

March 4, 1981

Dear Joan Dwig -

I am the daughter of Jake and Eleanor Mart, from Bogeman - 'Have enjoyed both your books enormously!'

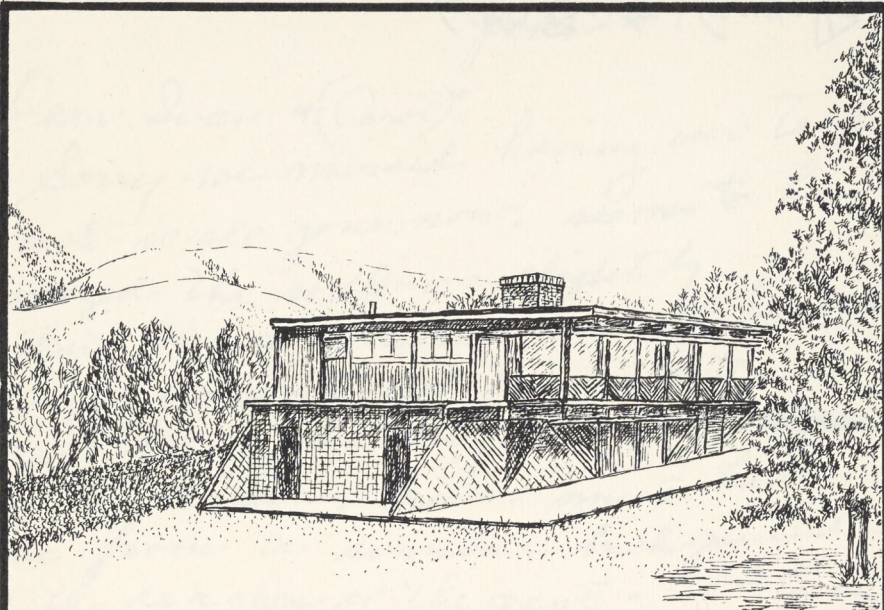
I have purchased this book for a friend of mine whose mother died when he was a small boy also. Additionally, he is a writer, and a fine sensitive man like you.

Would you be so kind to autograph it for him? (me?) His name is Bob Holmes.

Thank you, in advance! I'm enclosing an addressed <sup>label/and enough postage</sup> ~~stamped mail~~ for its return. Perhaps you would re-use this mailer?

Thank you again.

Sincerely,  
De Adams  
1826 Westwood  
Billings, Mt.  
59102



288 Bowman

Valley View Golf Club

6140 Bridger Canyon Rd.

Forge man, Md.

June 19 - 1980

Dear Ivan + Carol:

Sorry we missed having our talk -  
The ash is all gone now. seems to have  
damaged the willows slightly -

Wish this is an article from The Smithsonian  
I thought you might not have seen it. I  
haven't seen anything like it. ~~Since~~  
Your ancestors + mine must have  
come from a similar background  
in the reaches of the past - 15<sup>th</sup> Century?  
Best regards

Chance Must (over  
blank)

P.S. The altitude bothers me here -  
moves the pity - so I'm returning to Phoenix  
very soon - at least I breathe there & feel  
10 yrs. younger - Not looking forward to  
the heat - but I've air conditioning & a pool  
outside my door, Jake is committed here  
for this haying season but says we will  
put the summer in next year at  
Bellingham or Anacortes or vicinity. May  
get to see you then.

Regards again

Phoenix Address no. #104  
4727 E. Lafayette Blvd.  
Phoenix, Az. 85018

E M

23 June '80

June 23, '80

Dear Eleanor--

Yes, we're sorry too we got ashed out of seeing you at the ranch in May, but at least we're glad we got to say hello at the Museum shindig.

Thanks immensely for the Smithsonian piece. I hadn't seen it. Since I saw you in Billings, Carol and I have been to where the Doigs come from in Scotland, right near Carnoustie, north of Dundee. Not at all like what I expected: it's gentle seacoast, the North Sea in sight from everywhere. 30 miles to the nearest glen and heather.

