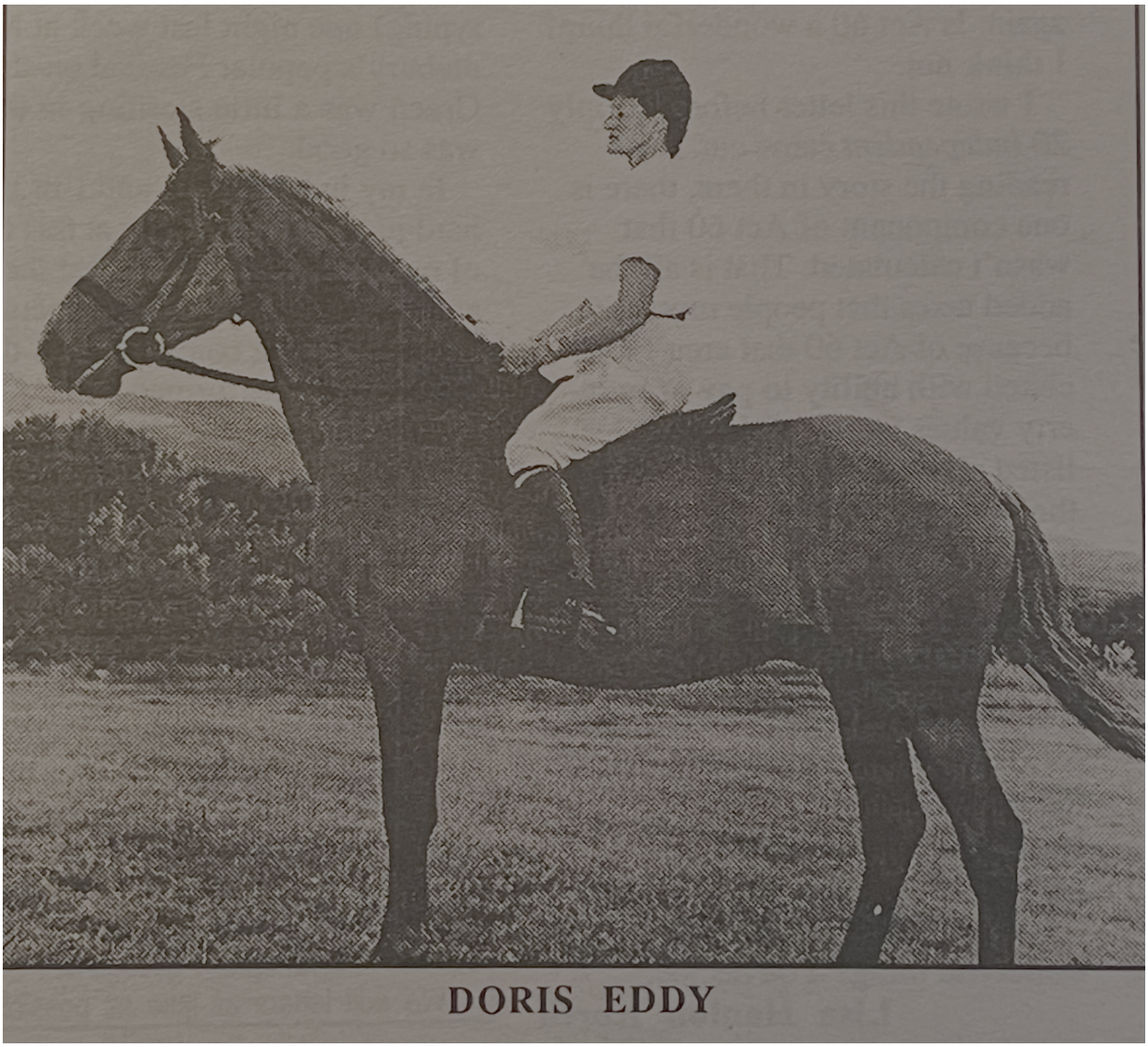
I wrote this originally in 1998, and it was published in the Vermont Horseman's Guide, Winter 1999. With the recent, tragic and unexpected passing of my friend Margaret Bojanowkski who had lovingly tended the Eddy Farm for the past decade or more, carrying on so many of Doris' values, I felt it would be a tribute to both to rewrite this with a few more memories added, and the ability to continue adding to it in the future. Women like Doris and Margaret are rare. My childhood with Doris heavily influenced me, and has made me the horsewoman that I am. I'm not for everyone, but neither was Doris.

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DORIS EDDY

On July 20, 1998, the equestrian community saw the end of an era with the passing of Doris Madalyn Eddy (born October 8, 1918) of Eddy Farm in Middlebury, VT. Doris was an icon in the horse world; her loss was a huge blow to the many students and friends, who, through generations, Doris and the Eddy Farm have been a home base to which we could always return, and inspired me to write this piece for the Vermont Horseman's Guide.

Some of the happiest memories of my life as a young girl are the years I spent at the Eddy Farm. Doris provided a home away from home for many young women like myself, where we all stood on equal ground with each other, with life and horses and nature. Eddy Farm was a timeless place, especially in summer, where day after day passed with no negative thoughts or feelings, a different world from the pressures of school, adolescence and competition.



Although I attended weekly lessons at Eddy Farm for many years, and as an adult continued to return with my own horse(s) to ride at the farm, it is the summers spent there, weeks at a time, completely immersed in the Eddy Farm life, that was so influential for myself and my generation of "Eddy Farm Girls".



