

JO DOUGAN SCHMIDT: Tape 2, side 3: Jo and Jackie 3/21/79

I remember that Thanksgiving, it wasn't very nice out. That was at Gramma's, too, wasn't it? At least until we moved up to Chez Nous. Then when they moved to town, it would be at our house. At the farm, it seems it was always chicken there. I don't remember turkey. They had chickens on their own place.

I don't remember turkey, either. I remember turkey at our house. Mother used to have turkey.

It was big roasting chickens at Gramma's.

I don't remember. What ever it was, it was cut up and ready to eat by the time we got there. We didn't have to watch somebody carve.

I remember biscuits, too.

Oh, yeah, biscuits.

Gramma made biscuits, too.

And the mincemeat, in the cold room?

I talked about the Depression the other night. We didn't really have any suffering from the Depression because food was abundant, and they managed by fast shuffling to save the dairy and the farm. Dad says that if anyone had chosen to foreclose, we would have lost everything. But nobody chose to. He and Grampa were smart to incorporate to get everything under one debt. The land something or other, from the government. The government wasn't about to foreclose because, for various reasons. If they foreclosed, what would they do with all this land with nobody on it, and so forth. So it was in their interests to help them out....So do you remember any specific Thanksgivings except for Grampa's long blessings. There wasn't an agenda to Thanksgiving like there was to Christmas.

I don't remember that there was and I remember that they varied. I remember a walk out on the snow and the hard frozen ground. I remember that lovely time when we had the sleigh.

A bobsled. I didn't know that was a Thanksgiving. There must have been snow at that point then. I remember they hauled it behind the truck, not behind horses.

I remember horses.

Well maybe it was.

It was fitted out with runners. On Thanksgiving. It was a special treat.

Do you remember any details other than that?

A bobsled is not what I'm thinking of. That I only remember sitting in the barn.

That wasn't a bobsled, that was a sleigh. With the wooden runners and front things. It was the sort of thing they would have hauled ice home from the river.

That's right. I don't remember riding in the sleigh.

No, the sleigh just sat there.

What ever happened to it?

Somebody borrowed it and never returned it....The farm--they didn't watch this stuff carefully....Do you remember riding home with the milkmen?

Yeah.

Would you sit in their laps and steer?

No. I never sat in any milkman's lap. I sat in Dad's lap and steered.

I would sit in Roscoe's lap, in grade school. Do the steering. At the Little House, we often went home for lunch, cuz the milkman would be coming by. They'd drive us home and we'd come back.

Or maybe it was kindergarten, and you'd come home for good, with the milkman.

That's right. The taxi didn't run at noon. We had to get home somehow. It seems we kids went to morning kindergarten. Maybe with that purpose--so we could ride home with the milkman.

We rode in with the taxi in the morning and come home at noon with the milkman.

There were no rides into town at that time in the morning, but there were plenty of rides coming home at noon. That's sensible....I can remember coming home every now and then for dinner at the Little House.

I think we probably did.

I remember particularly, and I think you do, too, coming into the house on wash days. And how damp everything would be and you could write all over the windows because they were just thick with moisture.

I don't remember that.

I remember once in particular when we had hot dogs at noon. I liked hotdogs. I remember coming into the steamy, steamy house, cuz Mother would have the wash hanging all over. And drape it all over the house. You don't remember that?

Huh-uh.

That was Pat or Craig, then. It must be Craig who says these things. Cuz he

says so much. Pat only had time to say one or two things before she had to dash back to Mississippi. I've got a little book of hers called "I Remember." And that was in there, that she gave Gramma several years ago. Coming into the house on wash day and how she hated it because of having to dodge wash. And you remember, of course, sitting on the grill. With heat coming up from the basement and getting waffles on our bottoms.

I remember Pat falling on it when she was little.

Did she get burned?

She has a scar on her knee to this day.

I don't remember that.

I'm surprised it's not in her little book.

Maybe it's there and I just didn't get it all.

Oh, I remember pouring water in the buckets that were by the house...that went into the furnace, that furnace hole.

Patty says she remembers every so often when Dad and Mother would get on a humidity kick and there would be buckets standing all over with towels hanging out of them.

We would definitely pour water down into a bucket that was in the furnace. We'd pour it right down that hole. I used to wonder...it was a mystery to me. I couldn't believe that they weren't putting the fire out. But they'd put it down and it would go SSSSSSHHHHHH! and all this steam would come up. And the smell, I can smell it in my nose right now.

Now you'd think I'd remember that and I don't. Cuz it must have gone....Pat didn't mention that. She did mention having all sorts of buckets and pails and towels and things...to dampen the house when the folks would go on a moisture kick.

Isn't that funny? I don't remember that. But I do remember pouring the water in the...

I do know there is a place in those furnaces for that sort of thing. Let's jump to when you were older and you worked on the farm one year. First you started working up at Rock County Breeders, didn't you? The office?

I think that was after. The first year I worked for Dad in his office.

OK I GET IT--SHE STAYED OUT A YEAR, WORKED ON FARM. RIGHT AFTER SHE GRADUATED, WORKED AT R CO BREEDERS.

They were saying, Oh no, you didn't work in the office, you worked up at the Breeders.

Who said that? My father? Gosh, I worked cheek by jowl with him.

Well, maybe part of that first year.

I'll tell ya how that went. I went to school for a year, I was a freshman--it was my freshman year. Then Dad was suffering from lack of manpower, he didn't have enough help. He needed more people. And I wasn't real thrilled with the idea of going back to school at that moment. I had met Don that summer, he had gone off the war, and I don't know...the whole climate was different. I felt suddenly grown up, I should do my part and all that sort of thing.

(Something something) at home at that time.

Well, I think that's possible.

That was the big Harriet upset.

No, that happened before I went. No, it happened that year, that's right.

