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Interview with Dashau Knight

Jenny Lawton

Dashau Knight

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Researcher's name: Jenny Lawton

Event: Interview with Dashau Knight

Place: at her home in Howard

Jenny Lawton: So you first remember growing things when you were really little. Tell me about that. How old were you?

Dashau Knight: I would say either two or three -- and I remember going down there and just being in my diapers and just playing in the mud and thinking I was helping but, y=know, really wasn=t. But I would just play in the mud and all that stuff -- it was a lot of fun.

JL: So when were you given the responsibility to start planting?

DK: Well, probably... 5 maybe. But now I=m allowed to because the corn and different things have insecticides on them - and they put them on the pieces of seeds -- and I=m allowed to put those in now that, since I=m older.

JL: Since you=re older. So do you think it takes a lot of responsibility in order to raise a plant?

DK: Yes because it takes a lot of patience -- you can=t just have short patience because you want it to grow really quickly -- and they don=t grow that fast so you have to have a lot of patience and responsibility.

JL: So what happens if you miss a day of watering?

DK: Mm, usually if it=s not too hot, you=re OK. But if it=s really hot and you really need to water it, it will wilt. And then if you keep letting it go like that, it=ll die. But if one day it=s really hot and you don=t and it wilts, you can get them back to being healthy again, but you have to be really careful about that.

JL: Have you ever had disasters where you=ve forgotten to do something?

DK: Mm-hm.

JL: Yeah? But have you been able to catch it in the nick of time?

DK: Yeah. Because if you let the weeds go, then you=re in trouble because you=ve got tons of them to pull out -- and that=s not fun.

JL: No, not at all. So what would you say is the biggest pain in the butt about gardening?

DK: Pulling weeds -- I hate that.

JL: What about it? Does it hurt your hands?

DK: Well, they have the like thistles... [interrupted by a younger sibling] and it=s really prickly so you have to wear gloves otherwise your hands are full of thorns -- so you have to be careful.

JL: Do they make gloves for your size hands?

DK: Yeah, you can buy them -- I usually just wear one of mom or dad=s pairs -- and they fall off all the time.

JL: A big challenge. So you need a lot of patience and you also need to know a little bit about where to put things, etc. How do you learn all those things?

DK: You can read books -- they have a lot of books. I learned from my mom and dad because they passed down from generation to generation.

JL: Got it. So hopefully you won=t make the same mistakes... yeah. So what kind of advice have your parents given you?

DK: Don=t over-water them -- make sure you put out all the weeds. And check them everyday. Check to see if the tomatoes are red, or the corn is ready and stuff so you know when to pick it, and everything. And plant it at the right time -- not too late and not too early.

JL: So how do you know when something=s ready?

DK: Like a tomato, it=s red, you know when to pick it - and it=s not mushy and all that stuff.

And if it=s mushy, it=s no good. Corn, you have to pull down the husks and look if it=s yellow and full-grown and everything -- that=s when they=re ready. Cucumbers, they have to be about this big, just the right size -- same thing with zucchini. Radishes, the onions and the carrots, you just have to pull ones out every so often just to see how big they are. And if, you know, they=re big, you just keep pulling them up.

JL: So your dad said that last year you tried lima beans for the first time -- are you going to try those again?

DK: Probably.

JL: Is there anything new that you=re going to try this year?

DK: We tried broccoli one year, now that I think of it.

JL: What happened?

DK: Well, it grew really well but there ended up these little worms -- these little white worms.

And that just grossed me out. We=d have to rinse them all out and pick them all out. And that=s just gross.

JL: So gross.

DK: And you=d have to cook it to make sure there were no worms left in it. And cauliflower is a little hard too because the bugs eat that.

JL: So what do you use to keep bugs away?

DK: We really don=t put a whole lot. Usually, when you have a whole lot of other plants around, they=re not so bad. But at the very beginning, you have to put lime on them, the little plants, because the bugs will just eat them.

JL: Now does that effect the taste or the way it grows at all?

DK: It doesn=t effect the way it grows -- but if you put it on there, the fruit, like when the tomatoes are ripe, it can effect the taste of it and it can be poisonous to humans, animals, anything that eats it. So you only put it on when they=re first growing.

JL: And then you stop. So have you ever lost vegetables to deer or rabbits?

DK: Mm-hm.

JL: That must be frustrating.

DK: Yeah it is because they eat them down to the little stubs and then they die. You can=t really do anything about it.

JL: Besides weeding, what are some of the frustrating things about gardening?

DK: When it=s hot outside and you can=t get out to water -- that=s really hard because you want to but you=re stuck inside because you=ve got to do something. Well, when it doesn=t rain.

JL: There=s nothing you can do...

DK: When it gets really cold, you can=t do anything about that either. So, you=re really just stuck right there - that can be the worst.

JL: [banter] What about the best things?

DK: Being able to pick them and say, **A**I can do this -- I grew this@ and giving it to people and saying, **A**This is from my garden, do you want some?@ And that feels really cool because people are like, **A**Oh you grew this?@ and you=re like **A**Yeah,@ and they=re like, **A**That=s really cool.@ And so that=s just awesome to hear someone say that to you.

JL: You have a lot of power as a gardener -- you=re creating something.

DK: Mm-hm.

JL: And, of course, eating.

DK: Yup!

JL: So what=s your favorite vegetable?

DK: That=s hard, because I like a lot of them. Because, I mean, I eat everything except for lima beans.

JL: That=s your dad=s favorite. [banter] So tell me more about 4-H -- when did you start getting involved with that?

DK: I did last year because I had such a busy schedule before. And last year, one of my friends at school was doing it and his mom gave it to my mom -- and so I decided to do that for vegetable, food gardening and cooking. And then I=m doing again this year and probably until I can=t do it anymore.

