that were there because they were built as—the originals were built as summer homes, and very often small summer homes that were enlarged as the families grew. And what had happened here, the original land was laid out in arpents. An arpent is 192 feet by 192 feet. And everyone had an arpent on the beach and forty arpents—or a mile and a quarter—behind them, so that behind their houses were the servants' quarters and the garden and the field and the cattle and so on. And the narrow streets coming to Beach Boulevard were little alleys coming from the back of the property, originally. For instance, Sycamore Street was originally Good Children's Street, but on my earlier maps it's listed as Street 16 because it was sixteen feet wide, and that was what was marked on the map and became the name of it. But Ballantine and all of the streets that run perpendicular to Beach Boulevard, with the exception of Main and Washington—Washington's still fairly narrow, though—and Nicholson and Waveland are the only four streets that go through to the beach that are nice wide boulevards.

Klapwyk: So where—you were living on the beach before, and now where are you living?

Gray: I have—I can't say rebuilt—I have built on the Washington Street property, 107 Washington, where the warehouse stood. The warehouse was thirty-six by seventy-two with twenty-foot ceilings, and it was built out of the terracotta building blocks as I had mentioned. The beams ran the thirty-six foot length, front to back, on the building. Four feet above them were identical beams, and they were laced together like bridges with the wrought iron Xs and the bolts that tied them together. They lifted automobiles from these beams. I had bought the building and started a total renovation with the intention of donating it to the Hancock County Historical Society because of the size of it. I had done two rooms, which I intended to use as bedrooms, two baths, a *salle de séjour* which was sixteen by thirty-six. It had the kitchen in one end and the library in the other and had great French doors in the center of the room opening into the grand ballroom, and the ballroom was 1,296 square feet with the twenty foot ceilings and a ten foot dome I had built into the center of it. It was all complete except the hanging of the fabric and the picture moulding to go around the paneling in the ball room. I had a seven foot Baccarat chandelier that belonged to my great grandparents, allegedly bought from Andrew Jackson out of his house Sea Song that was on the Bay of St. Louis at what's now Buccaneer Park. I had a great deal of art in the building. I had Leonardo da Vinci's *Boy with a Violin*; I had a Rembrandt self-portrait, six Davids, a van Brussel, two Picassos, 165 of the finest Russian lacquer boxes ever brought out of the Soviet Union—I made eleven trips to Moscow to buy boxes. I had three thousand sterling silver miniatures; they were scattered for miles. And the greatest loss was my little 1926 Chickering grand piano; I found it two blocks

away, upside down, under twelve feet of lumber, of course, totally demolished. It was the sweetest little piano in the world. I have a replacement piano; it was my grandmother's. It's a very, very early Steinway, but it's a nasty disposition little piano. The Chickering you could not hit a dissident sound on. The little Steinway is quite moody.

Klapwyk: (laughs) As pianos sometimes are.

Gray: This one especially. It was built in the 1860s. Steinway, I believe, began in '63. It's a very, very early upright Steinway, very small, very elegant little piano, rosewood, but it's not a pleasant piano and not a soft-sounding piano; it has a very harsh tone to it. I didn't mean to get off on that, except to say that the things we lost weren't just these homes that are unrebuildable. My furniture, my family furniture in my house, the earliest pieces were 1725, and the newest piece was a Directoire cabinet made out of tulip wood, seven feet long, six feet tall, lined in white moray, dated 1809, a spectacular piece. I lost family china. My mother's great grandparents owned Copeland Spode China Company at Stoke-on-Trent, England, and I had sets of Copeland, mostly twenty-four-place settings dating to back to an apple green set in 1837; I've got six pieces of it left. But at least it's something to show. Each piece has a hand-painted scene on it from my grandmother's childhood—her swing, her garden, the house, the outbuildings, and so on. And six pieces, one of which has a chip. It's remarkable. China floated in the water; people saved more china than anything else. Crystal didn't. I saved one small crystal glass out of several thousand, and I had Baccarat, Steuben, Lalique, some beautiful crystals. I only have one single piece left.

