March 2, 1962

THE PASSING OF A LADY OF WILL

Many other fine ladies have lived to be ninety-five or older but the passing of Mrs. Philip R. Alger of Southgate Avenue is worthy of mention for another reason.

We might mention that Mrs. Alger was a descendent of former President Zachary Taylor and say many other things about her life, but it was her nobleness of heart and great determination about which we would like to comment briefly.

Mrs. Alger was past middle age when, while crossing West Street, she was hit by an automobile. As a result of this accident which nearly cost her life, Mrs. Alger lost her right arm.

Instead of bemoaning her misfortune Mrs. Alger, upon recovery, decided to learn to write with her left hand. This she did. She wrote letters to the editor, and carried on a wide correspondence. A person of lesser spirit would have spent her old age dependent on others. Mrs. Alger was independent and self sufficient, took a great interest in local and national affairs and in her passing the community lost a fine citizen who was far above average in many ways.

She was of the era of the great ladies of our city, so many of whom seem to have left this world in recent years. They will be missed.

Annapolis, MD.
B 8/7/1866 D. 3/2/1962

Remarks by Mrs. P. R. Alger in response to questions concerning General Montgomery C. Meigs, Annapolis, Md. May 27, 1955.

Transcribed, edited, typed by Mrs. Gert Ehrlich, Schenectady, N.Y. December, 1961.

This is the kind of history you can't find in books!

grandmother Alger was the most influential person in my life-
Mary Staley

Copy No. 18

I was born in Washington and we were twin sisters in 1866 and we lived in Washington until 1874 when my father who had been on duty in Georgia keeping order after the Civil War and who had a very gallant record and who had graduated from West Point in 1856 was ordered down to San Antonio, Texas.

I remember my mother's horror at going to what she thought was, chuckle, a savage land. I remember she had all her silver for safety she thought done up in an old trunk, so the robbers wouldn't have their attention called to it. I remember on the way down the railroad tracks, after the Civil War, had long slivers, inches long, big as your finger and you traveled very slowly over these rails and of course the train was delayed and then we had an upturn and this trunk, this famous trunk, she saw rolling down the hill. I remember her distress. Later there was another upset, and I remember one car that was loaded with grain. There was a mountain of beautiful glistening yellow grain and I remember we children scrambled up it, just like sliding snow and there were two cowboys, genuine cowboys in deerskin embroidered hunting shirts and I remember they laughed at me because I kept scrambling up toward the top and they said "Go on, little girl, climb up to the top". So I scrambled up to the top and sat on the top of this

wonderful heaving sliding mass of golden grain. Then they said "Eat it" so I took up a handful and ate it - delicious it was. So that was one of our adventures.

We were going along between Houston and San Antonio; there was no railroad so we went in an Army ambulance and of course we went along the same track over which went the steers which built up Chicago as the slaughterhouse of the South, big long horned creatures, ever so many of them were dead by the roadside - huge vultures sitting there gorging on carrion, hm hm, horrid sight. And we went along to San Antonio. We went to a hotel with verandahs, two double decked verandahs. I remember so well the glorious field of magnolias, the first I'd ever seen. I looked down on an ocean of such wonderful blue and white flowers and then a tremendous racket and approaching was a bullfighter's outfit galloping at top speed in their silver, embroidered, red and blue jackets and a little child ran out across the street and these people came galloping along and I heard a loud crack, I think it must have been the skull of one of these little boys because the men galloped right along and the child was left dead in the tracks apparently; a man came out and picked it up and set it up in a chair and it fell over dead apparently and I flew in the house. That was my first experience of life in Texas. We were in Texas for four years.

Then we went back to Washington where my grandmother (Louisa Rodgers Meigs) was fatally ill in '79. Before we left San Antonio we all learned a great deal about the Mexicans. A proverb down there was that the Mexicans would steal the sugar out of an inch of sugar cane and candy was always served up in the way of sugar cane. My father used to buy a shock of sugar cane and put it up on top of a shed in back of the kitchen and whenever we wanted anything sweet we climbed up on the roof and took a knife and chopped off a few inches of sugar cane and chewed on that. Also we had a hedge of pomegranates which we used to eat and I think that's one reason we're all so tough in the system. For all the five Taylor children have been through great adventures and come out alive.

So from there we traveled off to Washington which was a very different place from what it is today. Grandfather's (Gen. M. C. Meigs) house, which he built in '67 was a rendezvous for everything that was fascinating and interesting; his intellect and his family Naval relatives filled the house with all sorts of very interesting and stimulating things.

From there we went out to Newport, Kentucky, Newport Barracks, facing Cincinnati across the river and there we lived about two or three years. While we were there the Ohio River flooded and that was something unbelievable.

It was very hot weather and I remember waking up in indignation to see my three brothers all crowded into my bedroom looking out the window and they were looking at the Licking River. The Newport Barracks were on the junction of the Licking and the Ohio and the night before the Licking had been a stagnant stream down to, oh well, almost so a man could ford it and it was a roaring torrent that night and down on the crest of the flooding were the boathouses in which the men lived and across the Ohio we could see the boats, the sidewheelers trying to get away from their ports to save themselves from going down the river.

One huge boat was torn forth from its moorings and I remember the gangway which was crowded with negroes wheeling wheelbarrows full of storage for the ship and the gangway was so high in the air and all the men and the wheelbarrows were tossed in the foaming tide and washed down against the suspension bridge. I remember the water came up on the Army ground nearer and nearer our house and finally it came through the fence and I remember my brothers all rushing out and getting their prize chickens and bringing them into the kitchen and the wrath of the cook because all these dripping wet roosters furious at their situation were flopping around the floor. The next day the flood rose and came in and just

escaped coming in our door.

We went to New York from there. I lived in New York about, I think, about two years and that was a very interesting experience. My father was Assistant Adjutant General; he was an officer of the Cavalry. At the end of the war he went into the Adjutant General's department. He was Assistant Adjutant General. We were in New York when the Tilden election took place. I remember my father extremely dignified, but very hot tempered, coming into the parlor one day during the election and he was furious at the scandalous dishonesty of putting Hayes in; oh, he was very angry.

We went out to Omaha which was then a wild, weird place with no pavements, the only pavements were made of immensely heavy planks, gorgeous primeval planks, that was one of the things we saw in San Antonio, the primeval forest of California with their ancient redwood trees which were cut and they made cigar boxes out of them. My father died of pneumonia in Omaha in 1885 and my grandfather immediately telephoned to us, to his beloved daughter Mary to come at once to him so we all five children went to him.

My eldest brother went into West Point and my youngest brother went into the Navy and my other brother went into engineering out at Keokuk, Iowa with Montgomery C. Meigs, the son of the General. He was in charge of the locks there

on the river. He was an engineer too and he was executor of my grandfather's property.

We were in Washington until I was married, that was 1891. I married a young officer, Philip R. Alger, who was famous as as an ordnance officer - his name is well known to the world - he was an authority on ordnance. It's very interesting now; he was really the author of what they call the ABC problems of all great guns. It was chiefly his imagination that engineered the new armament. Young as he was he was called the Father of the New Navy. Mr. Whitby was the Secretary of the Navy.

