

HELEN BURNETT: Tape 1, side 1: 5/25/80: RAD, JJ, VWD, HB, and Marie
Su 98 Copy the stuff at the end.

Helen was six or seven when she met the Dougans.

HB: We came to Beloit when I was six. And that's when I met the Dougans. I was sitting in church with Mother. Kenneth on one side and me on the other. Evidently I was doing this (craning her neck to look at Dougans). The Dougans were over at this side beyond my mother and Kenneth. As I watched, I was interested in what she was doing. This attracted me as a child. Mother kept trying to push me back you know. She was very proper. Finally she took me and set me down. I tried to be good but I was still looking to see what I could see. I didn't know what she was doing. After the service was over she told me that she was doing sign language to let her husband know what the minister was saying. So my mother went over and apologized to them because I was such a snoopy thing, looking. That how I first met the Dougans. We were good friends all our lives. I never really knew them until she began to teach my Sunday school. It was boys and girls, cuz I remember Merle Weaver. When we used to go out to the farm. I can see her sitting up in that balcony at church, on the left. I think she would sit on the railing so we were in the seats, so she could talk to us. Her preparation was complete. She was devoted to it. She had that determination, she was always that way--a very determined woman. She really told us what was what. She wanted us to realize what it was she was trying to say, to effect our lives. And she did! She was a lecturer all right. She was really wonderful. I loved both of them, very much. I can see Daddy Dougan's eyes with that twinkle in them. Smile--he smiled with his eyes. I never knew them a great deal, I was never at the farm long enough to get on to the way they managed the farm but I can still see Mrs. Dougan getting things ready to can. Bring bread and baked things out of the oven. I don't suppose they had any freezing. I can see her in her housedress and apron on. She really worked hard. I remember the beans. In the big glass jars. I think she used that water method where you boil them in big tubs. I don't think she had a pressure cooker. She went by timing it. She did applesauce and things like that. Her meals were always good. I can see that big, long table. Always a tablecloth. Never an oilcloth. They insisted that the men were clean when they came into meals--they washed. They sat around the table. There wasn't much conversation at the table. They were too interested in what they were getting to eat! Then they'd have to hurry back to work again. They had good food. They were awfully nice fellows. Lots of them came from the ag school at Madison, didn't they? He didn't just go out and pick anybody.

RAD: The Bowen boys came while I was away. They finished high school up in MN, had a semester in a vocational school in ag. They saw ads and went to make their fortune. But they couldn't get a job. They saw an ad in the paper for two young men. Al Bowen used to tell us the ad said, no smoking, no drinking, no profanity, preferably Methodist. They came on out and worked for a while. Al went on into industry, ended up out in the Ledges (?). The other boy went to work for Sunstang (?).///

su 98: these have to be the boys from Mn that grampa refers to so scathingly, who could make more money from their music than from farmwork! It'ds in Trevor growing up or when he;s talking to Ron in France about work.

JJ: Dad's telling how they'd come down from U of W and stay six months.

RAD: Then they'd go back and write a thesis. To get their master's.

HB: Do you have the story of their honor at the U of W?

JJ: tell me about that. I don't have much.

HB: I really don't know. I have a picture. On the steps coming down.

JJ: I wish I could find somebody that was there. It was 1925. There's a certificate somewhere. Tell me about visits to the farm with the Sunday school.

