

GEORGE & ELSIE TSCHARNER: Tape 1, side 1: George, Elsie, Craig, & Jackie

This is November the 17th. I'm at Craig's home in Beaver's Creek, Oregon. With me are Craig, Elsie, and George Tscharnner. I'm about to read out loud a very precious letter that Elsie received on Christmas morning in 1922 from Grampa and Gramma Dougan. And it says, "Our dear little girl, I cannot just send you a pretty card or sweet sentiments and I have no money to express even a tiny wish of happiness. How much less could I express by a gift the abundance of joy and happiness we wish you. If it will add to the joy of your Christmas to hear again the story of our love and appreciation of you I will gladly repeat it. For between Mrs. Dougan and myself our love for you is a frequent topic. We do appreciate your gentle ways and loving service. It is just these qualities that count in showing Christ's love to the world. May your Christmas and New Year be full of joy and may your highest hopes in life's journey be realized. Mrs. and Mrs. W.J. Dougan." And it's on Dougan Guernsey farm paper. Well that is a beautiful letter. ///

(This conversation is going on at the dinner table and I can't hear much. What follows is bits and pieces of Elsie talking.) My brother-in-law said, well, it would be natural way of learning about it. On a farm in America. So, Mr. and Mrs. Dougan had us stay with friends. Mr. Dougan, I can see him now, he had us talk to him. And we couldn't talk English yet, very well. (George?) didn't know if he should take it (the job?) and leave me alone. Finally Mrs. said she could use help in the kitchen and in keeping house. The house was beautiful. It isn't quite the same now.

It's still beautiful.

It is. The first time we saw it....

Let's see if we're getting any of this, or if it's too faint.

The Tscharnners have said that Bob Walter had just finished school and wanted to be a professor. So he came over to the....He wanted to be a doctor of agriculture. He came over to the states and he was going to take some more school at the University of Wisconsin. How did he find out about the Dougan farm?

The people we stayed with were old friends.

Now you came on that trip, right? You and...

My sister, Erma, and Robert. The three of us.

And you were the little sister. In 1921.

And so you stayed with someone, old friends, your mother's friends from Switzerland.

After mother and dad passed away, we were all alone in the world.

But you knew George back in Switzerland.

He stayed with us as a student. And they worked at the bank in _____ for 22 years. And I knew him all the time. And I said I wanted to go with him. He said, that's all right, I could come, too. He said, if you don't come, I'll come back in a year. But, you know, we were just really good friends. We didn't think of being in love then. He was a gentleman. So we stayed.

But before this, Bob had heard about the Dougan farm and had met Grampa and Gramma and they had offered him a job?

Yes.

And he decided, rather than go to school, he could learn about things first hand by being on the farm.

Yeah, he thought that would be a good idea. I don't know when but he said you ought to go see the farm. Go see these people, they're so nice. The first time we ever meet with them, they impressed Bob. He said I'm going to see the place, and he did. He felt why not? He could just do things.

So you said, what about me? And Gramma said I could use you in the kitchen.

And she sure did. She was so patient with me when I couldn't speak English yet. She used to tell me, go down to the cellar, raw vegetables are in cellar, everything was down in the cellar.

I know those root cellars.

And I would bring up the wrong things sometimes. She'd say bring up potatoes and I would bring up meat. But she just smiled and said no, no, that's not it. Very patient. I just fell in love with her.

You sat at the big table.

But we'd never start eating until Grampa came and said Grace.

After the meals, did he do any bible reading or prayers, do you remember?

Sometimes in the evening.

Some people have remembered those episodes, of bible study after supper.

See? I'm too old to remember these things.

Well, I'll nudge your memory and you may. Meanwhile, you'll probably be nudging your own memory as you say things. Where did Bob and Erma live? Over the milkhouse?

Yes, I had a small room with a bed in it.

(Something from George I think about the Big House.)

You were over in the Big House.

You probably lived up there in the dormitory. There was a row of rooms there at the top of the stairs.

Here's the version of how Craig met the Tscharners. Let's hear it your way and then we'll hear it their way.

I was on call at the Thoma(?) Clinic at night about 8 or 8:30. At Sunnyside Hospital. A charming couple came in and discussed their medical problems and I came to the conclusion, before they left, I said you talk just like Auntie Erma. And since the name Tscharner didn't mean anything to me at the time. Mrs Tscharner said Auntie Erma? Erma who? and I said Erma Alder. From Wisconsin. And she said yes, that's my sister. And I said, that worked for Mr. and Mrs. Dougan? Yes.

