


Spring 1992

UA68/6/1 Broomsedge Chronicles: Farm Living in South Central Kentucky

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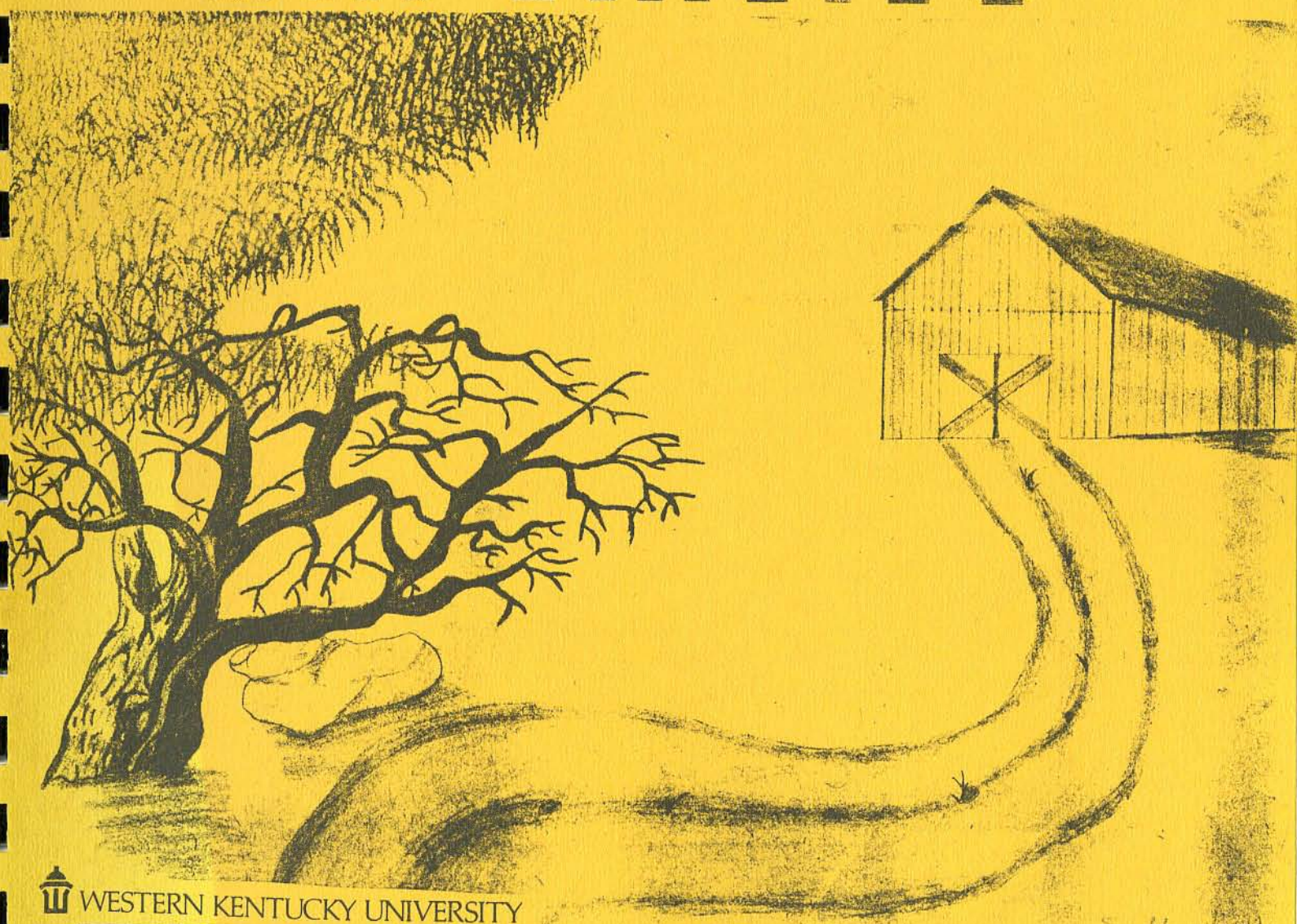
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Broomseidge



Chronicles



5.11.92
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Broomsedge Chronicles

Farm Living
in
South Central
Kentucky

Spring 1992



"Somewhere between real life and dreams,
you'll find Kentucky."

--Rowland Tharlson
English 200 and 300 WKU-G student
1988 and 1989

In January 1983 when I returned to Glasgow and started teaching English at the Glasgow campus of Western Kentucky University, I began asking my students to write essays dealing with the oral history of south central Kentucky. I have continued this assignment intermittently, and finally, almost a decade later, the work has begun to come to fruition. The topic of this semester's collection, "Farm Living," was chosen by my English 100 Freshman Composition students.

This collection is the first in what I hope will be a series, with a new collection appearing each semester on such topics as churches; schools; famous and infamous local characters; courting, romance, and weddings; box suppers and other social occasions; disasters--natural and otherwise; places in south central Kentucky; Roosevelt and the Depression; wars and rumors of wars; Mammoth and other local caves; talkies, telephones, TV's, and the radio; electricity; Model A's, Model T's, and other means of transportation; and ways of making a living.

The poems in the collection are written by WKU-Glasgow English 200 Introduction to Literature students and patterned after Lucia and James Hymes' "Beans, Beans, Beans" in Hooray for Chocolate, with credit to Dorothy Grant Hennings in Communication in Action: Teaching in the Language Arts, 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990) for the idea.

My students and I thank all the people who helped make this collection possible, including Judy Parker, Senior Administrative Secretary at the WKU-Glasgow campus, for the computer graphics; Jeff Duncan, a thirty-three year old marketing and finance major from Scottsville, for suggesting the use of broomsedge in the title; and Sonia Martin, a nineteen-year-old Horse Cave student, for the cover drawing of a farm scene with broomsedge. We especially thank the people who shared their memories with us--we have tried to record their information as accurately as possible, and we apologize for any errors that may have occurred.

My students and I hope these memories of life in south central Kentucky will bring pleasure to people from many different walks of life and will continue to live as long as the broomsedge thrives.

Loretta Martin Murrey

The Broomsedge

"The wind in the grass cannot be taken into the house."
--a proverb

Broomsedge is one of about 150 species in the Beard Grass family. (The Greek work for beard grass is Andropogon, meaning the beard of a man--andros "of a man" and pogon "beard.") Broomsedge (Andropogon virginicus) is a perennial which grows in clumps in abandoned fields and roadsides. The seed is a pair of scales with five white, silky hairs. Greenish purple as a young plant, it grows three to five feet tall, has a hollow, round stem, and at maturity turns to a straw color.

Broomsedge seemed an appropriate image for this collection of essays based on the oral history of south central Kentucky. Just as Walt Whitman in Leaves of Grass celebrates the multiplicity of humankind, the student writers of Broomsedge Chronicles celebrate the uniqueness of the people who make south central Kentucky their home. Just as Walt Whitman in his poem passionately assimilates the breath of creation, the students in their essays explore the broad aspects of south central Kentucky life. Just as Walt Whitman chose Leaves of Grass as the title of his masterpiece because the seemingly immortal grass grows everywhere, Broomsedge Chronicles was chosen as the title of this collection because broomsedge grows on the farms of the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the old and the young, and, as local farmers know, it can't be killed.

A child said What is the grass? fetching it to me with
full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is
any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of
hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corner, that we may
see and remark, and say Whose?

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe
of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow
zones,
Growing among black folks as among white,
Kantuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same,
I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

--Walt Whitman, from "Song of Myself"

A song of the good green grass!
A song no more of the city streets;
A song of farms--a song of the soil of fields.

A song with the smell of sun-dried hay, where the nimble
pitchers handle the pitch-fork;
A song tasting of new wheat, and of fresh-husk'd maize.

. . .

Ever upon this stage,
Is acted God's calm, annual drama,
Gorgeous processions, songs of birds,
Sunrise, that fullest feeds and freshens most the soul,
The heaving sea, the waves upon the shore, the musical,
strong waves,
The woods, the stalwart trees, the slender, tapering trees,
The flowers, the grass, the lilliput, countless armies of
the grass,
The heat, the showers, the measureless pasturages,
The scenery of the snows, the winds' free orchestra,
The stretching, light-hung roof of clouds--the clear
cerulean, and the bulging, silvery fringes,
The high dilating stars, the placid, beckoning stars,
The moving flocks and herds, the plains and emerald
meadows,
The shows of all the varied lands, and all the growths and
products.

--Walt Whitman, from "A Carol of Harvest"

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Sling Shot Food,
Broomsedge Mattresses,
and Tobacco Pouch Quilts

by Pam Ritchie

One particular summer day in 1936 was a scorcher. Sweat trickled off the body of the small, sun-darkened boy of six. Jimmy was scantily-clad and barefoot. Clutched tightly in his right hand was a hand-made sling shot, and in his left hand was a large, smooth stone. A fine layer of dust covered his body, mixing with the sweat. Jimmy was unaware of the heat or his dirt-streaked fact, for he was intently watching a young rabbit. The rabbit cowered nearby, paralyzed with fear. Suddenly, the rabbit leaped quickly and bounded toward a large, brush pile. The boy, too, leaped and bounded after the rabbit, but froze when he heard the rabbit squeal in terror. A look of anger and then disappointment settled on Jimmy's face. His dinner had been stolen! The thief was a huge cow snake. Jimmy watched as the snake took the young rabbit in his mouth and slithered away into the thick brush pile.

Though the cow snake was the victor in the fight for food on this particular day, Jimmy was quite a hunter and often helped supplement the family's food supply with freshly-killed game. He hunted with a sling shot he fashioned from a Y-shaped tree branch. Next, he tied two long, rubber strips to the branch, thus creating his weapon. Frequently, his hunting excursions lasted all day. Jimmy and his sister, Gertie, would ride the old mule throughout fields and wooded areas in search of game. Gertie would "drive" the mule, and Jimmy would sit with his back to hers, therefore allowing him an excellent view of the area. When an unsuspecting rabbit, squirrel, bird, or even pond fish came within his range, Jimmy would take careful aim and then let the stone fly! Jimmy was an excellent marksman to be six years old.

