

Sayings
by Kathryn Cubalo

My Mother was very particular about language, both hers and ours. We were taught to speak properly, using good grammar while growing up in a rural area where double negatives were common. "I ain't got none" was a common saying among our friends. We were corrected when we used language that my mother thought inappropriate.

I don't remember my parents using any particular sayings, but they always remarked that my grandfather never swore but, if he was upset, he said, "Oh pshaw." Lloyd's grandfather had the same expression and, interestingly, they both came from the same area in Canada.

I think both my mother and my grandmother said, "Mercy me" because that seem to be one of my expressions. My older brother, Frank, would say "Horsefeathers." Where and why he picked that word, I don't know.

Once we had a discussion at hunting camp about having a pond next to the cabin and one idea was to blow a hole in the swamp with dynamite. Lloyd's cousin remarked in his slow drawl, "Remember, what goes up must come down." That has become a famous family saying.

Another saying came from his Uncle Art. It seemed as there was some talk about going on an outing to pick huckleberries. One of the party objected because they might run into a snake. Uncle Art's remark was, "I go looking for huckleberries, not for snakes." That seems to be an optimistic view of many things in life, so the story has been told many times.

One of the expressions Lloyd uses when things don't turn out right is "That's a poke in the eye with a sharp stick." That saying always gives me the shivers, but some people think it's funny.

Some other common sayings:

- "Two bricks short of a load"
- "Like a fart in a mitten"
- "Many hands make light work"
- "A stitch in time saves nine."
- "That's a fine kettle of fish"

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Addendum:

As the person who "types" Kathryn's stories, I allow myself the liberty of adding comments.

Kathryn was 10 and Frank was 12 when our Dad left the boats and came home to stay. I was not quite 6 and John was a new-born, so we grew up hearing much more colorful language.

If he was mad, Daddy was apt to tell someone to "go piss up a rope."

On a really cold day, it was "colder than a witches titty."

Even mother was apt to remark that it was "colder than molasses in January."

Something lost was often "harder to find than a needle in a haystack."

Somebody with big dreams and meager resources "didn't have a pot to piss in" or "didn't have two nickels to rub together," (Guess which parent said which.)

(Helen Olson, 2012)

About Bessie Cubalo, Lloyd's mother
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Grams

A hug from Grams was so clean and soft and faintly perfumed. That faint scent came from her skin cream, an Avon product in a little blue jar. She used it on her face, neck and arms because her skin was so dry. Other grandmothers may have used the same moisturizing cream, but they didn't smell like my Grams. I looked forward to her warm, firm and scented hugs at the beginning of every visit to her home.

After Grams died, I was helping to organize her clothing. I found one of her favorite sweaters. I buried my face in it, inhaling breaths of Grams. I wore it, hoping Grams' scent and warmth would envelope me like one of her firm hugs. But alas, after no time at all, the sweater didn't smell like Grams, it smelled like me. Desperate for Grams, I sealed one of her hankies in a plastic bag. I will open it on Kristen's wedding day, and Kristen and I will have the scent of one last soft warm hug from Grams.

Lynn VanderLinde
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