

Grandma's Words



Aldene Telford
1904 - 1998

Saturday, December 6, 1997

At Grandma's House

(E: Erik, G: Grandma, C: Carlotta)

E: It's hard to believe its 1997, isn't it?
G: Uh huh.
E: I'll just put this (the tape recorder) over here, and we can just ignore it. Hmm.
G: It's hard to believe that I'm ninety . . .
E: Say again?
G: It's hard to believe that I'm 52.
E: 52?
G: No. I'm ... 92.
E: I think you're 93.
G: 94.
E: 94?
C: 93!
G: I think she told me that I'm 93 – 94 on my next birthday.
E: Right. Because you were born in 1904, right?
G: Uh huh.
E: In September?
G: Yes.
E: On the 3rd?
G: Uh huh.
E: So you'll be 94 next year
G: Hmm hmm.
E: Right. Because you just had your birthday 2 months ago, well 2 1/2 months ago ...
G: Yeah.
E: Yeah, that's pretty amazing. How old was your Mother when she passed away?
G: She was 90-something.
E: So I think you beat her.
G: Yea I did.
E: I think she was 92 or 91. Do you remember?
G: No I don't remember.
E: Where was she living when she passed away?
G: She was living up here. She was in a rest home I think.
E: In San Jose?
G: Yeah.
E: Really? Hmm ... and how about your Father?
G: He just dropped at the store.
E: At the store?
G: Hmm hmm.
E: That's were he died?
G: In San Jose – in Page. Hmm.
E: That's where he died? In Page? In San Jose or North Dakota?
G: In Page.
E: North Dakota?

G: Yeah. He had one of those quick heart attacks.
E: I guess that's the best way to go.
G: I guess so.
E: Oh . . . And Grandpa was shaving, right? Right here . . . Grandpa Telford?
G: I don't know.
E: I heard he was shaving, like I need to ...
G: He was back last week you know.
E: What?
G: He was back last week.
E: He was?
G: Yeah.
E: Hmm. So how did you meet Grandpa?
G: How did I meet him?
E: Uh huh.
G: While I ate at the commons. We called it a community . . . we ate there - the restaurant where everybody ate . . . was the commons.
E: Oh, the commons.
G: He sat at the table and he was there before I ate.
E: So you ate at a certain table?
G: Usually.
E: And this was at the dormitory or the college?
G: At the college dormitory, where everybody . . .
E: And this was which university . . . was at which university?
G: University of South Dakota.
E: Right. This was before he went to Peabody, right?
G: No, it was afterwards.
E: After he went to Peabody. OK.
G: He was head of the department then.
E: And how old were you when you met Tel?
G: Not much. 23 or 4.
E: Really? So he was a couple of years older?
G: Hm hmm.
E: About 2 yrs older?
G: I think so.
E: I guess we forget the details as we get older . . . hmm.
G: Yeah.
E: So you met in the dormitory commons?
G: Uh huh.
E: Do you remember how you met?
G: No.
E: Did he sit down next to you or something?
G: I was just there . . . he sat down at the table next to me. The next thing I knew he asked me for a date! <laughter> We played tennis.
E: You played tennis? Really? I didn't know that.
G: Yeah. We would play every afternoon if we could.
E: Really? Well how about the winter . . . what would you do in the winter?