For some families in Hart County during the 1930's, tenant farming was a miserable existence, but to Jimmy Wright, born on June 9, 1930, it was a way of life. He and his family farmed various lands in and around Bonnieville, Kentucky, where his mother would sometimes earn fifty cents for a full day's labor. In addition to using a sling shot to hunt for food, Jimmy also helped make mattresses and brooms from broomsedge and fashion quilts from cotton tobacco pouches.

Broomsedge grew in the fields abundantly and was utilized as well. Once it was cut, the sedge was used as a mattress filler. The mattress was made of a blue-striped cotton bedding material and was placed on the floor at night for sleeping. When the mattress got too flat, extra sedge was stuffed into the mattress. Brooms were also made of broomsedge. Jimmy would cut

a small sassafras tree and place the cut broomsedge on one end. He secured the sedge to the stick by coiling a piece of wire tightly around it. The hardened, dirt floors were kept clean with the brooms.

Jimmy also helped his mother make quilts. She made them in preparation for the cold, winter months; therefore, she began her quilt-making in the summer. Smoking tobacco could be bought in small, cotton pouches. When a sizable amount of pouches were saved, Jimmy would pull the strings from the pouches and then rip them open. A large iron kettle would be filled with pond water and brought to a boil over an open fire. Then walnut hulls were added to the water. The cotton pouch pieces were placed in this homemade dye and allowed to turn a deep rich shade of brown. The newly-dyed cloth pieces were hand-stitched together, and a quilting frame, on which the actual quilting was completed, was hung from the ceiling.

Like most families, the Wrights used what was on hand and rarely went to town for supplies. When supplies ran low, the convenience of going to Houchens or Minit Mart was not available. When a supply of food was out, that was it until the next harvest time. Jimmy commented, "We didn't know we had it so rough because a lot of other people were in the same shape. The hardest part was feeling hungry. But, I had fun, too." So, life as a tenant farmer did have an advantage: One learned to survive. The welfare of the family depended on the land, on what they could grow to eat; and more often than not, a meal of cornbread and beans was the one meal of the day they could count on. This is a small slice of life from a tenant farmer's son who hunted and made mattresses, brooms, and quilts.

carefully pin each pattern piece to the material. When I am sure each piece is appropriately pinned and spaced, I can begin to cut out the pieces. With scissors in hand, I slowly cut around each piece, making sure each notch on the material is cut according to the pattern. The cutting process is the most important step to the making of my quilt. If I make too many mistakes, it won't fit together properly.

Now that I am sure I have cut everything out right, I am ready to sew each piece together, or "piece" the quilt. I choose a small, slender needle, as it will make small stitches. A needle threader is used, as I have difficulty in getting the thread through the eye of the needle. With my needle threaded, I take small uniform stitches. Back and forth the needle goes through the material. The stitches are an inch apart in order to secure the material tightly. I sit by the window for hours stitching each piece as if it were a piece of glass to be handled carefully. After weeks or even months of stitching the pieces just right, I am ready to actually quilt the quilt.

There are two kinds of quilting hoops--a lap hoop and a large quilting frame--that can be used. I choose to use a lap hoop, as it is portable and doesn't require much space. A backing of lightweight quilting material is placed over the hoop and pinned evenly around the edges. Then I place a layer of cotton and my pieced quilt material over them. Once I am sure everything is securely placed, I place the hoop frame over everything and tighten the sides of the frame. I must now use a stronger needle, as the materials are thick and coarse. I choose a number ten needle and begin to stitch. Each stitch must be a quarter-inch in length and go through all the layers. I must now sit for hours at a time going around each pattern until every figure has been done. The quilting process will not be finished in a day. It is like an artist's masterpiece--it will take days, weeks, or even months to complete. For me, I choose only to quilt during the winter.

Finally, I have finished my quilt after months of sewing and planning. I wonder if it was worth the backaches and the many bandaids I have on my fingers from sticking them with a needle. The answer is yes. When I hear my friends or family say it is beautiful, I know it was worth it all.

The Most Common Home Remedies
by Sandie Barrick

Although home remedies seem to be old-fashioned, they are still being used today and seem to be as effective as the doctor's medicine. My mother and another lady that I talked with agreed that remedies for the bee sting, a sore throat, an upset stomach, a burn, and a cold are the most common.

In the summer, bees are everywhere, and more than likely a person will get stung. One of the most common home remedies for a sting is putting gasoline or kerosene on it. This seems to work best, but if gasoline or kerosene is not handy, then tobacco is the next best thing. All a person has to do is take a little tobacco out of a cigaret, wet it, and apply the tobacco to the sting until the pain stops. This home remedy seems to work as well as anything a person could do.

There are several medicines for a sore throat, but the one my mom always refers to is gargling hot salt water. She says that the water should be as hot as the person can stand and should have plenty of salt. She says this is also effective on a sore place in a person's mouth.

A home remedy for an upset stomach is drinking a glass of cold water that has had a teaspoon of baking soda mixed in it. Another remedy using baking soda is for a burn. Soda and water are mixed together to form a paste, and then the paste is patted on the burn, making sure not to rub the burn.

Several home remedies seem to have been handed down from one generation to another, but the most common seems to be the one for a cold and cough. A mixture of lemon juice, brown sugar, and whiskey seems to help a cold and cough as well as any other medicine a person can take. Also some people add rock candy to this mixture for an added ingredient.

These are just a few of the many home remedies that older people know, but these seem to be the most effective. At least, they are the most popular among the people of our community.



The Outhouse
by Jerry Neal Bean

Many modern-day conveniences have caused a nationwide effect on the general living standards of the average American. Electricity and indoor plumbing are the two which have had the biggest effect on the home. But in those days of yesteryear, when indoor plumbing was not enjoyed, the outdoor outhouse ruled.

The outhouse was not just a place or a building; it was a world all its own. In that serene spot, a person could dream the most wonderful dreams and allow his imagination to run free. He could race a car, marry a princess, be a king upon a golden throne, or be an astronaut looking at a quarter moon. It was one small place, yet behind that door were many more worlds. And even if a person did not want to dream, he had the option of singing, whistling, humming, or reading the catalog.

Each outhouse was unique, yet all had some traits in common. Every outhouse was started by digging a pit, generally ten feet deep. Then the actual woodwork would be built over the pit. The outhouse was usually ten feet tall and roofed one way--with the front sloping to the back. Each one had the usual toiletries: Sears and Roebuck's Catalog, newspapers, and maybe a few corncobs, if times were rough. If a family were large and fortunate, it might even subscribe to the Sunday paper. A little extra news is handy to have. Also, each outhouse had a good wooden seat made from a two-by-ten, smoothly planed with a hold cut in it. Even though everybody had one, the outhouse could serve as a status ranking. Some folks would brag, "Just built us a three-holer, we did." Of all the traits that outhouses have in common, the quarter moon in the door was the most famous. It was never understood why it was only a quarter

moon, but one may guess that with a full moon a passer-by might get mooned! A native of Monroe County, Lucille Harper Page said holly was sometimes planted around the outhouse to help camouflage it.

In reality, the outhouse did have some problems. Its sanitation could be given a bad report, and sometimes the flies were vast in numbers. In the winter, the walk outside was not at all pleasing. Waking up and having to scamper through the snow just so a person could sit down to rest like a snow bird on his frigid little nest was not very heart-warming. As Lucille recalls, "Air conditioning in the wintertime was not appreciated. Plus, if you had to go, you put it off until the last minute."

Although the outhouse had its problems, many people still hold fond memories of it. At least then it was not often that a person heard "Hurry up--I'm dying!" and "You've been in there all day!" Still, even with the wide range and ease of availability of indoor plumbing, some people use outhouses today. Whether it is a tradition or something else, I felt a loss and a kind of sadness when my father and I tore down the outhouse that was behind his old homeplace. The building may be gone, but the dreams dreamed there and the memories will remain forever.

Outhouses I Have Known
by Diane Rather

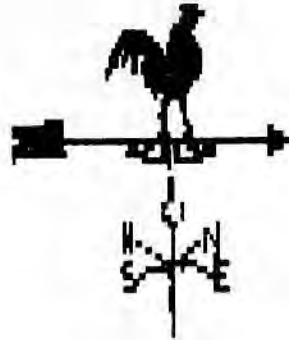
Most of the old rural country that I knew as a child has disappeared, but one of my keenest memories of that time involves outside toilets. With the exception of a scattered few, these old toilets have been pushed in, torn down, or left to decay. These necessary evils were inconvenient, hot or cold, depending upon the weather, and dangerous. Imagine dodging swarming wasp nests in the rafters, sitting on snow and ice on the seat, or tracking over one hundred feet through snow drifts or pouring rain just to get to the toilet. Then there was the occasional snake hanging from the rafters. As formidable as the outside toilet appeared to a child, the builders of these necessary evils put much thoughtful planning and workmanship into building them. The outside toilets in the 1950's were as unique, characteristic, and ingenious in their design and use of materials as the modern bathrooms of today.

My dad's toilet was a one-of-a-kind. The six-inch thick floor and seat were formed as one piece out of concrete made with small, rounded, creek gravel and sand. The huge barrel-shaped seat hole rose approximately thirty inches in the center of the floor. A seat top, hand-whittled from solid oak and painted, circled the hole. The massive size of this one-seat outside toilet made it very difficult for a child to use, and then there was the ever-present fear of falling into the hole. As a child, the dark, smelly hole seemed kindred to the bottomless pits of hell.

My neighbor's toilet was a junk man's delight. Nothing was wasted; refuse was recycled into the toilet. The two-seat wooden structure was constructed from lumber torn from an old barn. On the floor lay a braided rag rug and a cardboard box that held old newspapers and catalogs with which one cleaned oneself. For light, a half window on both side walls admitted glimpses of sunlight, and a bare bulb electric light hanging from a crooked nail in the rafters chased away the darkness of night.

Uncle Cleas' toilet was new and modern. I marveled when I first saw it: it had three holes--one on either side for adults and a small hole in the center for a small child. Each hole had a store-bought, white, plastic, commode seat nailed to the wood frame. Attached to the wall was a toilet paper holder with real toilet paper--blue, in fact. What a luxury to be able to roll off toilet paper and not have to use newspaper!

