

Terry d'Autremont Interview

Interviewed by Rachel Martin, August 8, 2001

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Rachel: August 8, 2001. My name is Rachel Martin. I work at Glensheen and we're conducting an oral history interview this morning with Terry d'Autremont. Terry, would you please be so good as to state your full name including any middle names that you may have.

Terry: Chester Congdon d'Autremont.

Rachel: If you don't mind, I'm going to stop the tape and see if it's loud enough. Ok?

Unknown: Can we start again?

Rachel: Yes. We'll start over.

Unknown: Good because I rewound it.

Rachel: We're starting again this morning. It's August 8th 2001. My name is Rachel Martin and I'm interviewing Terry d'Autremont on the Brule River. Terry, would you be so good as to state your full name please?

Terry: It's Chester Congdon d'Autremont.

Rachel: And when and where were you born?

Terry: I was born in Duluth at 4323 Robinson Street in August 10th, 1920.

Rachel: 1920. Would you please explain how you're related to Chester and Clara Congdon?

Terry: They were my maternal grandparents.

Rachel: And as grandparents then, whose son or daughter are you?

Terry: My mother was Helen Congdon d'Autremont. And, uh, she was born in St Paul. Before the family moved to Duluth

Rachel: Before the family moved to Duluth. Well good. Well tell us again about your names. Are some of your names family names? And tell us about your nickname too.

Terry: Oh, well obviously Chester Congdon is a family name

Rachel: Yes.

Terry: And my nickname, Terry, was thought of by my maternal Grandmother, by Clara, because I was the third Terry, third Chester in the family. There was Chester A., and my cousin Chester, and then me. Well, that seemed too confusing so my grandmother suggested Terry or I guess I could be called Tertius and that pretty much stuck. It's very confusing to a lot of people but...

Rachel: But it means "the third"

Terry: Yes

Rachel: Oh good thank you. Now you mentioned that you don't of course remember Chester Congdon because he died before you were born

Terry: Right, four years before I was born, in fact.

Rachel: I see. But do you remember Clara Congdon?

Terry: Oh yes, very well

Rachel: Could you tell about the times you'd visit Clara Congdon?

Terry: Oh we visited them a lot. I think when I was very little it seems to me we used to go to Sunday dinners at Glensheen a lot.

Rachel: How often were the Sunday dinners?

Terry: Well, besides every Sunday I don't know how often we went, that was a long time ago.

Rachel: Uh huh

Terry: So, my sense is we were there fairly often. It might have been Sunday dinner, but it might have been other things, too.

Rachel: Uh huh

Terry: If you were sitting at the table, the person who sat next to grandmother had to be ready to write notes a lot, because she really had no hearing at all. It would seem as if she could hear, but I don't think she could hear anything. So we wrote lots of notes and she was very good about that. She apparently tolerated the deafness well, but sometimes this great black box would whistle at her and she would say "oh dear" or something very mild.

Rachel: Did she use that black box as a listening device?

Terry: Yeah

Rachel: What did it look like?

Terry: It was just a big, maybe nine or ten inches square and had a little screen on it. It was just part of the way things were... we didn't, we weren't surprised at it. She had some other early form of hearing aids but I don't remember them exactly.

Rachel: Uh huh

Terry: But, I can remember once, uncle Ned, Edward Congdon brought home some kind of hearing aid, which he thought would make all the difference in the world, but it didn't.

Rachel: Oh, did that black box seem to help her at all?

Terry: I think so. Some. But I really have no idea. She never talked about not being able to hear. Certainly not to us grandchildren anyway.

Rachel: I see. So you remember Sunday dinners?

Terry: Well, Sunday dinners, well, and in the 30's, in 1929, we moved from Duluth down to Tucson AZ.

Rachel: What year?

Terry: 1929

Rachel: I see.

Terry: So, when we came back in the summer, which we always did, often we would spend a few days at Glensheen. My mother thought it wasn't proper some how for us to stay there very long and we shouldn't expect these things. But at any rate, we did and we loved it.

Rachel: Uh huh, Oh good. So you did stay overnight at Glensheen?

Terry: Oh yes, lots of times.

