

DASH AND CARROLL



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DASH AND CARROLL

Introduction

My tape recordings of Carroll Kirk talking about his dog Dash, a great dog and the dog of his youth, took place over two evenings during the winter of 1991 when he was in his early eighties. Carroll was nine when he got Dash in 1918 and he told me he had been twenty-six or twenty-seven when Dash died at the age of seventeen. I had been hearing these stories for a number of years and decided to document them.

Carroll Kirk probably made it through grade school in the Chickahominy Valley of Walton, Oregon, and no further. He worked his life here in the local woods and mills, in the latter case ultimately as a sawyer. His work life began just prior to the onset of the depression which clearly had its influence on decisions Carroll made in life and, according to what he said, may have kept him from ever seriously thinking about marriage. Carroll lived along Schade Creek named for his maternal grandfather's family name, Schade.¹

I got to know Carroll when he was a old man and he became one of my most interesting friends. Carroll was a good man, I can honestly say one of the best men I have known. He has been gone for a while now, yet I find myself thinking about him deeply several times each year. Among these recollections was surely one of the last times he took a long walk. I was loading my truck for an archeological project during the summer of 1993 or 1994 and looked up from the steps to the barn room that my friends Dave and Sarah let me use and saw him coming over a small rise along the creek and making his way toward the barn with the help of an old red-painted staff. To get to where he had had to negotiate several uneven grown-over paths and walk at least half a mile.

¹ The U.S.G.S. has bastardized this name to Shady Creek.

I was surprised and a bit concerned. Judd Warden, who was helping me pack, and I and my dog Sis all went quickly over to him and helped him to the barn stairs where I sat him down in a chair.

When we got to him he had a bright quirky smile on his face and said something like, "That's the . . . That's the . . . only time I do that again. Made it though."

I was going to make a visit to him on my way out of the valley, this having become a ritual for us: to toast to luck with a bit of whiskey. That time I gave him a lift back to his place and, watched by Sis, we tapped shot glasses that time too. His clouded blue eyes behind his glasses looked at me as sharply as they could and there was a big smile on his face, he said what he always said, "Lee, good luck in whatever you do."

Carroll died in 1997 and I dug his grave in the tiny Walton cemetery. A lot of people showed up for the ceremony, maybe fifty or so, more people by far than I had imagined he stayed in contact with. I finally got around to transcribing these tapes during the winter of 2000 while on the North Umpqua River. They covered thirty-eight pages and were replete with pauses and repetitions and my questions.

It is now 2011 and I am back in Walton for a few weeks this spring and I have finally yielded to the urge to clean up this story of Carroll and Dash and present it as though Carroll is telling it in some order. In his telling of his story for my tape recorder, Carroll had jumped around like a fish out of water and some things, such as information about Dash's dad, were amplified in several different places. To create an apparently coherent narrative, I broke up the original transcription into sixty-one numbered sections and then attempted to put them into some kind of order: chronological or otherwise. Most of these section numbers are footnoted so that—if you want to—you can get a hint of their original order in Carroll's telling.²

I also changed the text in some places to obscure the fact that he was clearly responding to a question. This was mostly a matter of removing some examples of words such as, no, yeah, and oh, at the beginning of passages. I also added a few words to smooth some of the more abrupt transitions. I did this latter thing perhaps half a dozen times with what amounted to no more than perhaps a total of twenty-five words.

Carroll really repeated himself a lot amidst numerous pauses as though saying the right thing, putting the right words together, for him was like getting a proper grasp on the handle of an awkward tool. Listening to him on tape made his hesitant way of gathering words more obvious than it was when you were a friend and were talking to him. And it is possible that Carroll, knowing

² the sections are in the order indicated in the following footnotes.

he was talking to a tape and posterity, was a bit more hesitant in his word choice than normal.

The main way in which this pseudo narrative is changed from the original transcription is by the removal of my questions and some of the many repeated and repeated hesitations and restarts. Each of these repetitive hesitations in the original transcription is marked by an ellipsis (. . .). There are only roughly a third the number of ellipses and repetitions in this document that there were in the original.

As you will see when you read this document, I have left plenty of ellipses and ambiguous wordings for the reader to puzzle over. Given the original, this I think is only appropriate.

I trust you will agree with me that this is a document of a remarkable dog and a testament to a good man with a—to me—rich way of expressing himself.

Lee Spencer

Spring 2011



DASH AND CARROLL

One day . . . they always had bells, I heard the old cow bells a-jingling. An' I looked down the road there a little ways and off the bank come a one of those cows and another one followed, anyway there was about a half a dozen of them all lined up down the road and at the tail end was a dog driving them along just as nice as you please. Never bothered one unless it asked for it. And they took off for home. They knew what they were supposed to do I guess.³ His maw was a kind-hearted little . . . dog. She wasn't . . . mean or anything that I ever knew of her or seen of her.⁴

And they'd feed her outside there and half feed the damn chickens. The chickens would come around there and try to eat her grub and that's what started her killing chickens. Killed her for killin' his chickens.⁵

His youngest kid, a boy, and he's three four years older than I am. I think he's probably the only one left. And he come out here to visit. He had a sister too that lived out . . . He come from Arizona or some damn place or the other. He worked for old Henry Ford for a lifetime and he retired he come out to Arizona, damn if I can remember for sure . . . and I hadn't seen him since . . . I guess 1918, anyway that was . . . When in the heck was that . . . Been probably ten years ago that he come here. We had quite a chewing match.

They lived down there, below the dump, below Walker Crik. Just a . . . Cherry Crik is the name of the crik. And there's a loggin' road that goes up there now and the old family home was back off the road. Still is. There's a trailer house or two back in there yet.

³ #1

⁴ #46

⁵ #48

Dash's dad . . . You s'pose you could hire him to kill a baby mouse? He just pick 'em up . . . in his mouth, . . . slip off to one side 'n' spit it out. An' you take an' old mouse. Snap 'em up right. Sometimes eat 'em even.

An' the same way with a little tiny pig. They're about as big a pest in the world. An' an old pig . . . Damn, if you didn't watch him, he'd kill one. If he . . . They got into something, there, he'd stay with 'em till he'd chewed 'em wide . . . chewed the hell out of 'em, you know. You take a little pig . . . absolutely no chance. [laughter] He wouldn't hurt one on a bet.