I don't know if Carol had a chance to tell you, we spent an evening in White Sulphur with Gertrude McStravick and the Buckingham. I hadn't known you and Gertrude were acquainted; remarkable woman.

All is well with us. I have a book called Winter Brothers coming out this fall, and have begun a novel; not the Montana novel yet, I'm still accumulating for that one. I may be back in Bozeman this October; am to make a speech in Billings, and hope to do some bookstore appearances with the new book at the same time. If you and Jake get out here next summer, let us know and we'll link up somehow. All the best.

Phoenix Az-  
July 23-1980

Dear Joan -

Thank you for the nice letter. Jake is the person who can give you a world of information - but he always deprecates his knowledge & ability. He's a gifted story-teller. Our social group in Bozeman loved to hear his White Sulphur Springs stories.

I'm writing him to see if he can't get our grandson's tape recorder & make some tapes for you. He did it for a Bicentennial (P?) History project & his tape was a riot. It's in the high school & we hear the youngsters like it a lot - Maynard Buck's boys brought it home for him to hear. Jake doesn't express himself well in writing & it's hard for him but he can talk! If he doesn't get the job done - try to tape him when you are in Bozeman. I believe he may still be there.

Best regards,  
I'll write what I can think of. Eleanor Mast.

Aug. 13, '80

Dear Eleanor--

Thanks for the note, and I'll try talk to Jake when I'm next in Bozeman. That looks as if it'll be late October, when I'm to go back for that Museum dinner Mt. St. H interrupted. I'll write or call Jake when I get firm plans.

Carol and I have been to Alaska, researching for a frontier novel I'm working on. Clouds and rain, rain and clouds, but a good trip in spite of it.

all best

18 July '80

Dear Eleanor--

I don't know whether you have the spare time to do this, or whether you have any information on this topic (sheep!), but if you have any memories or lore to share, I could happily use them. I've been hearing from some old Forest Rangers--you may know one of them, Johnny Gruar from the Sixteen country--and am playing with the idea of writing a novel about running sheep on forest land. It would be a situation something like my folks summering with the Dogie's sheep on Grass Mtn., but I think I'd tell it from the ranger's point of view, maybe have him accompanied by his son of twelve or thirteen years old. Seems to me there could be a short, appealing book there somewhere.

Anyway, do you have anything you can tell me about:

--shepherders. Their nicknames, odd habits, any stories about them.

--rangers. Ever been around them? How often would they come around to look at the range, would they happily set up to an extra plate at the table if offered, were they still hunting coyotes (in the 1930's, or even in the years just after World War Two, say), anything of the sort.

--forest fire crews. Were you ever around one of those crews they used to scrape together by sweeping everybody in from the streets of Spokane or somewhere?

--dogs, especially sheep dogs. Names, odd markings, unusual habits or ~~stipities~~ displays of intelligence.

Well, I guess you get the idea. Right now, Carol and I are about to set off for Alaska, for a novel I've begun which takes place partly in Sitka. I may be back in Bozeman briefly the last week in October, but won't know for sure for awhile yet. Will give Jake a call if I make it, though maybe he'll have joined you by then? I'm glad we had the chance to talk, even briefly as we did, in May. I don't think I had the time to tell you then that we'd had a visit with Gertrude McStravick just before that.

Hope you're well. All best wishes.



May 1 - 1950  
Phoenix, Ariz.

Dear Ivan -

Yes we will be home the  
week end of May 17 & 18. I'm leaving  
here via air for Dozmao, May 13.

Jake & I came down here Jan 1 -  
as, believe it, I've developed emphysema  
not too bad - nearly 80% capacity  
left - they think - or so they say.  
Anyway I get along here quite well.  
Jake went back Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> to supervise  
Calving.

We will be so glad to see you  
and your wife & hope we can  
be of some help.

Kindest personal regards

Eleanor.

P.S. Please disregard the  
return on this letter, just to know you received it.