Rachel: In the summer when you came home from Tucson.

Terry: One year, 1938, when we came back to Duluth for Christmas.

Rachel: Oh

Terry: It was freezing cold. 25 below zero. We stayed at Glensheen then. We were down in what was called the recreation room.

Rachel: Yes

Terry: We put up a Christmas tree and all that kind of stuff and had presents laid out on the ping pong table and my grandmother and Aunt Elizabeth and Aunt Margie I have a photograph of them looking sort of down their noses at whatever these presents were as if they can't quite make them out.

Rachel: And do you remember Christmas dinner?

Terry: Well, no, not specifically because any dinner you had there was quite good. And if there was roast or something like that Aunt Elizabeth always did the carving.

Rachel: Oh.

Terry: And there would be a comment if we were served a, she was served a souffle, if it was a really overflowing souffle that was great, but of course sometimes souffle's go (sound)

Rachel: Yes.

Terry: Drop in the middle. And so that was a bit of a disappointment, but there were always comments about the souffle if it looked good and so on. Just as there would be comments like, "These beans came out of our garden." Well, of course the garden was beautifully tended all the time by Linus the gardener who was very skillful but it seemed a little bit, I can't think of the word, silly to refer to these beans as if somehow Aunt Elizabeth and everybody had cultivated the garden when they hadn't done anything except eat them.

Rachel: That's right. Do you remember what Glensheen looked like in those days? Were there differences from the way it looks now?

Terry: Not that I would say. Obviously except for the Oriental rugs that were in the front hall up and down the hallway coming down here in the living room.

Rachel: Yes. Have you had a chance to visit Glensheen lately?

Terry: Well, lately, no. How late is lately?

Rachel: Well, in the last 20 years?

Terry: Yeah, in the last 20 years, sure. It bothers some of my family to go and to visit there, but it doesn't bother me so.

Rachel: Other than the rugs, can you think of anything else that's changed between when it was a family home and now that it's a museum?

Terry: Well, not that I know of particularly. I don't know for example in the recreation room where the ping-pong table was, but the same books are in the bookshelves. There was a good collection of kid's books there. Uh, the kind of the Tom Swift variety, you may not be acquainted with Tom Swift.

Rachel: Oh yes.

Terry: But, Tom Swift or the Hardy Boys or something like that. In the library on the first floor, I don't think we were encouraged to look at the books there. Some of them had been obviously bought just to fill up some space with a handsome set of books because the pages were uncut.

Rachel: Oh.

Terry: But, so, I might have looked at them. And some of them Grandfather had read and he wrote notes in the margins of what he was reading. Sometimes quite scornful, but that was the kind of person he was, he would say this was a good idea or something of that sort, a bad idea as the case may be.

Rachel: Uh huh.

Terry: But otherwise, the house seems pretty much the same.

Rachel: When you stayed overnight do you remember which bedrooms you may have stayed in?

Terry: Oh, sure. Usually we were upstairs on the third floor in the boy's rooms. But I have stayed in the yellow room at the top of the stairs on the third floor

Rachel: Yes

Terry: And there is of course a huge bathroom between that one and the next one but it was the middle room that we often stayed in. And it was one of the boys' I don't know whether Uncle Walter (??) or Uncle Ned or what, but anyway we stayed there and it was great we didn't have any problems with that

Rachel: Well, good. Going back to Mrs. Congdon, your grandmother

Terry: Yeah

Rachel: Could you describe her for us please?

Terry: Well that's an interesting thought. She was about 4'10, very short. It struck me as an unobserving child that she always wore the same clothes. A dark dress down to her ankles with a velvet choker and I don't know if there was a little cameo about here...

Rachel: At her throat?

Terry: Yeah. Uh, she obviously talked easily, but I think, I don't have the impression that she talked a lot to us children. She was good with all of us, but since you couldn't carry on a conversation, and I would as an example just write little notes. She was always, she was pleasant, though, and you didn't get a sense of frustration or irritation or annoyance at her children or her grandchildren. We were all on our very best behavior of course, but otherwise I don't remember anything quite striking.

Rachel: Our photographs are black and white. What color was her hair?