That was a surprise, wasn't it? When he said that you sound just like my Auntie Erma, what was your thought when that happened?

It was just like a miracle, after all those years! To find a Dougan.

And I didn't have a name tag on, either.

What we owe this to is Craig speaking up about things and saying things beyond what is necessary. Had he just said you have an interesting accent, that would have been the end of it. You might have said, we're Swiss.

I was walking out the door, there , and he said hey wait a minute. Come on back in. We started talking and we found out that he was the son of Mr. Dougan.

Went in the office and shut the door and talked for a half an hour.

Told the office, don't bother me. There were about seven people waiting for me when they left.

I felt so marvelous, unbelievable.

Small world.

He was so close to us and yet we didn't know.

I had been doing enough work on the farm so that when he told me the story and said the name, I said oh yeah! I know who the Tscharners are. I had your names and the times you worked on the farm and all that. I knew immediately, yes, the sister of Erma Alder. So Craig called me immediately. I told him to get a hold of you people and to tape it all. But he didn't right off, didn't manage. So when it looked like I was going to get out here, I said all right--I'll come and do it. Let's make it an occasion.

Daddy Dougan and you called them Auntie Erma and Uncle Bob. That stayed with us for a long time. We didn't call him nothing but Uncle Bob.

I remember their big house up in Elkhorn, big square brick house in the country. On the corner. The porch.

The brick house, the Alders bought that. They had one of the hands, who still lives there.

At one point, I think we visited them at that house. I had the feeling as a child that they were living in that house for awhile.

I don't think so, they lived down below, down the street. Next house down on Bettendorf.

Evon took over, he still lives there.

Joanne was always going to marry Bob Alder, Patty was going to marry George and I was going to marry Evon. We had it all figured out. We would go visit them. Then they would come down to the farm. For awhile, Joanne actually did go out with Bob Alder, my oldest sister. She also went out with Trever Jones. You must know that Trever Jones is at Elkhorn.

Sure, they had the St. Bernard dogs.

He was a monument maker.

Ya see, George was named George Wesson, and Robert was Robert Trever, and what was Evon's middle name? They were just lovely boys. ///

Young Bob has a tree farm and is retired.

He's sixty-two.

I'd retire if I could and raise ducks.

He was in the Air Force. In New Guinea. His plane was shot down, but he got away.///

Elsie just said, do you know what the hardest task was for me at the Dougan farm at first?

I had to clean the chicken. It was so hard for me to lay that poor chicken on the chopping block outside the kitchen. I had to cut off its poor little head. And then I had to undo the whole thing, pluck it and the inside and everything. But she gave me time to get used to it. It was very hard. They were very nice chickens, they were like pets.

It must have been '23 when we left.

If you were there with the Stams, it must have been close to '23.

We bought a car together with the Stams. With a cloth roof.

When you left, did you leave it with the Stams?

Yes, the Stams bought it.

I know that car--my pet goat went through the roof of it. He was still driving that car, long after other people had gone on to more modern models. So that it was an old-fashioned car. I have them on tape, both of them, but they died several years ago.

Did they live in Beloit?

Yes, all their lives they did.

They were so nice to us. Mrs. was a friend to me.

Moo-moo we called her, Mildred. They lived over the milkhouse. They must have taken that apartment after the Alders left.

Did I tell you that Mrs. Dougan told me to come over and live with them? She wouldn't let me live alone. And I was lonely. She said Elsie, you come over here. They were so concerned.

Tell them about the pie you had to make.

I made a pie crust, and it didn't turn out right. And I didn't want Mrs. Dougan to see it. She said, try it, you can make one. And it was terrible. I had never made pie before. So I crumbled it all up and fed it to the chickens, so no one would know. But the chickens wouldn't even eat it. It was that bad.

Then everyone saw what happened, because there it lay.

They said, what's that? But Mrs. Dougan didn't scold me.

Do you still make those oatmeal cookies?

We were just saying that she made some the other day.

That's all we made and my family loves it.

Do we have that recipe?

I have it. And I call them Mrs. Dougan's oatmeal cookies, for all these years.

Sixty years.

That's a long time to be making cookies. But they love them. My grandchildren say, do you have cookies? did you make cookies? Nowadays the oatmeal is not as coarse. I use granola in them, too.

