

February 10, 2004,
Dear Cory,

Thank you for asking me to tell you a story from my life when I was younger. I have decided to tell you my normal days activities in February when I was your age.

First I need to tell you I have three brothers. Erwin is nine years older than me, Dean is six years older and Kenneth is seven years younger. I had one sister, June Marie, four years younger who died at age six months.

We lived on a farm in Wapello, Idaho, which is located near Blackfoot. Cory, if you were transported back to my time of growing up you would think our family was poor. Things are just different today.

Living on a farm we raised a garden bigger than the lot your Beaverton home is on. We raised chickens, pigs, and cows. We had apple, cherry, plum and mulberry trees. We had raspberry, currant, and gooseberry bushes. In the spring asparagus grew on the ditch bank and we would pick a grocery sack full as we walked a half a mile from home. We always had plenty to eat.

A Grandma Baird Tuesday in February when she was thirteen.

I would be up and dressed by 6:15 AM.

My morning chores:

Skim a pint of cream off the top of the milk in the can.

Pour out two quarts of milk and take to the house.

Feed, water the chickens and check to see if there was enough straw in the nest to lay eggs, if not clean out the old straw and fill with new clean straw.

Feed the steers.

Make sure all the doors were shut on the shed.

Go back to the house and get cleaned up and get ready for school.

Have breakfast-help with the dishes.

Get on the school bus at 7:45 AM.

Home by 4:30 PM Change my clothes- have a snack

Feed the chickens and gather the eggs. I had a little stick just inside the chicken house door to hold the chicken's head so they would not peck me when I gathered the eggs.

Feed the steers.

Go to the barn- assemble the milking machine- get the milk cans and rinse each one.

Arrange the milk strainer so it was ready for the milk.

Pour grain in the feed bin for the cows to eat.

Bring the cows into the barn.

Cory this is where the fun begins. Cows are funny creatures of habit. They always come into the barn in the same order, enter the same stall and always "poop" in the same place. When they put their head in the stanchion and start eating the grain I would try and sneak in between them to lock the stanchion. As soon as I put my hand up to lock the stanchion both cows would move their rumps together and lock me in between them. I would push and plead finally get out- then move to the next two cows only to repeat the same scene. We had twelve cows. Now the real fun begins, putting on the hobbles. This entails hooking the hobbles on both hind legs and hitching the legs together. One had to be very clever and try to also put their tails in the hobbles so they would quit switching you in the face.

Scoop out the barn-wash your hands- wash the cow's udder and hook on the milking machine. Dump and strain the milk and move to the next cow.

My dad Erwin, was working in Blackfoot at the feed store and did not get off work until 6:00PM he arrived home at 6:30. He would hurry and eat come to the barn to finish the milking. I would scoot to the washhouse, change my clothes and run to the house glad to be out of the snowy cold. (The barn was built of wood and had a lot of fresh winter air that blew in the cracks and holes.)

My mom, Isolene, always had yummy food waiting for me to eat.

Tuesday I would take a bath and go to Mutual at 7:30-9:00

Do my homework go to bed to be ready for the next day.

A few years ago I walked into a store and saw black and white "Cow" home decorations. Wallpaper, pie plates, dishes, towels, tree, soap dishes, tree ornaments. I just smiled and thought I had milked too many black and white Holstein cows to want them in MY kitchen.

Love you more than all the cows in Wyoming!