

MSU ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW.

Louise Caudill, Susie Halbleib, Travis Lockhart, Shirley Gish

May 20.

In the living room of Dr. caudill's home in Morehead Kentucky.

LC Lucille has told me about this one woman play by the woman in Berea. It's about Yount (?) you know, who did Spindletop. She wrote it about her and then played in it

I First of all - I took this part out of an interview and it would help me a lot if I could hear you read it.

LC Lord sakes, did I talk that much? Must have been turned on!

I Well, it was sort of like someone flipped a switch.

LC Oh, listen, I had a real experience this week!

I What was that?

LC A man came in and showed me his finger and he said, did you know you sewed this finger on 26 years ago? " He said, "You know, I came up and I had cut it off. And you said 'where's the other piece?' and I said, well, my wife knows where it is." So, she went back and brought the finger in. Doggone, it took and he has a fingernail and everything!!

S It looks great.

LC It just looks like - a finger.

S It was right below the joint. He said it was at the joint but it was below the joint. And it will be 26 years in June - we got his record out. But it just looks so good.

LC Oh, and we have put an ear on, I can remember that.

I An ear on?

S Yes. A cow bit an ear off.

TL Isn't that tricky - I mean, can you always do that?

LC No. No, you can't always do it, but ...I mean....that ear, that ear did real good. The finger did too but I can't remember that finger like I can the ear.

TL Don't you have to do it right away?

LC Well, they had to go back home - they lived out in Farmers - to get that finger.

I What about the ear? If a cow bit it off, where was...

S I don't know, but somehow, the cow bit it. We had the ear anyway

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S I guess they brought it with them.

I Wasn't it chewed up?

S No. maybe it was just torn off, I don't know what it was..

LC I think we had two ears, Sus, there was one, I think, that a horse bit an ear off and swallowed that ear. And you know what mother said? She said, "they ought to kill that horse." But the other one was in a fight and....

S Oh, yes...a human did it!!

LC Yes, a human did it! So there were two ear stories.

I Did he just come in holding his ear?

S Yes.

LC You'd be surprised at how well they grow - quite often.

S Even with feelings, it is surprising.

LC Well, I was thinking about - you know that book (Rowan's Progress) where he talks about the lip.

I That book reminds me too, remember the first time I came here I met some people named Hogge who used to live right next door to you, ...did we talk about this....did I ever ask you.... They had two children with a disease.

LC Cystic fibrosis. that affects the pancreas and the lungs. They usually die of pneumonia or something like that.

I Then they are pretty much doomed.

LC Yes, they can't absorb, in their gut, so they have to take a protein enzyme of a kind.
They have to take piles of it in order to -.....the pancreas.

I Well, somebody told me that you built this house right here so that you could be near those children

LC Well, they wanted us to.

I Had they been real close friends of yours always.

S Pretty well.

I I think Hogge is a usual name around here.

LC Yes, he was a Hogge and he was a lawyer. He knew my father but they really were sort of competitive.

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LC I mean, they were friends , but competitive friends.
But, they wanted us there because we took care of their kids.
Except that they had ties with Cleveland, Texas, they took the
children every place

I For health, for medicine?

LC For medicine, yes. They went wherever there was a center that
knew anything about syctic fibrosis.

S They started out in Cincinnati and their doctor moved to Cleveland,
so they went to Cleveland. He did a lot of work for cystic fibrosis.

I Raising money?

S Well, Norma's done that but she got out of it when she found out
what happened to the money!

I What?

S It didn't get to the proper source.

LC They did get something out of.....?

I Well, when I first came here I looked over to see a path from this
house to that house, but I didn't see one.

S Well, no, but maybe at one time there could have been...

LC Back then. this is several years later.

I So the grass has grown up. So, do children with cystic fibrosis need
- oh, why would you have to have closeness....emergencies?

LC We didn't have to . But he'd get the place where he was like an
asthmatic, you know, he couldn't breathe.
I'll never forget the last time we saw him.
He wanted to ride in what we called the World's Fair - that was a
big fair, and he loved to ride his horse.

I The little boy, how old was he?

LC He was about 10, no 12. He started out and got as far as Owingsville
and he couldn't breathe so they brought him back. And we just loaded
him up on cortisone and he got to ride. We knew we had to give him
whatever we could so he could ride in that world's fair.
It was awful important to him so whatever it took we did it.