When I describe my summers to anyone who hasn't known Doris, I feel I need to refer to it as "summer camp", but always with a guilt feeling. There were certain words that Doris just would not use, that were taboo in her presence. Doris would never use the word "camp", it was "school". It just included the whole living experience as well as the lessons. And it WAS school, for everything we experienced at Eddy Farm involved learning and personal growth, although we might not have known it at the time.

My annual two week summer stay was always around the first of August, when the middle of the days were particularly long, slow and hot, while the mornings were crisp, fresh, foggy and moist with dew. At 6am, daybreak, Doris' eternally cheerful voice would ring out from the bottom of

the stairs, "Good Morning Girls!" We would groggily roll out of bed, to the smell of something wonderful always already cooking, making our hungry stomachs rumble. We would make our way down the path to the Upper Barn in the early fog. Our mission was to do the chores and prepare the horses for the morning lesson before breakfast. After catching the horses from the Night Pasture (sometimes from a great distance), graining, grooming and saddling, and putting them up in the straight stalls of the Upper Stable, we were absolutely ravenous. Every day Doris prepared a fantastic breakfast; enough to feed a small army of 9-16 year olds. When chores were done we tromped up the hill to the house as the fog lifted, clamored around the long wooden table and feasted. No one ever went hungry at Eddy Farm, except maybe Doris herself, in the winter time.



Six days a week we had a two hour (at least) morning lesson in one of Eddy Farm's many outdoor arenas, all of which, like the barns, pastures, meadows and rooms in her house, had names. The Upper Ring and Lower Ring, the Brood Mare Bin, the Caprilli field, Uncle Arthur's, the South Meadow, the Orchard, the Creek Pasture.

We always hand walked, (by the cheekpeice—never the reins) our horses to the schooling area before mounting. A large, handy stump was ever-present in every riding area. We never mounted from the ground, it was not permitted at Eddy Farm. Mounting from the ground is uncomfortable for the horse, pulls on the tack, stretching it unevenly, and considered taboo by Doris.

My favorite place to ride was the Lower Ring, which was shaded and grassy. Riding there meant a likely chance for some cross country fences also to be included, as the ring was constructed almost entirely of a wide variety of jumps among the hedgerows. The Lower Ring was adjunct to the Bank, 3 Kings and Gully, and a wonderful alleyway of jumps on a path just west of the railroad tracks at the boundary of the property, accessed by a couple of options down a steep hill that I loved to ride down, or up. Oh, what a magical place to ride! Doris had an amazing talent for constructing cross country fences out of almost anything, including the simple topography of the ground itself; her farm was physically ideal terrain for adventurous young jumpers like myself.

Living at Eddy Farm was an experience in itself. It was incredibly comfortable and homey, in hindsight probably partly because we were ravenous by mealtime and utterly exhausted by bedtime. My early years were spent in Goldenbow, the front bedroom upstairs, with yellow wallpaper and 3 beds. The other two bedrooms were Daisy Field and Green Haven, they each had 2 beds and all were always occupied by fellow students. North Station was at the base of the stairs, the realm of one of Doris' senior students who was our shepherd of sorts. I most remember Gabe, a



redheaded, sturdy and somewhat masculine gal in her late teens that none of us wanted to be caught alone with, as she would grab and pinch our flat chests viciously and yell "tit twister!" It was humiliating and painful. We used herd dynamics and moved quickly as a pack, and in different directions during her attacks, but inevitably one would be caught each time, and Gabe found it hysterically funny. None of us told Doris, of course, and nowadays that might have caused a scandal. Doris certainly would never have tolerated such behavior, and I can't imagine what would have become of Gabe if Doris knew about this.

There was a stuffed horse named Sparkplug, that lived in the bedrooms upstairs year after year, and we looked forward to seeing our "mascot" still there when we arrived for camp. Perhaps he is still there. Eddy Farm is timeless. I imagine the same library is still at the bend in the staircase.



There was no bathroom upstairs. If one needed to go to the bathroom in the night, it meant tiptoeing down the stairs, sneaking past Gabe or whomever was on duty in North Station and trying not to step on a creaky board in the living room to alert Doris herself. I remember once, during a late night trip to the bathroom, I saw Doris in her room, in a nighty, with her hair down. No one ever went into Doris' room, the door was always closed, though we all wondered what it looked like in there. And Doris was never seen with her hair down. My glimpse of Doris in her white nighty and long silver hair spread out over her shoulders like a cape, is etched in my memory; she looked just like a silver witch! I'm certain I was not supposed to see her, and never saw her ever again with her hair down or bedroom door open.

In my older years I spent one summer in Bedlam. That was an honor, and such a cool place! It was on the other side of the house, very attic like and there were huge closets of very old clothes and trunks and treasures

everywhere. There was a broken window pane in Bedlam, through which a deaf cat named CF (Cold Feet) would enter to sleep with me. Unbeknownst to me, there was a reason CF was so mangy looking, and upon my return home our carpet became infested with fleas from my socks and sleeping bag. My parents were not happy and we had quite a job getting rid of them.

There was always a heavy smell of unwashed and incontinent dog, and an abundance of cats in the house. Doris had an Irish Wolfhound, Oden, and you could see the fleas walking around through his thin coat. In her later years she had Meggie, a sweet little Lasa Apso. My favorite small animal was Tinker Bell, a big beautiful cross eyed siamese cat, with an impressive voice. Tinker Bell never looked like she had fleas, and she lived mostly in the Indoor Arena, she was a boss cat, the feline queen of Eddy Farm. One day I saw Tinker Bell with a rat she had killed that was almost as big as she was. Admirably, she devoured half of it before throwing it up and walking away in disgust. It took a large shovel to dispose of the remains and mess. Animals loved Doris, and people took advantage of that by dropping them off, as often happens on farms. Doris frequently had a cat on her shoulder when teaching. We found a litter of aborted kittens in a helmet once, pretty fascinating! And cat bones were ever present in the household burn barrel, as once a cat was deceased that was what Doris did with it. Doris certainly could not afford to spay and neuter all the strays that appeared; this was long before today's programs that assist with this, but she did her best and provided food, warmth and love to all of them during their lives.

