



# Halloween Prank

by Alice Poling Good

*“Old Jim will never be able to get Billy Whiskers off that front porch roof,” Byron laughed in anticipation of the coming fun. But Byron underestimated the farmer who lived across the road from Uncle Walter.*

On our annual trek south to our winter home in Florida, Paul and I spent our first night on the road with Ken and Mil Haines at Horse Cave, Ky. As usual, on this night we reminisced. Ken and Paul are first cousins and we have many things in common.

At a lull in the “cattle” conversation, and appropriate to the season, Ken told of a prank he observed and took part in as a boy.

From 1928 to 1932 Paul’s brother, Byron, and later Paul, assisted Uncle Walter Haines as summer farm hands. This was before Ken was old enough to do field work with Uncle Walter’s fine Belgian horses. Naturally, a due share of fun interspersed the work. All during one summer Byron observed the billy goat that ran with neighbor Jim’s small sheep flock. Neighbor Jim’s home stood across from Uncle Walter’s barn. Old Jim’s big frame house with the round-about porch stood next to the sheep pasture.

One evening as Halloween approached, Byron, a lad in his teens, and Uncle Walter worked long hours to make a rope sling. They caught the billy goat, entrapped him in the sling, and tugged and hoisted until they had him on old Jim’s porch roof. They quickly returned home and left Billy prancing and stalking from one end of that porch to the other.

In the following hours those fellows kept a constant watch of the neighbor’s place so they wouldn’t miss seeing Jim discover the goat on his porch roof. Contrary to their hopes, everyone on that side of the road continued with

business as usual, except Old Billy. Night came and Jim still had not missed Billy. The pranksters fretted. Uncle Walter finally said, “I’m worried about Old Billy. Jim hasn’t noticed he’s on the roof. That goat has to be hungry! He can’t stand it there much longer!”

After a consultation with the boys, Uncle Walter entered the neighbor’s back yard and said, “Jim, have you missed Old Billy? Come around to the front of your house. There’s something you should see.”

Uncle Walter pointed toward the roof. Jim looked up and laughed. “Why Old Billy’s on the roof.” He slapped his leg and said, “By golly, someone put him up there.” With that Uncle Walter said, “I’ve got to get home now.”

“How do you suppose Jim will get Billy Whiskers off that roof?” Byron laughed as the three fellows watched across the road from behind the barn door.

“Why, what is Jim doing?” questioned Uncle Walter. “He’s putting a rope on Old Billy’s neck.” Jim held on to the end of the rope, he opened the door that led into his home’s second story bedroom, and quietly walked into the house with Billy following meekly. Soon Jim emerged from the back door, still leading Billy. He returned him to the sheep lot, removed the rope from his neck, and slapped his rump. Jim watched as Billy assumed his usual place in the midst of the little flock.

Finally, he turned in the direction of Uncle Walter’s barn. He waved his hand and shouted, “Thanks for looking out for me, boys!”

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