Maybe we lost some of our heritage with the emergence of modern plumbing--but then, maybe not! Who knows what horror stories our children will tell their children about today's toilets? Everything is only as good as its time and place.



Renting in the 1930's and 1940's
by Steven Bunch

When my grandparents Frank and Gladys Bunch got married August 2, 1927, they were very poor. The main things they had were each other and their clothes. For twenty-four years, they were renters in Metcalfe County, a small county in south central Kentucky. Tending tobacco was their main source of income everywhere they rented.

During their first two years of marriage, they lived on Herbert Sparks' farm, where they rented from him. He was an upstanding citizen who was respected by everyone. They had their first child, Vernon Essie, while they rented from him. The main income was tending Spark's tobacco.

When the two years were up, they moved from Herbert Sparks' farm to Charlie Estes' farm, where they rented for four years. Their second child, Robert Kenneth, was born during the first year they lived there. When the four years were up, they moved and rented from someone else. My grandmother doesn't remember the landlord's name, but she does remember their third child, Geneva Elizabeth, was born there. Then they moved back to Charles Estes' farm for four more years.

Beyond a doubt, there was a lot of hard work and trouble in renting. My grandparents had to share all the crops with their landlords. When the crops didn't produce well, they would sometimes get the blame.

The fifth time they rented, it was from the two most disliked people in the neighborhood. These people expected my grandmother to wait on them hand and foot. Every time something went wrong, they would lay the blame on my grandmother. My

grandmother told me about one incident which took place just before they moved from there. The woman asked my grandmother to set tobacco on Sunday. My grandmother politely said, "No. We don't work on Sunday." They went to church that coming Sunday. The following day, my grandmother and the kids started setting tobacco and got through by noon. When they got to the house, they ate lunch. After lunch, my grandfather went on to work, and my grandmother stayed on the porch because she had a headache.

In the meantime, the woman came by raising heck because my grandmother didn't set the tobacco the past Sunday. My grandmother was so sick that she could barely argue back with her. After a few minutes, my grandmother's daughter Essie showed the woman she could raise greater heck than she could. Essie turned to the woman and said, "All right, darn you, it's time you hit the road, and don't you every come back again. You ain't gonna come in here and talk to my mother any such a way." The woman quickly found her way out of the yard with Essie following her. My grandparents moved from there at the end of the year when the crop was gone.

They moved to Carter and Mary Sparks' farm and rented from them. They were nice landlords and were easy to please and work for. My grandparents lived there for a year before they moved to Oris Wilson's farm to rent. Oris Wilson's farm was the last place they rented. In 1951, they bought their own home. My grandmother still lives in the house. My grandfather died April 11, 1959, from a blood clot.

Scrub Board, Wringer, and Crank Washer
by Veria Diane Hagan Rather

Yesterday I caught myself complaining about the huge pile of dirty clothes lying on the utility floor, a pile which consisted of half a load of delicate washables, two loads of jeans, one of towels, one of bed linens, one of baby clothes, one of permanent press, and seven sweaters of assorted colors. Mumbling to myself and more than a little irritated for putting it off for too long, I resigned myself to the fact it had to be done and threw the first load of jeans into the washer--my only option was either do the wash or go naked. In my mind, I heard my mother fussing, "Diane, you don't appreciate how easy washing clothes is now. All you have to do is put them in the washer and press a couple of buttons." It pains me to admit it to myself, but she is right. Doing one's laundry today is an easy task compared to this chore half a century ago.

Today, washing is less work. One loads the washer, selects a setting, adds the detergent, closes the lid, and pushes the start button. When my mother was a young girl, buckets of water were carried from the creek to fill two large wash tubs, a huge oblong cast iron kettle, and the pan that held the wash board. Clothes were sorted into separate piles--good whites, colors, towels, and overalls. Her mother took a bar of homemade lye soap, rubbed it on the clothes, scrubbed them up and down on the wash board, repeated this until they were clean, and then dropped them into the kettle of boiling water. Next, the clothes were stirred with a wooden punch stick for about an hour, lifted with the punch stick into the first tub of cold rinse water, and then placed into the second tub. Finally, they were hand-wrung and hung on a line to dry. The process was repeated with each different pile of clothes until the last pile, the overalls, was washed.

Second, washing takes fewer people. Today, one person easily does the family wash. In my mother's family, all females over the age of five helped. Mom and her sister Bonnie carried the water from the creek; her mother scrubbed the clothes on the wash board; her sister Ethel stirred the kettle and kept the fire hot under it; and her sister Dicey rinsed and hung the clothes on the line.

Third, washing is less time-consuming. While the washer is running today, one has time to do other things. Back then, washing required all day and had to be done no less than twice a week because Mom's family owned few clothes. Three times a week was required when a baby was in diapers, when it was time to plant or harvest the crops, and when someone was sick--everything had to be boiled to keep from spreading diseases since there was very little effective medicine except for prevention.

Finally, working conditions are better now. Today, our wash is done in the comforts of our homes. Then, regardless of the weather, the wash was done almost entirely outside. In snow and freezing temperatures, the water still had to be carried and the clothes boiled in the kettle over the open fire. In the hottest part of summer, someone still had to stir the boiling, steaming kettle. Only rain postponed washday.

Two washing machines, a hand-operated crank wringer washer, and an electric wringer washer precluded the automatic washer. My mother saved her milk money and bought her first washing machine, the electric wringer model, in 1953. Six years ago, she purchased an automatic washer. After washing her first load in it, I asked her if she missed the old days. She replied, "Lord, no! Do you think I'm crazy?"

The Art of Making Lye Soap
by Angela Morris

Before electricity and the electric washing machine were invented and available to everyone, people had one way of cleaning clothes--by hand, usually with the aid of a washboard, tub, and homemade lye soap. The lady I talked with married in 1900, and washing clothes and making lye soap became her responsibility.

Before the days of Tide soap powder, people had to make their own soap. First, about one gallon of water and one can of lye is added to meat scraps. This mixture is cooked until the meat fats have been dissolved by the lye. Next, a feather is placed in the soap mixture. If the down comes off the quill, then there is too much lye in the mixture. In this case, more meat fats are added and dissolved until the down stays on the quill. The liquid soap is then placed in a pan to cool and harden. Once hardened, the soap is cut into squares and stored for later use.

One time the lady I talked with tried to boil her clothes in a lye and water mixture as she had seen her mother do when she was at home. But, as luck would have it, she put too much lye in the water, and it burned her hands. This is no longer a worry for people today, but those who have experienced the burns of lye know it is not easily forgotten.

Even in this day of electric washing machines and Tide, some people prefer the old-fashioned way of making soap and cleaning clothes.



Women in Farming--
Canning and Preserving Corn and Other Foods
and Making Butter, Lye Soap, and Feather Beds
by Pam Ritchie

A man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done! An old proverb to be sure, but how true for the life of the women living on a farm! Born in 1909, Edythe Ross spent the first eighteen years of her life on a rolling 280-acre farm in Breckinridge County. Each day she dressed carefully in white cotton petticoats, stockings and a gaily-printed cotton dress. Her father then used a shoe hook and laced her boots. She always wore a bonnet when going outside. Recently, she described some of her most memorable events from life on the farm, including canning and preserving food, and making butter, lye soap, and feather beds.

There was no electricity, hence no refrigerators or freezers in which to store food. Edythe remembers one day when several bushels of golden corn waited to be taken care of. Edythe and her mother silked and washed each ear of corn and finally cut the kernels off the cob into large washtubs. Large, ten-gallon crocks sat on the floor nearby. Edythe spread a layer of corn in the bottom of the crock. This was followed by a layer of salt. This process was repeated until the crock was filled. A round piece of wood, cut to fit the crock, was placed on top of the crock and weighted down with a large rock. A piece of linen cloth was then placed over the crock and tied. The salt and juices of the corn formed a brine solution which preserved the corn. At mealtime, corn was ladled from the crock and soaked in cold water until ready to cook. Sauerkraut made from cabbage was preserved the same way. Apples, turnips, and cabbages were placed in the garden in a three foot by three foot by ten-inch deep hole. Upon having a single layer of

vegetables, straw was scattered over it. This process was repeated until the hole was filled with the fruit or vegetables. A piece of wood covered the opening in the ground and dirt was mounded on top of the wood. None of the contents ever rotted or soured! Potatoes and sweet potatoes were spread on the floor of the smokehouse.

Another process was involved in making butter. The Ross family milked six cows daily and, if they had plenty, sold the cream. The family had a cream separator and a crock-type ceramic churn that held approximately three gallons of cream. First, the milk was allowed to set until the cream rose. Next, a process called "skimming" was done. The cream was skimmed from the milk and placed in the churn. The buttermilk left was used for drinking and cooking. To make the butter, a wooden paddle was used in an up and down motion for approximately thirty minutes to bring the butter to the top where it was worked with cool water to help it gather. The butter was carved into a decorative style and put in buckets which were lowered into the well to keep.

Lye soap was used to wash clothes, floors, woodwork, and occasionally someone's hair! Edythe helped make the lye soap once a year, generally during hog-killing time. After every hog killing, the bony pieces of the hog and the fat pieces and meat skins were placed in an iron kettle. Water was then added to the kettle. The contents were brought to a boil for approximately fifteen minutes. Edythe strained the fat, bone, and meat pieces from the kettle. She saved the liquid and added lye to it. This mixture was allowed to boil again and was poured into a pan and cooled. Edythe cut the lye into cakes and then stored them in the smokehouse.

After a hard day's work, one could hardly wait to sink into a soft, thick mattress made of geese feathers. Edythe's family kept a gang of geese. The feathers were routinely picked from the geese and saved until there were enough feathers to fill a bed tick. The bed ticking was made from a heavy, blue-striped cotton material. The bottom mattress, or box springs as we know it, was fresh bales of straw dried in the fields. Pillows were also made of geese feathers. Every morning, the goose mattress was shaken and aired.

