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These vagaries of appetite are not to be accounted for always for any digestive reasons, nor racial or religious customs, but are merely the peculiarities and differences in the taste of different individuals.

As in other counties, each individual in Casey County has his or her ideas of the most fitting way in which to observe the various holidays, legal and religious, during the year, but all conform in a way to the general customs of the public. These holidays observed or celebrated by the people of Casey County are:

January 1st, or New Years Day, is still observed to some extent as the day for "setting up", paying up old and current accounts, also still made the time for "good resolutions", forming new plans, making new contacts, adapting new methods in business and home circles.

Though not a holiday in any sense, February 2nd, is known as "Ground Hog Day", and the weather conditions of the day are watched closely and with much interest, as according to an old belief, still relied on by many, if the ground hog, which is supposed to come out from his winter hibernation on that day, "sees his shadow" he will at once return to his winter lair and remain there for another six weeks; on the contrary if he does not see his shadow, he will stay out and "winter is over". In other words, if Ground Hog Day is clear it predicts another six weeks of winter weather, and if cloudy, the winter season is at an end, and spring work on the farm may begin as soon as weather conditions permit; so the condition of the skies on this momentous day are watched closely by many who profess no belief in the old superstition, particularly in the country.

February 14th, Valentine Day, is still generally observed by those who are sentimentally inclined, particularly by the younger people. Although the old paper lace type of valentines are no longer seen and the so-called "Comic" ones have also passed into deserved oblivion, sentimental messages

in the form of more or less artistic designs are still exchanged between members of the opposite sexes, though ordinarily anonymously, as of old.

Easter Sunday being a high church day is religiously observed in churches of all denominations, and special programs of sacred music and appropriate sermons are offered to the worshippers of all sects. Casey County containing a large Catholic element with several churches of this faith in the county; in all of them Easter is fittingly observed by high mass and special music. Some of the Protestant churches sponsor a "sunrise prayer meeting" on Easter morning, the members of the congregation and others meeting at some point out of doors before sunrise and engaging in prayer and song service until the sun appears above the horizon. Aside from its religious significance, Easter Sunday each year is also observed in a social manner, and coming at the close of Lent, a season of fasting, is observed as a "feast day" and a time for family reunions and other social gatherings of friends and neighbors when bountiful dinners are served in homes usually with baked or "stuffed ham" the culinary feature of the meal, accompanied with other delicacies of the season.

April 1st, on April Fool Day, is an event observed playing harmless tricks or practical jokes between friends, which are taken in the spirit in which they are meant, innocent fun; each one who is "Fooled" accepts it as his due and tries to get even by passing the joke or trick along to some one else.

Birthdays of noted personages as Washington, Lincoln, and Lee being legal holidays are observed by banks and post offices and occasionally by special programs in schools.

The Fourth of July is still observed to some extent but not so extensively as in former years. Such celebrations as are held are usually

in the form of picnics or outdoor gatherings, with appropriate music and patriotic talks by prominent speakers, always accompanied by the noise of firecrackers and small fire arms, usually closing with a display of fireworks at night.

October 31st, commonly referred to as Halloween is a Catholic holiday "All Soul's Day" and is observed as such in all churches of that faith. Usually in the afternoon and evening the celebrations take the form of a carnival, masks and fancy costumes are worn to parties and on the streets and the younger element resort to numerous harmless tricks, which are laid at the door of the "spooks" which are supposed to be abroad on Halloween night.

Thanksgiving Day, designated by proclamations of the President and Governor to be observed on the four Thursday in November is observed much as it has always been, as a day of giving thanks, attending divine worship in some church, and as a day of feasting and brotherly love. Family dinners are held with friends and neighbors as guests, and as has always been the main feature of Thanksgiving dinners, roast turkey with other delicacies to be found on farms and in home gardens at this time of year.

Christmas Day, December 25th is observed as a legal holiday, as a holiday of obligation in the Catholic churches and often by trees by Protestant churches and Sunday Schools.

The women of Casey retain a few of the old customs. The old button or "charm Strings", once so familiar in every home, are now things of the past, and seldom if ever seen. Quilt pieces are still collected to some extent, in the rural districts, and quilting bees held by the women of a neighborhood. The pieces collected are usually from dresses, handkerchiefs or neckties of especial friends, but that custom, too, is on the decrease, observed only out in the country.