Klapwyk: Um-hm. So, after the storm, what does a historical society do? Like what—

Gray: Recorded the—what we did following the storm was record the demolition, the removal, and now the rebuilding. Houses are going back, and except for the exact beachfront, everything is progressing beautifully. The beachfront is held back on two or three reasons. One is the fact that, as I said, most beachfront people are old families who live on old fortunes and cannot afford a million and a quarter to build a house back. The other reason is the Corps of Engineers is going to build a breakwater—not a breakwater, a levee, in effect, or a retaining wall—to the height of the old boulevard all the way from Washington Street to Highway 90. So, in front of the bank, the level of the land will be raised back to thirty-one feet, and the stores that were and are going back on the beachside will be sitting on solid land rather than on high pilings over the water. Beach Boulevard, in the early days, was a four-lane boulevard; one-half of it is washed away. In addition to that, on the waterside of it were two baseball parks that are gone, so at least a half a city block has eroded over the centuries; that's why they put in the seawall in the 1920s and are putting in this retaining wall now. So it should be very interesting. It should be beautiful again. We still have the spectacular beaches. The beach from Washington Avenue down through Waveland is wonderful. We have that excellent bike path, walking path. There are no more beautiful sunrises in the world than over our Bay. I used to get up at Beachwood Hall every morning, go

sit on the front gallery, and have a cup of hot chocolate and watch the sun rise. Sunsets we have to leave to somebody else; they're in the west behind us, but the sunrises were ours. And they're here, the beach is there, the magnificent oak trees are here, and the people are here; you can't lose with that combination.

Klapwyk: Um-hm. Did a lot of the population leave after the storm?

Gray: Well, everybody fled, of course. I think the population's back up to 6,500 or somewhere in there. I'm not sure exactly.

Klapwyk: What was it before?

Gray: Around eight thousand, eighty-five hundred. I have a number of friends who are still living away simply because they were beachfront homes, they're elderly, and until they—and there's no rental property here; rental property is so very valuable—so they're living with children or in familiar places elsewhere, though I do expect more than half of them to come back. The historical society didn't lose any membership. In fact, we have gained, oh, probably only around thirty, but around thirty members more than we had before the storm.

Klapwyk: Oh wow.

Gray: So, people have become aware of their history. Among the collections, I learned many years ago that there had been a photographer here who had a glass slide camera, and I traced the camera through several houses here, and in references to it, was finally told that the girl who owned the camera and the slides was at Mississippi Southern. So, since Southern was my school and I knew every sorority and every girls' dormitory, I called them individually. Nobody knew her; I could not find her. I learned twenty years later that she wasn't a student at Southern; she was up there visiting for a ball game, but when I was told she was at Mississippi Southern, I assumed she was a student. But I finally lost track of the famous glass plate photographs. And then I was having coffee with a lady from the Society, and she casually mentioned, "I have a friend in Ocean Springs who has all these glass slide pictures of Bay St. Louis." Well, I had the lady here for lunch in about two hours with the slides. She is a granddaughter—no, she's a great granddaughter of Prudent Mallard. Prudent was probably the most famous furniture maker in America, other than Duncan Phyfe. A Mallard bed today will bring you a hundred thousand on any market, a dresser sixty or eighty thousand. So Mrs. Ellery, the great granddaughter, had these slides; she brought them to me. I had them printed, and later this year we're going to have a joint showing with the New Orleans Museum of Art showing the Mallard photographs. They're in Bay St. Louis from around 1804 to 1814. The house with the round columns there on the porch was Mallard's home, and that is one of the photographs, black and white, of course. They're three by five glass sheets. I have them in the vault. We printed them all out, and some of them are extraordinary. All of them are interesting; some of them are absolutely extraordinary. So we will be showing those; we have them in a volume here for people to go through. Also, I