Doris' plumbing in the house was a great source of stress for us campers. We did not use the shower, ever. In fact Doris used it as a storage area, it was full of stuff. Instead we went to the Middlebury Gorge with a bar of soap at the end of the day. The only way to get to the gorge was in the back of Doris' old pickup truck. We would hunker down, under our towels, clutching our bars of soap and bottles of shampoo. As gentle and careful

as Doris was with animals, she was the opposite in her truck. We nicknamed her "Evil Eddy"; she hit the pedal like a nascar driver and it was terrifying to sit up in the back of the truck, so we layed down. Even though the days were hot, by the time we got to the gorge I was chilled. No sun could peek down into the gorge, it was dark, deep, ominous and cold. I would try to dip body parts in the water one at a time to wash them while balancing on the slippery, slimy rocks. Some of the girls jumped in and swam, like Gabe, she was tough, but not me. I dreaded the gorge and to this day I can do without ever getting into a body of water that is not warm, or in my own bathroom!

And then there was the toilet…the only one in the house that we were allowed to use, and it was highly unreliable. Barely anchored to the floor, it would act like it was flushing, then slowly rise, and rise, and rise along with the feeling of terror felt by the person who had flushed it. The plunger did not work well but there wasn't anyone who didn't desperately try to use it when they first got to Eddy Farm. And there wasn't anyone that didn't have to attempt to clean up an overflow at least once. Doris did keep a mop and bucket next to the toilet for that purpose. It was a great sport to see a new kid exit the bathroom after their first experience with it. Veterans quickly learned to just go outside, and most of us figured out how to go elsewhere, in the barn, or dig holes outside, and we simply did not use the house water for anything but toothbrushing in the sink. Doris never spoke of the water issue. I believe it was old plumbing, and not a water shortage, as Doris always instructed us to let the horse's watering tubs run over a bit to "make healthy mud" for the horses' hooves in the pastures. Old claw footed bathtubs were in the corner of every pasture or paddock for this purpose. Eddy Farm in summer was known for its hard clay soil, which would crack in August, some of the cracks would be quite impressive, something I never saw in my hometown of Castleton.

The ancient old camp beds were heaven to a tired body, even though they were lumpy on the edges, you could feel the springs and they were

saggy in the middle. The creaky old house was always comfortable, not scary. We could hear foxes yip as we lay in bed, crickets and locusts, the trees swaying in the breeze, branches scraping the sides of the house, the crack of lightning and booms of thunder right outside the windows. Lights went out early, after Doris would announce "Good Night Girls!" In her musical voice. If a conversation or muted laughter continued beyond what Doris thought was a prudent hour, she would announce again, "Good NIGHT girls!" However no one ever suffered from insomnia at Eddy Farm.

Some nights were so very hot. There was absolutely no movement in the heavy air upstairs where we slept. When it got unbearable, we would drag our bedding down the stairs, out the front door and spread it under the two big trees in the front yard. That gave us temporary relief, and we would stay there until the mosquitos inevitably drove us back into the house and stagnant heat.

Old horse related books were readily available all over the house along with piles of The Chronicle of the Horse. Doris had a television, but I don't recall it ever being turned on. She had a piano too, but like all of her flat areas it was used to hold stacks of books and papers. She had wonderful closets and barns full of old things, and generations of her students must have enjoyed exploring them as we did. Her attic was full, it looked like a vintage costume shop. All of the barn lofts were full and fascinating. Old sleighs and a Surrey with a fringe on top in the upstairs of the Lower Stable, and tons of stadium jumping equipment in the loft of the indoor, under inches of cobwebs. Cupboards full of old liniments and first aid items no longer made. They are probably still there. Hay chaff from decades in the lower stable loft, that we would jump into from the third story, it was so deep. Old wooden ladders in all three barns were available to climb up to the higher stories and lofts.

On the walls of Doris' house were beautiful framed art prints, my favorite being The Horse Fair, and The Pharoah's Horses, both of which I

acquired reproductions of for myself once I became an adult home owner and they hang in my home now. Doris inspired me in so many ways. She loved and appreciated beautiful things, and loved to share them.

There were many stories Doris loved to tell, particularly at the dining room table where we gathered three times daily. One of her favorites was hosting a dinner party and realizing she did not have any dip to serve with crackers and cheese, so she opened a can of cat food and offered that. She claimed that everyone loved it and she was asked for the recipe. I can still here her musical laugh every time she told that story. She also told us about the time she went to a competition and had forgotten her girth, but rode successfully anyway. We were all in disbelief, however this was Doris so you never could totally disbelieve…as an adult I actually had this happen, we went to an away trail ride and one of my people forgot their girth. I gave them my own, and was able to improvise with the hind cinch that I had in the horse trailer, and I suspect that something like that happened to Doris. She didn't really ride without a girth at all, that's not possible…or did she?