My husband, when he was a midshipman, as a First Classman, he was on a cruise around the world and came through the Mediterranean. Admiral Franklin was head of the fleet and ordered him to assess the military value of the north coast of the Mediterranean - the territory which Winston Churchill considered so vital, and there, the inference of the younger man; he was only twenty; was so acute that he made up his mind that Europe was boiling for a fight. He came home convinced Europe was sizzling for a fight, and ordnance was the secret. Of course he met with plenty of opposition. There is a letter here from an old commodore to my great grandfather Commodore Rodgers saying "What we need in the Navy is a good stout open - none of these tin pot affairs which

can be sunk with one shell through". I remember going onto a ship anchored off the coast of Maine. We went out to lunch and I said "here's my chance - I'll go down in a turret". And the Captain, our host, and my husband were standing there and so I climbed down the turret. There was this little knothole and I came to get out again and I bumped my head on the top so they both jumped forward and helped to pull me out and there I was between these two great turrets and I said "Why this is the safest place on the ship". The Captain said "This is where the Admiral stood during the battle - What", said I. He said quietly "Didn't you say it was the safest place on the ship?"

We were married in April 1891. Grandfather died in '92, we came down here (Annapolis, Md.) in 1900 after the Spanish War. We were in Washington during the war. He came to head a department of applied mathematics (U.S. Naval Academy). He was there and during the war the Maine blew up - at the beginning you know, the Maine blew up. Well, everybody who knew Alger knew he was topnotch except Theodore Roosevelt and the question as to why the Maine blew up was asked and Alger was ordered to write a report and this was a big, big row in the Navy and - that horrid Clough - and Alger wrote the report that it was an interior explosion. Well, of

course that reflected on the Captain and the record and everybody else but if you had any knowledge of stress and strain and explosive power you'd know that 'twas perfectly true. An explosion, the force of an explosion confined to a certain body blows out. If it isn't strong enough to burst its surroundings it will blow out - that's what happened to the Maine. She blew up and of course Theodore Roosevelt was just furious and sent over and had it taken down and that was dreadful and a great many explosive experts agreed with Alger. A midshipman came to me one day and said that when he was looking for a subject for his thesis he found a Government report on the explosion of the Maine - that nothing positive has ever been said about it and in it he said he found a longhand written account of the opposite conclusion. Mr. Bolando, the Librarian of the Naval Academy told him that was Mrs. Alger's handwritting and the report was a gift from here and to go and see me, so he did. I told him that that was controversial - a very bitter fight and I don't want to have any revivals and he said "Well, what could you say about it?", and I told him this and so - - Finally the Academy was so interested, it was a classic argument of course, that they gave him three days leave in Washington to study the question. So finally when the thesis was finished he came out and read it to me and in

it he said that he had found in Italy and France accounts of similar explosions which have never been identified as to cause and naturally the Captain was not going to say "my ship blew up" but Sigsbee who was Captain of the Maine telegraphed immediately "reserve judgement". At any rate it was a big argument and much intercourse and letters all over the world supporting Alger. He used to lecture at the War College. He was very eminent indeed in his profession, a very cultivated and very charming man.

Roosevelt waited for his revenge, as he always did, and when Henderson came to retire, Henderson stayed on another year hoping to persuade my husband to take over advanced mathematics because Roosevelt always had said the midshipmen had too much mathematics and not enough athletics. Henderson felt advanced mathematics ought to be food and drink to every scientific man in the world. Roosevelt didn't see that. My husband was not interested in advanced mathematics but in applied mathematics and so he refused. He went on here and was made a member of the special board of ordnance in Washington. He died in 1912 while he was still on duty at the Yard. We moved out of the Yard and to the house on Maryland Avenue.

My first impression of General Meigs was very characteristic. I must have been about five years old; it was my first

memory of anything. It was a very bright summer day and my grandmother was planting roses in a diamond shaped area. I remember how beautiful I thought the diamond of black earth was and Grandfather Meigs came to the door dressed in grey and called me. This was characteristic of his interest - no matter how little you were or how old you were. He called me into his library and sat down at his desk, a huge desk, with a green marble top, must have been about 5' long and about 3' wide, huge. He gave me a paper bag full of the seeds of morning glory and before he handed it to me he pointed out to me how beautiful the petals were and how excellently the four sheaves that fill the seed pod form the beautiful angles, and the beautiful coloring - and he fascinated me. I never forgot that picture. Then he gave me a little trowel and said "Now you go out and plant this in grandmother's garden". That was very characteristic of him. So I skipped out and ten days later I was thunderstruck to see the result, that all the seeds had come up. I remember his amusement and I remember another time - he had a box, a mysterious box that lay on the lawn and we five children were all summoned by grandfather. "Now see, what's in this box?" His feet were small - He wore Army shoes, very highly polished, almost like patent leather and I remember he put

one foot on the box and with a wrench he tore open one corner and immediately out came a snake. Then more snakes came out and spread all over the lawn. I remember how frightened we children were, and Grandfather's amusement, and then he told us these snakes were to kill the bugs. His grandfather, Josiah Meigs, who was president of one of the universities of Georgia, I forget which one, when he died was, at one time I always understood, secretary to the Postmaster General and so he had the authority to request and receive reports on the weather, so, this was the beginning of the weather bureau. Another thing Grandfather did, he was always for science - every day after breakfast, rain or shine, we were all trundled by Grandfather out onto the grass in front of the house where there was a rain gauge which I suppose his Grandfather, Josiah, had had made; pity they didn't keep it. The last I saw of it the bottom was all rusted out. It was just a piece of heavy iron, painted green and hung between two stanchions and we were allowed to measure the water in it. Grandfather first measured it very carefully with a very beautiful little yellow measure that he always kept in his pocket along with that wallet in which he kept his notes. He would measure the rainfall and then the eldest and then the twins in sequence, I was ten minutes older, and then the other children were allowed to

empty it out but it seemed to be a tremendous honor to do that; that was his scientific interests. There's a picture of him in there on the porch with all us children about him. He had great contempt for the South.

Now, here, Robert E. Lee was a cousin. Robert E. Lee was a first cousin to my father, so down here in this big society, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, those, well I won't say, I know a great many of them as they're in the DAR which I belong to and I always say General Lee was a traitor. You do? Certainly he was a traitor - didn't he break his oath? No; he resigned his commission. Oh, get out - much laughter. Now here's a story, a tale about Lee. Lee was very depressed. He fundamentally was an honorable man and honest to his oath to defend the Union but his wife was deeply deeply Southern; they're all narrow minded in the South - more laughter - anyway, Mrs. Lee was a very honorable and attractive lady but she could only see the South and if you want to know the spirit of the South you go down here to the Naval Academy Museum and ask Captain DeVries to show you the diary, notes for history, written by Captain Waddell of the Shenendoah, the famous Shenendoah, which I gave to them when I was executor for my friend, Miss Annie Eiglehart who was his niece. This came into her hands and she asked me to help her dispose of things and I gave them that -

well now all through those notes the South was very poetic, very chivalrous. My father used to say to us "Never lie and never be afraid and remember you belong to the cavaliers".

Now when Lincoln came in, when Lincoln was elected, you know of course, the history of Lincoln's election and that he was brought down through Baltimore by water because of riots there and he didn't like it at all but he submitted and his first appearance, his first public appearance in Washington was at St. John's Church there on Franklin Square and my mother was there. I remember it very well. She was sitting at a table with my father; everybody was on (tender-hooks) - the President was somewhere - that side door on H Street opened and in came a remarkable looking man - extraordinary height carrying in his hand that queer stove pipe hat he used to carry; immense feet, immense shoes he had and she said on his face was an inexpressable tragic sadness, with wonderful eyes, great shaggy brows, great gravity, accompanied by the Secretary of State, Seward, who took him up into the Secretary of State's seat which then, in those days, was at the end of the chancel, fitted into the big window that's up there on Eighth Street you know. That was his first appearance and she was there also before the fall of Fort Sumter.

