

## ADA'S MEMORIES OF GRANDPA AND GRANDMA VAN SYCKEL FARM AND HOME

We drove to Plainfield, Michigan and then took a right hand road at the point in Plainfield, traveled about one and one half miles to Van SYCKEL Road, it only went to the right. Maybe in about one half mile we came upon this very active lovely farm home and barns. On your left you would have first seen the icehouse and swamp that was filled with huckleberries. On your right you would turn into the driveway that led around to the back of a two-story farmhouse with an open porch across the front. We always drove around to the back and went into the kitchen.

At the head of the driveway was the garage barn that Grandpa drove partly through with his first car because he didn't know how to stop. Mama said he was really upset with himself. On down the driveway you would come to a barn on the left that always housed the horses and all the buggies and sleds. It was so much fun to go there, climb up in the buggies and play we were going for a ride.

On the right hand side was a barn that housed the farm machinery. Farther down the driveway you came to the long barn that held the milking cows and hay, I feel quite sure that they raised Milking Shorthorns. Of course at that time they were milked by hand and Mama said she never learned to milk. They also had sheep in the part of that barn. I wonder now how farmers managed to do all the chores and farm. Of course, Grandpa always had at least one hired hand.

Grandma Ada was a very fine cook and homemaker. She did a lot of baking bread, pies, and cookies. She taught me to make molasses and sugar cookies. She made pounds [crops] of butter each week and they were shipped by train from Gregory to Detroit for sale. The refrigeration they had then was their cool cellar and later an icebox. Grandma had a large kitchen with her cook stove, which must have been hot most of the day to get all her meals. The big meal was always planned for noon but most of the meals were big, for everyone worked so hard and needed the calories, which they didn't know about or count.

The large dinning room had a fainting couch on one side under a window where Grandpa always took a nap after dinner [at noon]. Part of the dining room had some setting chairs in it, where everyone gathered to visit. They had a parlor and parlor bedroom, but the parlor was only used for holidays and special occasions.

In that parlor was where my father and mother were married. They decorated the secretary that Roger and Charlotte now have, and used it as their altar. Christmas was really special in the parlor, the door was shut until after dinner, when we could finally go in and see the tree and get gifts. One Christmas the snow was so deep that Grandpa



came and got us with the horses and sled. what excitement that was for us!

One of the things I remember so well is that Auntie Marjorie [Grubaugh] was nine years older than I was. She had fixed up a playhouse out in the trees beside the back door. Grandma had given her empty spice cans and thins that we were able to play house with. my what fun we had.

Grandpa VanSyckel had sugar diabetes, which was hard to control then. He died on October 1, 1930 from pneumonia.

I faintly remember that they had to have an auction and then rent the farm eventually selling it. Grandma moved into the house in Plainfield that had been her mother-in-law's home. She lived there until she came to live with us around 1939

**source** is Family Cookbook put together in memory of their ancestors. Abt 1995.