Mrs. Tscharner, if you turn around you'll see the (Russian hunting dog).

Not only do we have animals, but our animals have friends that come over and visit.

(Discussion of these dogs in ads and in breeding and other talk of dogs.)

In writing this book I heard so many stories from so many times that I don't

remember who told it, but someone told me a story about Bob Alder, which was near-catastrophe. He started to back a team and a wagon down from the upper barn. He wasn't able to do it. Somehow the wagon went sideways and hung over the side. The horses, the wagon, all of it, it was a close thing that the whole thing would go over the side of the barn. And Bob Alder was getting more and more flustered and more and more upset. Finally Grampa had to come. Because he was getting upset, the horses were getting more and more upset. He retired Bob from the job and managed to coax the.....

I don't remember this.

You might have been in the house. Maybe no one told you about it. Someone else who was working out there must have told me.

Did he visit? Did he go to the farm?

This is big Bob we're talking about--Daddy Bob, not young Bob.

Well, he wasn't used to doing that.

It was a tricky place.

He was a farmer's boy, though.

I thought you were talking about young Bob in Elkhorn. They've got the same kind of barn.

Maybe you know what happened to George Wesson. He fell off a horse, got kicked. In the barn. He was very seriously injured.

He's still taking medicine. He's fine--married, five children. I've got pictures at home.

He used to stay with us once in awhile. (I get the impression that this boy became epileptic since this accident, or something similar.)

After he got married, he went to business school in Boston, so he could learn the business. He was there a year or so. He's learning the business, he's the boss.

Is that Dean's Milk?

Uh-huh.

They just sell to the stores.

(Miscellaneous things I cannot hear and then Jackie says:)

You were out there as soon as you met Craig, but I didn't know about it at the time so I didn't get up. I don't know if I could have anyway. But was it the summer time you were there? Or spring? Or fall?

That was a year ago, this summer.

It was fall, the beautiful fall colors.

I called Evon's to try to get a hold, but no one answered. Then you went on. So I didn't get a hold of you last fall when you were there.

The folks had a picnic, a barbeque/buffet for all the people who used to work for them. And Jackie went around with a recorder and got all the stories from people had been there years and years ago. It was so interesting to hear everybody.

Do you remember the names of anybody besides the Stams?

I have a list of yours.

The who used to start the fire for her every morning.

At four o'clock I had to get up. That's a hard thing for a city girl. Can you imagine that? And that nice farm boy said he'd come over and start the fire. Probably Mrs. Dougan had him do it for me. Then I didn't have to get up until 4:30.

Did he live on the farm? The boy?

Oh, yes. He was one of the hired hands. I had to get breakfast, you know. Mrs. Dougan would come about six o'clock, she'd come down. And I had to learn all that. I couldn't speak English. What's this? what's that? But she was so patient. Even if I made mistakes, she was so patient. Gradually I learned. We knew a little bit before we came, cuz we knew we had to know. So I took lessons.

Daddy Dougan married us. There were two ministers. The Alcorn minister and Daddy Dougan.

Where was the ceremony?

In Alcorn. A little church outside Alcorn.

When were you married?

In 1925. The 12th of May.

Vera would have been there by then. My mother would have been back at the farm. Dad got married in 1924, Ronald was my dad.

Mr. and Mrs. Dougan are both in the picture.

That's what I want to see.

It's a small picture.

What I'd like, eventually, is to get those pictures blown up.

You can have them.

I don't want to take your pictures. What I could do is...

I've got lots of them.

Well, let's see them. I put in for a grant to pictures copied and enlarged. I'm not ready to work on pictures yet. I certainly want to see your pictures. I've gotten some terrific pictures from earlier at the farm. I'm going to use them in the book if possible.

They're all black and white.

That's fine.///

We're sitting in the living room now and we're going to look at some pictures. Craig, you've seen some of these?

Would you like to see the wedding pictures?

Yes.

There's Momma Dougan and Daddy Dougan. This is my sister, and Uncle Bob and (Chrissy?). /// I recognize Dallas Davis and there's Bob Walter and who are these two women?

You tell me! Golly, that's what's-her-name, a friend of Bob's. This is Esther Dougan. The other girl was adopted, sort of.

A foster child. Did the Marstons come? down the road? Eloise or Albert.

No, I don't think we knew them.

The Smiths?

These are our Swiss friends from Beloit. Here is the lady we stayed with when we came, and this is another one.

This is Eunice here, and Wesson here.

