

When we were little girls, we asked our mother about her wedding, and she explained to us that the weddings were important social events in the community for family and friends. Our mother, Rose Frances Schuster married John M. Blaska on 11 May 1909 in Sacred Hearts Church, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Preparations for the event began many months in advance of the date. All of the linens--sheets, feather pillows, pillow cases, feather beds, mattress pads, kitchen towels, were assembled, along with the bride's trousseau--most of it hand made, including the wedding gown. Mother's parents gave her \$500.00 as a gift along with the wedding dinner and dance at the family farm for 400 persons. Food preparation took several days, and her parents, Anton and Theresa Schuster rented a huge tent, a dance floor, and an orchestra/band, and the neighbors and relatives came for the day, and danced until early morning.

Our father, John Matthew had a new buggy, and his parents, John and Anna Fiedler Blaska, helped him to purchase 80 acres of land adjoining their farm (the old Cobb farm), which was their new home. Our father was also given a team of horses, some machinery, and previously, he had been given a threshing machine, a Garn-Scott engine, and water tank, separator rig, so that he did the threshing for all the farmers in the community, until technical changes took place, and farmers did their own harvesting.

Their wedding always sounded so romantic, and we would ask many times about details, and learned about neighbors and relatives--their romances--their children--their tragedies--marriages and deaths. Our inquiries also provided for us the Courtship during the early 1900's--such as picnics, dances, fairs, and Sunday dinners--The horse and buggy days.

II--OUR FARM HOME: Our parents, John and Rose, settled on the 80-acre farm, one-half mile from Grandpa Blaska's farm, on what is now known as Highway W--one-half mile off Highway 19, about 2½ miles from Sun Prairie, and this is where all nine of us children were born and lived until we left to build our own futures.

I remember the old Cobb house where the four oldest children were born (Evelyn, Lila, Cyril, and Burdette). There were four rooms; a kitchen, living and dining room, and a bedroom on first floor, and 2 bedrooms upstairs. I have pleasant memories of the old house, with the exception of the cold winters when the water pail would be frozen solid in the morning. They heated the house with an upright coal stove in the living room, and a range (coal and wood burning) in the kitchen. The living room stove had panels of Eising glass all over it, and we would sit around

it and enjoy the lights on the glass. We would come downstairs to dress as the second floor was unheated and cold.

We outgrew the old house, and in 1917, Dad and Mother built the new house—a five-bed-room and bath upstairs—a living room 20x20, a parlor, a bedroom, and a large kitchen on first floor—a basement (cemented), with a large cistern for soft water, vegetable cellar, and a coal room where the coal furnace was located for steam heating of the radiators throughout the house. The house was wired for electricity, and running water for bathroom and kitchen was provided by an engine attached to the well on the property. (The barn was also provided with running water for the cows and horses.) The exterior of the house was finished with white stucco, and bron wood trim. I remember the building of the house as only the kitchen of the old house was moved to the granmery, and we slept there—the remainder was demolished. Our mother cooked for the carpenters, the hired help, and took care of four children (one/a small baby) with the improvisations and bare necessities.

In the fall (November), we moved into the new house, and had water piped in with a pressure system so that the bath room could be used. The new house seemed very elegant to me, and Mother furnished it with a Queen Anne dining room furniture and <sup>the</sup> table could be extended to seat 20 persons—a parlor set of brown leather and wood—a bed room set of gumwood. In the living room, we had a writing desk with beveled glass door which housed the stuffed American Bald Eagle our father had shot at age 18 while at his home, believing it was a hawk. I remember our Mother constantly cooking, and many sit-down dinners for relatives, threshing crews, and the nine children in the family. This dining room being large, took two nine x twelve carpets, and in spring, house cleaning required that the carpets from the dining room, and parlor had to be taken up, carried outside and hung on a clothes line, or on the grass, and pounded with wire beaters to extract the year's accumulation of dust and dirt. Painting and varnishing of the floors was done by hand by our mother, and later with help of the children. I remember the problem with flies in the summer. We had screened porches, and screens and storm windows for all of the windows, but with all of the children (Jerome, Juanita, John, Gregory, and Elaine) born in the new house, the doors were constantly being opened, and until we could purchase "fly stickers", we all helped chase flies toward open doors with dish towels flailing in unison by the older children.

There was no refrigeration, and all food had to be carried to the basement floor in summer, or to the milk house where fresh running water kept the cream and milk sweet. Finally, around 1921, our father purchased an Aero-Electric windmill and batteries, and when installed, we had some