Life on the farm was hard at times. Edythe said, "We had to rely on the land. We canned enough in the summer, and if crops were good, we had enough to last until the next harvest. We made it, though. We were what you called 'hill people,' not 'hillbillies.' There's a difference. Hillbillies lived in the mountains and were uneducated. My father believed in an education. We were taught how to read and write." On the farm, one was taught how to preserve foods and how to use the natural resources. To me, this sounds like a good life--hard, but good.

Miss Rosa
by Karen Decker

Miss Rosa was just another young mother and farm wife in the years around 1920. In that day and time, maybe she was no different from anyone else. But comparing her life to mine now in the 1980's paints an entirely different picture. Miss Rosa, just one of the many unsung heroes, was hardworking, loving, and very courageous.

"My home was on a farm in the bottomland of the Green River. Life then was hard," said Miss Rosa. Farm work consisted of rising at dawn and laboring until sunset. "Helping Cal on the farm was just a part of my day!" Miss Rosa exclaimed.

Supermarkets were unheard of in 1920. To make butter, Miss Rosa first had to milk the cow and strain off the thick, yellow cream. Then, sitting on the front porch overlooking the swiftly-moving river, Miss Rosa used a hand-operated churn to make smooth, soft butter. She placed the butter in chilled molds and set it in the dark, damp springhouse to cool. "When the cow was dry, there was no milk for butter, so butter was used sparingly," said Miss Rosa.

Wash day came but once a week. There were no automatic washers and dryers for Miss Rosa to use. Two huge, iron kettles were placed in the yard. They were filled with boiling, hot water, one for washing and one for rinsing. Homemade lye soap was used instead of our sweet-smelling, modern-day detergents. After the clothes were washed and rinsed, they were hung on the line to dry in the fresh, open air. "Washing in those kettles was dangerous," Miss Rosa warned.

Miss Rosa was the mother of five, healthy children. Childbirth was a grueling event which took place at home and many times without a doctor present. And, after the children were born, Miss Rosa said, "There were no babysitters to give me a day out in the 1920's."

"I cooked three meals a day, had to sew all our clothing, and was a doctor of sorts as well," Miss Rosa said. It is often said that hard work produces character. Through back-breaking work and many personal sorrows, emerged a lady who was admired and loved by all who knew her. Miss Rosa--character should have been her middle name!

Skills Remembered From the Good Old Days--
Making Molasses, Using Lye Soap, and Killing Hogs
by Betty Dillahay

I spoke with a sixty-year-old gentleman in the community who remembered yesterday with a smile. His education may have been limited, but his knowledge is great. As he remembered his younger years, he patiently explained to me how to make homemade molasses and lye soap and how to kill hogs and store meat.

Molasses is made from sugar cane. Sugar cane is planted and harvested similar to corn. After the sugar cane is stripped down and hauled to the mill on a wagon pulled by a team of horses, it is fed into the mill which grinds it down and mashes the juice out. The juice is boiled in a large, black kettle over an open fire. As the juice boils, the top is skimmed off to remove the trash. The mixture is done when the color turns yellow. After cooling, the molasses is stored in a lard can. The cooking process takes approximately four hours. Two wagon loads of sugar cane will make about one lard can of molasses.

For cleaning up the sticky mess the molasses made, lye soap was a necessity. Lye soap was good for cleaning everything--kids, clothes, floors, and dishes. To make lye soap, old meat and skins were put in a large black kettle along with a can of lye. This mixture was allowed to boil an hour or two until the meat and skins had melted and the mixture was smooth. After cooling, the mixture hardened and was cut into squares.

The expertise needed for killing hogs and storing meat adequately was extremely important because meat was a large part of the food supply. The gentleman I spoke with said the hogs were first shot or knocked in the head. Immediately after being killed, the hogs were put in a scalding box which was filled with boiling water and turned frequently until the hair came off. The skin was then scraped free of hair. Remember, the skins had to be kept to use in the lye soap. The skins can also be baked in the oven, resulting in something that tastes similar to the pork skins we buy in the store today. After the hair had been removed, the hog was first gutted and then cut into smaller sections such as hams, shoulders, and pork chops so that it could be salted down. A large wooden box was used to salt the meat in, and the meat was left in this salt from four to seven days. When the meat was removed from the box, the salt was rinsed off and the meat hung up in the smokehouse. The meat could also be smoked, which gave it a good flavor and prevented it from having a strong taste.

One advantage this earlier generation had over the present generation was it didn't have to worry about a power failure spoiling its food. The main concern was keeping animals out of the smokehouse, whether they were two-legged or four.

The Mathews Family Makes Molasses
by Tracy A. Mathews

In the spring of 1977, my father was given an old time cane mill. That fall we made our first batch of sorghum molasses. We also made sorghum the next two years, but because we really aren't crazy about molasses, 1979 was the last year the mill was used. We made sorghum just to see if we could do it. Here are the five steps the Mathews family used to make sorghum.

The first step of harvesting the cane was stripping. The stripping process was performed by holding the top of the stalk with one hand while stripping the leaves off with the other. Some people cut the cane first and strip it after hauling it in; however, we liked to strip in the field so we wouldn't have to pick up the leaves.

Phase two was cutting and hauling in the cane. One person drove the tractor while the rest of us cut the cane with tobacco knives and loaded it on the wagon. Step number three was topping the cane. We used pocket knives for topping the cane. The tops were put in grass sacks and the seeds saved for next spring. During this time, we would also strip any leaves that were missed in the field. After it was all cut and loaded, we hauled it to the mill.

Grinding the juice out of the stalks was the fourth step. We used the power take-off on the tractor to turn the cogs on the mill instead of using a mule team to turn them. We could feed three stalks at a time through the mill. Under the mill, we caught the juice in a wash tub. An old sheet was placed over the tub for straining the juice. When the tub was full, we would pack the tub over to the fire and pour the juice into the pan.

The final process, cooking, consisted of five steps: boiling, stirring, skimming, pouring the finished product into a tub, and filling the jars with molasses. We had paddles made of wood for stirring the sorghum to keep it from sticking. While the sorghum boiled, a skim, which had to be removed, would rise to the top. Our skimmers had wooden handles and tin pans. The pans had holes in the bottom to let the juice pour back in while taking the skim off the top. The sorghum has to be taken off of the heat while it is still a liquid. As soon as the skim is at a minimum and the liquid begins to thicken slightly, the molasses is done. If it is left on the fire too long, it will turn into a chewy candy. After the sorghum was taken from the fire, we pulled the plug out of the end of the pan, and the sorghum poured into the tubs. We then took ladles and spooned it into the jars. This is how the Mathews family made sorghum. We used these five steps, but other people may do the first three steps differently.



The Plentiful and Satisfying Southern Meals
by Ila Moody

Reared on a southern farm located between Summer Shade and Eighty Eight, the day began for Ethel Whitlow Myers before the rooster crowed! In the early 1900's the land was the family's income, and their food was provided by the crops and livestock on the farm. The meals--prepared by Ethel; her sister, Mary; and their mother--were bountiful. Breakfast, dinner, and supper gave the family much-needed nourishment to sustain them through a rigorous day of farming life.

Ethel, affectionately called "Etie" by her parents, was awakened each morning during her childhood years with the usual call, "Time to get up and come down for breakfast." This announcement was made at the early morning hour of five o'clock from her father, positioned at the foot of the stairs. Ethel and her sister would promptly dress prior to arriving at the breakfast table; one did not appear for breakfast without being properly attired. And what a meal was breakfast! Hot, flaky biscuits were always served with butter, honey or molasses, jellies and preserves. The butter was churned by hand; what remained in the churn was served as buttermilk. The jellies and preserves were homemade, and the honey came straight from the beehive. Molasses--a clear, amber, delicious syrup--was made from the cane that was stripped and transported by wagon to the local mill for processing. Chickens raised on the farm provided the eggs, and one did not eat breakfast without eggs--always eggs! Milk was the drink accompanying the first meal of the day. Ethel and Mary routinely milked four cows each to provide the family with their main drink. Sometimes breakfast would consist of fried steak or chicken smothered in smooth, rich gravy made atop the wood-burning stove.

As soon as the morning meal was completed, plans began for

the "big meal" of the day--dinner. This plentiful meal was served at noon, and Ethel and her sister assisted in its preparation. Ethel said her mother should have been a "commander-in-chief," so rigorous were the orders and the schedules in their daily lives in the kitchen and on the farm. Meat was retrieved from the nearby smokehouse, which also served as a storage place for the animals' food. Potatoes were collected from the cellar, and water pumped from the underground well. Wood was constantly hauled inside to fuel the stove, and eggs were gathered from the chickenhouse. Yeast bread, yellow corn muffins, chicken and dumplings or roast, dried beans, and a canned jar of fruit would constitute the "big meal" of the day.

Once the sun set and the day's labor had come to an end, supper was on the table. "Leftovers" were the main fare for the evening meal, served with dessert. This delicious treat was an egg pie (any pie made with eggs) or a cake adorned with canned peaches. Boiled coffee "that could stand up and talk to you by itself" was served, flavored with chicory, a seed pod often used to improve the coffee's flavor.

Growing up on a south central Kentucky farm, Ethel's life was a sheltered one ruled by strict, but loving, parents. With fond recollection, she remarked, "Home was the epitome of it all." Material items were sometimes scarce, but they never went hungry. Their land provided their needs; it was their income and their nourishment. Breakfast, dinner, and supper were their times to share, to be together, and to give thanks for the land and for their daily bread.



The Six-Legged Chicken
by Jerry Neal Bean

According to English scientist Charles Darwin, the animals we see today have evolved from their odd ancestors over a period of thousands of years. Through many years of study, he compiled evidence to support this theory. After looking at his book and listening to stories about dinner at my great grandmother's, I have concluded that Darwin made a crucial error in his studies. It seems that chickens must have evolved drastically and at an accelerated rate, for in the days of my great grandma, chickens had six legs!

