

Killing Rats

Ralph Anderson and his brothers Blaine and Melvin, earned their first horse (an old lanky gray mare) by killing rats. Ralph's mother was complaining to his dad about the amount of rats in the chicken coops. She said they were eating them out of house and home. He didn't think there were that many until they pried a 2x4 up and saw the rats stacked up on top of each other.

Their neighbor and friend Glen Powell and his dog Chubs helped them get rid of the rats. The negotiation was for ten cents apiece at first, but when that started to turn into real money, they decided that they would get them a horse. They needed a horse so they wouldn't have to walk to drive cows.

The process they used to get rid of the rats was complete pandemonium. They pried the board up enough for someone to stick his arm in and beat on the rats with a chicken coop hook until a few of them would run out between his legs into the coop. When the rats ran out into the coop the rest of the crew wildly swinging clubs would immediately pounce them upon. The rats would be running everywhere being chased by a dog and 4 people swinging clubs. Sometimes the rats would get in the space under the roost where the droppings would fall. Someone would beat them out of there and the process would start all over again.

Glen and his dog could catch the rats in midair as they tried to jump past them. Glen would throw the rats against the wall and stun them and then the boys would move in with the clubs to get them before they came to. The dog would grab them and shake them. Once the dog was bit in the mouth by a rat which slowed him up for a little bit but then he took after the rats with a vengeance.



Front: Marilyn and Melvin

Back: Blaine and Ralph