That was your first year in college. That would have made Patty a junior and I was an eighth grader. And I think it happened when I was in eighth grade, **ninth grade**. Things were a little wretched at home. It's interested that you came home at that point rather than stay away from the wretchedness.

Maybe, I wonder if there weren't financial difficulties, too? Isn't that possible? I seem to recall...there were more reasons than my...deciding and all that I didn't want to go back to school. Dad needed me, or I felt he could use me or I thought he'd rather pay me to do something than or maybe I was reluctant or anyway. I took the year off and I worked for him on a monthly salary, at the office. I learned how to keep his books and I kept the minimum amount and I enjoyed it immensely. It was a great feeling of accomplishment, knowing I could do something like that...that was totally out of my experience, but I could learn to do it quickly and easily. I had that same feeling that I've got to be the best there is in this that I always did in everything I tried then. So I had to quick get real fast on the adding machine. I had to make fewer mistakes than Mrs. Lenor (Moore) did and I had to, you know, be THE champion.

I remember very clearly that you were at the office because you and I and Patty, Patty would have been home then, too. This would have been your second year at college, it would have been Patty's senior year in high school, and I would have been a sophomore in high school the year that you were home....Now it must have been my junior year that I was an only child...Now it's hard to figure. Was Craig gone from our tenth and eleventh grade? Or by ninth and tenth? It hard....You didn't skip your senior year?

No.

Anyway, I was around, you were around, and Mrs. Moore and John Baker were fighting tooth and claw. They hated each other. And there was always friction and irritation going on. Either you had the idea or we had it together of writing a murder mystery. Where either Mrs. M would be murdered and John Baker would have done it or vice versa. Or they would have thought they were the natural ones to do it. And I think we decided to do it with John as the victim because nobody...John was such a prig about everything. I've got several stories in here about John of that nature. I remember that. I also know that you and I did something together because when I was in eighth grade I wrote a story and you wrote one too. We put the first sentence and the last

sentence. Either I came up with the first sentence or you did, and we both liked it. We came up with a last sentence and we decided Let's each write a story beginning with this sentence and ending with this sentence. It was very interesting to see the shape that each of our took. I've still got mine. What did you do with yours? I can even remember the first line: She must have been on a path but she couldn't see her way because of the fog.

Oh, wow!

The last line was, The crisis is over, she will live. This was a coming through from dying.

Yes! Now it, now it's hitting me!

You wrote one, too, and they were both good. I was in eighth grade, that would put you as a senior. Somewhere I've got a bunch of letters I wrote Craig, and of course he'll know whether he was in ninth grade or tenth grade. Or eighth and ninth. Anyway, I was on the job. I'm trying to figure out how that works in with you being home. I suspect it must have been that next year when you went back to college, Patty was off at college, and Craig would have been at Arizona. It must have been my junior year in high school when I was the only child.

I worked for Dad for the summer and the winter and the following summer and then I went back to school. And then was...after I graduated, I think. Maybe I worked the summers for him as well, but I don't think so. I don't think I worked in the office. He had to hire someone else to do my job....I did a big job in the office, I worked full time, so when I went back to school he had to hire somebody else. So I couldn't very well come back and pick it up in the summers. I remember working for him driving tractor and things like that.

I remember that you were driving the tractor once, when something happened.

I can't remember anything happening...something bad? Some accident?

It wasn't...Maybe it was when Freitag broke his arm, fell off and broke his arm. And he said Jo was driving. And I said Was it her fault? The driving? or did you just hit a rough furrow? And he said, Oh it was my fault! I fell off! But you were driving when Ron Freitag fell off and broke his arm.

I don't remember that. I remember sitting on the seat of the tractor, singing as romantically as I could, as well as I could, as torch-like as I could, all the current ballads, you know, the 40s ballads.

No one could hear you over the tractor.

That's what I presumed...and hoped. But I was having fun at the time. I was getting tan. I could do that kind of work real well. That's what I remember about those times.

Tell me about the office work.

Oh, that was fun. The men would start coming in from the routes and they'd

sit and check out their books and everything. And then they'd give me the book and the tapes and everything. I don't really remember now what I would do then. But I know I...oh, I do, too, now. There were papers to fill out, they'd fill out, I guess. What they took out and what they returned with, with purple finches on them. ???They would bring their money and everything would have to add and total and come out in the wash. When it didn't, it was something they'd forgotten. They had to make everything tally. They left 3 quarts for Mrs. So and so, you know. And what I had to do was separate out all the accounts. So that Mrs. So and so would have the right number of quarts of milk at the end of the month that she had to pay for, and the right number of butters, and so forth. They took it out of their books and put it on the sheets and then I'd take it off the sheets and add all their sheets together and come up with the totals. Then once a month I'd go through the books and do the bills. Then I'd do double-entry bookkeeping. I would take charge, keep track of everthing.

That's what I never learned how to do.

That's a very satisfying thing to know how to do....

(some question from Jackie.)

Not really, because I had forgotten how to do it, too. I never kept double books after I got married. But I've always had the feeling, ever since I worked in the office, that I'd be a good accountant. Or that at least I could be an accountant.

I suspect I would have hated it.

Well, I enjoy it very much. I sit at my desk and balance my checkbook and figure out this and that. And I figure out how I can get more interest out of it. If I don't pay this bill till such and such a time, I'll have more interest...you know. All those little ins and outs, I enjoy very much. I like working with money. Especially if I'm earning something by doing it.

I should do something with what money I have to make it start bringing in some returns.

You've got it in a ban, or something, don't you?

Interest.

The only thing you can do, if you have enough, you can leave it in there awhile...you can get lots more money.

Well, if you invest it...///

Do you remember any particular incidents? Did anybody...any funny incidents from the route, or did anyone storm in, or any personal dynamics, or more general? Mrs. Moore was a terrible, terrible irritant.

