

# **DORINE WILLIAMS**

(born Dorine Sarah Louise Diehl)

Interviewed by Jill Williams Bishop, her daughter

*The first interview session of my mother, Dorine Williams, was on March 5, 2006, during our usual Sunday afternoon phone call. At that time she lived in a retirement home, McKendree Village, in Hermitage, Tennessee, just outside Nashville, and I was at home in Annandale, Minnesota. The birth our own first grandchild, Charlie Aubitz, inspired me to gather our family history, and I was compelled to record my own mother's story. So we began...*

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## **I PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS**

**WHAT ARE/WERE YOUR PARENTS' NAMES?** Christian Herman and Jennie Diehl.

**WHERE DID YOUR PARENTS LIVE?** In Anna, Illinois when I was born.

**HOW DID YOUR PARENTS MEET?** My parents met in college in Effingham, Illinois. They both graduated from Austin College. She was a Latin major and worked her way through college teaching piano while living at home. It was very unusual for women to go to college at that time. He went on to medical school after college, graduating from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in St. Louis, Missouri, which later became Washington University.

**WHAT DID/DO THEY DO?** My father was a doctor; my mother was his assistant.

**WHAT ARE YOUR MEMORIES OF THE HOME YOU GREW UP IN?** We lived in many different homes. The first one I remember was in Effingham; it burned to the ground. It had apple trees in the back yard.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR MOTHER? My mother's name was actually Sarah Jane Deichmann, but she always went by Jennie. She was born on February 23, 1882 in Shumway, Effingham County, Illinois. She was intelligent and put high value on education. She passed the bar exam to become a lawyer in the state of Missouri but rarely mentioned it ... perhaps because my dad also took the same exam and didn't pass. My mother had very strong feelings about proper speech, and she didn't even like me to say "gosh" or "gee" because it was like swearing. She didn't want me to go to the movies on Sunday because there were 6 other days of the week to do that.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR FATHER? My father's name was Christian Herman Diehl. He was born on December 9, 1879 in Montrose, Illinois. My father had a great sense of humor and worked very hard. He taught me to play cards and was worried that I was a heavy-set child. My father was interested in psychology and psychiatry. Some of the different places he worked were the Anna State Hospital for the Insane (he worked there when I was born), Lincoln State School and Colony for the Feeble Minded, Kankakee State Hospital for the Insane, and the Elgin State Hospital for the Insane.

When I came home from college and told my parents that I had started smoking, my mother said, "Why would you want to do something that nice girls don't do?" My father said that he understood that I would want to do what the other students were doing, but I shouldn't inhale because it was bad for my heart.

As a young man living at home, even though he had to get up early in the morning for chores on the farm, he would slip out of the house in the middle of the night and play his fiddle at barn dances.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR MOTHER? The value of education.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR FATHER? To enjoy life.

A Story about my parents:

When I was young we had a wooden box about the size of a foot locker which had no lock, just a few nails that kept the lid down. This particular time we were getting ready to go to the Ozarks which meant the box was resting on a chair and the lid was leaning against the back of the chair. As my mother was putting stuff in the box, the lid fell down and one of the nails got impaled in her back. My dad rushed to lift the lid and held her in his arms and kissed her. I was only a very young child and had thought that only children like me got kissed so it was quite an awakening. Although I was very young, I still remember that occasion.

WHAT WERE YOUR GRANDPARENTS' NAMES? Leonard and Sarah Jane Deichmann, and George and Louise Diehl.

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM? Diehls from Germany, Leonard from Germany, Sarah Jane from Ireland.

WHAT DID THEY DO? All were farmers.

WHERE DID THEY LIVE? Diehls in Montrose, IL, Deichmanns in Shumway, IL.

WHAT MEMORIES DO YOU HAVE OF THEM? My Grandmother Deichmann was totally deaf and carried an ear trumpet. She didn't like my high pitch childish voice, but she liked to talk to my dad.

## **II CHILDHOOD**

WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU BORN? I was born on January 13, 1918, in Carbondale, Illinois. I was then and remained an only child. My parents were living in Anna at that time, but I was born in the Carbondale hospital because it was a bigger and better hospital than the one in Anna.

WAS THERE ANYTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR BIRTH? It was a Caesarean birth.

DOES YOUR NAME HAVE SPECIAL MEANING? I was named after the character "Doreen" in a book by the same name; the book was written by Lyall. My parents thought the spelling sounded too Irish, so they changed the ending to "ine" to sound more German to go with Diehl. When I read the book I didn't like the character because she was so sweet.

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR CHILDHOOD FAVORITES?

Activities: outside games after dark

Book: *Little Women*

Close Friends: We moved a lot. In Effingham my special friends were Roma Tucker, Stella Esch, and Eunice Melzer. I stayed at Eunice's house when our house burned down. In Roxana, from age 12 on, Georgia Hodges was my friend. We went to college together and remained friends until she died. I went to residential summer school two of the summers I was in high school, in St. Louis in 1935 and in Alton in 1936. I remember that Sister Aurelia was a good caretaker of me during that time.

Games: Ball and Jacks

Holidays: I wasn't taught to believe in Santa Claus, but the Easter Bunny came on Easter and I completely accepted that.

Neighbors: in Roxana, Wanda Snyder.

Pets: In Lincoln I had a monkey, but it stayed outside in the garage with the chauffer. We also had a German Police Dog. And at one time I had a cat, but I don't remember too much about the cat.

Relatives: Uncle George and Aunt Nettie, and my cousins Edna, Ruth, and Beulah.

