The best summers were spent at Grandma's house on the rugged downeast coast of Maine. Our family would drive the hours-long journey from Boston to the sleepy small town of Blue Hill. We'd impatiently drive another mile out the other side of town on the Surrey Road. Laughter and sighs of relief filled our car when her house came into view - the first on the right after crossing the bridge.

Grandma's house was built 'northern' style with the barn attached by an enclosed porch. Long ago painted shut, the front door refused to open. Everyone entered through the back, making their way down a narrow dark hallway to grandma's kitchen.

The largest room in the house, the crowded yellow kitchen greeted guests with the mouth-watering aroma of blueberry pies and homemade doughnuts. A massive black wood-burning cook stove dominated the scene. Grandma kept it burning every day of the year. Heat and ash from the stove rose loftily through an overhead vent, warming the bedrooms above and permeating the blankets with the scent of wood smoke. Beside the stove squatted a battered old woodbox - the best place to sit in the wintertime.

In the far corner, a plain wooden table and a wringer washer stood beside the cellar door. Granddad's addition of a big old wooden platform rocker added to the Heinz 57 decor. On the north wall, the stained porcelain sink provided the only evidence of indoor plumbing.

Trekking through the enclosed porch, the barn embraced you with the clean scent of horse and hay. Bright sunlight spilled in through the gaping plank walls. A wagon and sleigh stood to the right of the entrance, the horse stalls were on the left. Down the length of the barn, over the uneven dirt floor, through the back work shop, was the outhouse. A treacherous journey by day, no one ventured through at night.