She and I got along fine, most of the time. I don't recall that she bothered me.

She bothered everybody else.

I know the men didn't get along very well. But there was kind of a female...we're both on the same side thing. I just don't remember any great problem with Mrs. Moor. I remember she didn't like to take any kind of criticism. She never made any mistakes! But now we know that she had reason to be defensive.

No, it was Florence Johnson was...It wasn't Mrs. M

That's right. Florence Johnson worked there, too, when I was there. At least I think she did. Oh my. Minds are funny things.

Maybe you took Florence Johnson's place after she had embezzled.

Or maybe she took mine? It seems to me that it happened after I was there.

Maybe....You don't have any specific memories of the office then?

I feel myself sitting there...looking around, I can see it. I can hear the men coming in...stomping up the stairs. They'd usually come in the back.

You were up over the milkhouse?

No, no, I was down in the Little House...on the first floor...in what used to be the dining room. That's where my desk was. Looking out the dining room windows. **I remember being dismayed when Dad decided not to sell butter any more.**

That would be during the war. They chopped up the churn.

They did?

Well, it was just taking up room. And I guess maybe they couldn't get it out of the milkhouse without chopping it up.

I remember Mr. Stam standing there making butter, cutting it with the wires. I remember that churn. And the cold room where they kept...

Describe the churn. I have a very, very vague memory of it. It seems to me it was a huge barrel, on its side.

Yeah, that's what it was. It was sort of whitish-gray. At least I think it was.

I see it brown, but...

And it had a big ole _____, ??????of course. There were paddles in it, horizontal, running the length of it.

Would the churn be still and the paddles go?

I don't think so.

There'd be buttermilk in it when it was through.

There was some kind of fluid.

It wasn't buttermilk, because we made real butter, it wasn't what they'd sell, a commercial buttermilk.

Jo I remember them swatting it with paddles and working the water out of it after it was done. They'd pull out this great big glob of golden-yellow butter onto a stand, and somebody'd stand there and beat it on it for awhile with some paddles and gradually the water would run out of it.

A big mound, huh?

Yeah, a big mound of this yellow stuff.

Then how would they get it into a square?

They'd put it into a frame. Then they'd run another frame down through it. The wires, crisscrossed. They'd get...four...pounds, I think.

I don't remember Stam cutting it. I know that George Schrieber did, he was there during the war.

Oh yeah, George Schrieber.

He left in '43.

Oh, yes--it wasn't Mr. Stam. He never worked in the...at least not in later years when I was there.

I didn't think so.

It was George, that's right.

George cut the butter.

I also remember going to Grampa once...either that year that I worked there or shortly before, with an idea for a new way to wrap the butter. I thought that it was an inconvenient way to wrap butter...inconvenient for the housewife. Whenever she wanted to get some butter out, or cut some off from the pound, she'd have to unwrap it first, totally, and then cut some off. And what I wanted him to do was...I came up with a way of doing it, too. Was wrap it another way so that you could just open the end. And cut off a piece. He listened to me sympathetically, but I could tell from the start that there was no way he was going to change that. And his explanation for why it wouldn't work, or why he wasn't going to change it, I could never remember. But I couldn't persuade him. I just kept thinking that people didn't look enough at the other end of the operation. How the housewife proceeds.

I remember how we did it at the lake. We just chopped it in half and dug it out.

No, I don't remember that.

If we didn't have a butter tub. We'd just saw it in half. I remember putting it out when it was my turn to set the table. I'd put half out and we'd just dig into it.

That something we could do at the lake, but never at home.

And never the milk bottle on the table at home. And I don't remember even if we had the bottle on the table at the lake.

Or the ketchup bottle or anything. I suppose we must have used the ketchup.

We got raised with class, ya know?

Yeah.

As Bart tells Gramma.///

The other day we ran into Ernie Capp. And Dad called him up and talked to him a bit. Remember Ernie Capp, who used to babysit us?

No, I don't remember that he used to babysit!

But you remember that he had a rotten ear. And we called him Ernie with the rotten ear?

Yeah, now that you describe him, I remember.

Okay, I remembered him very clearly because I was littler than you, and I would climb up in his lap and examine his...rotten ear.

Was it a cauliflower ear?

No, it had a big birthmark on it which just looked like the rotten part of an apple. Just brown. Craig and I and maybe Patty, too, would climb up and examine it. I remember he babysat us one night when Craig vomited. When we called up, he told Daddy about this. I said, I remember lying in there in that little bed with the fence around it watching the vomit creeping closer to me. And not getting up. So Ernie over the phone to Dad the other day, told that he had, with the help of the older girls, you found him clean sheets, and things like that. He'd gotten Craig up and cleaned up and taken all the bedclothes off and made the bed up fresh and Craig and I went back to bed...So I was wondering if you remember any Ernie Capps?

No.

Do you remember playing ball with the help? After supper?

No.

Do you remember calling Russell Ulius...he'd call you Monkey and you'd call him Punkey, or something.

No.

Okay. I remember that.

I know. You told me that one time.

And you don't remember the murder mystery that we thought we'd write?

No...I remember standing at the top of the stairs in the Little House trying to get ready to go to a party...I think it was the eighth grade party. Michael...oh I don't remember the name of the fellow who was going to take me. I was going to drive downtown with Daddy and meet him at a certain spot. I remember standing at the top of the stairs and Mother told me I could wear some silk stockings of hers. This was the first time I'd ever had silk stockings on. I'd put on one and it would run, then I'd put on another and it would run. I didn't know how to handle them, you know, I was much too rough. It took me a long time, but I finally got a pair of gray, silvery-gray ones. And oh my, they were pretty. I felt so good....These were silk, not nylon.

Oh, this was before the war.

Before they invented nylon.