Sports to play: In 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Lincoln I enjoyed playing tennis. I didn't own any shorts or slacks, so I played in a skirt.

Toys: Rollerskating. I never liked dolls.

Vacation Places: We went to the Ozarks every summer, but it was anything but a favorite place. My parents went there for many summers because of my dad's hay fever, from around mid-August until the first frost. I hated it there, though, because it was so boring with no friends, and that's why I chose to go to summer school.?

WHERE DID YOU GO TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL? I went to some elementary school in Lincoln. In Effingham I went to West Elementary School.

WHO WERE YOUR FAVORITE TEACHERS? I really liked my 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Hoare. I learned lots of grammar from her and loved it. One day my dad was reading the newspaper and announced to my mother with a twinkle in his eye, "The Hoares just had their name changed to Howard." I didn't get why that was so funny.

WHAT WERE YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECTS? English, grammar, and rhetoric.

WHAT PRIZES WERE YOU AWARDED? In 8<sup>th</sup> grade I won the Current Events medal. I still have it.

WHAT DID YOU DO FOR FUN ON THE WEEKENDS? We did a lot of roller-skating around town.

HOW DID YOU GET TO SCHOOL? In elementary school and junior high I walked to school, and when we were in Lincoln I was driven to school by a chauffer.

WHEN YOU WERE VERY YOUNG, WHO TOOK CARE OF YOU IF YOUR PARENTS WERE AWAY? It never happened. They always either stayed home or took me along.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST MOVIE YOU SAW? The first I remember were silent movies. Patients came to showing of silent movies at Lincoln when I was around 8. I remember the first talkie was "The Jazz Singer" which was about Al Jolson.

WHAT INDOOR GAMES DID YOU PLAY? Jacks, played in the bathroom on the tile floor.

WHAT OUTDOOR GAMES? Tennis on a grass tennis court

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR SUMMER VACATIONS? Before HS, none; during HS, when dad was in private practice, we went to the Ozarks because of his hay fever.

DID YOU GET AN ALLOWANCE? No; I just had to ask for money.

HOW DID YOU SPEND IT? For treats, or a matinee for a dime in Effingham.

WHAT SPECIAL MEMORIES TO YOU HAVE ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD? I remember once when we lived in Lincoln that I received a very bad mark on a spelling exam because the way I had been taught to make the letter “r” in a previous school was unacceptable to the teacher. I made good grades all throughout my school years, and I thought this was grossly unfair.

When I was in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade I was awakened in the night by a family member shaking my shoulder and telling me to get dressed quickly and put on my boots. They gave me my school books and my mother’s purse and my father’s black doctor’s satchel, and they sent me across the street to the neighbor’s house. My grandmother lived with us at that time, so my parents got her out of the house, and my father moved the car out of the garage. While we watched from across the street, it looked like the fire was settling down, then all at once it burst into even higher flames and proceeded to burn to the ground. My mother and grandmother had to go to the hospital (I’m not sure why... shock perhaps), and I stayed a girlfriend’s house until my dad bought us another house which wasn’t too long afterwards.

When I was around 8 years old our family drove 30 miles to a nearby town to hear a radio, an “Atwater Kent Radio.” Soon after that my father bought one.

While I lived at the St. Ursuline Convent we were all supposed to learn some ladylike activity. Mine was embroidery. My friend Nedra took up harp lessons from Father Smith who had a cottage on the convent grounds. Because she was female and he was male, she needed an escort, so I walked over each time she had a lesson and then when they discussed it after the lesson, I got to plunk on the harp. Then when I was in Effingham, before we went to Lincoln, and quite young, I walked to the convent each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Monday I had a regular piano lesson, on Wednesday as a group we did music workbook things, and on Friday I just loved it because we had rhythm band. That day Sister played the piano and we had percussion things, and the rhythm band was why I stayed with it.

WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP AND NOW? Prices were very different. It was ten cents to go to the matinee, and five cents for the drink after the matinee. It was safer. We would stay out after dark and play games such as Red Rover and Three Deep. At 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. one of the mothers would come out and yell, “Everyone go home now.”

DID YOU HAVE A NICKNAME? I got the nickname “Do” (pronounced “doe”) when I was about 9 because there was a song “Vo Do Dodeo, Do Do Dodeo Do.”

WHAT WAS AN IMPORTANT NEWS EVENT DURING YOUR CHILDHOOD? I remember cyclones in southern Illinois. And July 4<sup>th</sup> was a very big holiday with fireworks and speeches; my father gave a speech on public health every year. One day in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade we all had to put our heads down on our desks because a president had died [probably Woodrow Wilson who died in 1924].

### **III TEENAGE YEARS**

**WHERE DID YOU GO TO HIGH SCHOOL?** I went to two convent schools, Marquette in Alton HS and Sacred Heart HS in St. Louis, and I finished HS in public school at Woodriver East Alton Community High School. I was the valedictorian in our class of 88 students. It was in public school where I met my best friend, Georgia.

**WHAT WERE YOUR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL?** I worked on the school paper and acted in school plays.

**HOW DID YOU GET TO SCHOOL?** In high school there was a carpool of parents driving us. My mother didn't drive, but when my dad could get away from the office he took a turn driving.

**WHAT DID YOU DO FOR FUN ON THE WEEKENDS?** We watched the high school football games, and we often rolled up the rugs in the living room and danced to the radio or to records. That always took place at our house, not my friends' houses. Our house was sort of a social hub.