I Wasn't there a little girl too?

LC Yes, she was older. She died about 12 too didn't she?

S I think she died about 12 or 13. She died right before her birthday

I I think Nan had one or both of them in school Said they were
really bright. That they just wanted to get out and be and do
with everyone.

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S Oh, they were very bright. Very energetic.

I Are you born with that, is that why both had it?

LC They are doing a great deal on that now. They think they are going to be able to change the genes. See, both parents have to have it.

TL It is rare.

LC Well, they think they are going to be able to change that now so they can know in advance if they are going to have it.

I So were you living next door to each other when the children died?

LC Not when she died. They lived downtown when she died. Where the Queens live, Elmer and..... next to the outreach (?).

I I think I got you off the track

LC Maybe I did that.

I Well, you don't have to do this.
But I'd appreciate it if you would.
Alright

(Reading)

I think there are a few things that are important.
I think you can do anything you want to do, if it's real and you really want to do it - you can do it.
I believe women have a harder time than mean (laughing - oh, I believe I said that in the paper just the other day)

S Yes. You did.

LC And I said I believe that women have a harder time getting things fixed and all that sort of thing.

S Well, that's a fact. Come in and fix whatever it is. You know, they put you off and they treat you like you don't know up from down.

LC Or they won't fix it or they don't come or they do it half when they get there and charge you twice as much.

TL It's hard for us too. It's hard to get people to come out and do things that you can't do.

LC And it's a shame when they don't do much.

I But what if the same guy comes to you and says, oh, I got a pain. You can't say, sorry I won't fix it.

S I think if we practiced medicine the same way the plumbers and so forth and the lectricians practice it - it would be too bad.

LC Yes, we couldn't attach a wire. We went a whole week without any heat in the pool because - well, the next man that came said the other man that came had detached the wire..

S And they work together - so -
but, you have to pay both of them.

LC Yes, you pay one to tear it up and the next one to put it back together. quite interesting - I'll go one now.

But, I believe you can do it. And I think you can make your way. Now, how do you do it.

Well, you have to keep a goal as you go along then - well, you just look out there and see the stars and you want one.

You don't get it that way.

You have to be capable and you have to train yourself.

I think you have to be physically able.

you have to, socially, be able to adjust to people.

You had to listen to those (what?) oh, those dad gone emotions.

I'm a great believer that affect is a great deal more important than intelligence.

That's a lot of words to say, I guess, but I really believe that. you have to have the feel of things more than anything else.

And I believe that is a big part of health.

I believe that a healthy body is a great part of feelings.

Whether they are the feelings for your religion or your adjustment to society, or your social status, or your culture.

I don't know - but I think that that's what makes you you.

I Thanks. I'd like to ask you more about one statement in there - you said, "I believe that affect is more important than intelligence." Now, Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge."
Could you talk about that?

LC Affect? Well, affect is that thing that makes you 'feel' about something. It isn't what you know about it. It's the feeling of it and it is the interpretation that you believe yourself.
It's not - oh, this is the way it was back in so and so and we did this and that - that's knowledge; facts.
And facts, you need a few of them but if you can't get the fell of them it wouldn't be any good.
Affect is your utility of what you have within.
I don't believe that the people that actually accomplish are so much the.....?
I think you have to have some knowledge but
(next section deletion was asked for).

TL It's a human thing? You can't just go to medical school and come out and then that's all there is to it. I mean, if I go to a doctor, I want more than just his or her knowledge of what I have - I want to be cared for. that's it isn't it?

pg. 7. May 20. LC.

LC Uh, huh, cared for.. And we don't have enough knowledge - in medicine, we're way off of all knowledge but - I don't damn knowledge and I think knowledge is important. i wish I had a lot more of it. My there's philosophical goings on here.

It's the soul, it's the spirit. And everybody can do it. Everybody out here has something that you desire to do. Just try to evaluate and see how you fit into the picture. I don't think you can take anybody and try to copy them. I think you have to make your situation fit you

I can't wear those fancy hats and those high heeled shoes. That's not me. That's somebody quite foreign as far as I'm concerned. I like to sort of be "prissed up" but I don't like to stay that way.

