The old boot top's story

I am an old leather boot top. The years have made me hard, brittle and cracked. I hang here, along with lots of other now unused things from bygone days in an old Stone Arabian barn which someone called a Dutch Barn. I was just thinking, that is if an old boot top has the ability to think, of all I've gone through during my many years of existence. I was once part of a nice new pair of boots. Being the top a boot, even though I do not remember was I right or left, was pretty important. A leather strap was on each side of me. For a long time I felt the wood-handled iron hooks that were put into those straps to pull me onto the foot of the young man who owned me. I felt pretty important that day when the young man saw me at the boot and shoemaker's shop. I do not remember just who made me, but I know I was made with great pride. Yes, the young man did choose me over the other pair of boots. Or was I made special for this young man? You can't expect an old boot top to remember everything about the young man who took me home to the farm that day. In the beginning the boots of which I was part were carefully cared for. Both the farmer and I hoped I would survive in good and useful condition for a long time. Every so often an old iron kettle full of special grease was heated on the stove and my leather was given a good coat that would help to keep me waterproof. I began to show the signs of age. Not quite such good care was taken of me now. My sole wore thin and a hole appeared. Still I was not thrown away. New soles were put on me. My owner was very thrifty and wanted me to last as long as possible. The time came when I was not useful anymore. Now I was thrown into the back of an old cupboard behind the stove. I had lots of company from other cast off boots and shoes. Then came the day when the cupboard was cleaned out for another purpose. Surprisingly I was taken up over a small workshop here on the farm. Maybe some part of me would be useful yet. Then one day spring was near and the corn was to be planted in the garden. The farmer who bought me years ago was not so young anymore He sent his teenage son up over the shop to find a small bucket to carry the kernels of corn in as he walked along the rows and carefully dropped the kernels in the ground. "No there is no bucket up here dad, but I'll just make something out of this old boot top that will work." About six inches of the top was cut off. They boy whittled a thin board to make a bottom to hold the kernels of corn. A few old tacks would hold it in. A piece of string was tied onto one of the old loops. The string was tied into the boy's belt. Kernels of corn were dumped into me and the boy reached into his invention to get the corn. Thus a part of me became useful again. Now things are not done the same anymore so I just hang here in this old barn, a remembrance of the days of my earlier existence. I remember all those years, that is if part of an old leather boot has the ability to remember anything. I'll let you make that decision.

Willis E Barshied, March 2009

The sequel

On this day, May 12, 2009 the leaves on the oak are larger than a squirrel's ear which by ancient tradition is the time to plant corn. The Native Americans gave corn to the first European settlers to reach our shores. The Iroquois called corn one of the three sisters, Corn, Beans and Squash. I shelled the best three ears I had grown last year from seed grown on the Six Nations Reserve in Canada. Then I remembered the old boot top and decided to bring it back into service. I placed the kernel into it and proceeded to plant six rows of corn in remembrance of the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy which gave our valley the first democratic government long before the coming of the Europeans. Five kernels were placed in each hill so we remember that there were only five nations before the Tusaroras from North Carolina jointed them in the first quarter of the 18th century.

The corn now is entrusted to the Creator to determine if the corn will grow to maturity.