**HOW DID YOU EARN MONEY?** One summer when the owners went on a trip for a week I ran the drugstore that was in my dad's building along with his doctor's office. It was open from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. For that I earned \$10 which I spent on a dress.

**WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WOULD DO WHEN YOU GREW UP?** In college I thought I would please my dad and be a doctor, but after one semester of science classes I could see that that wasn't going to happen. When I was a young child sometimes my dad's patients would ask him if I was going to grow up and be a nurse, and that always annoyed him because back then nurses didn't have much status and he thought of them as just women who emptied bedpans.

**WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU LEARNED AS A TEENAGER?** Because we moved so much I learned to smile in order to make friends.

**WHAT WERE YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL?** English in Convent School, because I loved Sister Patricia; In Public HS, Speech.

**WHAT SUBJECTS DID YOU DISLIKE?** Physics. If you had a high enough average you didn't have to take a final exam, and that was the only subject where I had to take a final exam.

**WHO WAS YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND?** Georgia Hodges

**WERE YOU ON ANY SCHOOL TEAMS?** National Forensic League; traveled around the state giving speeches; one topic was the Lindberg kidnapping.

WHOM DID YOU DATE? Virgil Latempt

WHAT FRIENDS HAD THE MOST INFLUENCE ON YOU? Georgia

DID YOU HAVE ANY PART-TIME JOBS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR? No

WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT SUMMER VACATION? Sleeping in and no school.

WHAT DID YOU DO IN HS THAT GAVE YOU THE MOST SATISFACTION?

Our house was the social gathering place, and we would roll up the carpet and dance; my mother was one of the smartest parents so she could help all my friends with homework.

DID YOU DRIVE A CAR? I borrowed the car in the afternoon during my dad's office hours.

WHO TAUGHT YOU TO DRIVE? My dad.

WHAT KIND OF CAR DID YOU DRIVE? Hupmobile

HOW DID YOU GET ALONG WITH YOUR MOTHER? Okay

HOW DID YOU GET ALONG WITH YOUR FATHER? Okay. But he wanted to throttle me sometimes. There was a lot of malaria around and I got it. He gave me some quinine capsules and said I had to stay in for the evening. But took them all and went deaf. He was mad.

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE SAYINGS FROM WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG? When I sent a postcard home to my parent from Niagara Falls (1934), I said that the falls were "keen." We were in Niagara Falls because Georgia's parents knew a travel agent, so after we both graduated from high school we went there. When we got there we bought movie magazines and cigarettes.

## **IV COLLEGE YEARS**

WHERE DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE? I went to the University of Illinois and graduated in 3½ years because I attended summer school.

WHAT WAS YOUR MAJOR? Sociology with a psychology minor

WHAT WERE YOUR GOALS AS A STUDENT? First, I was going to study medicine to make my dad happy, but that didn't work out. Then Georgia recommended the School of Commerce for the cute boys. When I went to summer school so as not to have to go to the Ozarks, there were fewer classes offered, so I took

sociology classes and found out that I could write the essay questions without having to know any specific facts. I went to college at age 16, an immature sixteen. I was immature in not having a real goal and changing often.

WERE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY EXTRA-CURRICULARS? Sorority, Zeta Tau Alpha, ZTA.

WHAT KIND OF STUDENT WERE YOU? Good

WHO WERE YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS OR ROOMMATES? Georgia and I were roommates the first year. Then after pledging, my roommate was Buddy Rhodes. Georgia flunked out.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER BEST OF YOUR COLLEGE YEARS? I had a wonderful time. I wore the fraternity pin of Ben Cantwell who was an SAE, a very good fraternity.

## **V MARRIAGE**

WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU MARRIED? We were married May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1939 in Nashville, at Grandmother's house (Johnny's mother, Gladys Williams) in front of the fireplace. We had a party with Johnny's relatives. Nashville was still dry then (Chicago wasn't), so in Nashville we hired a bootlegger to bring the booze.

After we got married, I had to work because I had used my vacation, so while I worked John and his friend, Randall Frasier, and my sorority sister, Liz Merwin, "did" Chicago, museums and such. When they got home they mixed the drinks and waited for me to arrive. To help me, they unwrapped all the gifts and put the tags on a plate, so I had to write my thank you's to everyone for "the gift."

WHO WERE YOUR BEST MAN AND MAID OF HONOR? Ken Kay was our best man, and Imogene Statler, a sorority sister, was the maid of honor. They came down from Chicago for the wedding.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE WEDDING GIFT? Later ... a spinet piano from my parents.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER MOST ABOUT YOUR WEDDING DAY? John's sister Pat (Gladys) played the piano. I remember that I was afraid we would all look like Indians or Negroes because they heated so much water for the many upcoming baths that the water was brown (from rust from the pipes, I presume). I got to meet all the friends and relatives that I'd heard of. I remember Aunt Ruby and Uncle Bill (Gladys' brother), and Reese and Betty (John's cousins), Leslie and T.P. Waller, their oldest family friends. Brown Hardison was supposed to be the best man, but he had an emergency appendectomy, so Ken filled in. Mrs. Hardison, Brown's mother, did come to the wedding. She lived in Nashville.



The night of the wedding, there were some friends that had come down from Chicago for the wedding and I had to drive them to the train to go back. John's sister Pat came along to tell me the way. It was my first time stopping on a hill, and I didn't know how. Pat was only 12 and couldn't help me.

