

We made quite a cavalcade, the big horses, the huge load, the crew following in rigs or on horseback.

I felt as proud as a Queen on her throne as we turned into Main Street and waved grandly at chance acquaintances who were standing by the village stores.

When we were directly opposite Uncle Will's grocery, I felt a lurch and the load of hay seemed to shift balance and dip in one corner. The driver gave a sudden loud, "Whoa!" followed by a sharp exclamation from the men immediately behind. I clutched a pitchfork stuck in the hay to avoid an unexpected toboggan slide.

After much activity all around the wagon, consultation with a hastily summoned blacksmith and the gratuitous advice of the curious onlookers, who had gathered by the droves, we on top of the load were informed that a wheel had come off and unless we wished to sleep in the hay over night, would have to descend immediately.

Have you ever tried to descend from an enormous load of hay parked in the center of a busy village street with endless onlookers offering suggestions, mostly inane, on how it should be done--or displaying hilarious amusement at the plight of the riders?

A long ladder was produced from somewhere, probably the storeroom of Uncle Will's grocery and set up against the wagon box. The ladder reached only the overhanging top of the hay. Loads of hay, properly built, are more or less mushroom shaped. To slide down the slippery incline, grasp the ladder, catch a foot-hold and descend can require the skill of a