One day we were gathered around the table looking at photos of ourselves and other students riding. Doris was ever critical of course, of our equitation. She singled out one photo and said, "Oh my, look at this rider, all wrong. Her seat, legs and those hands!" Then Doris went silent, and walked back into the kitchen. It was her in the photo! None of us said a word, but had many snickers about that afterwards.

Doris would take us "hacking" once a week or so. She would ride Caress, a big, thick mare who no one else ever rode. Caress was a handful and would prance down the road. Doris rode in a very heavily paneled old saddle that looked like the underside was made of burlap, and had many rings and dees on it. She sat up as straight as a soldier and her seat was perfection. We would usually go south down South St., through the swamp and then into the meadows far southwest of Eddy Farm. Those were the



days when equestrians were welcomed by neighbors, and it was a wonderful time to be a kid and experience that. Occasionally we went north towards the college, and hospital, and there were trails that were quite magical, I remember a multi-storied tree house bordering the golf course.

I don't remember the circumstances, but somehow one day some of us took a hack without Doris, and ended up on that local golf course. What a fabulous place to ride a horse!!!! And we did! I think Doris got a call from them shortly after, and we were forbidden to ever venture there again. There should have been hell to pay for us doing such a thing, but Doris took the heat herself, and probably made the golf course feel responsible

themselves, as only Doris could do. I've never passed a golf course again without feeling that it was a waste of good potential cross country land!

Sundays were a day of rest for the school horses, but not for us. We piled into the back of Doris' pickup truck for a trip out to a 3-Phase event or other educational activity to spectate. We went to Hitchingpost, Huntington and Tamarack Hill. We went to Green Mountain Horse Association. We would hunker down in our sleeping bags, invisible to other motorists, and also for self preservation as Doris drove like a madwoman. No one ever rode in the front with Doris. She always wore a dress on these Sunday outings, carried a purse and had a sun hat with her, always so proper. These Sunday outings were made despite the weather; regardless of the winds blowing through the open board sides of the old truck, the number of bodies in the bed and never mind that the event might be two hours distant. When we arrived we were thoroughly rattled and had to regain our legs to walk, like we had been at sea for a month.



On the road was the only time I found Doris' meals to be less than fantastic. Her picnic lunches are etched in my memory with life's worst sufferings, for you would never not eat what Doris provided you, and we were always appropriately hungry from an active, healthy lifestyle.

At the event, Doris exited her truck, proper in her dress, with picnic basket in hand, while we staggered to get our legs under us. I think it was the giant picnic basket that rode shotgun with Doris, filled with food and drink. She also brought a blanket to spread in the shade for us to eat lunch on.



Swallowing an entire sandwich without chewing to avoid caraway seeds in the bread was one of the hardest things I had ever done. The moldy cheese didn't bother me, but the caraway seeds gagged me if I bit into them. But I ate that sandwich. That was worse by far than the fact that we had to drink the old goats milk before the fresh, but that was an unfortunate fate too.

It's funny that I remember Doris' cooking to be so wonderful, despite the cluttered and probably pretty dirty and dog haired kitchen, always dishes in the sink, and I can't remember exactly what she cooked…I do

remember porridge in the morning, it was delicious! A mixture of granola and honey, always fresh and hot. A specialty of hers was a thin cake, with a hot lemony sauce poured over it. It was decadent. There was always fabulous homemade bread, how Doris managed the time to make it I can't imagine. And sasparilla tea, it was slightly root beer flavored, Doris always made gallons of it for us in the summer. My mother has a food memory of Doris serving her lamb; a food Mom would avoid at all costs, however one did not say no to Doris. Mom ate the lamb, and loved it. Doris was definitely an artist in the kitchen.

Some afternoons Doris would pack up her laundry and head for town. We were expected probably to read and relax in her absence, but as soon as the dust cloud on South St. cleared we would seek out adventures, often with our favorite horses. One particularly memorable day for me, we mounted our favorite school horses in the Night Pasture, they were grazing way down in the southwest corner, in a jump complex known as the Swastika. We often did this sort of thing in the barnyard; laid on their backs and experimented with different mounting techniques, or other things kids do with horses that Doris would have found inappropriate. The Swastika was about as far from the barn as the herd could be.

On this particular day, as we relaxed in the afternoon summer sun on our favorite trusty schoolies, the whole herd suddenly spooked at once. (Spook is NOT an Eddy Farm word, Doris would NEVER use that word, but it is important for narration) The herd of probably 15 horses suddenly spooked and took off at a dead run. They headed north, hooves pounding and nostrils flaring, along the boundary of the Night Pasture, and continued up the perimeter, rounding the north end, then heading southeast, aiming eventually for the safety of the barnyard of the Lower Stable, about 1/2 mile away. They ran flat out, noses straight out in front, tails streaming behind. I was astride Thbabinbak, my favorite, a saint of an old horse with the wispiest of manes and a shark fin wither. I had only these wisps of mane

and my seat to keep me from falling off and being trampled by a herd of galloping hooves that surrounded me. With my comrades on their backs with the wind knocked out of them, back by the Swastika, safely fallen to the turf from the stampeding herd, I realized a stark terror that a child hopefully only feels once or twice in a lifetime. For as the herd rounded the north end of the pasture, with me on Babin, smack in the middle of the herd, I saw Doris' truck flying up South St. in a huge cloud of dust. The truck and the stampeding herd were parallel at the turn. Thirty yards away at most, she must have seen me, a lone child clinging to the back of a horse in a stampeding herd. Mortified , I stayed on until the herd careened into the barnyard of the Lower Stable through a narrow gate; how I didn't get my legs torn off on the support posts I'll never know. Breathless and shaking, but still alive, I slid to the ground and prepared for the end of my career at Eddy Farm. Doris went directly to the house with the wash and never mentioned this incident. However the power of herd dynamics will be forever instilled in me, and I suppose she felt that was lesson enough.