WHERE DID YOU GO ON YOUR HONEYMOON? There was no honeymoon, but a year later we went to Miami, Florida -- with my mother.

WHERE DID YOU MEET YOUR HUSBAND? I met Johnny (John Curtis Williams) on the beach, the Hollywood Beach in Chicago, when he and his two roommates launched the boat they had made. They called it a kayak, but it didn't look like kayaks now. My roommate, Buddy Rhoades, and I got rides. Stan took me out in the boat, and I can still see the color draining from his face when I said, "Boy, would this be fun if only I could swim."

HOW OLD WERE YOU BOTH WHEN YOU MET? I was 20, he was 21.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT EACH OTHER? We both liked movies, beer, the kayak, and we were both readers.

WHERE DID YOU GO ON YOUR FIRST DATE? We used to go to the lake just outside the Edgewater Beach Hotel, which used to be very fancy. There was a famous band there and we would go out in the boat and listen to the music.

HOW LONG DID YOU DATE BEFORE YOU BECAME ENGAGED? A year. We met on Memorial Day, May 30<sup>th</sup>, we got married one year later on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1939.

HOW DID YOU BECOME ENGAGED? There was no formal engagement, no engagement ring. (I did have an engagement ring with Ben Cantwell, the college SAE that I was engaged to.) But I remember the day we were walking in the rain after I came back from my trip to California with two co-workers, the day we decided to get married. Since we had a long weekend coming up because of Memorial Day, we thought it would be a great time to get married.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM YOUR FIRST YEAR OF MARRIAGE? John and Ken took night classes at Northwestern University (Chicago campus), and I joined a bowling league.

## **VI CHILDREN**

**JACK** - WHEN AND WHERE WAS JACK BORN? On Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup> 1944 in Chicago at Illinois Masonic Hospital.

WHAT WAS HIS FULL NAME? John Curtis Williams, Jr.

WHY WAS THAT NAME CHOSEN? After his father. According to Grandmother Williams, though not Aunt Pat, he (Jack) is the seventh (non-consecutive) John Curtis Williams in the family.

HOW BIG WAS HE? 7 pounds 7 ounces

WHO WAS PRESENT? Just the doctor and nurse were present.

WHO WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE YOU TOLD? I called Grandma first, then she called John who was in Baltimore waiting to be shipped out to England. He got to come back and see him through the nursery window. Jack's gown was ripped out, and John interpreted that to mean that he was exceptionally strong.

WHAT WAS JACK LIKE AS A SMALL CHILD? He had a temper, and he cried a lot. That was before air conditioning and we walked him a lot because I didn't want to bother the neighbors. He didn't like nursing and only nursed two weeks.

WHAT WAS HIS FAVORITE ENTERTAINMENT AS A YOUNG CHILD? He liked to play with all his toys in his playpen. He bounced to music on the radio. He didn't need to be entertained, he was happy to be alone.

WHAT WAS HIS FAVORITE ENTERTAINMENT AS A TEENAGER? His jazz band, the Belltones.

WHAT DID JACK WANT TO BE WHEN HE GREW UP? A music teacher.

WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU THINK HE WOULD BE WHEN HE GREW UP? Something related to music.

WAS JACK A GOOD STUDENT? Yes.

WHAT CHORES DID YOU MAKE HIM DO? Clip the hedge and mow the lawn.

HOW MUCH WAS HIS ALLOWANCE? No certain amount.

WHAT WAS HIS SPECIAL TALENT? Music.

WHAT WERE HIS BEST HABITS? He read a lot. The Nashville grandparents gave him the book "The Boy's Life of Robert E. Lee" which was too advanced for him, but it didn't discourage him from reading.

WHAT WERE HIS BAD HABITS? He didn't have much patience, and his sisters bugged him.

DID HE HAVE A PET? Our dogs were family pets. He rode his bike around the block with a dog leash on his handlebars.

WHAT DID JACK TALK ABOUT? Little League and sports and music.

WHO IN THE FAMILY DID HE RESEMBLE? His father.

WHAT WAS HIS FAVORITE BABY TOY? Little cars to push around.

WHAT ARE SOME SPECIAL MEMORIES OF JACK AS A BABY? One night there was a terrible thunderstorm and I walked into his bedroom thinking he would be frightened, and there he was standing in his crib and he said, "Hi Dō. Shunder."

**JILL** - WHEN AND WHERE WAS JILL BORN? On Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1946 in Chicago at Illinois Masonic Hospital.

WHAT WAS HER FULL NAME? It was Jill Williams with no middle name because we assumed that some day Williams would be her middle name. In the army they put "NMI" for "no middle initial." My name was Dorine Sarah Louise Diehl Williams – too many names. (My friend was named Phyllis Marie Joanne of Arc Darche ...before she got married.)

WHY WAS THAT NAME CHOSEN? Because I was very much impressed with my friend Jill Roberts with whom we lived in Gainesville, Florida. Although she was called Jill, her real name was Christine. She had an older brother Jack too. And although we call our son Jack his real name is John, Jr.

HOW BIG WAS SHE? 7 pounds 5 ounces.

WHO WAS PRESENT? No one in delivery room.

WHO WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE YOU TOLD? Grandma. Grandparents in Nashville. Jack, age 2.

WHAT WAS JILL LIKE WHEN SHE WAS A SMALL CHILD? Very easy to get along with, well behaved, obedient, good at amusing herself, didn't cry much.

WERE YOU A FIRM OR EASY-GOING PARENT? Easy-going.