JL: What=s your title this year? You=re Recreation Director?

DK: Yeah.

JL: So do you have anything planned?

DK: Inside of the book, they give you ideas -- like you can do singing or playing ball or something like that -- it=s really cool.

JL: It=s an activity that doesn=t really have to do with gardening or...?

DK: No, not usually. It=s just an activity to have fun.

JL: So what kind of other people have you met through 4-H? Lots of different people? Lots of people like you?

DK: I think you find more older, I think -- we have 3 or 4 teenagers in it. I was surprised that they had... I didn=t think that they would last with something like that. But there=s one boy in there, he=s done it for 11 years -- which is really cool -- and they=ve done it forever.

JL: Do most people get into growing because their parents have?

DK: I think a lot of them do. Sometimes they like it just because of watching it and doing it and all that stuff -- and getting into the mud. That dirty work.

JL: That=s what got you into it in the first place, right?

DK: Pretty much, yeah.

JL: [banter over a mixed-up question] You said something about how when you got into 4-H that you learned different things.

DK: Yeah because if a lot of people are doing sewing or something, they=ll have a group for them and they=ll go on a field trip. And one time there were three people doing a lamb, and they brought in all their stuff and everybody learned about -- which helped those three people, and stuff. And she does stuff like that to help people.

JL: So what do most people in your particular club do?

DK: I would say... there=s quite a few people sewing - a lot of the girls -- a lot of animals.

JL: So you=re in the minority with garden growing -- yeah. I know we talked a little bit about this last time - at the Fair there are all these big barns with the animals... and then a little vegetable area. Does that get frustrating?

DK: Not really, because I don=t think about it. I think, sure they can buy an animal, and feed it, and train it -- but you can=t grow one. You sort of do, but you don=t really plant it and do all of that stuff. So it doesn=t really bother me that much. And I know that it=s harder to do that and everything and you don=t get as good of a chance getting better grades and things like that. I

know you don't get paid for it as much, but I still enjoy it.

JL: And I'd imagine you have an easier time eating one of your tomatoes then they...

DK: **A**I'm eating my own cow. @

JL: That would feel so bad.

DK: Yeah.

JL: [banter about fair]

DK: Yeah, you see a lot of my friends - a couple of my friends, actually, take cows. And in the end, they've cried because they don't want to let them go because they liked them and they were attached to them.

JL: Do you ever get attached to vegetables?

DK: No.

JL: I didn't think so. [banter]

[banter and joking discussion about growing plants with music]

JL: So what kind of people judge these events?

DK: I think, gardeners. The guy who did it last year, I think he was too. Yeah and he knew what vegetables were good and all that stuff.

JL: Did he give you any advice? You said he was pretty friendly...

DK: Not really. He said, **A**Keep doing a good job. You did a really good job. @

JL: So this is only your second time competing... is this something that you'd like to continue to do?

DK: Probably.

JL: What's more fun, having the meetings or having the Fair or...

DK: The Fair.

JL: So it's all building up to the Fair.

DK: Yeah.

JL: When is it this year?

DK: The second or third weekend in July.

JL: So when do you present your stuff?

DK: Last year it was pre-Fair - you do it earlier -- because you have to set up your booth that you do everything in.

JL: I'd imagine that it would be pretty complicated.

DK: Well you do it with all your other group members too, but it takes a while, though.

JL: It must be delicate to transport your stuff.

DK: Mm-hm.

JL: Well, cool. I think that's all my questions. Do your little brother and sister...

DK: Yeah.

JL: So is your little brother still in the roll around in the dirt phase because he's 4?

DK: He likes that.

JL: And what does your sister do?

DK: She likes to help.

JL: What's your brother's name?

DK: Kalen, K-A-L-E-N -- B-R-I-A

JL: is 8.

[stops tape and restarts it for a secondary part to the interview]

JL: I didn't ask you about the other stuff you do -- obviously, gardening only takes up a little

part of the year. So what other stuff do you do?

DK: I play basketball, I did softball last year -- and I'm going to do volleyball camp this year - this summer. I love to read. I always have my nose in a book.

JL: Do you. What kinds of books do you like?

DK: I like Harry Potter.

JL: I love Harry Potter. [banter] So before Harry Potter, who were you in to?

DK: Just anything I could read. I like mysteries and murder stuff -- like thriller, I like that. It doesn't give me nightmares or anything because I'm always reading that. My sister's like, **A**Oh that's scary!**@** I love it!

JL: Who do you read?

DK: These are out by Diana Hoe -- she's really good. It's always like someone's dead and -- it's really neat. They always have a twist in it.

JL: Do you like to figure it out?

DK: I try but usually I'm wrong because I always think... because someone in the book is always like, **A**I think I know who it is -- it's ...**@** And you think, **A**yeah it is, i'll bet it is.**@** And then it turns out that it was some person you wouldn't even think as being it.

JL: Does it make sense once... yeah it does? [more banter] So what position do you play in basketball?

DK: Right now we don't really have positions -- but next year I'll be a guard.

[banter]

JL: Do you hope to play in high school?

DK: Yup.

[banter about tall girls and being a short basketball player]

JL: What else do you do?

DK: I'm taking creative writing this year -- I like to write.

JL: What do you write?

DK: Anything and everything -- I just mess around half the time. I like draw -- doodle and stuff like that.

JL: You'd say you're a pretty busy girl?

DK: I like to swim too.

JL: Is that a summer thing?

DK: Yup.

[banter about pools v. lakes]

JL: So over the summer, you'll be playing volleyball and working in the garden and relaxing, hopefully...

DK: Sleeping in! I don't like to get up early so...

[banter and end of interview]