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Marjorie M. Hill

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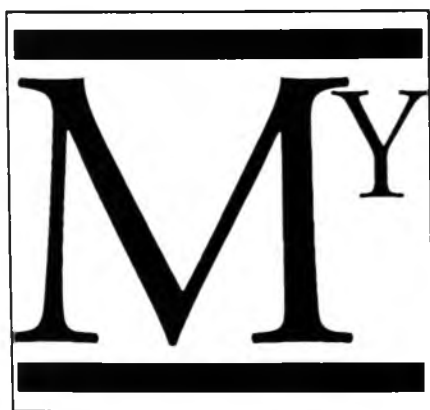
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# My MONTGOMERY WARD HOME



BY  
MARJORIE M. HILL



father said, "That's a Montgomery Ward house. You don't see too many of those around here."

We lived in Caddo County, a few miles from Apache, Oklahoma. I gazed at our house in awe. A Montgomery Ward

house? How did my dad get a Montgomery Ward house? I knew we ordered things from the Montgomery Ward catalog but had not seen a house in it. At seven years of age I was

impressed.

The house was two stories plus an attic. There were four rooms upstairs and a stairway and hall. Downstairs there was a large parlor (my grandma called it that), a living room/dining room, a kitchen and a big pantry. Grandma called the pantry a buttery. A porch extended on the south and east sides of the house.

Viewed from the driveway, the porch looked inviting with its eight round columns reaching to the porch roof which extended out level with the upstairs floor. A door and a large window opened up into the dining room on the south, and three windows on the southeast corner formed a bay window effect; then a door opened into the parlor from the east side of the porch.

The upper floor boasted three windows plus matching bay windows right above the ones on the lower floor.

The roof formed a gable above the south end of the house, complete with a small window in it. A lightning rod stretched up from the pointed roof.

When the house was first built, a railing enclosed the porch except for openings in front of the doors.

At night in the springtime when the storms came, my sister and I would be upstairs in our bed and sometimes the house would shake from the gusting wind. The lightning flashes blinded us and the crashing thunder terrified us. We were much too close to the sky so we would scramble out of bed and flee to our parents' room until the storm was over.

Upstairs was a great place to play in the summertime with south and west windows open to any playful breeze and there was no one to say, "Move; I have to sweep." We could take friends up there while their parents visited downstairs.

The porch around the house was also a good place to play during hot summers as it was shaded by the roof and a huge walnut tree on the west. The four of us children—two brothers, my sister and I—often played, observing occasional ants that tried to invade our territory.

To four young children, that tall house gave us security as we could see it from any part of the one-hundred-sixty-acre farm, so we never worried about getting lost.

Many summers we moved our beds onto the porch and spent the nights watching stars, listening to night sounds of coyotes, owls, and pattering feet of some animals just before we went to sleep.

There was a swinging door between the dining room and kitchen, a door just like the

ones found in barrooms. It caused some surprises once in a while and we learned that we could not push from both sides at the same time.

With no air conditioning, not even fans (no electricity), open doors and windows were called upon to furnish coolness. Windows open on all four sides of the house helped.

Squirrels found a hole in the attic and frightened my sister and me at night as they scurried around running or dropping nuts.

When I finally asked my father about the Montgomery Ward house, he explained in detail. "Well, my mother, my brother and I decided to build a house. We saw the picture in the catalog, so we ordered it.

"When it came, we had to go to Apache to the depot to get everything. It was shipped by train with big stacks of boards tied together. The windows were there, just everything we needed.

"We loaded everything on our wagons and took them home. After we got it all unloaded, we laid it out piece by piece, starting with number one as all the parts were numbered.

"The directions told us exactly what to do and how to do it, and you can bet we followed those directions. Sure enough, when we finished, it looked great!"

During the dust bowl days my sister and I had the chore of sweeping all of the upstairs window sills and the floors. Often we swept up a half-gallon syrup bucket full of sand. I could never figure how that much dust and sand got into our Montgomery Ward house.■