It was in Church, Dr. Pine was in the middle of his ser-

mon and a soldier came in and gave a letter to Secretary Cameron and another man came in and gave a letter to the Secretary of the Navy and they got up and walked slowly out, followed by their wives and Dr. Pine said "The blow has fallen. That of which we have all been apprehensive has happened. The sermon is closed, the congregation is dismissed" and they went out there on that great brick pavement next to Lafayette Square. They all fluttered out there and there she saw, for the first time, the animosity of the two different philosophies. Mrs. Lee, not Mrs. Robert E. Lee, Admiral Lee, who had been a lifelong friend of her mother, my mother spoke to her cordially, she looked at her haughtily and cut her dead and face after face froze as people passed each other without speaking who had known each other all their lives. That was the beginning. But McClellan, who was General of the Army, was a man of great genius. General Henry Jackson Hunt, who was afterwards Chief of Artillery of the Army, told me, he was a great friend of my father's, when I was a young woman, he told me that in time General McClellan would be acknowledged as the greatest tactician of the Army but at that time, because he had had a great deal of political pull and haul (and fought the) Battle of the Wilderness you know - the frightful malaria they had there, a malaria and typhoid together, many hundreds of men died of it.

And it was a primeval forest filled with mosquitoes, and bugs and mud and rain and fog. The roads were all what they call corduroy roads; pine logs you know. Well, McClellan (suffered) from typhoid and he was released from duty. Now I remember Grandfather saying that he went with Mr. Lincoln, Hooker had failed - Hooker was a classmate of my father's, to a council of war. My father was chief of staff to General Sumner. He was very young, but he was. My father was silent. Troops had been laid out so they were enfilladed by the fire of the Confederates. Hooker said "General, what is your opinion?" and my father rose and said "Sir, I would rather not express an opinion" - "No, I insist on having it" - "Well, then it would be rank murder." and so it was.

My father was ordered up to Washington where he was the night that Lincoln was assassinated. General Halleck, I think his name was, was sick over in his house at Georgetown and the quarters of the officers were on New York Avenue. Where 14th Street runs down to New York Avenue there's a sharp angle, well, along there was this row of four or five little two story brick houses I remember very well and my mother was living with her grandmother, Mrs. Rodgers, up there and it was in 361, second house from the corner on H St., so it was at an angle through which she could see out the back

window what went on in that street. My father was coming home and he met a soldier running, he told me this himself, he met a soldier running and stopped him - "What is it?"- "The President's been shot". Everybody expected the President to be assassinated but the President was a fatalist and he refused to have any more care taken of him than he could possibly avoid; he protested every sort of protection. That's one reason he lost his life, I guess. So my father turned around and went back to the office and there was Charles Paine, hiding under one of those tall standing desks they used to have you know. He had pulled out the sleeve of his coat and put it down for a disguise and his coat was on inside out and he was full of terror. He was hiding there and outside in the street was a mass of men shouting to tear him to pieces and my father who then, after the campaign in the wilderness, weighed only 125 pounds, he was 5'11", went out - my mother saw him come out to the crowd and order them to disperse and then Paine was taken away. (A reference to Charles Paine in "Gone With the Wind" is omitted from this text).

I couldn't stand Gone With the Wind, I went to the theatre and left; it was too ridiculous, too ridiculous. The South was very formal and very courteous. Ridiculous - people

took it down like gospel, made me so mad I couldn't stand it. The South was charming in its cultivation; the North with its puritanical doctrine was bent on moneymaking. Now these records here, my brother Colonel Taylor, was in Washington, when he was head of the War College and he wrote to me that if the war had continued a little longer and if the South had had a little better idea of the Union then the South might have won because the North was getting tired of having its wealth frittered away, just like today, Eisenhower trying to keep things straight, keep people on the edge. You know, millions of people only think of the money in it.

I remember reading a letter written by General Meigs' mother years ago describing his childhood. He was a very willful, powerful, highly intelligent boy and his father; Dr. Charles Meigs of Philadelphia was a very eminent physician, very eminent, and distinguised himself in the fight in the epidemic of cholera in 1832. In gratitude the city gave him a splendid silver flagon and a ceremony in thanks. Ironic - today we know so much about water - that pitcher was always full of ice water in the middle of the table and none of us were cholera victims. Miegs, as a boy, was violently opposed to anybody opposing him, he would fight them, regular warrior in the nursery. Toys in those days were pre-

cious, all handmade, but he invariably took his to pieces. His explanation was that he wanted to see how they were made. And he knew he was destined for West Point, apparently, his engineering faculty. He grew very rapidly. His father sent him down to Virginia to live on a dairy farm owned by a friend of his and there he filled out a little bit. He went to West Point when he was 16 where he graduated when he was 20. (Indecisive remarks about birthplace and education of General Meigs omitted from text).

He went out surveying on the Missouri, on the flat waters out there under Colonel Robert E. Lee. By the way on the table, there are some water color sketchings he made of that scene then. That was one of his amusements. I remember when I was a girl I wasn't interested in water color. I remember I used to do a good deal in his library for him and one day I found one of my sketches put away in a leaflet in his desk drawer. I was astonished at this complimentary treatment of it and he said "Loulie, you don't appreciate you have more talent than I ever had but you are wasting it. I used every talent I had". He was just sad about it.

Of course as he got older he was very rhumatic. His left leg was quite crooked with it. He always sat in a huge

armchair he had covered with a heavenly blue turquoise cloth and his feet up on a hassock and read and read and read and he was always immaculate, he always dressed in blue serge and a perfectly white linen shirt with a bow tie - and his hair, a tremendous head he had, his hair was silver and white, always the morning sun shone in on it. My mother had to cash his paycheck and he always had $ 5.25, quite a lot of money in those days, come back to him in a roll, back rolls in those days, you know, and they were kept in this little stand right here. And whenever a veteran turned up he always saw him and remembered the veteran's regiment and its record, everything, more than the veteran knew, it appeared to me, and on one particular occasion he was sitting there reading and the doorbell rang and I opened this heavy door out on N Street and there was the most awful ruffian slouchy creature and he came in and he walked across the room to Grandfather who was sitting there and who put his spectacles up on his great big forehead and bent his brilliant dark eyes on the man, sort of embarrassed him, and he came over and Grandfather said very kindly "Well, what is your service?", the man buckled over that, "Where did you serve?", the man buckled over that, "What action were you in?" - buckled over that. Grandfather looked at him, blazed his eyes at him and the man said, "Well

fact is General, I never did no fighting, I just followed the races." And Grandfather who kept his weight at 200 pounds, he was over 6' tall, a tremendous powerful man, but he was accustomed to walk slowly, with dignity and lame, but he rose out of that chair like a fawn - sprang up, seized the man by the back of the neck and the seat of the trousers and kicked him all the way across the 60' long room to the door and I flew to open the door and he gave him another kick through the door and threw him down the steps and then - nothing at all - just "The idea of that fellow coming to see me". That shows how alert he was to the end of his life. That was about 1889 and shows how vigorous he was and how perfect his coordination was and how alert he was to disloyalty.