Terry: Heavenly days! I have no idea. I think it was gray. There was no such thing, I don't think, for her there wouldn't have been any such thing as dying her hair.

Rachel: Was it whitish gray or dark gray?

Terry: More whitish gray, but I'm guessing. I don't know exactly.

Rachel: Ok

Terry: But she was very short. When I was married, my wife is tall. She's 5 feet 11 and they say she looked up at Ruth and said, "I heard you were tall." She was a lot taller than my grandmother.

Rachel: Do you recall if she wore eyeglasses?

Terry: Yeah. I think she did.

Rachel: Do you remember her wearing much jewelry?

Terry: No.

Rachel: Except for the cameo perhaps at her neck.

Terry: Jewelry, as I remember vaguely, was not her bag as it were.

Rachel: I see.

Terry: I don't think she wore much at all. Vanity was not her middle name. She was modest.

Rachel: Well, that was my next question about her personality. Modest you say?

Terry: Yeah I think so. She was really a very bright person. She graduated from college with Phi Beta Kappa just as her husband to be did. And yet you never, as grandchildren, would have known much of what she studied or of that sort. She didn't talk about that to us, anyway; I assume she didn't to others. I know that teaching was an interest for her and her relatives did a fair amount of teaching. Of course, one of her relatives was one of the founders of what is now the University of the Pacific and he was a Banister I think. Both grandfather and grandmother I think taught school. I don't remember much about grandmother teaching.

Rachel: Did she have the personality of a teacher? Seeming to instruct and being inquisitive?

Terry: That was more my mother. But I don't remember Grandmother doing that kind of thing.

Rachel: How about her hobbies? Did you notice favorite things she liked to do?

Terry: Well, she had a whole room set aside on the third floor where she used to paint.

Rachel: Mrs. Congdon?

Terry: Right now in the main guest room, there's a painting of our house in Tucson.

Rachel: Yes, I was going to ask about that.

Terry: She did that. And she did others. She painted china. She had a particular pattern she used to decorate it with.

Rachel: Oh, china painting.

Terry: She was very good. And they would fire it.

Rachel: Did they have a kiln at home?

Terry: I don't know, they could have.

Rachel: How about other hobbies?

Terry: I can't think of any. Somebody else may be able to help you more on that.

Rachel: Did you ever remember seeing her sew, or knit, or crochet or anything?

Terry: Oh, yes. I think crocheting, maybe. But I don't remember those.

Rachel: Ok

Terry: I think the room where people sat mostly was what's now called the library. It had books and stuff. I think probably if she was crocheting and or something like this that's where she would have been doing it. The only other thing about that is the little mechanical canary that was in a cage in the library has got a little rusty I think and the feathers fell out and that kind of stuff.

Rachel: Do you remember it...?

Terry: Oh, I could whistle you the song.

Rachel: Well whistle the song that would be good!

Terry: (Whistling) Not very good whistling. (Whistling)

Rachel: Oh, sounds like a canary!

Terry: Well, it was exactly the same of course every time. It was a music box.

Rachel: And did the bird move too?

Terry: Yep. It was in a big brass cage about a foot and half high.

Rachel: Yes, it's still there in the library.

Terry: I imagine it would probably still whistle at you.

Rachel: Well, we don't dare touch it. We don't want any more feathers falling off.

Terry: He looks pretty seedy, I think.

Rachel: Yes. Back to her painting. What were some of the mediums that she used? Oils? Or watercolors?

Terry: I think it was mostly oils.

Rachel: Mostly oils?

Terry: I am not sure about that

Rachel: And the subjects were mostly landscapes or portraits?

Terry: Again I don't really know. The only one I can think of is this painting of our house. But I don't... there must have been, well, I know, there were others.

Rachel: Do you think any of the other family members have any of these paintings?

Terry: They might. Sure. Check it out.

Rachel: Yeah, thank you for the tip. Let me also ask you if you're aware of any special talents that either Clara Congdon or Chester Congdon may have been known for?

Terry: Besides making money? (Chuckles)

Rachel: Well, yes.