And my sister here. And little Bob is here, too. He was four years old when we got married.

And Esther stood up with you?

Oh yes. She was a bridesmaid. Here's all the family. Evon, George Wesson, and Bob, and their families. Erma and Uncle Bob are here. They died recently, he died first, he was very sick, in 76.

I should have gotten over there, but I didn't. I didn't realize.

They were both in a nursing home. I don't know why their family would do that.

It was a beautiful place in Janesville.

After they quit the milk business, they retired.

That's a lot of grandchildren. Each one has four or five at least.

This was 1965.///

Now I'm seeing a picture of Erma and Elsie in their room at the Dougan farm. Which room was this?

It was just one big bedroom over the dairy. And I had the small room next door to it.

This is a beautiful picture. Very nice.

My granddaughter saw that picture and said, Oh I want that picture, grandma-you look so young.

Both of you are very attractive young women. Ermie was always plumper, wasn't she?

Maybe.

Yeah, she was.

Here another of the Dougan farm. It's the Big House in the background. The field is out front, the round barn to the side, the sidebarn and the side and front view of the Big House, the porch is on. There's an old car there that looks like Lester Stam's and then Erma is holding little Bob and he's got ears that stick out. It 's a cute little picture. It says on the back of it, something 25, Sept. 21. Mr. Dougan and John Ronald ready for church. Their back in the car going to church. So this probably would have been Sunday the 25 of Sept. in 1921. That would have been before there was any Vera on the scene. That's before George got there. Here's the Dairy, the front picture of it. Elsie holding little Bob out on the lawn. Here's the Big House with the elm trees being rather small. Here's the milkhouse. It looks like a ghost of a baby in there, like a double exposure. Here's Erma, baby and Esther. There's Boats right there.

End of Side 1

Side 2

There's Daddy Dougan over in front of the Little House. And this would have been before Ron and Vera came so that's probably the (Kasilkies) sitting there. Were they there? Did you know Bernard and little Bernard would be in the pram right there? And Grampa is standing there with an apron on. Looking like a young man. Probably on the front porch. On the other side with Esther they're in some watery place, there are boats. Somebody in the background in a middie blouse. And boats pulled up. It maybe Turtle Crick. A place where people rode. Leeson's Park.

Erma helped out once in awhile, but she didn't work there like I did.

There's George and Daddy Dougan's dog, Old Bob. Look at how beautiful Elsie is in 1922. This must be the porch that they remodeled. We never had

those pillars when we were little. They made it enclosed. Maybe it was on the side where they put the hired men's room. Those pillars were taken out and they built onto it there. Remember the cold room there, where Grandma would keep things? Windows that went out to that room? That's Craig. 1934 or 5.

Craig: I bet that was the year that Mother and Dad took Patty to Florida and farmed us all out. I stayed with Grandpa and Gramma.

You're looking mighty solemn, Craig. There's Bounce down in front. There's the Round Barn and a bunch of people on horses. Looks like Bob Alder on the first horse, the white one, but maybe not.

They're all workers there, but I don't know who they are.

Ronald might be able to tell how they are. The (Kasilkies)? He has the look of one. Dad could tell. There they are doing the thrashing. There's the steam thing. That's Ernie. There they are in Elkhorn. That's the way they looked when I knew them.

Here's my family again. There's George Wesson, Robert, and Evon. And this is our church. Chrissie, and Sylvia, and Betsy, and George and this is Evon. We had a good time together, the cousins.

Is Jacob Creusy still alive?

Oh yes. He lives in Smithfield, Utah.

I don't know if I'll get to Utah, but maybe I should call him up. Do you have their address?

Yes, at home.

It would be nice to write them and call them and see what he has to say.///

Elsie was just saying that Daddy was just like a daddy to them. It made them feel at home and so happy. And that is why they stayed in the country and became Americans, because of the influence of Daddy. Here's one with maybe the (Kasilkies). It seems to be the side of the yard of the Little House. Facing east. He was the herdsman and a very good man. There's Elsie and Ernie feeding chickens. But I don't recognize that building. It might be one of the outbuildings. Cats looking through the door. The back door of the Big House. What tall corn! There's a bad exposure, out on the front lawn. People sitting and there's the house. That I don't recognize, that house. But this looks like the back step at the Big House, out to the woodpile. And you're sitting there with all those cats. I need to check to see if the sidewalk went back there. It may have been destroyed since then. That is not familiar. It looks like a schoolhouse.

