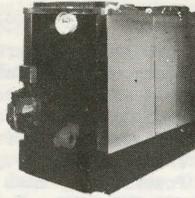


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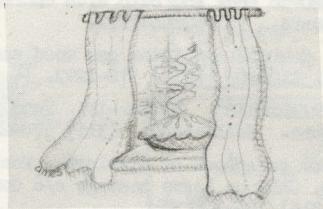
Reminiscence by Elizabeth Gibeau

Young people are constantly thinking of the future. They wonder what will happen to them, what will happen to the country and what will happen to the world in their lifetime. Some even wonder if the end of the world will come so they can see it.

It is different with older people. While they are still aware that the near future must be planned for, so that the supply of groceries and fuel will always be replenished, they tend to periodically look back and relive a part of their lives.

That happens to me, and often I think about the years we lived at Aldrich, New York where my father and his brothers, Tommy and Barty Beahan had a lumber job for Maxwell and Yousey. We were there five years.

Our camp was about two miles from the village, and I remember the layout of the buildings as we approached them. On the right was the sleeping camp for the hired woodsmen. Then we went down a little hill to the camp where our family lived and where the men ate their meals. I think the greatest number we had there at one time was thirty-five. A little ways to the right of that was the camp where Uncle Tommy and his family lived. Uncle Barty, being a bachelor, stayed in the sleeping camp with the other workers. I remember he always filed the saws and was supposed to be especially good at it.



Turning to the left and going across a little creek were two barns with a covered shed between them which housed the hay and grain for the horses. The oats were in a huge bin, and I remember crawling into that and burrowing down into the whole grain. It was fun! There must have been room for a least a dozen teams in those barns, but I can't remember for sure. There were bales and bales of hay, so the horses must have been well fed.

In the winter the logs were piled high on sleighs and taken to Aldrich where they were sent on to the market. They had to pass the camp so I saw lots of them and marveled at how big they were. One nice day my father let me ride to Aldrich with him. It was fun to be so high up on the load of logs.

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We went into the store, as I recall, and I asked my father to buy me some cloth to make a doll dress. So he bought a whole yard of pretty pink flowered calico. A whole yard! And it cost the whole sum of six cents. That made my day. It was pretty cold when I got home but I had gone somewhere and done something different. That is important to a child.

My brother and sister were in school in Carthage staying with an aunt and uncle, but came home during vacation. The first thing by sister did was to play school. She was the teacher and I was the pupil. Our brother was off fishing or something. I was the first Head Start pupil. (Maybe I should be in the Guinness Book?) The door to the camp had tar paper on it and that was our blackboard. After she went back to school, with the help of my mother, I would write my times tables on it and learn them. She must have been a good teacher because the second year I went to school I went into the fifth grade. I was eight and a half before I got to school.

One day during summer vacation, our mother took us over to Slack's camp, about a mile away. All of a sudden, up ahead of us we saw two little fawns (baby deer), eating leaves off the brush along the road. We were very quiet so we wouldn't disturb them and got quite near before they darted into the woods. We had something very exciting to tell the Slack's when we got there.

My brother wanted to go fishing in the creek, so we all went. I was only five or six at the time, so I didn't fish long. I saw some flowers at the edge of the creek and decided to pick them. They were a little too hard to pick and I ended up head first in the creek. They said I was going down for the third time when my brother fished me out. There was great excitement for a while. I have wondered since if my mother wanted to laugh at how funny I looked, all dripping wet, or to cry because she knew what might have happened. That night, when my father got home, I told

him I got drowned in Slack's Creek. It was many years before I knew why they all laughed. I didn't think it was funny.

Another time they laughed at me and I didn't know why, was when I took the pie to Willie Camidge in the sleeping camp. He had been to town over the weekend and didn't come down for breakfast Monday morning. He didn't come down for the noon meal either, when all the men came in to eat. I didn't say anything, but I wondered why.

There, on the kitchen table, were several fresh pies already to serve. I looked at them several times thinking how Willie was going to miss his favorite dessert. He was very fond of pie. I couldn't stand it any longer, so when no one was looking I took the pie and a fork and ran up to the sleeping camp to give it to Willie. But Willie was in no shape to eat pie, or anything else. So, I had to take it all the way back and this time my mother saw me and I had to tell her what I did. Again I was laughed at. It was years before I found out why Willie was sick that Monday morning. He went to work on Tuesday as usual.

Often I wonder what today's child would do in that environment, with as little as I had to occupy my time. No television, no stereo, no snowmobiles, no bicycles. All the things today's children think of as necessities and I didn't have one. But I don't ever remember asking my mother, "What can I do now?" There was the whole big woods and I have never lost my love for the great outdoors. Of course, we never went very far into the woods, but there was a lot of things to see right at the edge and we made the most of it.

It was a lifestyle that Dan'l Boone would have loved, and I am glad I experienced it. But at this point in my life I am happy to have modern conveniences to ease the rest of my days and to sit comfortably as I relate these stories to my great-grandchildren.