G: The courts were all snowed in.
E: So in the summer and in the Spring - you'd play tennis.
G: Uh huh.
E: Wow. So he was working on his PhD. or was he teaching?
G: No, he was working. He was teaching then.
E: he was teaching then?
G: But he had never had a girl!
E: Never?
G: That's what he says!
E: Wow.
G: I didn't think so but . . .
E: Well you were the first one that mattered I guess.
G: Yeah. He's in Jamestown now.
E: What?
G: He's in Jamestown. Yeah. He worked these difficult cases at the hospital there.
E: Oh, huh. Was he involved in the Fraternity then? Or not?
G: What he what?
E: He was involved in a Fraternity at one point . . .
G: Oh yes. He joined the Fraternity when he was a student ...at Idaho. He's an SAE.
E: He was involved in SAE when you met?
G: Yea, he was there but he never was . . .
E: So he was not or was involved?
G: Not; he belonged and that was all.
E: Yeah. He was busy with school I guess.
G: Yeah. He wasn't interested in the Fraternity much.
E: He wasn't interested in it?
G: No.
E: Why do you suppose he joined. Why do you think he joined in the first place?
G: Now?
E: No, when he first joined; why do you think he joined?
G: He always said, "They rushed me because I had high marks."
E: Say again?
G: <Laughter>
E: Say hmm? Oh, high marks? Because he had high marks, the rushed him?
G: Hmm.
E: Did he live in the Fraternity?
G: I think so.
E: It was probably pretty cheap housing too!
G: Yeah, I imagine; I don't think he lived there all the time . . . he lived in a house that some of the boys had. One of those . . .
E: Right. Did he cook?
G: Not much at home . . . but he could!
E: Yeah, that's a good thing – you have to when you are a bachelor. So, when did you meet his parents?
G: After school, we went out there.
E: You went to visit his parents? Where was that?

G: Idaho Falls.
E: Idaho Falls. So you drove out there?
G: Yea, we drove out there and ...They lived on a ranch, you know.
E: A ranch? Is that where he grew up? Its supposed to be a pretty big ranch I think, wasn't it?
G: Yeah - I think it was. Anyway, he knew all about horses – how to hitch them up and how to harness them and so on.
E: He knew how to hitch them up and how to harness them? Did you get to ride on one?
G: Oh yes.
E: Did you ride one too?
G: No, I didn't ride a horse. I rode with him though. We were in North Dakota one time and went to the Robinson Ranch.
E: Robinson Ranch?
G: Yea.
E: Yea.
G: Yeah, your Mother was along with us.
E: Oh really?
G: When she was a little girl and Jean wanted to ride with Tel. So he had one in front of him and the other one behind!
E: Uh huh. On one horse?!
G: Uh huh.
E: Wow.
G: He was quite at home on a horse.
E: He was quite at home on a horse?
G: Oh yes.
E: I guess all his brothers did too, right?
G: Yeah, I think so.
E: So how long did you date - before you got married ?...
G: Let me think. We were married in ... we were married in . . . took us the whole year.
E: One year?
G: No, it was more than that.
E: Where you still in school when you got married?
G: Yeah. I was finishing my Master's.
E: That was in History, right? English History?
G: Yea, Well, all kinds of history. General History, yea.
E: So you got married and you were still going to school? So it must have been your senior year . . . I mean your 2nd or 3rd year of your Master's program, right?
G: No, it was the first year.
E: The 1st year you got married?
G: Yeah.
G: The head of the Department was a SAE too.
E: The head of the Department was a SAE?
G: Yea.
E: So who married you? Do you remember the minister?
G: Issiac Thorn!
E: And that was where?

G: In Idaho. In San Jose...in Page . . . in Grand Forks.
E: Grand Forks, North Dakota? Your hometown, right?
G: No, Page is my hometown.
E: So, Isaac Thorn married you where?
G: It was a friend's apartment.
E: A friend's apartment?
G: I think it was my Mother's apartment
E: Really?
G: Yeah.
E: So it was a small wedding?
G: Yeah. Very small. And she had a supper for us afterwards.
E: Really?
G: And she made a wedding cake. Yeah.
E: Do you think it was your mother's house, or . . .
G: Mother's apartment.
E: Your Mother's apartment. Hmm. Wow.
E: Do you remember who was there?
G: Yeah. Myrna – a girlfriend who a girl who I had taught school with.
E: You had gone to school with?
G: No, I hadn't gone to school with her, but I taught with here.
E: You taught with her.
G: Yeah. And a fellow she was engaged to.
E: Oh. A fellow she was engaged to?
G: And Phyllis - I think was there. And Eunice.
E: Eunice?
G: Yea.
E: Who is Eunice?
G: The one in Fresno.
E: One of your friends?
G: Fresno. Eunice is my sister.
E: And Phyllis? Who is Phyllis?
G: Phyllis is my sister too. Both of them are dead now. Umm.
E: Were your parents there too?
G: Just my Mother. My Father was dead.
E: OK. Ah that explains it. So that's why your mother had her own apartment. OK. And were his parents there?
G: No.
E: No? Hmm. They're Mormon's right? His parents . . .
G: His parents are. He isn't though!
E: No, I heard he's not; he's one of the only ones I think. Everybody else is.
G: No, he has a couple of Brothers who were very doubtful.
E: They are not Mormons?
G: No, not very good ones.
E: That's good.
G: Yeah. I should say.
E: So what did you think of his ranch? His hometown?

