

An excerpt from a letter written by Aunt Grace Kearl Lambourn on 8th January, 1974, to Ted and Joan Kearl in Provo, Utah.

I have often heard young people talk about how the old folks live in the past - which, to an extent is true. However, I think we like to remember the good things in our past and the fun things-(I dare anyone but me to say I am an 'old people.') Sometimes, when I sit by the window and watch twilight enfolding the North hills and the lights coming on, I get a sort of nostalgic feeling - it isn't really a sad nostalgia - a sort of remembering, and last night I thought of Mother's pantry. I call it Mother's pantry because when I think of it I can almost see her working there - rolling out dough for pies (and no one could make better pies) or working up the butter we had churned or maybe skimming thick cream off the pan to spread on bread for Chase before she shooed us out to play. I would like to tell the children about Mother's Pantry.

It was my favorite room in the house, and the house was never completely finished, but Mother lived there 38 years and loved every minute of it and every inch of the house, and it seems strange that shortly after her death it burned to the ground.

But to get back to the pantry. It was quite spacious as pantrys go - was painted pale gray. It was off the north west corner of our big kitchen, and in the north wall was a window, not wide but reaching almost from floor to ceiling, and we could see across the fields to the blue lake - and in the spring when the glass was out and the screen put in, and after a brisk wind had whipped white capped waves high- we could hear them swishing on the sandy beach.

On the south wall was a cupboard. They were called "safes" in those days. This safe had tin doors perforated in a design - with holes

large enough to let the air in and small enough to keep the flies out. Next to the safe was a flour bin big enough to hold several hundred pounds of flour - and above the bin were shelves. Those shelves held the strangest conglomeration you could ever imagine - like swamp root for weak bladders, dried sage brush for tea which no one could possibly drink, even some stuff which was supposed to be good for drenching sick horses - everything Mother heard was good for sick people which she never used. I often asked her why she didn't get rid of it and the conversation would go something this - "Mother, why don't we clear out all that stuff?"

"Well, I don't know. It might come in handy."

"Then why don't you ever use it?"

"I don't know. Its been there so long. It might have turned poisonous. At any rate, when she was away and I was house cleaning the pantry, I disposed of all of it and when she saw the empty shelves she said, "Well, you finally did it."

I am sure she was secretly pleased and her conscience was clear of having herself thrown away anything of use.

Against the west wall were two work tables - one had an under cupboard for pots and pans - and behind the door were shelves from floor to ceiling - the lowest shelf was wide and held her stone jars or crocks, as they called them, of Spanish pickle peach preserve and crabapples preserved whole and with a clove in each. The rest of the shelves held her bottled fruit, and I remember her spiced red English currant jam and black native currant jelly. She was an artist when it came to cooking.

So now, chilluns, I have told you the story of your great grandmother's pantry. Maybe you will decide to have one like it one day.