Terry: Well, I guess he was a very good lawyer, Chester was. I think it's in the biography that was written up of him. John D. Rockefeller and he represented different steel interests and they haggled a lot with each other. And finally JP Morgan said, "You guys are wasting your time, why don't you get together?" And he eventually suggested the formation of the US Steel Company. Chester was one of the lawyers for Oliver Company in Carnegie's outfit and somebody, the writer of the book, quotes somebody saying, "If Congdon is doing it, then it's OK." And he was very reliable, very good person. He was smart too. We know very little about him. My parents, my mother didn't talk a lot about him. He apparently, though, would reward his daughters for learning how to do certain things. When they learned how to do their hair for example, then there was a reward of some sort. Then another time, with some accomplishment -- and I think these two went together, I'm not sure, she was taken on one of the ore boats down the lake with my grandfather and some of his coworkers I guess.

Rachel: Your mother went?

Terry: She went along as a prize, as a reward for doing something. But he was. grandfather, according to another letter that he had, I think Tom copied and it's around somewhere, talks about mother at college, she was at Vassar, as having. my mother and her Gypsy friends. My mother taught school for a couple years so she must have had, there was enough inspiration in the school teaching side of both parents, that she decided she would do it in Appalachia.

Rachel: As far as you've heard your mother say, did Mr. Congdon have special hobbies or interests? Photography? Camping? Fishing?

Terry: He was a good camper, but he didn't camp for fun, I don't think. He may have. There's a picture of him in the, what do you call it, his little office, study. Squatting by some campfire in Lower California. I suspect that. oh, my (Sound of splash in the river, like a fish jumping) I think most of his camping probably was with the idea of looking for some place to make some money.

Rachel: I see.

Terry: So he, I guess it's in the book; it's a very cute picture. He is holding my uncle Bob who was just a little boy, he had his feet on my grandfather's knees holding him out of the water when they were swimming, and that's the warmest picture I've seen of him, as a matter of fact. Because most of the pictures are pretty serious: Grandfather at work. Grandfather out in the wild. Grandfather doing something else. We didn't hear much; grandmother didn't ever talk of him that I know of. Mother was pretty sparing in her comments. And I think he was stern which...I really don't know.

Rachel: Uh huh. Well let me ask you about if you recall any of the staff that worked for the Congdons.

Terry: The principle ones I remember best are James Roper, who was the chauffeur for a long time. I guess he was a butler before that. And his wife Sarah who was the cook and she was a very good cook. So, we obviously knew Sarah. And we could wander in and out of the kitchen, and no one... I suppose you always thought of it as *her* kitchen— Sarah's, that is. That was the way it worked. She was the boss. Some are wondering about was it any different? I don't think it's vastly different as I remember it.

Rachel: Any other staff? Do you remember maids?

Terry: Not personally. There were nurses, of course that went with Aunt Elizabeth when she went to do such. But no I can't remember them or their names.

Rachel: Well let me also ask about family gatherings. We spoke briefly about the Christmas that you spent at Glensheen and you talked about Christmas presents on the ping-pong table. Do you remember any other family gatherings? Sunday dinners you mentioned, too.

Terry: Ah, there were those, but I don't remember offhand any other gatherings. There were, but there were Christmas. It seems to me we had Christmas dinner there. But, there were probably a lot of presents and stuff there. I think my mother and Aunt Marjorie and Aunt Jessie and others. We seem to have a lot of photographs of birthday parties and little kids. A year old, two years old, people about that age are all lined up by some sort of railing by the terraces looking down. But I don't remember; A) I don't remember those birthday parties, because I was too young, and B) I don't know how often they had them.

Rachel: What about Mrs. Congdon's birthday? Did people get together for that?

Terry: I don't think so. At least I don't remember that as happening. Her birthday was the 27th I think of April. I'm not sure. My older brother's birthday is the 28th of April and that, as far as my family is concerned sticks more in my head. There were several April birthdays. My sister Cecily has birthday on April 8th so April was a big time month.

Rachel: I see. Now when you were younger before your family moved to Tucson you said you lived on Robinson Street. And how would you travel from Robinson Street over to the Congdon home?