It is a schoolhouse. I remember that. We went there for a picnic, but I don't remember when.

There's Bob Alder and little Bob and Ernie and Elsie out on a picnic. That farm I don't recognize.

That's Linda's house.

What lake is this? Might be Delavan Lake?

Must be.

That's the farm, that's the Big House. They hadn't built this out yet, Craig.

What kind of car is that?

That's a Ford Sedan. We bought that together with the Alders. I wasn't even there then.

There's the balcony. There's a field that looks familiar. There's the baby again. There's harvesting. Those are good pictures to have, they show how they did things. When I get the money, I'll get these copied. There's another view of the round barn from the other direction. There's the straw stack out behind. I see what that little building is now, out behind the Little House now.

Inside the barn, what impressed me, it was like a church. So clean. Beautiful. And yet they had cows in it. It was so impressive. That impressed Bob, too.

Growing up, it impressed me. That's a fine picture. That would have been about 1921, right?

Yes.

22. There's some pigs. Some cows out eating at the mangers. There's the Big House again. That's Old Bob. Here's somebody going by in a wagon with a horse. Someone riding in it--looks like a fine lady. There's the milkhouse, the barn, the Big House. Old Bob. There's inside the dairy. Now you worked in the bottling.

Do you know how much money you got for a quart of milk? Twenty-five cents a quart. And the others were going for 10 and 12 cents.

It was seven cents in Elkhorn for awhile.

I know it went down during the Depression. That looks like a churn. You can't see him very clearly, but there's Daddy Dougan and all the cows coming to look.

Such a good time we had. Just like home.

There's a nice picture. There's Daddy Dougan with little Bob. All the cows standing and looking. They were always clean. That's on the way to the milkhouse. Look at those good milkers. Dad would be interested in seeing those milking machines.

There's the car, Lester Stams.

Well that's the one my goat went through, I'm sure. In the 30s. There it is again. Is this over the milkhouse?

I think that's in Elkhorn.

Those cabinets seem familiar. Now we're in Elkhorn. There's your bottler.///

Here's something that Elsie forgot to tell us.

My sister had her baby, April 6th. She had to go down from the farm to Beloit, to the hospital. We had about five feet of snow. Big snow storm. They had to take a sled and have the horses pull them down into town. They pulled Erma on the big sled and her husband went along. It was the first time it had happened since we were there.

To have that much snow and so late a snow.

But then it got better and they came home. They had no trouble.

Here are the people who were on the farm when you were there. Leon Richardson and Wallace Marlow, Ted Selmer.

I remember a Ted, that's the one with the milking machine.

He just recently died. I never got to see him and talk to him. Joseph Greer, and Hubert Rogan, and Robert Alder, Lester Stam, and Mrs. Robert Alder and Elsa Smith. In 1922 came George Tscharner. And you worked for 24 dollars a month the first month you came.

The bank offered him sixty dollars a month. But he got room and board on the farm. And I got thirty dollars a month.

You got more than he did! Dale Patton and Kenneth Whitson, and John Cormitz. In June of 22, Ronald Dougan came on and Robert Alder quit in June of 22. But Elsa Smith stayed on. And there was a Mr. Jack there, day laborer. We've got Jacob Creusy on the books, but Dad hasn't come to him yet. George Tscharner was there in July of 22 and John Tomlinson was there. In October of 22 Tscharner was still there. And a Mr. Porter and Mr. Jack and a Robert Travis and a Glenn Gile, Cyril Sherwood. Any of those names?

Too hard to remember.

Those were some of the people you worked with, and that you fed.

Sixty years ago.

Do you remember any anecdotes? Anything Gramma said? Other than You've got to cut the head off, Elsie. Any little stories.

You know who knew a lot of them was Moo-moo Stam, Mildred. She had quite a memory for stories. I've got lots of stories of hers.

She was really sweet to me when my sister left. She used to come over.

What do you remember about Esther?

She didn't make Daddy Dougan too happy. They were a little worried about

her at times. Is that true?

Oh yes, after you left, she had an illegitimate baby in 1925. And you people were married in 25. It would have been shortly after your marriage. You married in May? Her baby would have come in October. She was probably pregnant at the time.

That's what they were worried about.

They didn't know it then.

She married the brother didn't, she?

The father was Floyd Peters, and she married Herbert Peters--the brother.

I know she was a strange girl. She wasn't as much at home, or being around with us.

