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BEULAH PENNEL

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**FRIEND OF LOUISE ADAMS BROWN (MRS. BROWN'S FATHER GAVE THE
COMMAND FOR THE ARTILLERY SALUTE AT THE INAGURAL CEREMONY
FOR THE STATUE OF LIBERTY IN 1886)**

DIXON: Today is April 18, 1979. My name is Harvey Dixon and I am speaking with Miss Beulah Pennell. Miss Pennell is going to tell us about her knowledge of a Miss Lucy Brown.

PENNEL: Louise Adams Brown. Louise Adams was a very charming young woman at Fort Riley, Kansas. I guess in her late teens or early twenties when I was in high school in Junction City, I knew about her. I didn't know her, but she was considered by all the saleswomen in town as the most charming woman who had ever been at Fort Riley. So she was sort of a legend to me at that time. I didn't know her until many years later here in New York. I did know her cousin and the cousin was very ill and I sent Mrs. Brown regular bulletins about the cousin and got to know her and we became very good friends.

DIXON: What years were these?

PENNEL: This was about ten years ago. She was almost completely deaf and had only peripheral vision, but she was alert, her mind was as clear as could be, and she was very interesting. She was a native of New York, so she loved to hear anything that was to be had about New York, and I wrote her just cards or notes frequently and came

down to the Statue one day looking for a photograph and when I got home immediately wrote Louise Brown a letter about the museum, and got back from her promptly one of very rare notes saying that her father had been in charge of the, she said, firing squad, but I knew that was wrong because a firing squad is always commanded by a non-commissioned officer, and he was a commissioned officer. But he had command of the battery that gave the salute to the Statue of Liberty when the Statue of Liberty was dedicated.

DIXON: Right. His name was what?

PENNEL: His name was Granger Adams and he was a lieutenant, and I think station at Governor's Island because that was the command post for the eastern territory at that time.

DIXON: He was actually on Liberty Island when the dedication occurred?

PENNEL: Yes, and he brought Louise with him. Her mother had died when she was born and she was brought up by cousins or aunts or somebody here. I don't know that. And whenever he possibly could, he would try to take her with him. I am a little puzzled about how he managed it when he was commanding a battery because that is four men and four guns. It is the unit that fires the twenty-one gun salute. Of course, the president was here, so it possibly was. When I knew them later on, Granger Adams was gone. She was living at a beautiful old place called Ruid Hill on the outskirts of Royal, Virginia, and I visited her there once for about an hour, my only personal contact with her. I just knew her by mail. She always said I must be a cousin because I had been so good to write to her.

DIXON: And do you know any of the memories she had of the time she was on Liberty Island? I mean circumstances.

PENNEL: The one thing that she remembered most clearly was the lumps of metal that were lying around on the ground, and that has puzzled me completely, where the surely didn't have leftover metal that they sent along with the Statue. It must have been pieces that hadn't been fitted in.

DIXON: I don't know what they could have been. Did she say they were extraordinary large?

PENNEL: Big lumps of metal lying around that apparently she remembered as part of the Statue that hadn't been put in, like a jigsaw puzzle.

- DIXON: She didn't know whether they were copper or were they green or she didn't mention the color?
- PENNEL: No, she didn't mention them at all. She just said big lumps of metal. And she remembered the picture of those. I suppose it was made with a small camera or something, I don't know.
- DIXON: And the picture is no longer—
- PENNEL: No, it just vanished.
- DIXON: An interesting remembrance. She remembered other things?
- PENNEL: Yes. She remembered that the pedestal was set in the parade and that the first time I realized that meaning of the word parade. We spoke of the parade grounds of Fort Riley, but I thought that was actually where the paraded when they were having a review. It was simply meant the exercise field.
- DIXON: Right, it was the center portion.
- PENNEL: Right in the center. And she didn't mention the fact that it was in that star-shaped fortification and I found things about those star—
- DIXON: Fort Wood.
- PENNEL: Yes, Fort Wood.
- DIXON: You mentioned in your—you wrote a brief summary of her recollections and you mentioned the day the weather was bad.
- PENNEL: Oh, the fog. The fog came down to the top of pedestal and when the canvas came off you still couldn't see the Statue because it was all covered with fog.
- DIXON: Did she say anything about the size of the—I mean they had the whole Statue shrouded in canvas?
- PENNEL: Yes. There were three ropes. I got that from this history. There were three ropes and Bartholdi had one of them, was manipulating one of them. I thought that was very interesting. And the signal to lower this canvas came a little too soon, somebody miscued, and cut right into the dedications. Senator Everett was it who was making the dedication speech, and stopped him in the middle of it. But the noise was so great that nobody realized it. And, course, people began yelling immediately then, and the guns, of course,

went off. The unit of four artillery guns. That is a small cannon, that fires the—

DIXON: As the canvas was coming down?

