

The attached is provided by Freddie Staller who advises that:

This memoir was given to me by Dick Williams who is married to my daughter's friend Mary Konsgaard. They live in Napa Valley, California. Dick had come to Long Island to visit his ancestral homes, *Fort Hill* and *Sagamore Hill*.

Dick's great-uncle, Roger Alden Derby, wrote this memoir which is part of his unpublished autobiography. Roger and his family spent summers at *Fort Hill* which had been built by Mrs. Derby's mother, Anne Alden. She had purchased the property from the College of Saint Francis Xavier. The house was designed by McKim, Meade and Bigelow. Mrs. Alden lived in the *Lloyd Manor House*. Dr. and Mrs. Richard Derby and family are those referred to in this memoir. Young Dick married Ethel Roosevelt.

On Mrs. Alden's death, *Fort Hill* was sold to William Matheson.

Chapter II

BOYHOOD

Now to go back to the goats which played such a vivid part in my early youth and with reference to which these memoirs started. I have digressed quite far enough into events that took place before I was born. For some reason I cannot now explain a goat held a peculiar fascination for me when I was a very small boy. The one I loved most and feared most and with whom I had the best understanding was named "Billy Buck". Billy and I used to wrestle frequently. I took him by the horns and twisted his neck and he retaliated by butting me vigorously between wind and water and laying me flat on my back. It was a pastime we both enjoyed most of the time though it occasionally got a little too rough for my liking. One day at Lloyd's Neck I was so engaged with Billy when my brother Dick's trained nurse, a large, fat woman who was a member of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (my brother was at the time enjoying an attack of scarlet fever) came along and berated me for tormenting a poor, dumb animal. She forcibly pulled me off Billy's horns and shook me in her righteous anger. Then she went to pat the poor dumb beast that I had so maltreated.

A human thought suddenly flashed into Billy's mind, I am quite sure, for as she leant forward over him he rose like a catapult on his hind legs and gave her the works in the middle of her very fat tummy. Trained Nurse took the count on her back with her wind knocked out and I was a highly delighted urchin. Yes, Billy Buck and I understood each other.

One hot day I must have become a great nuisance to my mother. She got rid of me by suggesting that I take a drive with Billy in my goat buckboard. It was not long before I came back minus Billy and the buckboard and explained that Billy had "perspired" so much I thought it best to discontinue the trip. Of course an obvious lie. Billy and I had engaged in a wrestling match and this time Billy had completely routed me and gone back to the stable with the buckboard by himself. I recall the incident vaguely but remember that I was really frightened by Billy's ferocity. That was all good training.

Lloyd's Neck was originally granted to an ancestor on my father's mother's side, James Lloyd, by the British Crown. It came down pretty well intact except for a part that was confiscated by the American

Government from one Lloyd who remained a Loyalist in the Revolution. My mother's mother, Mrs. Alden, bought a considerable acreage there so that most of the Neck was in my family's hands when I was a boy. My father and mother built a house designed by Charles McKim who was a great friend of the family and who for years occupied the second floor of my father's office at 9 West 35th Street, New York City. This house was built at Fort Hill on the site of an old Jesuit Monastery. Fort Hill was on a high bluff overlooking Oyster Bay. It took its name from an old earthen work fort still standing which formed part of the courtyard of the house. The fort was occupied by the British during the Revolution. We had a large muzzle loading cannon mounted on the front lawn and pointed towards Center Island. On the Fourth of July we stuffed giant fire crackers into it and fired it off. I don't remember the history of this gun but think it was raised from the waters off the bluff in front of the house.

There had been an engagement fought on the high land east of the fort during the Revolutionary War. We were always plowing up bullets and once a complete

set of surgical instruments, very rusty but still recognizable. I recall some legend about a man who had his arm shot off during the engagement and being attended by a surgeon who was also shot and killed. My father thought that these were the surgeon's instruments.

