

## The Old Country Home

The *Old Country Home* referred to in my book, *Sweet Apple Cider and Cinnamon Sticks*, was actually my grandparent's home where many cherished and delightful memories were made. It was there that our family gathered on Sundays after church with my grandparents and other relatives. My grandmother prepared home cooked meals from the garden and as children we milked cows and then drank fresh milk straight from the cow. We feed the chickens, played games, and roamed the fields with our cousins. We also climbed the crooked tree which is still located to the right of the house; it was a peaceful place to sit and view the lush green pastures.

The *Old Country Home* today is known as a popular vacation lodge, *Paso Roble*, in Azle, Texas. The newly remodeled house was originally built in the early 1900's when my father was still in school. My father, Ralph L. Kimbrough, born in 1918, with his brother, Orman, and their father, O.L. Kimbrough, traveled to Jacksboro, a city forty-five miles away to gather large, brown and tan rocks from the surrounding hills. They loaded the rocks on a trailer hitched behind their 1929 Chevrolet. After several trips of gathering enough rocks, they paid a mason \$150. to build this home.

At the time this sturdy, rock house didn't have electricity because power lines had not reached the country from the city. Kerosene lanterns were used for light and a cast iron stove graced the kitchen for cooking and heating. A washer that had two rollers and a hand-crank attached to the top for wringing out the clothes sat in the corner of the small, dining room. That washer would surely be considered an antique today!

They lived without the ease of modern conveniences, but it was not a hindrance at all. They were an honest, hardworking family managing a hundred acre dairy farm, milking cows by hand twice a day. In addition, they raised Rhode Island Red chickens, and Bante roosters that crowed at the first signs of dawn. They also had a well-kept, bountiful garden providing them with fresh, wholesome fruits and vegetables. On weekends, father and sons took their extra produce and eggs to the *Farmers Market* in Fort Worth, Texas, and sold them from the back of their pickup truck.

It is from this rich heritage that I bring you, *Sweet Apple Cider & Cinnamon Sticks*, a story that is sure to warm your heart as the treasured and lasting memories of my family come to life.

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Daughter of Ralph L. Kimbrough