PENNEL: Yes, it fires the salute.

DIXON: Did she mention where she watched from?

PENNEL: No, she didn't. She did mention some man told her the Statue was bigger than the Colossus of Rhodes, and I found that in the history too. He must have gone around showing off his knowledge to everybody. I thought that was very amusing. She said on her way home she asked her daddy what a colossus was, so Colossus of Rhodes meant nothing to her, of course.

DIXON: Did she mention how she got to Liberty Island?

PENNEL: No, and in this history it speaks of the fire department. Did they have fire boats at that time?

DIXON: I don't know.

PENNEL: She certainly would have mentioned that. I don't think they did. There were three men-of-war on the harbor.

DIXON: What is a man-of-war? It is a type of sailing boat, right?

PENNEL: Not a sailing boat, no. It is a battleship, one of the bigger ones.

DIXON: She didn't know the names of anything?

PENNEL: No, she didn't.

DIXON: But there were three in the harbor for the dedication?

PENNEL: For this dedication, yes.

DIXON: Did she see her father when she was on the Island," or he was off involved?

PENNEL: No, he put here where he could keep an eye on her because she was just a youngster and, or course, he had to stay with his gun and with his man.

DIXON: Did she mention anything about, were there a lot of people there or

did she see anyone—

PENNELL: Oh yes, mobs, a great many and very noisy.

DIXON: Did she see anyone like the President?

PENNELL: She didn't, no. I don't think that would have impressed her anyway. She was more interested in the guns and being with her daddy.

DIXON: How was she when this (?)

PENNELL: She must have been about ten. I thought earlier she was older. I thought she was twelve, but I am sure she couldn't have been.

DIXON: I bet it was a memorable event for her.

PENNELL: Oh, probably, and wonderful, wonderful day,

DIXON: Plus she remembered it all the way to enter into her nineties.

PENNELL: Into her nineties, she was ninety-five when she died. She was ninety, ninety-one, or ninety-two when she wrote that letter. That is remembering things a long, long time.

DIXON: Right. You mentioned the book that had all the interesting anecdotes in it. Why don't you ahead and out it in.

PENNELL: That history.

DIXON: Right.

PENNELL: A History of New York, and it is by Martha Lamb and Mrs. Burton Harrison. It is the only book that gives any kind of detail I can find. I got to hunting for the salute business because is puzzled me. I knew it couldn't have been a firing squad and I thought I should be able to find something about the salute, but there is no mention of it in any of the histories at all.

DIXON: She may have meant literally a firing squad n the sense they fired the rifles.

PENNELL: Yes, she was just writing it in the shortest way she could, of course, to get it done.

DIXON: And her father when he did this, he was actually in the Army.

PENNEL: He was a lieutenant, yes, he was a West Pointer.

DIXON: That's right, you mentioned that.

PENNEL: Yes. And he kept his station here as long as he could just to be near her until she was old enough to go with him as hostess. That is what she was doing at Fort Riley. He was stationed there with the 6th Field Artillery. I think I told you he was a Cavalryman, but he wasn't. Fort Riley is the Calvary post or was at that time when there was a Calvary, and I just tend to think of everybody there as being Calvary, and I know there was regiment, 6th Field Artillery was there and he was in that. And General Brown was an Artilleryman. They were both in the 6th Field Artillery. Brown played pool all the time.

DIXON: General Brown was her father?

PENNEL: That was her husband.

DIXON: Oh, her husband, right.

PENNEL: General Beverly Brown.

DIXON: And that was her father, right?

PENNEL: Yes, Granger Adams was her father. They are related to the Massachusetts Adams family. They go back to Quincy and John Adams.

DIXON: Can you think of anything else important that she—the weather was there and she noticed the Statue shroud coming down and the firing squad. Did she mention how the people were seated, were there seats for people to sit on?

PENNEL: No, she didn't mention that and I don't think there could have been at that time.

DIXON: Maybe bleachers or something. I don't think so either.

PENNEL: I doubt so. I imagine they were just standing around or sitting on the ground.

DIXON: Did she mention where the people were standing who spoke? Were they on the pedestal?

PENNEL: No, she didn't mention that. Neither does his history because I

hoped that it would tell it. It mentions the people who were there. There was President Cleveland, De Lesseps and Bartholdi from France, and Chauncey DePew, Everest who was senator. I suppose he was a New York Senator, and there is some other name that I should remember, there were speakers at that time.

DIXON: Did she know who Bartholdi was when she saw him?

PENNEL: No, I don't think she did at all, no. No, really.

DIXON: Did she say anything about the nature of the Island? Did she mention the fact there were buildings on the Island?

