

SISTER ZACCHAEUS RYAN

GRANDPA AND GRANDMA RYAN

While encouraging other relatives to tell their stories I realized I needed to do my homework, too. I do believe that Megan McKenna's words are true for all of us. "We are known by the stories we tell. They give sense of power of who we are."

I had the privilege of knowing both of my Grandmothers as well as my Grandfather Ryan. I also knew I was special to them.

My earliest memory of Grandma Ryan was the morning our brother Bud was born. Ethel O'Hern and I were playing school when Dad came and he and Grandma told us that Lois and I had a baby brother.

Three years later when Grandma was ill I made my first stop every morning at her bedside. The morning she died, as I greeted her she held my hand and asked me to prayer for sinners. That noon Grandma died. After Grandma's funeral and we returned home I recall Grandpa Ryan walking through the house shouting "Julia, why did you do this to me? Why did you leave me?"

Life with Grandpa Ryan holds many memories – some more humorous now than then.

- His daily checking of the exact time the sun set with Dr. Miles Almanac and his watch.
- Listening for the mill whistle from New Prague. Again, check on time. From this operation I learned the speed of sound.

Dr. Miles or Farmers Almanac were sources of other scientific bits of knowledge as to phases of the moon, planets, times to plant, as well as birthdays of famous Americans. Buffalo Bill, Chief Shakopee and others were real for me.

- Many of the family recall Grandpa's trips to New Prague and Jordan in the lumber wagon and shorter trips to Lydia in the buggy for a supply of summer sausage.
- Green tea was the only tea I knew of and the five times we served Grandpa tea every day were like the canonical hours – Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Vespers.
- A famous quote of Grandpa's when he didn't get attentions was, "All officers and no soldiers." We knew the meaning quite early and also that he was the commanding officer.

- How many of you remember the Easter Runaway with Himself and Aunt Mayme? When they didn't arrive at Church, Dad left and found them at home a bit shaken and bruised, but Thank God, safe. The bit had broken and Mabel took them to St. Patrick, around the school and back home, non-stop. The trip ended when Mabel ran into the barn.
- The first sign of cold days Grandpa would say, "This will make a man think of his last summer wages."
- Winter also brought the sleigh. When Grandpa came for us we had our system of one standing guard talking to him while others hitched the sled/toboggan to the sleigh for a ride. Grandpa's big coat collar cut off his side vision and so heedless of the danger we had our thrilling rides.

While dwelling on Cedar Lake, do you remember County Fair Days. Getting our exhibits read at school and for 4-H? Then going to the fair – its ferris wheel, merry-go-round and the special events: the human cannonball, tightrope walkers, animal tricks, the exhibits and the boxing exhibitions. One year John Ryan was our hero on the boxing number.

Speaking of Fair Days, my first checks were prizes for my leaf booklet. In fact, I won two prizes – a first at Jordan Fair of 75 cents and a second at Shakopee, which paid \$1.25. I really should have shared the winnings with Albert Ryback as he had climbed many trees along the roads to pick the exact leaf I thought best for the booklet.