G: The hometown is nice. The ranch is kind of rundown I suppose.
E: It was run down a little bit?
G: Yeah.
E: Was his father still alive when you saw it?
G: Yeah.
E: Why do you suppose it was run down?
G: Oh, they had a big ranch and not a lot of money.
E: Oh, big ranch but not a lot of money?
G: Yea.
E: Well, that must have been the early 30's? right?
G: I guess it was.
E: Or maybe, maybe it was the late 20's.
G: The late 20's is more like it.
E: Yeah. So if you were 24 years old, it was probably 1927 or so.
G: Probably about that.
E: What day did you get married?
G: Saturday.
E: Do you remember the day of the month?
G: Saturday.
E: Which month?
G: February. It was between semesters.
E: Oh, OK. February?
G: Yeah.
E: Huh. So then you finished school – got your Master's.
G: I finished school that Spring.
E: And what did he do?
G: He just went along and taught school.
E: And you were teaching after that?
G: Yeah.
E: What level did you teach?
G: I taught English in high school.
E: High School?
G: yea.
E: What was that like?
G: Oh, I don't know. They could be a bit of a headache/hazard.
E: They could be what?
G: A headache/hazard. But um, they were really pretty good.
E: They were really pretty good?
G: Yea.
E: What do you think of kids today?
G: Well, they are kind of, I don't know, kind of bad.
E: Kind of bad? Now. In what way?
G: Well, they tear around and don't study enough.
E: They tear around, what?
G: Don't study enough.
E: What gives you that impression?

G: I've seen them tearing around.
E: Yea, I suppose you're right. There are a lot of distractions these days, I guess. Did you ever go to any . . . or do you remember anything specific that you guys did as a date? Before you got married. Like a dance or something?
G: Yes, they used to have Hob Knobs at the University.
E: They had what?
G: Hob Knobs.
E: Hob Knobs?
G: Yes.
E: As a dance?
G: At the University.
E: What is a Hob Knob?
G: A dance! – An informal dance at the university.
E: Informal Dance at the University.
G: We used to go to those pretty regularly.
E: Really, what kind of dancing did they do then?
G: Oh, I guess regular ballroom dancing. Tel hadn't done much.
E: Did you have to teach him how to dance?
G: No.
E: He knew enough?
G: No.
E: They say it is sort of coming back you know? Not in the popular realm. But there is still a lot of Ballroom dance going on. A lot of competitions too. So how did they get the name Hob Knob?
G: That's just the name for it. Somebody thought it up.
E: I guess that's as good as any, huh? So they had it at the gymnasium at the University or something.
G: What?
E: Did they have it at the University?
G: In the Armory.
E: In the Armory?
G: Yeah.
E: What's an Armory?
G: Well I suppose it was built in the early days for the Servicemen, you know.
E: For the what?
G: The servicemen. The Service.
E: Oh, the military, right, huh. What was it like later in the Depression? Did that seem any different to you, or not really – life in general?
G: You had to count your pennies.
E: Yeah? Where were you then, in the 30's?
G: I must have been teaching school somewhere.
E: Still in North Dakota?
G: Hm hmm, I taught in Page.
E: You taught in Page.
G: Yea, and I taught in Langdon, North Dakota.
E: Landon?

