

FANNIE V: Tape 2, side 3: Fannie, RAD, and Jackie

You were just saying something and then we hit Ernie Capp for a minute....

I said Ernie Capps and I were the ones who decided that it was so cold that night that chocolate milk would be better if it was made into hot chocolate. So we took a whole five-gallon can and put it on a gas burner, they had a stove out there. Uh, it was bottled gas.

Were you out at the cabin?

Out at Messer Lodge! This is all the single help. It couldn't get hot enough--by the time it was hot enough for hot chocolate, it had a nice burnt flavor to it. It got stuck to the bottom. We drank it anyway.

Something about the fellows going to a feather party in South Beloit around Thanksgiving.

What's a feather party?

They had a roulette wheel and they had nice games and they had tickets to win....

Anyway their prizes would be turkeys and ducks and chickens....

Talk about where the parties would be held--in later years moved up to the old car barns (cow barns?) down there on Colby Street.

One year Wilbur Metcalfe got a goose, and so he wondered if he brought it over, would I cook the goose? and then all the single fellas would come over there for a Thanksgiving dinner that we had. Of course this was after Thanksgiving. And I had never cooked a goose before, but I cooked that goose! And we enjoyed it. I remember the pony you kids used to have named Mona.

Yeah, we tried to call it Star. But everyone else called it Mona and we could never caught it to ride it, so it just sat out there in the field as I remember.

Well, yeah, then Daddy brought it over there to the Hill Farm and told Freddy that if he took care of it he could ride it. Any time you kids wanted to come over to ride, why you could. Well that made him very happy. He had Mona four or five years over there. Rode all the time. Don't know if finally sold or what?

I don't remember.

I don't remember. But I know she used to make Freddy awful mad when she'd be running through the gravel and then she'd just stop and he would fall over her head and set in the middle of the road and bawling and she'd nudge him in the head--so they could get going again. That would make him madder! She was quite a pony.

Tell me about 1936, the cornhusking contest down a Blodgetts.

That was 38. ( Turns out it was 37!)

### **ALL THIS I'VE USED**

\*I know Mabel Wallace and I, the Grange ran the eat tent. Three kerosene stoves with three burners each. You know how slow them things can cook!

We had one out at the lake with two burners.

We had never been to one of these, didn't have the least idea of how many people would be there. And then have to order stuff for it. Went down to Bonnie Bee and we ordered 40 pounds of ground beef for hamburgers. They were going to make up more ahead, so that if we needed more we could send someone down there to pick it up. And pies--we couldn't make that many. Ordered 100 from a bakery and everybody thought we were nuts--that we would have pie for a month afterwards! The people kept coming, used all the donuts, we kept sending somebody down after more supplies. It was really a big success, since we didn't know what to expect.

I suppose you were so busy, you didn't get around much.

No we didn't.

What sort of things were at the cornhusking contest?

There wasn't much there at the time.

I've been to alot of cornhusking contests but I missed that one...I was out at Cheyenne and then out of San Francisco. My brother was working for United Airlines and we could ride for free.

I don't think that back then they had many displays or booths like they do now.

I have a feeling there was more events and excitement. Wasn't there farm machinery on display?

There might have been, but at that contest--the corn picking was done by hand.

And with horses.

Each picker had his followers that went with him.

The horses pulled the wagon, huh?

Oh yeah.

And the guys would go down the rows and husk the corn off the stalks.

Then two gleaners would come and take the corn that he had missed off the stalks and used to weigh against him. But every fella in the contest had people there to root for him. They stayed right out on the field with them. Now they have displays and pickers for people to see. But then, they went into the fields to watch.

I remember that one because I was home. Craig, Patty and I had the measles. We were feeling fine and looking out the window and seeing cars bumper to bumper up to Blodgett's. Finally everybody was gone, even Mother. We couldn't stand it--we decided that there was such a crowd that nobody'd see us. We got dressed and went with the measles. I've often wondered how many people got the measles? I hope it was the ten-day measles and that we didn't cause some infant to be born with problems from the German measles. I think if I put in the book, I'll give us the chicken pox. We had to go up to the contest--there hadn't been that much excitement since....

Till we had Farm Progress Show in 1961.

Before we get to Farm Progress, I didn't get to that to my great sorrow. At these cornhusking contests, did they have any side contests, or anything like the fairs? Pig calling contests?

I don't remember anything like that.

Do you ever remember a pig-calling contest?

Oh, yeah. They had them at the county fairs years ago. As an afternoon event.

It seems that the men would have a pig-calling contest and the women would have a husband-calling contest.

I don't remember many of those.

How do you call a pig? ALL DONE ON THIS PAGE

It usually goes "Hey! Suey suey suey!" (laughter)

Did you know that suey means pig in Latin?

No, I never knew that.

