

## **Grandpa's Gander**

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Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

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My grandpa and grandma, Rudy and Annie Holbil lived in the old Three Pines School House in 1956, the year I came to Oregon to live with them, me and my little brother, Daryn. It was a lot different from our lives in Syracuse, NY, as you can imagine.

One day grandpa decided he needed a new goose, maybe two. He did have some banty hens and a rooster running around in the back yard. The two outhouses, left from school days, were as yet standing in that yard, one now a chicken house, the other still doing its original duties. Well, we did go get some geese, three, as a matter of fact. I guess Roy Norton, who lived down Russell Road a ways, gave grandpa a good deal on those geese otherwise I know that my grandpa, who came from Bohemia, was too tight with his nickels to buy three. Two would have done what he wanted, he told me so. Well, the geese were not very old when we got them and we fed them along with the chickens and they grew fast. One of the geese was indeed a gander. And this gander thought he was king of the back yard, thinking he had dethroned that banty rooster, I guess. He was king as far as Daryn and I were concerned. Every time anyone, grandpa included, went out to use the outhouse or to even feed those chickens and geese, that gander would give chase. And he could pinch you to tears, I tell you. I was a lot faster, a lot quicker from the back door of the house to the outhouse than Daryn was, him being four years younger than me. Well, this one time I went to the outhouse, hitting the ground in full stride off the back steps and looking for that gander as I hustled toward the outhouse door. Daryn was right behind me, almost. I got to the outhouse and pulled open the door, diving in, kinda like. Daryn was right behind me, almost. I was in and Daryn leaped in behind me, trying to slam the door shut behind him. The gander had a lip lock, rather a bill lock, I guess, on Daryn's pant leg and Daryn was screaming like a girl. He tried to slam the door shut, as I said, but that gander got in the way. The gander got his neck caught in the door when Daryn yanked it shut. Well, for a few days after that the gander wandered around with his head kinda screwed around and bent up at an odd angle, making it hard for him to eat or drink. Grandpa decided that he best butcher the gander. He was sure mad at Daryn and me. I guess you could say he had his gander up? I told him I wasn't the one that slammed the door but it didn't help me any. We both caught Dutch, as Grandma put it. So she made gander and dumplings and the banty rooster reclaimed his crown, crowing he was king of the yard again. He made a better king anyway, I thought. Mr. Norton provided a new gander but it turned out to be a goose and that is all I have to say about that.