Yes, well, I do like to get all fancied up every now and then. Oh, Lord sakes, don't let me stay that way.

Everybody has to be themselves. My daddy always said, "You could do whatever you wanted to do." And mother believed you had to look fancy and do things that looked fitting. I got a little bit from both sides. I studied, I wasn't smart. I believe you don't have to be smart. I believe that if you work hard enough, you can make up for your ignorance. And I don't believe that because I was from Eastern Kentucky that I was any more ignorant than they are in Lexington and Louisville or anyplace else. I don't think that where you are from is any measure of intelligence and I don't believe that because you aren't from something that you aren't smart either.....

IO thank you, I just remember that what you said was so wonderful I wanted to hear it again.

Also, today, I have a list of things. I - when we started out there were a lot of things I wasn't ready to think about yet and now we have to - like a set, like music, or clothes - all those things you have to do to put it together.

Is there a kind of music that you like?

LC I tell you, I thought the Rhapsody in Blue the other night was wonderful.

TL Larry Keenan was magnificent.

LC I went to Lexington to hear the music from Oklahoma and I really enjoyed that very much.

S It sounds like Broadway musicals.

LC I liked south Pacific, I thought that was a good one. Well, I can't remember....

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TL Sounds like you like Rodgers and Hammerstein. Sound of Music?

S Yeh, we liked Cinderella.

I What about - oh, when you come home tired at the end of a day - do you put on music.

LC We usually go swimming. Well, when the man comes and gets the water...
i used to play tennis all the time. I'd play 5 hours on Wednesdays.

I Do you play tennis too Susie?

S I do, but not 5 hours!

I Who would you get for a partner.

LC The next door neighbor. She could play just as long as I do.

S Norma (Hogg) and would play tennis for 5 hours - on Wednesdays. We took the whole day off and played tennis, all day long. They'd take **time out** for lunch and then back out they'd go. I like to play but not like that.

I Nan told me you taught her little boy (Jimmy Ward) how to play.

LC I taught a lot of people.

I Do you play any more.

LC I have a little trouble - my legs don't work any more
As I look at it, surely to the Lord I was better back then than I am now.

I Well, I remember you telling me that years ago you had to walk up all those hills and that was hard.

S She was a smoker.

I She says it was her legs, you say it was her smoking.

S But they go together.

LC You don't get any air. Well, it got worse as time went on.

S But, you've done pretty good for all the years you did smoke..

LC Yes, and I smoked HARD.

I What do you mean by hard.

LC Well, you know those people who take a little bitty smoke and then let the cigarette rest in the ash tray - not me. I'd take a great big drag, like that, get it down in my lungs good and then I'd blow it out, y'all (?) it was wonderful.

I Did you smoke tough cigarettes too - like Camels and Phillip Morris.

- LC Oh, Pall Malls and for a long time I smoked those things like brown paper - to cure smoking. Wet brown paper. That's what carlton's taste like . I smoked them for two or three years. They are the worst tasting thing you could ever imagine.
- I They're supposed to be the lowest in nicotine.
- LC That's why I smoked 'em. They were terrible.
- TL How did you quit. Did you just stop?
- LC I got up one morning, three o'clock and came in here to smoke a cigarette and I just gave myself a talk and said, "Louise, you don't need that cigarette." So I went back to bed and as soon as I got out of bed I started and thought about last night and didn't have that and so the last cigarette I didn't have was the last one I didn't have.
- I But were you feeling the effects of it (smoking) by that time? When you said, I don't need it, you must have felt something..
- LC I'd have coughing spasms - so bad they would disturb the whole church. That wasn't very good for a doctor.
- I Oh my, if you chain smoked, how were you delivering babies? What did you do in your office.
- LC I smoked in the office You know, I don't see how people could stand me cause I smelled like a drain (?) - was bound to. Because now, when somebody smokes, it really gets me.
- S Now, if somebody comes in the house and they smoke - who empties the ash trays first?
- I You let people smoke in here?
- S If they smoke. We don't like it, but if they do, they can smoke here..
- I Do you think it's a number one health problem?
- LC It's a bad one
- I Guess you've seen people with lung cancer.
- LC We had here, at one time, three of them diagnosed on the same day. It turned out that one of them had TB . Two of them are living and I can't remember who the third one was. And they're both still smoking!
- I I don't know how we got on this from music?
(laughter)
- LC How about Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.
- I Every time we will start here we end up over there - every time.