We all wore the ancient dusty old hunt caps that hung in the Upper Stable, none of which had harnesses, so when we fell off the helmet usually landed several yards from where the rider landed. I can't recall anyone ever being injured in a fall at Eddy Farm, and we certainly all fell off at times. We were never permitted to ride without one of these ineffective hunt caps. We wondered about the flattened helmet that hung at the row of oldest, dustiest hunt caps, it was always there, Doris never spoke of it and no one dared to ask.

One time I was rolled on by Peaches, who I thought was a dreadful beast, a cob sized chestnut mare with a roman nose and small eyes, stubby legs and a long body, she had a dislike for children and Doris cherished her. She had been "rescued" from Pond Hill. I was riding that day in The Felt Saddle, named for the felt hanging out of the seat area which had been worn down to the wooden tree, so the rider was seated directly on the bare



wood. Of course this was one of Doris' favorite saddles despite the discomfort it caused all of us who rode in it. In a sandy area of the ring, Peaches suddenly dropped to the ground like a stone and started grinding me into the earth beneath her, but before I could properly panic Doris started screaming "get that horse off my good saddle!!!!" My profound disbelief that The Felt Saddle was of far more importance than my meager life gave me the strength to kick and flail my way free and then raise that miserable nag to her feet. While Peaches sneered at me Doris ran to inspect the saddle before giving me a leg back up into it before I had hardly caught my breath. It would be many years later, when dealing with the same situation with a frightened student of my own, before I realized the wisdom

of Doris' seemingly inhumane attitude towards her students in times of crisis.

And Doris actually reproduced Peaches; she had several foals. Apricot Tart was one, Parfait another.





All of Doris' foals were named aptly, usually with a family link like Cash on Hand had Petty Cash. I wish I could remember more. There were many related horses, the brothers Khamis, Laylie, Babin, Mashi, Clockwise and Delahny. Beba and Beanie, sisters. Beanie was old and completely blind, however she was a regularly used lesson horse for beginners. Delahny was unable to raise his head and had a white star on one eyeball; he had either been struck by lightning or he had been in Doris' indoor when the roof collapsed. I can't remember which story, if either, was true, but she had several horses with symmetrical white spots on their backs supposedly from nails landing on them from the arena collapse. Doris never considered these horses handicapped, but she modified their jobs and they all led useful and comfortable lives as lesson horses.



Doris always made us feel responsible for any mishaps that a occurred, making it clear that the horse is never to blame. When my friend Randi was viciously bitten by dear old Mashiwer "Mashi" in a tie stall when girthing him for a lesson, she suffered in silence for hours before showing the rest of us a huge bloody black and purple set of teeth marks on the tender back of her upper arm. "Don't tell Doris!", she made us promise.

Petting and fooling with the herd in the barnyard of the Lower Stable one day, the horse I was patting became jealous of one approaching me from behind, and trampled me flat. It was sudden, violent, painful and completely knocked the wind out of me. When I recovered enough to know I was going to live, I told my fellow campers not to tell Doris…

If, during a lesson someone became hopelessly dislodged by refusal of a jump or was bucked loose of the saddle enough to enter the twilight zone that all riders know, when you realize that you are inevitably going to part company with the horse no matter what you try to do to save yourself, you could count on Doris to chortle "Sit down!", just before the rider left

the saddle for good. Then upon catching the horse, she would give the unfortunate student a leg up, shake her head, and with a tinge of "I guess I haven't taught you to ride yet" in her voice she would inevitable say "Child, you have GOT to learn to SIT".

For all the students she humbled, it was always for our own good.

We cleaned the stalls with shovels and nubbly old brooms that had little straw left on them. The stalls in the upper barn were made of railroad ties, which had deep grooves in them from decades of horses standing in them. No pitchforks, as we have today, other than in the hay mow and those were the old fashioned 3-tined metal forks. We wheelbarrowed the manure along boardwalks made of wooden planks, from each stable to it's designated pile. This was a balancing act, and must have been very difficult in the winter, as the piles were all a significant distance from the barns, and there was never a wheelbarrow without a wobbly wheel.

We did not use crops or whips, but we carried "sticks". We cut our own sticks, and they had to be the length of our forearm from elbow to fingertip, plus one hand. Doris was very strict about this. I tried to carry on this tradition, but it failed early on. There was a "stick box" in the Upper Stable, but I remember cutting my own, and occasionally adding to the stick box.

The horses in the Upper Stable during my time were Basil who occupied the small box stall as he could not be tied, Beba and Beanie in the straight stalls next to him, Dorcas, Mashi and PJ in the 3 straight stalls across the barn aisle. Below was the "nursery" which held about 6 more straight stalls. The Lower Stable had the Pony Barn attached, but during my time the Pony Barn was full of stuff, not horses.

There was a chicken coop, and I was fortunate enough never to have to clean it, which I believe was only an annual job. There was a goat, or two, which Doris milked herself and had to occasionally acquire a Billy goat for a brief time to keep them lactating, during which time the Lower Stable



reeked of Billy goat musk, which I found hard to bear the smell of. To this day, I can smell a Billy goat a mile away!

It was well known that Doris frequented the local food co-op, particularly in the winter, and took their unusable or expired food home in big boxes "for her chickens". Those boxes always went to the house first, and were sorted through thoroughly before the remains went to the chickens. Doris did what she had to do to sustain herself, and at times it must have been terribly difficult for her. However she never complained.