HB: We used to walk out. We probably met at the church. We of course lived all the way over on Eighth Street. It was a long walk to the church, even so, then we'd walk on out to the farm. We had wonderful food, played games. Run, sheep, run or something like that. I remember one time, the sun was too much for me, it happened coming home from school. Henry Strong and Harold Rockwell used chase Ruth Bartholomew and me home from school. Just for the dickens of it! Then they'd pull our hair ribbons off. When I got home one noon I was just a terrible sight. Same thing happened walking out to the farm. I've had to be careful of the sun since. My face would just get purple. She came out and saw me arrive. She got a blanket and put it out under the tree, made me lie down, put cool water on my wrists and my head. I lay there most of the day. They would generally bring us home. At least to the church. They were busy people and so were we. I remember they would often ask Evelyn and me to come out for dinner on Sunday. I remember one time we went on over to Lake Geneva to a cousin or someone over there who had a cousin. The Bosworths. There was **a pump over there, I've got a picture of us, Evelyn and some of the boys. I've been trying to get them out to see. (Su98--I have these pix, I think correctly labeled)** It was real fun. Then we'd come back to the farm, then you'd bring us home. We used to have lots of fun doing that. Evelyn was the sister who was closest to me in age. Ron and Trever were both younger than I was. She evidently liked to have us come out. Have the boys be around girls or something, for a while. That was probably her intention. I had my 80th birthday this year. We had lots of fun together. That day I remember very well, the lake was beautiful. We went swimming. You were trying to teach me how to dive. I never told you this. You got me on the pier and when I went off into the water, he put his hands under my heels to give me that tip up. It hurt my back. I was in bed most of the next week with a very sore back! But I forgave you!

RAD: I hope there was no permanent damage!

HB: That was a great day. They were few and far between, it wasn't like we were out there a lot. When Esther came to the farm. I don't know where they found her, or anything about it.

RAD: She was just there.

JJ: They got her from the orphanage at Sparta.

HB: I probably knew at the time. Mrs. Dougan liked me to come out and be with her. I'd come out on a Sunday. Esther was much younger. I did have an experience but it's nothing that could be in the book.

JJ: I won't put it in.

HB: I was staying overnight, after Esther came. Years after, she was a young lady. I was sleeping in that front bedroom upstairs. I was awakened in the middle of the night by someone at the side of my bed. It was one of the men/boys. It frightened me terribly. What do you want? Well I want to tell you something, he kept saying. I didn't even know which one he was. It was dark. I said I don't want to hear, you get out of here as fast as you can. He finally did. He left. I was scared to death, so I put the light on and kept it on the rest of the night. When Daddy went past the door in the morning, he saw the light. He rapped on the door and he said, You're not getting up yet, are you? You don't have to, you know. Cuz he got up so early. I didn't get up. But I did tell him, of course they were terribly concerned. That's when they found that Esther and he had been having trouble. I always look back on that very sad occasion. **(Me: check and see if that is what she said OJ would say.)**

JJ: I've debated whether to put that whole story in the book and I think I won't. **Hah.**

HB: What about Esther? Is she...

JJ: Esther died a few years back.

HB: I never heard more about her. She married the brother, didn't she? Then that was a divorce. Then married the father of the child.

RAD: That was a divorce, too. Then she married a fella named Keesly and they lived in Shoppiere. Esther was an awfully hard worker. She gave everything to it. They had a store. That broke up. Then she married later on, she worked at the Wagon Wheel for a while. I couldn't keep very good track of her. She married McCoy who had a shoe store. That only lasted a little while. Then we lost track of her. The next thing we knew, she had married a guy named Cox--an elderly man who lived out on Afton Road. She died. Then he died. Russel was the only child she ever had.

JJ: Russel married and had a child. Then Russel was killed in the Korean war.

VWD: He divorced the first wife, then married again. Then he had a daughter.

RAD: Russel was killed in the Korean War. One of Russel's children married, must have been the girl, and had a son who is or was the captain of the special teams of the Washington Indians. That made Esther an avid baseball fan. This boy would come and see her. Take her and get her special seats to the games. He was at the funeral. Big fella. I can't recall his name.

SO, RAD WAS AT THE FUNERAL.

