

THE BULLY

EVERY STREET OR NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A BULLY

When I was a young boy growing up on Poplar Street in New Milford, we had a "bully." His name was Eddie Dodd

One winter night I had two papers left to deliver. Dodd came out of his house to walk with me. I knew something was up. At the end of Poplar Street, I had one paper left. Dodd grabbed me by the neck of my jacket and the seat of my pants and jammed my head five or six times into a snowbank and left me there. I had to wiggle myself out. I delivered my last paper and walked fast toward home which was three houses up from what is now Village Crest. Dodd was quite aways back on the other side of the street and when I thought I could make it, I yelled something back to him - not a compliment - and took off for my house. I couldn't see or hear him but knew he was coming. I was wearing rubber boots (galoshes) with buckles (they weighed a ton). As I was going up the steps to the side porch, I tripped and fell onto the porch. I reached up and grabbed the doorknob, turned it, and fell half into the dinning room yelling for my mother. Dodd had almost beaten me. He had me by the ankles. My heart almost stopped and then he ran home.

In the summertime after supper, about six or seven of us boys would play Hide & Seek in the cemetary just off Poplar Street. The bully wanted to be the Seeker every night. He would hide his face, count to a hundred, and yell "Ready or not, here I come."

Dodd was about three years older than most of us (we were eight, nine or ten. When Dodd said "Here I come", we were long gone.

There was one night I will never forget. My buddy Tom and I were laying flat on the ground in back of a large gravestone. The ground rose and suddenly we saw Dodd against the skyline walking slowly from gravestone to gravestone listening and looking. He was going right. We went left, crouched down gravestone to gravestone. We met Joey, one of us kids, who was sure glad to see us. We walked along the cemetery's gravel road keeping low and looking for Dodd. We got to a split in the road near a tree. We boosted each other into the tree. I was on the lower limb, Tom was next, and Joey was above Tom.

This was no fun. We hadn't seen Dodd in quite awhile and we had to go home soon. Joey yelled "Hey Dodd, can't find me." Nothing. "Hey Dodd, can't find me." I looked at a gravestone about 150 feet away. It had a shadow toward the bottom and I had just decided that it was a dirt mark when it moved. Good grief; it was Dodd! Joey yelled "Hey Dodd, can't find me." I stood up on the limb I was sitting on, put my left arm around the tree, and watched in terror as Dodd got to a gravestone fifteen feet from the tree. He ran to the base of the tree and yelled "I gotcha."

I leaped for the road. My legs already running in place. When I landed, I took a quick look back to see where Dodd was when I saw Joey fall right out of the tree.

I took off for my house as fast as my legs would go. (I just thought of something I have been blessed with - longevity. I'm 94; Dodd would be 97. Last I knew, he had moved and was in the area. Good grief, if by chance he reads this, he'll know where I am. Hey Dodd, you can't find me. (Maybe he has.)

Arthur B. Carlson

P.S. In reading, it doesn't sound like much but then you hadn't met "The Bully".