The discovery of a six-legged chicken may be startling to the average Kentucky Fried Chicken eater. This person only knows about the two legs known as drumsticks. Now when a person wants a leg, he only has to say, "Give me a leg" or "Give me a drumstick." But in the 1940's, in a small community called Harlan's Crossroads in Monroe County, my father and the other grandchildren had three types of legs to choose from when they ate Sunday dinner at the home of my great grandmother, America Charlotta Gillenwater. The three types of legs were the big leg, the little leg, and the short leg.

The main reason my great grandma's chicken had six legs was because my great grandma had twenty grandchildren to feed. And, as with nearly all children, they each wanted a chicken leg. Thus, the need for more legs arose. When the family got together, the children always ate first. They would storm the kitchen, line up at the long wooden table, which had chairs on the outside and a bench on the inside, lift up their tiny voices and blast out the type of leg they wanted. "Big leg," "little leg," or "short leg" would ring in the ears of the adults

sitting at the table. As soon as the children got their favorite legs, they would stampede out the screen door, which usually lasted a good two weeks before a small child would run through it because the door was swinging back from being opened a split second earlier by a faster child. After the children had swooped down like little chicken hawks and robbed the platter of legs, the adults would eat the remains.

In all honesty, I must tell that the three types of legs--the big leg, the little leg, and the short leg--did not come from evolution or genetic engineering, but from the ingenious way my great grandma prepared the chicken. If she had had to kill enough two-legged chickens to supply the demand for legs, the hen house would have been bare within a month. Realizing this, she made each chicken have six legs. The biggest leg was really the drumstick. The little leg was obtained by breaking the wing and using the upper half. And last, she would fix the thigh to resemble the short leg.

My great grandmother was definitely a smart woman with the ability to fill a demand without causing a shortage in stock. America Charlotta is not an ordinary name, and my great grandmother was not an ordinary woman. Because of her chicken feats, she might have made Darwin a little nervous, but she surely would have been a hero to Colonel Sanders.

Maters
by Tim Taylor

Maters
Maters
Maters
Red Maters
White Maters
Grandma's Sweet Canned Maters
Garden-Fresh Sliced Maters
Rotten Maters Too.

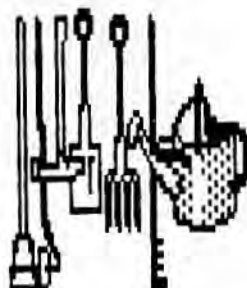
Ripe Maters
Spiced Maters
Don't Forget Cherry Maters.
Last of All, Best of All
I Like Throwing Maters.

Taters
by Tammy Stephens

Taters,
taters,
taters,
baked taters,
boiled taters,
cheesy, cheesy, scalloped taters,
twice-topped, filled taters--
those are just a few.

Sweet taters,
mashed taters,
whole tiny red taters,
new taters too,
instant taters,
salad taters--
don't forget gravy and taters.

Last of all, best of all,
I like fried taters!



Home Canning Fruits and Vegetables on the Farm
by Jennifer Reneau

My family raises our own fruits and vegetables. Home canning is one of the ways we preserve the fruits and vegetables of our labor. Every summer my grandma, Edna Reneau; my aunt, Debbie Reneau; and I get together and share the chore. We talk and work at the same time, and this helps time pass faster. We use three steps in our home canning: gathering the fruits and vegetables, preparing the fruits and vegetables to can, and canning the fruits and vegetables.

The first step to home canning is gathering the fruits and vegetables. We get up early and go to the garden, so the vegetables will be crisp. We pick tender, young beans and ripe, firm tomatoes. It is also cooler in the morning, and this keeps us from getting so hot. If, for some reason, our crop grows poorly, we go to the farmer's market and buy our fruits and vegetables.

The second step to home canning is preparing to can. I always wash several jars at one time and leave them in hot water until I am ready for them. Next, I put the jar tops in hot water and boil them. Now, my grandma, my aunt, and I form an assembly line: I wash the fruits and vegetables; Grandma peels the tomatoes; and Aunt Debbie breaks the beans. When I finish washing the vegetables, I start filling the jars with tomatoes. I use a wooden spoon to push out any air bubbles inside the jar. I put one teaspoon of canning salt in each quart of tomatoes. Meanwhile, after Aunt Debbie finishes breaking beans, she parboils the beans for five minutes in a large kettle. Then my grandma drains the beans and fills the jars. She puts one teaspoon of canning salt into each quart of beans. When we have seven jars of beans and seven jars of tomatoes, we are ready to

wipe off the tops of the jars. Next, we put sterilized jar tops and rings on the jars.

The final step is the actual canning. For the green beans, we use the pressure cooker method. We put two quarts of water into the cooker and the seven jars of beans. Then, we put the cover on the canner and set the canner on the stove on medium high heat. We allow the steam to build up and flow freely for ten minutes. Then we close the vent and allow the pressure to build up to ten pounds. Now, we cook the beans for twenty-five minutes. Then we remove the canner from the heat and let the pressure drop naturally. After the pressure has dropped completely, we remove the cover and set the beans on a table to cool. They must not be in a draft because the hot jars could break. In canning tomatoes, we use the hot-water-bath method. We put seven jars of tomatoes in a big kettle and cover them completely with water. Then we put the kettle on the stove and bring the water to a boil. The tomatoes need to boil for forty-five minutes. Then we remove the jars and place them in a draft-free place to cool.

Although home canning is a tremendous chore, it is well worth the effort. The finished product is food for the winter. When we can our own fruits and vegetables, we know where and how they were grown, and home canned fruits and vegetables are not filled with preservatives. The days are long and our bodies are tired, but there is a strong sense of pride and accomplishment acquired from home canning our own fruits and vegetables.



Canning, Freezing, and Drying Food in the Home
by Joyce T. Armer

Preserving food in the home is done for many reasons. People preserve food to save money, while others preserve food to retain flavor, appearance, and nutritional value. There are three ways to preserve food at home: canning, freezing, or drying.

The first thing, and to me the most important, is to grow the food yourself. A garden may be very satisfying to watch grow, and to harvest and eat food that I grew is very satisfying to my palate as well as my soul. A garden begins in winter, as that is when a garden should be planned and seeds ordered. A garden must be planted from the early spring on into summer, depending on what is being grown. Early crops are peas, cabbage, broccoli, onions, leeks, lettuce, and potatoes. Warm weather crops are tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, eggplant, beans, watermelon, and pumpkin. The ground must be tilled as early in the spring as it can be worked into a fine seed bed with no large clumps of dirt or rocks. Then you begin planting your garden by marking rows according to what crops are being grown. The seeds or plants are planted at the recommended depth and distance apart. Moisture must be provided if Mother Nature doesn't provide rain. Then you sit back and wait for the seeds to emerge. Keep the garden weeded, watered, and fertilized, and it will produce many good things to eat. Soon it will be time to harvest nature's bounty. All this goodness should be preserved for use all year, not just "in season."

One method of preserving food is by canning, both by hot water bath and by steam pressure. There are only a

few foods that may be safely preserved by the hot water bath (or cold pack) method. These are fruits, tomatoes, pickles, and jams and jellies. These foods are more acidic, so they may be safely processed at lower temperatures. All vegetables and meats must be canned at the higher temperatures obtained only in a pressure canner. If these higher temperatures are not obtained for a long enough period of time, the contents will spoil, causing a deadly organism called botulism. To obtain the best flavor and color of the preserved food, it must be fresh, preferably picked the same day as it is being processed. Wash the food thoroughly; then prepare it according to the particular recipe being used. Process the full time and method directed in the recipe. Do not reduce the processing time or temperature. After the processing time is completed, remove the jars, using a jar lifter, and place them on a folded towel to cool. When cool to the touch, check to see if the jars have sealed by pressing down in the center of the lid; if the lid doesn't pop back up, the jar is sealed. If the jar hasn't sealed, reprocess according to the directions, using a new lid. When the jars are cool and sealed, store them in a cool, dark place. When opening a jar to use it, check for seal, color of contents, and cloudiness. Open the jar and sniff for an off-odor. Then boil for ten minutes to insure safety. Eat and enjoy the product of your labor.

The best frozen fruits and vegetables are picked fresh that day and quickly processed and frozen to preserve that freshness. First, wash the food thoroughly; then prepare according to the recipe being used. Process in boiling water the prescribed time, as this destroys the enzymes that may give the product an off-flavor or off-color. Quickly cool the product in ice water for as long as you heated it; then drain completely in a colander. Pack it into freezer-safe containers or bags, and put the containers in a single layer in the freezer to freeze as quickly as possible. When the packages are frozen, they may be stacked as desired. Simply prepare these home-frozen foods for the table as you would any commercially-prepared food.

To dry food, there are three main methods: drying in the sun, drying in the oven, and drying in a food dehydrator. All methods require freshly-picked produce of a good quality. Wash the produce thoroughly and prepare it as directed in the recipe. To dry in the sun, place the prepared food in a single layer on a horizontal screen that will remain in the full sunlight the entire day. Remove the food to house before nightfall. Repeat by putting the food in the sun the next day or days until the produce is completely dry. Package the produce in food-grade airtight containers and store in a cool, dry, dark place. The

procedure for drying in the oven or in the food dehydrator is basically the same as for sun-drying. The drying just takes less time. The finished product is stored the same way as for sun drying. To use the dried food, water must be added to rehydrate it. Just follow the recipe that you are using. Drying foods is an inexpensive method of preserving food, and dried foods take up much less storage room. Campers prefer dried foods because they are lightweight, take up little space, and require no refrigeration.

Home preservation of food is very satisfying to me. While it is hard work, the end product tastes better, and pesticides and preservatives are not used, which is important to me. I know exactly what is in my food. Do you?

Granny's Homemade Hominy
by Shela Bingham

My granny's name is Marie Borders Thomas Palmore. She was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. She and her family moved to Barren County when she was twelve years old, and she has lived here ever since. She is now eighty-one years young, and she and her husband live in Glasgow. Her father, Thomas Borders, was born in Germany. When he moved his family from Indianapolis, he bought fifteen hundred acres "down on Peter's Creek." My granny was taught how to can and garden by her grandmother, Mary Borders. Some of my granny's favorite memories are of the times she and her grandmother made hominy at home: the choosing and the shelling of the corn, the cooking with ashes, the rinsing, and the cooking for a second time.

