

**Eunice Sullivan Pracht**  
(Recorded interview October 2, 2000)

I was born in Anderson, South Carolina, on October 21, 1929, the week of the stock market crash that ushered in the Great Depression.

My mother for whom I was named was Sara Eunice Glenn. Her father, Henry Glenn, was a farmer. My grandmother was Elizabeth Lewis Burriss Glenn. The homeplace is still in existence, Hickory Hill. My father was Jacob Wannamaker Sullivan. He was born and reared in Anderson. His father was James Mattison Sullivan and his mother was Mary Wannamaker Sullivan from Orangeburg. When Sherman made his march to the sea he spent the night at my grandmother's house. She was just a little girl and sat on his lap. But the next day the enlisted men confiscated all of their silver. My father never did say if the house was spared but there was a scorched earth policy.

The Sullivans came from Ireland. John Thomas O'Sullivan immigrated in 1655 to Princess Anne County, Virginia, and came on down to South Carolina. My ancestors were O'Sullivans but the *O* was dropped. Most of the Sullivans settled around the Anderson area but some returned to Virginia.

The following concerning my Grandfather Sullivan is from a biographical directory of the Senate of the State of South Carolina from 1776 to 1964:

James Mattison Sullivan (relative of George Washington Sullivan, of Charles Pinckney Sullivan, and of Hewlett Sullivan). Senator from Anderson County. Born September 8, 1855, in Anderson, the son of Nimrod Kelly Sullivan of Anderson and Emily K. Mattison attended Ligon's private school; one year at Davidson. (That was the same time Woodrow Wilson was at Davidson.) Married, first Mary Alice Wannamaker, May 16, 1877. Second, Harriet DuBose of Clarkston, GA in 1903. Clerked in his father's store in 1876; partner until 1879. Partner of his Uncle C. S. Mattison until 1895; Partner with his brothers in hardware business. President and officer of other businesses. Part owner of Anderson Daily Mail. Constitutional Convention of 1895. S. C. House of Representatives, Anderson, 1896-1898. S. C. Senate, Anderson, 1898-1902. Mayor of Anderson, 1904-1908. School trustee. S. C. Railroad Commission, 1908 to death. President of the Anderson Board of Trade. Knights of Honor. Member of the Methodist Church. Died in Columbia November 2, 1910; buried at Anderson.

My great-uncle William Woodward Sullivan's father was a prisoner of war of the Yankees during the War between the States. He was befriended in prison by William Woodward, a Northerner who was a successful banker. When he was freed and came back to this area and

married, he named his first son William Woodward Sullivan and that is how Woodward got into the Sullivan name.

James Mattison Sullivan and cousin Charlie Mattison were the co-founders of Sullivan Hardware. It was founded in the 1880s. There were originally five Sullivan brothers in the business. My grandfather, James Mattison Sullivan, was the first president and then Charles Stark Sullivan. The original building is still standing on the west side of South Main Street just off the Square but at one time there were actually six stores.

Charles Stark Sullivan was one of the founders of Anderson College. He gave the president's home, which became the Sullivan Music Building. His wife, Luta Bueley Sullivan, wrote the alma mater for the college. Aunt Luta's son, Charles S. Sullivan, Jr. taught at Anderson College and was a trustee. His wife, Corie Meeks Sullivan also taught at Anderson College and was a trustee. Uncle Charlie, who was my great-uncle, was in Columbia with the Baptists in regard to Anderson College when he had a heart attack and died.

Anderson College was a four-year college then. It was a good school and we all took advantage of everything from art to ballet, voice, piano and everything. It was very much a part of the community. We went to many plays and many recitals.

My father was educated in the Anderson city schools and at Clemson College. My father was president of Sullivan Hardware for 17 years. Following a major coronary he remained part-time for awhile and then retired. He was one of the founders of the Anderson Country Club and helped keep it going during World War II when there was only a swimming pool and a golf course. He served as a member of the board and an appraiser for Perpetual Building and Loan Association, president of the Rotary Club of Anderson, chairman of the Board of Stewards at St. John's Methodist Church and chairman of the Anderson Memorial Hospital Board during one of the hospital's greatest expansions.