HB: The one thing that made my love for Daddy so deep was that they encouraged me in my effort to go to college. I used to talk to them about it--this and that. They would tell things that perhaps I could do. But of course, when one sister got married, then another and another. And I was just left. That was after I had started. Then Velma and Fred came to live in the house on Eighth Street. Then I went to live with Marie and Bud. They were always so interested in what I was doing, and how things were going. I had enough to start the first quarter, I didn't get to start--I started the second quarter. The first

of January, 1924. The third quarter came and I had 25\$. That was quite a bit, of course I had to help support the house. All of us did. It got to be a problem. That's when Daddy gave me that little envelope. I made him take \$50 back cuz all I needed was \$25. I got those scholarships. They were always so interested. They had a great deal to do with my determination to get through. I wanted to tell you, Vera, between high school and college, when I was working, I was president of junior Treble Clef. It was the first year that they invited the juniors to come to their national convention. I went to Ashville, NC with Ann Gardner and Ruth Hulbert, Mrs. Wilford. I went to the convention. We took the train down. There were only about 18 of us juniors in the whole country. We were really carried around on silver platters. Everybody wanted one of us to sit at their table. I had lunch with Florence MacBev and it was all modern music--it was just beginning to come in. The head of the Chicago Symphony, he had charge of the music. They played all modern. I have my papers and everything from that convention. They're still on the shelf! I had to give a report to the club, of course. That was really an experience for me. The first traveling I had done. That gave me an incentive to want to go on. I saw a little bit of what the world was about. I got there. I made it all right. We stayed at the old Battery Park Hotel. Right in the city. It had one of these long porches that went way round the place like the one up at Mackinaw. The Grand Hotel. This went way round. The new Rosespinner (?) had just been built. I think we visited the Rockefeller house and we went up the mountain and gathered mountain laurel and rhododendron. We went up in old Hudson cars. That was the only car that would take the climbing. We'd have to stop every once in a while and cool off the engine.

RAD: This was the National Federation of Music Clubs?

HB: Yes. I enjoyed that work with the juniors. We had a real nice group. Frederick Stock was director of the CSO.

JJ: When you were at the farm, did you go around and watch the bottling and milking.

HB: Yes. It was always so clean. The round barn was the first one of its kind. It was quite a picture. The horses going around. You could go around on the inside, too. They put the feed in from the center. He had ways of washing--all the cows were washed. They didn't have milking machines when he first built the round barn.

RAD: **We didn't have milking machines till I was 16, 17.[i.e., 1918 Or 19!]** We had four or five milkers to do about 40 cows. We used the Gerrler milk pail. It had a lid halfway over the top. We covered the top of the pail with with a piece of gauze. The first milking machine we had **was an Empire**. We had an awful lot of trouble with **milk flavor**. I don't know when the first machine was made. We had a bad flavor to the milk and we checked everything under the sun. The University people came down. Finally they attributed it to the milking machine. It was made of German silver. The action of the acid in milk with the German silver gave it a metallic taste. [me:Then we got a Surge.?)

HB: I remember that Trev sold some disinfectant or fly stuff. I heard after it happened. The milk got a bad taste and the customers began to call about it. Finally we found out it was the spray. It gave a peculiar taste to the milk.

JJ: It took the hide right off the cows, too.

RAD: That guy travelled all over town, as far east as Delevan, sold fly dope to beat the band. Supposed to sell a little atomizer with it. But all the farmers had a little hand pump--that didn't atomize as well as it might. So using the pump, they got quite a bit of it on the cows. When Trever went around the next summer expecting to resell to the people, why, they nearly tarred and feathered him. All the hair came off their cows!

JJ: Think of all the people eating that fly dope. It didn't do any of our tissues any good to have that residue in it.

HB: Now they have inspections and lawsuits and all that.

JJ: They may not have had as dangerous stuff in that fly dope. They didn't have DDT and stuff like it yet. Maybe it was stuff the body would flush out. **Let me make a note to say that I could put in a whole thing on the taste of milk , including garlic and stuff from the cows that they eat in the spring. The Homogenized. Acorns effect the taste of the milk?**

RAD: Howard Baldwin had oak groves on his farm. Every fall their milk would taste terrible. They finally located the problem there.

JJ: Did you tell them that you wouldn't take their milk while the cows were eating acorns?