Do you remember Esther trying to get you to name one of your dolls Agnes?

Vaguely.

Here's what I heard while eating lunch with Gramma and Grampa Sunday. We got to talking about Esther and they're not eager to have me put anything about Esther in the book. In some ways I'd like to, and in other ways I don't know. They brought up Esther from Sparta, there was an old orphanage there. She was five years old. Her name was Agnes, something like Gloss. When they got her home, they renamed her Esther. Which was the name of the little girl who died. Of Grampa and Gramma's. Which seemed to be an unfortunate thing to do. I think they should have kept her name Agnes. And Mother says But she had a doll named Agnes. And I immediately had a whole story in my mind of this little kid being given a new name and transferring her own name to keep some hold of her own personality. A name is so important. Calling her doll Agnes. I said, But Mother, Esther was five and Dad was twelve, so how do you know about that? I began to try to put together. And she said, Well it must have sitting around somewhere--on a chair or something. She kept that doll. I could have seen it. Then she said she tried to get Joanne to name one of her dolls Agnes. So it must have been still a name that meant something to her by the time you were a little toddler.

Isn't that interesting. Poor Esther.

It was a sorry story with Esther. I think alot of it was that they took her too old.

They didn't know how to treat her.

Gramma, I'm sure, wasn't particularly good mother for a girl. Compared to how good she was with a little boy. She _____ alot. But she could have developed those self-protective habits before she was five years old.

Sure.

Bob wanted to adopt an older child, at one point was talking about it. I think it must have been after Bill left Kent, in the mid to late 60's. Bill argued strongly

against it. He said, If you get them older, everything's formed. And its terribly difficult to do anything with an older child. Don't adopt an older child. Of course, that was the whole idea. Bob wanted a son. He wanted a sort of instant son. He would adopt one that was older than Elspeth and that would be a companion to Elspeth and also be a son. But I did not encourage that at all. Because Bill said, Don't take an older child. He and Eila took four older children.

So he knew what he was talking about.

Bill certainly did. They never properly adopted Ester, she always felt like a second-class citizen, I'm sure. And Mother says that the idea was that Esther would adopt herself, when she felt like she had become one of the family, and so forth, that she would ask to be adopted. Or decide to be adopted. But she must have never come to that feeling. Then we conjectured some about why WJ hadn't been more successful in his kindly ways with Esther.

He was kindly, but he was also severe in a lot of ways, too. He was very detrimental. I can imagine that a little girl who had already been exposed to stealing and stuff and had been caught, already had a pretty well- developed guilt complex by the time she moved into that family. She probably found it hard to be frowned on. I'm sure she was frowned on.

I'm sure she was, too. Dad's recollection of her is practically...///

End of side 3

Side 4

It may be his recollection at this point. If I caught him fifteen years ago and asked him, he'd be willing to talk. He might have remembered more. But I said, You were twelve years old? Surely at the age of twelve to have a five-year-old sister show up on the scene must have made an impression. Then he did begin to remember things. They had to do with her stealing and I didn't get this down, so I'll do it now just so I have it on tape. This was also at lunch the other day, at the Holiday Inn. He said he would go through the pennies that came back from the route and there had been pennies made, new Lincoln head pennies that had the designer's initials on them. After this penny, the govt passed a law or whatever saying that no coin would have the designer's initials on them. So they didn't make any more. So Ron at 12, or 13 or 14, however old he was, knew that these would be valuable. He already had a coin collection. These would become scarce and so he would go through the routes, the change, and he would take out a certain kind of nickel and these pennies that had the initials on them. He said they were frequent, but not that frequent, like one in a hundred, maybe even one in a thousand. He had quite a collection of those pennies and Esther stole them and spent them all...And Mother told how, while she was there, Esther stole all of her beautiful underwear. Her trousseau lingerie, and so forth. When they finally found it, Mother hadn't missed it right off, she'd noticed it was gone, but hadn't put on an active search. Until one day Gramma had an idea and went in looked in Esther's little chest. There was all Mother's French lingerie, pretty well shot because she'd been wearing it to school. She'd wash it out secretly and so forth. And she'd buy things secretly.

She'd change into things at school.

At her locker. Mother says they had parties for her. Mother apparently did quite a bit for her. Gave her some singing lessons. Sponsored some parties and things. She would have been sixteen or seventeen, I guess she was a senior in high school when she got pregnant. Which cut off any chance of doing any further schooling. Had the baby over at Shopiere, which Mother said was Grampa's decision so that there would be no doubt in anyone's mind about the parentage. As I recall, it wasn't the father that married her, but the brother of the father....I always felt sorry for Esther, but as Mother says, Was it better to live on the Dougan farm with Gramma and Grampa's faults or to have stayed in Sparta? I said she might as well have come to the farm.

She had a lot of contacts and opportunities that she wouldn't have if she had done it another way. I think she probably had an interesting life, even though it wasn't what they had hoped to do for her.

Here's something that Craig remembers very vaguely, that I remember a little less vaguely, and you played a big part in it, so maybe you'll remember more strongly. Apparently I told Craig stories, and we all told Craig stories and elaborated on them about an imaginary boy named Jacques.

It's drawing a blank...Sorry.

We didn't produce Jacques, because we couldn't produce the imaginary boy, but we could produce Jacques' mother. And you were Jacques' mother and I can still see you. We made you a home out in the corn crib. It was empty at that time. Jacques lived in the corn crib. I can still see you sitting in a rocking chair that you moved out there and you had on long clothes and a pair of glasses, which you didn't wear at the time--as I recall--sort of down on your nose and you made have been knitting. I see you sitting there being Jacques' mother....

Whistler's Mother!