learned of a collection supposedly done by—well, done by a local photographer named Anthony J. Scafidi, and I hunted those photographs for several years, following relatives. “What happened to all his negatives?” “Well, I think they’re in Sam’s attic.” Well, they weren’t, and so on. And then a couple of years ago, a man walked in dragging an old Samsonite suitcase like I went off to Southern dragging, weighed eighty pounds empty, but you could drive a Greyhound bus over it; they did it in their advertisements, a virtual vault. And he plopped it up on a table and said, “These are some negatives that belonged to Anthony J. Scafidi.” I had been hunting Tony Scafidi’s negatives, and the man was out the door before I realized Anthony was Tony, so I started screaming, and he came back, and he said, “You know, you’re welcome to them.” There were two thousand negatives in there, three by five negatives in black and white taken between 1946 and 1969, and they are everybody’s wedding, high school graduation, senior prom, ball game, pictures of houses, whatever a professional photographer in the 1950s and sixties would be asked to take. Well, I called all over the country, and \$12.50 was the best price on getting one printed, and I had two thousand of them, and I didn’t have twenty-five thousand dollars in the Society to spend on it. But a very nice man in one of the places said, “It’s labor intensive, but if you have labor to work for you, if I were you, I would look for an Epson 2300 scanner.” Well, I looked it up on the Internet, and it said it would do those, so I called Epson in California and they said yes, and I said, “Put it in the air.” So we printed out the two thousand negatives, converted them to positives, and started printing. This is Mr. Scafidi’s picture in this row of albums here with his camera, and those are the first two thousand photographs we printed out. The man who brought them to me didn’t—by omission he lied—he implied that was all of them. Well, later he recanted because he liked the use we made of them. We gave shows; we invited everybody to come find themselves in the photographs. So, he brought me another thousand and another thousand and another thousand and another thousand, and then he said, “That’s all of them.” Well, time flies when you’re having fun, so I have misstated that, because it was before Katrina. So, it’s been three years ago or three and a half, instead of two. But in any event, after Katrina he came in, and he said, “Charles, I have another thousand photographs, the best ones, and they washed away.” And I said, “Well, which way did they go?” And he said, “Down the creek.” And I said, “Well, let’s go.” So we found the container. I have it in the front room; it’s full of mud. I have no earthly idea how to extricate those negatives without ruining them from the river mud and the debris. If we never do, they’re a sight in themselves. When I take a few out, you can see they just stick together with mud and so on. Perhaps one day I can get a grant to somebody more professional than I to do it. I hate to ruin them, to be the one that ruins them after finding them after all that. But in any event, we put them out in collections of four or five hundred and advertised we are putting out more of the Scafidi photographs. Last second Saturday, Saturday a week ago, we had a booth set up over on Main Street, and in fact I think you came by, and we were showing the photographs. And we identified 70 percent of them in that collection that night. Those people, many of those people, are still living, and some of these photographs are wonderful. There are young boys in tights either in theater programs or in Carnival krewes, and so on; these men are now city councilmen and prominent businessmen. I keep saying, you know, they’re for sale at the right price if

