

My Grandpa's Barn

My grandpa's barn is a memory. Weeds now stand where cows used to be.



Dad, his brothers and father, abt. 1949.

Bark is clinging to hand-hewn logs, cut by timbermen long ago. Daylight glows through weathered walls. Cobwebs adorn the walls like haphazardly hung Christmas swags. Loose straw covers the wide-plank floorboards.

Long ago, industrious ancestors built this barn with the help of neighbors and family. The festive day brought crowds from miles around. With each person given a job to do, all worked together to build this solid piece of architecture, creating the stately focus of livelihood and survival which would serve for generations to come.

In Grandpa's barn, creaky narrow steps lead below to the coolness of the milking stalls. Mewing cats wait expectantly for streams of warm milk squirted deftly by my grandfather's swift hands. With the rhythm of a clock, strong hands urge the milk to flow into the metal pail. Cows come in peacefully, waiting their turn. Grandpa's stool is just the right height. Tails swish back and forth, flicking flies with precision. The wooden walls absorb grandpa's singing.

Barn swallows scold as they dive at our heads, beaks making contact with an occasional lazy cat. Sheep wander back from grazing, baaing in the pen, seeking shelter and rest from the hot summer sun.

Grandpa's barn may not stand where it used to, but it has found a new place and purpose, just miles from where it began. Grandpa sold it to an Amish family who painstakingly tore it down, moved it, and rebuilt it on the foundation where their barn used to stand....

Grandpa's barn still houses cows and sheep, cats and chickens. Spiders spin their garland and swallows dive for flies while scolding the farmer who steadily milks with firm and gentle fingers. Walls echo with new voices, with my grandpa's voice, and of those who came before.

Life in the barn is a peaceful place, built long ago by strong and steady hands. The blood in those hands passed on to my grandpa, to my father, and to me.



Grandpa's Barn moved to an Amish farm, painted white.

~Karen Glenn Farr 2017

In honor of my dad and grandfathers on Father's Day.