He was vicious with a cow. That was Dash's paw.

There was a bunch a' cattle . . . stray catting aroun'. In them days a . . . bull or a cattle buyer used to drive the cattle to town an' they got away from him. An' there, there's two or three big ol' bulls an' a half a dozen cows and more. Different sizes.

This ol' bull seen Dash's paw an' he just threwed his head down . . . there'n' . . . made a wild pass at the ol' dog just nailed his mou . . . nose as he went by. It didn't take but about half a minute an' he was down.

Then he . . . started to bellerin', by golly . . . an' the ol' dog, he . . . I guess maybe he jerked loose a' the ol' dog by that time. But I tell you, that . . . that's all it took. It wasn't two minutes er all them cows 'n' bulls, they was gone.

Like I say, he grabbed that ol' bull by the nose 'n' down he went. An' he . . . An' he held him down till he bellered.

Another time . . . the walloper run up . . . bite a young bull there if he had to. The bull made a lucky pass . . . kicked the ol' boy, bowled him end over end. I . . . really, musta' . . . kicked him for ten feet, just a-rollin'.

An' he never . . . he never even howled. He just kinda grunted an' . . . next thing . . . next thing you knew, the bull was a-bellerin'.⁶

Yeah, he was vicious. He'd . . . bite anything 'r . . . anything that come along he'd tackle. But he didn't bite people . . . mostly.

Ah, I can't remember. [laughter] Only . . . Only one I can ever remember him bitin' was a . . . guy who parked right there at the house . . . an' he wanted a beef. So Pop went out there an' shot one . . . the one he wanted . . . an' the butcher in the bunch, he rushed up to cut its throat, you know, an' 'bout that time, the old dog nailed him.

[laughter] Oh, that made him mad. Pop said, '*Nope. No use getting' mad.*' he says, '*The old dog figured that was his an' . . .*' Pop'd kind of forgot about him or it wouldn't 'a' happened.

Now, another thing . . . They'd kill . . . kill hogs . . . down there by the old shop. Hang 'em up there. He'd stay there the whole blessed night an' if someone

⁶ #34

happened to walk along there, it was six of one, a half a dozen of the other he'd let'm go by.

Same way with Pop's coat. He could lay it down . . . out in the field where he was a-workin' an' someone'd come up to visit him there an' go . . . go over to pick up Pop's coat 'n' . . . He let'm know right now that it's to be left alone.

Well . . . actually, I named Dash after the old dog. Dash's paw was . . . seemed part blood hound and shepherd. He was black an' tan 'n . . . had a tail just about like a rope.

His hair was . . . Neither short or long an' he was . . . well, a little heavier. Little bit bigger than his son.⁷

I guess he was about . . . Oh, I don't know, twelve or fourteen when he died . . . probably. About the time, we got the little rascal.

We were livin' down at Gran'dad's place. Just off where . . . well . . . Kirk Crik, it's called.⁸ . . . Lets see, it was about 1918. We just got the old Model T, I think . . . Had it a little while.

Yeah . . . He was just the scruffiest little devil you ever seen. He was just big enough to tug around . . . and he'd go anywhere and do anything even then . . . [laughter] That damn stinkin' little pup there was just big enough to go around where the water wasn't deep . . . wasn't any deeper than that and pretty thin . . . to make them salmon, you know they'd just make the water fly goin' out through there. An' he was a water dog besides, he loved the water.⁹

Well, let's see, what the hell . . . used . . . When he was a little devil, he chewed up shoes [laughter] . . . but . . . but he wasn't . . . he wasn't too destructive.¹⁰

Grown, he was . . . Thirty pounds, forty pounds. His tail was . . . just regular and he had a big white tip on the end of it . . . an' he carried it straight back most of the time. He could pack it high if he wanted to.¹¹

He had . . . oh, dog eyes. Brown. His ears . . . sharp ears.

Oh, bit me a thousand times. [laughter] Just harmless.

[Carroll had a hand-tinted picture of Dash next to where he sat in his house in Walton. The photo was framed and set where the sun could catch it. Dash is seated on his haunches on top of a fence post with his front paws up. His mouth

⁷ #45

⁸ #48

⁹ #2

¹⁰ #41

¹¹ 34

is open and his tongue out and he looks like he's laughing. He looks like a somewhat big border collie—black and white, medium long hair, plume tail—
with a large patch of white on his breast.]

[He has a picture of Dash and himself as a youngster (used as the cover photo of this manuscript)] . . . Oh, that was taken before we come up here to Schade creek [in Walton], I guess. When he was just a real young dog. I think that . . . that one was. . . . Or maybe . . . maybe it was after we moved up here an' . . . It was taken down there near Kirk Crik. Anyway, that picture was taken down there.

Yah, he . . . He'd rather have his picture taken than eat.

He . . . seemed to know what a camera was. Oh, I got a picture of him there . . . with a . . . goggles . . . goggles on an' a pipe in his mouth. He was very damn . . . very good about [posing] how you put him. He wouldn't move till I . . . till I told him to. I don't know why he . . . thought that picture takin' there was important. I got another picture of him . . . taken . . . stan' . . . sittin' up on top of a fence post . . . a . . . gate post, had been . . . worked over an' there was about an' eight-inch top on it.

An' I got another picture of him a . . . when the . . . kids . . . cousins there that I've got . . . there that was my age. He was on a wheel barrow ready to take a ride.¹² You couldn't move that wheel barrow unless he'd jump on it.

We . . . had an old hen down there—it was in the yard there—[laughter] that used to wale¹³ the devil out of him when he was a little tiny fella' . . . and . . . finally, he kept growin' and growin' and . . . you know, he never . . . he never held it against her or anything. He liked her. He'd find her down in the barn . . . with the other chickens. And . . . he'd know her. And she didn't try and get away either. She never tried to get away and he'd feel around until he got a hold of her wing just right . . . and pick her up and never stop till he got to the house and let her down.

Once in a while . . . Once in a while he'd . . . wouldn't get the right hold and make her squawk. He'd set her down and feel around until he got a better hold.

Well, he . . . He thought that hen was his, I guess. And she was supposed to be up to the house.

One time my cousin ask . . . 'Why, that dog is killin' that hen.' Pop says, 'No. That's his.'