I was astonished to learn that! The Latin came all the way down. And bos is cow, so when you call a cow "bossy bossy bossy," that's Latin, too.

All these years! Everybody used to call them that.

You yell "suey suey suey" and they come running.

Falling all over each other.

How about when you and Roy started going around with the seeds to the fairs? and took over the seed stuff.

When was that?

We started raising a little seed corn in 38. I was on the sales end of the milk business, not the farm end. When I found that you could retail a bushel of seed corn for 7dollars, I thought that's for me! We developed the local

business and then we started to expand. That's when you and Roy stepped in and we rigged up equipment. You and Roy had great imaginations. We made maybe a dozen fairs during the season.

The first one was likely up at Stouton. With the help of Roy Pickers (?). They were just starting a new fairground up there. That's 32 years ago.

We didn't start growing corn till about 37. [he's wrong, it was earlier]

Thirty-nine to seventy-nine is forty years. We didn't start showing right away because we didn't have enough corn.

ALL THIS FOLLOWING USED

We worked up till we had about 11 shows during the summer.

Do we have photographs of the way you fixed up the booths? With the corn on the side and bows?

After a while they wouldn't let us do that at some of the fairs. It must have been an unfair trade practice, or something.

I remember us kids coming in and helping.

Oh sure. We had a regular cooler we carried along. When Dave was with us, we always gave him some and he would really bring them in. Uncle Dave Wallace, he was from Durand.

These were different kinds of fairs. They weren't just the county fairs.

Only one.

Elkhorn was always a big one.

We did the Farm Progress shows for a number of years. We did Beaver Dam, a corn show, in October one year--it was cold. We had rented one of those campers that opens like a tent. We couldn't get a motel cuz there weren't many around. We had enough room to put it in back of our show tent. There was electricity there. We took a heater. I always had the coffee pot going. The other salesman from the other tents would go back there and have their coffee and get warm. Susie our big dog was with us. We had a nice pile of corn in the display. One of the nice Jung came by and went back to warm up. Susie took the biggest ear of corn out of the display and ran to him waiting for him to take it out of her mouth. She did the same thing to him the next day (he didn't know she'd done it to others). He wondered how we taught her to do that to him.

He was a rival salesman.

Yes, that's where Bob George is now, at Jung's.

Would Great-grampa Dougan have been alive then?

He died in 1949.

It was after that. My mother died on Friday night and Grampa died on

Saturday noon. We went down to Southern IL, or course. Gramma Dougan couldn't figure out why Roy and I didn't come. Nobody had told her. So afterwards they told her we were in Southern IL for my mother's funeral. We hadn't made any displays before that.

Tell me how the Trask Bridge picnic originated.

That was done when we come here. The Grange, Burett Grange started that. It was a community get together. It expanded until it got to be three different stages. Different programs going on from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A political speaker would talk and the other stages would close down. There were variety shows and fiddling.

Do you think it's still running?

No. It hasn't been done for 15 years. It was too much for the old people at the Grange and the young people didn't want put themselves out to do it.  
USED DOWN TO HERE

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Do you remember the time we had the corn display east of the dairy where we had invited all the competition to furnish seed and we took care of it.

On the corner?

Yeah. We weighed it out to determine the yield per bushel and noted what everybody had yielded and we had pamphlets printed. I think that was the time we entertained the Rotary Club for dinner. We had the State Senator named Smith that died? That was also the time I went through the corn husker. A coupla days before this picnic and demonstration, I ran this hand through the corn picker and there I hung.

I've got to get that story! I don't think I have that.

Fortunately it was a pretty loosly put-together machine. Men were standing around and turned off the electricity pretty quickly. And they took crowbars and broke the roller bars apart and got my hands out. I had the skin stripped off all these fingers.

A corn sheller?

No, a corn husker.

A machine that rolls the husks off them?

It was the bed out of the corn picker.

Side 4: Fannie, RAD, and Jackie, cont.

We husked the corn in the field, but there was a lot of husk left. We would put these into a motor-driven husking bin taken out of an old woods husker. The rolls weren't running tightly together. I would be very careful standing over this thing and patting down with a stick or my hand so that the rolls would seize the corn husks and pull them off before the corn was elevated into the drying bin on the ear. Husks would accumulate under the husker so that from time to

time they had to be pulled out. It never occurred to me that if the rolls are running down the take the husks through, on the reverse trip they would roll up. So I reach under this thing and first thing I knew I had both hands stuck up into the rollers. And they broke the thing apart and got me out. I rolled around on the grass and cursed myself for being a fool. To the hospital to get sewed up.

Where was I?

I still have the scars.

How old were you?

I can't remember.

Was this after 1950, or before?

Probably after.

I was married and gone and just heard about it from the mail or something.

Then we had the demonstration and invited the Rotary Club out and gave them a big dinner: corn and various other things.