you want to take them out of public view. (laughter) But we are set up to replace photographs for anyone who's lost theirs. Joan Arceneaux had lost all of her wedding photographs in Camille, and we have them. She was ecstatic. For twenty-five years she had thought her photographs were gone forever, and now she has a set. The other day I had a phone call from a lady in Atlanta who's in her nineties, and she said, "Charles, I want to apologize. I always meant to bring my grandparents' photographs down to you to scan, and I just didn't get around to doing it." And I said, "Martha, you've forgotten; you did, you brought them to me, and I have them." So I printed out a full set of her grandparents in their home, in the library, on the beach, in their rose garden, and sent them to her. So, there's one very happy ninety-year-old lady living in Atlanta showing her grandparents' home. The home stood where Christ Episcopal Church was, a quite beautiful home with extensive gardens and grounds. So that's just one of the many, many cases I have. One of my favorites—I was having a show; I heard a lady scream. I ran in to see what was the matter, thinking she had fallen or something. She was pointing at a photograph of a beautiful girl in a very frilly little dress, and she's screaming, "It's me, it's me, it's me!" I didn't correct her to, "It's I," but I learned better at Mississippi Southern. Anyway, we all agreed it was; she looks just like that today, except in Technicolor. But with her was a very dower-looking woman, and she pointed to the adjacent picture and said, "That's me, and I could shoot you." And I said, "What do you mean shoot me? It's a cute-as-a-button picture." She said, "Look at those two little white bow ribbons in my hair." Said, "I hated those, and my mother made me wear them every day to school." And she said, "My mother's in the nursing home now, and I go over every morning and pin two little bow ribbons in her hair." So be careful how you treat your children; it may come back to haunt you. (laughter)

Klapwyk: That's funny. How many of the historical buildings were lost after Camille?

Gray: I don't know that I have a count on that, but on the beach I would say not more than a dozen. And the actual loss on the beach, I believe, was 259 in Katrina. But the historical society, we didn't have a place to meet, and this little house was abandoned. It sits next to the Hancock County Courthouse, and nobody in town would tell me whom it belonged to. The people didn't want to be bothered by people trying to buy it, but the accountant who was paying the taxes on it said, "If you write them a letter, I will forward it to them. I won't give you their name, but I'll forward it to them." So I got out my great grandfather's quill that he signed Mississippi's constitution with, and I have a degree in art, so I did an Old English script letter begging for the building and didn't hear from them. And then one day the phone rang, and this man said, "My name is Judge Robert Lobrano in Algiers, Louisiana, and I have on my desk a letter you wrote to my uncle Judge Allen Lobrano in Pointe a la Hache, Louisiana. Uncle Allen has died, but on the bottom of your letter he wrote, *Give the little house to the historical society*. So they donated, the Lobrano Family donated the house to us, and it had no electricity, no water, had a septic tank out back; it had been abandoned for years. I had ladies over here in three-inch heels carrying boards to their husbands who built a porch onto it. They ran an electric circuit; we found a sewer and hooked onto it

and started having meetings. And then we built this room onto the back of it, a thousand square foot room. And at the moment we are down to two, but two very good computers. We had a whole bank of computers over here, and the collective batch was not equal to one of these, so we're now capable of handling the volume of stuff that we have. So I have done photo albums and taken the albums out of the vault. And we're open to the public, not to members; we are open to the public. We have a little reception section as you come in, and RSVP, which is our Retired Senior Volunteer Program, is going to begin sending me two docents every morning as the town progresses and tourists return. I want them to come in every morning, put on the coffee pot, put some brownies in the oven, and greet the guests. And any document in this building is available for research. If it's so valuable, so old, so fragile that we don't want to put it out, we make a copy, and we put the original in the vault for backup. So, in addition to the eighty thousand marriages that are listed on our website, we have every birth, death, communion, baptism back to 1842, all the censuses. So I have set it up, as you can see, with four little individual, nice little walnut tables, so you can come sit by yourself and work on whatever you choose. We do not do genealogy for you. We will show you where it is; it's alphabetically arranged. You're welcome to go through it. We're indexing—we're taking the index from every book and putting it into a database so that any name you type in, it will bring up every publication, every photograph, everything we know about that person.

Klapwyk: Wow. So, have there been a lot of people coming after the storm?

