

Mother's Horse Barn Yesterday and Today

On a recent Sunday morning I pushed aside the brush and mists of more yesterdays than many of the readers have known. As I passed along Route 10 just south of Marshville, NY, I had intended to stop and ponder about a now tree and brush covered piece of creekside where once stood the home of my youth. My mind carried me back to the mid to late 1930s and on to 1948 when I last called that spot my home. Almost hidden by dense vegetation there still remained a building that held special memories for me. The question was, should I try to get a closer look at the now decaying structure. I stopped at a trailer home that stood there in what was once my mother's horse pasture. The owner, Mr Yerdon, said he owned this property and not only allowed me to venture to the old building but went along with me and listened to my ramblings of some seventy odd years.



Just what was that building and what part did it have in my youth? It was once my mother's horse barn and mine too I would say. Exactly when the building was erected is somewhat obscured by too many yesterdays. My grandfather Benjamin Garlock, 1877 to 1971, built it and the fact that it had stood the years at all, with no care, tells how well grandpa's handiwork was assembled. I peered into the windowless and doorless building for what would doubtless be my last time. The only recent occupants had been the feathered creatures whose nests rested one on top of the other showing their annual satisfaction with the location. My mother Margaret Garlock Barshied had been a horse lover for all of her life. Upon closing my eyes I could yet hear her old horse, Jenny, the next one, Nelly, and my horse

Junie. Their footsteps on the plank floor as they awaited their hay and treat of grain came back to me as if they were still there.



The sharp crack of a shotgun came suddenly back. The accidental discharge of one of my old muzzle loading guns made that sound when Jack, who was like a brother to me, let the hammer slip from under his thumb. The rolling door where the charge of shot struck just about knee high and only a few feet from my legs is gone now. The lesson of keeping behind anyone with a gun still rings in my ears.

This old horse barn once had some appendages. Just toward the house was the chicken house and yard. A small pig pen was behind that. Just over there was my father's large garden. By now it probably has become apparent that back then our family was pretty well self-sufficient as were most others for these were the days of the great depression. As I stood there by the dilapidated old building the surrounding brush was too thick to see where the old iron kettle with its never-ending spring water supply once sat. The horses drank from it.

Just up there the house once stood. Close behind it was the creek. In summer a lazy haven for turtles and frogs, and sometimes a raging torrent.

So ended what will probably be my last visit to mother's horse barn. However I'm glad I ventured there to help recall a day and age from my youth when in many respects life was so very different than it is in the 21st Century.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, June 23, 2014