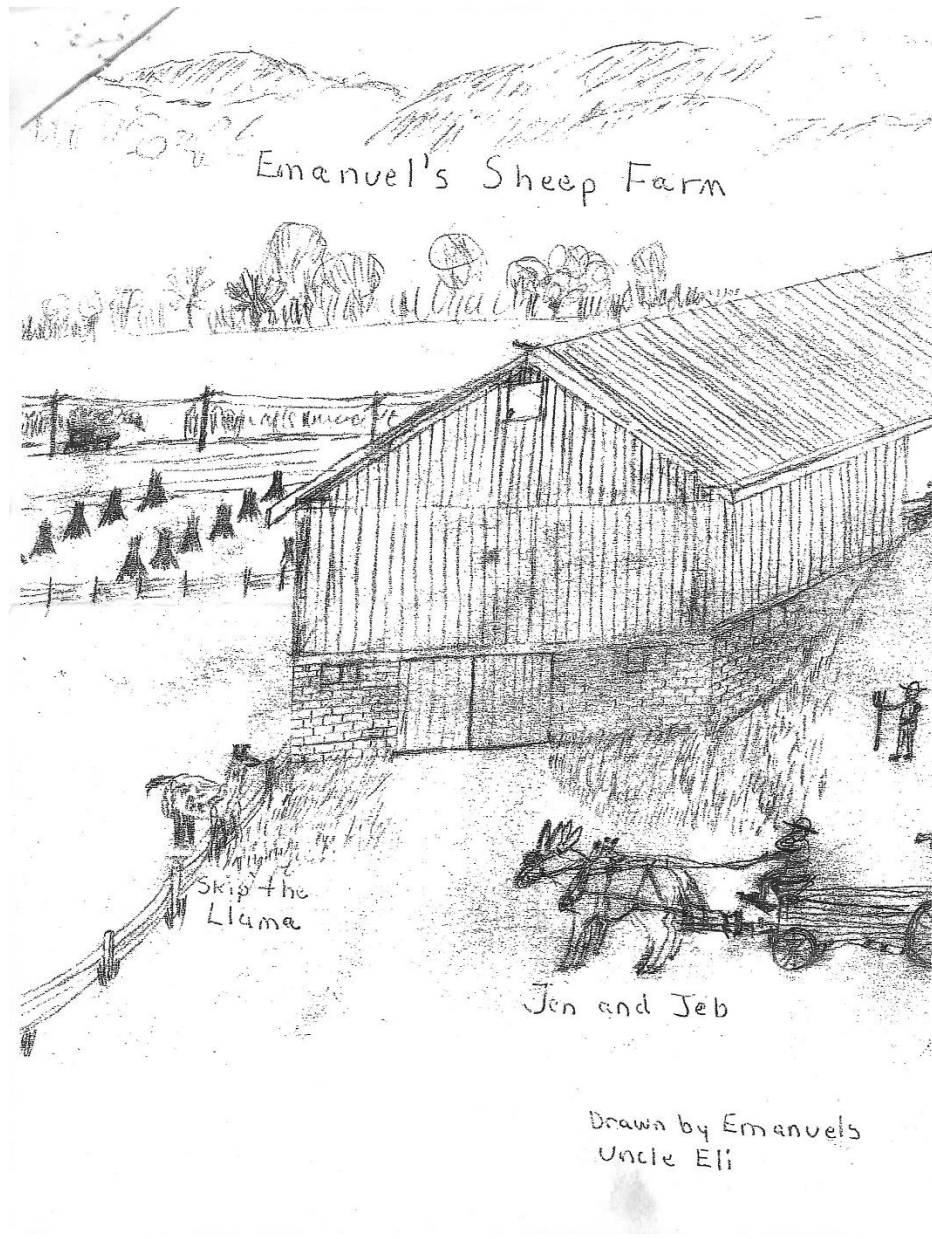


The Great Llama Hunt, a Tale of Friends and Two "Skips"

Not long ago the Amish family of Emanuel the wagon maker and Nancy built a barn so they could raise sheep and help teach their sons farming. In a conversation about protection for their sheep it was stated that a llama could be pastured with the sheep to protect them from coyotes and dogs. So on a Friday afternoon their friend Skip offered to purchase a llama as a gift. Shortly thereafter Emanuel, their three oldest, Alvina, David, and Norman, went with Skip to the friendly area llama raiser. A young white male animal with red spots on its face was chosen by the young folks as an appropriate addition to their farm animals. These three young folks chose the name "Skip" for their new llama. The animal was to be delivered on Saturday.



Early on the next Monday Skip, not Skip the llama, received a phone call from his friend Emanuel who said he was sorry to have to make the call. The message was that Skip the llama was delivered to their property as agreed on Saturday. The llama was very afraid of its new home and its ride there. Along with the newcomer came a nice bridal and lead strap. It was tied but not securely enough. In a few minutes it pulled loose. Skip the llama jumped a fence into a pasture with Jen and Jed, a team of large work mules. It was terror, not love, at first sight. The mules went through the fence and Skip the llama headed for the countryside. Much of the area surrounding the farm was overgrown brush and swamp.



In the ensuing days the Great Llama Hunt began. The Amish pupils were released from school to search for their new friend. The sheriff's office was alerted and one Sunday morning a deputy called Skip, not Skip the llama, saying the traveler had been spotted. The deputy was thanked but given the information that the sheep guardian was wild enough, ran like a deer, and no method had been found to catch it. To lasso or tranquilize the llama was considered. Another sheep raiser said that either method could be fatal to the animal. A newspaper advertisement and feature article titled "Where would a llama go?" produced little except chuckles to many readers. About then another sheep raiser and llama owner made a suggestion and offered to help. It was well known which direction friend llama Skip was traveling and not venturing any great distance. A lady llama was loaded on a trailer and parked to the windward side of the advancing animal. Skip the llama did not prove to be amorous and after a few days the lady llama returned home. The situation was getting serious since nearly three weeks had gone by since the great escape.

Shortly after word was received that a neighbor had captured the elusive beast. Skip, not Skip the llama, went to investigate. The neighbor, Kelly, had pursued the animal with a four wheeler until it was tired and lay down. The capture was made and the llama was secured in a dog kennel peacefully eating. In short time many thanks and some nice Amish pies were exchanged for the adventurous animal. Skip the llama was taken home; the sheep and mules eventually accepted him. The Amish children faithfully tend the sheep and their companion Skip. Thus the Great Llama Hunt came to a peaceful end and it is hoped that all will live happily forever more.

Skip Barshied

December 26, 2007