Mrs. Eleanor Mast  
6140 Bridger Canyon Rd.,  
Bozeman, Mont.

59715

14 May '79

Dear Eleanor--

You are a real research bonanza. I had no idea you were going to the extent of effort you did in your letter, but am glad as hell to have the material. It is exactly the sort of stuff I can't get anywhere but from somebody with a keen memory. Since you were generous enough to offer more topics, I'd love to hear whatever you can tell me about--

...the method of dying wool yarn with lichens or chokecherry juice  
...anything about traveling by sled. For starters, what did Jake's gypsy wagon box look like, and what were its approximate dimensions? And maybe he can tell me if there was anything different about harnessing horses to a sleigh in cold weather than, say, harnessing them to a hay rake.

...I remember something about pouring beans into boots, but not enough. Can you tell me what it was all about? And do I remember there was a danger of the beans splitting the boots open?

I was in Missoula last week for a few days, but at the university for a conference on a schedule so tight I never got out of the city limits. Since they were paying my way, my time was theirs. I have some hope I may get to Bozeman at least by next spring. I was invited by a number of Montana libraries to show up for Library Week this year, but couldn't do it; maybe I'll see if they want me next year. Anyway, I will see you and Jake whenever I make it there. And until then, thanks immensely for sharing your memory with me.

all the best

May 7, 1979

Dear Ivan,

So glad you may be able to  
use my recollections of the Doigo.

From time to time as I remember  
them - I'll write you some homely  
details of pioneer living. This was the  
garden <sup>in Bridger Canyon</sup> when Jake & I were married  
in 1930. On my mother's side they were  
pioneers - came to Montana in 1863. I  
was born in 1907 and can remember  
visiting my great uncle's ranch on the  
Little Blackfoot at an early age. <sup>(about 4)</sup> They  
met the train from Butte & took us to  
the ranch by susey. <sup>(drawn by horses) (odor of horse manure)</sup> I remember standing  
in the back - also sitting. I got so thirsty  
& hot <sup>on arrival</sup> that I drank from a jug I thought  
had water in it - proved to be coal oil <sup>for the lamps.</sup> They  
induced vomiting - I didn't get much.

I remember the lovely small bedroom -  
blue & white bed cover (quilt?) & white walls - <sup>white curtains</sup>  
white washed - I made a dive for the bed &  
got the shock of my life - practically smothered  
I sank in so deeply.

It was a feather tick! I remember my mother searched around & found a buffalo coat with the fur on and used it for ballast under the feather tick. (new England sailors in my background)

### Interior Walls:

On many early cabins <sup>walls</sup> muslin was stretched to ~~form~~ cover walls & ceiling. Of course it sagged a little & once in a while a mouse would get in behind. I have seen these muslin walls papered with several layers of wall paper. They also used white wash.



### Floors:

The floors were often <sup>what is</sup> called "puncheon" floor - This was when the log was adzed or sawn on one side & the other left round. The planks were prized against one another & <sup>nailed</sup> ~~the~~ floor not tongue & grooved. ~~and~~ Any cracks were filled. Our floors here at the ranch are done that way except they are sawn top & bottom. Jake has a little saw mill.

Once a week the floors were scrubbed on hands & knees - a brick was used to scour.

When the floor was spotlessly clean & dry the pioneers boiled some skim milk (after skimming the cream) and put it on the floor hot. After a year or so this produced a beautiful dark floor with a high shine and a hard finish.

### Laundry:

On TV ads ~~and on~~ I snort at the way they hang clothes on the clothes line. The correct way that doesn't wear out sheets & blankets - hang them the long way - (Side to side) never put over the line through the middle of the sheet. Clothing was hung  - edge to edge overlapping at the top <sup>corners</sup> - clothes pins were wooden & prized - never left on the line - they were  this type and home made. The saying was "laundry well hung ~~is~~ half ironed" - the edges smoothed as the article was hung. The white clothes were boiled to loosen the dirt & then dumped back in the wash tub & scrubbed on the board a second time. The dirt just poured out - The water in the boiler was "broken" with the addition of lye water - (water run through wood ashes - & settled to clarify. The water in the

boiler <sup>then</sup> developed a scum of minerals such as limestone. The scum was skimmed off & the water was then ready for the addition of home-made lye soap cut by knife in thin curls, so it would melt & dissolve easily. Some women kept the soap soft for washing. This was in soap - home made. the well known "soft soap".

