

Rebecca Lamb

By Johnny Cooper

Rebecca Lamb is the sixth of eight children in a family that numbers 105, with five more on the way. Although never small in numbers, her family of ten did live in a three-bedroom house in Kent, Ohio for many years. After a few years, her father, a carpenter by trade, built a larger house on the five acres they owned. The house was built out of the raw lumber from the trees that covered the property. Also on the land were wild berries, flowers and a river which marked one end of the property.

Ms. Lamb described the life style in her own words as, "When people today talk about living green, well that is what we did." She remembers taking long afternoons to pick berries with her brothers and sisters, or waking up early to milk the goat and feed the chickens. Ms. Lamb also remembers that when she was growing up no one complained about having to do the chores. She believes it was not because they were a perfect family, or anything like that, but because every person had to help or there might not be enough food to go around. It was out of necessity that their family stayed together.

Ms. Lamb did also recall that when she was 16 her father got a raise; it meant that he would earn four dollars an hour, the most that he would ever make. On that meager salary he had to be able to support his eight kids, his wife, and any other family members staying with them— at one time his family included both sets of grandparents and two aunts. All of these people depended on each other in order to go on living the life that they knew, and that dependency on one another helped them to stay together.

Today Ms. Lamb is the only one in her family living in Colorado, and only one brother still resides in Kent. The majority of her relatives still live in Kentucky where her parents grew up. In February of 1982 she attended the first massive family reunion. She remembers that her favorite part of the gathering was exchanging information about each other and each other's children, and trying to find out where people had ended up and if there was anyone near you. The whole family now tries to get together about once every year and a half to keep the tradition going.