

Down Home in Clearfield, Pennsylvania

Byrnesville, Barnesboro, Northern Cambria, Cambria County, Pennsylvania

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thursday, january 29, 2009



Down Home in Clearfield, Pennsylvania



Schrot Homestead in Winter (front).

When I was young we used to visit the farm and homestead house where my grandmother was born in Clearfield, Pennsylvania. It was the Schrot homestead. It is a surrounding farm and a great old farm house which seems to have had more rooms built onto it through the years. Maybe this was the case as my grandmother had thirteen siblings.

When I visited, great-aunt Ruth was always there. Great-aunt Anna Sandri had a home in Curwensville but she would be there. Great-aunt Catharine Schrot, a nun, Sister Joseph Anne would many times spend time 'down home' and be there too.

In 1981, during a summer of a Byrnes Family and Friends Reunion at the Barnesboro pool, these three great-aunts invited my family to a chicken dinner, it was delicious. It was hot so we ate out on the back porch.

Right before the feast, Sr. Joseph Anne was trying to swat some flies and wasn't having much luck. My then nine-year-old son Chad had been watching her for awhile until he couldn't take it any more and grabbed that fly swatter off Sister Joseph Anne and began swatting the flies. I was glad he didn't knock Sister Joseph Anne down. Sister Joseph Anne was very close to 100 years old when we saw her in August 1981, great-aunt Ruth was 83 and great-aunt Anna was 81 years of age.



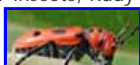
Schrot Homestead in Summer (side).

I received 4 letters from great-aunt Anna Schrot Sandri from 1981-1984, they were usually in response to some genealogical question I had. Her letters were newsy, talking about all kinds of things, visiting Rudy in Florida, or who might be in poor health. On June 9th, 1981 she wrote from Curwensville; "Its been very warm here this past week. They are predicting thunder showers this afternoon and tonight so that ought to cool things off. Ruth has a little garden down home and has had three ripe tomatoes already. They were small but she was very proud of them."

Across the street was the home of my great-uncle Rudy Schrot, a brother to my grandmother and the three great-aunts. I took my boys down around the hill in the back of Rudy's home to show them the spring fed swimming pool. The pool was built by hand out of local stone and seemed to me to be pretty good size. It had a diving area and a shallow part for kids. When I was less than twelve I remember my older cousin Rudy Joe (Rudy's son), and his friends showing us what they could do at the pool. There was a long line of them, at least seven older kids, and they all had inner tubes around their waist. One by one, and a step after each, they ran down and jumped into the pool, each with a splash. They did it with what at the time seemed to me to be military precision.

At another time, later on when life slowed down around the farm I found duckweed and a big bullfrog making a home in the pool. To the side of the house on the right was a cool wooded area, the ground was covered with pine needles and there was a long wooden swing. It was peaceful swinging on that swing.

Rudy Joe also impressed me with his insect collection. I can still see it in the glass covered case in his attic bedroom. He had caught all the butterflies himself. On one trip to the woods to look for insects, Rudy Joe showed me an insect I called a



Screaming Mimi. The Screaming Mimi was really the Milkweed Beetle. When disturbed by being held in your fingers this little insect would make a sound like a tiny scream.

Edna Byrnes Lantzy remembers the Schrot homestead; they would play croquet on the front lawn and she liked the boys (the Schrot boys) because they would take her to the movies. I can remember a croquet set at the Schrot's. When I was a little older I loved fishing and learned how to fly fish at the stocked pond which was also down the hill behind Rudy's house. The pond was a little ways to the right of the swimming pool. I think my Uncle Jerry taught me to fly fish there, or the equipment

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