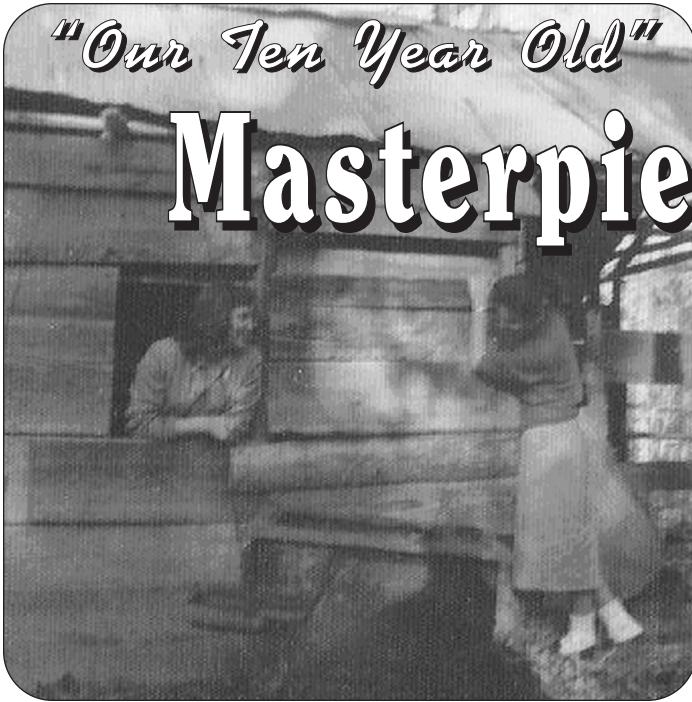


"Our Ten Year Old"

Masterpiece Cabin



***The cabin was built in 1948 and
this photo was taken ten years later***

It was a particularly hot, muggy summer day in 1948 and we were chopping cotton in the west field. I was nine, due to reach adulthood of 10 in November. Dark clouds gathered to the north, with the promise of rain, but they were different kinds of ominous clouds, soon casting an eerie yellow hue over our field, and sucking the oxygen from the air. The birds quit singing and there was only silence.

Daddy, with calm concern said, "Boys, we had better head home--it looks as if a bad storm is coming." We hurried the quarter of a mile to the comfort of home, just in time to see the large pecan tree in our yard bend to the fury of the wind, but stand firm in defiance, as we quickly retreated to an inner room for safety. Lightning flashed, thunder roared, torrential rain followed in sheets, taking the storm and oppressive heat with it.

We excitedly ran outside to determine any damage, finding none, but a rearranged yard full of storm driven debris. Soon learning that a tornado had touched down on the Fulton farm, some seven miles to the north. They had a huge barn constructed totally of tin, and the storm had dispersed it to the four winds.

Within days, we noticed sheets of tin scattered throughout the forest, near the Beulah cemetery. The idea of building a cabin with this tin from

**By Gene Chapman,
achapman3@stx.rr.com**

heaven was just a natural process for us, Ashton, my younger brother, and Kenneth, my cousin. We gathered the least mangled tin, headed out for the discarded slab lumber at the old saw mill on my great grandfather's Alsobrooks road, knowing we had a five gallon bucket of nails gathered when we tore down the old Alsobrooks barn. Many of them handmade square headed, pre civil war, but at my house we "wasted not and wanted not."

We picked a high spot below the Cemetery where a bubbling spring provided wondrous water for drinking, while cutting a little branch going north toward Clear creek. We had a hammer, hand saw, nails, lumber and tin. We were very fortunate kids.

Ashton and Kenneth were born talented builders, with Ashton developing upscale sub-divisions with spiraling staircases in real life. I loved to read books about Lincoln and our founding fathers, but I was stronger and able to do the work, coordinating our young ideas of a cabin in the woods at no cost.

We soon had her done, complete with a makeshift bed, an old stove for heating, a refrigerator made of tin, insulated with saw dust dug into the cool, moist earth. You may think we build it to keep food cool, but you would be wrong. We heard that one could ferment wine with Muscadine's, so we smashed up several quarts, burying them for constant heat in the old saw dust pile, breathlessly waiting the prescribed weeks for fermentation, and one heck of a cabin christening, partaking of the fruits of the vine. We wanted cool wine.

We spent many happy nights sleeping out in our cabin, usually with our pot licker hounds providing the music the Angels stoop to hear, running the long running smut faced fox that denned forever in the Alsobrooks field, a short distance to the east.

Life was good.