

A LICK AND A PROMISE

'I'll just give this a lick and a promise,' my mother said as she quickly mopped up a spill on the floor without moving any of the furniture.

'What is that supposed to mean?' I asked as in my young mind I envisioned someone licking the floor with his or her tongue.

'It means that I'm in a hurry and I'm busy canning tomatoes so I am going to just give it a lick with the mop and promise to come back and do the job right later.

'A lick and a promise' was just one of the many old phrases that our mothers, grandmothers, and others used that they probably heard from the generations before them. With the passing of time, many old phrases become obsolete or even disappear. This is unfortunate because some of them are very appropriate and humorous. Here is a list of some of those memorable old phrases:

1. **A Bone to Pick** (someone who wants to discuss a disagreement)
2. **An Axe to Grind** (Someone who has a hidden motive. This phrase is said to have originated from Benjamin Franklin who told a story about a devious man who asked how a grinding wheel worked. He ended up walking away with his axe sharpened free of charge)
3. **One bad apple spoils the whole barrel** (one corrupt person can cause all the others to go bad if you don't remove the bad one)
4. **At sea** (lost or not understanding something)
5. **Bad Egg** (Someone who was not a good person)
6. **Barking at a knot** (meaning that your efforts were as useless as a dog barking at a knot.)
7. **Barking up the wrong tree** (talking about something that was completely the wrong issue with the wrong person)
8. **Bee in your bonnet** (To have an idea that won't let loose)
9. **Been through the mill** (had a rough time of it)
10. **Between hay and grass** (Not a child or an adult)
11. **Blinky** (Between sweet and sour as in milk)

12. **Calaboose** (a jail)
13. **Catawampus** (Something that sits crooked such as a piece of furniture sitting at an angle)
14. **Dicker** (To barter or trade)
15. **Feather in Your Cap** (to accomplish a goal. This came from years ago in wartime when warriors might receive a feather they would put in their cap for defeating an enemy)
16. **Hold your horses** (Be patient!)
17. **Hoosegow** (a jail)
18. **I reckon** (I suppose)
19. **Jawing/Jawboning** (Talking or arguing)
20. **Kit and caboodle** (The whole thing)
21. **Madder than an old wet hen** (really angry)
22. **Needs taken down a notch or two** (like notches in a belt usually a young person who thinks too highly of himself and needs a lesson)
23. **No Spring Chicken** (Not young anymore)
24. **Persnickety** (overly particular or snobbish)
25. **Pert-near** (short for pretty near)
26. **Pretty is as pretty does** (your actions are more important than your looks)
27. **Red up** (clean the house)
28. **Scalawag** (a rascal or unprincipled person)
29. **Scarce as hen's teeth** (something difficult to obtain)
30. **Skedaddle** (Get out of here quickly)
31. **Sparking** (courting)
32. **Straight From the Horse's Mouth** (privileged information from the one concerned)
33. **Stringing around, gallivanting around, or piddling** (Not doing anything of value)
34. **Sunday go to meetin' dress** (The best dress you had)
35. **We wash up real fine** (is another goodie)
36. **Tie the Knot** (to get married)
37. **Too many irons in the fire** (to be involved in too many things)
38. **Tuckered out** (tired and all worn out)

39. **Under the weather** (not feeling well this term came from going below deck on ships due to sea sickness thus you go below or under the weather)
40. **Wearing your 'best bib and tucker'** (Being all dressed up)
41. **You ain't the only duck in the pond** (It's not all about you)

Well, if you hold your horses, I reckon I'll get this whole kit and caboodle done and posted for you. Please don't be too persnickety and get a bee in your bonnet because I've been pretty tuckered out and at sea lately because I'm no spring chicken. I haven't been just stringin' around and I know I'm not the only duck in the pond, but I do have too many irons in the fire. I might just be barking at a knot, but I have tried to give this article more than just

A lick and a promise!