WHAT WAS HER FAVORITE ENTERTAINMENT AS A TEENAGER? Getting together with friends, especially Kathy Benson.

WHAT DID JILL WANT TO BE WHEN SHE GREW UP? A teacher.

WHAT DID YOU THINK SHE WOULD GROW UP TO BECOME? A teacher.

WHAT DID SHE DO THAT MADE YOU ANGRY? Quit playing clarinet (in 6<sup>th</sup> grade). But she resumed it later.

HOW WAS SHE AS A STUDENT? Good

WHAT CHORES DID YOU MAKE HER DO? Clean her room.

HOW MUCH WAS HER ALLOWANCE? No allowance.

WHAT WERE HER SPECIAL TALENTS? Clarinet and being friendly.

WHAT WERE HER BEST HABITS? Helping people who needed help; being especially good to Grandma.

WHAT WERE HER BAD HABITS? None

DID SHE HAVE A PET? At age 4, she got Hank the dog for her birthday.

WHAT DID SHE TALK ABOUT? School

WHO IN THE FAMILY DID SHE RESEMBLE? Grandma [Jennie] and me.

WHAT WAS JILL'S FAVORITE BABY TOY? A doll named Molly. It was Grandma's idea that when Jill went to Sunday School that if she took Molly she would be happier, but she screamed anyway that first day. She was very shy.

WHAT ARE SOME SPECIAL MEMORIES OF JILL AS A BABY? She slept a lot. We thought we'd better take her out because the neighbors would think that there was something wrong with the second child.

**JEAN** - WHEN AND WHERE WAS JEAN BORN? Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1949, at St. Francis Hospital in Evanston, Illinois.

WHAT WAS HER FULL NAME? Jean Williams.

WHY WAS THAT NAME CHOSEN? The name Jean was not in honor of anyone in particular, we just liked the name, it was short and simple and it followed our pattern of the "J's." I wanted to name her "Dixie" to acknowledge her southern roots, but Rena said that if we did she'd never speak to us again.

HOW BIG WAS SHE? 7 pounds 2 ounces

WHO WAS PRESENT? Just the doctor and nurse.

WHO WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE YOU TOLD? Daddy was at the hospital waiting for her birth, then he called Grandma at home with Jack and Jill, and then he called Nashville. WHAT WAS JEAN LIKE AS A SMALL CHILD? She was very curious and interested in everything. When she was older she loved to shop.

WHAT WAS HER FAVORITE ENTERTAINMENT AS A YOUNG CHILD? After we got our TV when she was 5 she loved the TV.

WHAT WAS HER FAVORITE ENTERTAINMENT AS A TEENAGER? Being with her friends, especially neighbor Colette Yeiser.

WHAT DID JEAN WANT TO BE WHEN SHE GREW UP? A nurse.

WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU THINK SHE WOULD BE WHEN SHE GREW UP? A nurse.

WHAT DID SHE DO THAT MADE YOU ANGRY? She didn't study much.

WAS SHE A GOOD STUDENT? Average.

WHAT CHORES DID YOU MAKE HER DO? Not too much.

HOW MUCH WAS HER ALLOWANCE? No specified amount.

DID SHE HAVE A PET? We had several dogs that were family dogs, and Jean helped take care of Grandma's bird.

WHAT DID JEAN TALK ABOUT? She talked about her TV shows; she wasn't a gabby child.

WHO IN THE FAMILY DID JEAN RESEMBLE? She took after the Williams side more than the Diehl side.

WHAT WAS HER FAVORITE BABY TOY? Not the playpen. She wanted to be wherever her brother and sister were.

WHAT ARE SOME SPECIAL MEMORIES OF JEAN AS A BABY? Jean slept in a bassinet on wheels, and Jack and his friend Jamie played stagecoach running around it. She was a very good sleeper.

## **VII HOME LIFE**

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE FAMILY HOLIDAY? Christmas, because that is when the whole family was most likely to get together.

WHAT WAS A FAVORITE FAMILY TRADITION? Playing Michigan Rummy when younger and Charades when older. I remember playing “What’s My Line” and Jack tipped his chair backwards and went through the window. He was the “mystery guest.”

WHAT ARE SOME TRADITIONAL FAMILY FOODS? Romano’s pizza. We had steak on birthdays, we called it birthday steak, which I prepared by broiling.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL TRADITIONS THAT I HOPE MY GRANDCHILDREN KEEP? Keeping the family together at Christmas.

WHAT ARE SOME SPECIAL MEMORIES OF FAMILY TIMES? One time we were come coming home from Tomah where Daddy went for Army reserve training every summer, and the driver of the Duck, an amphibious water-land vehicle, let Jack drive the boat. It was Jack’s 7<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I remember the trip to Florida where the policy was that the kids would pay for their own food so that they wouldn’t order more than they could eat. You could hear it all over the restaurant when one of you kids said, “What?! Orange Juice, 25 cents?!”

There was a policy on that trip that there were scheduled stops for bathroom and gas, and anyone that caused an unnecessary bathroom trip would have to treat everyone. Only I had to do it!

## **VIII HOMES**

WHERE DID YOUR FAMILY LIVE? My father’s first practice as a physician was in St. Louis. His interest in psychiatry took him to Anna, and that is where I was born. When my mother’s parents needed care we moved Effingham where my father worked for the State Department of Public Health. He traveled away from home a lot during that time. When I was around 6 years old my mother bought a car and learned to drive it in order to take us down to West Frankfort where my father was caring for the victims of the cyclone there. She waited until after the school year, my second grade year. The next move was to Lincoln when I was age 9 and in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

WHEN DID YOU LEAVE YOUR PARENTS’ HOME? In 1934 when I went to college.