The following was an editorial written about my father by J. B. Hall shortly after his death:

#### Jake Sullivan – Builder

Jake W. Sullivan, who died unexpectedly over the weekend, was one of a dwindling number of Andersonians who can recall the days when Anderson was little more than a village – a town without paved streets, with cotton and corn fields almost within sight of the public Square, and a place where each Sunday morning a majority of the community's families walked together to worship in its few churches.

Mr. Sullivan was one of a small group of able, forward-looking citizens responsible for nurturing that country town of the early 1900s through a critical era of uncertain growth and into the prosperous and growing Piedmont city we know today.

His name is unalterably linked with Sullivan Hardware Company, where prior to his retirement, he held an executive position most of his adult life, and headed the company as president over a span of 17 years.

His leadership and guidance, along with that of a few associates, was instrumental in bringing the company to the status of one of a few regionally known mercantile establishments in upper South Carolina.

At the same time, however, Sullivan Hardware also enjoyed a wide local patronage, built on its reputation for excellent service, plus a policy of standing completely behind every sale of merchandise and service.

That was far from a universal standard among stores in those early years.

"Mr. Jake," as he was known to literally thousands of friends, retained his prime business judgment into the latter years of his life, and he continued to render valuable services as consultant with an Anderson building and loan establishment.

Mr. Sullivan was a kind man, a friendly man, a man whose warm handclasp and sincere smile conveyed the warmth of a large, generous and understanding heart.

He was a builder, in his community, his church, his civic club, and in all the walks of everyday life.

He rubbed shoulders with the great and near great but without losing a common touch that made him a beloved and a trusted friend to those who walked life's broad and sometimes difficult highways.

He will be deeply and sincerely missed by many thousands who loved, honored and respected him as a man and as a leader among men.

My father's older brother, George Cullen Sullivan, was the first editor of the *Anderson Daily Mail*. Uncle Cullen was twice mayor and was city attorney for 30 years. We went to a Bar dinner one night and Mr. T. Frank Watkins said that Uncle Cullen was perhaps the most eloquent speaker in the courtroom he had ever heard. His daughter said, "Why, he was a frustrated actor." He was a good man. We were devoted to him.

His daughter, Carolyn Cullen (who was called "Cullen"), wrote a syndicated column from New York which was carried throughout this country and abroad. She was a mystery guest on "To Tell The Truth" and appeared on the "Merv Griffin Show" and was cited as one of the three foremost astrologers in America. She always prefaced her analysis with, "If there is anything to astrology." Her mother had been a Quaker and had taken up astrology as a hobby.

When growing up we had fun with the most simple things – like climbing up a peach tree we had in the back yard. One of the great events was when Mrs. Acker next door used to get her son out in the back yard and give him a spanking. It wasn't looked on as abuse in those days.

When I was a little girl, about 5 years old, the trolleys were still running in Anderson. My mother wanted me to have the experience of riding on a trolley, a streetcar. It ran in front of our house. We came through town and rode in front of the house. That was a memorable day.

There used to be a red brick building on South Main Street near our home that was the old Patrick Military Academy. It had been one of the Confederate Mints during the Civil War. In my day it was an apartment house.

We had what was called a "Tom Thumb wedding" at the First Baptist Church. That was a great event. It included children mainly from the Baptist Church and a few from other churches. It was a pretend wedding. Everybody had dresses made. I was the bride and never was there a more nervous bride. I was 5 years old. Clarence Brown was the groom. Lila Albergotti was maid of honor. Grady Clinkscales, Clinky Seabrook's brother, was the ring bearer. His mother went down the aisle with him because he was weeping. I think they gave it two nights at the First Baptist Church and then a command performance was given at Anderson College. I remember Clarence kissed me on the cheek and said, "Well, Mother and Daddy did."

Former Mayor Pete Glenn's niece's family lived next door. They had ice delivered. They had a great big card up at the door and it would designate if they wanted 5 or 10 pounds. Her little brother would call out to the iceman who was in a horse drawn wagon, "A nickel's worth." We would get the ice pick and eat crushed ice. That was the most wonderful thing – to have crushed ice. My son, Christopher, used to love that when he was a little boy too.

When we used the telephone we picked up and got central – the operator. Our number was 174. Lila Albergotti's was 453. Sullivan Hardware was 962. My grandmother had a party line and I picked it up one day through a mistake (accidentally on purpose) when I was a little girl. A maid next door was talking and said, "Somebody is eavesdropping." The beauty of having a central operator was if there was an emergency they could really do something in a hurry.

