

## **Eighty-eight Years of Hunting Memories**

**By Lori Jo Mundstock**

**Reprinted with permission from the Redfield Press.**

Redfield Press  
605-472-0822

Earl A. Schultz began hunting at the age of 12. It was something he liked to do and everything that he and others in his family killed was processed and eaten by the family. Earl has lived here in the Redfield area his entire life and hunted up until 1997 when a bad storm that winter drove him and his wife from their home on the farm into town. While they were in town someone broke into their home and stole the furniture but Earl said, "That's how that goes, we had never locked the house and never had a problem like that".

Earl recalls much about his time here over the past 88 years. Some of the most memorable times occurred when out of state hunters were at his folks home and onward as three generations of them traveled from Chicago to Redfield to pheasant hunt. When asked how the out of state hunters knew about the pheasant hunting in Redfield Earl told of his mother, Lydia Hamburg, who came originally from Chicago. After her mother's death, her father remarried, and as is often the case, Lydia did not get along with her new mother. Her Aunt and Uncle had a farm in the area so Lydia came to South Dakota to start a new life and met Earl's father.

Lydia would keep in touch with her sisters who were still in Chicago and told them of life here and of hunting. Her sisters told their husbands and soon they were coming to the prairies to hunt pheasants. It was such an enjoyable sport and something they didn't have in Chicago and upon their return home, the stories of their experiences were told in the neighborhood bars. Earl explains that back then, each neighborhood had a bar and those that went there were like family. The next year for hunting season Earl's uncles would return to South Dakota to hunt and brought friends with them.

Like the domino effect, each year brought more hunters and as the families grew, the next generations began to make the journey. Earl's mother would cook from morning to night to house and take care of their meals. When Earl married his wife, Arlene, she would carry on the tradition for the generation that was currently coming and would pass it along to her daughters as would the hunters of Chicago. From 1937 to 1980 three generations kept coming and coming. Connie Tiff, daughter of Earl and Arlene, recalls the fun of the pheasant hunters and hunting season and recalls that she learned to cook and care for large groups from her grandmother and mother's example. Connie said that her mother and sister would charge \$15.00 per day for the hunters and that included meals and board. The tradition of the Chicago hunters seems to have faded with time however, as the three leaders of the group died all in one year. Still the memories continue on.

Earl tells the story of the year the hunters took the train to come. They rode the Galloping Goose from Aberdeen to Redfield and along the way there were so many pheasants they were able to convince the conductor to stop and they hunted from the

train, bagging their limit by the time they arrived. Another time, the group got to Watertown and couldn't get any further so they hired a taxi to take them the rest of their journey.

Of course, not every year was good and Earl can recall after the drought of the 1930's and 1936 in particular when there was a really bad winter and 90% of the pheasant population was lost. The sleet would freeze the nostrils of the pheasants shut and then when they roosted at night in the stubble, their tail feathers would freeze and they wouldn't be able to move. Food and water were scarce for the pheasants that winter and also declined their numbers, as did the lack of gravel to digest. Because of the ice, the birds couldn't get any grit. Earl tells of farmers putting out food and water for the birds and some of them would get landing nets to catch the birds and put them in better areas. If the tough environment caused by the weather wasn't enough, nature also provided natural predators of the pheasants. One of the worst says Earl, was raccoons that would steal the brood eggs, and hawks that would soar down and scoop up the chicks. The last year on his farm Earl and his son-in-law, Bob Tiff raised 100 pheasants and released them but Earl said the hawks swooped in and picked them off. It was the last time that Earl tried to release any birds.

Earl also spoke of something that I had never heard before. During World War II it was hard to get shells or gas and most of the young men who hunted were gone fighting the war. During that time pheasant numbers swelled as the birds could freely repopulate. It was after that time that the planes began to fill the airport, a tradition that carried on for many years and several residents may recall going to the airport on Sundays after church and seeing the double rows of small planes parked there from the road to the slough. Thanks for the Stories Earl.