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I OK, music, back to music. Let's say they want to use music to open the show or during intermission or something - what music would you identify with - or by?

LC What kind of music to open or end with?

I Well, yes, the kind of music significant to you. This sounds like one of those dumb questions like if you could be an animal, what kind of animal would you be.

S I think we'd have to be thinking about it.

I By the same token, hymns, are there any hymns that you are particularly fond of

LC Oh, I do that almost every Sunday morning. I go through the hymn book and decide which ones I'll have for my funeral.

I Hey, you don't listen to the sermon?

LC No, I guess you'd have to give us homework to do that. Well, let's see. What songs do I like. I'll make you a list.

I OK.

LC If I had to choose a hymn for the morning it would be one that had two verses I guess.

TL Reminds me of when I was a child - I'd chose them this long or this long.

I What about - oh my - these are like journalism questions - about art. I know you have two Bernard Buffets .

LC Oh, I like art that looks like what they're trying to paint - I don't like abstract. I like it to have a feeling, I like it to be something or personal and not too much, not the frilly stuff so many people like - (pointing to buffet painting) Now I think that's a pretty good picture don't you?

I Yes, and the one in the living room.

What about any passages in the Bible that you are fond of?

LC I don't read the Bible much. I have some passages I like but I just couldn't tell you right off.

I I'm not asking jeopardy questions - just sometimes there are things that inspire you or lift you. What about travel - I know you've been to South America.

LC To Asia, China, Sweden, Europe, Alaska...all over. usually we went some place once or twice a year. We went on one of those (safari) where you go on a kind of a bus thing and shoot with your camera.

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- LC I used to do lots with a camera. Did lots of movies. Did pictures of the world's Fair in New York in 1939. I had a picture of Old Faithful and I've never seen one I thought was as good.
- I really. Do you still have those?
- LC They've vamoosed.....
- I I was going to ask you if you had such things as photographs.
- LC We don't have much. We tried to find some pictures when they did that thing up at school and we couldn't find but that one picture of me. I don't know where they went and I know that there was one - about that long and about that wide, of me and I can remember I had a little curl hanging down. That just went off someplace.
- I Also, there wer e some letters about the hospital....
- S I looked and I can't find them -but I'll keep looking
- I The ones where they called you a socialist or a communist or something.
- LC I was a bad girl.
- I I know that this will not be written like the classic plot - conflict and resolution - but I'm trying to think of what would be the big conflict in your life - and I remembered those letters when you were having a hard time getting the hospital the way you wanted it to be. That seems to me that that would have been something you really fought for and believed in.
- S But, in reality it didn't come to that.
- LC Well, we had to leave a lot of it out but we got the structure ... I wanted the hospital to have in it all the specialists. I wanted the General Practitioners to send the people to the hospital for the specialists; cardiologists, neurologists adn so forth. And when they got through with them, got them well, they send them back to the family practitioner. That was the kind of set-up that we had in mind. And, there's lots of reasons why it wouldn't work - because the specialists would all - the way we had it in our minds then - would all be paid the same salary. We found out some places that had had that. they had an ophthamologist that would rather be on the golf course as in the hospital . There were some problems with our idea too - the specialists wouldn't always do what you wanted 'em to . And too, the practitioner might not be able to pick up what was wrong in order to get them to the specialist. I mean there were problems with it. Even though I think it's a good idea - well, you have to get an awful lot of people to agree with you. you have to have a lot of people who have that 'affect'.

I So, it was hard to find, at that time here in Morehead, people who were supportive of what you wanted to do.

LC Well, see, our plan was made by Dr. Willard and Bob Johnson and Dr. Pellegrino, Dr.....? (Sagens?) and myself. We're the ones who figured out what we thought it ought to be . They were all from New Jersey - from the University of Kentucky.
See, they were starting the med school there - the same time we were building this hospital. jSo, they were interested in the med school as being a part of this community hospital.
So, they were willing to just give - oh, almost anything.
Willard and Bob Johnson came to all our meetings - for, I'd say, two or three years and honey that's a lot for a dean of a med school.