Terry: Uh, it's funny. I don't remember. My father always seemed to have a model T and I suppose we probably chugged around in that. But, otherwise I couldn't say.

Rachel: And how did you travel there when you lived in Tucson?

Terry: Back and forth? By train.

Rachel: You took the train?

Terry: Took the train. It was about a 2 and a half-day trip. Or, a three-day trip.

Rachel: Oh really? Where did you have to change trains?

Terry: We changed trains, well on the Southern Pacific they had one car on the train going from, coming from Los Angeles to Tucson and going east. There was one car on the train, Car 72, which went from the west coast, and in our case Tucson, to Minneapolis. And the car would get switched around in the middle of the night in Kansas City, at the Union Station there. Otherwise, the Southern Pacific, the Golden State Limited, as it was, would from LA right to Chicago.

Rachel: But you'd switch in Kansas City?

Terry: Yeah, you'd get off the train in Kansas City often and just walk around. There was a store there where we'd, I'd buy a little toy car or something like this. But I don't remember much else except when they call for these trains, these stations were huge, the hall where the waiting area was, it was, oh my goodness, it must have 40 feet or 30 feet high, it was very tall. So when somebody would call "Train 4!" and then give you a long list of names, you could never understand what they were saying because it echoed so badly.

Rachel: Then when you got to Minneapolis did you... ?

Terry: Then we changed trains and take a train up to Duluth.

Rachel: But still in the same station?

Terry: Not necessarily. I don't...once we got to Minneapolis I don't remember the details. I think if you came from Chicago to Duluth the train went fairly close to here. There was a stop called Hawthorne where those of us who were going to get off, got off.

Rachel: Then when you got to Duluth, did someone come pick you up?

Terry: Frequently. James could come pick us up. It wasn't a tough life and I don't know the details of where anybody kept a car or anything like that. We just used a car, somewhere... I don't remember the idea of renting a car entering anybody's head. We had

a car because we had a little camp on Grand Lake about 20 miles from Duluth. You go out the Miller Trunk road and turn off Twig and go to this camp. It was, uh, it was pretty much a bare bones place. We had, for example, a well and one of our jobs was to pump water into a little tank. And then a pipe ran down by gravity to the house and that was the only water in the house. If you were going to take a bath, you went out and swam with a bar of soap.

Rachel: Back at Glensheen. Do you ever remember anyone using gas lights?

Terry: No

Rachel: I wondered. They were installed originally, but I wondered if they were ever used.

Terry: Ah, not that I know of. It was electric. A unique feature, one of the little details, was they were buttons and you pushed this button and it was a very loud click. There was nothing quiet about these things.

Rachel: To turn the lights on.

Terry: To turn the lights on, yeah; and I especially remember for example if you were going down in to the recreation room there were a whole series of buttons to push above the stairs and then the bottom of the stairs and then the hallway and that stuff.

Rachel: Do you remember what the electrical outlets looked like?

Terry: Nope. I don't really, except their two plugs I suppose, you know, two prongs. But no.

Rachel: Ok. And you said you don't recall much about the kitchen.

Terry: Well, I can recall a little bit... There was a stove, I think it was a rectangular room. (Sound of pages being turned) There was a stove here. There was a door here to the outside. There was a pantry room here with an icebox. There was another icebox somewhere. There were sinks I think on this end.

Rachel: You say "sinks", plural?

Terry: Yeah, I think so. Don't count on me for accuracy. There was door here to the kitchen. One of the features of the house was an in-house telephone system.

Rachel: Yes

Terry: We used to use this as a toy. Somebody would get down in some room.

Rachel: We are on side two now and we were just in the middle of hearing the story about how the in-house call system worked and how you'd use it when you were young.

Terry: We just played and so we'd run around the house to different places and call each other up. It gets a little complicated because somebody has to know where you were going or you have to know where somebody was going. But anyway, we thought that was great.

Rachel: Did you ever use those little white buttons, the call system? The enunciator system?

Terry: No, I was aware of it. That's where I learned about those things. This house here at Brule used to have that.

Rachel: Oh, did it?

Terry: There is a box on the wall. There was; showing where the buttons are, and there are buttons in the walls of some of the rooms.