There was an iron ring in the limb of an old apple tree in the garden where we were told a spy had been hung and buried. General Washington spent a night, I believe, in my grandmother's house, the old Lloyd Manor house on Lloyd's harbor, a really beautiful old Long Island mansion, the upper floors of which had been used for storing grain during the war and were so sagged in the middle that they had to put stoppers under the legs of the beds to keep them in place.

It was a lovely but isolated spot in those days. There were deer and plenty of quail on the Neck. Wild duck flew in the fall. There was good shore bird shooting. Sea trout used to be caught in the stream at Cold Spring. Good sized tautog were plentiful off our wharf. We used to catch crabs and spear eels in Lloyd's Harbor, swim, row and sail in

the waters of Oyster Bay, collect specimens for our aquariums and ride our ponies through the woods and fields.

It was a dusty eight mile drive to Huntington which we covered in jig time with horses and a light buckboard. My grandmother, Mrs. Alden, always had good horses and fast ones. From Huntington one took the Long Island train to Long Island City and the ferry to East 34th Street, New York. My father commuted to his office in the summer, sometimes by way of Huntington and sometimes by launch to Oyster Bay.

My grandmother's Irish coachman, John McMullen, was a particular friend of mine; "Johnny Ponny", I used to call him. He bought me goats in Harlem, cared for them and whenever possible I used to climb up on the box and drive to town with him. I am told by my family that on the way I used to tell him fabulous stories and when we got home say solemnly, "Johnny Ponny, all those stories what I've been telling you, there ain't a word of truth in any of them". My family still reminds me of this when I get off a story that seems to them improbable.

Children were dressed in those days in such a way as to please the vanity of their parents but which did not take into account the budding sense of dignity of the young male. Little Lord Fauntleroy, God bless his soul, was the vogue. My brother Dick, one of the most amiable and kindly people I have ever known, was first clad in this ridiculous costume and then painted in it by an extremely bum artist. I inherited the miserable affair, velvet coat, lace ruffles and all. How I loathed and despised it nobody will ever know. Then I inherited by the same route a Highland Chief's costume with plaid, kilts and a spalpeen, or whatever it is that is suspended round the waist of a Highland Chief and interferes with his thighs when he takes a step. I don't think I liked this much either but it was preferable to the suit of shame that should have been reserved for nobly born little English boys and not perpetrated on scions of democratic American families.

At an even earlier age Dick and I were dressed in white ermine fur coats, fur bonnets tied under our chins with white silk ribbons and fur muffs hung round our necks, all manufactured by De Pinna just round the

corner on Fifth Avenue. The first day these were put on us we scampered down the front steps of the house on 40th Street and rolled in the gutter which in the days of the late lamented horse was not a pleasant place for small boys in ermine coats to roll.

I think that the effect of dressing children in such a foolish, almost inhuman manner, is to make those that are sensitive to the impropriety of it very indifferent about the clothes they wear in later life. I'm sure it had this effect on me. I have always had a horror of overdressing in both myself and others and am never happier than when in really old, shabby clothes.

I had to wear long black curls long after I felt they were a manifest sign of effeminacy. One day I stole a ride with Johnny Ponny from Lloyd's Neck to Huntington, slipped off at the barber shop and told the barber that I had "things" in my hair and that my mother wanted it shaved off. I do recall the scene when I arrived home looking like a Buddhist priest. There were loud lamentations from my mother. My father said nothing but when he returned from town the next day brought back a yellow wig with

long curls for me. I was told I would have to wear this till my own black hair grew long again. I wore it in swimming daily until it became such an offensive thing that nobody could stand the sight of it and after that I became a boy honourable in his own sight.

At a very early age, I can hardly remember the incident, I eloped with the gardener's daughter on a pair of bicycles. We got about half way across the neck that connects Lloyd's Neck with Long Island proper and being very tired and hot, took off our clothes and went for a swim. We were so discovered by the search party that was sent after us and when asked by my mother to explain the incident I am reported to have said, "Mama, it was the old story of Adam and Eve. The woman tempted me". If I actually did say this it was the most completely masculine statement I have ever made, but I am afraid it was somewhat exaggerated as I've never really known how to pass the buck.