Yeah, as close to that as we could make. We brought Craig out to see Jacques' mother and talk about Jacques with the mother. You carried it off. I asked Craig if he remembered it and he said, Well I wanted to believe in Jacques, so probably I was trying very hard to believe in Jacques. I said that she looked so much like Joanne, even dressed up, that it's hard to imagine you falling for it even as a boy. He wanted to believe in Jacques so hard that he believed that this woman was Jacques' mother. You don't remember sitting out...

Not at all. I remember the corn crib and that we played in it. It always smelled like mice. It had a musty smell, dusty corn.

Both you and Pat remember putting on plays on the sloping roof of that shed out behind.

And climbing up, it was always a little bit of an adventure to get onto the roof. It wasn't really easy. It was a little bit of a reach there. A moment of...an act of faith to get up there from the fence, or whatever. It was a little bit scary.

Well, I don't remember that at all. And yet Patty mentions that in her memoirs, too. That I came on.

Maybe Patty and I did them mostly. I seem to recall dusk. It might be that you and Craig were in bed.

Or getting our baths.

And Pat and I were up on the roof making up stories and acting out things.

And prancing around. It was a perfect theater, for you and Pat, for people to sit out and watch. To put something on the sloping roof.

It was neat and it was fun.

Do you remember, not the bull walk that went round and round where Patty caught her foot. And we'd all walk in a row, the day Patty caught her foot, you're the one who leapt and threw the switch. **It ws Warren Mathews**

Gosh, I don't remember that, either. Well, Patty got caught and started going around. You had the presence of mind to leap and pull the switch. All four of us, we were walking in a row, just walking walking walking holding onto the rail when Patty caught her foot. She screamed! I remember that.

My goodness! I don't think I've had the proper gratitude shown me all these years! From Pat...for having saved her life! or her leg or something.

Her leg would be mangled...But then, out behind that spot where you'd do theatricals on the roof was a long treetrunk, or telephone pole, it was probably a treetrunk it tapered off into a fairly small bore at the end about that big, and came to a point. This is where they would walk the bulls, on a pivot, and the heavy end was in closer and this sort of long switch came out and they'd put the bull on one end of it. Then he could walk in a circle, go round and round. Do you remember the bulls walking out there?

Yes.

Do you remember fastening Craig to that?

No! But it sounds like the kind of thing we'd do!

I think we all walked on it occassionaly, but I have a feeling that Craig, because he was the littlest, could be coerced into put on the end of the bull thing and walking. I remember that but I wish I had some incident to go with it. I also remember little Jerry getting close to the bull once. And how scared everybody was. He went right up to the bull...somebody saw him and jerked him away, but he could've been gored and killed. **(me,too)**

I remember being on a runaway horse.

What sort of...

Do you remember that? One of those big, fat, rock-a-bye horses, the work horses. I was on the back of a comfortable old work horse. He decided he

didn't like it, I guess. He started to run down the lane. He really ran...towards the crick. And there was a gate up. My memory, somewhere back in the dim recesses, says he went over the gate with me. But that can't be possible. A great, big heavy horse, I don't think he could have done that. He probably just came to a halt, scaring me to death. I was probably afraid he'd go over the gate....But I didn't fall off, I just remember being scared to death. That might be why I didn't find horse-back riding enchanting...

You had that early scare.

I had that, yes, it was still in me somewhere. Kit, I think it was.

Kit would have been quite old, cuz Kit was the one that Grampa rode and broke his leg on in 1917. The horses lived into their twenties, ya know. So it could have been the early thirties. Kit wouldn't've been too old at that point. He could have been fairly young.

It might be that that's the only horse name I remember at the moment.

Bess and Barney are the ones I remember. And Molly. I don't remember Kit at all.

I remembered I knew Kit before...whether he was the one I rode--I don't know.

I remember this scene from my childhood that I swore up and down was an accurate memory. I was told it was not an accurate memory. Now of course that I'm older, I know it's not an accurate memory. I was so positive at the time. That involved a horse that was followed by the pony. The pony had an attraction to this horse. Then there was a lamb, a sheep. And the sheep followed the pony. Now that part of the memory is true. There was this horse that the pony followed and the sheep followed the pony, almost in a procession.

I remember that. That was cute.

I remember the horse going past the Big House and the pony behind and sheep behind and I swear that horse was as tall as the second story windows. Like one of Hannibal's elephants. I was told, No, no, no horse could be that tall. It was only that I was so little that the horse looked so big. And yet I knew the difference between a big horse and a horse who stood as high as the second story windows. So I was furious at being told this, so I can't make sense out of that memory, except that I do remember that little procession. I should ask Grampa about that procession, and see if he remembers it. But you do, huh?

Yes. Vaguely. I would not have come up with it. When you described it, then suddenly I could see it. I don't remember that we had sheep!

Just a stray, just a singleton.

What was he doing there?

I don't know.

How did we ever happen to get goats?

I should ask Grampa why he brought that first goat home. I think that once we had a goat, and it became mine. How did it become mine?

I don't know. Was it when we first had Butter?

Yeah, it became Jackie's goat. And why it became my goat, I don't know. Was it just because I assumed ownership? That I showed the most interest in it?

Maybe you had wanted a goat. He brought it home cuz you wanted it.

Maybe so. I certainly remember it coming home. And trying to get it to drink out of a bottle. The poor little thing couldn't suck for days. All of a sudden it caught on and THEN---the rapidity with which it would sssipp down an entire bottle.

And the little tail going all the time.

It's little tail just wagging as fast as it possibly could while she was drinking it. Then she always wanted to get in the house. Whenever the door was open, when somebody came out, and she could streak in, she would pivot a turn right inside the front door, and gallop up those stairs through Craig's and my bedroom onto the sleeping porch and jump onto Mother and Dad's bed.

And made marks!

That was the farthest she could get, you see. The farthest point in the house. She'd just go psssst! And be up there. And then somebody'd have to go up and drag that goat down.

