

The Camp Fireplace

By Barbara (Spencer) Politis

On the day my grandfather ventured to Beech Hill Pond to build the camp fireplace, he brought his fragile, elderly mother along with him for company. Believe it or not, she played an important role in the construction of the camp fireplace without ever touching a rock. While my grandfather worked hard placing the stones in their proper place, my great grandmother sat nearby knitting in a rocking chair, rocking away which had a methodical squeak to it. Normally, the "beat of a squeak" would drive someone crazy, but in this case, it was crucial to the construction of the camp fireplace.

Every time my great grandmother disapproved of the position of the rock my grandfather was placing, the squeak would stop. Therefore, my grandfather would re-position the rock and would know that it met with his mother's approval when the squeak would resume. I often wonder if my great grandmother ever knew that she was a part of the construction of the camp fireplace. You see, my great grandmother never knew there was a squeak in her rocking chair - she was deaf...

Barbara's notes about this prose poem:



I was fortunate to be a stay-at-home mother and I would take my two sons to Beech Hill Pond for the entire summer. This is a picture of our family cottage. My grandparents built the camp during the Great Depression. I found it amazing how they were able to do it during such hard times. My grandfather bartered with R. Leon Williams Lumber. He told them if they cleared part of the land and cut some wood for him, then they could have the rest of the wood for themselves. The windows were free from a hotel in Bar Harbor just before it was torn down.

My grandfather built the stone fireplace, and, of course, I wrote a poem for that, too! My father added on the addition on the right side of the camp.

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