



Daddy's Pocketknife

ries that each one contained was worth a king's ransom when viewed one at a time on a rainy day on the floor of our back bedroom.

Ever since I was a small boy, I have kept a box of special items either under my bed or on a shelf hidden nearby. I'm sure this is not only a trend of mine, but is probably a passion of many people who collect things. As a child, my collectible box contained some favorite cat's eyes marbles, baseball cards, a metal dog tag ordered from saving cereal box tops with my name misspelled on it, and other treasures that only a little boy would really understand. As a child, none of the items in the little blue tin box had any great monetary value, but the memo-

special because each item was a one-of-a-kind keeper that in some way for years held my attention to be looked at over and over again.

A kind neighbor lady down the road, who saved them from wiener packages, gave the cat's eyes marbles to me. At one time, a certain meat company back in the late fifties included six marbles in their packages of wieners as a sales promotion. Her family liked wieners and didn't have any young children, which meant she saved them for me. We never bought wieners except on

special occasions because they cost too much. In fact, I still have some of those marbles today.

I no longer have a little blue tin box, but instead have moved up to an adult size plastic storage container. I have also advanced to old wills, pictures, menus, books, and other items; that just like when I was a child, have very little monetary value. However, I can still look at them over and over with a new degree of wonderment each time the lid is raised.

Just the other day, I was going through my adult treasures and found something I had completely forgotten about. There, wrapped among an old 1929 tornado insurance policy and a playbook I used in our senior play in high school, was my father's old pocketknife. The blades were almost sharpened away and the handles were chipped around the

brads that held them on. The inside grooves where each blade lays still contained fragments of straw from possibly one of the last hay bale twines he had cut to feed our dairy cows. As I sat there on the floor, just like I had done hundreds on times before as a kid, I held that knife and reminisced about the times I had seen my father use that bone handled instrument.

He was a farmer and everyone knows that farmers are never without a good pocketknife. Daddy even wore out front pockets carrying his knife, but it was always there.

His knife did the usual task of cutting string on feed sacks, topping tobacco, cutting vines from tangled up hay equipment, and other agricultural chores that only a pocketknife can handle. A pocketknife is a required tool for a farmer.

But, like the farmer, his pocketknife was not only available for just work. It was also in demand by the entire family. It sharpened hundreds of Number 2 pencils during homework assignments at night. No one could put a point on a yellow pencil with teeth marks like my daddy.

It also was handy for peeling an apple on cold winter nights as we would gather around our coal oil stove telling stories and enjoying each other's company. Daddy could peel an apple without ever breaking the curl of the peeling and he seemed to have a lot of pride in that accomplishment.

His knife was very much a part of him and just holding it while going through my treasure box brought back some great memories that afternoon. I remembered when he gave me my first knife. It was a little silver penknife and

wouldn't cut hot butter; but having your daddy give you something that was as important to him as a pocketknife is to a farmer, made it even more special. And, those types of memories become even more special as the years go by.

Today, I also carry a pocketknife just like my daddy. I don't feel fully dressed without it and you never know when someone will need a Number 2 pencil sharpened. Maybe someday my pocketknife will end up in someone's treasure box and on a rainy day they will have the chance to remember back to when I used my knife to do something special.

-Pettus L. Read is editor of the Tennessee Farm Bureau News and Director of Communications for the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. He may be contacted by e-mail at: pread@tbf.com

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