Gray: Oh, many, many have been, hunting lost relatives. It's brought the area to the attention of the country. We're getting a lot of people from away. Now, *away*, spoken on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, means specifically north of I-10. That could be Diamondhead, Wiggins, or Chicago. It doesn't matter; it's north of I-10. But the people come in. Also, Hancock County—originally there was Mobile County, and then when Great-Great-Great Grandfather ran the line from Tennessee down to Mobile, they gave Mobile County to Alabama and broke up the rest of it, the Mississippi section as Jackson County and Hancock County. Then in 1842, they divided Hancock, forming Harrison out of it. And then in 1890, they redivided Hancock, forming Pearl River out of it, and in 1914, they redivided, they divided Harrison, forming Stone out of it. So people come here hunting early Hancock County records that I don't have. We handle the records on what's currently Hancock County. They have papers saying, "My Great Grandfather Shaw lived in Hancock County." Well, if your name's Shaw, you live in Stone County. And I keep trying to tell them, "It *was* Hancock. It's not." "But it must've been here in Bay St. Louis. It must've been in Pearlinton." "No, he lived over near Wiggins or somewhere." So, Perkinson College, Dr. Charles Sullivan is up there, quite an incredible man, brilliant man. He knows more than I will ever dream of knowing about the history on the Coast. But I sort of speak for the west end of the Mississippi Gulf Coast these days because everybody else has died; I'm the last man left standing. And this society, though, is well enough endowed that I feel it will survive. And our collection of local history and documents is unequalled by any little small-town society, I think, in the country. I think we're going to be number one nationwide as soon as all of this is

digitized. On your right—the sort of, whatever, rose-colored albums there—are nineteen hundred pages that I typed, oh, twenty or twenty-five years ago, on the history of Bay St. Louis. There was a man named M. James Stevens. He was the champion typist for New Jersey in 1927. He came to the Coast and bought what was the Old Confederate Inn in Biloxi, and because of the name, people started bringing in Confederate money, Confederate uniforms, Confederate things. He got interested in history, and because there were no Xerox machines, he took his little portable typewriter, and he went to courthouses and church records and newspapers, and he typed around sixty thousand documents. So I met him when I joined Sons of Confederate Veterans at Beauvoir, and he gave me permission to copy his sixty thousand documents. And though he had his in albums like this, and he said, “Charles Sullivan at Perkinson College has them in file drawers. He has copied my albums.” So I went up to see Charles, and every Wednesday he gave me a file drawer full of M. James Stevens’ documents. There are newspaper articles, marriage records, obituaries, stories of the time, just incredible little documents. And so I bought a copy machine, and in those days they were not as advanced as they are today. The self-feed mechanism lasted about three days, and I spent the rest of the year hand-feeding but skim-reading documents, and so so much that I know about the Coast I got from skimming those documents that are printed out there. And the problem was, I know the answer, but I can’t prove it to you. So now, with our new database that we’re going in, these documents are being put into it, and if I give it a clue word, I can find the subject, and it’ll go directly to things. So, we will be able to use the things, many of the things in the past that—because information not shared is useless. Until it’s shared, it has no value at all sitting on a shelf.

Klapwyk: Is there much civil rights history in this specific area?

Gray: No, and for a very specific reason; we didn’t have a problem. As I mentioned earlier, 1699 the French came here, explored, and Iberville returned to France, stayed ten months, eleven months, came back, and was disappointed that his fort had not grown. He didn’t leave any women—now you’d think the French would know better than that, so he went back to France to get women. Well, the Caskett girls and a few brave women came over, but they were always decimated by the hostile area, yellow fever and that sort of thing. But, as I said, the colony at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, 1803, was only forty-eight families. So, the only women they could get and bring in were Native American women or black women who came in from the Dominican Republic and Haiti as the ship came around. So, many, many, many—I won’t say most, though probably most—of the old families either had a Native American or a black great-great-great grandmother. So, and then we had some very wealthy black families who came here, like Joseph Labat. Joseph went to New Orleans. He was a freed black man and had a beach on the home—home on the beach. (laughter) He went to New Orleans and bought his wife at the slave market, but he raised, I think, twelve children, all of whom had master’s degrees or better. Two of the ladies who helped found the Hancock County Historical Society were his daughters. So, we never—and these people are accepted, have always been accepted socially and civically everywhere, so we didn’t have a civic problem. Another thing