She would have been in high school, then. Going back and forth. Did she help some in the kitchen?

No. My sister did.

I think that Esther did earlier, help in the kitchen.

There was a very nice lady, there, before me. She was there a week or so. I met her and then she left.

Hilda?

Yes. She was very nice.

People I've talked to remember Hilda. Can you remember the routine? Somebody lit the fire for you at 4:00 and then you were up at 4:30.

Then I came down about 5 and started breakfast. I had to set the whole table.

What would you have for breakfast?

Oatmeal, eggs, bacon, I suppose. A big, heavy breakfast.

And then the men would come in and eat at about what time?

Six or seven.

They milked before they ate. What time did they milk?

It would have been about 4 o'clock at that time. Because in 23 or 24 Jim Howard remembered that. Says that Daddy Dougan didn't care what time you got up or how long it took you to get ready, but he wanted you at the barn at 4 o'clock. You could get up at five till 4 and run down, or get up at 3:30 and shower and curl your hair and do whatever you want but you had to be ready and at work at 4 o'clock in the barn. After the milking, then the men would come in for breakfast. After breakfast, you'd serve the men and then you'd

clean up.

Clean up and what's interesting is that we had not a machine, but in the middle of the kitchen floor, a wide thing. Water would come over from the faucets at the sink into the machine and it would wash them.

It was a kind of a dishwasher.

Yes. I never had to wash dishes, I had to wipe them.

So Gramma and Grampa had all the modern conveniences.

They really had some. But what I had to do was making butter. Ooh-hoo, by hand, in the wooden thing.

We didn't sell butter at the time.

I don't think so, not yet. But whenever we needed butter, boy, I had to do that. And that's pretty hard for a city girl.

Were there two dashers? Because you made both hands go. I remember those wash days, I remember tubs.

Not like they have nowadays.

They had a washing machine that you run by hand. That was quite a place.

What the Dougan farm did to us Swiss people was changing our minds and we wanted to stay here in America. That's the best thing that happened to us. It was the Dougan farm.

Did you ever regret it?

Never regretted it. We loved it. That's what I told Daddy Dougan last time I saw him. When Daddy Dougan passed away, we went to see Mrs. Dougan. She lived in an apartment in a house in town. ///

Craig and George are talking about putting the cows to bed.

Both Grampa and my Dad would talk to them and be sure they were comfortable.

Did you have music in the barn?

Later on they had a radio in there. I'm not sure it was there in 1922.

Depending on who was the herdsman, it depended on the music you heard. Usually it was the hillybilly station, or WLS the farmer's station. But years later we had a herdsman who was a classical musician and scholar. He had WHA from Madison, with classical music on all day long. I think that somewhere someone has done a study that cows give more milk if they hear classical music.

Well they like it. All animals do.

They gave more milk to the classical than the rock n roll!

So I've got this whole story that Jim Howard told me about how things were on the farm.

He remembers well. He must be a lot younger.

Well he was a young man in 1924. He would have been 20, 21. "These are my criteria for cleanliness," and it tells of the spotless white cap and apron they used to wear at every milking. That the cows are brushed and shaved and washed. What the steps are in clearing the manure, washing down the sidewalk and gutters and spreading lime, and he says the walls are to be regularly whitewashed. Does it say anything about the milkhouse? Paul Erickson, would he have been there? He wasn't on that list. The former herdsman, Paul Erickson stays on a week or two to break Jim in. Paul has a muscle exerciser machine up in his room. A contraption of straps and pulleys with which he exercises in all his spare time. All the while he's beating up on the guy that stole his girl back in Maidenrock, Wis. Paul leaves ready for vengeance. And Jim is the one in charge of the cows. He finds that WJ, Daddy, treats him with respect. He never tells him no, you're doing that wrong, do it this way. He never seems to be checking up on him. In the mornings when Jim pushes the 2-wheel cart that has four cans of milk on it from the barn to the milkhouse, and sees Daddy's head peeking from the little window of his bedroom in the Big House, he never feels he is looking out to spot loiterers or to count how many loads they are getting in. It is only Daddy surveying his world before emerging.

That's well-written.

