

Dixie's Childhood Sports & Leisure Activities



This week's story comes from going out to dinner at Okoboji grill. Lydia wore her Halloween Cheerleading outfit to dinner. Somehow it came up that at one time mom was a cheerleader. I had never known that. I figured I better explore what other activities she used to do as a kid and young adult.

Jump Rope Champion

The City of Ottumwa had a jump rope contest through the schools when Dixie was in 6th grade. Dixie was an excellent jump roper. Dixie's competition started at Franklin school where she went to school. There were judges and everything. They judged on quality and speed. The jumpers had to do regular, crosses and double cross jumping. Dixie won at Franklin school. She then traveled to the other schools to compete. The last school was Horace Mann where she won it all. She would have gone on to state but her school teacher forgot to tell Dixie about the next meet. Dixie was disqualified when she didn't show up. She however was the jump rope champion of Ottumwa.

Cheerleading

She remembers Cheerleading at Franklin school during her 7th grade. There was a tryout in which she went out. The school colors were Gold and Blue. She remembers cheerleading at football games. The outfits were similar to what they are today. She liked doing it but not enough to go out for it again in 8th grade.

Jacks

Dixie LOVED playing jacks. She was very good but she just could never win any championships. She HATED to lose. It was the schools that would host the tournaments. She said that she was always good enough to win but would do something to lose.

Track - Hurdles

Dixie was a member of the track team. She ran hurdles and was very good. She was fast and could jump over the hurdles without knocking them over. She was just as fast as the boys if not faster. She was allowed to practice with the team however no girls were allowed to participate at the track meets. That was considered un-lady like.

I still remember a time when I was in middle school, Sam and mom was arguing about who was quicker. Sam was in high school at the time. Sam challenged mom to a foot race. Mom beat him. I remember watching it in shock. She says he still claims that he beat her, poor loser.

Pole Vaulting

This was definitely not school sanctioned. Dixie and her brothers Shorty and Ladd wanted to pole vault. They went to Carroll lumber where they were allowed to have all the bags of sawdust that they wanted. They dug a 2 inch deep, 6 foot by 6 foot pit. They filled this with 50 to 60 bags of sawdust. They then went to the dump where they got 6 foot bamboo poles. There was a plant in Ottumwa that made these and they were readily available at the dump. These poles were only good a few times before they splintered. Many times they wouldn't get over the concocted pole setup. Other times they would slam into the wooden setup. The worst times which were frequent was when they would overshoot the sawdust pit or miss it to the sides. She said this hurt a lot. Looking back she is surprised they didn't kill themselves doing this.

Roller Skating

Dixie loved to roller skate. She started when she was 11 and roller skated until she got married. Once she got married she stopped going. One time with her instructor she got to lead the grand march. This was a big deal. You had to know somebody to get to lead the grand march. She remembers wearing skating skirts made from the lady across the street. This lady, Eda Hallbaker made these skirts for her daughter and her daughter's friends which included Dixie.

5th Grade Musical

In 5th grade Dixie was going to be in a musical. She didn't want to do it but her teachers talked her into it. A week before the musical the teacher pulled Dixie aside and told her "I can give you a dress for the show". Mom was so embarrassed and upset that she walked out of school and went home. She was embarrassed that the teacher thought she was so poor she needed to give her a dress. The teacher apologized but mom refused to be in the play. This was one of the most embarrassing events of mom's life. She says she only told this story in the last year. She never even told this story to her mom or Dean. She's good

with it now (she was good with this being part of the story as well). She said after this she refused to sing for any school activity or event ever again.

Mom was definitely active as a kid. I would be interested to hear Sam's side of the foot race.