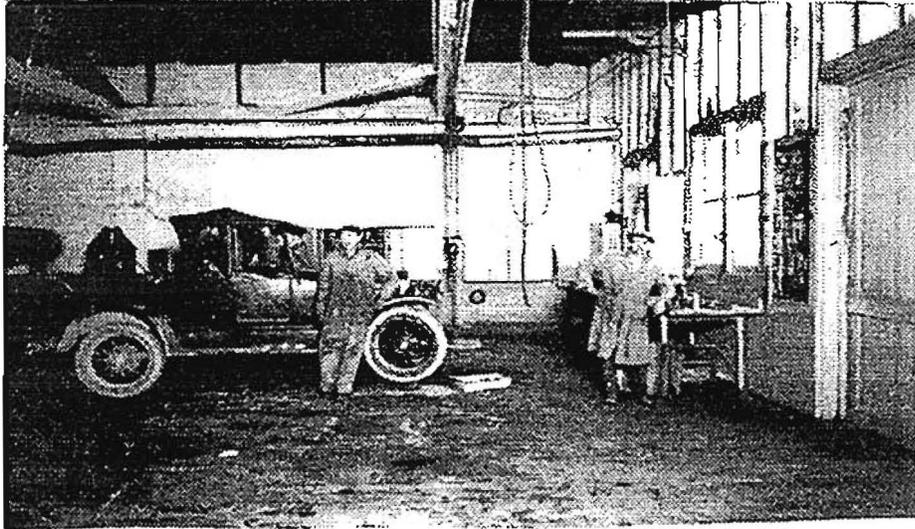


Visiting Grandma in the '30's

I was born in Whitefish, a small railroad town in Montana. My dad was a mechanic at the Ford garage. Mom, Josie Wolfe, would sometimes



take her children to visit her grandmother- Gunhild Steen, her father- Andrew Steen and her uncles Ted and Abraham Steen. They all lived on Abrahams' homestead twelve miles

south of Chester, Montana.

Being very young my memories are sometimes mixed but still very vivid in my mind.

One of the trips was made in a Model "A" Ford with a rumble seat. I was in the rumble seat when we were going through the park and I remember being terrorized at the deep chasms below.

My great grandmother Gunhild was a lady that everyone said, "If there is such a thing as a Christian, Gunhild was one." Gunhild said there was some good in everyone. She brought up twelve children, only six that were her own. My mother spent most of her childhood with her. Gunhild's deep religious faith is what carried her through her hard life.



Their home was a little two-roomed shack with a big black cook stove. I had only seen electric ones. This stove really impressed me. You can imagine what I thought of the outdoor plumbing. Everything in the house was old, I think that is where I acquired my love of old things.

Although my great grandmother was a very clean person, one visit was spent pouring kerosene on the bedsprings to kill the little varmints called bedbugs.

Another memory that I have is riding out in the country from Chester to my grandmother Gunhilds' funeral. It was a terribly dry 5.

and windy year and the blow dirt was piled fencepost high along some fences. I was only five years old but it was a sight I never forgot. Gunhilds' funeral was held in the largest room of the unfinished house. Seats were made out of everything. I even remember a seat from a buggy. I knew it was a sad occasion, although my grandfather would try and make me smile at times. My grandmother didn't believe in embalming, so she wasn't embalmed. She said she knew of some they thought were gone and they were really weren't. My grandfather said he's only wished she could have lived one more year so she'd have known where her next meal was coming from. The next year was their first good year.

When the depression came my dad, Dan Wolfe, was laid off at the Ford garage and as there were no jobs to be had. We came to Chester to live with my grandfather. We slept in one homestead shack and ate in another one.

When we came to Chester the last time to stay, we came by train. My mother had three little children. My older brother was with my dad in my grandfather's truck, hauling our things over from Whitefish. The train pulled into Chester in the middle of the night. For some reason my aunt that was supposed to meet us--didn't. That long walk from the depot to my aunts house stuck in my mind, also the dirt and the wooden sidewalk.

My poor mother must have felt overburdened with babies and luggage. I think this remains so clear in my mind as somehow I knew my mother was very sad as we trudged toward my aunts house in the dark.

It turned out to be a good move for our family as we spent many happy years growing up on the farm.

by Anna Mae Hanson