The weather gets cold enough for the cows to start sleeping in the barn and WJ teaches Jim how to put the cows to bed. At nine or nine-thirty, they return to the barn, the cows are all lying down. They've eaten, they've kicked hay out of their mangers. WJ and Jim get them all up, they sweep the hay out of the mangers, get more hay, for the cows, once on their feet, make more droppings. Not all fall into the gutter. They scrape the manure into the gutter. Tidy up around the cow, shake up her bed. All the while, Daddy croons to his lassies, he also talks to Jim. You'll be surprised how much cleaner the cows are in the morning and how much more they'll eat than if you just abandoned them from six o'clock at night till four in the morning. He gives Jim other advice. As Mr. _____ says, the cow is a mother, treat her as such. And every day go around in front of each cow, watch how she eats. Look her in the eye. See if its got a bright sparkle or if its loosing luster. Then you know how that cow's feeling today. Go back around her. Look at her droppings, from them you'll know how she'll going to feel tomorrow.

And he was a minister, wasn't he?

Jim thinks everything Daddy tells him makes sense. He is also impressed with the routine of the Big House. The meals are served in the dining room and the hired men eat with the family. Mother Dougan, herself a master homemaker makes all the bread, pies, and cakes and spreads a lavish board. Breakfast is never merely bacon and eggs, merely buckwheat cakes and sausage--but bacon, eggs, hotcakes, sausage, toast, jam, applesauce or other fruit sauce,

fruit juice, milk, cream, coffee. Dinners at noon make the table groan even more than breakfast. Suppers are simpler, but equally fulsome. At meals, WJ does not sit at the head, but in the middle of the table. He always says grace. After supper, he reads aloud from the bible and from a commentary. Before bedtime, Jim habitually polishes off a quart of milk. The day-old milk returned from the route is in a box beside the cooler door and is free for the taking by the men with families in town and by the borders. ... Does this all seem familiar?

Really.

As a boarder, Jim has his bed made every morning and his sheets and clothes laundered every week. ... Now that's what you would be doing.

I had to go make the beds.

Elsie made the beds, okay. Mother Dougan and her helper Hilda, this would be after you leave, but Hilda was before you. Okay, that's worth knowing. Hilda came before Elsie. Maybe there was somebody else before you that had a different name. ... Mother Dougan and her helper Hilda toiled over the big washtubs in the men's washroom off the kitchen. To wash or use the toilet in the closed room at the rear, he must thread his way around tubs and women; in the winter time, clotheslines laden with overalls. More clotheslines are stretched in the cellar near the furnace room and sometimes he helps to hang the clothes or carry a basket. Spring, summer and fall, the clothes are hung outside to flap in the sunshine between the elms on the Big House lawn. For his rest period, he can stretch out on his bed in his room or sit down in the men's parlor off the dining room where the radio is tuned into WLS, and there are magazines, books and papers to read. There is also a Victrola and records. Out in the barn when short-handed, WJ sometimes works along with him taking the place of someone with a day off. Sometimes, especially on Saturday and Sunday afternoon, visitors from town come to see the milking. WJ gives a mischievous glance at Jim. Takes the cow leader, catches a cow through the nose and exposes her gums. "This cow had no upper set of teeth," he says. "She was born this way." The visitors cluck with surprise and sympathy. Daddy Dougan does not give away the joke, nor does Jim or the other barnhands. Jim works a year on the farm. He does his best. He and the other barnworker, Dave Clark, make a smooth team. Every week they scrape the barnyard. Every three months they whitewash the barn walls. Jim learns to swing all the way around the barn, hand over hand, on the manure trolley track. Grampa sees him and says, "Hi, I didn't know this was the Big Top." Then Jim leaves, he goes and gets an operation on his leg and then we go into the long story of Glenn Gile (?) when he tried to kill Grampa.

Who did?

A hired man named Glenn Gile (?).

Was that after we left?

Yeah, after. You might have heard about it up there in.... I'm sure it's the sort of thing that when Gramma and Grampa came up to visit, they would have told about. So you might have heard. Anyway, this story goes on. Years later, he's driving through Beloit, and he sees a Dougan milk truck. He turns and

