

The County Line House

When my father left the Coast Guard and our small family came back to Spruce, he did not have a job and few people in those depression years had any money. For a few months he lived with his parents, and my mother and two children lived with her parents, but that did not make for good family life. My father's mother owned some land with an old farm house on the County Line (Hubert Road) so we moved there. I remember snow and someone carrying me into the house wrapped in an Indian-print blanket. I think it was my Uncle Mert.

I don't remember much about the house except that the outside was old gray wood and we did not use the upstairs as it was unsafe. I believe there was a well outside with a bucket to dip water. In the summer we kept some food cold down there on a shelf.

There is one story that I partly remember and part was told to me. My mother was missing some silverware and discovered that I had been poking it down a hole in the floor. One day my Unk (Piper) came over and nailed some metal over the hole. Apparently, he scolded me as I remember feeling so small as I looked up at him standing over me. He was one of my favorite people so I suppose I was a little upset.

Another early memory I have is waking up in my crib and feeling very happy. It was a warm summer day and the window was open. I could reach the dresser from my crib and get some clothes. I think I was happy because I could dress myself.

My Dad had odd jobs at this time, sometimes for the WPA. My mother told about one time he brought home ten dollars. She was able to buy some new shoes and some fabric for some clothes. She was a good seamstress and kept us children well-dressed, sometimes cutting up old clothes to make us coats or snowsuits.

Food wasn't a huge problem as both grandparents had farms. The problem was transportation as we didn't have a car. Sometimes in the winter we would take a sled to the neighbors to get milk. On one visit I admired a small cream pitcher Mrs. Vam had in her cupboard and she gave it to me. I still have it. It might have come from Norway.

My father decided to work up some land so he borrowed a team and plow. My brother and I followed him around the field and somehow one of my sandals came up missing. My mother was quite upset as they were new. Everyone looked but the sandal was never found.

My brother and I often got into trouble. We once dumped several boxes of jello on the floor and mixed the colors together. Then we got the broom and tried to sweep it up and get it back in the boxes before we were discovered.

The County Line house was very drafty and cold in the winter months. Sonny says if you stood by the stove you got warm in front and were still cold on the back. We soon moved to a cozy little house on Spruce Road that we called the John Beck house. We rented it from a bachelor named John Beck who worked for a farmer nearby.