

A Hungry Man With a Hammer

Life As I Knew It

By Don Dillon

My grandson, Colton is staying with me and helping me in the shop for an undetermined length of time. He is nineteen and tried to get in the military but at the present time this is very difficult even though he had two years of ROTC. His little car broke down and Grandpa decided to help him out, being as he was a little short on cash and the car was going to cost a lot more than either he or Grandpa had anticipated. I sat down and thought about when I was his age and the things my Grandpa did to help me; therefore I responded in the manner in which I felt that my grandfather would have expected; that bill sure took the hide and hair off my kitty. Colton agreed to work it off in the shop, which may be good for both of us, we got a lot done last week.

I took him in my cabin and showed him a couple of the surviving boards of what had been Dad's diary. He had recorded lots of events on the walls of an old house that stood on the farm. I would go in there and read what all he had wrote down. November 1938: Getting married (that is when he and mom got married). May 16 1942: Baby born (that was me). August 1942: James leaving for the Army. May 8, 1945: War over, James can come home. January 20, 1946: Cutting wood, brought the shotgun, Bell and Queen, killed two rabbits. May 4, 1946: Raining, garden and tobacco plants looking good. August 1, 1947: Bought refrigerator (we had just got electricity). July 4, 1949: Family went to Fourth of July Celebration (I remembered because I got to ride the hobbyhorses twice and got me a grape flavored snow cone).

I explained to the grandson that this was the history of the family; the times, the community and a way of life that knowing about would help us to understand the way things were at that particular time.

We read on; October 19, 1949: Add Tucker died, he was a farmer, mule trader and storyteller, humorous, jovial, laughing. (Today we would call him a BS artist. The summer before he died I rode the horse down to visit him, when I left I made the horse run. He was standing beside the



woodshed laughing and popping his hands).

Mr. Add's funeral was another story it was huge, he had several children and most of them had large families. He had never owned a car and suddenly fell dead backwards off the wagon seat as he headed for the fields. According to the custom at the time the body was brought home and displayed in the "front room" for the wake until it was taken to the church for the funeral. Family and friends came from far and wide and the house was packed most of the time. There was so much food on the table that it looked like it would break down. Children played in the yard and parents were constantly having to quiet them down. When time for the funeral arrived the procession left from the house, the undertaker pulled the old Packard hearse out in the little dirt road and they all got underway. The cars must have been lined up for a half a mile. No one knew exactly what happened but the undertaker stalled the hearse out about two thirds of the way up the long steep Ballard Hill. Everyone behind the hearse had to come to a standstill. Back then all the vehicles had straight gears and when

the undertaker tried to get the hearse started it rolled backwards into the family car, which rolled backwards into the car behind it. Lots of the old timers in the procession hadn't learned to drive until they were in their forties or older, clutches, brakes, gas pedals and starting on hills weren't quite their thing. Pretty soon the whole affair had the zig zag appearance of a train wreck. There was a lot of bumping together and spinning before everyone got underway. Grandpa and Granny fell in behind the procession when it past their house so they were about half a mile behind. Old Man Webb's people drove an A Model A Ford and was the last car in the stalled procession. Grandpa said Webb's Model A was bouncing down the hill backwards and he could hear the old man hollering, "Whoa, whoa, d- you." For a long time after if you saw a car with both the front and back bumper bent we knew there was a good chance that the owner was in Mr. Tucker's funeral procession.

September 1953: Ellen Tucker died, she too like her husband died with a heart attack, suddenly. Grandma and I sat down

after her funeral and counted up her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was granny or great granny to about ten percent of the students in Colfax School.

February 17, 1951: Betty Atkins died; she was 98 and was my great granny. I can remember being fascinated with her stories about stagecoaches, the Underground Railroad and hidie places, then the civil war. How Great Grandpa bought 500 acres and sold the railroad enough crossties and firewood for the train to pay for the land. She said he kept a crew of men cutting for years. An old black man named Jim lived at Grandpa's house in a log cabin. Part of Jim's job was to see that Great Granny had enough stove wood in. Jim also could remember the civil war; he loved the ashcakes that Great Grandma cooked on the hearth. He would get him an ashcake and a cup of coffee then the two of them would talk about the old times. She kept house until two weeks before her death, and was buried in a dress she had made for herself just recently. She had never been sick in her life and liked a spoon full of brandy in her coffee every morning.

1953: Late crop, hail damage, things look mighty slim. We got the last in the barn on

October 15, about four weeks later than normal.

1955: Good crop, traded for 56 Chevy. (The 56 Chevy started using oil two years later when I got my license and ran it 80 miles per hour in second gear)

July 1957: Left sack of wheat on the combine, Bill got in it foundered and died. (Bill was a big horse we had).

December 12, 1959: Will Atkins died (That was my grandpa and the first death of anyone real close to me. At the time of his death I had a horrible earache and nose bleed. My ears ruptured and I have since had a hearing problem. Grandpa was a great storyteller and trader; I have written about him in several stories. He had a heart attack and died in his sleep. The cement that held the family together was gone.

September 1960: Took boy to Boone to go to college (That was me, lot of stories that I am not about to tell the grandson).

The entries went on, some insignificant and some important.

March 1963: Boy gets married and several question marks following.?????????

February 2, 1965: Son has a son (That was when my son Andrew was born).

March 1970: Got a new ford 2000 tractor,

Papa don't like the two-stick transmission. (At the time Grandpa was 87 and still liked to turn land).

December 17, 1971: Ivy Dillon died. (That was Grandpa Dillon; I have lived in his house for over twenty years now. He had basically raised me and been my buddy all my life. He loaned me the money to pay the doctor bill when my son was born. When this generous, loving man died there arrived a great void in my life. As the song says life as I knew it ended that day.

As I explain all this to my grandson, I wonder how much of it he understands. It is a part of his history, a family history in a time when family histories are rapidly vanishing and identities are being lost. Guess I will do what I can to keep it all alive. Of course the government will probably outlaw them soon. Had a friend who managed an auto dealership and heard a customer ask a new salesman what the wheelbase of their featured pickup was. The salesman quickly replied that the manufacturer had discontinued wheelbases this year. The salesman was fired. They later heard he had got a job working for the county government in the transportation department; think he even later became a supervisor.



Hook Measurement



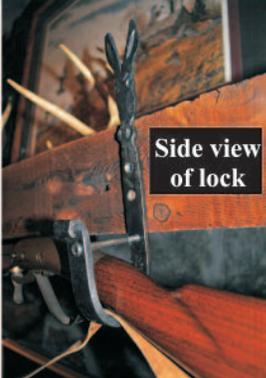
Above: Paper Towel Holder
Left: Toilet Paper Holder
(can be made right or left handed)

Mule Hooks

by Don Dillon



Don Dillon at:
336-668-2211
email for brochure
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Side view of lock

Right:
Gun Rack



