

A tale of two Bobs

For some reason I feel compelled to tell the reader this story even though I have other s not completed. I must reach back into my youth and the house by the creek side at Marshville, NY. Both Bobs were the family canines and both were large brown and black Airedales. They were however oh so greatly different. Here are their stories.

Old Bob

Sometime before I arrived at my grandfather's home at the age of two in 1932 "Old Bob" had taken up residence. At that time there was another boy in that household. My mother's little brother Douglas Alan Garlock (1923 – 1936). The story as it was told to me was that my Aunt Pauline's first husband had trained "Old Bob" and had done a great job at it. I remember grandpa Garlock saying that it was hell to live with a dog that was smarter than you were.



Old Bob

I'm sure "Old Bob" and I got acquainted even though I was only two when we met. In the next few years our lives were entwined. My father was a hunter and so was "Old Bob". Each fall as I was growing up dad, along with Uncle Junior," my mother's brother", grandpa Garlock and other hunting companions took to the fields. Often in that time of the great depression, hunting was a source of some extra food or a pleasant diversion from the cares of everyday life. Old Bob had some possibly unusual traits. One was the dislike of anyone in a uniform. I do not believe he ever actually bit anyone in uniform but his dislike was made quite clear. Although we had a family cat which "Old Bob" tolerated he treed any cat when hunting and woe be to the cat who did not find a tree. It has been said that Airedales were

famous for hunting mountain lions in the Western US. Was this aversion to cats something inbred into his species?

Uncle Douglas was only seven years older than I. He died in 1936 when I was six. "Old Bob" was our guardian. Once when Uncle Douglas was very young the dog pulled him from the creek so near behind the house. Everyone felt that the boy's life was saved by that dog. "Old Bob" was my protector too, even carrying it to extremes at times. I never knew of his biting anyone but he was always there. My father's sister Carmeta was afraid of "Old Bob". He had a way of making his wishes known. I remember once as a small boy Aunt Carmeta was helping to put my coat on. The old dog took that as a threat to me. He just reached up and took her arm in his mouth and put it down by her side. No one was hurt but his wishes were quite clear. Another time Aunt Carmeta refrained from stopping "Old Bob" from sampling some of the newly frozen ice cream from the freezer which sat on the kitchen floor.

There is no way that I can give Old Bob the credit he deserves for being my companion and protector from so long ago. I do not know just when Old Bob left this earth but I remember when grandpa found him on the creek bank. I'm sure that it touched him deeply. No one was sure what happened to the dog. Possibly he was hit by a car and went to the creek for a drink. Then it may be that his time was just up. Grandpa thought he was about 13 years old. It was the end of one era for me and the beginning of another.

Young Bob

Not long after Old Bob's exit the family got another Airedale. He looked much the same as his predecessor but like no two persons are alike neither were these two dogs. He possessed the natural instinct to hunt but the great training was not there. Both dogs were always in the house. Young Bob had the best of house mannerisms as had Old Bob.



Young Bob

Young Bob was more of a big friendly companion for me. He liked everyone. The only young person in the household besides me was gone after 1936 when Uncle Douglas passed away. The students in the old county school became even more like family. Everyday happenings between a boy and his dog can be nearly lost after many years. We never know just what of those happenings will adhere to your memory. Sometimes they sound insignificant. One such memory involved an animal running under the corn crib. Young Bob dug and dug to get under to get at it. Finally Bob had closed the hole behind him with dirt. Grandpa had to dig Bob out. Another day I remember involved mothers horse Nelly. That horse hated dogs. Young Bob decided it would be fun to chase Nelly. The horse kicked Young Bob then struck him with her front feet. One of Bob's front teeth was broken off. I do not believe Bob ever chased Nelly again.

We lived close to the bank of Bowman's Creek. Any good sized creek can be a lazy joy in some seasons and a roaring tyrant in others. Young Bob crossed the creek on the ice one spring morning. That day the ice went out and because of an ice jam a short way below the house the water was very high. We never saw Young Bob again. What happened to him no one knew. Did he try to swim back home and get swept away? He was a young and valuable dog even in those days. Someone could have picked him up in a car. He was so friendly I believe he would have gotten in. Some 75 years have passed since that day and all I do know is how hard it was for a young boy to lose his dog. To this day when I see someone with a nice Airedale dog I ask if I can pet him.



Patty

In the years I was there in the house beside the creek at Marshville there were only two other dogs. One a female Airedale we called Snippy. She just could not measure up to the two Bobs. For some reason I have little memory of her. The other was a black and white Springer Spaniel. Little clings to my memory of that dog we called Patty.

The two Bobs after some 70 years still are only a pleasant memory away.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, March 8 2012