The summers at Lloyd's Neck were long and hot. Mosquitoes were a plague. But we children, my older sister, Anne, Dick, Lloyd and I led a happy life. We enjoyed the things that all normal children would.

We had our dogs, we caught young rabbits and woodchucks, hunted for bird's nests, stole strawberries from the garden, played games, rode our ponies, tried to drive our goats four in hand which always resulted in a butting match between Dick's aristocratic Angoras who were leaders and my low born Harlem goats who were wheelers, swam, rowed, sailed, fished, acted charades, gave an amateur circus in the old Jesuit dormitory known as the Annex. In giving this circus we assumed that if one were dressed in an improvised ballet skirt and one's mother's long, pink, silk stockings one could gaily leap on the back of a galloping pony and carry on like the beautiful lady equestrienne at Barnum and Baileys, all without any previous training.

A mastiff in a shipping kennel was the lion. Dick dressed in an Eton suit and cracking a whip was the ring master. I was the lady equestrienne who wept in the middle of the ring when I found I couldn't jump lightly on the back of the decrepit old grey pony who stood sleepily, with his head down in the middle of a pile of sawdust. Had I done so the poor old beast would probably have collapsed in his tracks.

However, the circus was a moderate success though soon over.

P.T. Barnum was a patient of my father's. I remember when a very small boy being shown the monkeys by him when his circus was at the old Madison Square Garden. He lifted me up in his arms so I could see the cages better and I recall a very large diamond horseshoe pin in his neck tie and his beaming red face. I am told that he was a very kindly man and extremely fond of children.

Another recollection is a visit from Rudyard Kipling. I went in the old naphtha launch with him to Oyster Bay when something had gone wrong and he almost missed the train to New York that would have just got him to his steamer for England. Perhaps I imagine it but I did not find him a very agreeable companion on the trip across the bay.

Sir Robert Cunliffe, an English friend of my father's of the Lord Dundreary type and period, came to visit us in the 1880's and was also to catch a steamer back to England. For some reason his valet did not come with him to Lloyd's Neck. Sir Robert failed to appear at breakfast on time so after a long

wait my father and uncle, Percy Alden, went to his room and found him completely tangled up in his undershirt and underdrawers, unable to dress himself without the help of his valet or to pack his bag. As I recall the story they dragged him, half naked down stairs and dressed him and packed his bag in the carriage on the way to Huntington.

The Theodore Roosevelts lived at Sagamore Hill in those days but I have no recollection of them. The Weeks family, cousins of ours, used to toboggan down Cooper's Bluff. Miss Sarah Weeks always interested me because she owned a monkey and a parrot. F. Hopkinson Smith, an artist and an engineer, designed the little rough light house which still sits on a steel caisson in front of Fort Hill. He once illustrated the principle of a diving bell for me with an inverted glass while I was taking my evening tub in the nursery.

My father bred English mastiffs and had a large kennel of them. They were utterly useless dogs and consumed quantities of meat which had to be cooked for them in a large black kettle mounted in a brick oven in the kennel yard. The best dog we ever bred,

Hans Sachs was so fierce he could not be trusted in the open. Most of them were gentle, however. My father was President of the American Mastiff Club and once in London made a speech before the members of the English Mastiff Club in the course of which he said in a light hearted vein that he hoped that the English would breed the mastiff to such a point of perfection that they would take the lion or the unicorn out of their flag and put the mastiff in. This suggestion was treated coolly by the London press.

All that is now left of Caumsett Kennels, named after the tribe of Indians that used to inhabit the Neck is a fine Barye (Antoine Louis) bronze of some mastiffs baiting a bear which is in my possession and a few enormous leather collars with brass name plates which I am now using on young Aberdeen Angus bull calves at Tyrconnel Farms in Maryland.

In the winter we moved into 40th Street in New York and lived with my grandmother. There was a billiard room in the basement which was the only place my father was supposed to smoke. On the ground floor was a parlor in the front, a ball room in the