

A CLUCKING HEN AND ITS DUCKLINGS

On the small farm where I grew up during the 1940 to late 1950s, the farmers adapted to the challenges of a small farm and were able to make an economic difference with little “seed” capital.

My parents had an Incubator where they were able to hatch about a Hundred (100) chicks at a time. Ducks were also raised but usually about six (6) to eight (8) ducks were a brood at any time. The female ducks laid eggs which were not eaten by our family for a reason that I never knew the answer to because I never asked. These eggs were not enough to operate an Incubator to hatch.

Hens sometimes naturally became interested in hatching eggs and would begin to sit on some eggs that it had laid and would begin to “cluck” and thus were named “clucking hens” for want of a better name.

My mother would “sneak” duck eggs under such a hen so that they would hatch ducklings.

The Hen did not seem to care or know the difference and eventually the eggs hatched with a chick or two and perhaps six to eight ducklings.

The Hen accepted the entire “brood” as hers and took care of them as her own.

Soon the ducklings became interested in water and swimming and gravitated to the adjacent pond. Farms were always strategically sited to have a slough near by the barns for watering the stock and for raising ducks and geese.

The clucking hen would become very concerned when her brood (the ducklings) would just walk into slough and naturally swim around as the mother (Clucking Hen), clucked up a storm. Obviously like any mother, she was concerned for the safety of her “children”.

It was always interesting to watch this scene of the Hen walking around the slough “calling” for her “children”.



As this photograph demonstrates, “they are all my children”

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