I believe he, as late as '82, completed the Pension Office building in Washington. Yes, I have photographs of that but I can't see where they are. That was a very original building. You see he was a student of classic architecture, that was shown in his architecture of the bridge, the Union Bridge, or the Cabin John Bridge, as stupid people call it. The name of it is the Union Bridge. He was a student of classic architecture. If you look at the construction of the Pension Building it isn't at all American; it's classic. The method of construction of those bricks, that beautiful brick building - round brick reinforced with steel, earliest method

of construction and he had that portico all around the gallery. Cleveland's first inaugural ball took place in that hall. He had around the balcony a row of busts; he applied to his friend, Professor Henry, they were ardent friends; for busts of the Sioux Indians. Sitting Bull was taken captive down in Florida and life masks had been taken of their faces and they were stored in the Smithsonian and Professor Henry had had busts made of these early Americans and they were all around, except at one end. Now here's something, he had a bust of himself, one of his wife, one of Walter Scott and one of Alexander Hamilton. The busts of Hamilton and Scott were in his father's house in Philadelphia and the busts of himself and his wife were made in the building of the dome of the capitol; they did a great deal of casting down there then and those two busts - when the Government many years ago - my husband was very ill at Atlantic City and I read in the Washington paper of the removal of those busts. The plaster had been falling from the indian heads and danger had been (foreseen) and I wrote and the answer to my letter not long ago was that the busts had disappeared; they didn't know where they were. Well now at the Smithsonian, there's been a sort of storecloset for years - now they're going to build a new storecloset and I saw in the Washington Star a

photograph of one of the storerooms and there was a shelf in the background along which was arranged a row of busts and I couldn't see but I thought perhaps Grandfather's busts had fallen down there and been lost. Things are lost, very easily lost, and of course they were not named.

I was speaking on McClellan. I remember his, either a letter of his saying, (McClellan you know was recalled to duty by Lincoln who couldn't get on without him and my Grandfather), I remember, went with Lincoln to McClelland's home in Washington where he had been on leave ill and they went in and McClellan sent down word he was having breakfast and Mr. Lincoln said "Then we'll wait". They went into the parlor and after awhile very slowly McClellan descended and sat down. He answered Mr. Lincoln's salute and then Mr. Lincoln asked him what his plans would be and he said nothing. Then General Meigs crossed the room and said "General McClellan, the President is exceedingly anxious to see what your views would be" and he said "Whatever I say will be on the pages of the New York Tribune tomorrow morning; I will say nothing". That suitable today? - Admiral Carney would think that too. Some people in Washington and all over the country can't understand why the Government, the Navy and the War Department shouldn't make public their plans and what they will need -

why you can't - even a baby boy who's going to have a fight pretends to be stronger than he is.

A few minutes ago in the dining room you were telling me about General Meigs having obtained and translated some books on war for the benefit of President Lincoln. They were the works of Bonaparte's General Jominy, the French General Jominy, but I only heard Grandfather speak of it. Lincoln had, of course, had some wild western experience in frontier fighting of back indians but he knew nothing of military strategy and he met General Meigs who was then charged with building the dome of the capitol and recognized his very great ability and sent for him one day and outlined for him what he wanted him to do (as quarter master). Of course the Army hasn't changed much since the days of the Revolution and General Meigs said "Mr. President, I can't do that",, "Well, why not?", "I haven't the rank", "Well, that's very easily remedied" and he drew a paper toward him and wrote out his commission as quartermaster general and from then on he had the authority.

It was General Meigs, by the way, who began the business of having women in the office. Washington was full of officers' widows, many of whom wrote a very beautiful longhand and had nothing to do. It was General Meigs who organized the

Note: Actually Meigs was made a Colonel one day and a General the next, by Lincoln's order.

idea of having them as clerks, so they brought them in as clerks in the office but there was a man, a soldier, always at the door to keep men out. Women needed protection and they were treated with very great courtesy. That was the beginning of women in (offices).

Here's a Taylor family story. Elizabeth Lee, long ago, married Zachary Taylor. Zachary Taylor was the son of Richard of the Army of the Revolution and my grandfather was General Joseph Pennell and one of his brothers was Zachary. Well, at any rate, the time came for Lee to decide. Well, of course there was a great deal of unspeakable unhappiness but Mrs. Lee, I used to hear my grandmother describe Mrs. Lee, who smoked a corncob pipe as a great many Southern ladies did, and who was very sure that the South was the South. So Lee was called down to see the President, Mr. Lincoln, and it was supposed he was offered the Union Army and he declined. I don't know whether that was ever put in black and white but that was the general concensus of belief and he returned to Arlington which was his home and the story is that he came in to his wife who was ill with tonsillitis in the right hand room of the first floor and said "I have decided", "And what is your decision?", "I go with my state. The path of honor is the path of glory." That's a Taylor family story. Then he went upstairs to his study which was

on the second floor over the righthand room on the first floor and was heard walking up and down, walking up and down, all night long. Early in the morning he left for Richmond to report to Jefferson Davis who, by the way, was another relation because he married the daughter of General Zachary Taylor who didn't like him at all and objected very much so they were married in a cousin's house. So, Lee joined the Army but his idea was defense, not attack, and the first codicil in a man's thought as a soldier is to attack but General Lee was for defense but he had to attack. He was a brilliant man but after the death of Jackson, who was a brilliant tactician, Lee's star declined and at Gettysburg, he was defeated. General Henry Jackson Hunt, famous chief of artillery, told me that there was so much feeling, brothers, cousins, parents and sons on both sides and of course there he was defeated, far from home, and it was the concensus of opinion among his officers to let him go home and take his army with him. Defeated the foot soldiers would be all over Pennsylvania. The Dutch farmers were so antagonistic to them that after the battle they refused to bury the Confederate dead until they were paid $ 2.00 per body. General Hunt told me that.

General Hunt had a photograph, taken the day after the battle. The South was so pressing in its attack that a great

many army wives were taken up to Gettysburg for safety, the photograph was taken, not of the wives, but of the officers. I've always noticed in photographs of the men of the Civil War they had a grimness; a different look from the men today. Perhaps they weren't so well fed. They had a grimness; I think it was the fraternal strife that gave them a tragic look. I had a book of photographs that's mentioned in one of those letters right there - you might find it. Grandfather Meigs, one of his other scientific amusements was taking photographs (including) a number of photographs of Washington in the early days and pictures of the aqueduct. So Lee was allowed to come South and of course he was defeated and he knew it. Colonel Taylor told me in his researches that the South might have won if they had only understood the Union and supplied the states because the blockade runners brought in silk and tea and supplies from Europe but they didn't share them with Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. Just as Washington went around begging and imploring the Philadelphia Legislature to feed his ragged soldiers but they wouldn't.

What was General Meigs' relationship with Secretary Stanton? "If I knew I wouldn't say."

(Reference to John Rawlins omitted) Grandfather admired

Grant exceedingly much. Oh, here's a story from Admiral John Rodgers who was his brother-in-law. There was a council of war down there off Norfolk somewhere or other and the President, I think the President was there, I'm not sure, Rodgers was and Meigs was and Grant was expected. Now Grant drank, everybody knew Grant drank like a fish. Grandfather never drank and never smoked, never, and his complexion was just puuurfect, always, and his brilliant dark eyes.... General Meigs took everybody's breath away by walking in with a bottle of whiskey. He put it down on the other end of the table near the other flap of the tent, you know, one flap was open, the other flap was shut and a uniformed arm was put in and the whiskey bottle was withdrawn and it was heard being poured out and drunk, then the bottle was put back. A little later General Grant walked in the front flap and Admiral Rodgers asked him about that and he said he needed it. That showed Grandfather's catholic disposition. He understood; he made allowances.