WHERE DID YOU MOVE AFTER THAT? I graduated from college (Univ of Illinois in Champaign Urbana) in January of 1938 (at age 20) and moved into an apartment on Kenmore Avenue in Chicago with Buddy, a sorority sister.

HOW MUCH RENT DID YOU PAY? \$42/month, split two ways.

WHAT DID YOUR HOME LOOK LIKE? It was one large living room with a pull down bed, a very small kitchen, a small bathroom, and a dressing room.

HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE THERE? 8 months.

WHY DID YOU MOVE? Because Buddy was going to Europe to sketch. She was an artist.

WHERE DID YOU MOVE NEXT? To a 2<sup>nd</sup> bedroom in an apartment with a couple, next to the 3 fellas (Brown, Stan, John (yes, JCW)) who lived in a boarding house.

HOW MANY OTHER HOMES HAVE YOU LIVED IN? When Buddy came back we got another apartment and another roommate, Imogene Stotler. We lived in two different apartments.

Then after we got married we moved to a different apartment, but still on Kenmore, I believe it was 5529 Kenmore. It was a very fun neighborhood, with lots of other young adults, both singles and married couples with young kids, and just a block from Lake Michigan. We didn't have a car, but we had three choices of transportation: the El (an elevated train), bus, or streetcar.

Then John and I rented a larger apartment together with another couple, Stan and Trudy. When my dad died, my mother moved in with us so there were 5 of us.

The next move was to an apartment on Winthrop Ave, John and me and my mother. All of the other apartments were on Kenmore.

When WWII started my mother and I took a smaller apartment when John went to war. Jack was born when we were there, Jill too, and John came home from the war to that very small apartment.

John was gone to the war from 1942 to Thanksgiving Day, 1945. He was on permanent cadre in Florida but volunteered for everything imaginable to get into the action. He volunteered but didn't get accepted to teach armament to Chinese officers, also to be part of the Mule Troops in Colorado. Finally he got accepted and went to Fort Benning for paratroop training. He served in Germany and in the Battle of the Bulge.

In October of 1947, when Jack was three and Jill was not quite one, we moved to 336 Woodbridge Road in Des Plaines where I lived for 27 years. I moved to Longboat Key, Florida in 1974, and 27 years later, in October of 2001, I moved to McKendree Village in Hermitage, Tennessee.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FURNISHINGS THAT BELONGED TO YOUR PARENTS? No, the house burned down when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR FAVORITE NEIGHBORS? Bob and Rena Williams who lived 2 blocks away in Chicago. Then in Des Plaines, The Yeisers.

WHO HAVE BEEN THE MOST IRRITATING NEIGHBORS? The Kersts. They wrote terrible boring Xmas cards.

## **IX TRAVEL**

WHAT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE YOU HAVE EVER VISITED? Notre Dame in Paris, because it's a place you've heard of all your life, and it was a treat to see it for that reason.

WHAT WAS THE MOST RELAXING VACATION? Our Elderhostels. Ed Selman and I attended around 25 of them.

WHAT WAS A PLACE YOU RETURNED TO AGAIN AND AGAIN? Tomah!

WHAT WERE MEMORABLE FAMILY TRIPS? The trip to Florida in around 1954, and the trip that Jill and Jeannie and I took to Mexico in around 1966.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE VACATION MOMENTO? I started a charm bracelet, but when I realized that it would klunk the table when I played bridge, I stopped collecting charms. I still have the gold charm bracelet. All of the charms were supposed to be real gold BUT the one from LV turned green. I have charms from New Orleans and Las Vegas and from the 5 countries Jean and I visited in Europe.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE VACATION MEMORIES? Driving through the U.S. with my friend Ed Selman (1981-1992). The first one was an Elderhostel in Presque Isle, Maine, the beginning of visiting every state of the union except Hawaii. The last few summers we did tours in Europe and saw every country in both eastern and western Europe.

WHAT IS A PLACE THAT YOU WOULD HAVE LOVED TO HAVE VISITED? Australia and New Zealand

## **X HOW THE WORLD HAS CHANGED**

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN INVENTED SINCE YOU WERE BORN? Cell phone, computer, and television. Radio was just beginning to become commonplace in homes when I was young. My dad and mother and I drove 30 miles to Pinkneyville to see a friend's new radio, an Atwater Kent. Soon after, my dad bought one.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED? Penicillin, sulfa, and polio vaccine.

HOW DO YOU THINK ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED ABOUT THE FOLLOWING?

Dating: Not much difference, though there was more freedom about hours for Sara, Shannon and Jefferson; Jill's curfew was midnight, but Jack got a little bit longer time because he had to take a girl home.



Raising Children: Spanking as discipline is no longer accepted.

Education: Not many differences, though more students went to state universities than private schools.

Georgia and I were the only ones of my close friends that went on to college; none of the boys, just those two girls. But some of the girls went to a finishing school for girls that had horse-back riding which was too scary for me. One of my friends went there, and one night they were playing cards and a girl was caught stealing. There was a powder that made the fingers turn blue, so they put the powder on some money in a drawer, and her fingers turned blue. When her parents were brought in it was learned that she had been treated for kleptomania.