RAD: I think so.

HB: Marie has a story about your mother! Tell it, Marie.

M: I was singing in the choir. Your mother and daddy and you, I don't know if Trever was there or not, you could not sit still. You kept fussing and fussing. Your mother would be trying to quiet you. All of the sudden, she picked you up, took you right out down the hallway, I heard (smack!) just like that! Everybody did. And they heard you let out one scream. And that's all. Pretty soon you both came back in again. She brought you in and set you down. Do you remember that?

RAD: I don't remember ever being beat!

M: Just one slap!///

JJ: Dad's first memory of being stretched out on the pew.

RAD: I'd be stretched out on the front pew. I put my hand under my head and I'd be able to look up at the dome ceiling. I would count the lights this way and that way. Pretty soon I'd go to sleep. That's how I spent my Sundays in church.

HB: I remember that, too. Kenneth was always on one side and I would be one the other. The one who wanted to go to sleep first always got Mother's lap. The other one got the arm. Generally Kenneth would get the lap, and I'd get the arm! I remember the sky light just as plain as can be.

JJ: I'd examine that skylight just before I put my head in Grandma's lap and go to sleep.

RAD: How many organ pipes were there?

HB: I never counted! But I can't remember seeing Blanche Scallenger slide over on that organ bench. I was going to tell you about the wedding. We were married at Marie and Bud's. It was during the Depression. Ben (from Appleton, I met him at college) and another fella. We decided we wanted Daddy Dougan to marry us. We had a small wedding. The folks came down from Milwaukee and Appleton. We had a real nice time. Daddy said, did he tell me this beforehand or not? He told me that when the groom would ask him how much he owed him for the ceremony, he'd always say, How much is your wife worth to you? Then of course the poor fellow would be so embarrassed! Then he of course would say it was a joke and say it was nothing. Then he would say, Oh! Is that all she's worth! He'd make it still worse! Finally it was a joke. It was fun and he got the biggest kick out of it. He baptized my first baby, Sue, at Marie and Bud's.

RAD: You were living on Prairie.

HB: Tom came after we were in Appleton. Sue was born in Appleton, too. We lived right next to the Buchanan's. That was Ben's family home right next to the one on Green Bay Street. Did you ever meet the Buchanan's up there? They lived in that big mansion right on the river. Mrs. B and Mrs. Tuttle, Adelaide's mother? They were sisters. Of course, I knew Mrs. B when she used to come down here with the Tuttles. Adelaide and the twins were such good friends. We lived next door to the Buchanan's. His father had made an apartment of it. They would go to Florida in the winter. We'd take over and be there for a while. Sue was baptized at Bud's house.

JJ: So Grampa did the baptism. Do you remember anything in particular?

HB: It was a very dear service. It was all so very personal and sweet.

RAD: Tell me the story again of how you burned your hand. I remember examining your hand one day, sitting on that porch.

HB: Both hands, but not this one as much.

RAD: I was so sorry.

HB: They've always been this way. I loved to play the piano. I did play, but I couldn't reach more than an octave with one hand. I fell on the stove. I was sitting in my high chair. We still lived in Rockton. My father died three months before I was born. The unusual part of the thing is that Ben and I never discussed this part of it before we were married. His father died three months before he was born, too. We were both posthumous children. His father graduated from the U of Wis and he was at the Wells paper Co. in Michigan. He died of a ruptured appendix. But-- after my father died, my mother came back to Rockton where her mother, an aunt, and sister lived. Until I was born. She had bought a house up the street from my grand- mother's. She had it doubled so that she could have someone live there with her with six children and not be alone. I remember sitting in my highchair, very vividly, before the

stove in the winter time. She was getting the rest of the children ready to go to school. Something happened, I don't know if we ever found out, but the strap didn't hold, or what.

M: We were right in front of the stove. You stood up to put your clothes on.

HB: Then I fell over on the stove, then I put my whole arm on it to get off. There were never any great scars. But oh I remember the blisters on my hand! They were terrible.