¹² #29

¹³ *Wale* is an informal verb meaning to beat or hit. The spelling *whale* is apparently more common. When Carroll used the word it was definitely with an initial *W* sound, not a *WH* sound.

That hen, she used to wale the devil out of him when she had chicks around there. [laughter] She . . . She'd wale him 'till he . . . till he got down on his back and he couldn't . . . [laughter] My uncle had to rescue him there one day. [laughter] She was just a waling the hell out of him [laughter].

But he didn't seem to hold it against her any. After he got big enough so he could've done something about it she quit. Course the chicks got bigger and . . . and she quit trying to wale him then too. And she seen him comin' and she'd just squat down.

An' she didn't seem to hold it against him. Not a bit.

He paid no attention to the rest of the chickens. He'd probably nip them.

'Nother thing. I had two or three cats at the barn always. He'd find one them And they was friends. He'd find one of them . . . a hun'erd yards or a quarter of mile from the house, by God, he'd nail 'em. He'd . . . He'd feel around till he got a . . . right hold and pick 'em up and take 'em to the barn.

Picked 'em up by the scruff of the neck. And . . . sometimes he, the cat, he'd yowl a little . . . He'd always let up. Feel around . . . till he could get the right hold and then he could . . . Boy, when he got started, he never . . . hesitated. [laughter] Don't know what he's thinkin'.

The cats . . . well, they didn't seem to mind it. They'd just wilt when he picked 'em up.

Well, I tell you, you'd have to see what he could do before you could really . . . appreciate, uh, realize what he really could do.¹⁴

As for tricks, well, he could sit up, shake hands, and something like that, but that was about the only things you'd try to teach him, I guess. Pop, he did . . . have other things he could do if he wanted to. I just . . . I just played with him when I was a kid and I'd tell him to do somethin' an' he . . . an' he usually done it without any messin' around.

Once . . . we'd just moved up here, an' he was a jumper. He'd clear a five-foot picket fence like nobodies business. Without touchin' it. The damn pickets was always sharp in them days. I got scared. I had my [mumbled] around the yard up here. I got scared he'd make a mislick an' hang up an' choke himself to death. The damn goin' on is ok, you open the gate, just push it open, you know. But comin' back he couldn't do it . . . couldn't open it. An' he'd have to . . . have to jump that picket fence to get in.

I told Pop, I said, '*I know I'm gonna do somethin'.*' '*Oh, what the hell you got in your mind?*' '*I'm gonna nail a strap on that gate.*' So I got my strap an' a hammer an' nail an' went out there. He went right along with me an' stood right

¹⁴ #14

there an' . . . watchin' me. He didn't . . . just stand there. He look to see what I was up to.

Always had to stick his nose in anything he thought somethin' was different. He was always interested . . . in most anything . . . that looked a little different.

So I nailed it on there. Well, I could tell him to pick somethin' up. Anything. An' he'd pick it up.

I'd just point . . . I'd say, '*Pull it.*' I say, '*Pull it.*' He just reached out an' give it one yank an' in he went. He never stopped to see what was gonna happen. He knew just as quick as that. Pulled that gate open, that was what it was for.

Never bothered 'bout it again. He just come up . . . the gate there an' give it a yank an' in he'd come. One time the old Watkins man . . . Old Man Kimble . . . Now why did I remember that name? Anyway, he stopped in. He was quite a bee-esser . . . talkin'. An' Dash, he'd been out . . . an' . . . messin' around on the place somewhere. You never had to tie him up.¹⁵

Very good most . . . a' the time about stayin' at home. You tell him to stay home an' that . . . But if you just goin' around on the place here . . . he . . .

Now, when I went huntin', he wasn't worth a damn, 's far as I was concerned. He was too aggressive. I mean, couldn't make him mind. If he seen a damn deer . . . that was it. He was gonna . . . catch it.

He's killed a . . . number a' . . . crippled ones. He got them by the throat an' . . . choked 'em to death.¹⁶ He was a vicious one.

And turn him loose . . . damn . . . and he . . . jump and grab them by the throat and hang on, his jaws'r' clamped there just like a bull dog.

You couldn't . . . take him huntin'. If you seen one, you couldn't get him to, you couldn't keep him from breakin'. I didn't hunt with him much, hardly.

He'd stay. You told him to stay home and he'd mind pretty good. If he seen the shot box rattle . . . boy, he was right up and . . . thinkin' maybe he might be able to go.

Bird huntin', he, like I was huntin' quail or something like that, he . . . dig around or he'd go out there and if there was any anywhere close . . . smell 'em. He had a nose and half on him. An' he go into a blackberry patch and stir 'em up. One time, I was out there with a .22 messin' around and I shot one. Ah, it was right up the road here a little ways. It flew up on . . . half way up the damn hill before he hit.

And he . . . Pretty soon he got the track of it some way or the other. I was going to cuss him cause he wouldn't come back. I wanted to do some more huntin'.

¹⁵ #21

¹⁶ 38

Finally, I seen him . . . walkin' through the fern and stuff, walking back. He jumped out in the road, spit out that quail right in the road. He could find . . . ah . . . find stuff like that just like nobodies business.¹⁷

Oh, he was . . . full a' hell. [laughter] All the ways, up to ten, twelve-years old, long in through that . . . maybe a little older, he . . .¹⁸

He slept . . . had a place . . . a pad or something that he slept on . . . downstairs when we first got him. Most of the time, he slept in the house an' . . . Well not all the time . . . otherwise he wouldn't've got in trouble.¹⁹

He come damn near a dying of that salmon though. He got . . . out around where there was too many fish . . . dyin' along the edge of the crik.

*[In the Pacific Northwest, **some** salmon are host to a fluke **some of which in turn** harbor a rickettsial bacteria that is lethal to canine species.]*

He was just . . . 'bout a yearlin' maybe. Not much older, if any.

He just laid there. And Ma a-doctoring him . . . an' they didn't have anything in them days to doctor him with. Finally . . . he didn't look like he's that better an' she made tapiokee puddin' for him. That's what . . . Somebody told us that there was more dogs—salmon'd dogs—killed, when they started to gettin' over it than otherwise.

They'd feed'm a bait of stuff that . . . Just, like you'd feed any dog, you know, and they're hungry an' they just fill up on it . . . an' . . . their stomach, the lining in their stomach had been, that fish had practically eat it out . . . part of it there, an they'd . . . eat a hole . . . and then half the time they claimed it bust their stomach.

