

DAD

– LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #114 –

When WWII broke out, Dad was 31, probably still living at home, and still single. They called him up for a physical, but he was recovering from a broken leg, so they sent him home. It was Uncle Sam's loss, he would have made a good soldier. Dad was mild mannered, modest and reverent, and got along well with everyone, including his parents, brothers and sisters – and of course with his wife, my mother. His value system was unquestioned in the community; not because he made a big deal about it, but just the way he lived his life. Our family was poor, by today's standards; dad was nearly 60 before he could afford a used pickup truck.

Dad loved the outdoors; his job at a rock quarry had him drilling the holes, packing the dynamite charges and setting them off. I never got to be part of that; but when he wasn't working he was hunting, fishing, trapping, cutting wood, picking berries, mushroom

hunting or working with his honey bees or in the garden — all outside activities; and it was my great fortune to spend time with dad. I can also remember swimming in the creek, planting trees

and making maple syrup in sugar camp one spring.

Once in a while someone asks why I hunt. My answer is simple: "Dad taught me to hunt and fish, when I was just a kid; and I've been doing it ever since." I've also taught my kids to hunt and fish and they in turn are teaching theirs. Perhaps it's part of our DNA.

I remember a few of dad's stories: one about him climbing into a tree to get a raccoon out of a hole and dropping his



It's hard to think about dad, without thinking about mom; she was always there and also set a great example. Here they are dressed for church, about 1972.

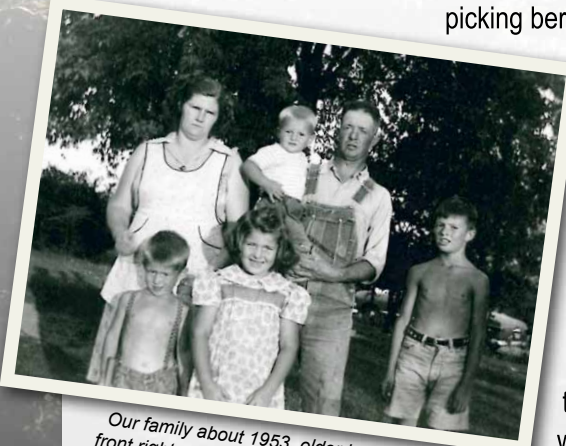
rifle — breaking the stock. Another was about the only wild turkey he ever shot. Dad was a deer hunter and I recall a story about him shooting a buck that was running flat out through the brush and another about shooting and missing a standing doe because the rear sight elevator had fallen out of his Marlin 30/30 carbine, causing it to shoot low. And there were fishing stories!

"Dad taught me to hunt and fish..."

Dad's been gone now for over 25 years, and what I most remember about him on Father's Day is how he lived his life, the example that he set and the stories that he told. He was a great father and would be pleased to see my office and listen to some of my stories.



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Our family about 1953, older brother Marion on the front right, sister Jo Ann in the middle and myself on the left. Dad is holding younger brother Jerry. Two other brothers, David and Joe were born later.



Dad in his late 60s. He helped with deer restoration in northern Missouri in the late 1950s, but never shot a big deer.