Doris kept 3 Arabian stallions, Hadeer "Hud" a grey that lived in the indoor arena shed row, Tfaddle "Taffy" a chestnut and Daroga a bay. Taffy and Daroga lived in the Lower Stable. She had numerous Thoroughbred broodmares, and created many of her horses herself. They had wonderful names, usually with a family link. I wish I could remember more of them. We never rode them until they were about 7 years old, and it was an honor to get a training horse as a teenager. My idol as a young child had been JuJu O'Brien, an older teenage student who not only was beautiful and graceful in every way, but she was given the privilege by Doris to train Clockwise

"Lockie". Years later I was given a training project, Abobalik, the daughter of Dorcas, one of Doris' favorites, a big bay mare with a roman nose and a bad temperament. We all feared Dorcas, and she taught us to keep our hands low and quiet. If you raised your hands on Dorcas she would panic and bolt until you fell off. Doris said that this was because a former owner had hit her over the head with a wine bottle. Although I was not a big fan of Dorcas, I loved Abobalik and spent several proud summers schooling her. She must have been the daughter of Tafi, as she was a liver chestnut. Dorcas is second in line in the above photo. We did endless long diagonals, serpentines and bending lines around the bowling pins that Doris used as markers in the Upper Ring. Many hours spent there!

For a time Doris had a tenant, Dick. Dick lived in the back of the house, behind Doris' room and the pantry. He had a couple of old Karman Ghia cars at the farm that he tinkered with, and he handled the stallions. Doris was critical and dismissive of Dick, almost mean to him, I think he may have been a drinker, as she seemed to frown on him and his ways, constantly. We all wondered if he was something of a former boyfriend. We never knew, but we all watched Dick handle the stallions with great precision. I remember him walking Taffy and Daroga from the Lower Stable to the indoor, down the road, both of them doing airs above the ground as Dick trudged along with the lead ropes slack. As we watched, mesmerized by his calm demeanor with the dancing stallions, Doris at that moment acknowleged this, and remarked "Well, Dick IS a horseman".

I don't know if Doris ever wore a watch, and if she did she never used it to gauge her teaching time. A lesson was a lesson, taught until the subject was thoroughly communicated to her satisfaction, however many hours that might take. Lessons were four dollars when I started and my mother simply added to that as the years passed. Doris would accept the sum humbly and gracefully, and stuff it into her pocket without ever looking at it, and I'm certain she never would have raised the lesson fee herself. She dressed in

rags, her boots were decrepit and holy. She never had truly warm looking winter clothing.

I never knew Doris to sell a horse, although she would occasionally give or "loan" one. Doris did not do regular farriery on her broodmares, yet they were healthy and happy, despite the ugly feet. I don't recall a veterinarian ever coming to Eddy Farm for an emergency, horses were never seriously injured or ill, other than the arena collapse which was before my time. You could see their ribs and backbones, however there was never a colic during the years I was there, which were many. Nor were any of us kids ever ill during our stays, and we were there for weeks on end, without even so much as a sniffle, ever. There were no food allergies, no one was picky or fussy. There were no anatomical girths, and there were no girth sores, no therapy or riser pads, no martingales, no complicated bits, we rode with an occasional crocheted "pommel pad" under the old Stubben, Passier and Hermes saddles. Doris always said the saddle was more important than the horse when teaching proper equitation, and as an instructor myself now I totally agree. Eddy Farm was an incredibly healthy place for a child to learn, despite it's challenges. My mother has a memory of helping Doris bury a foal, an incident that I myself was not present for. Perhaps Doris was able to hide the tragedies that inevitably happen on farms, from us children. Very elderly horses did seem to disappear in the fall sometimes, without explanation.

Doris made one visit to my farm, Horse Amour, during the first years it existed in the early '90's. I was extremely nervous, for she showed up during one of my winter "camps" when I was actually teaching a group of kids in the indoor. She stood ringside at the gate and watched until I couldn't bear it any longer and asked her to come in and take a turn at the students I was so proud of. She warned me, "If I begin, there will be tears", and then informed the entire class that they were not ready to hold reins yet. She put one child on a longe line and instructed while the others sat on their mounts

and watched. Somehow without belittling my instruction, she humbled every child into not picking up the reins for months after. I believe this was late 1994, as I can tell by my jeans I was pregnant with Stephanie.



Although I engage in lots of activities with my horses, I never would have expected to Doris to become aware that I do anything other than correct dressage and a little jumping, or that I have a stable full of appaloosas and other oddities. Although she must have suspected it after her visit, she never mentioned it. Doris had Anglo-Arabians, offspring of her many Thoroughbred brood mares and her three Arabian stallions.

I trucked my big Arab cross gelding and my girlfriend Randi's Arab mare to the Eddy Farm for a ride, and Doris let me know that she found my horse suitable by her single comment, "what a shame he is not a mare". Then that same summer, to my horror, I came face to face the Doris at a team

penning competition. At a full gallop exiting the arena, no helmet, my horse fully outfitted in western equipment that was clearly familiar to my horse and I. Doris never missed a beat, and said "It's a good thing I gave you your seat". I think she was as embarrassed as I to be caught at Pond Hill, although clearly we both enjoyed going there occasionally.

I cannot remember ever leaving Eddy Farm before one o'clock after my weekly 10am lesson. This incredible generosity with her time and teaching endeared Doris to generations of riders, and set an example for those of us who went on to teaching ourselves, that speaking for myself will always be the little angel or devil on my shoulder saying "What would Doris do?"