My parents rented houses in Highlands during the summer for four years. Two years were at the foot of Old Bear Pen and two years were up the Horse Cove Road. For about four summers after that we stayed at Kings Inn because Mr. Bob King, who owned Kings Inn, was a friend of my father. We would stay there for about a week.

Back in our day, we were so sheltered. I did not know about the birds and the bees until I was going into the ninth grade. I always thought if a couple fell in love, married, prayed, and it was God's will, He would send them a baby. My friend Dr. Joseph Nannrello said, "The Immaculate Conception."

I picked up a book one day when I was in the doctor's office and the secretary said, "Little girl, you must not look at that book." I couldn't get anything. My reading was heavily supervised and the Bible would say, "And he knew her" – well, you know a lot of people. "They lay with each other" – well you lie down with children and look at the stars. It was utter darkness.

I went two years to Kennedy Street School off East River Street. I had the most wonderful teacher in first grade – Alice Lee Humphreys. She was originally from Honea Path. I loved poetry and trying to write poetry and she encouraged it. I remember I wrote a poem that she said was her favorite.

A golden star shown down on night  
It was so beautiful and bright  
It sprinkled stardust on my head  
And made star daisies on my bed.

The entire class compiled a scrapbook of poems and we won the blue ribbon at the fair.

Lila Albergotti's poem was:

I ate two pieces of pie  
And said, "Oh my!"  
I ate two pieces of cake  
And it gave me the tummy ache.

Bill Fant's was:

You're a poet  
You don't know it.  
You make a rhyme  
Every time.

Later Alice Humphreys came out with three books about her school children in the King James Version and they are lovely books. One is *Angels in Pinafores* and there also is *Three Hear the Bells*. The Richmond Press I think published them. I was such a trembling, frightened little girl. To have a teacher like that meant everything.

We had a chauffeur who also served as yardman and a butler. He would take me to school or my mother would take me.

I had a very severe teacher in the second grade and I wasn't happy anymore. The principal put two little boys back to the first grade and I remember saying, "I want to go back." Then we moved to North Anderson, where I went to North Anderson School. After sixth grade, we went on to what was McCants Junior High School. We were scared to death because we had come from such a tiny school. After about two weeks we adjusted. When we finished the eighth

grade the boys went down to Boys High on South McDuffie and we went to Girls High on Greenville Street for ninth through the eleventh grade. They didn't have 12 grades then. The only time we saw the boys was when they came up to sell papers.

World War II began when we were in the seventh grade – December of the seventh grade. I remember going to my first formal dance on Saturday night and the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor the next day. My oldest brother, who was 17 years my senior, was in the European Theatre in combat three years. My other brother, who was 14 years older than I, got his training in Hollywood, Florida, and served in Panama. I think back about how hard that was on parents at that time. People clung together. It was, as one person told me not long ago, the last patriotic war. We would not go to school on certain days because the teachers had to issue ration cards. We were too young to feel the fear.

We bought defense stamps and bonds. I had a little beau in Atlanta from whom I would buy my defense stamps. He would mail the Stamps for Victory to me. I think I was doing that as an excuse to communicate with him. He delivered newspapers and sold defense stamps. After we got a certain number of defense stamps we surrendered them for a bond.

In the eighth grade we had to make a patriotic poster. Robert Gallant was very good at art so he did the poster. They couldn't think of a title for it. Billy Fant, who was kind of the class clown, suggested, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" – that was from a song at the time. Emily Pruitt, who was such a beautiful girl, said, "What about 21 Tons for Tanks and Guns." That was what they used. They let the boys out sometimes during school to collect scrap iron. I think they were also collecting newspapers for the war effort.

An Army officer came to our school on a recruiting mission and we all went down to the football stadium behind the old McCants Junior High School on Fant Street. He let the class officers ride in the Jeep. When we got out he said, "I just want to announce that school is out for the day." The teachers were fit to be tied.

The officer had come to Anderson College for a May Day celebration and they made a picture with Beulie Mayfield (who was train bearer for the Queen), the May Court and May Queen sitting beside the officer in the Jeep. The president of Anderson College, Miss Annie Dove Denmark, was in the picture too. The officer really made a splash.

We had socials on the weekends. They would have a basketball game and, after the game, a social in the gym with a record player and we would dance. At holiday time there would be dances. They used to have them at the American Legion Hut or occasionally the country club.