Rachel: Were you aware of the security light system at Glensheen?

Terry: No. I don't think so.

Rachel: Ok. When you would have a meal at Glensheen what type of food would you eat? You mentioned green beans, souffle's, roasts.

Terry: Anything. The food was very good. With Sarah cooking—she was a good cook. So we had a wide range of everything. That's where I learned the niceties of finger bowls. Because if we were having dinner there in the dining room, not so much on the breakfast room, after the main meals you'd be given a finger bowl. We learned you have to take the finger bowl and the doily and put them off to one side.

Rachel: Did you have a towel?

Terry: No no, just napkins. But we had grand napkins. I'm sure they were washed and ironed daily.

Rachel: Yes? And how was the food served?

Terry: There was somebody who was serving it.

Rachel: How exactly would they do that?

Terry: Well, if you were going to pass a dish of potatoes for example it would be passed to you so you learned how to handle that.

Rachel: Would the dishes be passed around from one person to the other at the table?

Terry: Yeah, not by the people, but by one of the maids. Ordinarily, as I remember, we didn't pass a bowl of food.

Rachel: So the serving plate would be held by the maid and you would take your portion from that?

Terry: I can't remember whether if, Aunt Elizabeth did some carving of a roast for example, somebody else probably took the plate and passed it, but you didn't pass it around by yourself.

Rachel: What about desserts? What type of desserts would you have?

Terry: All sorts of good things. There was no limit, or no idea about something being either healthier or better or something. And we did what kids do you know we save the chocolate cake, we eat cake and save the frosting for the end. But, no, the food was generally very good.

Rachel: For the dinners would you have candles lighted on the table?

Terry: I can't remember. I think probably, yeah.

Rachel: How about salt and pepper shakers. Did everybody get their own?

Terry: I think probably yeah. Little ones.

Rachel: Do you recall your grandmother Clara Congdon visiting your home?

Terry: Not really. When we were in Tucson, she probably did because I can remember one time when she was. I think Grandmother was about 75. It was sort of routine that she would come with us on a picnic. I can remember one picnic up in the mountains and she had to climb up with the rest of us at 75 -- it didn't seem to stop her at all.

Rachel: So she was agile? She'd come to Tucson every winter?

Terry: Well, I guess so because Aunt Elizabeth built a house there and Julia Marshal had a house there. Sort of next door, next door being a hundred yards away or so. So I'm sure grandmother came to our house, but I don't remember any particular times or any special occasions. We did picnics, well, people don't do picnics now. It would be a Sunday picnic. We might go off into the desert and the trick is to find a nice place with some shade. Not easy. And I think she would be along on a lot of these. We had a well-cooked meal and we'd just to serve it to each other.

Rachel: Were there picnic tables or did you spread a...?

Terry: No, no, we just spread a cloth on the ground. There'd be nobody else around. I don't think we ate. some special occasions. I know there are photographs of grandmother in our house in Tucson. We had, for example, Thanksgiving was often out of doors at our house in a big courtyard with my father doing the some of cooking right there in a pit. And then, on one occasion at least we had a big Mexican barbeque [tadema? Spanish word]. She was there 'cause we have pictures to show it, but I don't remember particular occasions.

Rachel: How about Yakima? Do you remember visiting at Yakima when she was there too?

Terry: Yes. Well, actually the only time I can think of, I think. I think... I'm not sure... I was going to say the only time I can think of was going up there once just briefly when Aunt Elizabeth was there with her kids. I don't remember if Grandmother was there. We went there twice, in 1930 and 31, but we didn't go back. I'm not sure we ever went back as a family. My mother was very ambivalent about big houses, which is kind of a little bit contradictory.

Rachel: Is the sun a little hot? Would you like to move?

Terry: No that's alright.

Rachel: Ok, I just wondered. I see that the sun has finally come out. So, I was asking about Yakima and if you were ever there together?

Terry: No.

Rachel: And it was interesting the comment you made that your mother was ambivalent about big houses. The house that you had on Robinson Street, was that a big house?