But there was a hospital - Underton - that they knew had sort of some of these ideas. They had this idea of the family practitioner and specialists on the hospital staff. That's where they had that opthamologist.

We went up there - Doc. Segnitz (?)..... Sister Mary edwin who was about my age. She went up there with Susie. Just the four of us. And we went to their meetings and to see how they did things. We could sort of see that some of our ideas weren't working too good there.

I So, you saw the ideas you had actually in practice and they weren't working.

LC Well, they weren't fully working. You knew you had to do something to improve on it though.

I Did you get your concept from them or did it just happen that they matched?

LC A little bit of both. I think Dean Willard had understood the way they ran it up there and he wanted something sort of like that. And Dr. Segnitz, I guess he was - he would, as Susie said, he called every night about 3 o'clock. We'd talk for an hour or two.

S That's true. He was great on the telephone but he was busy all day long.

I So, when you proposed these ideas you couldn't get doctors to come here. They wouldn't agree to get paid all the same salary?

LC Well, they did. The ones that came in the very beginning. But it didn't take us long to see that a surgeon has to have more money than an internist.

I According to....?

LC According to them.

S They bring in more money.

I You mean there is a hierarchy in the doctor's art - according to fwhat part they do?

pg. 13. LC May 20.

S You mean you haven't heard of the almighty surgeon?
He feels like he's above the rest of them. Well, that's not all true
- a lot of them But, that's just the way it is.

I They've had to study harder?

S They just bring in more money.

TL It's just economics isn't it.

LC In education it's that way. Certain fields are sort of looked up to -
whether they make more money or not.
i know that when I was a PE teacher, you were the lowest one on the
totem pole.
That's just the way that life deals out the cards.

I Of course in any field there are people who work hard and those who
just loaf by - which wrecks plans.

LC That's why, when you've got the human element - you've got to look
pretty deep.

I There's probably a lot of laws we wouldn't need either.
So, your ideal hospital never happened.

TL You were asking for a certain amount of sacrifice. Sometimes that
goes beyond human nature.

LC You'd be surprised. There's a man who going to come next year - in
surgery - he wants to come and his wife does too, it's really a big
deal that both of them want to come and work and you don't make as
much money here as you could in Lexington or Louisville...
But, my philosophy was that there's a lot of people that just want
to live calm and easy. Make a living, being well satisfied with what
you make and doing what you want to do - not make 5 million a year.
One person said that to me - just make a living. It's funny that
women will do that - but, most of the women aren't married and
don't have any responsibility.
So, I think that doesn't give women the total edge.

I What about idealism - the kind that says 'I want to be a doctor
and help mankind?' Does that really exist?

LC Yes, I think it does.

S I think the Dean of the School of Medicine right now is doing his
best to instill that in the students.

LC He's good. Why, he said some mighty good words about me.

S We have a tape of that - I'll give it to you right now.

pg. 14. LC May. 20.

I We were talking about sets - I think they want something elaborate - and I'm trying to think of a set for you. Tennis court. Swimming pool.

LC As I said, people are more than just one thing.

I Then, a lot of people see you from a prone position. I thought of that one room in your office that is all full of baby pictures...

You know, where you sit on a stool and write your unreadable prescriptions.

LC You know, that might make a nice background.

I You think so too.
What is this tape from -

S Med school graduation.

She almost didn't go to that. She'd gotten a doctorate down at UK last year. Then Dr. Wilson invited her to come to the med school graduation. Well, she thought, I guess it's customary when you get an honorary degree, to do that so she agreed to do it. Then when the time really came she thought, well, I really - oh, it doesn't make any difference, maybe I won't go.

it was on a Sunday. It's just a good thing she did go.

No, I didn't know either. Jane and I were just absolutely beside ourselves. He said so many nice things.

LC Susie, she was talking about a back ground. The pictures in your office Don't you think that might - well, everyone is interested, everyone that walks by

SD Yes, whenever somebody's in there they walk down that hall and they pass where I am .

LC That's really Susie's room.

I Well, that's perfect - fits the title.
People just send you pictures - how many do you have?

LC We must have about twice as many as are up.

S We used to have a table in the waiting room and we had baby pictures all over that - under the glass - in fact we had two table with pictures under the glasses.

