

Gone With the Wind

by Loweta Kimball

A friend will stay by your side through thick and thin, good times and bad. Four legged animals are masters at developing friendships.

Bozo, a brown, black and white collie that just appeared on the farm one day and Ben-jam-in, a beige colored Clydesdale horse Dad bought from a travelling circus a few months earlier were BFFs (best friends forever).

The dog was a site when it arrived: wet, matted hair, and skinny as a rail. When Ben-jam-in saw the dog he nudged it to the water tank and pushed him in as if to say, "You need a bath!" After a quick romp in the tank, the dog lay on a bale of hay and went to sleep. Dad found the name 'Bozo' on the dog's collar and quickly threw it away. He was keeping that dog!

Ben, a gentle giant of a horse, could do the work of two but only ate an amount for one. Bozo who turned out to be an easily trainable dog could easily corral the chickens, turkeys, and pigs if they happened to escape the pen. This horse/dog combination was the epitome of strength, speed, agility and teamwork.

Ben was too large a horse to get through the barn door so he had to sleep in the lean-to next to the barn. Bozo slept right by Ben's side.

One stomp of Ben's hoof in the garden left a hole big enough to plant several seeds at a time which drastically cut planting time. Bozo chased pesky rabbits from the garden.

Dad believed Ben and Bozo were partners before, probably in the circus, and had found each other again. They teamed together all day doing the work of two hired hands and didn't shirk their assignments.

Weather conditions in the rural area are unpredictable most of the year so Bozo was trained to carry messages to the school warning of inclement weather and when it best to keep students inside the brick school house.

One unusually stormy day both Ben and Bozo were sent to the school with a message that read, "Tornado expected. Stay inside. Dad will come when all is clear. Extra food on Ben-jam-in." By the size of the food bag we knew the storm was a doozie and we would be indoors for a long time. Dad had built a brick lean-to next to the school building for Ben and Bozo for such a time as this.

We slept two nights in the school and only opened the windows when we heard voices outside. The townspeople were glad we were warned and had been supplied with food and water.

For several days after the storm everybody searched for Ben and Bozo but they were gone with the wind. We all prayed they were still together. Isn't that what friends are for?