Now here's a story of social life in Washington about my grandmother. Life was very simple and ladies called on the wife of the President just as they called on anybody else and Grandmother went to call on Mrs. Somebody, I forget who, and rode in the quartermaster general's carriage. To-day it would be laughed at, it was so ramshackle, with two

beautiful forses and driven by old David who was an ex-slave, black as ink and very proud of his position. My grandmother had a great deal of humor and so they drove up to the White House door where there was standing a beautiful landau with two beautiful gorgeous horses and two men in univorm on the box. When I was young we used to call them nabobs; (the rich people had them). So, David drove up to where this carriage stood and David was heard to roar out "Drive out of the way for quality". The coachman whipped up his horse and galloped off and General Meigs' wife went in to call on the President's wife. Imagine that happening today.

I remember at a Washington ball once when I was a girl, Mr. Whitby, Secretary of the Navy, was very rich and gave a great many very beautiful balls and - would this happen today? There was a beautiful tapestry curtain, a portiere between two doors and that was the repositary for all the jewelry that was found. I was dancing and a pin stuck through my shoe. I looked down and there was a crescent of pearls and diamonds on the floor and I had kicked it with my foot. So my partner picked it up on the curtain where there were a lot of other things. Would that happen today? It shows the quality of Washington sociiiety!

What other well known men of the period have you heard the General or your father speak about? Oh well, if I knew I wouldn't remember. I was so used to them I took them for granted.

Did you have the impression that Mr. Lincoln called on General Meigs rather frequently. Yes, a very common occurrence. It was General Meigs who told him to have Arlington as a cemetery, you know. Mr. Lincoln was a man of very high principle, very just in his mind, but he didn't know what to do with Arlington. Arlington had been used as a remount station during the war and Mr. Lincoln didn't know what was just to do with it. There was Lee still alive and General Meigs said "Mr. President, why not make it a field of honor?". Those were the words he used, a field of honor. "The ancients filled their enemies fields with salt and made them useless forever but we are a Christian nation; why not make it a field of honor?" "You're right", said the President and he appointed it as a cemetery. It happened that Grandfather Meigs was there one day and the soldiers then dying were taken out and buried at the cemetery at the soldier's home and three corpses were brought along on three litters and Grandfather stepped off the first grave.

My mother remembered so well going there with her mother to call on Mrs. Lee before the war. And then in those days that hill that comes down to the water was a plowed cornfield and in the back of the house was the big circle of the negro quarters, cottages close together. The east room, the great room, was now plastered and behind the columns at the end of

the hall as you entered were turkey red curtains, stuff called turkey red was brought in by the ships, ballast I guess, very thick heavy deep red cotton stuff made in Turkey and over the front door was a lion couchant, heraldic, and going up the steps were Hessian soldiers and those were all painted by Washington's son, Mr. Custis. When Lee came home and said he was going south he went out that night, and his wife followed him, and he gathered together what papers he could; he left everything in confusion. The Quartermaster General, of course, took possession at once and all those papers were gathered up and stowed in boxes and barrels. Everything thing personal was stowed away in the quartermaster's care and the house was taken over.

Not so awfully many years ago I was on my way to a DAR tea party and having lunch in Baltimore and I told this story - that my mother and father, my mother was a splendid horsewoman, were riding together and rode over to Arlington where he had been so much as a boy and he went up and touched a secret spring in a wainscotting on the breastworks of a big chimney in the drawing room and it opened; it had never been known, and it was full of Lee's private letters. And I told this story and of course they were taken over by the quartermaster and one Southern minded lady wrote to me very

sharply the next day the "we hear that you have private papers of General Lee; the family would greatly appreciate your restoring them immediately". But they were there all that time.

What was General Lee's religious affiliation? Oh, he was probably Episcopalian. Was he pretty regular at church? Oh, I don't know; I haven't any idea. He was very religious, I know that, very religious. I have a friend here who had a letter from him of consolation written to a woman whose son had been killed in battle. He was deeply religious, deeply sentimental, very very sentimental. I think he was an Episcopalian. Have you ever head any discussion of Mr. Lincoln's religious views? No, Mrs. Lincoln used to go to the Episcopal Church (where we were christened). I don't know what Mr. Lincoln's religious principles were except they were sound, whatever they were. You don't have to go to church; you don't have to put your name down. His life was a prayer, you might say, and a sacrifice. His life was certainly a prayer and a sacrifice. He thought of nothing but the country. My mother used to see him riding. Of course he knew as well as anybody else that he'd probably be killed. He used to ride, he was so tall, and no carriage was big enough for him; not like today when you can have everything you want. He rode up 14th Street and the doctor said he must relax from the hot weather and the dust. I've seen Washington dust that deep. About a foot deep? I've seen it on N Street and he

used to ride out 14th Street with a cavalry escort to soldier's home for awhile and he used to wear that absurd hat and they wore in those days linen dusters. Have you ever seen a linen duster? Well, everybody wore linen dusters then because of the fearful dust and the fearful heat. He'd sit straight up, his great hands on his knees, legs doubled up, cramped - he used to ride out like that. My mother stopped the procession one day. She was riding, with her orderly behind her, riding a very spirited mare that nobody could use because it was gun shy. If it heard anything like military accoutrements it would stall. So, she was riding across 14th Street and the sound of a military cortege approaching frightened her horse and it stopped right in the middle of the street and on came the President's four horses and he rode in his carriage and the military escort came on and on. Finally, with a great deal of release, she heard "Halt" and they all stopped. She saw the President, who knew her, looking at her with a great deal of amusement to see what she was going to do next. When everything was still and the sabres stopped rattling her horse calmed down and she went on her course but she said the President looked, with his head on one side, gazing at her with this merry appreciation. He was a very great man.

Did you ever hear any discussion of the problems of

supplying the troops? I used to hear Grandfather talk with grief about the way things were thrown away by the young soldiers. (Narrator - His frugal soul was revolted by the waste of war.) No, it wasn't only his frugal soul; his honest soul because they were so hard to get, they were valuable. Now for instance General Henry Jackson Hunt told me Bull Run was really a victory for the Union but it was rated as a defeat. He told me that the men panicked; that at the very crucial moment when they should have stood; they were frightened and in a panic they dropped their guns and they dropped their cloaks and they dropped their uniforms and they fled and he, among other officers, jumped off their horses and with their swords tried to beat back these flying men shouting "To Victory" but they ran, so it was rated as a defeat.

People used to go down from Washington and go into the camps near Washington and I remember my father telling a story of a party of young women coming down into his tent and it was very hard to get rid of them. One young woman said something sentimental about such a wonderful scene, this that and the other, and shouldn't she have something to carry away as a souvenir. So my father, who was disgusted, handed her his old (coat) that had been through the campaign and said "Madame, won't you accept this?". A Naval officer told

me about the same time of a party that came aboard his ship. Time came for them to get out so he said he just took out his penknife and cut a button off his coat and said "Sir, this is your share. Now would you kindly leave?" and so they had to go.