Ohhh, let's see, what the devil was that old remedy . . . Now, I can't think of it . . . There was, number one remedy for anything . . . something similar . . . sounds something like . . . What the hell was the name of that damn stuff? It was something that I haven't heard of for years.

It was tablets. Worked like it'd shit'm to death. That's what they thought, that's all they thought they could . . . would cure 'em was get that stuff out of them.

Prob'ly it was . . . sulfa. An' most of the places in town, they wouldn't sell it to you . . . on account of you should a' take 'em to the vet.

At that time . . . it was near impossible not to get salmoned.²⁰

¹⁷ #11

¹⁸ #27

¹⁹ #61

[laughter] He was no kindhearted soul. [laughter]

One time . . . Well . . . it was 'fore I moved up here, I was messin' around with him. Well, he was gettin' playin' pretty rough an' he . . . he nip . . . Ah, I started to run an' he nipped me . . . an' I fell down an' . . . piled up . . . an' started a howlin' bloody murder, you know . . .

I don't know, I was ten prob'ly. [laughter] Anyway . . . Pop, he was a-workin' there. [laughter] He knew . . . He knew I done it on purpose to see what he'd do. An' he stood around 'n' . . . back, walked back an' forth . . . an' walked over to me an' rammed his nose against me an' I paid no attention to him, just kept on a-howlin'. He looked at me an' then he went over an' went to diggin' Then he'd look at me [laughter] see if he could get my mind off of what it is.

Pop got quite a kick out of that.²¹

'Nother thing I used to do. He could find anything or anybody I think if he could get a good smell . . . or give him somebody's tracks . . . er . . . even another dog. Gran'dad had a . . . dog down there an' he got salmoned an' decided . . . he was about ready to die. Took off up the crik . . . an' Gran'dad come down . . . 'Oh,' he says, 'Get Dash.' He says, 'Buster disappeared.' We go up there . . . All Pop had to say, do 's, 'Where's Buster?'

He started pretty soon . . . Up the crik he went. Crossed it. Ah, how that damn dog, weak enough to die, know . . . er . . . How he'd stan' up. He crossed the damned stinkin' little ol' alder that wasn't any bigger than that.

When they got there, Dash he . . . took off an' went across it too, 'n' they . . . they couldn't wonder how that dog . . . an' they didn' go but a little ways an' they found him.

He was alive. They brought him back an' he died that night, I think. That was . . . the idea was when he left, he knew he was done, I guess.

One time . . . we was up crik a-huntin'—snow was on the groun'. Three 'r four of us . . . an' then there was a damned ol' cedar . . . stub, snag . . . there that was hollow . . . an' he begin sniffin' that. Jim Hanes, my neighbor says, '*Goddamn, there's some coon in that.*' So we messin' aroun' there an' got some dry . . . cedar limbs 'n' stuff an' they built a fire. An' the damn coon, there was three or four of them in there.

Never did get a coon out of it. Singed 'em like the devil. An' you know that . . . he [Dash] wouldn't tackle that . . . singed coon. He just . . . well, a-couldn't . . .

²⁰ #9

²¹ #26

It was the smell that he didn' understand, I guess, an' he went along an' smelt of it.

An' Jim Hanes, 'Oh,' he says, '*don't think nothin' of it.*' He says . . . He says, '*I've heard that all my life, that a dog wouldn't have anything to do with a . . . singed coon, unless they fought . . . stopped to fight.*'

Pop . . . he . . . I've eat coon meat. It's damn good when it's fattened on corn. But I still . . . Too much like eatin' a dog, I guess. Idea, but . . .²²

He was . . . He was such a water dog, that . . . he'd go in . . . any place there's water. [laughter] If I was fishin' or messin' around like lookin' for an old salmon to get . . . get some eggs, if I missed it, he didn't.

Why, he was the best fisherman you ever laid eyes on. Why . . . I've seen him go clear out of sight in water pretty near as deep as that [Carroll motions with his hand]. There . . . he'd come out and snort water out of both nostrils. [laughter]²³

[laughter] One time, Pop . . . made a bunch of shakes and the crik . . . That little crik below the house was about the right size that he got the bright idea of floating them down. [laughter] Pretty soon there was a damned old salmon down there. Course, they stirred him up and tried to get loose and [laughter] the dog seen him [laughter] and if that wasn't the damndest sight, the dog was grabbin' them shakes and throwing them out a ways an' then driv . . . divin' in under 'em, tryin' to get that salmon. [laughter]²⁴

Like to got [laughter] Come damn near . . . My Gran'mother come damn near drownin' him out there at town one day. Hose. They . . . He try to drink every . . . bit that come out of a hose. Goddamn, he drank 'n' drank till he's . . . just about . . .²⁵

You pretty near had to be with him . . . to get the damn cows in at night. He was too . . . wanted to bring 'em in in high gear. [laughter] His idea just . . . drive 'em along . . . good cow gait. He couldn't see that. They had to be *movin'*. Faster they moved, the better he like it.

He was just a natural born heeler. Just like his mother.

Oh, the old . . . The ol' dog, he was a good heeler, but . . . too . . . far as that mattered, but . . .²⁶

²² #32

²³ #3

²⁴ #10

²⁵ #33

²⁶ #35

[The old school house was about a mile further up along Chickahominy Creek.]

He'd be down the road maybe a ways to meet me of a night . . . Ohhh, I don't know what . . . 4:30 . . . 5:00.

We had a long sidewalk . . . there at the house. About as long as from here to . . . my car, I guess, or farther, a little farther. He'd always be settin' out there on that end of that, waitin'. He see'd me coming up the road b' couple hundred yards or down the road a ways . . . He'd prob'ly come down to meet me then.

He might grab my pants leg or somethin' if I fooled with him.²⁷

He was . . . He was into everything. There was nothing that went on that he didn't have his . . . have his snoot in to see what the hell was goin' on.

Him and I were the ones that done all the mischief. [laughter] Oh, he was . . . he was everybody's dog . . . anybody that liked him.

A strange dog would come there . . . always friendly with him. There used to be a hound pup, neighbor had. Man and his wife would come up . . . in the horse and buggy days. [laughter] The hound pup would always come up there . . . and that about half a mile to the store . . . and that dog would stay there and they would play. They'd play and play until they was so damned tired they didn't know whether they was comin' or goin'.