Fat of all kinds was cut in small pieces and rendered out - elk fat is excellent - makes nice white soap. After rendering ~~out~~ out of doors in a big kettle (black ~~of~~ cast iron) and any leftover cooking grease added - lye water was ~~again~~ put in after the fat reached a fairly ~~hot~~ warm temperature. (Left over cooking grease was clarified by adding water & boiling it up & skimming the fat off the top - The idea was that no salts are in the fat as this will keep the soap from "making") Then the mixture of fat & lye water is slowly boiled down to evaporate the moisture. A paddle about 6 to 8 in wide & 2 or more feet long was used to stir the mixture ~~keep~~ very slowly or it might separate - If it did separate you added water & started in all over again. The way a person knew when there was

enough lye in the mix was to taste it - just a tiny bit on the end of the tongue when the mixture stung the end of the ~~long~~ tongue there was enough lye. Then when the mixture became thick & honey colored - the soap was made. Some wooden boxes about - 4 to 6 in deep were lined with old material (rags) and the liquid soap poured in. ~~The boxes~~ <sup>The boxes</sup> were covered top & bottom with old rugs - hides - what ever <sup>soap</sup> allowed to cure & harden for several weeks. Before it got too hard it was cut into bars - taken out & hardened further in the air & sun. Voila! Soap.

Here are some other subjects ~~that~~ <sup>on which I</sup> have memories. Let me know if you would like this <sup>information</sup>.

Preparing wool for spinning & spinning.  
 a little on knitting - They always knit Sox & mittens & caps - sweaters - dyeing the wool yarn with chokecherry juice & lichens - how to.  
 Travel on sleds drawn by horses in cold weather (Jake made a gypsy wagon box) - some times we used the hayrack or rick? - bricks heated in oven or the fire place - beans heated and poured in wet boots to dry them - You know about this!  
 We always sang to distract ourselves from the cold.



The Christmas masses <sup>at home</sup> & Christmas programs  
at the school house - They are a wonderful  
memory -

I called Paul Wylie - He knows them  
fairly - well - He sends his regards & was  
so pleased House of Sky was nominated

It's not necessary to write a big letter <sup>in reply</sup> as I  
know you are busy - just let me know if  
this type of information is what you need &  
want - probably not new to you - but some  
may be.

If you ever could get this way - our house  
has been remodeled & in the style of the  
more affluent (but we aren't) pioneer dwelling. We  
have a house we rent out that is an historic  
house about - 1880 - or earlier. He restored  
it in the original style & moved it to the edge  
of the ranch.

Must quit - But as you can see I love  
this type of historical love. & I believe I have  
observed & lived through quite a bit.

Regards.

Eleanor West

June 12, '79

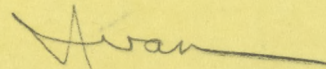
Dear Eleanor--

Liked your gypsy wagon material; I don't think I ever encountered a vehicle like it, although since your description I do remember a few sled boxes sitting amid the scatter of old buckrakes, tractors, etc. on a ranch or two out of my growing up. Also loved Jake's pair of stories, and thank him greatly from me.

Sometime when you write, would you include anything you think interesting about milk cows? I remember such things as kicking irons-- is that what the hobbles were called? And that cows sometimes were named, as workhorses were; would be glad to have any such names (of either cows or workhorses) you and Jake remember. Also, my memory is dim on some exact points: just when in the spring would a cow come fresh, and how long until she went dry? Also, how early in your ranch life do you remember cream separators: were they always around, or do you remember some earlier way of handling milk?