drives out to the dairy. He goes into the office. "Hello, Ron. I saw a Dougan truck there on Milwaukee Road and I couldn't go by without saying hello to the Babies' Milkman. I see you have the same slogan." "Jim Howard!" exclaims Daddy. "That's not the only thing that's the same, do you know who is driving that truck?" "How can I possibly know?" Jim asks. "Lester Stam," says Daddy. "He couldn't be, he was driving a route when I came here forty years ago, and he was middle-aged then!" Daddy shows Jim the farm, the pond, the seed buildings, the round barn with its milk coming up to the milkhouse through the underground tube. "What do you think of our operation? How does it look?" he asks. "Jim affirms all the progress but adds "After all these years, time will take its toll." "What do you think?" presses Daddy. "Well the barn housekeeping, the care doesn't seem as good as it used to be." "I know it," Daddy says with a rueful shake of his head. "It's a problem getting help who give a damn these days. In all the time I've been connected with the dairy business, there have been only two who used to do everything on their own without being prodded. The two top barnmen we ever had were Bernard (Kasilkie) and Jim Howard. Jim is pleased. Had Ronald only given one name, he'd think he was buttering him up. But with the two names, he believes him. Jim tells about WJ. "Daddy never preached to me," he said. "Yet working with him and living with him was like a sermon every day." He looks up at the aims up on the silo. "My first day here, I wondered if those words included the working man, too. I found out very soon that it was for every person on the place. We were truly a family." Daddy reminds him of the Glenn Gile episode. Jim grins wryly, "I've tended a number of herds since Daddy Dougan taught me," said Jim. "And that was the one time in my life that I almost didn't go back out to the barn and put the cows to bed." ///

...I was at the ice cream plant in Sandusky, downtown.

But he didn't like it.

At reduced wages.

This is after you left the Dougan farm, you went to Sandusky?

Yes.

Then you came back to Elkhorn.

Then we came back.

What were things like in the milkhouse? What was the routine in the dairy?

We had to cool the milk and bottle it. But there was just raw milk at that time....I don't even remember separating it. We had some cream for sale, didn't we?

I'm sure you did.

It's funny I don't remember those things.

It's hard.

When I think of all I don't remember, and here I am only 55.

Next year I'll be 85 and catch up.

I'll be old, don't tell me.

My Uncle Pat was always a little irritated with one of our aunts that we played with. She was always giving Ron some gift and saying to Pat, "When you get as old as Ron, you'll get something like that." Pat quickly figured out that "I'll never be as old as Ron!"

The interesting thing is that still rankled when Uncle Pat was in his eighties, or 79. He died just recently.

It was November I think, about a year ago. And I was going to do this interview and so forth. And then so many things happened. Barbra broke her leg. Uncle Pat died and I went back. Then Barbra had a back operation and was bedridden for awhile. So just didn't get out and do much of anything except be here.

Well, it's been quite an interesting evening. Thank you very much.

If you remember any stories, let me know.

I wish I would remember. It was a long time.

Maybe Ronald would remember what it was like.

I was always more of a farm girl than a city girl. The Dougan Dairy farm was home, even to my brother-in-law. Isn't that something?

He stayed quite happily as a dairyman for the rest of his life.

Mr. Davis was a wonderful partner. He was on the farm before, and then he wanted to start a dairy business. I don't know how he heard of Robert. Friends must have told him.

Your sister was very dear and sweet to me when I was a little boy.

You remembered her.

I remember her so well.

She was--very nice.

One time, I was eleven or twelve, it was during the war. My parents left to ride their bicycles to the YMCA camp near _____. That was quite a ride, 42 miles. Quite a ride for an 11-year-old. So Randy(?) told me we'd ride as far as Elkhorn the first day and stay with the Alders. They had a nice tent in the backyard that we could stay in. Then we rode our bicycles all around Elkhorn. Bought me an ice cream cone. Had a nice supper. That was a high point that I will always remember.

I don't remember that story.

Well, we did.

She had to come up twice that evening to tell us to be quiet. The second time very sternly. Ted(?) and I were on a laughing kick, having the time of our lives and making so much noise, we were waking the cows up. The second time she had to come up, she was very stern. Another time, I don't know if my parents went somewhere, and farmed us kids out or it was just an invitation. But I stayed with the Alders again. I was about ten or nine. Younger than that. Stayed for about a week. I remember Evon was particularly close to my age, particularly attended to me. He had a gun. I don't know if it was a play gun or not. As the years go by, I think he was putting me on. But he said he could shoot that gun and that whole pile of corn would explode. I was after him all week to shoot that gun. I think it was a toy gun.

He's so funny.

All the kids, they had more fun together. When you get together with those three, it's nothing but laugh, laugh, laugh.

Remember Big Little Books? They cost a dime and they were the forerunner of the comic book. The Alder boys had a bunch of them. And I read them all. _____ said I could have one. I whittled down my choices and I remember at the time, not too subtle of psychology.///

End of tape