Oh my! I remember the hard little head with the nubbins.

She never got horns. The others did.

She'd push against you with them. As if she was trying to rub'em out.

A goat with horns, as I found out in later years, doesn't so much as push against you as tries to hook you. Which is what they tried to do to Mrs. B----, and so forth...my goats up at the other house....I had another thought I wanted to mention. It's funny how you can remember certain feelings.

And smells, I remember.

I find that the feeling or the incident frames the picture. In other words, I can see the scene at the time of that feeling. Whereas if someone were to say to you, Describe such and such a spot, you'd draw a blank. But if something went on in that spot that I remember, I'd see it. For instance, I can remember a very early feeling, possibly my first feeling of being chagrined. Which was that we had somebody taking care of us, Mother's help, and I insisted up and down and around and around that I did not need a nap, I didn't want a nap. I must have been three. I don't know how old I was. I was put down in a bed up in the little bedroom, the bed with the fence around it. It ended up there eventually, I don't know if it was there at that time or not. But this was a crib,

with the sides. I went down, vigorously screeching and protesting that I did not want a nap, I did not need a nap, and the next thing I knew, I woke up a couple of hours later. I remember lying there in that little crib and remembering the vehemence of my protests. That I didn't want a nap. And realizing that I'd been asleep. And the feeling was...chagrin. That I had been wrong. But I can see that whole little room! And that's the only way I can see that room.

The one at the top of the stairs?

To the right. You and Pat slept in the other room. I remember that room because we had the measles together in that room. And also we'd come in there and play bear. One of you guys would be the bear and we'd go round and round the beds.

And down between them. Oh, boy, do I remember that!

Pretty soon, even if you were the one chasing, you got the feeling of being chased because there was somebody right behind you. And you would panic. I also looked out your bedroom window at the airplane light.

That used to scare me, that airplane light.

That was a scary airplane light.

I don't know why it was a scary airplane light! Why did airplane lights scare us?

Sweeping around? I don't know....Then Craig and I would sometimes go and sit in our closet and listen to you guys. Because the two of you carried on with such wonderful games. You had one called preacher where you would lie with your knees up and Patty would try to stand on your knees and preach a sermon?

Oh Jeez!

And you would make it hard for her? I remember another one where you had a kind of a charade that you were supposed to guess. And I remember you being under your bedclothes, and you'd stick your top out and go EEEE! and that was the name "Bobby"

Ohmigosh!

You and Patty had marvelous games. Craig and I had some, but we always found your games fascinating--when we were allowed in. And we played a lot of bed games, you know.

Oh my! We must have been put to bed too early, or something....I remember reading as long as I could by the light of that window next to my bed, and sometimes we could. I'd read until I could just barely make out the letters on the page.

One problem I'm having with this book is relating incidents that involved siblings. I found it quite easy to include Craig. I think I told you that. I think that

Craig and I were thrown together more. We were a defense against being pushed around by two older sisters. Craig was sort of my little sidekick. It shows in some ways how self-centered you are, but in the lake stories, I have a stronger sense of everybody playing together, as a whole. And doing things, walking around the lake together. But you know, I do remember us all going down to the crick together. Do you ever remember fishing in the crick together?

No.

We used to fish with bent pins.

Did we ever catch anything?

No, of course not. There was never anything to catch in the crick by then. Even then I thought, a bent pin is not a good thing to fish with. In all the books we'd read, the children would fish with bent pins. So that would seem the thing we were supposed to do. Even at that age, my tender age, I knew you had to have a barb on a hook to keep the fish. I wondered how they caught fish with the bent pins. So we'd go down and sit on the bank and fish and didn't catch anything. Oh, here's something. Do you remember anything about, you've already told me some about the marvelous houses we would make out there in front with the boxes. From the...

Pat must have made those with Craig. I don't remember.

The boxes the milk bottles came in--those wonderful crates.

We made some terrific...we called them "huts."

Sometimes they'd be double deckers.

Oh yeah!

And sometimes they'd be all spread out, and we'd thatch them with that marvelous grass. Not a hay.

We used to make them at Grama's house, too, over there by the woodpile. Because that's where a lot of the boxes were. We didn't have to carry them as far, we could drag them.

My strongest memory is out in front in that mid-area, where they paved that little area in between the house and mailbox, that diagonal. There'd be all this sweet-smelling hay.**Whatever diagonal am I talking about?**

I remember that too.

I remember dragging them to wherever they were. They were on the woodpile a lot, and we'd go visiting. The woodpile was a marvelous place to play.

Sometimes there were kittens in the woodpile. There were certainly chickens out there.

Oh, lots of chickens! I remember watching the chickens a lot. There was this house that we built--what was I going to say about them? There was so much raw material. Modern kids, in their suburban neighborhoods where there aren't all these raw materials to do these things with... Oh I know what I was going to ask you about, because I was fairly young at the time. Do you remember taking one of those boxes, or two of those boxes and we'd go down and sit it out on the road for a sign for a roadside stand. We'd go down into Grama's basement and get carrots and potatoes and apples out of the root cellar and put them out there, and wait for hours. And nobody would ever stop--ever! Nobody ever bought anything!

No! I don't remember that!

Well, maybe once a year or so. We decided to have a roadside stand.

I remember making mud pies at the lake and having rows and rows of things.

I remember the mudpies, I think that goes into one of the books, Ghostboat, but I remember making a farm, too, Patty mentioned once having too many mudpies that were too beautiful to throw out. And I think she balanced them up on the bins there up around the area sleigh is. Or else set them on the tray with which we were playing, up in the sleigh or something.

We used to put those little buttons of weeds, I've forgotten the name, pigsweed?

I don't remember, but I do remember those buttons.

They were very good.

They tasted funny, but we ate them.

They were fresh and tasty.

