

## MY 4-H FOOTSTOOL

Behind our big farmhouse was the smaller, older house in which Grandma and Grandpa began their married life. When they built the present home, this became Grandpa's workshop and also the storage place for unused objects. It was a wonderful place for us kids to prowl around in.

Among the many objects stored was a discarded clothes washer, used by my Grandmother in the early nineteen hundreds. The wooden tub with a wooden dolly as the agitator was a fascinating contraption.

Grandma told us that years ago when she used the washer she had Grandpa fill the tub with hot water. She added shavings of her homemade lye soap, and put in the dirty clothes. Grandma then pushed the lever back and forth to agitate the dolly. It would swish the clothes around to loosen the dirt until they were clean. The attached wringer of two rollers squeezed much of the wash water from the clothes, which was easier than wringing them out by hand.

Washing clothes was still hard work, but this was an improvement over the standard washboard Grandma had once used. Throughout the years, she welcomed each improved washing machine as it was developed. Yet she kept the old washboard handy for stubborn stains, especially on socks.

The wooden washer with its dolly became a plaything for us four kids. Once we filled it with dry leaves, hoping to spin them out like a whirlwind because John was a good spinner. We had fun, but not much success.

With its four spokes, the dolly looked like a low stool, so I begged to turn it into a footstool for a 4-H project.

Grandma gave it to me and I sanded it until it was smooth, then painted it dark green. After padding it, I covered the footstool with a lovely piece of ivory colored velvet from Mom's stash of fabrics. Finally I tacked pretty upholstery braid around the edge to hold the velvet firmly in place.

It became a handsome footstool. I entered it in the Ringgold County 4-H Fair that fall. The judges deemed it worthy to be entered in the Iowa State Fair. I was a very proud girl when I saw it exhibited there. It placed third and the judges gave it a white ribbon. I gave the footstool to my Mother as a gift.

Years later the cover became worn and tattered. My Mother hand-hooked a new cover designed with four tulips, making it handsome again. I was thrilled when she gave that footstool filled with memories back to me. Many feet found it a comfortable resting place. Through the years it became a favorite sitting spot for my children and grandchildren. Now, I enjoy watching my great-grandchildren make happy memories with this 4-H dolly footstool.



## AUNTIE PEARL AND CHUCK

“Let me live in a house by the side of the road, and be a friend to man.”

—*Sam Walter Foss*

Grandma Adair had embroidered this favorite verse of Grandpa’s years ago, and hung it prominently in our living room. To us, it was the motto of farm life.

Dad’s cousin Chuck Adair and his wife “Auntie” Pearl lived this philosophy. Their little house with its adjacent garden setting always made people feel welcome. They expected people to stop by.

Chuck was a great story teller. It was a joy to listen to the men folk ‘chew the fat’ and laugh while slapping their thighs. They made us feel grown-up while visiting them, and expected us to be on our best behavior.