The first step in this process is choosing the right kind of corn. This can be grown at home or bought at the store. In my granny's opinion, anyone making hominy should only use hickory cane corn. The corn can't be picked until the early fall, after the first frost of the year. Granny said the first frost kills the sap in the corn. Then the corn must be shelled off the cob. This step is not difficult but sometimes causes blisters on tender hands.

The next step seems strange to most people. The corn, about three gallons, is put on the stove in cold water and brought to a boil. When the water starts to boil, Granny said to place about a cup of ashes from a wood stove into a white cotton cloth which has been tied at the top to keep the ashes from getting into the water and then put the sack of ashes in the boiling water. The mystery of why ashes are used is really simple. There is a natural form of lye produced when wood is burned which loosens the husk from each kernel of corn.

After the corn has cooked for a while, it will change colors. The white kernels of hickory can corn turn yellow, and the husks begin to loosen. Granny said when this happened she took the kettle of corn off the stove, removed the sack of ashes, and started rinsing the husks from the corn. Granny stressed that this step is very important. She insisted that the hominy will be no good if any husks are left on or in the corn. This process takes a lot of time and patience. She said to be sure and change the water several times until no husks are found on the kernels.

Now, she said, is the time for the long-term cooking process of the hard-shelled corn. The corn is

placed back on the stove with fresh, clear, cold water. She said that the cooking time usually is three to four hours for three gallons of corn. Once the corn is tender, this process of making hominy is complete.

Granny said next she takes out enough of the hominy for two meals and seasons it with salt, butter, and bacon drippings. Three gallons of hominy may sound like a lot, but with a family of eleven, the hominy did not last very long. She said she stored the rest of the hominy in a stone jar with a white piece of cotton cloth over the top of it to keep out the bugs. Anyone wanting to can the hominy would go about the normal canning procedures used for canning any other vegetable.

The main reason for this elaborate and lengthy procedure was economical. During the canning season with all the vegetables maturing at the same time, often some of the corn would get too hard to can. To keep the corn that was left on the stalk from going to waste, she would just leave it in the garden until after the first frost and then turn it into hominy.

The reason hominy is not made as much now as a few years ago is probably because it takes so much time. But I have heard from my dad and other country-cooking-loving people that the effort is well worth it. I personally have never eaten any homemade hominy, but if my plans go as I hope, I will tackle this job myself this coming fall.



Corn
by Kimberly Taylor

Corn
Corn
Corn.

Tall corn
Short corn
Green growing field corn
Beautifully-colored Indian corn--
These are just a few.

Yellow corn
White corn
Hot juicy buttered corn
Green Giant canned corn
Creamed corn, too.

Fried corn
Boiled corn
Don't forget ear corn.

Last of all, best of all,
I like popcorn.

Growing Corn in the Early Days
by Celena Martin

When she was a young girl, Mrs. Christine Meadows' grandfather told her this little saying about when corn was ready to plant: "You will always know when it is time to plant the corn, when the oak leaf is the size of a squirrel's ear or when a little dove is cooing."

Most farmers raised their corn in low places that held the moisture better and made healthier corn. Mrs. Meadows, a resident of Hardyville, said the last few weeks of April, the farmers plowed their fields with a horse pulling a turning plow. Later they used a harrow, a heavy frame with metal spikes which is pulled over plowed ground for breaking up the soil. Then they made a furrow, a straight row made by using a plow with a straight point. Finally, they went along drilling holes two and half feet apart, dropping the seeds of corn in the holes, and covering up the holes.

Around the first of May, the corn began to sprout, break through the ground, and grow. Farmers chopped the weeds out during the time it was growing to maturity. When or if it ever rained after they had chopped the weeds, the weeds grew back, and they had to go through the entire process of chopping the weeds again.

When the corn was ready for harvesting, the farmers cut the corn with a corn knife and put the corn into shocks or stalks. They got two stalks of corn and tied them together with a grass string. They then threw the corn stalks into the corn cribs and hauled the corn to the barn to be put on the wagon.

Before they were able to put the corn on the wagon, they shelled the corn into grass sacks. It was then time to put the grass sacks of corn on the wagon. The wagon was filled with corn to its limit. The farmers took the corn to the market to sell for cornmeal or occasionally trade for flour.

The farmers did not sell all of the corn they grew. Some of it was used for their meals, and the rest of it fed to their chickens, cattle, and hogs during the long winters. Corn growing was always hard work, but the entire family always helped out.

A Trip To The Grist Mill
by Faye Johnson

Life on Maple Grove Ridge in Allen County during the year of 1931 was slower than it is these days. Simple chores could take many hours to accomplish. Blon Johnson, a boy of twelve at the time, remembers when just getting a sack of meal could take as long as a day.

When time came to get corn ground at the grist mill, Blon would have to make preparations the previous night. A trip was made to the corncrib. Here, a bushel of corn was shucked and carried to the house. Everyone in the family then joined in to shell the corn by the light of the fireplace. Shucked and shelled, the corn was placed into a thick, heavy, white tow sack.

Early the next morning, Blon had to rise promptly to listen for the whistle at the grist mill to blow. This whistle was the signal to let people in the community know that the steam was rolling and the mill was ready to operate. When the whistle blew, it was time to place the blanket on the old mule; this blanket kept the mule hairs from getting into the corn. After placing the sack of corn on the blanket, Blon heaved his body up on top of the corn.

The steam-operated grist mill was located on Snake Creek and owned by Mr. Will Huntsman, a stocky-built, friendly man. Mr. Will's two boys, Henry and Charlie, helped cut wood for the fire. "Mornin', Mr. Will. Ready for you to grind my corn," Blon said as he swung down from the mule.

"Mornin', Blon. You're a good customer and always come in early," Mr. Will replied. Mr. Will had a homemade wooden box that held one-eighth of a bushel. Each time he ground someone's corn, he took one box full of corn for his pay. This was called "grinding for the eighth." The rest of the corn was placed into a large hopper. A gauge let the corn filter through in just the right amount. Two outrageously-large gray stones ground the corn into meal. They were placed wide apart for coarse meal, closer together for fine meal. Ground meal poured out slowly into a large box. Mr. Will used a wooden shingle with holes for thumb and fingers to push the meal to one side. Someone else's corn was then put into the hopper to grind. The brown wooden shingle, smoothed by many years of use, was again used to ladle the meal into Blon's tow sack. Blon was then ready to start for home.

Today Blon Johnson thinks back and remembers his trips to the grist mill. Memories are all that remain of the mill because Mr. Will Huntsman is dead and the grist mill was torn down long ago.

Burning Day
by Joyce Alford

My grandfather was an old-time farmer. He didn't believe in using chemicals to kill weeds on his farm, so each spring he would pick a good day and call the family to help him. Burning the fields was made into a family gathering.

The first thing grandfather did was pick a good day for burning. He would wait until dusk, just as the dew started to rise. He would make sure there wasn't any wind to turn the flames in the wrong direction. His fields had to be at just the right dampness, not too wet, or they wouldn't burn, and not too dry, or they would burn too fast and get out of control. When all of these factors were just right, it was time for grandfather to call the family.

My grandfather had two sons and eleven grandchildren. They all lived within two miles of grandfather's farm. When grandfather called, everyone knew to get there as soon as possible. Dad would put us kids in the back of the old Ford pickup truck and head for my uncle's house. When we pulled up at my uncle's house, the kids would run and get in the back of the truck. Then off we would roll to grandfather's farm.

When the family members arrived, grandfather would hand them each a stick with a rag on the end, a lighter, and a piece of green brush. The brush was to beat out the fire if it headed in the wrong direction. The family would circle the field to be burned, and Grandfather would give the command to set the field on fire. The family would walk with the fire as it burned inward. When the fire had burned to the center of the field, everyone would pile the brush that hadn't burned completely onto the flames, and the children would have a weenie-roast.

My grandfather believed the old-fashioned way was the only way. He believed that family should help family in times of need. No one ever thought about saying no--it was just automatic to jump in the truck and go when grandfather called. It would have been easier for grandfather to have just sprayed the fields with chemicals. But that would not have kept with his way of life.



Grandpa and His Mules
by Jennifer Reneau

My grandpa, Stanley Reneau, was born and raised on a farm between Temple Hill and Nobob, Kentucky. He remembers working hard on the farm all of his life, even as a young child. Grandpa was around ten years old when he began working on the farm with mules. There are three major components in mule farming: obtaining the mule, caring for the mule, and working the mule.

The first thing needed to farm with mules is a mule. There are different ways of obtaining a mule. Many times, Grandpa's family raised their own mules. This is unique because a mule cannot be bred. A mule's father is a jack (an offspring of a donkey), and a mule's mother is a mare. There was usually one jack per neighborhood. Grandpa remembers riding his mare to Warner Wilborn's place at Nobob for breeding purposes. Grandpa said the fee was around \$10 to \$15 per visit, and sometimes the mare had to visit more than once. If the breeding process was successful, the mule colt would be born in eleven months.

Other times, Grandpa's family bought or traded mules with neighbors. Sometimes, they would go as far as Tompkinsville or Glasgow. Every third Monday of each month, there was a "Jockey Day" in Glasgow at which time mules could be bought, sold or traded. Jockey Day was at one time held at Pedigo's barn on what is now known as North Race Street. Grandpa said he usually went twice a year. He remembers usually going in September to sell his new mule colt. This was always a long day. Grandpa would get up at dawn and ride his mare three to four hours on a dirt road to get to Glasgow. Sometimes, Grandpa would pack a sandwich for lunch; other times, he would grab a hamburger and a cold drink at the "Hoo-do Wagon." The "Hoo-do Wagon" was a

train car located on the northwest corner of the public square. Some people say it was called a "Hoo-do Wagon" because the owners charged extravagant prices, or "hoo-doeed" the customers.

After arriving at the Jockey Day, he would begin trying to trade his new colt. Grandpa said that a colt six months old would sell for around \$100, and a good, four to five-year-old, fifteen to sixteen-hand high mule would bring around \$300. However, it wasn't like the livestock market is today; people did their own trading. Sometimes Grandpa didn't buy, sell, or trade; he just visited with the other men. There was a lot of socializing. Jockey Day was a man's day because there were no women allowed.

