

Memories of Clifton Orpahl

As some of you may know, the time spent with relatives in "Green Bay" usually involved weekends in the summer months. Mom never really let us know where we were going to stay until we got there, but I knew no matter where, it was going to be FUN. Besides, we were always "wanted" at everyone's house.

To me, spending time on the farms and the "two houses by the church" offered something we could not get in the "city" and seeing it always provided something different to do. Besides, being from the city (Milwaukee) the trips up took a long time and the stay was too short in length. Because of my asthma, Christeeda could stay up there for longer periods.

Time at Uncle Tom and Aunt Ellen's usually involved spending time in the barn, which I was not supposed to in because of my asthma, hay fever, and allergies. But I did anyway and sometimes paid for it later. With Tommy, Larry and sometimes Jerry it involved trips to the little general store to buy "caps" which we loaded between two bolts and dropped from the silo ladder. Something that I will never forget was playing on and around Uncle Tom's Farmall tractor and the time I accidentally released the brake, just to see it start rolling and eventually crash into the chicken house. He always seemed to have a piece of the square "Butterscotch" candy in his pockets or in the cab of the International Truck.

Now up the road a piece, and that mile was a long way, was Uncle Martin and Aunt Jo's house. Their farm was different because Diane had her own pony. Whenever we stayed there, both Christeeda and I always wanted ride the pony. I remember it usually stayed in the apple orchard, so when we would ride in there, the horse always knew to take us under the branches of the apple trees, forcing us to fall off. Occasionally, we could take the horse in the fields to ride, but it always seemed like when we got to a certain point it would stop and then head for home whether you were on the horse or not and at full stride. Now with our expert riding skills, we stayed on in the neighborhood of seconds, not minutes, but we did ride the pony.

If we went the other way from Uncle Toms, we wound up at Uncle Wencil's and Aunt Anna's farm. Just think, not many houses had a hand pump for the water in the kitchen pantry or a real wood stove that always seemed to be hot, and, it seemed like Aunt Anna was always cooking something. Whenever we went there, Harold always came through. He would figure out how we would have to take their tractor out on the road so we could clean off the tires, wink – wink. Being able to ride the tractor at highway speeds was great.

If we went towards Green Bay, we wind up at Aunt Toot and Uncle Dan's and Aunt Tress and Uncle Emil's. And yes, we did hear about how far everyone had to walk to school from the "homestead". It seemed like everybody who went there had to walk up hill, both going and coming. Now, having two families so close to one another offered us a very short distance of travel to enjoy the fresh hot bakery that came from both houses. But, there were times that the bread would not "rise" resulting in a really good HEAVY bread and times the apple turnovers would not flake up and were just flat. Just think though, it really didn't matter. With Bobby, Carol, Glenn Cinty, and Cele, it seemed like we were always going to the general store to get some kind of ice cream or candy and from there went to the church playground to play on the merry-go-round and play hide and seek in the cemetery. I can remember one time when we saw trucks going to Green Bay with loads of peas and as it went by, some fell off. If memory serves

me right, Bobby decided we could hook some more peas if we threw a rope with a hook at the trucks as they passed. Uncle Dan's garage was the place to find things like that. So with our new weapon, we would hide behind the headstones in the cemetery and wait for the trucks to come. Needless to say, by the time we threw the hook and rope, the truck was long gone. Timing was off, just a bit.

Now, I am not trying to be picky, but it seemed like the bicycles everyone had just did not go as fast or ride the same on the gravel as our bikes did on our streets and sidewalks. I guess the city did have some advantages, concrete! We did not get to Uncle Dan's Welding Shop often, but driving by it always looked interesting.

One last thought. Being from the Chicago area and a Bears fan at times, I know first hand about rivalries. But, I remember a couple of times when the debates and discussions regarding what kind of car was the best, took center stage. You know who you are. Was it the Pontiac or the Oldsmobile? Now, throw in a International Truck, a Ford Pickup, the Farmalls, the Ford 8 N's and whatever else was around and I feel like an amateur.

All in all, the vacations and time spent in "Green Bay", were always interesting, always enjoyable and always something I looked forward to. Too bad, we did not get to do it more often. But, I guess that is the reason for the Bowling Tournament and why you are reading this short "Clif Note".