[Laughter] It was always a curiosity when that fella and his wife, they come back. That damn dog, uh, my dog'd keep after him to play. An he'd stop and look down the road and see 'em just about gettin' out a sight Pretty soon [laughter] he couldn't find 'em and away he'd go. [laughter]

They'd play there the whole damn time. Half hour maybe . . . or more. And he never bothered any dog. They was always welcome. Once in a while some darn dog'd come . . . come in there, pick a fight out of him. An' he could fight if he wanted to.

He wanted to be friends. I mean, everybody was supposed to be his friend, till they'd do something wrong and then that was it. He had no more use for 'em. That was it so far as . . . anybody that messed around.²⁸

He'd bark his head off. That was the biggest feature . . . er . . . thing about him that he was . . . Nobody liked his ornery damn barkin'. All he could think of was bark. Anything was goin' right or he was having fun, he was a-barking

²⁷ #31

²⁸ #5

along with it. Everybody used to say. . . if he'd just get rid of that lousy bark. [laughter]²⁹

Hardly get him to stop. Stubborn as the devil. Tried to take . . . if he could . . . Always liked to grab something somebody had and then get you to take it away from him.

And he just almost let you have it. [laughter] And my Gran'dad, he liked him too as far as that matters, and he just loved to pester Gran'dad . . . Grab him by the pant's leg and give it a jerk or grab his hat if it was possible.

Gran'dad was, oh, up in the sixties, I suppose. An' still spry. He'd be there, messin' around. [laughter] He'd come in there . . . Gran'dad like to swear a blue streak. He come in there one day, "*You son-of-a-bitch, I'll fix you this time. I'll leave my hat on.*"

When he come in the house, he left it on. Just . . . He usually just come in the house and give it a sling any direction that come handy. 'Bout once or twice and that dog broke him of that. [laughter]

Oh, the dog, he hung around there, stick that damn hat up there . . . and see if Gran'dad would grab it and, of course, he never would get 'in a mile of it. He'd always have his head jerked out of the way before . . . That time Gran'dad said he was going to leave his hat on.

Not very damn long though. [laughter] Mom happened to be a-watchin'. And . . . seen him sneakin' in the front room . . . She knew something was up. He . . . Gran'dad was readin' the paper, his mind on what he was readin', of course. He slipped up behind the chair, right *e-a-s-y*. [laughter]

Right now, I think the dog liked to hear Gran'dad cuss about as much as anything else. Make a noise, I guess.

[laughter] And then he . . . Mom had to call him in and bribe him to get [laughter] to get loose of it. Had somethin' for him to eat. Fine and dandy. He got that in his head . . . He go'n' to get something, that way he'd bring it around, he was supposed to, goin' to get something to eat out of it before he let loose of it. Foolin' around there . . . We'd have to choke him. He was just that stubborn.

When I'd run out on the place, he'd always have to pack a tool or something when he come home. He'd pester you, and if you didn't pay attention to him, he'd look around and see if he could find something on his own. He always had to pack somethin'. Busy.³⁰

Oh, sometimes you thought that he knew the names a' things. [laughter] An' Pop would be out there buildin' a fence and lay's hammer up on the post. He'd be working off a little ways and he'd tell him, '*Dash, get the hammer.*' Some

²⁹ #6

³⁰ #12

way or another he knew where . . . what he was usin'. Hell, he'd always packed it coming or going anyway. '*Go get that hammer.*' He'd . . . He'd just up . . . an' grab that hammer off of that post and bring it back to him. But . . . Dang it, when like Pop'd work . . . workin' there messin' around there, he wasn't bad about gettin' away from him . . . stayed around. He's . . . He thought that was business, I guess.

[laughter] And he'd bring the hammer to the house and . . . lay it out in the yard somewhere. An' Pop would keep an eye on it. Next day . . . he'd say, '*Dash, you go get that hammer now.*' And the old dog would stand there just for an instant or so just like he was a-thinkin'. So far as I know, I don't think he ever failed to . . . but where he remembered where he left it.

Whatever he brought up . . . Now, if he bring a stick up . . . and leave it out in the yard . . . and the next day you say, '*What'd you do with that stick?*' Well, see, . . . that whatever it was he had, he remembered it, I guess."

He'd go on his own . . . with no pointin' necessary.

Well, I don't know how he could. I know a couple of guys around . . . that didn't have any use for a dog much. They always had to admit that that was one dog, the only dog they ever seen or prob'ly ever would see, that . . . that would do what you told . . . ask him . . . tell him to do.

He just could remember . . . Well, like a damn stick . . . He liked to pack a pail too. He'd hunt around till he could get hold of the bail . . . and take off like it was nobodies business. Sometimes it was big enough that it'd dra . . . He'd have to . . . turn aroun . . . He'd have to turn around an' back up and drag it.

It was something that . . . well, he'd do . . . You know, I mean, . . . something we was gonna, something he knew we was gonna pack it. And he wanted to carry it. He always had to carry something.³¹

You never had to . . . what ya' call, teach him. Show him a time or two, tell him a time or two. More 'r less, just showin' him.

He like to play . . . better than anything in the world . . . an' bit hell out of me along with it [laughter] if it is play.

But . . . if somethin' outright . . . Now, like him a-watchin' me . . . fix that gate up. Stood right there, just his mind on what I was a-doin' 'n' when I . . . showed him . . . told him what to do, he done it. I didn't even have to show it, I says . . . I says, '*Pull it.*'

An' another thing he could do. He, you know . . . A hoe handle or a . . . rake handle . . . won't . . . won't go through a . . . a yard gate without . . . turnin'. Well, he could . . . he could do it. He'd turn it an' go through.

³¹ #13

Another thing he could do. He could pa . . . pick that hoe han'le 'r a rake an' he pick it up an' he could balance it. If he didn't get it right, he'd move his head over . . . till he got it balanced . . . an' away he'd go.³²

An' there was one other thing that he done that just . . . Talk about bringin' this an' bringin' that. The damn hens . . . got to layin' under the house . . . back under there. An' you, believe it or not, you told him to bring them eggs out of there an' he did. About five or six dozen, whatever it was that he brought out of there, an' I think he only brought . . . only broke one or two.

They laid under there for half the summer. An' every day he'd go under there an' bring out the eggs. An' he never broke . . . ah, I don't think there were one maybe, three at the most, I don't know how . . .