We would go to the soda shop in the Calhoun Hotel occasionally in the afternoon. (This is awful but an incident I never will forget. I got a Coca-Cola or something and they had a lot of ice in it and there was a roach.) We would go and sit around and talk awhile. I had so much homework to do that I really didn't get to do much hanging out at the soda shop. I had French, Latin, geometry, English, history and math, two voice lessons a week and two piano lessons a week. It was during the war and I used to sit down in the yard and get all my homework done

before going to my lessons at the college because I wanted to listen to the radio at night to hear Lionel Barrymore in *Mayor of the Town* and programs such as *Crime Doctor*.

I guess I was so young I wasn't extremely conscious of the Great Depression. You would not call my mother extremely thrifty but she was frugal. She knew how to take good care of us and my father did too without over indulgence. My dad was so responsible that someone remarked to me once that, "I never knew anybody that helped financially both sides of the family and never ever complained about it." He felt so responsible for everybody. He worried about everybody yet he had a keen sense of humor.

I remember one day, one Saturday afternoon, at home on South Main. It was cold and the front doorbell rang. I went to the door with whomever was staying with me, the maid. This man said, "I am freezing to death. You see I am barefoot." With permission the maid got a pair of Daddy's shoes and gave them to him.

After high school, I attended Washington Seminary in Atlanta, near the Westminster Schools. Then I went to Anderson College for a few months and got college credit which was transferable to Converse. I had been accepted at Agnes Scott too but I just wanted to be closer to home so I went to Converse instead. My brother and his family lived in Spartanburg. I didn't see a lot of them but I knew they were there. I was in South Carolina and I liked that. It was a small liberal arts school. There were 300 students or so at Converse then. I spent the four years there. In order not to have Saturday classes my senior year, I went to Erskine for six weeks the summer after my junior year and took high school teaching methods.

I was getting a teacher's certificate the hard way. They didn't have training schools at Converse. You were on your own to do your observations. You had to cut classes to do practice teaching. After my freshman year I was the only Anderson girl at Converse for the next three years.

When I was younger we used to play ball in peoples' back yards. Mr. Carroll "Frog" Reames would come around to the schools and I remember he introduced us to fist ball. As I grew older I had an injured knee which restricted me. The main things we did, especially in the summers, were picnics and going swimming. We went to movies. There was a bowling alley for a short time and we tried to bowl a little bit. Those were just about the greatest things that we did.

We went swimming out at the country club and then we would go on occasion to Boscobel near Sandy Springs. Back in those days the Anderson Country Club was the only club like that in Anderson so everybody would go out there and swim.

The first time I went to Atlanta (I was 14) was August 9, 1944. Dot Smith Fant, Marshall Fant's wife, and I went to Seneca on the train from Anderson. We had lunch at Mrs. Finnhart's Tea Room and then boarded the train to Atlanta. It was during the war years and was so crowded; we had to sit in the little luggage compartment. There were a lot of servicemen on it on

the way to Atlanta. One serviceman saw our distress with our luggage and said, "Well, if you will carry my bag, I will carry your luggage." That was a real event.

They had a big terminal station then in Atlanta. We visited friends for over a week. I could not get over how it took 30 minutes to get across town. I just couldn't believe how big Atlanta was. That was old Atlanta when downtown was really a charming place.

In the '30s and '40s the downtown Anderson area was such a friendly place. You knew everybody in passing. You would stop and chat if time permitted. It was a very alive place – in good weather a happy place.

Sullivan Hardware, which I remember so well, had a good many people working there. The building is still there but it is now the Sullivan's Metropolitan Grill. It has the same floors, same stairway and the same columns. It has maintained some of the past. The town has now grown and so much has gone to the Anderson Mall.

Near Sullivan Hardware was a popcorn stand. They had a box of Bluebird popcorn for a nickel. Then you could get in the movie for 9 cents, popcorn was a nickel and a coke was 6 cents. Nowadays, if you take your grandchild and a friend of your grandchild, you scarcely get out for \$25.

Bailes was a very fashionable store then and had an escalator. George Bailes and his father, George senior, had designer clothes and hats. There were Kress and McClellans. Really, we miss them terribly. One of the best florists, Davis' Florist, was on Benson Street. There was Fant's Book Store and also Fant's Camera Shop on the Square very near Gallant Belks' former location. Cochran's was a beautiful jewelry store. John B. Lee's for Music and Walters & Hillman are now gone.

