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## THE HAYSTACK

It was a lazy late summer day in Whitelaw, Wisconsin. Grandpa Grall, who lived on a farm two miles from the village, had stopped by the day before enroute to the Equity, the local cooperative. When Mom noticed he had forgotten his straw hat, she made an exciting suggestion to the three of us, Dorothy age 11, Helen age 9, and me, Lucille, age 7.

"How would you girls like to walk to Grandpa's house?" she said. "He will really need his hat." Grandpa was quite bald!

After lunch, we set out on our great adventure with strict instructions, "Walk by the side of the road, facing the cars, and be sure to be home by suppertime." As we walked past our orchard, we filled our pockets with snow apples to eat along the way. Soon we were out in the country, watching the meadow-larks fly up from the oat fields and the bunnies hop quickly into the weeds in the ditches as we approached. We picked bouquets of Queen Anne's Lace and other wildflowers and pretended they were wedding bouquets and the fence posts were our groom and groomsmen.

At Schiesl's Lake, we turned right onto Hirschau Road which was named after a village in Bohemia, Europe. Many people in the Whitelaw area had emigrated from that and the surrounding villages.

"There's Grandpa's house!" Helen shouted when we had climbed to the top of the hill. We ran the rest of the way and

rapped on the screen door on the back porch. "Well, my goodness! Where did you come from?" Grandma exclaimed. She was so surprised. "You must be hot and tired. Come in and have some apple juice and cookies."

After our snack, we went out to the front porch. Grandpa had built a big double swing that glided back and forth with 'foot power'. Dorothy sat on one side and Helen and I sat on the other, alternately pushing with our feet to make it swing to and fro. We thought it a great invention, much superior to our simple tree swings.

A little later Grandma called, "I baked some bread. Come and help me take it into the house." In the yard, near the pump, was a little brick building about four feet high, round on the top. It was an outdoor oven. With a lot of bread and kolaches to bake each week, the outdoor oven kept the house more cool and comfortable. Grandma opened a door in the front of the oven and a lot of heat came out. Then she wrapped a folded towel around the handle of a big flat paddle and reached into the door with it. Out came a loaf of bread which she set on a rack to cool. Then she brought out another and another until there were four. After a bit, she wrapped each loaf in a clean dish towel and gave them to us to carry indoors. They smelled so-o-o good!

I guess Grandma saw our hungry looks for she cut a thick slice for each of us and spread on some butter from a crock in the pantry. It melted right into the bread. There are not many things more delicious than fresh hot bread with homemade butter!

Just about then we saw Grandpa coming into the yard with the horses. He had been cutting grain. Grandma called out to him, "After you put up the horses, come and see who's here." When Grandpa came into the house, we gave him his straw hat. "Did you walk all that way just to bring me my hat?" he asked, sounding very surprised and pleased. "Here's a dime for each of you." "Thank you! we chorused. A dime was a fortune to a little girl in 1932.

Before long, it was 4:00 o'clock and Grandma reminded us that it was time to head for home. We decided to take a different route back to Whitelaw as it was the same distance either way. When we had gone about two-thirds of the way, we saw a big haystack in a field. Dorothy suggested, "Let's slide on that haystack." We raced across the field, carefully avoiding stepping on the sharp stubble of the grain that had been cut. At the top of the stack, Dorothy warned, "Wrap your skirt around your legs like I'm doing and follow me." Down we went! Then up and down and up and down again. It was great fun! "Oh, look!" Helen exclaimed, "Someone is coming." There was a car parked by the fence on the far side of the field and a lady was walking toward us yelling. Thinking it was the owner of the haystack, we took off and ran as fast as we could to the opposite side of the field. We crawled under the fence and ran down a lane that led to Highway 10 through Whitelaw. We were safe!

When we finally got home, we were in for quite a surprise. "Why did you run away from me?" Mom asked. "I thought you would be tired from walking all that way, so I came to get you with the

car." "We thought you were Mrs. Zipperer." exclaimed Dorothy, laughing. "We were afraid she would scold us for sliding on her haystack." "Maybe she should," said Mom, "but I think she would forgive you. She was a little girl once, too."

That ended our big adventure. I'll never forget it, but we never slid down haystacks again!

The End