that contributed to that is the soil here was nothing but sand; it wouldn't grow anything but peanuts, and George Washington Carver hadn't come along and told us how to make peanut butter, so there was very little done. So, we had no slaves of any number because we didn't have plantations. Andrew Jackson had a little plantation down on the river, which was always a total failure; Andrew Jackson was always in poverty. And the Clifton Plantation and Daniel Plantation both were financial failures. And there's a house here in town called the Carroll Plantation. I've never known exactly what grounds it had, but it allegedly had a cotton field, but my grandmother probably had a larger tomato patch than they had a cotton field. So, there were never field slaves here. So when the—we didn't have a Civil War for the same reason; we didn't have anything they wanted. Abraham Lincoln very cleverly sent the *Massachusetts*, put her in the channel at Ship Island, and blocked everything from Mobile to New Orleans with one ship, so we didn't have any manufacturing. The only thing they did manufacture, a little salt from seawater, but the timber couldn't be shipped out because of the blockage, and we had no manufacturing, and the only thing to eat were mullet—they called them Biloxi Bacon; those dreadful fish in the Bay. And so we had to do without a major Civil War. Now, there were many soldiers who trained here, the Shieldsboro Rifles and so on, but they went off to fight with the army of the Tennessee or somewhere else. There were no—Natchez—there were no major battles down here. And New Orleans fell in 1862, very beginning of the war.

Klapwyk: OK, so back to your personal life experience. You said you traveled the world. What are some interesting places that you've been to and you liked?

Gray: My traveling the world was sort of necessity rather than choice. I bought a partnership with Jim Plauche in the Corinne Dunbar Corporation, and not only the restaurant, we had real estate and other things. And in 1972 Jim developed mouth cancer, and the doctors told him he had less than six months to live, so I said, "Well, what do you want to do?" And he said, "Well, I don't want to sit here and have everybody watch me die; let's go somewhere." So I called an aunt of mine in Wilmington, Delaware, and said, "What is the finest cruise line?" And she said, "Son, there's only one; the Swedish American Line." So I called the Swedish American Line—this was in December—and asked to get on their January third world cruise, and they said, "Sir, we've been sold out for months on that, but give us your name and phone number. Should we get a cancellation, we'll call." And so I called Aunt Mary back, and I said, "Aunt Mary, I can't get on your line, what's my next best choice?" And she said, "Oh, don't be naïve, Charles; they're just checking you out. They'll call you back." And about an hour, the phone rang, and it was Jack Fraser, president of the Swedish American Line, and he said, "Mr. Gray, I understand you want to go on our cruise." And I said, "Oh, very much." He said, "I can offer you Suite M15, Main Deck, Midship, one of our finest suites." And I said, "Well, wonderful, you know, thank you." He said, "I'll have my people contact your people." Well, I had people then, and so, but before he hung up, he said, "Oh, by the way, Judge Minor Wisdom in New Orleans said tell you hello." So I even know who he called and asked about us. But we got on the world cruise, three months, went around the world, and the reason for the popularity of this ship—it catered to Vermont, Connecticut, and New

Hampshire for January, February, and March. These are the retired CEOs of every major corporation in the world. It was sold out. They were very careful about who went with them. There were the widows of many of the wealthiest people in the country, and so, because of my du Pont connection—that was my Aunt Mary—all, Edith du Pont, those people were on there. Mrs. Howard Johnson, Mrs. Heath D. Byford, Jack and Jenny Strauss, Jack Onassis, the CEO of Exxon, the CEO of Wallace—I was the only person on board I'd never heard of before. It was incredible. Well, anyway, we went around the world for three months, came back, and went back to see Jimmy's doctor. His doctor said, "You're no worse, and you may be stronger." Said, "You may live six months more." So we went and got back on the ship and went to Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, what's known as the North Cape. And when we came back from that, we got the same answer, so we got on a ship, and we went around South Africa. And then it was—that was October, and so then January we got back on the world cruise, and for twenty-nine years we cruised the three major cruises, and that's why twenty-nine—

Klapwyk: Twenty-nine years.

