

A Story About Uncle Louie

For no particular reason, this story came to mind today.
I have told it more than once, but I do not think I have written it.
It was the summer of 1960.

We were making hay at the Croteau farm that Pa rented.

Uncle Louie always drove the baler.

Louie was baling a field that was about two miles from home.

I was sent to bring him home for the noon meal.

I was 14.

Pa had an old Dodge pickup that he bought from Louie about 1955.

I had been driving on the local roads for a year or two.

I do not recall the trip to pick Uncle Louie up. That was uneventful.

This story is about taking Louie back.

The route was on two segments of gravel road.

One was narrower than the other.

The speedometer did not work on the pickup, but we left a beautiful rooster tail of dust on the straight away.

The road was hilly, and I felt the rear end float on the gravel a few times.

I misjudged my speed and did a major sideways slip as I braked and turned for the field driveway.

That was a bit unnerving.

I tried not to show it.

I let up on the brakes at the last instant. The little truck hooked sharply into the driveway.

The cloud of dust caught up to us as I brought the pickup to a stop.

Louie had not said anything about my driving during the trip.

He opened his door, stepped out, and while still holding the door open, turned to me and said, in a completely calm voice, and wearing that subtle Louie smile, "Do you always drive that fast?"

And he walked away. Tom.

p.s. Louie's son Dennis has that smile. But I was exceedingly pleased to see Mike's son Grant wears that grin.



Pa smiling in his pick-up.

• MAY • 60 •



Jim and Mike wrestling cats