After obtaining a mule, the mule has to be cared for. Grandpa said his mules were treated well. If he planned to work the mules, he got up around 4 a.m. and went to feed and water them. "The mules ate three times a day before I did," Grandpa stated. Grandpa said he curried these mules every morning with a currycomb, and once a month he sheared the manes. Sometimes, he had to shoe the mules, although some had tough feet and didn't have to be shod. After this, he could put the bridle, collar, hames and harness on the mule and prepare to work.

The most important factor of mule farming was the work one could accomplish. Grandpa would break his mules to work when they were around two years old. Grandpa used mules and horses to plow, cultivate, disk, drag, mow, plant corn, set tobacco, bind oats, thrash wheat and even pull wagons. My grandma, Edna Reneau, remembers putting my daddy, Billy Reneau, into the back of the wagon when he was a small baby while she and Grandpa gathered the corn. They used mules for just about everything.

Grandpa farmed with mules until he bought his first tractor in 1955. He continued using his mules to plow the garden and the tobacco patch until 1970. His favorite two mule teams were Kit and Beck, and Dinner and Bell. I remember watching him plow the garden with his mules when I was a little girl. Although Grandpa still owns that farm and enjoys farming, he doesn't farm with mules anymore. A few farmers in the Temple Hill area sometimes still use mules to farm. Bob Rich used mules to drag his garden yesterday, March 4, 1992.



Whippoorwill Peas, Mule Power, and Moonshine Whiskey
by Joyce T. Armer

Farming today, although still hard work, is much easier than it was fifty years ago. Today there are tractors, cultivators, and other machinery to do the work, whereas in the past everything was done by hand or mule power. In the 1930's and early 1940's, farming, as well as life in general, was much harder.

The farmer I talked with is sixty-six years old now, but he remembers very clearly the time he spent learning to farm when he was just a boy. He was born in London, Kentucky, on July 14, 1925. When he was four years old, he was taken to an orphanage in Madison, Kentucky. Just as he turned five years old, he was taken to Tompkinsville, Kentucky, in a 1930 Model A Ford. He remembers being brought to a big white house on Main Street that still stands today next to the Dairy Queen. The day after his fifth birthday, on July 15, 1930, he was picked up by some people from Clay County, Tennessee. They took him home with them in a wagon pulled by a team of horses. He was fascinated by this team, as he had never ridden in a horse-drawn wagon before.

Soon after he arrived at their farm, they put him to work picking old-fashioned whippoorwill peas. The peas were dried and then placed in a feed sack. Then heavy sticks were used to beat the sacks to loosen the peas from the pods. The sack was then emptied onto a sheet, and the peas and pods were separated. The peas were bagged in a feed sack and hung in a dry place.

At an early age, he learned to use a mule to plow a field. He was told when to start, when to stop for dinner, and when to stop at night. That old mule knew when it was dinnertime as

well as the boy did. The mule would go to the end of a row, stop, and bray loudly. The boy would look up and see his daddy waving him to come in and eat. While the boy ate his dinner, the mule would be fed, watered, and rested.

When they raised corn, the boy's daddy would plow several rows ahead of him, and the boy would operate a mule-drawn corn-driller to plant the seed. They would use a double-shovel plow to cultivate the corn three times during the growing season. Each time they plowed next to the row of corn, a ridge of dirt that prevented the corn from falling over was built up. They picked the corn by hand and used a mule-drawn sledge to take the corn to the corn crib to be stored. They also pulled up the stalks of corn and hung them up in the barn. At night, when the dew was on them, they pulled the leaves from the stalks and tied them into bundles. They did this at night so the dry leaves wouldn't crumble. This was used as fodder for the cows and the mule. "The cows would really pour the milk from feeding them this rich fodder," the farmer I talked with said.

They also raised tobacco, wheat, hay, and a big garden. They bought very little at the store, usually just coffee, sugar, and salt. They took their wheat to a mill at Fountain Run, Kentucky, to be ground into flour. They took their corn to a mill in Milestown, Tennessee, to be ground into corn meal. They canned everything they grew in the garden. Food really tasted better then because they didn't use any spray on it. They picked all the bugs off by hand.

There wasn't much social life during those days; even church was held only once a year, and it lasted one to two weeks. There was an ice cream social a few times a year, and that was just about all the social life there was. The boy attended school about half the time it was open; the rest of the time he had to work on the farm.

The boy's daddy made moonshine whiskey. The corn would be dampened and placed in a barrel until it soured and sprouted. It was then placed in a vat and boiled, and the liquid was taken off and cooked in a copper still. After it was poured into jugs, the boy would have to hide it in the woods until his daddy wanted it brought to him.

Farm life then was a lot of hard work, but life was also simple. Farm life today is easier, using machines, but it is also more complicated.



Replacing the Mules
by Kathy Fancher
as told by Lucian Trowbridge

Lucy and I lived on a family farm located in Metcalfe County, Kentucky, during the 1940's. Our home was a small white building located at the top of a hill. We were proud of living in the country, even though many long, hard hours were spent in the fields with our mules, Belle and Jack. A new tractor would make farming much more efficient.

Early in the morning, when our red rooster would crow, I knew it was time to get dressed in my blue overalls and yellow cap to begin milking my six Guernsey cows by hand. I saved my money from the cream which added about \$3 a week to the fund for a tractor we dreamed of having one day. We owned red chickens because I thought they produced larger eggs.

Lucy and my three sons also pitched in with the chores. After I teamed up the mules, she would drag the soil; of course, that was after she finished the housework. Meanwhile, I would walk the long, dusty road to Charlie Edwards' farm in Center to work cleaning fence rows, plowing, and doing other odd jobs for \$1 a day. When I returned home, Belle and Jack would still be hitched up waiting for me to plow until dark. Nevertheless, we kept scraping pennies for the tractor.

One spring morning, I awoke to begin doing the daily chores. Even though the sky seemed dark and cloudy, chores had to be done. I walked to Charlie Edwards' and left Lucy with the mules. Little to my knowledge, Lucy had another thought in mind. Later in the morning, she walked to the Center grocery where Lemmie Hoover was a merchant. There she bought a sewing

machine with the money saved from selling turkeys. The news concerning the sewing machine purchase was gently broken to me that night after I returned home. After simmering down a bit, I realized the sewing machine could be time-saving in patching my faded, blue overalls. Nevertheless, my concern was expressed for the great help \$30 could have made in buying the tractor.

Later in the spring, I caught a ride to McCubbin and Branstetter in Horse Cave for a look at the tractors. After a great amount of thought and discussion, I purchased a disk, cultivator, and a gray Massey-Ferguson tractor for \$2200. When I returned home, my sons were anxiously waiting on the porch for a turn in driving the new tractor. From that day on, the afternoon field chores were happily performed by my sons after they returned home from school. Even though the machinery cost was great, a reward was included.



Changing Traditions
by Amy Williams

Farming and farming techniques have changed drastically over the years. Many people look down on farmers for various reasons, but they never stop to consider the skills and time put into farming. James and Bedie Williams have a ninety-six acre farm they have been tending on the outskirts of Glasgow for forty-five years. They know how hard the work is and how much time farm work requires. Several things have changed during their long years on the farm, such as using farm equipment, sowing and harvesting crops, and milking cows.

Forty-five years ago, teams of mules or horses were used for almost every aspect of farming. The teams were used to plow, disk, and drag the ground to get the soil ready to grow the crops. These things took all day to do. The Williamses said they also used the teams to pull wagons for transportation. They loaded the wagon with wheat and corn to be taken to the mill and ground into flour and cornmeal. They always got enough for a year's supply because it was so far to travel to the mill. Horses and mules had hard lives back then. Now there are tractors to cut the work time down to only hours.

Sowing and harvesting the crops was the biggest part of the family's life. James and Bedie sowed the wheat and hay by hand. They always did this when the ground was wet because they had no way of irrigating. When it was time to harvest the wheat, they used cradles, or long sharp knives, to cut it, and they tied it in bundles with grass strings. When time came to thrash the wheat, farmers came from all over the county to help each other thrash their crops. To cut hay, a team pulled a mowing machine, which was similar to a tractor mower, but smaller. After the

hay cured, the husband and wife duo stacked the hay in a big pile. The hay was kept like this until it was time to feed the cattle during the winter. Combines, mowing machines, bailers, and tractors make harvesting much easier today.

The Williamses also milked cows by hand. This was a very long process. After they milked the cows, they strained the milk, poured it into ten-gallon milk cans, and cooled it in water. They sold this milk to milk companies. They also milked one gallon of milk from a good cow for themselves each time they milked. They then pasteurized the milk by boiling it. When it cooled, the cream rose to the top. Bedie said the sweet smell of milk filled the house as she skimmed the cream to make butter. In about three days, she could save enough cream to churn one pound of butter. She said the butter was much richer and creamier than it is today. Today, pipeline milkers are used for dairy farming, and the milk is sent to large cooling containers as soon as it is milked. After it is cooled, trucks with refrigerated tanks take the milk to a milk plant where it is pasteurized and made into dairy products.

Now tractors, combines, mowers, spreaders and bailers take care of the labor that was once so hard and time-consuming. The new technology cuts out the need for large families to take care of farm labor. The Williams family was small, with only one daughter to help with the numerous chores on the farm, but, thanks to these changes, the Williamses now have time for a little rest and relaxation.

Milk Cows
by Michelle Glover

Cows,
Cows,
Cows.

Brown cows,
Black cows,
Big fat ugly cows,
Long tall open cows--
These are just a few.

Little cows,
Big cows,
Mooing kicking dirty cows,
Bawling friendly licking cows
Spotted cows too.

Solid cows,
Mean cows,
Don't forget dead cows.

Last of all, best of all,
I like milk cows.



Dairy Farming
by Angela Cowan

For many years, family farming has been an interesting and profitable way of life for both the young and the old. Shawn Smith's dairy farm has been family-owned and operated for twenty-three years. Dairy farming has influenced him toward a joyful and successful way of life. Shawn likes dairy farming because he can be his own boss--he can work as long as he wants to and rest as long as he needs to. Shawn guided me through the successes and downfalls of dairy farming.

