

# The Night He Shot the Bull

A Greendale Story

Young Peter experienced a somewhat less-than-harmonious relationship with his father, for reasons one can only guess. As a result of a near-death, farm-related experience, reconciliation between the two took place. Heinrich was attempting to return the farm bull to its pen after servicing a cow. The bull objected.

Peter recalls that of his father's many characteristics, stubbornness was one. At the least, it was quite difficult to change his mind about things. One such thing was that he could never be persuaded that a 2000-pound Guernsey bull could be extremely dangerous and needed to be handled carefully. One never leads a bull by a chain snapped into a ring in the animal's nose. Instead, the snap is fastened to a 10-foot pole so that the creature can be pushed away should he decide to charge. On that semi-dark night, Heinrich's 'pet' bull decided to charge.

Peter's sister recalls sitting inside with her siblings, engaged in reading and perhaps school work, when the unmistakable sound of a clanging chain caused Peter to cry out, "the bull", and simultaneously bolt from the house in the direction of the clanging chain. In Peter's mind, the clanging chain, which was attached to a ring in the bull's nose, had only one implication, and it wasn't a positive one. At this point, it should be noted that young Peter was endowed with a sprinting ability that was well-known throughout the community.

Upon arriving at the pen, Peter noted that the bull had his father at his mercy. Peter's father was lying face down in the mud with the bull in the process of goring him. One shoulder, it would later be known, had been gored and broken. Peter, without a further thought for his own safety, hurdled the fence, grabbed the bull's chain and darted for the opposing fence, bull in pursuit. With one fluid motion he was able to secure the bull to a post and roll under the lowest strand of the barbed-wire fence.

The doctor, who made house calls, personally took Heinrich to Chilliwack General Hospital. It was at the hospital that Heinrich asked for time alone with his son, and after thanking him, apologized for his role in their rocky relationship, thus cementing a reconciliation between father and son.

Years later, Peter recalled that events of that night were a little hazy in his memory, but one thing, he said, that he would never forget was how the bull filled all of that night with a hellish bellowing. "I was told that only an animal having the smell of blood in his nostrils can make that sound. Years later, when Martha and I were in Africa, we heard a lion's roar, and the sound was similar."

This was not the night he shot the bull if you are wondering. Not yet. Over the years he had a recurring dream in which he was chased by a bull, barely escaping into the house. Events reoccurred in identical sequence until that night – the night he shot the bull. After the chase, and the safe escape, he woke up. When he returned to sleep, he had the dream again. This time, he grabbed a rifle from the wall and in his dream, went out the door and shot the bull. From that time on, he never again returned to his dreams.

Adapted from "Canadians Through Miracles"

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*Heinrich Dietrich (1885–1955) and Sarah (Wiebe) Neumann (1890-1958), arrived in Greendale in 1948 via Gem, Alberta and Bredenbury, Saskatchewan, after having immigrated, in 1926, from Rosenwald, in the Barnaul Settlement, Asiatic Russia. This large family of 15 spawned many memorable experiences, both serious and amusing. This anecdote incorporates both.*