Terry: No, no it wasn't. It was a very typical middle class house. The iceman came up and gave you however many pounds of ice that you needed while we gathered around and chewed on pieces of ice left behind. The streets were plowed by horse-drawn wooden plows. No, it was a nice straightforward house on a block with a lot of similar kinds of houses.

Rachel: Was it close to London Road?

Terry: If you were going to walk it was 3 or 4 blocks

Rachel: Did you ever live on London Road?

Terry: Yes, we did.

Rachel: Oh, when was that?

Terry: Nineteen twenty-seven, I think we moved from Robinson Street to London Road. That was a somewhat bigger house-- 2 stories or 2.5 stories, a porch on three sides, and right on the water. So that was neat. But we moved from there to Tucson because of my younger brother's health.

Rachel: I see. What was the address at London Road, do you recall?

Terry: My address? 4760.

Rachel: Ok, is the house still there?

Terry: Yeah. It's been changed. Somebody took off the porch and I think they spoiled it. I have never seen the house inside, but it was very pleasant.

Rachel: Was it close to Julia Marshal's house?

Terry: Well, I don't know which was her house.

Rachel: Oh you may not, that's true. Never mind.

Terry: She was, of course, Julia Marshal was a friend of my parents.

Rachel: Uh huh. That's why I asked. You had mentioned her before. So was your father then mayor of Duluth?

Terry: No, my grandfather was mayor of Duluth in 1895. My father ran a couple of times for some political office and barely got any votes at all which discouraged him a little bit. But he was the Chairman of the Democratic State Committee in 1928 for House [] election.

Rachel: Is that right? So then it was your father's father who was mayor of Duluth. I see.

Terry: Yeah. He was in business at times with Grandfather Congdon, too.

Rachel: Your father?

Terry: My grandfather. My grandfather []. They were about roughly the same age.

Rachel: I see. What kind of business was your father in?

Terry: He was a lawyer. And then in Tucson he got into banking and ran a bank there.

Rachel: I see. Do you remember any stories that your mother may have told you about Chester or Clara Congdon?

Terry: I don't. Like I said, it's a little unusual, seems to me, looking back on it, that there were very few stories told about Grandfather and I won't speculate on why. It would be out of speculation anyway.

Rachel: Yes.

Terry: So, except for these silly things like, "he never touched the back of his chair" and the general impression that he was a pretty stern guy.

Rachel: But you don't know if that's true.

Terry: And in the same letter where he talks about my mother's Gypsy friends at Vassar, there was some. I think Aunt Marjorie had written asking if she could take a certain course, implying that it was going to be easier than other things she was taking, and she was told "absolutely not, what you think you are anyway?" In no uncertain terms she was told to go back and do what he thought she was supposed to do.

Rachel: I see.

Terry: I don't know how far she went in college. Aunt Elizabeth went to Vassar didn't she?

Rachel: Yes. And your mother graduated in 1911?

Terry: My mother graduated in 1911. Which is the same year my father graduated from Cornell.

Rachel: Oh.

Terry: And that makes me think that grandmother of course, was an unusual person. In her stage when she went to Syracuse, she was obviously young, but she was highly educated.

Rachel: Yes, her two sisters went there too.

Terry: That's great. I didn't know that.

Rachel: I read that.

Terry: I feel there could have been a lot of stories. She took the train from San Francisco to wherever it was, New York, maybe. And it would have been great stories to hear about what the train was like. And it was in the early period of the Transcontinental Railroad. She started college in 1870, I think. And they worked like dogs! They had to know all sorts. They had to know Latin. They had Sciences. Syracuse was very up to date even and they were taking women. They were small classes of course, but there was no

question about women being admitted. In contrast, say, to Harvard Medical School where they didn't accept women until 1970, I mean 1950, no 1947.

Rachel: Oh really.

Terry: And then it was an experiment, they said. It's been over 50 years so the experiment is pretty well gone and they admit as many women as they do men. I can only imagine when she was going to college she was one of a small number of people.

Rachel: I'm sure that's true. Let me ask about your mother at Vassar. There's been speculation that the bedroom at Glensheen that was hers was the same color as the school colors at Vassar—pink and grey. Did you know...is that a coincidence do you think?