When I get cold in the arena teaching one or two hardy souls who manage to show up on a frozen, snowy night I keep sneaking peeks at the clock, to the how soon I can gracefully finish them with "free time", and think of the many years that Doris did this, so much older and frailer than I, without ever a complaint or regret that I knew of, and spent so much more time, for so much less money, never looking at a clock.

She had to be more uncomfortable physically than I ever have been, with her many times broken fingers and toes, in a time before routine joint replacements, her fingers were swollen, bent and gnarled, she walked with a limp. She taught a full length lesson once to our amazement after receiving a brutal kick from a horse on her way from the stall area to the indoor arena that broke 3 of her ribs. After collapsing against the wall with a huge involuntary moan, she eventually caught her breath, righted herself, refused attention and hobbled to a reel in the corner of the arena where she remained seated and bent over for the entire class. Doris had realized that an inept student was walking a lesson horse behind a known kicker's tie stall and stepped between them and took the kick herself to save the horse. Both hind feet to the ribs.

A week later she confessed that she had finally been convinced and escorted to the hospital for the amount of pain she was in, but for naught as the doctor sent her home with a diagnosis of broken ribs for which there is no treatment, which she already knew and did not need a doctor to tell her.

Doris did all her own chores with forty or more horses at all times, and no husband or children to help on those sub zero nights when the water froze, then to go home to such a big, old, cold house. Despite being a hive of activity in the summer, it was just Doris in the winter. She was known to have working students, wayward souls that needed a time out from the outside world and that Doris welcomed under her roof. Some stayed briefly, some stayed longer.



All of the things that made Eddy Farm such a haven in the summer, in my mind, made it one of the most uncomfortable places I've ever been in the winter. Middlebury always seemed 20 degrees colder than our home in Castleton. The wind was continuous, and the perpetual redness of Doris' Windburned cheeks testified to her many years of toiling in it. I can still see her, stooped a bit and walking with a permanent limp, up the long path from the Lower Stable to the house, with a basket of eggs or a can of goats milk, and as much as I adored her I never envied Doris' lifestyle. It takes an incredible amount of self determinaton and strength to exist so long, seemingly satisfied, with so few human comforts and conveniences.



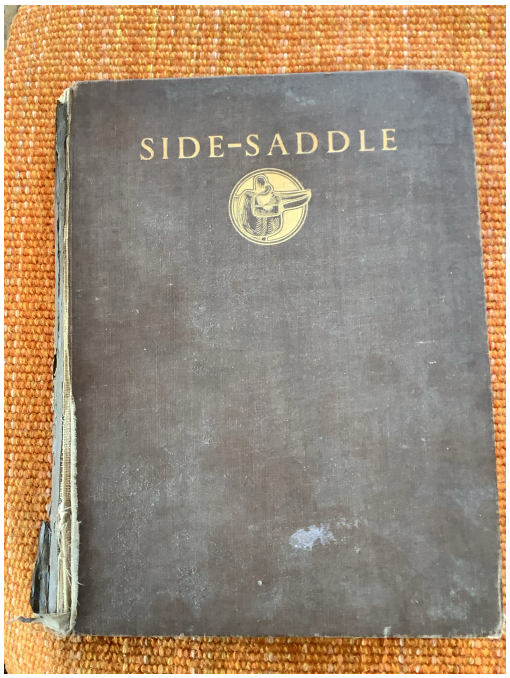
Doris was known to show up when one least expected. She attended the weddings of Randi, and Katie, Eddy Farm girls of my era. She showed up at the Job Corps Center in Vergennes where I was for a time during my parents divorce. Visitors were not allowed there without permission, but I heard her unmistakable truck from my dorm room and sure enough it was Doris! She would not be rebuffed by the security, jumped out of her truck and told them what for. I ran to her, we visited for a bit, and I was deeply touched that she would remember me at such a desolate time in my life. Meanwhile the security stood there not knowing what to do, but like every other being they submitted to Doris, the eternal alpha!

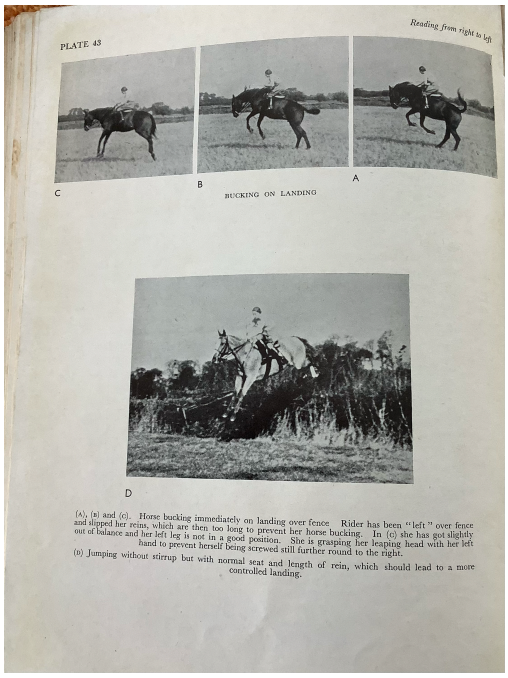
Doris showed up at my father's memorial service. My father died suddenly and unexpectedly, and Castleton State College offered to host his Memorial Service, but they had to do it with little notice, only a few days after his passing as that was when the Old Chapel was available. I was devastated, incapacitated with grief, living in New Hampshire at the time, and certainly did not reach out to let anyone know. How Doris found out, I don't know, but she was there. As a farmer myself for the past 30 years now, I know how difficult it is to ever leave the farm. Doris did amazing things for the people she loved! Doris was one of few people in my life who have epitomized unconditional love.

