

THE HORSE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER

THE EARLY DIARIES
OF JANE CROSBIE



Jane Crosbie
Foreword by Ches Crosbie

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Jane E. Grosbe



Jane Furneaux with Snow White on the family property near Burton's Pond

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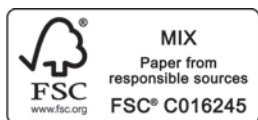
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For John

When the Himalayan peasant meets the he-bear in his pride
He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn aside,
But the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant tooth and nail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

— Rudyard Kipling, 1911

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L-R: John and Joan Crosbie, with Andrew on mother, Jessie's, knee



Jane's father, Dr. Jack Furneaux, holding the horse's bridle.

FOREWORD BY CHES CROSBIE

Jane Ellen Audrey Furneaux aspired to be ordinary, but her marriage to John Carnell Crosbie, who would become one of Newfoundland's and Canada's leading political figures, gave her the chance to be extraordinary.

Nurture shapes nature. One of my earliest childhood memories of my mother's family world was of peering into the forbidden basement surgery of the house on the outskirts of St. John's where my mother was raised by her parents, Dr. Jack and Margaret. Jack was educated as a veterinary surgeon in Guelph, Ontario, during the Great Depression, when vet practice was large animals. He was known in St. John's as the "horse doctor."

The stairwell to the surgery was lined with bottles of such mysterious, dangerous, and necessary aids to surgery as chloroform and ether. Small children were gravely warned away from these bottles and from descending the stairs to the fascinations of the surgery. I obeyed the prohibition against uncorking the forbidden bottles, but I could not resist sneaking down—when my grandfather's tattletale talking myna bird in the cage upstairs was looking the other way—for a look at the numerous recovering surgical patients. These were mainly dogs and cats with a few exotic pets adding to the allure. But nothing beat the excitement of a glimpse of the monkey from Bell Island who had gotten sick on too many bananas!

This was the earthy, small-town, connected world into which Jane was born in 1931, when having Thanksgiving dinner meant applying an axe to the neck of Bob, the family turkey, and Dr. Jack had to give up taking his children to movies at the Capitol Theatre because he kept getting called away to emergencies involving somebody's horse or cow.



Left: Jack Ferneaux
Right: Mary Ferneaux

Traditional institutions like family, hard work, and marriage survive the test of time, while incremental change preserves the best and throws out the rest. Mom graduated from Bishop Spencer College in St. John's, attended a one-year commercial program at Mercy Convent, and then obtained positions as a clerk typist, with expectations of a married life with her sweetheart since age seventeen, my father, John. They married when they turned age twenty-one—no doubt, in the words of the song made famous by Johnny Cash, "hotter than a pepper sprout"!

I was born nine months and four days later, an event that my father may have had in mind when he quipped that the ill-fated 1979 Joe Clark national government, of which he was Minister of Finance, was in power for eight months, "Long enough to conceive but not to deliver."

At the suggestion of her mother, Margaret, Mom began keeping a journal in the 1960s. Her journal provides an inside look at the social and political life of Newfoundland and Canada over the roughly twenty-eight-year period to 1993 when she and Dad were at the centre of many social and political events.

Politics during the long premiership (1949 to 1972) of the power-loving Joey Smallwood were known for vicious partisanship and such signature Smallwood practices as "scalp collecting." Mom describes a

meeting at home on May 13, 1968, when Clyde Wells (later Premier Wells) and my father, embroiled in Cabinet opposition to Smallwood's lunatic economic development policies, decided it was time to kill or be killed. The dissidents made this decision after "much hashing, just like planning a murder or perhaps waiting to be murdered."

Says the Premier is dividing them, which is true. John . . . met with Bill [Crosbie], Tom Ryan, and Clyde, much hashing, just like planning a murder or perhaps waiting to be murdered. Tom very adamant that John get out. Final straw was when Clyde said Premier said to him some three weeks back that Crosbie was bought for \$80,000 and Ryan told Clyde that P. said "he was scalp collecting and had three." Decision was made around 1:30 a.m. that they—Clyde and John—had no choice but go, the longer they wait the thicker the web the Premier would spin.

