

## Down By The Berry Patch

### "The Corner Cupboard"

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Oh, how I remember the corner cupboard! We lived in Caro, Michigan, and the cupboard was located in the dining room of our lovely home on Sherman Street. That was in the 1930s. The home had formerly belonged to my Grandma and Grandpa Wilcox and I imagine the cupboard was a built in feature at the time they purchased the home. If they lived there when my mom was born in 1908, this cupboard must be at least 100 years old --the century mark.



The dining room also included a dining room table that was large enough to seat "thrashers" and all the help and visitors we had arriving daily. At one end of the room was a huge built in buffet that covered the full wall. I am sure this was too big to move when the house was sold. All I can recall on the buffet were huge shells that someone had brought from a trip to Florida. We would always enjoy holding them to our ears and hearing the whistle or blowing of the wind.

What I remember most about this room was the corner cupboard--with the stocking shelves. The cupboard was a solid, dark stained wood and went floor to ceiling--probably close to 7 feet, as I remember it. But, keep in mind, I was just a child--under age nine--and recollections of things back then seem to increase in size. The top doors had glass fronts that exposed shelves containing dishes that belonged to my grandmother--creamers and sugar bowls, mostly.

But, it is the bottom cupboards that I remember most. They were called the "stocking shelves." Mother truly disliked mating socks-- or even turning them right side out. After the clothes came from the line, a few socks were mated and the rest were just thrown in the cupboard to be snatched up for Judy, Rita, or Andy--my brother, sister, or me. Some belonged to Dad and some belonged to the drivers for the egg trucks. I still have a vision of big Italian, Tony Mara, saying it would be easier if the socks were mated. And I recall Mother saying, he could do that any time he chose.

I remember when we were told we would be moving to Unionville, I wondered what would happen to the stocking cupboard. Well, I found out soon enough. Mother, too, said that we could not leave the cupboard in Caro. I am sure it was not a simple chore for Dad to get the cupboard detached from the wall, loaded on a truck, and moved to the Unionville dining room. But it did happen.

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Photo Caption: The corner cupboard, purchased for a home in Essexville, Michigan. It now resides in Rose City, Michigan

To my surprise, the “stocking cupboard” was no longer used again for that purpose. It now became the storage place for Mother’s sewing supplies--pins, needles, thread, bobbins, lace, rickrack, zippers, patterns, snaps, hooks and eyes, and small pieces of material.

The upper shelves contained some of Mother’s wedding crystal-- stemmed, long stem, light pink, very fine, etched goblets and with a ring that said it was the real thing. Today, I have some of it-- mostly with small chips, but I still love it. There were also some of the creamers and sugar bowls that were Bavarian made and belonged to Grandma Wilcox.

On Mother’s last Christmas with us in 1989, she gave both Rita and me a set of these beautiful pieces and we treasure them dearly. And then there were the salt and pepper shakers from Mother’s collection-- chickens, cows, owls, vegetables, and so much more. I can’t imagine where she got all of them or who may have helped with the collection.

The Unionville dining room also had a long table, later to be replaced by a round antique table of sold oak. The new buffet was filled with Mother and Dad’s pastel Lurey ware, multicolored water glasses, table clothes, and silverware.

Above the buffet hung a huge dimensional picture of the last supper given to the folks by Grandma Liberacki (BaBusha). It was pretty wild with the gold metallic leaves and red velvet, but we looked at it for years and years. As I recall, one just like it hung in my Aunt Mary and Uncle John’s home next door to us. I imagine neither Mother or Aunt Mary dared remove the picture for fear BaBusha would come down to haunt them if they did that.

At some point, Mother kept saying she wanted all white furniture in her bedroom and dining room. She did purchase lovely pieces for the bedroom. One time when she was on one of her many trips, Lorain and I painted all the dining room furniture white--the old oak table, the buffet, the mismatched chairs, and the corner cupboard. Now, I think that we may have spoiled the antique value of these pieces, but Mother was certainly pleased.

In my home on Phelps Street in Unionville, I did not have a corner where a cupboard would fit, but I always thought some day I would have a corner of my own. That happened when we moved to our lovely home on Hart Street in Essexville. In fact, the first piece of new furniture I purchased for this home was the corner cupboard and it was a lovely piece in my dining room.

When we sold the Essexville house, we temporarily moved to an apartment and one of the things we took there--before putting many things in storage or loaning others to newly weds, Jackie and Darrel Bell--was the corner cupboard. It just seemed to fit so nicely and it had so much meaning.

Then a problem arose when we were planning to build a new home in Rose City at our lovely Michriste Manor. The plan did not allow enough space for the cupboard. Therefore the plans had to be redrawn to accommodate it in the dining room. It now holds many of my lovely pieces of Lenox ware and other china that is used often.

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When we sold Mother's house, my sister, Rita, and I decided the corner cupboard "had to be saved in the family". I really wanted this piece, but had no place to put it in my home. Rita had no place for it in her home. But she did have a lovely cottage that would work--provided it would fit--and it could be cut down a bit to allow for the lower ceilings, if necessary. I have no idea what she uses it for today. But I am sure it is dearly treasured. Rita is the third generation to have this beautiful keepsake. Will her daughter, Susan, or one of her grandchildren be the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> generation to value this wonderful memory?

I love my corner cupboard, as I am sure Rita treasures hers. I wonder if Mike, Steve, Janice, or Alex will want mine some day. Will this beautiful memory be a treasured tradition of a "corner cupboard" last for generations to come? Only time will tell.

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