

Uncle Al had a trucking business.

He hauled cattle to South St Paul Stockyards for farmers a couple days each week.

Then hauled feeds or materials on the return trip.

I rode with Al several times when I was sending a few days at their farm cultivating corn.

We would start out early, at 4 or 5 am, then stop to pick up livestock at local farms.

Maybe 5 or 6 stops to get a load.

A typical load might include a couple of cull milking cows, two new-born bull calves, three sheep, several fat steers, and ten fat hogs.

When loaded Al would drive through Minneapolis and St. Paul to the Stockyards.

There were no freeways or even beltlines around the cities in those days.

Every highway headed to the city center.

There was no way to avoid countless stoplights.

The South St Paul Stockyard was a huge place.

There were countless unloading docks, pens, interconnecting alley ways for animals, and walkways, for buyers, sellers, and workers.

There was an endless din of cattle bellowing, sheep bleating, and calves crying.

There were men on horses, wearing cowboy hats, and Judas goats.

The cowboys were sorting and driving the cattle.

The Judas goats were trained to lead sheep, cattle and sometimes hogs to specific pens.

Sheep are especially willing to follow a goat with a confident air about it.

Many of the cattle, hogs and sheep went to slaughterhouses that were on the periphery of the yards.

Literally within walking distance via interconnecting alleys.

There were even horses for slaughter, but I think those were hauled away to another location.

We unloaded at a different dock for each species.

Then Uncle Al drove to a special lot to wash the truck clean.

That seemed like a good idea in any case, the truck needed to be clean for goods on the return load.

After the truck was cleaned, we drove to a café for breakfast.

That may have been the first café I had ever been to, other than Uncle Clarence's in Rockford.

After breakfast, which may have been noon, we loaded the return freight.

One time it was tons of pig feed in paper sacks.

We unloaded the pig feed at Kemmetmueller's farm, by the pond, between the Millside and Fletcher.

Another time we hauled automobile body parts, doors and fenders, to the Albertville Garage.

A third load was blackboard for new classrooms, in St Albert's parochial school.

That was a three-story building, that stood where the parish hall is now.

The trip invariably ended with a long stop at an Albertville bar.

I was never comfortable there.

The bar stunk of stale beer and cigarette smoke.

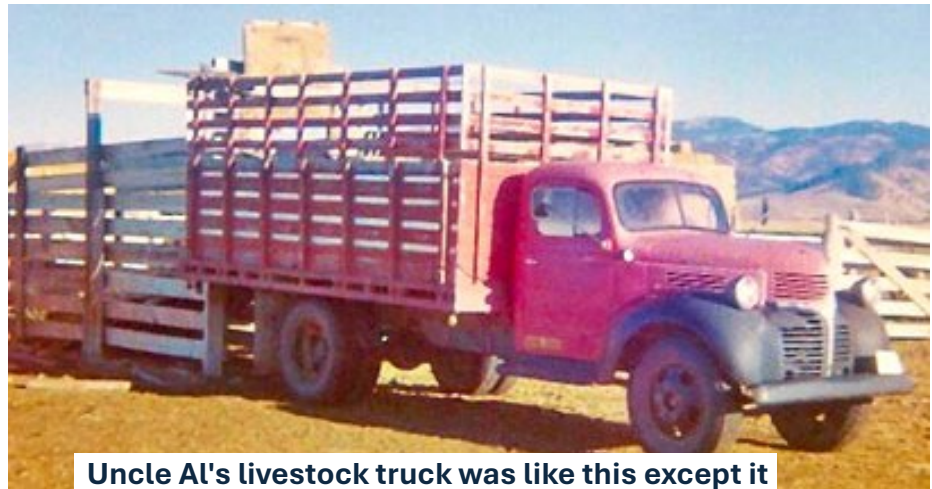
Everyone there was very friendly to a little boy.

The patrons constantly offered me pop and candy bars.

I had been taught to accept one and turn any more.

After an hour, I just wanted to return to the farm.

Uncle Al could hang out there all afternoon.



Uncle Al's livestock truck was like this except it was totally enclosed and more modern