

## **We Hear Tell**

That a neighbor boy named Harold, dared Aunt Elizabeth to put her tongue on a metal hand railing in the dead of winter. It took off a bit of skin, but appears not to have hampered her speech any nowadays.

That Aunt Shirley won the healthiest baby contest at the Lake County Fair. She is still wondering whatever happened to the prize money.

That Grandpa and Grandma also won a prize at the Lake County Fair for having the largest family. Wonder if they entered every year with their "sure thing".

That Grandpa decided to take down the chicken coop, about the mid 1950's. Gathered for the occasion were Grandpa, some uncles, and a few of the cousins. After the structure came down, the concrete foundation remained. Grandpa said, "ya know whats under thar? - Rats". A few of the hardier, took turns breaking up the foundation with a maul. And we still have fond memories of cousin Seth, with a coal shovel raised above his head, running wildly about, trying to crown the vermin when they scurried out.

That the teacher at school thought a member of the family had died, the day Lucy the cow passed on.

That Grandpa and Grandma got a telephone before they got electricity to the farm.

That one stormy night Uncle George decided to stand on top of a metal radiator and place his hands on the wire terminals of the hand crank telephone. He's gone far since that electrifying experience.

That Aunt Mary could never stand chickens, chicken coops, or would she hunt eggs, One time, she and Cousin Margie took a bicycle trip up to Wisconsin. The first place that they stayed at for the night was a renovated chicken house.

That Aunt Shirley had unknowingly beaten the shot-put record while in high school. She didn't find out till after she was married, when a newspaper article appeared saying that her record had been broken by another girl. Bet Uncle Spear had second thoughts about talkin' back to her from thereafter.

That just about every year, Grandpa would decide to burn the field, and that Grandma would be out there serving coffee and doughnuts to the firemen that had to be called when the fire got out of control and approached a neighbor's house or field, which it always did. Also, on occasions, she would run and hide with any mention of Grandpa starting to burn off the field. She would come out once she heard the fire whistle go off. It appears that Grandpa and a neighbor would take turns doing this.

That Grandpa put his faith in two good horses named Cyclone and Plowharder rather than a tractor.

That Uncle Ray, Uncle Lyle, Aunt Mary and Aunt Shirley would sit at the top of the stairs and try and get a listen in on what was going on down stairs when Aunt Esther and her husband to be, Lewis, thought they were alone. To liven things up a bit, the three older children, would give Mary a shove and send her tumbling head over heels down the stairs.

That this same bunch of Aunts and Uncles would hide some things of Lewis's when he came over to visit Esther, such as his hat or his car.

That Grandpa bought a seven passenger touring car, and managed to get the whole family in it.

That one fourth of July the whole family got fancied up to go to a picnic in Wheeling Grandpa went out to start the car but it wouldn't turn over. Come to find out, that someone had stolen the battery. So they had to sit home and eat their own potato salad.

That there was an old friend of Grandpa's that lived up in Riverwoods. Now this old guy liked to drink, so he'd take his horse and wagon from Riverwoods up Milwaukee Ave., get a snoot full and come back again. One night, Grandpa came from the barn after milking, and was walking to the house when he tripped over a body. It was dark and he got kind of scared, so he went in the house and got a lantern. He came out and rolled the fellow over to get a look at him. He then recognized his friend, but wondered how he had gotten there, so he went out looking for this fellow's horse. He found the horse leaning up next to the barn, waiting. Grandpa put the fellow and his horse in the barn for the night to let them sleep it off.

That Cousin Virginia was not afforded the accommodations due a lady, when she would visit her brother Seth's apartment when he was in college. She asked Seth where the toilet paper was, and he replied that there was a bucket and sponge under the sink. Try the gas station down the street, Virginia.

That Grandpa killed Cousin Royal's pet chicken, and Aunt Ruth served it for dinner. Royal stayed out in the field that evening refusing to eat.

That Cousin Terry uses a baseball bat to get his cattle to come around to his way of thinking.

That Great Aunt Irene once had a boy friend named Roy Rockenbach (her cousin). She climbed out a second story window to go to a dance with him one night.

That there was a Grand Niece of Grandpa's, named Melvina. The family didn't bother to name Melvina until she started school, always called her Baby. This same family didn't believe in Santa Claus, and Melvina would cry and say, "why does Santa come to Almon's family and not to ours."

That Grandpa and Grandma were going on vacation with the Barrets and Aunt Shirley decided she wanted to go along, so she hid inside the spare tire on the back of the car. Someone spotted her a few yards down the road and ended her career as a stowaway.

That on the Crystal Lake farm, a number of large porcelain urns were kept in the attic, which was converted to sleeping quarters, for lack of any plumbing.

That when Great Uncle Orman was going with May, he hid a box of candy that he bought for her in a locked trunk. Grandpa took the hinges off the trunk and made off with the candy.

That Uncle George convinced Grandpa that he could drive the old car to haul milk cans. He started the car put it in gear and proceeded across the road and through a neighbor's fence.

That one winter night the Uncles were taking a group of people on a sleigh ride and the horse got its hoof stuck in the railroad tracks, and with an approaching train, things got pretty tense. The train passed on an adjoining track. They had to call Grandpa to get the horse loose.

That the Uncles would come home from basketball practice, and would have their grip bags stuffed full of toilet paper, for use on the farm.

That Grandma would put her old tissue dress patterns to good use, See above.

That Uncle Bob was pitching manure one day and tried to change Aunt Shirley's looks with a misguided pitchfork.

That Cousin Pam was deathly afraid of box elder bugs, so to keep her in bed at night, Uncle Ray use to place raisins on the floor around her bed. He must have convinced her that they were bugs, 'cause she didn't jump out of bed the rest of the night.