Yeah. An' . . . An' he knew wherever it was. Now why, I can't figure out . . . that he was sharp enough that . . . You didn't have to tell him only about once or maybe twice at the most. An' he . . . He'd hear them darn hens cackle of course an' they come out of there. An' I'd tell him, '*Now go under there an' get them eggs.*' an' he seemed to know that . . . eggs an' hens were . . . connected . . . at, enough that . . . maybe . . . All them eggs an' . . . he brought out of there an' I don't think he bro . . . lost one, two, or three.³³

I got a . . . spear . . . I seen a . . . steelhead down the crik there'n . . .

[laughter] An' . . . anyway, I . . . that spear finally slipped away, but I still ha . . . had the rock up home layin' around there.

I scratched th' word, *spear*, on it. He was with me an' I give him the rock . . . I said, '*You go up, take that to Pop.*' Wasn't long, I looked up . . . out my field, an' here he come with that spear. [laughter] Like nobodies business.

[The bedrock of the area is a relatively soft light-colored sandstone.]

Oh, he was . . . No, he was . . . getting' up middle aged at that time, I guess. Prob'ly . . .³⁴

Any . . . anyway, down . . . Clear down here at the end of the field . . . where I seen the fish . . . handy rock, scratched '*rock*' . . . 'r, ah, '*spear*' on that rock an' handed it to him an', boy, he went to the house in nothing flat. He didn't tarry when . . . when he, y'give him something to take to the house, he went with every ounce of speed he had.

'*Take it to Pop. Take it to Pop.*' An' anything around the house there . . . he knew. All you have to say, '*Take it to Mom.*' or '*Take it to Pop.*' He . . . He

³² #42

³³ #60

³⁴ #43

knew. He always seemed to know anyway, near as I can remember. Didn't have to fool with him.³⁵

He was ornery. Well, we both were . . . prob'ly six of one, half a dozen the other. [laughter] The old boy didn't have any trouble holding his own, I'll tell you that. [laughter]³⁶

He'd bite me . . . Just, playing. Oh, once in while, he'd make a mistake. That time though, he . . . he felt real bad about it. He just . . . looked like it broke his heart. There's . . . a bunch of fir trees around there. I'd reach up and give him a fir limb, pull it down where he could jump to get it. An' he'd just stand there on the ground and he'd jerk and he'd jerk and he'd pull it one way and then the other till he'd break the damn limb.

I don't know why he liked to do that, but he did. One time, I . . . lifted the limb [laughter] down an' instead of get . . . instead of getting the goddamn limb, he got my thumb.

Boy, he just wilted, right there just as he done it, he just wilted and took off to the house. [laughter]

He didn' . . . I don't . . . I never did really beat him up for . . . biting me or anything.

An' he'd bide his time, he'd grew up and grabbed me by the pants and give it a couple jerks and down I'd go. [laughter] He thought that was . . . that was great. Now I used to . . . when I was in the hay mow, I'd stick my damn leg down and he'd jumped up and grab me by the pants leg and I'd haul him up and . . .

[laughter] Looked like . . . battery acid . . . been at my pants. [laughter]

Ah, she . . . used . . . He made . . . He made life great for most everybody. Oh, once in a while he'd make things a little miserable with his orneriness. But . . . something you'd overlook.³⁷

He's the . . . Dash was the one . . . done the strikin' to get them pancakes.

Well, the ol' man Atkinson always wanted to raise cor . . . er, had to garden some. An' then . . . He had a milk route up there . . . where the old mill there, just before the dump is now. He had a milk route there . . . an' he picked up . . . what was left over from meals from the big cook house. I don't know, a good many . . . a number of guys boarded there. . . in fact, guys that worked in the woods an' the mill.

³⁵ #58

³⁶ #53

³⁷ #17

[laughter] An' he had a contraption fixed on the back of his buggy then, he could slip a barrel on . . . there . . . so he wouldn't have to lift it much. You'd just have to tip it up . . . Only about that high off a' the ground.

Well, any . . . anything that come out of that cookhouse that they wo . . . that the boys wouldn't eat . . . went in that barrel. Meat. Potatoes. Feed it t' the hogs. An' pancakes by the bushel. That was the main . . . famous . . . main item was pancakes . . . for breakfast.

One of the boys said all you had to do was just . . . grab one end of 'em an' put the other end 'n his mouth . . . pull back like that, an' you . . . happen to slip an' fly back an' knock your brains out.

[laughter] So . . . that was a just like all that . . . cookhouse stuff them days. It wasn't good 'r it wasn't bad.

Well, I showed Dash about that barrel. [laughter] I just . . . I was messin' aroun' behind the buggy . . . there . . . I'd been up there foolin' around. Ah . . . He wasn't payin' much attention an' I . . . tol' . . . 'Come here, come here, come here.' [this said in a soft voice].

An' . . . Course when I pointed to that barrel . . . he could smell it a' course. He ran up there an' . . . he got 'bout four or five pancakes the first pass. An' he . . . acted pretty cute about that. Got off . . . out a' there an' behind a bush . . . 'r, ah, bushes. Just like, acted just like he was doin' somethin' he knew he shouldn't . . . an' wanted to get out of sight, I guess.

So, he eat them up. By the time we got to the house . . . an' he made another pass. An' he got another mouthful. That time . . . took off an' got behind the house t' eat. [laughter] An' from that time on it was . . .

A guy happened to be ridin' with the ol' man—or he never would have discovered it—told him.

An' the ol' man . . . ever . . . every morning he'd come on by there, you know . . . an' Dash'd sneak out . . . where he could get slipped in behind, you know. The ol' man'd be watchin'—he had a whip—he'd make a wild pass at him. Course he never come within a mile of him.

Some . . . one . . . One time, he's a . . . he tried in the dark an' . . . made a grab for somethin' an' got a . . . mouth full of onion peelings. An' . . . boy, spit them out. An' the old man . . . [laughter] Yeah, everybody got a kick out of him.

He'd walk along on his hind legs. Had his front feet hangin' over that barrel, you know, an' walkin' along on his hind legs.

Yeah, I can see the walloper yet.³⁸

³⁸ #49

We had a . . . house . . . One that we moved into . . . when we moved here to Walton an' stayed there for a number of years. Well, the fact is . . . the garage . . . the garage up here is part of it.

