

## Hunting Camp

206

Every year after Thanksgiving dinner at my Grandma Cubalo's house, my dad and Uncle Harold headed back to hunting camp. Since it was near the end of hunting season, my dad took me along as a special treat. I loved to go to camp, and I felt so grown up to be a part of the hunting gang.

The camp was rustic and unimproved and appealed to my sense of adventure. My favorite jobs were to pump water from the outside pump and to empty the bucket of slops with a big heave-ho into the swamp. I bravely walked to the outhouse in the dark by myself, shining the flashlight all around to check for bears.

I loved listening to the much embellished hunting stories from my Uncle Art Boucher and Uncle George Wood about the biggest bucks in the forest and the ones that got away. Uncle George asked me riddles and told jokes and played his fiddle, just for me. I was proud to be a part of this select group of hunters.

I dressed in my hunting clothes -- red sweatshirt, snowpants, boots, and my dad's hunter's plaid wool hat -- and trudged with my dad through the woods to his hunting shanty. I impatiently sat with my dad in the cold shanty and scanned the woods and meadows for that mythical 14-point buck. Of course I never saw anything but a squirrel because I was talking to my dad the whole time. After a few hours, we walked back through the snow to camp, and I pushed over every dead tree stump that I could find. My dad would laugh and my Uncle Harold said he could hear me coming from miles away. I'll always remember those days at camp as special times I spent with my dad and what an honor it was to be considered a hunter.