

Grandizio House

The Grandizio House as told to Patchwork by Elisa Grandizio.

Interviewed by Raychel Gingrich & Ashley Eaton in the spring of 2003

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GrandizioThe Grandizios have lived in Columbia County for nine years. Bill and Elisa Grandizio own their own business. Their family lives in a large, beautiful home on East 5th Street in the town's historical district.

The 130-year-old house is owned by the Grandizios, who purchased it when they moved from New York.

PATCHWORK: When was the house built and how long did it take to build?

GRANDIZIO: From what we know, it was built in the mid 1880's. The Original owner of the house was Samuel Clifton Creasy who was married to Mary Wells. To much of our knowledge that was when the house was built. The whole house, as you see it now, is not the way it was built. It was kind of built in sections, like I said the first half we know was built in the 1880's. I'm not sure how long it took to build the house. I would assume it took quite a few months, possibly even close to a year. It's totally made of brick; it's three stories. Samuel Creasy; along with Mary Well's father, (E.C. Well's) owned a lumberyard, which was located right down the block on 7th Street in Bloomsburg. It's very detailed. There's a lot of woodworking and the floors are all inlaid floors. So this wasn't a house that could have been built quickly.

PATCHWORK: Why did you choose to buy this house?

GRANDIZIO: We just love old homes and we had seen others, but there was just so many unique original features left in this home that it was something that we wanted to help preserve.

FirePATCHWORK: What is your most favorite feature about the house and why?

GRANDIZIO: I don't know that I have a favorite feature. There are so many features about the house that we love. I would probably say the fireplaces. So if I had to pick something that I liked about it, it would be the fireplace in this parlor and the fireplace in that parlor.

PATCHWORK: What changed about the house from the original house?

GRANDIZIO: Originally, when this home was built, there was no electricity and there was no plumbing. So of course there would have been no bathrooms and we can see where they added them on. And the light fixtures that you see here were actually gas lights that run through the home that were required by gas. Those are two things we know were not original. Also the homes at this time, often times there were not full kitchens, but there would have probably been one here with the servants working in the home.

PATCHWORK: Is there anything you want to change about the house now?

GRANDIZIO: I think that we would like to bring it back to the way it was originally. There have been some modifications made in the house, nothing too terrible by the owners, as time went on through the course of 100 years, there was some modifications done, but we were fortunate. We bought the home from the Favino family, who bought it from decedents of the original owners. The Favino family lived here for 25 years and they did not make any major structural changes. They did modernize some bathrooms, which we restored back to how they would have been originally. But there are some features of the home we would like to change.

PATCHWORK: What does it take to keep the house maintained?

GRANDIZIO: It takes a maximum amount of time to keep a house like this maintained. There are twenty-three rooms in this home. So, cleaning it is almost a full time job. There is a lot of woodwork in the home and of course that all needs to be dusted. But in addition the outside of the home takes a lot of maintenance. Most of the house is brick, but there are some wooden additions like the porches and in the back, the porches. It constantly needs to be painted, scraped, and updated. It's a lot of work, it really is. You have to really like an old house in order to want to live in one.

PATCHWORK: Are there any stories or legends in the house?

GRANDIZIO: Well, actually someone was kind enough to drop off to us a few years ago, and according to this picture which I will give to you. That picture was taken right here in this room. And there was a bishop from the annual conference of the first Methodist Episcopal Church and that conference was held here in March right around this time. Between March 15 through 21 in 1911. The really neat thing about this picture and the people in the picture is that it is taken from the room we are sitting in, with the exact view that you have right now. Visible in the picture is the fretwork and the glass light. So that's just a really neat thing. You can see the fireplaces and what I thought was really neat about this picture after we got it, was that we have been living here a few years and we realized that if you look in the corner, the decorations are very similar to the way it is decorated now even in term of how the pictures are hung. So this is something we know happened in the

house historically. We also are very fortunate, we had some elderly neighbors, who are no longer here that stopped by and told us some stories about when they were young. One woman in particular stopped right after we moved in and asked if we could show her through the house, which we did. She had told us when she was a little girl she played with the Creasy girls, and the younger Creasy girls. One of them actually got married in the house and that she came down the steps as a young bride and into the parlors where she was presented. So we thought that was really neat, just to know that a wedding had taken place here. Something else that we have learned about the house, which we also had people come to tell us. They used to give piano lessons here in the house and many people in the town used to come when they were just kids and take piano lessons. The Creasy girls, lived here one older, she continued to live here in the home and gave piano lessons.

PATCHWORK: You mentioned there are 23 rooms, how many are bathrooms, bedrooms, and parlors?

RANDIZIO: Well, we have a gentleman and ladies parlor which would have been common for that time, which are the two rooms that you see here. There are very many bedrooms in the upper two floors of the house used for bedrooms but, there's let's see, there would be 7 bedrooms located on the second floor and then an addition five bedrooms upstairs on the third floor.

PATCHWORK: Is there only one stairway to get upstairs?

GRANDIZIO: No, there are two stairways on each floor, there are two stairways, a front stairway here, and then there are two stairway leading to the third floor. Something else we know about the house is that the Favinos bought the house from the two youngest siblings of the original Creasy family, I want to say Ruth. Of course it would be difficult to maintain a home like this financially. What the sisters did was they literally divide the house in half, they put up door ways on the second and third floor and they put a wall up on this floor, so this house actually became a residence for the two sisters. Something else I know about the house is when the house was originally built, as I mentioned before, it was smaller than the home you see here. I'm sorry I don't know if you can get this picture. When the house was originally built, there was not a front porch. Porches were not in fashion at the time period. They actually did not come in fashion, porches as grand as this porch until after the turn of the century. So the house did change a little bit, it was more of an Italian style when it would have been built and especially with the rounded porch on the side, it kind of gives it more of a Queen Anne look. This room here was not an original room. This doorway here would have lead out to a side porch, and we knew that just from the picture here that the room wasn't there. It was just a porch. Up in the front there was a little balcony railing area up on the third floor. That is no longer there; it's just a flat roof, but that detailing has been

taken off, so it's really nice when we find pictures that show as what the original home looked like. Here's a picture that I have of the home with the three Creasy girls standing out front shows that porch was added on so we know that the porch was added on as I said after the turn of the century, but this picture came from 1901 and then this picture you know being from the from that time period, you can also see a hitching post and that would have been out there. Other than once the porch was added on, the house hasn't changed too much on the outside. So we feel that we were fortunate to be able to find a house that hasn't been altered significantly, we were able to restore it.

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GRANDIZIO: We have redone every room in the home. When we came into the house, the wallpaper that were in these two parlors dated back to about 1907, and we know this because when we stripped off some of the wallpaper in order to repair the walls, the person who actually hung the wallpaper signed the wall, and so we find his name and the year he did it. So as I said the wallpaper in these two rooms was from way back in the early 1900's. Unfortunately, it was not in good enough condition for us to keep.

PATCHWORK: When you redo anything to the house, do you have to ask anybody?

GRANDIZIO: You have to ask if you make any alterations on the outside of your home, but you do not have to ask anyone though before you can paint your home or before we would be able to, even if we wanted to replace something just as it is, we have to get permission. When we first came, the chimneys outside are very detailed and intricate. They are not just great chimneys, they're very decorative at the top and there's one chimney that was on top and the other had long been gone and before we could repair it we had to seek permission.

PATCHWORK: Thank you very much for the information.

GRANDIZIO: You're welcome!