Health: Discoveries of vaccines; especially polio was important. The vaccine was discovered when Jill was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, only the grades younger than Jill got it because there was such a short supply, so only Jimmy Muchow got it. Jack, Jill and Jean had to nap every day as a protection from polio, hoping to heighten their resistance. People worried about their kids, not adults. In Chicago everyone was paranoid about getting polio. They didn't take kids to the store or anywhere in public in the summer. The suburbs were not so scared about it, it was mostly in Chicago. The polio scare went on during the summer during the very hot periods. At the time I never knew anyone that got it, but when I lived in Longboat Key I met someone who had recurrence of childhood polio.

Marriage: Divorce rate is so much higher now. It was practically nil before. I remember that I stared at the first divorced person ever saw, a woman named Billie Russell, when I was living in the boarding house after college. Later she became my close friend, but I never heard any of the details of the divorce.

Men: Now they aren't as gallant as before. They figure women can go out to work and carry packages as well as they can.

Money: Prices are all higher, but so are expenses; it almost takes two salaries to support a family. There were no college loans back in my day, and now they are very common, especially for law and medicine because medicine takes so many years.

Women: They go out to work and are not the helpless little female.

Race Relations: In a fancy restaurant one time a black waiter said to Daddy "Johnny, do you want some coffee?" He responded, "I am either Mr. Williams or Mr. John, and you remember that." He came a long way from that.

Other: Songs, movies, books have more swearing. When I saw the movie Gone with the Wind, and when Rhett Butler said to Scarlett O'Hara, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," everyone in the theater gasped.

Ways in which the world seemed better when I was a child: It was safer back then; children could play outside after dark and come home alone.

Ways in which the world seems better now: Thanks to TV, there is more awareness of current events, even children know more than they used to. When I was a little kid I didn't even know who was president. There's more concern for good health such as working out and giving up smoking. Seatbelts are required as are children in cars. There was no driver's license required until the mid-1930s.

#### WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT YOU LIKE BEST NOW?

Activities: Movies, sports on TV, reading, game-playing (bridge now, Pinochle in HS)

Artists: Any impressionist

Athletes: Tiger Woods

Authors: Mary Higgins Clark for escape reading

Books: Thornbirds, one of my favorite books ever

Comedians/Comediennes: Johnny Carson back when he was on TV

Desserts: Lemon Meringue Pie

Fashion style: Anything casual

Flowers: tulips

Food (main dishes): hamburgers

Close Friends: Phyllis McCloskey in LBK; we talk on the phone every Wednesday evening (until she died in 2006).

Furniture style: Anything comfortable

Hobbies: bridge

Holidays: Christmas

Magazines: Don't read magazines much, but Reader's Digest because I like the jokes and the stories are short and they are great for traveling.

Music: Good classical (like Russian composers) and good jazz (like Gershwin)

Newscasters: Used to be Tom Brokaw, but he's gone now. Now, Larry King.

Newspapers: Chicago Tribune when we lived in Chicago.

Radio Programs: I never listen to radio

Restaurants: Pizza Hut; IHOP

Season: Summer, because of the warmth and the tan

Singers: Liza Minelli

Sayings: See Ya Later

Snack foods: Brown cow (Eskimo pie)

Songs: Rhapsody in Blue

Television programs: Jeopardy; Dr. Phil; interviews by Larry King; Do You Want to Be a Millionaire; Small Claims Court shows

Time of Day: Noon ... a good time for rising.

Vacation places: Florida

Some major ways my tastes have changed over the years: No more cigarettes

## **XI FRIENDS**

WHAT FRIENDS HAVE YOU STAYED IN TOUCH WITH SINCE CHILDHOOD? Xmas cards with Georgia (until she died in 2006)

WHAT FRIENDS HAVE YOU MEANT TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH BUT HAVEN'T? Buddy Rhodes. After 1969 she was in the newspaper, so I went to see her.

WHO ARE YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS NOW? Mary Kamura from Florida; Evelyn Haynie, Kay Crunk, and Kathleen Binns, my bridge playing friends in Nashville.

WHERE AND WHEN DID YOU MEET YOUR SPOUSE'S BEST FRIEND? John and Brown Hardison met from a car accident because they went to the same lawyer, and I met Brown in Chicago when they shared an apartment. I first met him on the beach of Lake Michigan when they were launching their kayak they had made from a kit. The reason they were in all that winter was because Stan had picked up a social disease and wasn't supposed to date. They lived right on the beach and I lived a block off the beach with Buddy.

WHAT DO YOU MOST VALUE IN A FRIENDSHIP? Sense of humor.

WHO IS THE BEST FRIEND YOU HAVE EVER HAD? Rena. When we were living in Chicago and Grandma was in the hospital, my back went out and Rena took care of Jack.

## **XII HISTORY AND POLITICS**

WHO WERE THE PRESIDENTS WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP? Woodrow Wilson (the war time president), Warren Harding (the bad boy from Ohio), and Calvin Coolidge who came in when Harding died and said "I do not choose to run." He was known as "Silent Cal." And Hoover, who was blamed for the Depression. I remember tramps who would come to our back door and ask for work or food, and my mother would give them food and they would sit on the porch and eat it.

TO WHICH POLITICAL PARTY DO YOU BELONG? Independent.

WHY? Because my parents were Republicans and my husband was Democrat when we got married.

WHICH NATIONAL CANDIDATES HAVE YOU VOTED FOR OVER THE YEARS? FDR, that was my first vote; also Eisenhower, Reagan, JFK, and Al Gore.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST VIVID HISTORICAL MEMORY? The end of WWII. Everyone was so happy and looking forward to return of family members and to the

fear being over. Also Pearl Harbor. John was home with some classmates in a class he was taking at Northwestern. He was practicing a speech. I was in the car with Grandmother Williams, Grandma, and Clover Hardison. I kept going through the dial on the radio looking for music, but there was only talking. Then when we got home the men told us what had happened.