But the value of the journal to historians is that it provides an inside look at social and political life from the viewpoint of a traditional wife and mother, whose horizons expanded and whose opinions of what was socially and politically acceptable changed.

Jane's entry for December 2, 1979, the period of the short-lived Joe Clark government in which her husband was Minister of Finance, shows her in a mood of defiance over rules which required spouses of Cabinet members to place even the small amount of investment money she possessed into a blind trust. She felt this treated her as a "blob":

Just had another argument with John re putting . . . investments in a blind trust. . . . I naturally refused. Was given an insulting memo from his office saying he



Young John Crosbie.
The first picture John sent to Jane.

would be in trouble if I didn't comply and it becomes public knowledge by the press. He might have to resign from the Cabinet as a result. I just can't go along with it, that's all. I have done everything for my husband, but this is a case of principle—I am not a blob. I just can't go along with this. I feel miserable, but I really can't do it.

December 11, 1979, was the date of John's Budget speech, but Jane makes time to record that she received a conciliatory note from Joe Clark:

The Prime Minister wrote me a letter on my stand on blind trusts! What a guy! I kept letter.

We will never know whether a compromise on this matter of principle might have been negotiated between the Prime Minister of Canada and the horse doctor's daughter, because two days later, on December 13, 1979, the Budget was defeated in the House of Commons and the Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister Joe Clark was forced to seek a writ of election.

The election did not go well for the Clark government, and weeks later, Pierre Trudeau, once again Prime Minister, was telling Canadians "Welcome to the 1980s!"

Jane and John decided to leave behind the angst of the Clark government defeat and broaden their horizons in China, still a mysterious and slumbering future economic giant.

Jane's entries during the China trip provide insight into the little-known Communist China of 1980. One vignette from an official lunch in Chongqing involved jellyfish in chicken broth, for which neither Jane nor John had an appetite. "Fortunately, the jellyfish proved as hard to get in the soup spoon as it would have been to pick up with chopsticks."

I hope the enjoyment of readers in discovering the experiences that caused the life of the horse doctor's daughter to evolve from ordinary to extraordinary will be as great as my own.



Jane (left) and sister Midge Furneaux



Taken in Jane's family's field. Dr. Jack Furneaux on horse,
Grandpop Clark looking over fence.



Halifax, NS. Law Ball, Lord Nelson Hotel, October 23, 1953.
John C. Crosbie's graduation from Dalhousie Law.



Jane with eldest son, Ches, demonstrating salute



John (left) with brother Andrew Crosbie ready for action



A handsome young John Crosbie



Furneaux siblings. L-R: Doug, Midge, Jane, and eldest sister, Mildred. Heather came later.

The Diaries, 1963

Cruise

Name	John & Jane Crosbie
Residence	16 Circular Rd
Telephone	9-1482
St. John's, Nfld., Can	
1963	September
Cruise	New York–Caribbean

[The SS *Santa Paula* was a 178-metre ship launched in 1958 with a capacity of 546 passengers. It was owned by the Grace Line, providing Caribbean cruises out of New York.]



September 10, New York

Arrived at the Taft around 5 p.m. The hotel Taft is a dump. Hope to move tomorrow. Good trip up from St. John's. Went to the Strollers Theatre Club and saw *Establishment*. Not bad. I almost fell asleep.

September 11, 1963, New York

John was finally able to find another room—the Waldorf. Great improvement! Went shopping in the morning. Got John fitted out, he will now be the best dressed man in St. John's! I bought three pairs of shoes, slacks, shirts. Saw the play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Pretty good. ("Lump the hostess.") Ate at some dump after. Phoned Mom—everything fine.

September 12, 1963, New York

Today John bought me two beautiful dresses at Bergdorf Goodman's. I had my hair done here at the hotel—not bad. Saw the play *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Terrific! And thrill of thrills—walked out beside Richard Nixon, Pat, and daughters, got autograph! Ate at a lovely place tonight, Ad Lib Pub.