They had little tiny peaeggs (?) on them. They looked like little cushions.

Right. We'd pick them and make plates.

(description of looks using HANDS)

Almost like an avocado, but they had the little button in the middle. And they were about that big, weren't they?

Yeah, they were about that size. We'd pick a lot of them and put them on our plates--like peas or something. And put them on our mudpies.

How did we know it wouldn't hurt us to eat that little thing?

I don't know.

I haven't seen it in ages. I wonder what it is. That would be interesting to look up in something.

Maybe we have it in our yard and don't know it. I haven't looked.

We were down closer to the ground in those days.

We sure were. Do you have a lot of stuff about the cow tank?

No, practically nothing about the cow tank.

Oh my. Well...

You saved me once. I went down and I thought this is it, goners.

Oh, I have all kinds of gratitude coming to me. I never collected it!

I was very matter of fact about as I went down, I didn't feel any panic, I just thought this is it. The next thing I knew, Joanne had grabbed me and hauled me to the top. My thoughts were still just as matter of fact. I thought no, this isn't it, I'm still alive. I remember it clearly enough so that it must have made an impression on me. That I mustn't fall. Yet sometimes you did fall on account of the, sometimes slimy.

Yes, I remember how slimy it could be. And how bad-smelling it was. Sometimes.

Occasionally they put stuff in it to keep it clarified.

Well, they cleaned it out from time to time, too, of course.

Sometimes there'd be floating green stuff on it.

Slime floating, algae of various kinds. It was always okay, it was never unhealthily dirty, but it could be unpleasant sometimes. I also remember walking across the yard to get to it.

You had to pick your way among the cowpies.

And feeling, as you got older, more and more fastidious about the whole thing til I just couldn't swim in it anymore. And I suppose it was about that time that we went to the lake. But maybe not. I was seven when we went to the lake. You kids must have been quite small. Craig was two, and you were what?

I would've been four or so.

You don't remember the cow tank very well then.

I remember swimming in it. I was told....The sun would be hot and we'd take our finger and get it wet and draw pictures on that rim, the flat rim. Then the sun would dry them up. We'd try to get our pictures done with the wet before the sun dried it up.

It would be hot. I remember hot, hot summers there....I wonder how they happened to let us do that? Swim in the cow tank.

I don't remember being supervised in the cow tank. I don't remember some adult standing around watching us.

Well, it was two feet deep was all, . . . So I guess they figured we were, uh, . . .

Yeah, but we could have drowned in there. Maybe it was that you were responsible and big enough, that you'd haul any of us out.

I learned how to swim in there.

I learned how to swim at the lake. I didn't learn until I was seven. So that I didn't learn how to swim in the cow tank.

We had a slide for awhile.

I don't remember that, except to be told about it.

I don't remember much about it.

Maybe when we were considerably younger there was certain supervision.

I think Mother went with us when we were little. I think she was there, I just don't remember.

I remember the rush across the cowyard to get away from M-12. And Craig being the last one under the fence. I don't remember any adult with us at that time. Panic! Rushing home, there was this cow that was after us. M oo moo but here I mean Mig___ remembers M-12. She and Winnie had a bad time with M-12 out in the pasture. We called her up and asked her about it. She had told Paul, to remind him of M-12.

Oh my!

Well, we've gotten quite a few things here.

Yeah!

I've gotten down some of my memories as well.

And you've got it straight about Bounce?

Now--tell me what there is to get straight about Bounce?

About Bounce biting me.

No. Repeat that, onto the tape.

Bounce and I were playing alone in the horse barn.

When did we discuss this? Awhile back. Was Pat there?

Yeah, you called me up.

And we didn't have any tape. You and Bounce were playing in the horse barn...

Alone. After supper, as I recall, one night. It was still light. It was summer, it must have been. They had put bales of hay in the horse barn and they had started to take them out and use them.

Bales? and they started using them? You were quite a big kid.

Well, I don't know, Jackie. I don't recall that I was. I think I was only... seven?

Then what probably happened is that they bought some hay. We wouldn't have had a hay baler.

I distinctly rememer bales. I wanted to put him down in this hole. I wanted to get down there, too. With him. There was this hole that was there after they had taken out some of the hay. It was a nice, neat little place to sit. I picked up the dog to try to put him down there, and he didn't want to go down. He wouldn't have it. And he just went CCHHRRUUMM!

Onto your chin.

And he grabbed me. And the scars are still there. One there, and one there. I had . . .

One above and one below your chin.

Right here. I had the instinct or something, to grab him. I grabbed what I could. I grabbed him trying to pull him off. I grabbed him around the neck. I guess I squeezed him tight enough that he opened and let me go. I ran screaming home and was all bloody. I guess that's when they got rid of Bounce. I was trying to get him to go down that hole. He shouldn't have bit me no matter what I was trying to do.

No, but he was a crotchedy little dog.

He was.

And not the sort that you really played with. I'm surprised that you were trying to get Bounce to do anything! I thought we had long learned that you didn't try to get Bounce to do anything except drive him into a frenzy saying "Sic'em, Bounce; sic'em, Bounce" and opening that basement door and letting him leap down. Or else when you were outside, he'd leap up a tree. There was one tree he would race up and rip the bark off of.

Well, I was very foolish, that's for sure. Probably because I didn't have anybody there to play with and I was trying to play with Bounce. I don't know why I was alone. If everybody was not there. Maybe it was one of those summertimes when we used to come home one by one from the lake to spend a little time with, come home with Daddy, give him a little company to come home to.

I don't really remember that. I remember once coming home to go to the dentist. And once coming home to go to a... party

I remember hitchhiking home with Dad once!

Were you the one? Daddy asked me about hitchhiking home, and I drew a complete blank. And he said Well, how could you forget that? Now it was you!

It was me! I don't know why we hitchhiked home from the lake.

