

## The Old Tent

Back in the late 60's, our family wanted to set out upon the great adventure of camping.

So, in the grand tradition of camping, the old man borrowed a tent from somebody.



The tent didn't come with assembly instructions.



Nor did it come with instructions for bored teenagers.

### The Old Tent

To solve at least one of these problems, we bought a tent. A Sears "**Ted Williams**" 10 Man tent (with awning) to be exact.



First things first - a dry run in the back yard to avoid that nasty three hour ordeal in the quickly darkening campground. This may be the first time the tent was ever put up. Notice it takes two grown men to figure this out.

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Soon however, the setup team became a well oiled machine, able to setup and strike the tent in as little as 10 minutes. Or less than 90 seconds in the case of the Great Arkansas Monsoon Rains of 1972.



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While my aunt and uncle enjoyed the palatial luxuries of their pickup camper, we toughed it out like real pioneers.



We didn't need new-fangled devices like a Coleman stove when there were old restaurant burners and rusty LP cylinders available.

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Many a night was spent in that tent. And many a day, chasing flies and sweeping out the dirt.

It even survived the Dog As Big As A Water Buffalo single car crash.



After it was retired from family camping duties in favor of the luxurious truck camper and fifth wheel trailer, the old tent was passed to me, since my older sister considered camping to be a Hyatt in the woods.

I used the old tent solo for the first time in 1975 while working construction. It was a lot cheaper than a motel room, but it got pretty cold on toward the end of the season.

Eventually, I got married, had kids and repeated the entire cycle.

First things first – a dry run in the yard to avoid those embarrassing campground moments.



## The Old Tent

As near as I can recall, we purchased that Sears Ted Williams 10 man tent sometime around 1968. I couldn't tell you with any certainty the last time I used it. My best guess is the early to mid 1990's. It was still in great shape, and still had the Iowa State Parks pass in the front window from the first time I'd used it solo back in 1975.

Last week we had the 10' storage container delivered filled with the remainder of Steph's craft studio and both of the garages from our old house. In amongst the treasures was the old tent.



The whole kit was still intact: pole bag, tent bag, ground canvas and the tool bag full of ropes, 2 lb. hammer, hatchet, folding shovel, rain ponchos (the ghosts of the Arkansas Monsoons still lingered) and the screw-in foot steps for wooden light poles we used for tent stakes in rocky ground.

A couple of months ago Steph heard about a program run by Adventure 16, a local backpacking/outfitting store, that utilizes donated camping equipment to introduce underprivileged kids to the great outdoors. After a few minutes' contemplation I could think of no better fate for our old tent, now at least 35 years old, than to introduce yet another generation to the joys of camping.

