

## My Dad

10/27/70

Dad is so much in my thoughts. I think I'll try to gather them all together and write (?) a biography -- for my own benefit. I talk about him a lot, I find, seeking feelings & information from those who know him and essentially slandering (?) him to those who didn't. He lived in such -- well, he never cleaned up, he couldn't let anyone help him.

Joyce?, of Edison, last night was following up on an unpaid light bill and just this week learned that Dad had died. Wonder how many more there are like that? He also said that he thought Dad was a bachelor. He's lived in Hanson all his life and never knew Dad had children.

Funny, I used to go down & work with Dad. We'd go out to eat and I'd get introduced, but I don't remember people being very surprised that Dad had a son. Maybe they thought I was a "love" child or something. Anyway, Dad did keep his life compartmentalized. He rarely talked about his work, or friends, or Masonic (?) life when with us and probably did the same when with others ... but with an exception. When I talked with Aunt Dot, she said Harold was hurt when he was younger and he never got over it. It was foolish but he was so stubborn, when I suggested he must have been hurt before Mother left him -- I was thinking of how he hurt her, failing to bring? money home, paying the bills, cleaning up the barn, letting her help him with the billing, being on time, being so hard when Harold Richmond was dying -- even resenting having to call the Doctor. These are things I've learned from Mother & I doubt they know any of it ... Well, anyway, Aunt Dot said she didn't know that he hid from? (him) earlier.

I next asked her how old Grandmother Brown was when Dad was born & she said 17. Aunt Roberta was there & she said 16 and then they finally agreed on 15. This meant she had to get married at 14 ... it was more common in those days, but she was still a child.

Aunt Dot went on to tell again how Harold disciplined the family. And when I said perhaps this was quite a burden for a young boy, she justified it with, "Mother needed him," "Pa worked nights," and "After all there were 9 of us!"

In truth there were only 6 because Arthur, Roberta, and Rebecca never knew their oldest brother to be living at home.

But however it happened, Dad's childhood was stolen away. "He was always quiet, serious, all business & work," Aunt Dot said. My response was maybe that's why he couldn't [or wouldn't?] relax & laugh & kid & disagree with someone in a lighthearted sort of way. We could have had so much fun & I would have been willing to do so much for him & with him -- with his house, or yard, or with his woodworking machinery, or sorting his papers, etc, etc.