General Meigs knew everybody and apparently the world knew him because he had letters of introduction from all sorts of people. My mother remembered Professor Simon Newcomb, as a young scientist, coming with a letter of introduction to General Meigs. She remembered his extraordinary wonderful beautiful blue eyes. He was a famous scientist and everybody received him.

Everybody had help. I remember my husband laughing at me as I came downstairs one day and found him giving a a five dollar bill to some rapscallion on the door-step and I said "Gracious, you're no better than Grandfather". He made me a bow and said "Would you have me like anyone more distinguished, more worthy, than your Grandfather?"

Professor Langley, I remember Professor Langley very well. I used to often take him into Grandfather's study to discuss the problems of stress and strain of the flying machine. Grandfather believed in them and I used to take him in often. People are so afraid, you know, of something

new. Finally he did have an appropriation, I think it was $ 50,000 to build his first little machine and the story is, you know it was wrecked, the man flying it got frightened and turned it ashore, he was afraid to go up. I have here, downstairs, a portfolio of supplements from the New York Times 20 or 30 years old. All those new planes are pictured in the News of the Day, those ramshackle things no more like what we have today than the man in the moon, in my opinion. My grandson-in-law is an aviator. Aviation is just a matter of course. A young Naval woman said to me one day she was walking with another young woman and she said "What service is your husband in", "Why he's an aviator". "What", says the other one, "Heavens how can you let him do anything so dangerous?" "What's your husband do?", "Oh, mine's a submarine man."

Danger is entertaining. My father used to say to me "Don't be afraid". In consequence I was always doing things to see if I was afraid or not. Harum scarum things I did to see if I was afraid or not make my hair stand up on end today. Walking up a plank into the porthole of the Constitution which was anchored at Newport - I walked up this long plank, climbed in the porthole, surveyed the whole ship - no one allowed, gangway shut off - I walked up this sloping plank right across a moat of stagnant black water. If I'd

fallen in I would certainly have drowned in a minute. Nobody around but still I had the urge and I did it and I had to come out again. It was no joke, just try climbing out of a porthole of the Constitution, climbing over a plank and then walking down a slope but I had the urge and that is what carries people into danger; it's elixir. A man the other day in Washington jumped into a burning bus and dragged out little children. Somebody said "Aren't you scared?" "Scared, well I got so used to being scared in Korea I guess I didn't recognize it when I felt it".

Grandfather was so cordial, always he was so benign. He had a stong belief in marriage. He used to say better be happy for two or three hours than never to know it. Marriage and family life - he was strong on it. The family was very big and there were lots of people in it and they all came to see General Meigs and before I went to a ball in the evening I always went in to tell him goodnight. He used to enjoy my being young and gay, and done up for a ball... so sympathetic with young people, so sympathetic and wise in his counsel. Everybody came to him for advice, oh no, he was remarkable, magnificent in every way. He always was I guess.

I was walking in the street one day and some man passed

me and said to the other "Old Meigs, what would he say to that!" and I came home and told Grandfather, and he didn't like it. (Narrator - that sounds to me as if it were a compliment.) Well of course it was. He was an authority but he didn't like loose talking.

When he built the aqueduct, the Cabin John Bridge, people know it better as Cabin John, the reason is there was an old slave named John, an escaped slave who went to the wild country there and gathered together pieces of wood and he made this cabin. I remember it very well, right on the edge of the water. Rock Creek then was a lovely limpid stream and there was the water running by and he lived there and in the design for the aqueduct the arch of the bridge sprang right over his little hut. Grandfather turned everybody else off the Government reservation but he left old John to live there in peace. Shows what a kindly old man he was. So it was called the Cabin John Bridge but really it was Union Arch. I have a photograph of it somewhere. I remember the bridge when the parapet was not built. (Workman) just laid big rocks around the edge, it was beautiful. Grandfather was very fond of driving us all out there while my father was still in Georgia.

He went from there to build the dome of the Capitol and after he retired he built the Pension Building. And that

architecture is Italian Renaissance, and that frieze all around the edge was the pride and joy of his life. He had that made. Such an uproar, waste of money, this that and the other, hullabaloo, bang, bang, slam, slam. Stupid, no imagination. And he had on top of his chimney, to check the drafts, he had made, and what's become of it I don't know, a roman offertory urn. It was very handsome mounted up there - hullabaloo - fact was people didn't know what it was. It was made of iron, I think, I don't think it was bronze. It was a basin you know for (higher) offering at (lower) temple. Very handsome it was. He used that as a cover for the chimney.

But in the capitol - my brother Colonel Taylor who lived there for a year before he went up to West Point told me that you could recognize Grandfather's knowledge of classical architecture in his correction of lines and stress on the drawings for the capitol here and there scattered about. And the dome, Grandfather didn't consider safe in its construction and the architect changed his design. He remodeled it on the well tried lines of St. Peters. I told that to a midshipman once who told me later he went up to a dance in Baltimore and there he met a descendent of Mr. Walter's who had drawn the original design. He nearly had a fit at the idea, but 'twas so.

Brumidi, the decorator, wanted to put his face in the apotheosis of Washington you know. Have you ever looked up in the crown of the dome, you know Washington's face is there?, well, he wanted to put Meigs' face there. "General, you're a very handsome man, people wouldn't know the difference". "Why", shocked, said General Meigs, "certainly not!" "I'm not General Washington, I've no right, my face doesn't belong". "Why General, you've built the dome, you've practically built everything here. You were responsible for the creation of this building, almost", "Not at all", said the General, and turned him down flat. In the dining room is one of the drawings for (the interior of) the dome, the watercolor painting in there. It was done in Brumidi's studio and it's very dramatic, very artistic. It's the fight with the British but the Americans are being defeated, they're being crowded out of the picture. Grandfather wouldn't accept it because it was the defeat of the Americans, well, certainly not. So it used to hang in his library. When he died I took it over.

Tell us something else about life in Grandfather Meigs' house. Well, I remember he was always prompt at breakfast and he used to have the most wonderful digestion. His favorite breakfast was milk toast and cucumbers with French dressing. He was always prompt, and always cheerful and always

benign. And that picture of General Meigs over there hung over the mantelpiece in front of where I used to sit and this picture of Mrs. Rodgers hung opposite. I used to sit between these two pictures when I was a child.

At my wedding there was champagne and all the young Naval officers were very gay indeed. It was about time for the party to be breaking up and the Best Man suggested a toast to the bride, so a toast to the bride was ordered and the butler came in, in a very abject manner, and said to my husband - General Meigs had stopped the flow of champagne, enough had been consumed now. There was a lot of it downstairs in the storeroom but Grandfather thought we had had enough champagne, so he didn't hesitate to put an end to the wedding party.

Well, here's a story about cockroaches. He rented his house to a secretary of something or other when he went to Europe and when they came back Grandmother Meigs was horrified to find millions of cockroaches downstairs. It was a big house with a vast kitchen. The kitchen must have been about 50' fong and 30' wide, an immense kitchen where every day, it happened in all the old houses after the Civil War, there was always a big old mammy there with a big basket and a bandanna on her head come for largesse, always was one sitting there. Well, there were a great many cockroaches and an exterminator was sent for. I went into the library one day

and Grandfather was still fuming. He said "That foolish man just brought me two wonderful freaks of nature - two white cockroaches, and he killed them. Why" he said "what specimens for the Smithsonian", so indignant, and the man quite crest-fallen went crawling downstairs with his basket of cockroaches.