This is encouraging. I thought, you know, since Dad didn't pay us a whole lot of attention that if I had done anything as exciting as hitchhike home with Daddy, that I would have remembered it!

It was pretty exciting! I do still remember it.

Well tell me about hitchhiking home with Daddy!

Well, as I say, I don't remember why we did it. It had something to do with...I think I had a dentist appt. I'm not sure. Anyway, we had to hitchhike home. Maybe he left the car for Mother, I don't think it was a matter of the car breaking down or anything. There seemed to be some reason why we had to get home. We hitchhiked. The reason I remember it, not thoroughly, but it stands out in my mind--it's one of those things I can feel. He really paid attention to me. We talked--a lot. He talked to me, I talked to him and he listened. I have forgotten what we talked about. But it was things like world affairs, I mean I asked him to explain something to me. And it was very nice. That's all. I don't remember who gave us a ride or, how long we had to wait or anything.

But you made it.

Oh sure.

Well, I'll tell Dad, then, that you were the one he hitchhiked with. I can remember one time, with Dad, I suppose because it was unusual.

Yeah, that's why I remember...well, hitchhiking was unusual.

One summer on the farm, I saw something glowing way down in the pasture towards the Catalpa_____ forest that shouldn't have been glowing down there. What was a fire doing down there? Nobody lived there. I think I pointed it out to Daddy. It might have been when I was a junior in hs, and home alone. I was the only one who went with him, anyway. He got interested in what this fire was, so we walked. It was a coolish night...

END OF TAPE

Jo working in office after freshman year:

Oh, that was fun. The men would start coming in from the routes and they'd sit and check out their books and everything. And then they'd give me the book and the tapes and everything. I don't really remember now what I would do then. But I know I...oh, I do, too, now. There were papers to fill out, they'd fill out, I guess. What they took out and what they returned with, with purple finches on them. ???They would bring their money and everything would have to add and total and come out in the wash. When it didn't, it was something they'd forgotten. They had to make everything tally. They left 3 quarts for Mrs. So and so, you know. And what I had to do was separate out all the accounts. So that Mrs. So and so would have the right number of quarts of milk at the end of the month that she had to pay for, and the right number of butters, and so forth. They took it out of their books and put it on the sheets and then I'd take it off the sheets and add all their sheets together and come up with the totals. Then once a month I'd go through the books and do the bills. Then I'd do double-entry bookkeeping. I would take charge, keep track of everthing.

Jo on butter making

Yeah, a big mound of this yellow stuff.

Then how would they get it into a square?

They'd put it into a frame. Then they'd run another frame down through it. The wires, crisscrossed. They'd get...four...pounds, I think.

I also remember going to Grampa once...either that year that I worked there or shortly before, with an idea for a new way to wrap the butter. I thought that it was an inconvenient way to wrap butter...inconvenient for the housewife. Whenever she wanted to get some butter out, or cut some off from the pound, she'd have to unwrap it first, totally, and then cut some off. And what I wanted him to do was...I came up with a way of doing it, too. Was wrap it another way so that you could just open the end. And cut off a piece. He listened to me sympathetically, but I could tell from the start that there was no way he was going to change that. And his explanation for why it wouldn't work, or why he wasn't going to change it, I could never remember. But I couldn't persuade him. I just kept thinking that people didn't look enough at the other end of the operation. How the housewife proceeds.

Here's what I heard while eating lunch with Gramma and Grampa Sunday. We got to talking about Esther and they're not eager to have me put anything about Esther in the book. In some ways I'd like to, and in other ways I don't know. They brought up Esther from Sparta, there was an old orphanage there. She was five years old. Her name was Agnes, something like Gloss. When they got her home, they renamed her Esther. Which was the name of the little girl who died. Of Grampa and Gramma's. Which seemed to be an unfortunate thing to do. I think they should have kept her name Agnes. And Mother says But she had a doll named Agnes. And I immediately had a whole story in my mind of this little kid being given a new name and transferring her own name to keep some hold of her own personality. A name is so important.

Calling her doll Agnes. I said, But Mother, Esther was five and Dad was twelve, so how do you know about that? I began to try to put together. And she said, Well it must have sitting around somewhere--on a chair or something. She kept that doll. I could have seen it. Then she said she tried to get Joanne to name one of her dolls Agnes. So it must have been still a name that meant something to her by the time you were a little toddler.

--Isn't that interesting. Poor Esther.

--It was a sorry story with Esther. I think alot of it was that they took her too old.

--They didn't know how to treat her.

--Gramma, I'm sure, wasn't particularly good mother for a girl. Compared to how good she was with a little boy. **She ?Esther? lied?** _____ alot. But she could have developed those self-protective habits before she was five years old.

Ja They never properly adopted Ester, she always felt like a second-class citizen, I'm sure. And Mother says that the idea was that Esther would adopt herself, when she felt like she had become one of the family, and so forth, that she would ask to be adopted. Or decide to be adopted. But she must have never come to that feeling. Then we conjectured some about why WJ hadn't been more successful in his kindly ways with Esther.

Jo He was kindly, but he was also severe in a lot of ways, too. He was very detrimental. **(judgemental?)** I can imagine that a little girl who had already been exposed to stealing and stuff and had been caught, already had a pretty well- developed guilt complex by the time she moved into that family. She probably found it hard to be frowned on. I'm sure she was frowned on.

I'm sure she was, too. Dad's recollection of her is practically...///

Ja--the dead sheep

One summer on the farm, I saw something glowing way down in the pasture towards the Catalpa_____ forest that shouldn't have been glowing down there. What was a fire doing down there? Nobody lived there. I think I pointed it out to Daddy. It might have been when I was a junior in hs, and home alone. I was the only one who went with him, anyway. He got interested in what this fire was, so we walked. It was a coolish night...