PENNEL: She just mentioned that granite fortification, that star-shaped granite fortification, and I am still very curious about that because I read of another star-shaped fortification. I have to find out what that is. I am very curious about it.

DIXON: Well, Fort Wood is star-shaped, the point that you can go out on a promenade around the building and see the (?). The museum is actually—

PENNEL: But why? What is the point in having a star-shaped fortification?

DIXON: I don't know.

PENNEL: It doesn't make any sense. They must have some significance.

DIXON: That is interesting. I don't know that either. You mean why, when they built it, would they make it in the shape of a star?

PENNEL: Yes.

DIXON: I don't know.

PENNEL: I have been hunting for that for some time.

DIXON: And just assumed it was there.

PENNEL: Well, Colonel Arlinger promised to look it up. Colonel Arlinger is her cousin. He lives in West New York. And he promised to look it up in a history of the Army that he has to see why there would be a star-shaped fortification, so maybe my curiosity will be satisfied on that point later on.

DIXON: You can let us know if you find out.

PENNEL: I will, if I find it out.

DIXON: After this event, did anything future—I mean association because of that, did she have an occasion to refer to it again in the future?

PENNEL: No.

DIXON: I mean her father or anything.

PENNEL: No, I didn't know her father. I just remembered he must have been a very fine man. One of his nieces said he was the only person in the world who she never criticized, so I have always thought he must have been quite a wonderful man. He lived alone. He didn't remarry.

DIXON: They were from New York City actually?

PENNEL: They were from New York City, yes.

DIXON: Why don't you tell a little bit about yourself, maybe mention your brother, so we will know the person who is telling this story.

PENNEL: I had a school for officers' children at Fort Riley. That is how I happened to be so well acquainted with the Army people. I lived in Junction City, Kansas, which is just four miles from Fort Riley, and commuted back and forth for the day, and conducted that school for a number of years. And came from that directly to New York. Junction City at that time was seven thousand, New York was seven million and, of course, it sort of romped on me, but then I came to stay a year and I am still here.

DIXON: When did you come?

PENNEL: In 1926. I was going to stay one year and I am still here.

DIXON: When was the first time you came to the Statue, just out of curiosity? Was it many years ago?

PENNEL: Yes, many years ago. Let's see, it must have been around the '20s. It must have come in '26 because that first year I was seeing everything in New York that I could see because I didn't intend to stay and I wanted to look it over, so I did come and I went up as high as you can go in the tower.

DIXON: When you came in '26, when you came today, was there a

difference in how you came or do you remember?

PENNEL: There was a boat very similar to this one, as far as I remember. There wasn't any crowd.

DIXON: Do you remember whether you docked in the back of the Statue, like today you were behind the Statue when you docked? Do you remember whether it was the front or the rear?

PENNEL: No, I don't, I don't remember that.

DIXON: You don't remember that.

PENNEL: There was not any such crowds as there was today. I remember that. There was a good many people, but not a mob like this. And then I didn't come again for a long time, and then I have been here just to see the museum twice, and then this is my third trip out.

DIXON: You don't by chance remember the fare when you came out the first time.

PENNEL: I think it was a quarter. It wasn't much more than that.

DIXON: Right, considerably less. Do you remember anything about the Island when you came? Was the Island different then?

PENNEL: Yes. There was no landscaping. It was grass and rocks around. And the five-pointed or six-pointed, must have been there that time, but I didn't notice that. All I thought about was the fact that the ground was not cultivated or kept in any sort of manner.

DIXON: Was the breakwater up around then, do you remember, the wall around the Island to keep the water out?

PENNEL: I think it was, yes.

DIXON: How about the old buildings? Were there a lot of old buildings?

PENNEL: There were a lot of old ships around.

DIXON: Oh really, old ships? You mean docked at the Island?

PENNEL: Well, I don't know if they were docked on this Island or docked a little ways from it, but I remember thinking it was kind of a graveyard for old ships nearby and I thought that was not a very nice thing to have near the Statue. I didn't understand why.

DIXON: Sailboats?

PENNEL: No, they were bigger things. More like cargo boats.

DIXON: Around this Island? Not around Governor's. Not between Governor's and here or between here and Ellis?

PENNEL: They were from here and Ellis, as I remember it.

DIXON: Do you remember anything else from your visit that occurred that was interesting?

PENNEL: No, I don't remember a thing. I thought the view was perfectly gorgeous, I remember that. It was unbelievably beautiful that day. It was a clear day.

DIXON: And you actually went to the crown, right?

PENNEL: Yes. Then you were allowed to. I don't think you are now, are you, allowed to go clear up there into the—

DIXON: The crown you can go to. The torch wasn't open then.

PENNEL: Oh, that book calls it, "The mighty woman with the torch."

DIXON: Well, that is what she is.