Grandfather was a great hunter, oh yes, he was a great hunter in his youth. I remember coming downstairs one morning and there lying across the doorstep was a deer with antlers and all. It had been disembowled but there was the deer, and his hide and everything. They were married in Washington and then, I think pretty soon, he went off to Detroit right on the edge of the primeval forest and there he hunted and my mother remembers when she was a little child he used to put them all in the wagon, or carriage, and drive into the forest and there he hunted and my mother remembers when she was a little child he used to put them all in the wagon, or carriage, and drive into the forest and there he would (graft) onto this forest tree peach and apple and plum tree (cuts). Do you know how that's done? You split the bark and plant the bud in it and it grows and a branch of a pear tree will grow out of a birch tree, now that's a scientific occupation. He did it constantly. From there he went to Rouses Point and from there he was ordered to come down to survey, design, and build a reservoir. Washington at that

time was furnished with water by pumps from streams down underground. Everybody went to a corner pump, ignorant of germs. The ladies of the household had what they called a tea pump. "Each pump has a different flavor", so for their laundry water they would take the pump nearest by but for their tea they might go two blocks away. These pumps were made out of hollowed trees, huge ancient trees. I remember I used to admire the bark long ago rotted through, all silver, and on top of each one was an iron cap and on top of that a ball which glittered in the sun with a magnificently graceful iron handle which would come swinging out and curve down with a knob on the end. It was great fun to get the water to come out of the spout but we weren't strong enough to use the handle, but if you ran and jumped on the top of the spring of the handle and then waited to pull down the handle, water would gush out into the gutter, and the gutters I remember so well were all paved with pebbles, in a great long dusty row.

Sitting on Grandfather's wall once, let's see, this was about '76 I guess, what Washington was like. Vermont Avenue was not paved, just a heavy beaten down pebbled earthy road and I heard music, singing - the negroes, and down to my left coming up from Thomas Circle was a band of about 20 negroes, men and women. The eldest one wasn't more than 18,

and they were barefooted and all dressed in the plantation woven denim, blue with white stripes, a uniform and the women all had their hair done in tight little pigtails and they walked arm in arm and they sang - the plantation chorus. The alto and the tenor and the bass would sing an aria alone and then the chorus would be entirely animal's noises, the baaing and the bleating and the barking, all in perfect harmony and they were like negroes, they were absorbed in their music. They walked slowly past, I was sitting on the wall, I suppose the wall is there yet, a low brick wall, I was sitting and watching them as they disappeared in the distance. The negro singing is different today. Their voices have changed.

Now you were going to tell me something about the placing of the freedom statue on the dome, gentle laughter by Grandmother. Well, the dome of the capitol was built under the ardent devotion and skill of General M.C. Meigs and the Washington people thought the dome would be crushed by its own weight, collapse, and there was a great deal of talk about it, and when Mr. Lincoln (spoke) parts of that bronze figure were still disembodied (on) the platform from which he spoke. Then on another occasion when the water was turned into a reservoir John Meigs said to his family "Go down to the foot of the capitol hill and see the water

come through the fountain there. My mother was sixteen then and they went down and stood in the crowd of people laughing to think of that man Meigs who thinks he can make water run uphill and suddenly whooooo there came the water breathless astonishment - conviction at once, dramatic.

He was very interested and very confident that Rock Creek Park should be incorporated into the city as a public playground but the city was sure that it would always be too far away and when finally before his death they began re-surveying it he was very satirical indeed. Of course the surveys were very incorrect for the same reason that all the early surveys were - they used cloth tape where now they use a steel tape so as not to have any stretching. He used to drive us out to Rock Creek Park every afternoon when it was possible and one day he lost his watch; he came back and found his watch had fallen out of his pocket. So we waited for a week and next Sunday afternoon we drove out and there it was still banging on the same perch. I walked out there one day and true to my fancy for doing things that were dangerous I undertook to walk across one of the falls. I had a friend who was having a picnic on the shore and I undertook to walk across the top of the crest of one of the falls. I walked along the edge and I slid off. I never will forget the sensation of going down the falls. I slid down

down the falls, scrabbling and holding onto the rocks, and thought I might go to Kingdom Come but fortunately I struck a ledge of rock and scrambled up again. Thereafter I waded in the water and I remember with tears of laughter how I walked through dust, a foot deep I guess, to get to the picnic ground. But the water was always so clear and bright. Another adventure we had there with grandfather, again so confident of his grandchildren. He was driving and one of the horses was Browney who he had ridden in Chattanooga. Grandfather suddenly stopped. Browney was seen shivering in his harness and Grandfather, I was sitting in the front seat where he was driving, and Grandfather said he had blind staggers, we must get to the ford. So we got to the ford as soon as we could and drove in the ford and then Grandfather handed me a knife with its big blade open and said "Now Lulie, I want you to get out and help me". So I scrambled down and he went to the horse's head and took off his halter and with a huge sponge began washing his face. The horse was shuddering and shivering with the blind staggers and then he said "Now see here Lulie, put the knife in where I tell you." So, I was so little, I still remember how ice cold water ran over my knees, deep as that, and so I had to stretch up pretty high, the horse's head was low and he held the horse's tongue and upper jaw up and his lower jaw down and said "Now

put the knife right in there". So I stabbed the knife right in under his tongue and out gushed the blood; that was an act of faith on my part. Blood was all scattered around. The object, of course, was to release his blood, to relieve the pressure of blood around his head and eyes. Otherwise he would have fallen in a fit and died.

Grandfather was full of ideas and he built for himself a steam bath in that house of his down in the cellar in a great big room. He had built a big tank which I suppose was about 5 feet deep, oh it was a regular pond with a cement wall around it. Then he had a little steam room built. Now Grandfather was lame and, well, I guess he was a retired age, and he used to go down there in the steam room and then, without any attendants, plunge into this cold tub. We used to be scared to death but he would come up much refreshed. That was his confidence.

Another family adventure, we had a dog. My brother Joe was home on holiday and took the dog for a walk down to the Federal Street market. Grandmother used to market there and her carriage was standing outside and I was in the carriage, no, I was at home that time, I was usually in the carriage, Joe told me, that the dog had a fit. Well the policeman wanted to shoot it then and there for rabies but Joe caught

the dog who was struggling in a fit and dragged him over to the fountain and plunged him in. Plenty of spectators all giving advice and the policeman wanting to shoot but he couldn't shoot under the circumstances. Finally Joe hailed old David and put this fighting dog into the coupe and I was sitting on the porch and whooooo into the garden gate came the carriage and I could see this dog carrying on and Joe shouted to me "Come on down to the steam bath" so I immediately ran down to the steam bath and it was empty, unfortunately. Joe said "Turn on the water". So Joe held him, fighting, snarling, having a fit under the two spiggots of cold water and I held open the spiggots and when the water was deep enough to keep the dog in Joe swung aside and said "Now get out of here" and I sped into the hall and he rushed after me and the dog stayed there for two weeks without anything to eat, crazy. Perhaps it had rabies, I don't know, but it was one of the adventures we had.

Another adventure in the house - his son Monty came home from Germany from a study of electricity. He came home and I remember how well he looked and he lined all us five children up, hand in hand, and then put a shock through and it went all the way through all of us. I remember how I suddenly could not release my hand from my sister's. With awful effort I broke the circuit and tore them apart. He had

some kind of a little box, I don't know what it was.