Am working like the dickens on my next book, which is set out here on the Coast, and likely will have to keep at it right up until the end of the year. In the meantime, thanks again for writing--see you whenever I can get to your part of Montana.

best



p.s. Also, you've mentioned dances in your letters. Would be glad for anything you can remember about what tunes were played, and what musical instruments, and where the dances were held--schoolhouses usually?

Sat -

Dear Ivan -

It is a pleasure for me to recall the old days and ways - although the incessant, numbing work. I don't recall with joy and abandon. I'm taking a bit of time off from washing windows and curtains. I stick to the old way in that I do a mini-housecleaning before Thanksgiving and a more thorough one to be finished by Memorial Day. The garden had to be planted by the same date. We're not going to quite make it - but well so what!

About traveling by sled. He heated bricks & heavy plates in the oven or on the back of the wood burning stove in the kitchen - really called the range (fun to find the derivation of that word). He wrapped the ~~old~~ hot bricks & plates in pieces of worn flannel or wooden cloth. <sup>(might burn)</sup> He used heavy, tied quilts - the interior batting was wool & the outer pieces covering came from old ~~or~~ overcoats - the unworn areas such as the back & bottoms. The old timers called these soogans<sup>sp?</sup>. <sup>as</sup> ~~another~~ word not in dictionary - also the word faunched - "the horse faunched at the mouth" -) The sleds racks were piled with hay or straw. I liked the straw best - seemed cleaner - not so many lumps & burrs. didn't stick to your clothes.

When Jake comes in I'll ask him for more details

about traveling by sled. We had harness bells  
which I now use to hang on the door at Christmas.  
inside the evergreen wreath. These bells <sup>leather</sup> must  
be close to 80 yrs. or more old. It was an old  
second hand harness when we got it  
fifty years ago. Two traditions observed in my  
family - <sup>(Pioneer Wyoming Montana on my mother's side)</sup> - An evergreen wreath at Christmas and  
an American flag out on the Fourth of July. Also  
new summer clothes for the children didn't come  
at Easter - <sup>was now a day</sup> but at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July - when there  
was a picnic ~~and~~ and a baseball game.

In the winter Jake used to wear a black calf skin  
Coat - with the fur on the outside. He always  
loved it when he had to stand in the hay rack  
and drive the horses. He wants to duplicate it - in  
his old age - It came down about 3 in below the  
top of Levis and had a webbing. We sang a lot  
on those trips - quite often they were in the evening  
and I remember clear, cold moon lit nights

After Jake made the gypsy wagon - we really  
were comfortable - It was ~~about~~ a box - five  
feet long - 4 feet wide & 4 feet tall, with a door  
on the driver's side - He put in a glass across  
the front - up from the floor several feet & bored  
holes through the boards to put the reins through  
It was placed on a bob sled

It was made out of unpainted boards - & was filled about 1 1/2 feet with straw - then the blankets - hot bricks & plates & more blankets - very tasty & comfortable - However a bit dangerous if the horses ran away which they did with me once but I didn't tip over & the horses ran breast high into a snow bank & stopped.

Jack said to tell you about the time we had been to a dance & it was very cold - 25° - 30° below - when we came home & got into bed - He said, "I've been warming up your feet for years ~~and~~ mine are really cold, so would you warm up mine tonight?" I tried but my feet were so cold I couldn't tell <sup>for about 20 min.</sup> that he had climbed in bed with his shoes on!

Jack used to lease pasture from Florence Harley at <sup>Sixteen</sup> ~~the~~ - Do you remember her? She was about 60 yrs. old and had been teaching at Sixteen school for years. When we bought this ~~place~~ ranch in Bridger Canyon he moved our registered Herefords down here through the foot hills all by himself - He went through the country your parents summered <sup>in</sup> but he came through in the fall - and nearly caught pneumonia - the first night he ~~was~~ rolled out his bedroll in Alex Campbell's house - your grandmother's relative - the next night he stayed with Jack Lane