Gray: —countries, and some of them twenty-five or thirty times. My favorite was—the friendliest people in the world are the Irish; love Ireland. If I were a young man, I'd move to Australia; it's America a hundred years ago.

Klapwyk: Let me just finish out with some other things. Maybe if you just want to talk about where you're living now. I know you have a fancy little home; do you maybe want to talk about that? (laughs)

Gray: Well, I wanted to build a version of Beachwood where the warehouse stood. It's further back from the beach, and I loved Beachwood; great central hall, mahogany curved staircase, music room, big formal parlor, grand dining room. And my lot on Washington Street's not deep enough. Beachwood was ninety-two feet front to back, and the lot went—the current lot is fifty-two feet. So, in annoyance rather than anger, I redesigned the old warehouse, started out thinking I'd rebuild the warehouse and put the grand ballroom back, but I designed all night. And I was watching a news program, and when I got through, the warehouse looked suspiciously like 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue with the west portico and the windows with the little adornments over them, and so on, and I liked it. So I went down and asked the building inspector if I could build it, and he said yes. And I said, "Well, my grandmother taught me that guest bedrooms breed guests, and since I don't want a lot of guests, I have designed this house with one bedroom, but I have nieces and nephews. Can I build, in what was the old courtyard to the warehouse, a separate guest bedroom, small cottage?" And he said, "Up to five hundred square feet." Well, I immediately had to design a five hundred-square-foot cottage that matched the White House. And so when I did, it's really more of a takeoff on *Le Petit Trianon* than the White House, but it has a parapet roof and so on. And I built it first because contractors, like two years ago, were impossible to get down here. And my nephew brought a crew from one of his crews up in Waynesboro and built this little guest

house for me. And it's absolutely delightful. It has ten foot ceilings, solid wood doors and windows. The windows are six-and-a-half-foot doors that open all the way across the front; has a parapet roof. The bedroom is twelve by twelve, then there's a hallway that bypasses the bath, and the living room is twelve by twenty-four with the kitchen across the far end. And it's an absolutely delightful little cottage. I moved out of the FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] trailer into it. And I have my Aunt Mary's old 1964 Silver Cloud Rolls Royce, and it survived the storm. I had taken it up to Diamondhead as we left town, but it sat out in the sun for the last two-and-a-half years and has suffered severely from it, so I have built the garage at the far end, and I hope within the next two or three months to build the main house between the two. Since it is sort of a takeoff on the White House, and it's not quite the White House, and my last name is Gray, I'm calling it the Gray House. And the guest wing is the East Wing.

Klapwyk: Hmm.

Gray: I had a lady stop and photograph it day before yesterday, and she said, "Does this really belong to President Bush?" And I said no. And she said, "I heard it's a hideaway that he slips down here to." (laughter) That wouldn't hold one-third of his security force. But it's photographed with great regularity. One of the leading architects in town lit into me the other day about it. He wasn't very amused; he said, "It's hideous." I don't think so. I've known him a long time, and I like my taste better than his.

Klapwyk: Well, it's your house, so you like it; that's what counts.

Gray: Now, you know, people stop and photograph it, and I can point to that, but they could also be photographing it because of its peculiarity. It is *different*. I would never have built this house on the beach and certainly not when the historic houses left were there, but there will be many unusual houses going back. We, on the Preservation Ordinance Committee, do not specify style or color. You can build a ranch-style, a post modern, a Victorian if you choose, and you can paint it any color from mulberry to orange; I hope not in the combination, though. So, well, if I don't go take Miss Plume to lunch, she's going to quit.

Klapwyk: OK. Well, thank you so much.

Gray: Thank you.

(end of interview)