WHAT WORLD EVENTS HAVE MOST AFFECTED YOUR LIFE? WWII.

WHAT INVENTIONS OR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES HAVE MOST CHANGED YOUR LIFE? TV.

HOW? Pleasure and news.

WHAT CAUSES OR ISSUES DO YOU NOW FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT?  
NOT global warming.

### **XIII PASTTIMES**

WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY DOING? Playing bridge.

WHAT TALENTS AND ABILITIES HAVE YOU TRIED TO DEVELOP? computer

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON A STAGE? School plays.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD YOUR NAME IN A NEWSPAPER? Yes, for PTA or something.

WHAT NEWSPAPER? Des Plaines Journal.

WHAT TYPE OF BOOKS DO YOU READ MOST OFTEN? Fiction.

HAVE YOU PLAYED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS? Piano – by ear – poorly. I had a saxophone once in Jr. High. I was told to practice, then went to take a bath and took it along and it got wet, so that was the end of the saxophone.

HAVE YOU HAD OTHER HOBBIES? Card playing, reading.

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS, CLUBS, OR ASSOCIATIONS DO YOU OR HAVE YOU BELONGED TO? Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority, PTA, and League of Women Voters.

HAVE YOU BEEN ACTIVE IN ANY CHARITIES AS A VOLUNTEER? I've been a collector for many.

## **XIV WORK, JOBS, MONEY**

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST FULL-TIME JOB? American Hospital Association in Chicago in 1938 after graduation from college.

HOW MUCH DID YOU EARN? I earned \$85/month which was more than my two roommates.

WHAT WERE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES? I was the assistant to the office manager which included collecting and distributing the mail, doing a daily financial report, and helping any department that needed help.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MAIN OCCUPATION? Teaching.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE IT? Because Daddy wouldn't let me do anything else; in his opinion southern ladies didn't work much. We thought we might have three children in college at one time if they went on to get advanced degrees.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED? I saw an ad in the paper.

FOR WHOM HAVE YOU WORKED? I worked at the Park Ridge School For Girls from 1962 to 1967, and then at Maine West in the book store after that.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXTRAVAGANT THING YOU'VE EVER DONE? Travel to Europe several times.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE SOUNDEST INVESTMENT ONE CAN MAKE? I don't know; I let the broker worry about it.

## **XV FAMILY LORE**

HAVE THERE ANY CHARACTERISTICS WHICH YOU FEEL RUN THROUGH THE FAMILY? An inclination toward stockiness.

HAVE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY FOLLOWED SIMILAR OCCUPATIONS OR PROFESSIONS? Jack is in business like his father, Jean in health care like her grandfather, and Jill a teacher like I was.

WHICH RELATIVES POSSESS ARTISTIC TALENTS? My mother and father and I were all talented in music, and Jack is too.

ARE THERE ANY MEDICAL PROBLEMS THAT SEEM TO RUN IN THE FAMILY? No. My father died of Cerebral Thrombosis at age 60. My mother died of a stroke at age 87.

ARE THERE ANY FAMILY “BLACK SHEEP”? No, but there was one weirdo, my Uncle Pete who, in a theater when a character lit up a cigarette, yelled out in the theater “Can’t they have any decent people in these movies?”

## **XVI RELIGION**

When we moved to Des Plaines we decided that we needed to find a church in which to raise the children. John had been a southern Baptist, but I would not consider going to that church. The reason I didn’t want our children to be a Baptist was because I didn’t want them to be dropped in the water when they were baptized at age 14, in case they couldn’t swim – which I couldn’t. I had been to lots of convent schools, but John said that he was not going to “let some man in Rome tell me how many children I could have.” So we shopped around and decided on the Congregational Church because it had the best music.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD? Yes

DO YOU REGULARLY ATTEND A HOUSE OF WORSHIP? No, but I watch the McKendree Chapel service on TV.

HAS A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY HAD AN INFLUENCE ON YOU? No.

DID YOU EVER WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY? No

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PRAYER? Lord’s Prayer.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE RELIGIOUS MUSIC? Ave Maria

IS RELIGION A MAJOR FACTOR IN YOUR LIFE? No

DO YOU INTERPRET THE BIBLE STRICTLY OR LOOSELY. Loosely.

HAVE YOU EXPLORED OTHER RELIGIONS? Yes, I took Catholic instruction.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE? Taking instruction.

HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS TRAINING DID YOU RECEIVE FROM YOUR PARENTS? I attended Sunday School as a child.

HOW MUCH RELIGIOUS TRAINING DID YOU GIVE YOUR CHILDREN? They attended Sunday School as children.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PRAYERS IN SCHOOLS? Against.

## **XVII IN CONCLUSION**

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF DOING? Having three kids that turned out well.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF BEING? Easy to get along with.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST EXCITING EXPERIENCE? Driving across the country in all the 48 states and all the provinces of Canada.

WHAT WAS YOUR HAPPIEST EXPERIENCE? When Daddy came home from War.

WHAT WAS YOUR SADDEST EXPERIENCE? When he got sick.

WHAT GOALS HAVE YOU SET FOR YOUR FUTURE? I would like to go to the big bridge game in the sky without being any problem to my family.