-4-

said his <sup>new</sup> wife. Jack was a tall-lean former bachelor - they lived out to hell & gone. but they had a nice cabin - with hop vines all around. They also had goats. I guess they were his wives. He had fenced the yard extra well - with chicken wire inside the regular fence. Jack also had two wonderfully well trained dogs. One day he came home - the goats had jumped the fence & were at the vines - He told the dogs to take them out of there & the dogs did. There were nine goats & nine holes in that chicken wire fence. The goats ran down the creek away and gradually returned home all but the Billy goat, so Jack went down the creek <sup>howe</sup> & roped the Billy & took him on home - It was the first day of hunting & there was a light fall of snow. Some neighbors coming along behind Jack ~~and~~ and seeing the track in the snow - said, "Well I see Jack got his deer already" - Then they saw where the goat had gotten to his feet & jumped ahead for a few paces. One hunter looked at the other & said, "My God, he's bringing him in alive!"

where Jack was dragging the goat

That's one of Jack's favorite stories. Entertaining but I don't believe the type of background material you are collecting.

This must be all for now. I'll write again - I

Keep a list of ~~things~~ or subjects I believe might interest you. I'll write about the lichens to color wool & other things about wool - what her milk cow meant to a frontier woman - the coziness of a barn on bitter winter nights - cutting ice & the ice house. I keep thinking of facets of pioneer living - some might be useful.

Best regards,

Eleanor Mast,

About the hot beans & split boots - I remember that warming also - The beans were heated to real warm - put in for an hour or so, poured out - reheated & put in again but not left in long enough to let the beans swell.

E

The harness for the Gypsy wagon was the same as for a hay rack.

June 15 - '79

Dear Swan,

This pen is easier to write with and this one even better on this old paper - Please excuse - but since this letter may be voluminous - I'll use up this paper.

About milk cows:

We had one named Speck - she had spots all over her face and if curiosity denotes smartness - She was smart. She fell in love with Jake or thought he was her calf. If he worked on a calf <sup>or bawled</sup> or talked to me in the barn yard she came running. <sup>+ got between us - herded him away from me</sup> She was our only milk cow at the time & probably was lonely as she was not kept with the other cattle.

Speck was also jealous. If I came out to talk with Jake - she would get between us. <sup>(Excuse, please)</sup> She followed him dutifully every where - up & back - when he got out wood. She followed him fencing & didn't notice when he returned to the buildings. He was half angry at her & tired & refused my suggestion he go back & get her as her tag was huge with milk & if not milked out would be painful



The next a.m. he went up ~~over~~ <sup>on</sup> the mountain to get her - She had taken up with a sheep herder who had milk in every possible container.

One day I saw Jake with fishing pole in hand skulking around the corner of the barn. When I asked ~~what~~ <sup>why</sup> on earth he was doing that he said, "That damned old ~~cow~~ <sup>speck</sup> follows me fishing - crashes through the brush & makes so much noise - I can't ~~get~~ <sup>catch</sup> anything."

Kicking irons were called Hobbles & Jake developed a unique restraint for messy cow tails that were sometimes switched across the face - I went in the barn & he had ~~so~~ run a wire the length of the milking area - just above the cow's hips & the tails were clothespinned up to the wire - all in a row.

A milk cow or two often was given to a young woman when she married. A real ~~rapport~~ <sup>affection</sup> between woman & her cow often developed. The cream was made into butter & sold & that money along with the egg money was hers. She used it for store bought things such as sugar

(3)

Cocoa, coffee, salt, tea & sewing materials.

On a bitter, frosty night the cow barn was a haven of warmth & comfort. Jake used to fill the squared log barn with horses and cattle & the milk cows - and it became really comfortable & cozy. Frost rimmed the walls inside, the kerosene lanterns cast deep shadows & the rustling - munching & chewing noises and the warm animal - even manure odors made the barn a ~~happy~~ <sup>snuggly refuge</sup> from the bitter winter weather outside.