Tore it down when we moved up here 'n' built a garage out of it. Anyways, one time, went after the cows . . . Oh, we had . . . I'd always . . . take the .22 and nine times out of ten, there'd be a . . . wood rat in there. I'd shoot the darn thing an' he'd grab it as it hit an' give it a shake or two. Pack it up the road . . . up the creek a ways, 'r wherever we was goin' after the cows. An' he liked to bury everything he could get. Everything had to be buried, he thought.

Anyway, he took that . . . wood rat off to one side . . . rooted out the . . . fall leaves out . . . there . . . an' covered him up. We went on up after the cows for a ways. Come back, we wondered what he would do. He knew exactly where that was. He just went out . . . when he got there . . . rooted some more leaves down over on it an' packed it down with his nose an' took off.

[laughter] 'Nother time, he had a rat there an' it got a kink in its tail . . . when he tried to bury it. An' he root some leaves on there an' . . . tamp it down with his nose . . . Up them damn leaves'd come, you know. An' he'd make a wild pass at it with his nose an' just push everything an' . . . pile some more on. An' . . . we went on up an' come back an' the damn thing was still there an' he . . . give another try. He . . . damn . . . he had a . . . a number of curious things that he could do 'r . . . did do.³⁹

All you had to do was to put a ladder up or . . . or come to where there was a ladder up . . . Well, '*Climb it.*' there, an' away he'd go. He . . . He didn't make any mistakes a-goin' up, but coming down, that . . . of course, that was another business.

He always come down head first. An' he never did get the idea . . . tryin' the other way or else . . . Hind feet wouldn't've found the ladder any better than his front did, so . . .

To start with I'd . . . climb down the ladder there . . . at the top of the ladder 'n' he'd stick his head under my . . . under my arm, one way or the other. An' down we'd go.

Usually he didn't try to climb . . . fool around climbin' any ladders . . . anything, unless I was with him. One time, there was a big wood rat up on the . . . shed roof of the barn. I seen it up there an' I told him—well, he'd smelled it, far as that matters, 'n' he knew where it was at. Boy, when I put the ladder up there . . . an' . . . he didn't stop for a second, he just . . . cl' up that ladder and nailed him . . . there. And the rat couldn't get inside. An' so . . . he nailed him there . . . an' come back there . . . come darn near t' fallin' off.⁴⁰

³⁹ #36

⁴⁰ #50

[laughter] And, you'd show him a rope . . . He had bull dog jaws and I pulled him up . . . ten . . . ten, twelve feet . . . into the hay mow. Well, the first time or two I pulled him up about four or five feet and . . . he let loose and he slid down and hit his butt like a . . . a *woop* he's goin'. I threwed him the rope again and he didn't let loose that time.

He'd pretty near jerk . . . I wasn't too damn big either, you know . . . He was stouter than a bull . . . A hard job a gettin' him off the ground. He . . . He would fight until hell wouldn't have it to keep from gettin' off the ground. Just as quick I got him off his hind feet . . . then he'd walk right up the side of the buildin'.⁴¹

Most everybody . . . knew him from . . . Walton to Eugene, might say.

Well, he liked attention . . . quite a lot. He'd try 'r do anything . . . to . . . get attention. He . . . [laughter] Goddamn near hung a . . . girl down there one day.

Oh, bunch of damn nuts . . . I was just a brat then . . . an' . . . always a bunch of girls out from town there, from the Moore's bunch. An' they told this girl, a couple of the damn boys there. They was grown, far as that matters . . . happened to be there . . . threwed a rope around this girl's neck, said they gonna hang her. Had . . . threwed over a limb there was there. By God, they just about hung her. Goddamn dog . . . was there takin' it all in. Quick as that rope . . . went over there, he grabbed it an' took off. [laughter]

[laughter] Why, it took the . . . two of them guys . . . pullin' like the devil to get in . . . [laughter] loose enough so they could get that off. [laughter]

It didn't feel very damn good on her neck.

That guy says, '*Well, there's one thing about it. You can't say you never had a . . . rope around your neck.*' [laughter]⁴²

He had to see everything. He was a . . . had to see about it. One time, in town . . . Here come a kid on roller skates . . . down through the street there, miles per, you know. I had the dog on a leash there in town, a' course.

Goddamn, he just nailed the kid as he went by. Grabbed him by the pants leg an' . . . braced himself. Kid was kinda watchin' for it, I guess, an' he slammed his brakes on then an' there. An', when he stopped, the dog let loose, rammed his nose down and smelt them . . . them skates over . . . from top to bottom.

So the kid just laughed. '*You know,*' he says, '*he . . . guess he had to find out what they were.*' [laughter]

⁴¹ #16

⁴² #37

Dash didn't scare him a damn bit. Well, I guess . . . 'cause the dog grab him by the pants leg instead a' grab'n him by the leg. Grab'd him . . . [laughter] swung on 'n' made him stop.

Quick as . . . Quick as the kid stopped, he let loose of the pants leg an' then smelt the skates over till he got tired of it an' the kid went on. Laughed, '*Well, I guess he found out what they was.*'⁴³

There was a guy that worked at the camp down here that hated the dog I guess. And . . . Dash, he hated him back. An' . . . An' I had to get a-hold of him every time that guy got near.

Nobody else . . . and there was a couple of the other neighbors. He was always bad, now you couldn't blame him . . . 'bout them bein' 'bout half scared. He just liked to bark, you know, and rush up behind 'em . . . as they go . . . He never did bite anybody. Just . . . Just like a . . . rushed by and make a noise. And nobody . . . He never did bite anybody that . . . [laughter] These two guys backed up with their cork shoes . . . on his nose. He never liked them after that.

Never forgot 'em either.

He remembered. Seemed to anyway.⁴⁴

Oh, he liked both men and women. He had one woman lived up at the camp. Grandma used to go up to camp once in while or Mom too. To the store to get somethin'.

Whenever he heard the jingle . . . jiggle of the pocket book, goddamn, he's . . . knew what was goin' on and he'd raise hell till he got ready to go. Then . . . Grandma up there one day . . . and disappeared on her. And one of those women . . . well, she was a . . . local woman . . . lived a lifetime here. And Grandma hollered . . . called . . . tried to get him to come. And this woman, she'd just had an operation, hadn't been up and around very much. She layin' there in the house on a cot, I guess. She heard Grandma. '*Oh, its okay*' she says, '*He come in here to visit with me.*' He thought . . . she wanted to visit with him.⁴⁵

He had another bad habit. I don't know how many houses along the edge of the road there they had a board walk . . . along most of it. The son-of-a-bitch'd walk along there and turn his rear around and dirty on the . . . porch.