Seems like I should remember that.

and \_\_\_\_\_ came in--we had this political celebrity and I think his name was Smith. He later died. He gave the talk to the Rotary at noon. I was going around with my arm in a sling, feeling quite miserable. The interesting thing about this demonstration, and all the work and the money I put into it, preparing the circulars and gathering the data on yields, etc.--Every single competitive corn company took my figures and used them to show that they had the best corn on the lot! Everyone of them!

I remember that now!

After that, I never planted competitor's corn for....

You made it come out best for yourself, didn't you?

Well, our corn looked all right. Sure, but I was just showing what the various corn would do. I remember Fred Wallace made hay outta that! He had Pioneer.

And DeKalb, and...were you still with them or were you Dougan by then?

Oh, I was Dougan.

Do you remember any of Roy's stories of being on the route?

Back in 36 when they had all that big snow...

I remember 36, I wasn't very old.

Henry Florey had a route, too. They would double up when they'd get out at the apartments...what were they called?

Nigger Flats.

But they had a fancy name.

Riverview, or something like that.[Edgewater]

Their two routes ran close together up there and they'd take a big hand sled and would pile cases of milk one there. The two of them would pull it and they would run part of their routes up there. It was the Edgewater apartments. Edgewater Flats. Tom Higgins was selling milk to the farms at that time. From the farm to Tom Higgins' house, it was six weeks that the road wasn't opened up.

What they now call East Colley Road?

Uh-huh. From the Hill Farm up to the next corner. Tom would come having a path cut from the woods to the Hill Farm where he could get between the trees with his team and his bobsled. He would take the milk down and Mr. Giffis (?) or somebody would meet him at the corner below Fred Wallace's. So one day, awful cold, they had to come within ten feet of our front porch, across our yard then back down to the road then. He was coming back up the hill and I thought, Oh boy, he looks pretty cold. When he got out in front of the porch, I called "Stop and have a cup of warm coffee. I'm sure you're cold." He says, "I'm just froze." So he did. I had coffee and cookies. It wasn't too long the telephone rang. It was Mrs. Higgins. She asked if I had seen Mr. Higgins anywhere. I says yeah he was here drinking coffee and getting warm. She says, Thank goodness! The team and the bobsled are here but he's not with it!" We didn't even notice the darn horses were gone!. She was scared to death! It ended up that Tom had to walk home! **THIS IS USED**

Oh, I remember those were some cold days!

Everybody's saying that this was the worst winter, that this was more snow. What I remember the huge slabs of ice on the river. The school cab couldn't through by Frietags. They had to take us around the highway.

I remember having a full house every night. Henry Fleury, John Holmes, and Bill Purcell would stay because they would worry that they couldn't get back to the farm in the morning.

What did you do? Roll them all up into blankets?

We had two bedrooms and a big davenport that opened up. I remember one night when it was real cold, we decided it was silly sitting around at home every night. We might as well go into Beloit and go to the dance hall at Waverly Beach. We decided to take baths first. Well, Johnny Holmes was the first to take one (in the bath off the bedroom). Henry and Bill came in with a heaping dishpan of snow. Roy said "Watch out! I don't know what Johnny's gonna do!" They dumped it down over him while he's in the bath. He comes running out of there saying, "Watch out, Fannie! Here I come!" At any rate we went to the dance that night.

**THIS IS ON BITS FOR NOW** : Do you remember when Glenn Wallace and somebody else were courting the same girl?

That was Bill Purcell. I remember that. Who took this girl to the dance? Glenn took her, I believe. And then Bill decided to see what they were doing after the dance. Glenn had a coupe with a rumble seat. Glenn had a feeling that Bill was hiding in that rumble seat. They went somewhere to park and Bill like to froze back in that rumble seat.

And knowing that things were going on up there in that front seat that were making him groan....Which one got the girl?

Neither one.

So you could be in one of those rumble seats with the lid down?

Yeah, Bill was a little guy, anyway.

Bill's father was the milk inspector over there.

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If you had any company on Sunday afternoon, up there at the farm, when Claire Matthews was ready to milk, cuz he was always dressed in a white apron--it was quite a showplace--you were proud to take your friends in there to see the Sunday afternoon milking.

Could you give me a little more description of that? It would be nice to say something about that. /// I want to get Dad's words that John was really pernickety. Gramma Dougan always called it persnickety. He came down with his guests on the Sabbath, it was Saturday afternoon. The milking machine wasn't hanging at the right angle, so he stepped across the gutter to adjust the machine and the cow saw this stranger coming in a good suit and kicked off the milking machine and the lid and the tit cups off and John went head over heels in the gutter and it was quite a show. On Sunday, people would come and watch the milking. Did all the men wear white aprons? **USED**

Yeah, Claire Matthews was head herdsman. They had black boots that came up to their knees.

Did they wear caps?

Yes, they did.

White canvas caps.