In this atmosphere a pioneer woman milked her cow. One woman told me she just <sup>loved to</sup> put her head against the cow's flank & milked away. Cows treated affectionately & gently let down their milk easier & gave more of it. Cows were named Clara, Flo-Bess, Bossie, Daisy, Flossie - any short female name. One rancher started naming his registered cows after women in the area - didn't contribute to his popularity.

Separators started coming into general use about 1910 - Jake remembers his parents hauling the milk into the creamery - about 3 miles to be separated. Before that time

(4)

every farm or ranch had to have a cold room. I remember one - a log room built over Spring Creek <sup>in Meagher Co.</sup> so cold you couldn't stay in it very long even on the hottest day in August. Some were stone houses built over a spring - one <sup>room</sup> in Bridger Canyon has a cement floor & the spring piped into big cement tubs.

In these cold rooms the milk was put into large shallow tin pans, 18-20 in across & 4 in deep to let the cream rise. ~~It~~ the milk was covered with muslin so ~~at~~ <sup>the cream</sup> wouldn't get dry on the surface, <sup>& let the best escape.</sup> After about 8 hrs it was skimmed with a metal skimmer about the shape & size of a large clam shell. Then it was made into butter or used for cooking & table use & everyone - including myself got fat. After washing & scalding milk pans were put in the

The milk cows were often short horns - a good all purpose breed. The milk cows were bred to come fresh any season of the year to insure a continuous supply of milk - gestation was 283 days & cows were dried up for about 2 months before the birth of the next calf. The skim milk was mixed

pan to sterilize - cow racks at the sunny side of the house.

(5)

with ground feed for pigs & fed plain to calves who became pot-bellied - particularly on separated milk -

most ranches had a grinder even in early days. It was a metal hopper <sup>4 1/2 ft high</sup> on a five foot square wooden base. The hopper flared out at the top - brass were down in the bottom - It had a double tongue - one acted as a brace & the other stuck straight out & was pulled around by a team to grind the grain. If finely ground grain was wanted - the brass were screwed down & the grain ground the second time.

Whole wheat soaked over night & boiled the next a.m. until the skins burst makes the finest of all <sup>breakfast</sup> cereals - Served with sugar & cream. The Supt. of Schools here told me he was raised on it in the Dakotas - good protein.

Work horses were named - (teams) Mick & Joker - Fred & Rusty - Fannie & Charley, Sam & Saul, King & Queen - altho the same sex usually worked together.

## Dances -

The violin was always the lead instrument accompanied by a banjo - or a guitar, sometimes a mandolin - seldom an accordion. (At home the Scots played harps - I asked one young woman (years ago) where her father got his harp & she replied - "The old Scottish families just always had their harps".) They passed the hat to pay the musicians - any contribution was welcome but <sup>1.00</sup> the usual. Sometimes the hat was passed again to induce the musicians to play another hour - when the evening wore on - sometimes the violinist would stall - & they knew it was time to fortify him with another few drinks.

The dances were waltzes, polkas, schottisches, minnets, & quadrilles after about 1915. Early on the square dances, & polkas & the like were most approved. Face to face dances where partners put their arms around one another were considered too sexy - vulgar. The music was "Turkey in the Straw - School Day (Good old golden rule day) Put your Little Foot right there - a polka. Pop Goes the Weasel Put on your Old Gray Bonnet - Daisy - Daisy (Give me your love so true) - my grandfather's favorite. A lunch brought by the women

(7)

Jake says:  
"Wonderful  
cakes."

was served at midnight - Cakes & Sandwiches -

A supper companion was asked <sup>for the supper dance.</sup> Jake  
often asked Anna Doig. I believe they  
might have married - had she been a  
bit more accessible - propinquity - you know.

For entertainment, if a Scotsman  
were in the crowd, he might be induced  
with a few drinks to sing Scottish songs -  
An Irishman used to dance a jig - I remember  
him - He was so light on his feet, he could  
have danced on eggs. One rancher played  
the bones - they were beef ribs, bleached  
& polished. He held them between his fingers  
to play them - produced a rhythmic clatter.

