



#### THE FARM AS AN IDEA: PROTECTION FROM HUNGER

This was the original idea behind acquiring land. During the Depression, Dad had observed that his friends who lived on farms had food, at least. He had lived with a great amount of uncertainty about having food and often had a very restricted variety; oatmeal and raisins, no meat, sometimes vegetables discarded from the train where Grandpap worked as often as he could in the baggage car. During World War II, home gardens, "Victory Gardens", were promoted. At that time we lived on Dewalt Drive. Mom and Dad tried to raise chickens in the basement. We also stored food in a cold cellar, cobwebby and damp, under the garage.

The original farmhouse had a pantry. The remodded house had a walk-in pantry, a large basement with shelves for canned goods, and two deep freezers for meat from the animals we butchered. Salted hams were hung in the garage. We harvested and stored food for animals, too. There was a feed house for wheat and oats, a crib for corn, and "the big old barn" for hay and straw.

In the more prosperous, cold-war years of the '50's, storing food gradually, quietly became a joke. Every time Dad went to shop at Versharen's market, he bought a bottle of ketchup, to be sure we didn't run out. At one time the pantry held forty of them!!

#### THE FARM AS AN IDEA: PROTECTION FROM DISEASE

Fresh air and sunshine were the prevention and cure for Ricket's, the nutritional deficiency of vitamin D. Fresh air was also the cure for tuberculosis. Uncle Jesse Weaver wore a heavy built-up shoe, because bovine tuberculosis had infected his toe-bone, as is its habit. Having your own cow was some assurance against this. Tuberculin testing of dairy herds was to become an important public health measure and a service routinely performed by veterinarians.

Being away from other people and staying away from public swimming pools was protection from polio. Uncle Don had suffered from polio in childhood and is said to have been cured by a hot poker laid across the back of his neck and rehabilitation at the shore, where Great-grandpap lived while he painted bridges.

Strep throat and Scarlet Fever were other dreaded childhood diseases because of complications of rheumatic fever, St. Vitus Dance, and Kidney disease. We were staying at the farm during my fifth summer when Mom took me on the streetcar to St. Joseph's Hospital. My tonsils were removed to prepare me for starting school. Three days later, I returned to the farm for the dubious comfort ritual of Aspergum and ice cream served up on the shady back porch.



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