G: Yea, after Page, after my Father died, I went back to Page so I could be with my Mother.
E: And Tel went with you?
G: No,
E: no?
G: I can't remember. I think he did though.
E: That's kind of tough on a marriage isn't it? Did your Mom live a long time after that?
G: 91 years.
E: 91?
G: When she died ..You can see why I've lived so long.
E: Wow pretty good. You've got it in your genes, huh?
G: I wish I had seen him last week when he was here.
E: Yeah.
G: I saw about him and that is about all . He didn't come to see me.
E: He didn't?
G: No.
E: You talking about Grandpa? Who are you talking about?
G: Grandpa Tel! Yeah.
E: How did you see him? Where you asleep?
G: No, I wasn't asleep.
E: Yea. I think about him a lot.
G: You do?
E: Yup.
G: Well he comes back every once in a while you know.
E: Really?
G: He came back last week.
E: Wow.
G: He has his work in Jamestown at the insane asylum.
E: What did you say about Jamestown?
G: I said, there's this big hospital there for the insane.
E: In Jamestown? And he was there?
G: He does a lot of work there.
E: Really? What kind of work?
G: Oh, testing these people. He doesn't believe in punishment at all. <laughter>.
E: He doesn't believe in punishment at all?
G: No – Some people... you read about these people - they probably have been horse whipped and beaten since they were young.
E: Yep. Yup. When they're too young to know better.
G: Yeah.
E: And it affects them for the rest of their life? So that's where they go is Jamestown sometimes?
G: Yeah. Jamestown
E: Is that similar to Agnew's?
G: Yes. But Agnew's is, um, feeble-minded.
E: Say again? Feeble-minded? At Agnew's.
G: Yea.
E: The people? Or the people who work there?

G: Ha ha. I've only been there once.
E: Me too.
G: I went one time with Tel when he took his class too.
E: Tel took his class there?
G: No, he took lots of classes there – he taught classes there - he observed them.
E: A personality class or something?
G: He'd go up to Grafton, North Dakota.
E: Grafton, North Dakota?
G: I don't know what it was. Hospital for the feeble-minded up there. He had a student who worked up there too.
E: A student?
G: Yea.
E: I guess that's right. He did a lot of work early in his carrier. Did he?
G: No, I don't know. He never went here. At least I we went to Agnew's once.
E: Right. How did he get interested in that?
G: In psychology?
E: Well, yeah.
G: Well when he studied his undergrad work.
E: He did his undergraduate work in Psychology?
G: Yea.
E: And how did he get interested in the insane? Why that?
G: I don't know. He was used to me.
E: He's used to you?
G: Yeah.
E: Well, I don't think you're insane.
G: Pretty near!
E: Pretty near, huh? Well you still know what's going on.
G: Well, I wish I could see him again – walk - way up there.
E: What do you think he's doing right now?
G: I don't know.
E: What do you think?
G: Probably watching these people eat.
E: Ha ha ha. Yep. I think he visits, I think he visits the cabin too. I think he still visits the cabin, in Santa Cruz? – in Aptos?
G: He didn't finish it??
E: No, I think he goes visiting there, still.
G: Maybe, I don't know. Maybe he came to see me.
E: So, what's the story behind the cabin?
G: Well, we had our house built in Grand Forks. He decided it would be a good idea to have a place at the beach.
E: Actually you had the house built here.
G: We had it built in Grand forks.
E: You had the cabin . . the house but the ...
G: He didn't build it but... We had it built. But um he and another psychologist fellow – they decided they wanted lots. They ran up and down the coast in the car.
E: Who was he with?