Any disagreements - usually over girls -  
were settled outside - usually occasioned  
by too much consumption of rot gut whisky.  
The women were carefully shielded from  
first hand knowledge of these affairs - going  
home - the participants were pretty subdued.

Dances were usually held in school  
houses - & in some barns - This is  
all!! for now.

Best regards.

Clarence

This is huge - but I enjoy writing it.

June 21, '79

Dear Eleanor--

Very nice lore about milk cows and dancing. Specks sounds as if she was a terrific chatter.

Sometime this summer or later in the year, I hope to go through the collection of photos I have around here. In it I think is one of Anna and Jake; also one taken at a dance at the Sixteen schoolhouse, but I think before your time. Will pass along anything that seems of interest.

best

6140 Bridger Canyon Rd.  
Bozeman, Mont.  
59715  
April 30, 1979.

Dear Ivan,

Congratulations on your nomination to the 1979 National Book Awards - We can't get cable T.V. so don't know how it all came out. Honor enough, it is, to be nominated.

I told you when we met so briefly in Belling and you remembered having a photo of Jake Mast - that I would write you if I dredged up any memories of the Dogs - so here goes.

Angus invited Jake and me (about 1932) to a dance at the Hill Mountain school house. I remember Angus & Anna and, I believe, Charley were still at home.

I remember how the group of Scots all made their own fun - high lived - energetic dancers. They drank a little whiskey - the men - but not the women - but there was no drunkenness.



The dance ~~was~~ broke up about 5:00 a m  
and then we rattled over the dusty  
roads to the Doig ranch - way out  
and gone it seemed to me.

The thing that made the experience  
different was that Jake & I used to  
go right to bed - sleep a few hours &  
then get up & do the chores - & feel  
rotten all day - from sleeping too heavily.

The Doigs had a different pattern -  
Everybody got busy as a whistle - milked  
the cow - fed the chickens - took care of  
the fresh milk, etc. etc. ate breakfast  
did the dishes and then went to bed  
and slept until about 1:00 p.m. - then  
got up had Sunday dinner - visited  
a while and each one went on  
about his business - but felt refreshed  
and rested. It was a good pattern.

I remember the ranch house - plain  
& clean with linoleum floors. I  
remember table cloths - oil cloth in the

Kitchen, but the small tables in the living room <sup>were</sup> covered with embroidered cloths. I also remember Anna's hope chest + how lovely her things were.

Those Scottish people played hard and worked hard, and there was fun and gaiety <sup>(sp?)</sup> - respect and loyalty to their mother and real love and protectiveness for Anna.

Well - this isn't any earth shaking revelation but I thought it might be interesting to you.

Very truly yours,

Eleanor Mast.

May 3, '79

Dear Eleanor--

Thanks so much for the letter. As it turned out, I did not win the National Book Award--Westerners hardly ever do--but the nomination itself had been a good experience.

Your memory of the Doigs is useful to me. I have it in mind to try a novel about Montana homesteaders, from about 1890 until the winter of 1919-20, in which I would take the situation of my family and fictionalize it, and the lore of staying up to do the chores and then bed down is the kind of detail which is terrifically helpful. A former Ringling resident named Arch Ford, who now lives out here at Wenatchee, has been writing me some highly useful memories of Ringling in the 'teens and 'twenties.

My aunt who lives in Missouri--Jim Doig's widow--has told me that the oil-cloth you saw on the table at the Doig homestead was referred to by my Scottish grandmother as "the ile-clawth."

I've not heard from Anna for some time, but the last report of her was not good; her health seems to be declining x fairly alarmingly.

I'm going to be in Montana the coming week--at Missoula--but as I'm scheduled to be at the university the full time, I don't guess I'll get to Bozeman or anywhere. If you ever encounter a Bozeman resident named Paul Wylie, give him my regards. He was my grade school principal in WSS, and wrote me a fine letter after House of Sky came out.

See you sometime, and I may be in touch to ask about further Montana details from you, within the next year. Until then, all the best.