⁴³ #30

⁴⁴ #18

⁴⁵ #19

And at home, you couldn't hire him to do anything that way.⁴⁶

He was a . . . He liked to ride a horse pretty well too. If . . . the horse'd stan' for it. Once . . . in a while, I'd go out . . . an' get the old mare. She had a wish bone that . . . back bone . . . stuck up about that high it's spit a . . . rain drop, pretty near. Gettin' old. So I go out . . . do some work . . . I'd go out an' I just . . . grab the mane an' swing on . . . Didn't need any bridle or halter or anything.

'Bout . . . that time, he swung on behind me.

Long as you walked, that was fine. But I . . . I kick her in the ribs an' make her trot a little. [laughter] 'Bout then . . . [laughter] 'Bout that time [laughter] we'd both go off.

He didn't want . . . He'd grab her by the backbone. [laughter] Yeah, he'd chew on . . . let her know . . . right there . . . darn trottin' wasn't s'pose' to be, I guess. [laughter]

He'd always stand up, usually, cross-ways.⁴⁷

He always went an' got Mom's slippers for her every night. I'd say, '*Better go get Mom's slippers.*' An' m . . . most . . . most of the time, he . . . it never failed, he remembered . . . by that certain time, that's what she needed or wanted.

He wanted to do that, but he wanted to argue a little when he . . . when he brought 'em. He didn't want to let loose of them, right, as good as he ought've course. He'd yank, pulled on 'em a time or two, an' he'd let go an' he'd go get the other one. An' . . . [laughter] uh . . . Once in a while he'd get somebody else's. An' bring that an' I'd tell him, '*No, no, that's the wrong one. Go back an' get the other one.*' An' . . . He might . . . Once in a . . . Once in a great while he'd . . . make a second mistake, but very seldom.

Long about the time I was eight-an'-a-half years old there, we used to walk to the mill messing around. An' he was a clown. I'd get a-straddle him . . . ride him. An' . . . an' the walloper'd buck like a bronco. [laughter] With a little help there, he'd go through the motions like nobody's business. I had half that damn mill crew . . . was out there watchin' him one night [laughter] an' they got a kick out of it.

Only did that sort a thing when I had that dog.

⁴⁶ #20

⁴⁷ #28

About the time he . . . he got too damned old to do anything, everybody . . . everybody in the country wanted a . . . pups from him then, an' he couldn't. Waited too damn many years.

Davis down here had one that's s'posed to've been . . . one of his, but . . . I think . . . I think another dog got in there an' . . . helped out the deal. Maybe before they brought that dog up.⁴⁸

You never had to tie him up. Only when somebody's damn dog . . . bitch dog got hot an' then you'd have to tie him up. That's what put him in the shape that he was in. Blind for six, seven years.

You couldn't tell it around the house.

Damned old stinkin' horse kicked him in the back of the head. That horse one of the . . . smart ones. He could kick back about four feet an' kick the dirt. An' Dash was used to . . . bite . . . heelin' anything. That damn . . . neighbor there, he was the cause of it. The horse got out there . . . an' he set . . . Dash was up there . . . on account of his bitch dog he had. An' . . . the horse got out there an' he sent the dog . . . set the dog after the horse.

Probable'ly knocked him colder than a wedge. I don't know, but . . . next mornin' he finally showed up. An' I looked . . . there had a bad gash in the back of his head from that . . .

An' . . . so, he went along for years . . . two . . . maybe . . . a couple years or so, I noticed him runnin' into things . . . out there. Out there in the road, he'd . . . bite them cows even after he . . . you might say . . . was fair blind, you know, pretty near. So that's . . . the fruits of it . . . tom caddin' aroun'. . . .

You couldn't tell it around the house. Oh, he'd go . . . on the road . . . if you were runnin' along the road somewhere . . . he'd go. An' you couldn't tell it.

He'd . . . trot along in front of you. An' if he'd . . . His ears, I guess, were pretty good. He could tell about where he was.⁴⁹

An' when the house burned . . . neighbor come down here . . . finally . . . an' Mom and Gran'mother were settin' there . . . watchin' . . . up to the burnin'.

First thing he thought of when he come down, he said, '*Where's the dog?*'

An' . . . my . . . folks . . . forgot him completely. An' they started to callin' him. He'd went up to the . . . up there to the old shop an' stayed there till they called him an' he come.

That was in '28 an' he was blind then.

He had burned a little. Finally found a place that was scorched on him. An' he knew . . . of course, he knew . . . he knew where everything was. In the house I

⁴⁸ #39

⁴⁹ #22

got now . . . it's . . . the room's about the same, practically the same. He had no more trouble . . . gettin' around through the house an' outside in the yard than he did before . . .⁵⁰

When he got old he just . . . got weak an' down . . . an' you had to help him up 'n' . . . don't know how long you had to help him up . . . an' then he could navigate pretty good, you know, after he got goin'. This was for prob'ly a year, more or less.

He died . . . in . . . '34, somewhere in there. I don't remember dates anymore. It was just old age . . . ah, an' a bullet. Well, I had ah . . . I packed him out to the barn. Laid him down there an' the neighbor . . . Griffin . . . come along after we'd left an' . . . put him out of his misery. He didn't want to but he did.

He was . . . He was layin' there . . . moanin' an' groanin' . . .

That was hard after havin' him that many years.

Could I have shot him? No, I don't suppose I would've. Doubt it.⁵¹

He's bu . . . buried right there where . . . a . . . next door to where I buried Polly. An' I got another . . . three dogs there.⁵²

It was quite a little while before we got another dog. Then Surcamp down here give us that police dog. An' he was a vicious son-of-a-bitch that ever came . . . down the pike.

He was smart too, far as that matters. But not . . . just dog . . . just common every-day dog smart. An' he was death on cats if they didn't mind their business.⁵³

end



Carroll's Mom, Dash, Grandma Schade

⁵⁰ #24

⁵¹ #55

⁵² #25

⁵³ #40