**THIS IS COPIED AT END:**

The walks around the back of the cows were limed real heavy with crackling white.

Fannie, do you know how they (slakked) lime? You would buy lime for slakking. They would pour water on it and it would get very hot and break down into a very fine powder. We used that for years to keep the gutters white and to keep odors down. The only thing against that is that it would build up on the walls. Makes the wash (walk?) rather rough, so in later years we would use ground limestone.



Back then we always looked forward. Every third Sunday afternoon from about 2:30, after they had checked off the milk route, they had the rest of the afternoon off.

Gramma started the unheard-of policy of giving each man a half a day off. And they rotated that half a day. Work had to go on on Sunday.

Any other recollections of the barn?

It was really quite an experience for your friends from town. To come in and see such a lovely herd of cows and how clean they all were--how clean everything was. We often planned on having friends from on the milk route, which was good advertising. They would go back and tell their friends how clean it was.

Claire would invite people out?

No, Roy would. From his milk route.

That's a story I like.

It was good advertising.

They'd go back and tell their neighbors that they'd gone and watched...

Quite often you got a new milk customer out of it.

And the school children used to go out. I remember our girls coming home and bragging about having a bottle a milk given to them and playing with the calfs. Oh, we had quite a program. That was in later years. Practically every school in town would send out their first or second grades and you'd give them half a day for every class. Usually run for two weeks or a little more to the first week in June. Then we were always thinking up something special. We had a pet fox that they all had fun with. There was a few scraps of black cellophane blowing around somewhere that we'd use to cover sided stacks. We told them that witches lived on the farm. As you viewed one of the corn cribs some distance away, the weather vane on the top--it looked like an individual. I'd point out, "Maybe that's the witch." Then there was the little hog house across the crick that they couldn't get to and I said "I think the witch lives in the Round Barn, I think that's where her daughter lives, across the crick." They'd oohh and aahh. Then there's that culvert there at the corner where you go down the old Mackie farm. I would suggest that the braver ones could go down the rabbit hole. We would scramble down the side of the bank into this culvert, and sit in this culvert and look at each other for awhile. Then we'd go all the way through the culvert and surprise anybody that hadn't come in by turning up the other side.

I don't think I have that on tape. I know that sometimes you'd run water down a gopher hole and the gopher would come out on the other end.

We didn't do that with these kids, of course, we did that when we were youngsters in school. Mike Shelmeyer would kill the gophers by waiting and pounding their heads when they came out. That turned my stomach some.

Another thing I did with the kids was to talk about the witches and we'd get up in the round barn and I'd say, "Look around, maybe you could find her broom somewhere." And they'd look around and they'd find an old, battered broom. Then I'd suggest that you never know when you'll find a witch, there might be a witch in this class. What's your male witch?

Warlock.

They might be able to fly. Would any of them like to try? Finally some little boy or girl would come timidly forward and everyone would cheer them on. They'd try the broom and run down the incline of the barn just as fast as they could go and everybody yelling. I'd caution them that the bus leaves to go back to town in fifteen minutes. So if they did fly, they'd have to be back in fifteen minutes. Fortunately, no one ever flew.

Well you put a chicken to sleep, and kiss it awake. And everybody'd make a snowball. Everybody'd get something to drink.

All the classes, when we'd sing the chicken to sleep would sing "Rock a bye baby." One class sang Brahms's Lullaby. Then we'd take them down to the pasture and they'd walk among the cows. I'd tell them the difference between the country kids and the city kids. The country kids could run across the pasture and never dirty his shoes. A city kid would really get smeared up. One little girl was running across the pasture and she tripped and slid right into a fresh cow pie. It was all the way down her. Well, the poor little crying thing, I took her down to the brook and washed off some of it, then I took her out to the house and Mrs. Anderson stripped her down and put her under a shower and put her clothes into the washer and dryer and in fifteen minutes she had her out in circulation again. Salerno--was there a teacher named Salerno when you were in school?

There was a male teacher that I had that taught violin.

He had a very attractive wife. That was when we had pigs. When you catch a little pig, you can lift it up by the leg and it really squeals! Well we were down alongside the big pasture and here was a bunch of little pigs, alongside the fence, the same side of the fence we were on. Beautiful young Salerno thought she'd catch a pig. She tripped and took a fall.

Did she fall in a cow pie?

I don't remember a cow pie, but she certainly ripped her socks and dirtied herself up.

First thing I saw when we come up here was when they went to make ice out of the river.

Tell us about that.

End of tape.

The walks around the back of the cows were limed real heavy with crackling white.

Fannie, do you know how they (slakked) lime? You would buy lime for slakking. They would pour water on it and it would get very hot and break down into a very fine powder. We used that for years to keep the gutters white and to keep odors down. The only thing against that is that it would build up on the walls. Makes the wash (walk?) rather rough, so in later years we would use ground limestone.