

ful earache. She complained so much about missing Mama that Grandma called Dr. Fullerton for advice. Margaret heard her repeat the remedy, which was to slice an onion in half, collect the juice, and drip it into the outer ear. She slid under the covers and told us to tell Grandma that she was asleep. She wasn't about to have onion juice put into her ear! Margaret stopped whining and she actually fell asleep, waking up without her earache. We later wondered if the remedy was a ploy of Grandma's to quiet her whining.

Grandma offered another remedy after I'd stepped on a nail in the barnyard (barefoot of course). The first course of action was to soak the foot in a basin of Lysol and warm water. My squeals were enough for Grandma to suggest a surefire remedy to take out any infection. She told me to go back to the barn lot, remove the bandage and step into a fresh cow pie. Its fresh warmth would draw out any poisons lurking there. Yuck! What a mess that was. We kids wondered if this was a real cure or just an old-time remedy to keep one alert for barnyard hazards. It was more effective than just being told to wear something on our feet, even though going barefoot continued to be our usual choice.

Through all our years on the farm, one thing was sure to torment us: chiggers. Those tiny red specks embedded in our skin caused a very unpleasant itchiness. Chigger weed grew abundantly in the pastures and was infested with the little mites. When we went after the cows in late afternoon we were sure to find chiggers had crawled on us. The best remedy was a bar of homemade lye soap that we rubbed on each chigger bite. When we were smart, we washed with the soap before those pesky mites began feasting.

Growing up on a farm presented many challenges to keeping a family healthy. Although most of our nursing needs were met with a bottle of iodine or a magic pink pill, the most effective remedy was a kiss and warm hug.

## A GOAT TALE

Farm life meant dealing with unexpected problems, and I have fond memories of how our Dad and Mom always found enterprising solutions.

In 1930, our eleven-month old baby brother, John, developed an allergy to cow's milk. So in addition to a barn full of milk cows, we acquired a Nanny goat. She quickly became a pet to all of us kids. Our ten-year old sister, Margaret, became the unofficial milkmaid as she formed a special bond with "Nanny."

All went well on our farm until we planned a trip to visit our relatives over 100 miles away in Des Moines. The question arose: how would John have

fresh milk? Dad's resourcefulness came into play as he attached a platform to the back of our 1928 Chevy. On this he fastened a crate with slatted sides, put in straw for bedding, and then in went Nanny! We kids kept watching out the back window of the car to see if she was comfortable. After much jostling, she seemed to find it safer to just 'bed down' and munch on the straw that surrounded her, rather than be tumbled about as we drove along.

Nanny gave much amusement to our cousins and their friends in Des Moines who came over to pet her. One boy tried to feed her a tin can because he heard that goats ate them and was very surprised when she butted him away. Handfuls of grass were better offerings.



**Margaret Milking Nanny with Mom's Supervision**

The kids also liked to watch Margaret sit on the one-legged milk stool, position the pail, and proceed to milk Nanny. Cousin Kenneth begged to try milking, but Nanny kept her eye on him and seemed ready to kick. Margaret petted her and offered fresh sweet grass to eat while Kenneth tried his best to follow her instructions on milking, but to no avail.

Our days of visiting were soon over and it was time to put Nanny into the crate and head for home. She began butting and kicking to let us know that the crate was not a welcome place to be. Dad finally just picked her up and plopped her down onto the straw. She kept bleating and butting the crate until Dad started the car and caused her to tumble down. And that's where she stayed until we were back on the farm.

Our car pulling Nanny in the crate caused stares from bystanders as we drove through the city. We still laugh about the time we stopped at a corner and a man approached Dad, saying: "Now I've seen everything. Traveling with a goat! Why just last week a car went by with a washing machine fastened on the back!" Dad had a good laugh as he said, "I'll bet that was my brother Fred. He's a washing machine salesman." The man shook his head and walked on.

## WORMS

Many years ago  
As a child of three or four,  
Favorite cousin Maury  
Gifted me, with glee—  
Slimy angleworms!

Screaming for my Mom,  
Fearful for my life.  
Dreadful, hateful things  
Squirming down my back.

Then Maury offered 'treats'  
Making peace, or so I thought.  
Held my hand expectantly  
For his pacifying gift—  
ANGLE WORMS!

Panic stricken,  
I grabbed my dolly,  
Scooted deep  
Into my closet,  
Curled upon a shelf.