Doris' age and health were always a mystery to my generation of students. When I first started at Eddy Farm in the early 1970's, Doris was like a good school horse, "aged" but also ageless. I thought she changed little over the years, maybe because I expected the worst when I would visit her after an absence. I was never disappointed truly, for even as cancer took its toll Doris retained her musical laugh, genuine sense of humor, her memory for the details of her relationships with all of us who loved her. No matter how long it had been or how regretful I felt about how long it had been since I had visited Eddy Farm, Doris never greeted me with anything but pure happiness upon my arrival. A look and hug from Doris, an invitation to lunch

and it was as if no time had passed. I always thought that I held a special place in Doris' heart, she made me feel that I was an above average rider, outstanding in the class with the blessing of good hands and a secure seat; she made me smugly believe I had a "gift". I wonder though, if we all thought so much of ourselves, having been given the strength of self confidence by Doris in her subtle ways.

My last visit with Doris, she was quite ill, on her couch in her house. I had always been fascinated by the old sidesaddle she had in the carriage shed, and I asked her about it. She told me to take it, but that it was a loan not a gift, and that if I took it I would also need to take her Sidesaddle book, and promise to read it. I took both, and did not look forward to reading the book, it was published in 1938, how could it be relevant to me? But my conscience made me open it. I couldn't put it down! Reading this book was like hearing Doris talk! It really was not about riding Sidesaddle, it was about horsemanship. I treasure this book, and show it to my campers. My favorite piece is when the author declares that "as any competent woman knows, riding out a buck sidesaddle is far easier than astride."




PLATE 43

Reading from right to left

C B A

BUCKING ON LANDING

D

(A), (B) and (C). Horse bucking immediately on landing over fence. Rider has been "left" over fence and slipped her reins, which are then too long to prevent her horse bucking. In (C) she has got slightly out of balance and her left leg is not in a good position. She is grasping her leaping head with her left hand to prevent herself being screwed still further round to the right.

(D) Jumping without stirrup but with normal seat and length of rein, which should lead to a more controlled landing.

When I got the call, the devastating news that Doris had passed away, I felt as if a great hole had been torn thorough my soul. She had been ill for some time with breast cancer, and for her suffering to end at home on the farm, was what I'm sure she had wanted. But along with Doris went the end of a era that will never exist again. A person who was larger than life. Times have changed in the equestrian world. With the liability woes that stable owners face, the costs of keeping a large school of horses, the demands of boarders and parents are so different now. The requirements for hosting an overnight camp are insurmountable for the average trainer. Doris quietly avoided the conventional and taught horsemanship how she felt it should be taught, along with so much more. In 1998, when I originally wrote this, my Stephanie was 4, and I wondered wherever will I send my daughter, that she will have a mentor so honest and dedicated, so incredibly passionate, and a farm with such freedom to experience and learn as Eddy Farm was for me?

I attended Eddy Farm for the memorial service with a heavy heart certain that no one could properly eulogize this incredible woman I loved, admired so, and who had so heavily influenced my life and relationships with my horses.

However, the service was a beautifully orchestrated celebration of so many lives, human and equine, that Doris Eddy had touched throughout her life. Astounded, I listed to the stories of people just like myself with experiences and relationships with Doris just like my own. My generation was just one of many who had had the Eddy Farm Experience and I was only one of so many who Doris truly loved. Those who stood to speak, spoke for me. That one woman could share so much with so many and leave each and every one of us so touched individually is a source of inspiration that comes along only to those fortunate enough to know a remarkable individual like Doris in our lifetime.

At the farm after the service, my mother and I met up with Randi and her mother, and so many faces from the past, along with many from the present who I never dreamed knew Doris. It was a huge turnout, truly a celebration of a life well lived.

We went into the Upper Stable which held the same familiar smell, the tack room with the same saddles and bridles on the same racks, the names of dozens of former equine residents covering all bare wall space. Some of the names brought nostalgia, some laughter and all brought memories, and so many before my time holding the same feeling for those who came before me.



We thank you Doris, for showing love of all living things. For the feel of a good hack, for the appreciation of the heat of the summer sun and the shade of a good ringside tree, for the feel of a warm cat, the taste of a

fresh egg, the goodness of a home cooked meal to a hungry, hardworking body, of the escape found in a good book, the beauty of art, the wisdom of an old horse, the comfort of a saggy mattress after a full day, the beauty and athleticism of Arabian and Thoroughbred blood and the exhilaration of a challenging cross country course.

Thankyou for your time given so freely, the farm you shared so openly with so many, the lessons and the unconditional love. Thank you Doris, for the love and appreciation of life you shared with and fostered in me. I hope you knew.

*****



Doris is buried on the Eddy Farm, under an apple tree between her house and the Orchard Pasture. At her request a marble mounting block sits upon her grave. It is inscribed "Somebody always gave me a chance, here's your first chance".



Some things that were important to Doris:

*horses and what they can teach us
*the natural way of things
*cooking and sharing good food
*stewardship of land
*being a good neighbor
*having fun
*fresh air
*sharing stories
*hard work well done

Some of the expressions Doris used:

*let me give you a leg up
*I teach communication and control
*what would you do?
*LOOK where you are going
*It don't make no nemmamind
*use a little elbow grease
*it's never the horse's fault
*inside leg, outside rein
*my favorite words are "never give up"
*I did it my way