

Vly Road, Niskayuna, New York

We lived in Schenectady, New York, for approximately seven years from 1948 through 1954. World War II was over, but housing was still very, very tight.

When we arrived in Schenectady to go to work for General Electric Company, we went direct to the housing department of the company, as they had previously written that they would at least arrange temporary housing for us. However, they had not done this. We had the address and phone number of a couple who were living in Schenectady, who we had known in Stadium Village, the Sterling Bartons. We called them, and they said to come and stay with them while we were looking for accommodations.

After searching feverishly for six weeks, all the time staying with those wonderful people in a small three-bedroom house with their three children and our three children, we finally found a two-story, three-bedroom house at 401 Bedford Road. We lived there for some months and then decided that we would have a contractor who was a member of our Schenectady Branch, Bill Heffernan, who was a building contractor, build a house for us.

We found a lovely wooded half-acre lot, five miles from the G.E. Knolls research laboratory and about the same distance from our LDS chapel in Schenectady. It was located in Colonie, an area that was located approximately in the center of the three cities of Albany, Schenectady, and New York. It was the first lot sold in a newly planned subdivision. We had one neighbor across the street, and there was a family half a mile down the road, the Kitten-daughs, who we became acquainted with and who had two children who played with our children.

Our house, which took about eight months for our contractor to finish, was a standard subdivision house out of white clapboard, with a full basement, three bedrooms, a living room, a bathroom, a kitchen-dining room, and an attached garage. It was our first home, and we thought it was wonderful.

After a while, we thought it would be nice if we had a family room, and decided to remodel the garage for that. I decided to first build another garage on the back of our walkout basement, where there was a door leading from the basement. I planned to do all the work myself.

So I designed the garage. I decided to construct the garage of concrete (not cinder) blocks. They each weighed 40 pounds. The garage was to be 12 feet wide and 20 feet long, with a concrete floor and a reinforced concrete ceiling.

My tools were an electric concrete mixer, cement, shovels, hoes, trowels, and a wheelbarrow. In those days you did not just phone for a concrete truck to deliver the concrete. Everything had to be done from scratch.

I first leveled the land and put in two by four forms in the ground. Then I poured the concrete floor, all by wheelbarrow, and let it dry for a week. Then I started putting the concrete blocks in place.

One day, Ida-Rose came home from running an errand and found me on the bed. I had hurt my back lifting and placing these concrete blocks, and had crawled into the house on my hands and knees and managed to get onto the bed.

I recovered, however, in a few days and resumed my task. After I got all of the concrete blocks in place, I let them harden for a while. I had built forms to make the beams for the ceiling of the garage. There were three forms. They were each 12 feet

long. Then I filled the forms halfway full of concrete, put in the steel, and then filled the rest of the form. I needed six of these beams for the ceiling. I had to let the concrete in each of these ceiling forms cure for at least two weeks, and then I had to repeat the process for the other three beams.

I got some of my friends to help me lift the beams into place. I then put plywood sheets between these beams and poured a six-inch thick concrete roof. I let this cure for three weeks. It took me essentially all summer long. The garage was finished!