JJ: It kept you from stretching, then.

HB: I suppose nowadays, if a thing like that happened, they would be able to stretch. Yep! They're still there! Evidently, when I shake hands with people, they notice it.

RAD: We were holding hands, I think!

HB: I don't think you ever held my hand! Not that I probably wanted you to! When I shake hands with people they say, Gee! You must have been working hard. But it isn't that--it's the scars.

JJ: Tell me about the 75 dollars. Do you remember what he said?

HB: He brought it to church and just put it in my hand. I didn't even know. I thanked him profusely, I'm sure. At that time I was able to get through all right. It was certainly wonderful of him. I've just had the fun and the pleasure of making a very nice contribution to the Chapin fund on my fiftieth, and again on Ben's fiftieth. I just love doing it. I wanted to do it while I could enjoy it. My college life was wonderful, I was in TC, president of the chapter, I was in all the musical things. Working all the time. I worked part time for Dr. Colley. The little tiny black figures you see on the specimens at the Logan Museum are mine. I classified over, they sent me to the Field Museum in Chicago and the museum in Milwaukee to find out about their systems. We had to decide what was best for us. We were getting specimens from all over the world.///

born. Helen first meets Grampa and Grama in church. She peers around her mother at a woman down the pew.

"What is she doing?" Helen keeps whispering. "Look, what's she doing?"

"Hush, hush," says her mother.

It turns out to be Grama, spelling out the sermon to Grampa on her fingers. After the service Mrs. Burnette apologizes to them for Helen's stares.

Grampa smiles with his eyes, and shows Helen his ear trumpet.

"If you shout loud, I can hear through this," he tells her, "but we can't shout that loud in church."

At one point Grama is Helen's Sunday School teacher. Grama is an earnest teacher, with well prepared lectures. She knows that what she is teaching will affect her students lives and mustn't be treated lightly. She doesn't put up with any shenanigans from her pupils, including Ronald and Trever. The class sometimes visits the farm. They walk out, and have food and milk and play "Run, Sheep, Run." Then they all get a lift back in a wagon.

Sometimes Helen and her next older sister Evelyn come out for Sunday dinner. Grama thinks it is good for Ronald and Trever to have girls around, especially such splendid girls as the Burnettes. When Esther comes from the orphanage, Grama likes to have Helen come out and be with her. She feels Helen is like an older sister, and a good influence.

Helen gradually becomes a favorite of both Grampa and Grama. For her, Grampa is the father she never had. She especially loves them both for they encourage her in her desire to go to college. She works several years after high school, and saves her money, but she can't save much for she has to help with the household. She talks often with Grampa and Grama about how she can manage. She has saved enough for one quarter at Beloit College, but at the start of the next she has only \$25. This is a large sum, but she needs \$75 for her tuition. One day in church Grampa hands her a small envelope. In it is a check for \$75. She is overwhelmed. She is able to give some of it back, for she gets a scholarship, but the gift makes possible her college that year.

Grama has hopes that Ronald will marry Helen, and many times in her letters to her son when he's at college she gives Helen good press: "We had supper at Burnettes. . . . Helen got the supper alone and everything was so nice and tasty and dainty. She is a little queen wherever she is." "Helen was overjoyed at what you sent for her birthday. I gave her a nice cream cake and Trev a record. Dad said he didn't know who was most in love with Helen-- you, Trev or me. I said I had nothing to do with your affairs in that line; Helen and I were always in love." But Ronald marries Vera, and some years later, during the Depression, Helen marries Ben Wadsworth whom she met in college. They have a small wedding at the home of one of her sisters, and W.

J. Dougan is the minister. He embarrasses the groom by saying he'll accept for payment what his bride is worth to him. He then refuses any payment, and compounds the confusion by saying, "What? Is she worth nothing to you?" Finally the joke is cleared up and everyone laughs, Grampa most of all. Later W. J. baptizes their first child.

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