On a few of the Casey farms one still finds an old-time ice house still in use, but the custom of making ice harvest a festive occasion has been dropped.

Such timber as is cut these days is converted into lumber, and there is no longer occasion to preserve the old log rollings, formerly a social diversion when the timber was rolled into large heaps and burned. This called for a big dinner and other festivities as the neighbors joined in the labor of rolling and heaping logs.

Maple sugar and syrup, and sorghum molasses are still made on many farms. Although several neighbors will join in this work on occasion, the social features have long since been dropped. Usually, now, the work is done by the family and hired help; and the product not intended for home consumption is sold on the market like other farm products.

With the prevalence of motor vehicles two once indispensable adjuncts of early days have passed into discard, viz: the hitch rack and stile blocks. The old racks were found around

the court house yard or at places convenient to the business houses, for the use of farmers' teams, when they came to town to do their "trading". And in front of many stores was the stile block for the rider to step from the horse on dismounting.

For many years milking and care of poultry was considered strictly the work of the women of the family. Such is no longer the case save possibly in remote sections. Dairying and poultry raising have assumed the dignity of special branches of agriculture, largely attended to today by the farmer himself or hired male help. Very little "country butter" is now sold on the market, as the cream is separated and taken to the cream stations at Liberty, from when it is shipped to creameries and cheese factories. On many farms where the entire supply of butter fat is sold, oleomargarine is used instead, the skimmed milk being fed to hogs and poultry.

Side-saddles, once used by all women when riding horseback, are now only found in old barns, dust covered and neglected, kept only as souvenirs of the past. Along with the side-saddle have passed the long black riding skirts once worn by them. Today the women of Casey, who ride at all, ride astride, wearing either riding breeches or divided skirts. The side-saddle and riding skirt have not been used for more than twenty years. Occasionally, however, "carpet-bags" are seen in use, but rarely.

Records in the County Clerk's office, written with a pen as late as the year of 1815, show occasional use of the long "s".

"Pounds, shillings and pence" were often used as late as this, in computing money.

It is not known when the use of the quill pen was discontinued, but the modern pen was used for years before it became the custom to write all county records with a typewriter. The old pen and ink records of a century ago are still legible.

No authentic records when stage coaches were abandoned in Casey, but according to the older citizens they were succeeded by motor vehicles about 1902. Passenger traffic in and out of the county since then has been handled by bus or private car, while mail, express and freight are carried by motor trucks.

Spinning wheels and looms are almost entirely abandoned as to actual use, being kept mainly as relics of a former age. Still, in a few farm households looms are occasionally used for ~~making~~ weaving rag carpets and rugs, for home or for tourist sale.

On many farms the housewives still make soap after the manner of their mothers, to be used mostly for home laundry purposes. So far as is known the practice of making the old tallow dip candle has been entirely abandoned. Kerosene lamps, or factory made candles are now used in homes remote from electric lines. Many farms on power lines use electric lights and current.

Feather beds, straw or shuck mattresses are still used in many rural homes, while the older women knit hosiery and mittens for members of their family.

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Nearly every farmer in the county kills one or more hogs in November or December, each year. They cure hams, shoulders, side meat, render lard and make sausage by the same process handed down to them by their ancestors. Most of these products are ~~use~~ for home consumption, though some of the larger farmers have a surplus to sell. And it is still possible to buy a two or three year old "smoked ham", but there are no farmers making a business of curing meat for commercial purposes.

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Bibliography:

Data for this theme was obtained by personal interviews with Mr. Otis Thomas, Liberty, editor Casey County News; Mr. William Morgan, Liberty, Circuit Clerk; Mr. J.W. Weddle, Liberty, County Clerk, and others.



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Casey County

Folklore

(R. L. Nesbit-242) (6)

Mr. Otis Thomas - Liberty, Ky., Editor of Casey County News.

Dr. C. V. Hiestand - Campbellsville, General Practitioner of  
Campbellsville.

Interviews with unknown parties around Casey County Court House.

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