There were the Carolina Theater and the Strand. The Osteen Theater at Greenville Street and Main came in much later. A lot of property beyond there was still residential at the time. The Bleckley home was on the right-hand side, across the street from the Osteen Theater. But on the same side as the Osteen, a little ways up, was the Abney house and then the Calhouns' and Means'. A good bit of that was still residential.

When my father was a young boy, he and some of his relatives and friends went skinny-dipping off the bridge at Beaver Creek. When they would dive off, they would shout, "Who's the best man on Beaver Creek?" His father, J. M. Sullivan, came along and sternly said, "I will show you who is the best man on Beaver Creek."

I remember Mr. Bill Johnston quite well. He was a good mayor. He called me one time and said, "I haven't seen your father lately. I was worried about him. Is he feeling well? I have missed seeing him."

Christmas Eve of 1949 two friends who had been drinking got in a fight at the Varsity Drive-in on Greenville Street. Finally they took one of the victims to another boy's house



because they didn't want to take him home in that condition. The following morning he was still in his cups and one boy said, "We have got to get you home. It is Christmas Day." He said, "Don't do that, they will tell the damned old man." He looked up and his father was standing there. He was in solitary confinement for a few days after that.

Then there was another incident a few summers before that. One young man got so sick on chewing tobacco that they had to carry him bodily to his front door. That young man turned out to be a very prominent merchant.

I did volunteer work at one time at the Red Cross, also Meals on Wheels and I have always been interested in the theater, locally. I did some work when it was little theatre. I have also worked in ACT (Anderson Community Theatre), which is the only Broadway theater here. We have a professional director and a very good one, Rob Alverson. In 1998, on New Year's Eve, we opened *My Fair Lady*. In February of this past year I had a cameo role in *Mame*. I always follow with interest whether it is the children's theatre or the adult theatre. I try to see theatre everywhere I can in this country and, when I was younger, abroad. It has always been an interest and a hobby of mine.

I have written poetry through the years beginning in the first grade encouraged by Miss Alice Lee Humphreys. In 1969, my book of poetry was released, *White Heather*. It was dedicated to my son, Christopher. I have another book which is ready if I ever get it to the printer entitled *Verses* and it is dedicated to my grandson, Christopher and also to Joseph Nannarello, who is my mentor and good friend. I am most grateful to Dr. Archibald Rutledge. He was the state Poet Laureate and he was very kind and generous in what he had to say about my poetry.

After my first published book, *White Heather*, I was fortunate in that I was asked to 25 speaking engagements, a good many in Anderson and one in Union, South Carolina. They included Anderson College and Erskine College. In later years there was one speaking engagement in Easley. It is always a pleasure when you have a group that enjoys poetry and is receptive. You feel you benefit more than anybody else even though you are doing it for them.

Stella Gilliard came to our home when I was 2 1/2 years old and we were living on South Main Street. She was with us until one day she was on her way to work with some flowers for my mother and had her last stroke. She had had an earlier stroke and was recuperating and the doctor told my mother, "Mrs. Sullivan, she will never be happy anywhere else except in your kitchen." He meant, "Let her come back." Of course, mother wanted her back.

My father was not a racist. He had a great sympathy for the blacks but he did not believe in amalgamation. For instance Stella, who was with our family for 42 years, said the day after my father died, "Eunice, we have lost our best friend."

On the day of departure when we were going to spend summer months in Highlands, just before the car was backing out, Stella would come to the car to say goodbye with tears just streaming. Stella employed a lot of wisdom and a lot of love and loyalty. It is something that I feel we will carry in our hearts always.

Then there were others who worked along with Stella. We had several maids who did the housework. Clarence served as yardman, sometimes chauffeur, sometimes butler and sometimes handyman in the house. I had a nurse in the afternoon. My parents were older of course and the nurse would take me out and very often Lila Albergotti's nurse and my nurse would go out together with us.

Later I was married and had a little boy of my own. Before he was 2, Jeanette Stewart came to us. She is Jeanette Tucker now. My son will be 46 the fourth of November and she is still with him. She was with us for awhile and now she is with him. She will do for Chris what she won't do for me. He is her baby.