

An Iowa Anecdote

GRANDMA'S WOODEN SOW

It was a morning in early summer back in Iowa's infancy when great grandmother was young. Great grandfather was away driving cattle from his farm in Poweshiek County to Davenport. The trip would require several weeks. Grandma was looking after the stock while he was gone.

During the night, a sow had died farrowing eleven pigs. As grandmother stood looking at the dead sow, she wasted no time wailing over the loss. Instead, true to her Dutch ideals of thrift, she began trying to devise some way to save the baby pigs. It was apparent at once to her practical mind that the loss of both the sow and pigs would cut entirely too big a hole in the profits.

It was impossible to feed the pigs on the bottle as she did not have the necessary equipment. Besides, the bottle method would consume too much time. There were cows to milk, hogs to feed, the garden to tend, household tasks to perform, and no one but grandma to do all the chores. She had to find some way of feeding the orphans which would be a good substitute for nature's method and not take too much time.

All at once she hit upon a plan. Whenever great grandmother made up her mind to do anything, she started right at it. She hunted around until she found an old log which had been hollowed out for a watering trough. Along each side of this log she bored holes. Then she stuffed rags into these holes. She poured milk into the log and trained the wee pigs to suckle the rags. In this way the pigs were fed and they thrived on the nourishment received from their wooden mother.

Upon great grandfather's return, he laughed long and heartily when he first beheld the greedy little pigs tugging away at the old log, each one at his accustomed place. He poked all sorts of fun at grandma's wooden sow and predicted an untimely end for the pigs.

But, grandma had the last laugh. Her pioneer resourcefulness won out, for every single pig survived and all grew into strong healthy porkers. How she did enjoy relating her experience of raising those orphan pigs. And she lived to be ninety-three.

HAZEL B. TERABERRY