Friday, September 13, New York

Did some final shopping—underwear, shift, bathing suit, etc. Very pleased with purchases. Had lunch at Ad Lib and back to Waldorf for rest before checking out. Boarded SS *Santa Paula* around 3 p.m. Liner late departing 6 p.m. departed. Lovely ship. Seated in dining room with Assistant Purser Charles McCarthy, Blanch and Andrée Ruet (Canadians) and John. Food great. Saw movie. Turned in early. So far, so good.

Saturday, September 14, SS *Santa Paula*

Rather restless night. Had breakfast in dining room. John swam while I baked. Very warm! Captain's cocktail party at 6:30 very pleasant. Wore black and pink cocktail dress, which everyone admired. Amongst other courses had lobster and pheasant for dinner. Went dancing in evening, to singsong after and got to bed about 3 a.m. John is a real knockout in his new grey swim set!

Sunday, September 15, SS *Santa Paula*

Woke up dreaming of my children. Had breakfast in room, then attended lecture on what to buy. Buffet by pool. John very downheartened because he soiled new swim jacket. Spent most of afternoon resting in room. Afternoon tea in lounge. Very sultry outside. Went to "horse racing" last night and won twice, John once. Stayed on for dance.

Monday, September 16

Had breakfast in bed and stayed there till 12 noon. Swam and had lunch by the pool. Was invited for cocktails by chief engineer. Lovely time.

Tuesday, September 17

Arrived in Curaçao during morning. Were up early to see arrival whereby you sail up main street. Went shopping during morning. Very hot. Bought bracelets, gloves, earrings, John bought clock, etc. Lunched on ship, went to private club in afternoon and relaxed, very pleasant indeed. Would not want to live in Curaçao. Sailed again around 6. Had an early evening.

Wednesday, September 18

Arrived Venezuela early morning. Took tour of Caracas. Extremely interesting from point of view of poverty and wealth and politics. Attractive country. Arrived back on ship after buying cufflinks, tie clip, brooch and earrings in gold at about 5 p.m. Was invited to cocktail party—very gay! Dinner and quiet evening. Rained all afternoon, so ship will be late leaving.

Thursday, September 19

Stayed in bed all morning. Were late arriving at Aruba due to rain yesterday, pity because we planned to hire a boat but this way we didn't have time. Spent afternoon at hotel beach. Tonight John wanted to

spend evening in gambling den. I took as much as I could, watched floor show and came on back to ship.

Friday, September 20

Departed Aruba about 3:00 a.m. Breakfast in room, went to sundeck around 12 noon to swim and sunbathe. Got more sunburn than intended unfortunately. Dressed for costume party as an Apache dancer and John in a sheet as Caesar. Some very good costumes—skin-diver and octopus, sheik and #1 concubine, man in box returning from casino, couple with plaque saying “I got ideas” “I carry them out” (she pregnant). Went to techno bar and were very late to bed.

Saturday, September 21

Arrived in Jamaica early this morning. Planned originally to take tour but Don Andrews came and took us around. Had mineral bath and went to Terra Nova House, where we had lunch. Arrived back on ship around 5 p.m., had drink with Tib. Sailed at 6 p.m. I turned in immediately after dinner, John went to movie *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

Sunday, September 22

At sea all day. Got up late, swam, had my hair done. Was asked to be in Talent Night Show as Anna in *The King and I*. Had five people in for drinks before dinner. Show went off quite well at 10:00 p.m. Danced after.

Monday, September 23, Nassau

Arrived here about 8 p.m., so we were up early to go ashore. Shopped a bit—bought sweater for self and dress for Beth. Stores nice here. Went to see flamingo show, was disappointed. Very hot, very humid. Took glass-bottom boat to view fish (\$8.00) then went to Paradise Beach and spent very pleasant afternoon. Sailed again at 6 p.m. Tonight is Sadie Hawkins night. Were to the Asst. Eng. for drinks before dinner. Had a grand time at dance. John did Irish jig! Captain asked us up on bridge tomorrow.

Tuesday, September 24

Spent rough night at sea. Didn't get much sleep. Arrived Port Everglades early morning. Very hot. Tour boat wouldn't work so took taxi around town. Very lovely place but too hot for my liking. Short stay—sailed again

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