G: Dr. Waller.
E: Dr. Waller?
G: Dr. Waller's dead now.
E: I've heard that name before.
G: And I was with them.
E: You were with them?
G: Oh yes. He couldn't buy a lot without me. And ah, Waller bought this house....due to taxes. Yea, they hadn't paid.
E: Oh the people who owned it hadn't paid them?
G: We bought the 2 lots and Waller bought the one right next to it.
E: Waller bought the one next to it?
G: And we bought that one from him later.
E: I think there are still some relatives of Waller up there. I think. Because they bought another plot near the water, near the cliff. I think. I met one of the granddaughters or nieces over there.
G: I wouldn't want to be near the cliff.
E: Its gonna fall off.
G: Wind and all.
E: So they bought the lot and then what?
G: I wondered too, – what we were to do. The next thing I knew we were starting to build. He had to build the foundation you know. And he would go over and uh, carry the lumber - he picked out the lumber himself.
E: Say again?
G: He picked out the lumber himself.
E: He picked it out himself? And what's the story behind the chimney. Isn't there a painting somewhere that has a chimney and you were helping with the bricks?
G: It gave me a backache.
E: What?
G: It gave me a backache.
E: The chimney gave you a backache
G: Yea.
E: What was your part in that?
G: Bringing a wheelbarrow and take them up the ladder and handed them to him as he wanted them.
E: Did you climb up the ladder too?
G: Yea, but I did not take the wheelbarrow up there. It was at the bottom.
E: Say again.
G: It was at the bottom.
E: And you handed them to him as he wanted them.
G: Uh hm.
E: How long did that take?
G: Well, all summer. In fact, he went over once in awhile and did something else.
E: That's a lot of drives over that hill.
G: Uhm hum.
E: What kind of car did you drive.
G: Chevrolet.

E: Chevrolet, eh?
G: We've never had anything but a Chevrolet until we got the Toyota.
E: It's a good little car. I just got an oil change today
G: Did you?
E: And Jake helped me do a tune up.
G: Oh. Is that your big, what is it Coach?
E: Say again? My big coach. I don't understand.
G: Well, you do have a coach...
E: What do you mean by coach?
G: A big car.
E: Oh coach, as in car?
G: Yea.
E: I have your car.
G: I know you do.
E: I'm sorry what about it.
G: I don't think, I'll ever drive again.
E: Oh. I don't think so.
G: My arms aren't long enough.
E: Yea.
G: I drove over at the beach once.
E: Once?
G: Down to the store, and I came back and I couldn't stop.
E: Really, why?
G: I couldn't reach.
E: Yea, you couldn't reach. The Chevrolet you had. It was a petty big car.
G: Yea, it was.
E: Grandpa was pretty tall.
G: Yea, he was . . . five-ten, eleven.
E: Yea. Yup. I think Becky got all his height.
G: I think so too. He planted all these. - God's Garden.
E: He planted all these?
G: I call it God's Garden.
E: Really? You've always called it that?
G: Yea.
E: That's great. I didn't know that. Want another one?
E: Got it.
G: Thank you.
E: Sure.
E: Well, God's Garden is pretty green.
G: It is, isn't it?
E: I got a whole bag full of oranges.
G: They're nice oranges, I'd say.
E: Oh yea. They bring back memories.
G: Did I tell you that Janet....this fellow across the street that we thought was gay.
E: Across the street?
G: He's not a gay at all.

E: He's not?
G: No.
E: I don't know anything about that.
G: Well. He's crazy about Janet.
E: Oh really?
G: Yea. He owns the big house.
E: Really? How funny.
G: I think his Father probably bought the house.
E: Oh.
G: When his mother died. I think his Father probably bought the house.
E: Right across here?
G: No, not on the corner. To the left.
E: To the left?
G: Yea.
E: Is it on 17th street or on San Antonio? Or whatever street that is down there. Right across the street, huh?
G: It's on 27th.
E: Well, I better go. Gotta go have some dinner myself.
G: Yea, you shouldn't skip your meals.
E: Hm?
G: You shouldn't skip your meals.
E: Well, I'll try to type this up, OK?
G: OK.

Diary entry - 4/21/98: 2:38 Tokyo time, on the plane descending into Narita:

I watched Grandma die last night. I guess I was sort of avoiding it during Saturday night and Sunday . . . her breathing was so heavy and strained; Thank God Carlotta was there and that Mom showed up, even though I did not leave a message. I think her last words were either, “Are you leaving soon?” or “How long will you be going?” At 6:27 PM she officially died . . . Carlotta was very good – stroking her as she worked to breathe. . . . I am very glad I was there and that Carlotta was not alone . . . she was very sad and somewhat unsure at times (like myself) but she knew what to do when it all happened. I just held Carlotta’s shoulder and head for a moment or 2 and then called Ethel to have her come over. Well, we are almost here.

May Grandma rest in peace and may Mom and Craig and everyone remorse and be grateful.



Grafton



Jamestown

Page

Grand Forks