PENNEL: That is what she is, certainly. She is more impressive from the rear to me than she is from the front. That is a marvelous Statue.

DIXON: It is almost as though when they built Fort Wood they had it in mind that someday in the future it would be up because it is a nice shape, it is a nice design for the Statue to fit into.

PENNEL: I was still teaching at Fort Riley and doing writing on the side, trade paper writing, and a New York firm wanted me to come and be on their editorial staff, and I couldn't do it right away. And my father died and then my sister, who I was (?) responsible for the older sister, and a friend who was also writing for the same editor wired and said, "I think if you ask her now maybe she will come," and he immediately telephoned, "If you will come on, we will pay your way here." I said, "I'm going to have vacation. If you will keep your job by September, maybe I will come take it, otherwise I won't."

DIXON: And you did?

PENNELL: I did. I went to North Carolina for my vacation and that editor was down there on a convention. He said, "Get your pencil and come over her and take this convention," and I did and I still said to Mr. Thacker, "If your job is still open in September, I will consider coming," and that is how I happened to land in New York.

DIXON: And why don't we go ahead and mention your brother.

PENNELL: My brother is Joseph Judd Pennell, and his collection is at the state university, the University of Kansas, and it is called the Pennell Collection and it is quite famous. A book is actually coming out this month, April, with about two hundred and fifty of his photographs, one of those big coffee table books.

DIXON: What are the photographs of?

PENNELL: Almost anything a man could be interested in photography in a small town and the Army. See, Fort Riley is a show post. It is not just a fortification. They take all the visiting firemen from abroad who come here to see our Army, are actually taken to Fort Riley. It is a very beautiful post right up on hills, and it was the Calvary School, the Mountain Service School first and then the Calvary School. It was also the Cooks and Bakers School and the Ferrier School and some other kind of school, I have forgotten now. It was a huge place. I has about, I believe, eighty-one thousand acres in the training fields and target ranges and everything.

DIXON: So his record is essentially a photographic record of Kansas.

PENNELL: And Fort Riley.

DIXON: Fort Riley. And the town's name was what?

PENNELL: Junction City.

DIXON: I don't guess there would be things like immigrants involved, people who came into Kansas?

PENNELL: No, no. It was a frontier town at one time, but not the standard frontier town. I don't suppose there was as much shooting up as usually goes in the Westerns. It ran wide open for a long time, when Kansas had been dry and allowed cigarettes or anything of that kind. But Junction City was wide open almost all of the time. Sort of an independent place.

- DIXON: Sounds like an interesting collection.
- PENNEL: It is a very wonderful collection. And the fact that he was an excellent photographer and really trained himself. He was from North Carolina originally, but he settled in Kansas.
- DIXON: Is there anything else you want to add? Is there something we have left out about Mrs. Brown that we would want to put in? His full name was—
- PENNEL: Her name was Louise Adams Brown.
- DIXON: Let's see, you mentioned where she was buried when she died.
- PENNEL: At West Point.
- DIXON: Did she by any chance mention or did her father mention anyone else that they knew who was at the dedication?
- PENNEL: No, she didn't. It was just, to her it was more important because it was a day with her daddy and that was rare.
- DIXON: They didn't take other people with them or they didn't know them?
- PENNEL: No, I really don't understand how he was allowed to take her, but he did.
- DIXON: Well, he was in the honor guard.
- PENNEL: Oh, I suppose so, yes.
- DIXON: He could sneak her on. That is why I was interested in to see how she actually got to the Island, whether or not he brought her in a—
- PENNEL: She probably came with him on the—she must have. He wouldn't have put her on another boat and let her come by herself. She probably came on the—what do they call those things—Army, no, it wasn't a ferry. It was a ferry from Governor's Island to New York. It might have been a ferry that they came over on from Governor's Island.
- DIXON: But do you know whether she came from Governor's Island or did she come from Manhattan?
- PENNEL: Well, she probably went to Governor's Island and then came with him. Probably somebody took her to Governor's Island, I don't

know, she didn't mention that. Just the fact that she came with him.

DIXON: Well, would you mind saying how old you are so we will—

PENNEL: I am just six months short of ninety.

DIXON: Okay, that's nice. I mean I hate to ask you, that is kind of a rude question.

PENNEL: I think I told you in my first letter that I was a year short of ninety.

DIXON: That is a very interesting account. You haven't heard of anyone else who was connected with the dedication?

PENNEL: No, I haven't.

DIXON: Well, that's nice to know. We know someone who was here. Because they would have to be very old if they were an adult.

PENNEL: Absolutely, nearly one hundred. It was '86.

DIXON: Well, I have enjoyed very much talking with you and I thank you for coming.

PENNEL: You are very welcome. I enjoyed it myself very much.