Terry: I didn't know anything about that. I wouldn't venture to say. I know it certainly is not as grand a room as Aunt Marjorie's room, which is the big blue room on the lake side of the house. But, uh, anyway.

Rachel: I had a couple other questions that popped up recently. We have a pennant that we found in storage. One of those triangular felt pennants that you put up on the wall that says "Graham' g-r-a-h-a-m. Does that ring a bell as the name of a school or town?

Terry: Nope, not that I know of anyway.

Rachel: Another thing I wonder about is we have very few photographs of the family and no wedding pictures. Have you ever seen a wedding picture of Chester and Clara Congdon?

Terry: No. Nope.

Rachel: Or your parents?

Terry: Parents, yes I've got pictures here, as a matter fact, of mother around the time of her wedding. Perhaps even dressed for it. We can go through them if you want.

Rachel: Oh, great. Was she married then in Duluth?

Terry: She was married in Duluth in 1918.

Rachel: And was she married at church?

Terry: She was married at Glensheen, I think.

Rachel: Oh, was she? And I also wanted to ask you about that painting that's in the gold guest room that you mentioned. It's inscribed, it was painted by David Erickson, and it's inscribed "To [Clara Congdon], Mrs. Congdon. 1943", and is that the garden of your parent's home in Tucson?

Terry: Well, if you're going to take this as the guest room? The door is here and this looks out over the driveway...it's in that corner?

Rachel: That's the one I'm talking of.

Terry: I thought it was grandmother that did that—it was David Erikson...

Rachel: The inscription says "To Mrs. Congdon from David Erikson"

Terry: Then I am sure he wouldn't say it was so if it weren't.

Rachel: Well it's nice to know what that is actually a picture of, we weren't certain. Those are most of the questions I have unless you can think of additional information that we've overlooked.

Terry: Let's see... my notes. I wrote down a reminder that the, what do you call it, the garage used to be just a stable, but very grand accommodations for horse. Big, handsome stalls and polished brass fittings. And there was a tack room where they had everything you'd need for horse. Saddles and all sorts of harness and one of the things they used to hitch up would be the sleigh. I can remember going for a sleigh ride with the [] and sleigh bells and all that kind of thing and it was really grand.

Rachel: Did you go horseback riding?

Terry: No, I never did. My parents did. They used to ride together a lot. And once, I don't know whether it was a Christmas we were there, but James Roper, mother's horse Dexter had to be shot, or whatever kindlier word you use. And James made an inkwell out of one hoof. My mother didn't think that was too great and she had a hard time saying thanks to that one.

Unknown: Dexter...who has the hoof?

Terry: I don't know.

Rachel: Other people we've interviewed have referred to your mother as a really fun person to be with.

Terry: Hmm. That's interesting. (chuckles)

Rachel: Would you describe her that way too?

Terry: No, I wouldn't use that word. The principle thing that stands out in my mind—and it's only been more obvious in probably the last 20 or 30 years—is that she was always trying to teach us something. It might have been informal—it was usually informal. But

she made sure we knew the Greek legends, Greek stories. The Iliad and the Odyssey, and not as they are translated, or a retelling [] is one the people who rewrote Greek myths for children. She taught my older brother and me to read when we were 5 so when we got to school, we already knew how to read and what they did was they pushed us ahead. My brother got pushed ahead 1 year and I was half a year, until 3rd grade when I got the other half. She didn't do that with Cecily, my sister, or Hugh. But he somehow managed to learn a great deal of the history of ancient times. He could rattle off Pharaohs in Egypt and Nebuchadnezzar and all his buddies in Assyria and so on. Even out here in Brule when we got this house, she got a student from the University, a biology major or biology graduate student to take us around and point out different plants. And he made some wonderful drawings, which Cecily has in her house, of the life cycle of the mayfly. They're on the porch.

Rachel: Well, I think we're ready to wrap it up, unless you can think of something else. We've had a very interesting discussion here on the Brule and I thank you very much for all your assistance.

Terry: You're welcome. And I'm sure I may think of some things, but if it's anything graphic I'll let you know.

Rachel: If you do, please keep in touch. Thank you so much.

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