

The 33,120-Minute Egg

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located, clean. A steady flow of visitors invades to marvel at the fortitude of the poor abandoned infants.

Nobody marvels at me. Too crowded to sort laundry. Husband needs clean pants.

Eight-year-old thinks fluffy chicks are in eggs now. I tell her they must gestate like she did. Sex education lesson. She wants to let fluffy chicks out right away. I restrain her.

Husband tries to lure me away for weekend fling. Can't go. Have to baby-sit eggs.

Day 12. Eight-year-old drops one while turning eggs. Stink increases. I notice while cleaning up mess that there is no sign of poultry.

Day 14. We get curious and open an egg. No chicken.

Day 17. We get suspicious and open an egg. No chicken. We open another. No embryo, no nothing. Another. Same thing.

Day 18. We start preparing eight-year-old for harsh realities of life. Keep fostering eggs. Do everything perfectly.

Day 21. We get nothing done because we run to incubator every 10 minutes so as not to miss miracle of birth. Husband is sure one in center moved. I saw one in back corner rocking. Nothing hatches.

Day 23. Early morning. One egg has a hole in it. Loud chirping issues from hole. Eight-year old eats breakfast beside incubator, calls us to come SEE every forty-three seconds. She reports each peck, each sliver of shell that breaks away. Takes me half an hour to get dressed; must run downstairs eight times for progress report on chicken.

9:37 a.m. Chicken pushes egg

shell apart and lays flat on his stomach between other eggs. He is ugly. Eight-year-old ecstatic. Names chicken "Prize." "He's my prize for remembering to turn the eggs!"

Inform Mrs. Neighbor of blessed event. She relinquishes her parental rights. Prize is officially a member of our family.

Day 24. Waiting for brother or sister for Prize. Go to feed mill and buy 10 pounds of chicken feed.

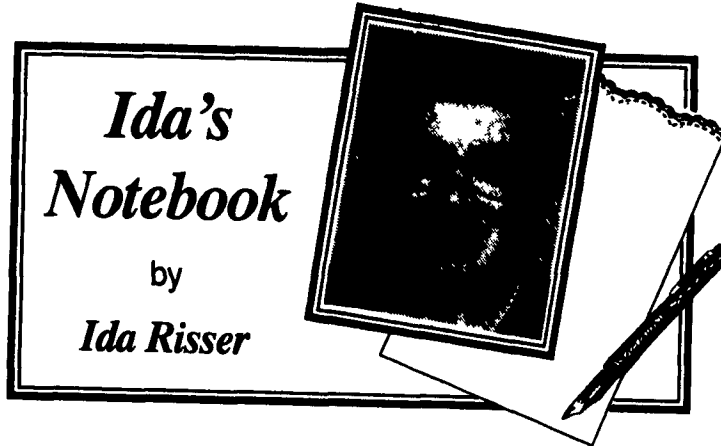
Day 25. Hoping for sibliiffs.

Days 26-34. Still hoping.

Day 35. Husband takes eggs way out into the woods and dumps them.

I make pot of tea. Pull down shades. Unplug phone. Go to bed.

Prize is king of the chicken house.



Recently we had several couples at our home for a meal. The conversation afterwards turned to roads in Centre County. It was amazing to me that they all seemed to be familiar with the area even though none of them lived there. Some had cabins there to hunt and fish while others looked for wildflowers. Allen urged them to attend "Ag Progress Days" there in August even though they

were not farmers. And, I asked if they had visited "Columbus Chapel" in Boalsburg. We remember enjoying all of the items displayed there.

When our meadow was covered with snow, we watched children and adults sled down our meadow hill. There were a few spills but I'm sure they enjoyed the sport. How well I remember when I and my sisters walked up this same hill through the snow. One time we got off the beaten path and the sled stopped abruptly so that the top person slid off over me and I broke my glasses. I surely hated to tell my parents as money for glasses was scarce. Each time that we came down, we tried to go a bit farther — even into the woods on the opposite side of the meadow.

When our children were young, there were many other boys and girls of the same age living in a nearby building development. Then there were so many on our steep hill and sometimes they ice skated on the ponds in our meadow too. The Conestoga River, that runs past our farm, does not freeze over every year. The shallow ponds are much safer although even then our boys got wet feet occasionally.

We are planning a trip to Florida and trying to decide how many warm clothes to take as sometimes it is cool there too. So many attractions are in this state and so I'll probably be telling about some for the next few weeks.

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