Grandfather was constantly interested in the expansion and security of the city and the beauty of it. His own house was a beauty spot really. He planted a magnificent poplar tree, not a lombardy but the other kind. There was a fountain not far away in the garden which nourished the tree so it became an enormous tree, people thought it was a primeval tree. He was constantly on the porch until he became so lame that he stayed more or less in his library. He was always very punctual, always very kindly and always gave the impression of great dignity.

What was the immediate cause of his death? Pnemonia. Did he die at home? Oh yes, people were not shipped off to the hospital in those days. Was he active right up until his death? Oh yes, he was not an invalid, not an invalid at all. He retained his mental faculties up to the end? Oh yes, definitely, he read incessantly, his voice was full and genial and his library was so full of interest, there were so many things in it. He had an enormous amount of papers. He was an artist too, in his library, all the woodwork in his house was black walnut, priceless today, beautiful black walnut. The doors were all great sheets like this, from ancient trees. In his library he had along the floor, cabinets (with painted doors), there's one in there, that picture of Mt. Etna was

one. He had one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, must have been nine of them, framed like that. Each one contained one of those Italian guache paintings and you opened it down like this, there was a hinge on the floor and in behind there were shelves stuffed full or records, I don't know what, always full of something or other. Then on top of that there was a shelf and then there were books right up to the ceiling and about 4 feet down from the ceiling there was a rod held on to the shelf by a carved bracket and there was a ladder. The reason to go up the ladder was to get a book off the top shelf but I used to go up the ladder and walk along the shelf holding onto the rod, as a little girl, and take books out from near the ceiling, quite an adventure. All sorts of fascinating books (were there) and in the sale of his property I daresay some valuable books were sold off for nothing. He had, I remember, a whole set of Tenney magazine. It's a British publication, I suppose it's been out (of print) for a long time, since 1935 I guess. But in that Tenney magazine there were lots of interesting things.

Down here, in the library here, just the day before my arm was lost, I was reading an article on the excape of Jefferson's Navy from Richmond. I was interrupted and I put in it a post card to mark my place and I went back there three years later and it was still there.

General Meigs was quite an inventor, I understand. Yes, the first thing I ever heard he invented was the sewing machine, I don't know whatever became of it, up at Rouse's Point, a little machine for his wife. Then he invented the lamp that they use on automobiles, I might say he invented that lamp, originally a carriage lamp.

In his workshop he had, over the whole extent of his library he had a workshop, lathes and a long workbench, everything you can think of. I remember one day a barrel of charcoal stood on the hearth. In the hearth down below he used to use six foot logs. A friend always sent him a barrel of walnuts every winter and I used to go and crack the walnuts on his anvil and eat the walnuts. I went in there one day and I found the barrel of charcoal on fire - it was just one big ember and it was situated right over Grandfather's head. It was held together by the brass straps. Well, there was no time for talking! I rushed from one end of the house to the other and dumped buckets of water from the bathroom and dousing it and I put it out but the water poured right through onto Grandfather's head. The only time I saw him mad - he came storming upstairs, mad as anything, very indignant, but when he saw what I was about he courteously bowed and thanked me for assisting in the salvation of the household.

Now that lathe he had belonged to his father and he had

bought a gas engine instead of treadling it with his foot and this small gas engine was mounted on the leg. Now that gas engine is the foundation of the present automobile engine. It was made by a man named Aucpach, or something or other, the fuel was petroleum, I think. His nephew, Charles Hart who was on the Board of the Franklin Museum, wrote to me and said "You have Grandfather's lathe." His family had sent it down to me and I had had it in my Maryland Avenue house but when I built this house it was too big to go in the cellar door. So I gave it to St. John's College, thinking they'd use it. Well Charles Hart wrote I had the only original engine in the country that he could trace and the Franklin Museum would like to have it. Well, I went on a search, all around the old (corridors) and everywhere else but no, St. John's College had thrown it away, so it disappeared. They (the Franklin Museum) cared so much that when finally I stopped my searching, the Board sent me the most courteous letter, with elaborate thanks for my search. That was Grandfather's perception of the future. He used to turn on the lathe a lot. That little table over there was turned by my brother Joe on the lathe. I designed it and Joe made it. I played a joke on a man who was looking for antique furniture once. He came and looked at that table. I said "What do you think of that table?" Conceited creature, he looked it all around and said "that table's a very beautiful antique, very

original with the cloverleaf top, Chippendale design". I said "yes, I did it. I found the top in my Grandfather's attic and my brother Joe made the legs".

Your Grandfather also invented a fire hydrant. About the time he was building the aqueduct he invented a fire hydrant; some of which are still in use in Georgetown. I didn't know that (LTA)

Grandfather invented a candlestick. When he invented his shade he invented a candlestick and took them down to the Chase Home, the old ladies home, which is a colonial building. There are two of them there and I said "Why look at Grandfather's candlesticks" but they wouldn't believe it. I said "I'll tell you how it's made, I'll tell you its history". "Why you're right, Mrs. Alger, we thought they were colonial". He took a brass tube and screwed it into a round brass base and then in the tube he fastened a spring just the size of a candle and the candle was crushed down on the spring and held in by a cap. As it burns, of course, and disappears, the spring keeps pushing it up. Very simple, and on to that he hung this shade, just the kind of reflector that the automobiles have. He didn't believe in having a patent. He though a man's invention belonged to the Republic, that was his high mind. So when he had this made and sold for a year he had a patent of 10¢, I think, and he was considered very foolish and at the end of the year everybody was buying

them. They were very nice to read with, that is, the lantern. In his workshop he had any number of pieces of metal cut in a circle and with a section cut out. Of course it depends on the shape of the section (when) two pieces are put together how the angle of the reflection is in the mirror. One of them I gave to my son, the one I had made into a lamp, and he gave it to the Franklin Museum, I think. Oh yes, he was full of inventions. I remember, among other things, he had a jar of quick silver there on one of his workbenches quicksilver was a gold and I had a plain little gold ring on my finger and I sacrificed it for science, laughter, some excitement to get it back again, of course.

Under his enthusiastic inspiration we used to take casts from legs and arms. I remember my brother one day asked if I would permit my face to be taken. I said "Well, O.K.", so I lay down flat on the bench (in the workshop) and he smeared my face with lard and when he came along with the soft plaster to put on my face I said "How am I going to breath?" "Oh," said he, "I'm going to put straws in your nose". I said "That's enough" and fought my way off the table. They thought I had so little spirit, so really little ambition. We used to take arms, and feet, legs and hands. Then he died and they were all thrown away - those were very good models. I remember there was one of my brother Admiral

Taylor, a pair of clenched hands.

I guess I'm the only (living) person who ever wore a Commodore's uniform of 1812, but I did. In my room was a big storeroom and my mother took out a trunk in which we had a lot of moth eaten uniforms. I was a young thing about 17 and I put on Commodore Rogers' dress coat. I remember the collar came up to here and the tails trailed on the ground - it was full of moth holes, and I paraded up and down.

Let's have some coffee now; I always have coffee about this time. Call Agnes, will you.

I want to thank you for talking this afternoon. I hope your son Philip will appreciate this, and I'm sure he will. Grandmother laughter - He thinks everything I say is wonderful.

The person speaking is Louisa Taylor, the granddaughter of General Montgomery C. Meigs, United States Army, now Mrs. Philip R. Alger, widow of Captain Alger, a famous ordnance officer of the United States Navy.

That does it, laughter.