

ADELIA GIVES WOMAN'S VIEW OF THE ALLEN FAMILY CAMP 3/25/97

Margaret Tonkinson's letter (3/11/97 Page 10) about the lack of women feature writers certainly raises some valid concerns. It made me think that a recent letter from my sister, Adelia Pearsorn commenting on some of my past columns might interest many women readers. M.A.

Dear Mart,

I would like to comment on hunting camps that you have been writing about as a family member who generally didn't use it for that purpose.

As you well remember growing up, money was not a major commodity in our home. I can remember dad saving his gas rationing stamps (it being World War II) and walking to work so that we could go to camp on the weekends - our major source of entertainment.

I vividly remember it usually fell to me, being the youngest and the "gopher", to run out and stick the yardstick in the gas tank of the old '32 (?) Ford and bring it in to dad so he could see how much was in the tank. This was the first step for the weekend outing.

My camp memories are of picking every trillium. I could lay my hands on and filling every available water glass and the kitchen sink with them; of sitting in the old abandoned road that served as the access point to the camp with various pans and spoons playing in the very fine sand. This was particularly a big treat to me not having a sandbox at home. The barn cats you wrote about put the damper on that.

I remember...

- Skipping down the hill with the water pail and dipper to get spring water that tasted so sweet and cold and being scolded if I happened to scoop too deep and got sand with it.
- Getting terribly sick one time on that water I wasn't used to and spending a lot of time in the outhouse.
- The elusive mosquito that managed to make our lives a living hell all night long. You could lie in bed and hear him honing in for the attack and you could get up a hundred times and light the lamp knowing that you were going to get him this time but you didn't.

- Sitting on the porch at night in the dark and listening to brother Andrew play "Oh! Susannah" on dad's harmonica over and over again until we all wanted to shove it down his throat. And dad playing the harmonica so beautifully, sometimes holding a lamp chimney up to it for a beautiful tone. I think "Red River Valley" was my favorite. Sometimes we just sat there quietly and could hear foxes bark in the distance.
- Riding the back roads with you looking for wildlife of any kind and the pure pleasure of spending time with my big brother and hero.
- The time you went off fishing and were told to be back at a certain time because we were heading home then. You didn't come and didn't come and Ma was practically going into cardiac arrest and just knew you were lost in the Tamarack Swamp. Dad had all the faith in the world in you and your woods savvy and wouldn't go look for you as Ma insisted he do, which brought on an awesome verbal donnybrook, to say the least. Pretty soon (I can still see it) you came running down the road with trout stuck everywhere you could possibly carry them, fish pole in hand, huge grin on your face, and talking so fast you could hardly catch your breath. You just couldn't leave when they were biting so good. Ma was so thankful you were all right she either didn't give you "what for" or she didn't want to admit that dad was right all along.
- Pulling in the yard at night and angling the car so the headlights would shine on the outhouse and you jumping out and shooting the porcupines that were feasting on it.

Memories of Old Joe

I was about six years old when you went in the Army (September 20, 1946), and I'll never forget how he carried on when your clothes were sent home, or how he looked for you.

They tell me he laid under my crib when I was born (he must have been about four years old then) and growled when strangers came near it. I can remember he had his own chair in the kitchen by the window near the stove from where he surveyed his kingdom.

I remember Andy lovingly giving him a bath in the wash tub in the back yard and Joe immediately running and rolling in the coal cinders in the driveway, much to Andrew's consternation.

Joe meant so much to us all. I picked Andy up at the airport once and he had to drive by Doc Hawkin's old house where Joe was buried before he went to see his parents. As you remember, we were all so upset feeling Doc should have known whose dog it was and we could have brought him home for burial.

He would also lie on the floor in the living room by the pot bellied stove and I would sit down there with him and play "beauty parlor." I used to polish his nails and when I could sneak a pair of scissors, give him a "clip" here and there that I felt no one would notice. He took this all in good stride. I can still feel his baby fine silky hair and smell his doggy odor.