LC You'd be surprised, some people would take things - pictures - maybe a mother would take out one of one of her children....

I You mean steal them?

LC Uh huh.

TL Oh my goodness.

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S They'd just be there and they'd know that one or that one and so they'd push that glass over and take that picture out. That happened many times. We've got them all in a bag somewhere in your office..

I Again, how many babies do you think you delivered.

LC Susie figured eight thousand. I swaer I can't count that many ...

S Well, I didn't really count that many but I gave them the ones we'd delivered in the office. But I couldn't give them all the ones we delivered out in the area because all those birth certificates were gone. And then I figured what we delivered at the hospital. Oh, somebody else figured that out I guess. No, I just figured what I could

I You must get an awful lot of Christmas cards.

LC We get lots of them. not much anymore....

S I don't think people send Christmas cards as much as they used to. Too expensive.

I If there were a second set - well, Travis and I have been talking a lot - so we went up to your cemetery - that you took me to. It was the most beautiful day..

TL Must have been Monday or Tuesday.

LC It is a beautiful view.

TL The first year I was here I discovered it - and that really is one of the most beautiful scenes I've ever seen. It's not just the mountains and so forth. It's also down into the town . the only other view that I know of in town that can even compare to it up there at the end of Knapp Ave. and Wilson. (.....?Hill)

So, I've been up there every now and then when I needed some kind of uplift. But I didn't know the significance.

LC My grandfather lived over in Clearfield and he could see that hill from where he lived. That's where he decided that he wanted it.

TL It seems so untouched. It doesn't look like anybody goes up there and messes it up.

S that's what we were working on this morning.

LC They are supposed to have it fixed by Decoration Day. The road's supposed to be fixed and those trees that are sort of coming out over the road there. Cut those down or plant some others, or trim them or something.

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LC It won't get done but Lucille sort of handing them some money to get them to do that.

I I was thinking that that would make a beautiful set in the sense that you are up on that hill and in the back are the mountains and down below is Morehead . Travis thought maybe that could be a 'downer' to some people - open in a cemetery. But you don't feel like that up there.

TL Oh, I don't think that is necessarily true.

S I don't think so either.

LC Susie drives everybody up there.

S Oh, I do. It's wonderful.

I What would you think of that? As a matter of fact, if you remember when I first started to write this I had it set in the cemetery and I had never even seen that cemetery at that time. It seemed to me a wonderful way to talk about your family.....and then talk about the town because it is right in that setting too.

TL Now, there are ways to incorporate more than one image on the stage. We don't have to limit it to one set - with the office and the cemetery. We can do a lot of different things. But, I could envision, for example, the play beginning and I could envision the ending - then to the office - then to wherever. And the combination of not only the set but the lighting could take you anywhere you want to go. So, we really don't have to be talking about one place, only , or another place, only, . There are ways to get several of them. But, the more I thought about it the more I thought about that setting up there as a kind of - oh, like bookends. You know, this as sort of a framework, this is where we start and then end and it could be quite beautiful.....Of course, depending on how it's written, but that's a beautiful image. It really is.

I It's what I first had in my head as a way for you to talk about your family , about the whole town and then to close there too. But I had no idea about that cemetery when I wrote that and so when I saw it - it seemed a bit like fate. Maybe this is just how it has to be.

TL It's beautiful, but it's also very simple. It's a beautiful unpretentious place.

LC It's plain.

TL But you see, and that's what I think of this place. in eleven years I've grown to love this place.

LC Well, good. I don't think there is any place like it.

TL To me it's like - well, I'm from Texas originally, and have some ties to Western Kentucky. my grandfather is from western Kentucky.

pg. 17. LC May. 20

TL But I'd never lived here and it's just very special. I don't need to get into that but the point is that, you see the mountains and you see the town and you see all that, but it's just there. God did that, it's not something....

LC That man did...

TL Yes, that's what I mean. It's not pretentious. It's just life. I'd like to see some of that get into the play.

I I think Louise would too. It's that 'sense of place' that's got a great deal to do with you and what you did. I mean, I don't see this as just being a string of amusing stories. Of course I'd really like to be wearing a sequined evening gown and can't figure out how to get that in. Maybe we can figure out something - like a dream sequence.

TL OW.