It is very important to have a good quality of dairy cows. This will allow the farmer to make more money. Some of the most common dairy cows are Holsteins, Jerseys, Brown Swiss, and Guernseys. Today most people milk Holsteins and Jerseys. At the present time, Shawn and his family are milking a total of sixty-four Holsteins.

There are many different things to do each and every day on a dairy farm. Most dairy farmers start about 5:00 a.m. Shawn usually finishes milking between 6:30 and 7:00 a.m. He milks the cows twice a day--morning and evening. Shawn's barn is equipped with a double-four herringbone, which allows Shawn to milk up to eight cows at a time. The milk is drained from the cows by four vacuum-operated devices called milkers. It's then pumped through a glass pipeline to the cooler room, where the milk is filtered and pumped into a round cooling device called a cooler. All milking equipment is stainless steel. This makes it much easier to clean and helps prevent bacteria from entering the milk. Every other day, the milk company comes and picks up the milk, and every two weeks, it sends a check for the total amount of milk produced. The milk company determines the pay by the number of pounds of milk. After the milking is finished,

Shawn and his family wash and clean the entire milk barn, including all the equipment used. The milking process is generally the same in the evening as in the morning.

After the milking, Shawn does the feeding for the day. He begins with the baby calves. They are fed both morning and evening. Each time they receive four pints of powdered milk. The second feeding, Shawn feeds the heifers, the cows that haven't had their first calf and don't give milk. Heifers get fed once a day. They eat only feed, which is ground corn with vitamins and minerals added. At this time, the dairy cows are to be fed. Many farmers today feed their cattle a high-protein feed called "silage," which is very healthy for the dairy cows and makes them produce a third or more milk everyday.

The most important aspect of dairy farming is how the farmer manages his money. Shawn says, "If a farmer doesn't manage his money the right way, problems will arise, and the farmer will continue to go downhill in the dairy farming business." He continues, "You manage your money right, and you will always have enough money to pay all the bills and have some left over for spending and saving."

Dairy farming is also very educational for children. It builds responsibility for children, as well as adults, to prepare them for tomorrow and the future. As of today, dairy farming is very expensive but also very profitable. In the future, dairy farming will become easier because of computer knowledge.



Dairy Cows
by Kelli A. Young

Cows,
Cows,
Cows.

Black cows,
White cows,
Black and white spotted cows,
Red and white spotted cows--
These are just a few.

Healthy cows,
Beef cows,
Injured and three-titted cows,
Mean and dangerous long-horned cows,
Pretty cows, too.

Ugly cows,
Jersey cows,
Don't forget smelly cows.

Last of all, best of all,
I like dairy cows.



Dairy Barns
by Laura Wheeler

My uncle and aunt, Carlos and Banna Burnett, have been in the dairy business for forty years. Now, in 1992, Carlos and Banna milk approximately sixty-five cows. The dairy barn is essential to the dairy business. Many things have to be considered in dairy farming, such as building the barn, cleaning and sanitizing the barn, preparing the milk to be picked up, and following the requirements set by the federal government in order to have a successful dairy business.

The type of dairy barn Carlos and Banna built is a modern dairy barn, instead of the various types that were used twenty years ago. The dairy barn is made of ceramic blocks, which are easier to clean than the painted cement blocks. The dairy barn contains electric doors, refrigerators, a restroom, weigh jugs, and milkers which have automatic washers. Building a modern dairy barn costs approximately \$60,000, but there are numerous advantages to having a modern dairy barn: a person can accommodate more cows at one time, and milking the cows takes less time. In the modern dairy barn, Carlos and Banna can accommodate sixteen cows at one time, whereas in the older barn, they could only accommodate three cows in the parlor at one time. In the modern dairy barn, milking sixty-five cows takes approximately one hour, and in the older dairy barn milking lasted over three hours.

The barn must be cleaned and sanitized every day. Aunt Banna does the cleaning. She cleans and sanitizes the barn once a day with a broom and some water. It takes approximately one hour to clean.

The milk is picked up every other day. The only special

procedure to do before the milk is picked up is to keep the milk's temperature at thirty-eight degrees. If the milk is any warmer, the company will not accept it.

There are several requirements set by the federal government that Carlos and Banna must follow. They have to keep their barn cleaned and sanitized. The cows must be tested to make sure they do not have bangs (tuberculosis), and the water must be tested for purity. The dairy barn is inspected every six weeks by the state inspector.

Dairy farming is an important business, and there are various steps that must be followed by everyone in the business. There are several advantages in the dairy business--a person always has a job and a paycheck. There are also several disadvantages--owning a dairy is a lot a work and is very time-consuming because the cows must be milked twice a day. The dairy business has given Carlos and Banna a nice life, and they both agree that if they had life to do over again they would operate a dairy business.



Raising Calves
by William Myatt

Dairy farmers often raise calves from their own cows. There are many factors involved in successfully raising calves. The successful way to raise a calf is through knowledge and regular care.

When a calf is born, it must have colostrum, the rich, creamy milk the cow produces when she calves. The cow can produce colostrum for three days. Colostrum not only gives the calf nutrients, but it builds up the antibodies in the calf as well. Therefore, it improves the immune system, and the calf becomes less susceptible to disease.

Next, the calf must have appropriate shelter. This differs from owner to owner. The person who buys calves at the stock pen must leave the calves outside where they can be rotated to different parts of the farm. This is necessary to raise calves because it lessens the chance of disease wiping out the purchased calves. This is not a factor for those who raise calves from their own cows. The best shelter is an individual pen for each calf inside a barn. It provides shelter from the weather, and the calves can eat the proper amount of feed given to them. Calves are also less likely to run out of water in individual pens. It is also easier to bottle feed a calf in an individual pen than in a group.

A calf should be weaned anywhere from six weeks to two months. Before weaning, the calves should have an opportunity

to eat dry feed. It is not necessary for the calf to have a regular serving of dry feed until it is weaned. After weaning, it is up to the owner to decide what ration of feed each calf should consume.

The next decision is whether to feed the calves individually or to feed them as a group. It is a good idea to feed the calves as a group before they are turned out to pasture. This allows calves to become familiar with competing for feed. Calves should not be turned out to pasture before six months of age. Intestinal parasites can build up in a calf if the calves are sent to graze too early. Also, a calf cannot efficiently digest the high-energy food that pastures provide.

A calf has a reasonably high chance of survival if these processes are followed. However, few calves will live if they are not given the proper attention that raising a calf requires. A watchful eye is needed to raise calves. Calves are no more exempt from getting sick than humans. If symptoms such as droopiness, scouring, and loss of weight are detected early, a calf can receive proper medical treatment. It is a good practice to feed and water calves twice a day so that they can be checked every twelve hours.

A high rate of success in raising calves can be achieved with knowledge. Proper shelter, feeding, and logical decisions determine the quality of calves. However, the knowledge is of no use if calves do not receive constant care. A combination of knowledge and care is the true process of raising calves.

Pig Farming
by Terri Smith

Livestock farming in Kentucky is an up and down business. There will be good years and bad years. The pig industry is a smelly, but profitable business, according to one Metcalfe County pig farmer, Mr. Garrett. He says, "It only takes courage, hard work and a clothespin for the nose." So, with those reassuring words, let me introduce you to some aspects of pig farming.

Pig breeding is most profitable for the small farmer. The feed is fairly expensive, but the pig is quick-growing and always in high demand. It is also possible for a mature sow to have two litters of piglets per year. This is a total of sixteen to twenty-five piglets, per sow, per year. The piglets are completely weaned at around eight weeks. They are then put on solid food. Most area pigs are fed crushed corn and fattened to around fifty pounds. They are then taken to the market and sold as feeder pigs. The average price per pound, according to Mr. Garrett, is around ninety cents. The mother is rested for only a short time. She is then bred again, and the cycle starts all over.

Raising pigs for food is also a money-saving aspect for pig farmers. Mr. Garrett says, "When a sow is big enough to rare up on the second fence board and beg for food, she's ready to be eaten." Generally, sows are butchered at around three hundred pounds, but a person can butcher one at any time, if the climate is right. Mr. Garrett says that butchering boars is a waste of time and money. Evidently, the meat tastes terrible and has a very strong odor. If a person likes a variety of taste, then there's no wasted meat on a sow. The pig provides many different types of food, including chitterlings or cracklings (made from the lining of the stomach), souse meat (made from the head), pickled snout and feet (made from the nose and the feet), mountain oysters (made from the testicles of a boar), pork rinds (made from the skin, after rendering the lard), and sausage (made from everything that's left over). There are also the lean cuts. Some are tenderloin, pork chops, roast, hams (after they have been cured), bacon, ribs, heart, liver, lungs, tongue, and brain. Pig manure also makes a very cost-efficient fertilizer.

The most important thing to consider in pig farming, according to Mr. Garrett, is the housing. Pigs are generally thought of as dirty animals, when in fact they're no dirtier than any other animal. Mr. Garrett says, "If you see a pig wallowing in its own filth, blame the owner, not the pig." Farmers who raise pigs for multiple breeding should provide permanent housing for them. This means the shelter should be built of mostly concrete and erected on level ground. It should

have adequate drainage. It should be hosed or cleaned, in some way, everyday. This helps prevent diseases. There should be an adequate means of heating because piglets are very susceptible to cold weather.

With this information and a few good books, anyone can become a pig farmer for profit. As Mr. Garrett says, "It only takes courage, hard work, and a clothespin for the nose."

Killing Day
by Joyce Alford

PapPaw and MamMaw always believed in doing things the old-fashioned way. They raised their own vegetables and livestock on the farm. Each fall, PapPaw would kill a hog, so they would have meat during the winter.

The morning of the kill, PapPaw and MamMaw would get up early. PapPaw would head to the barn to prepare the things that would be needed that day. First, he would fill two barrels with water. Then he would start a fire under a third barrel. He would tilt the barrel over about two-thirds of the way and put enough water in the barrel to dip the hog in, but not enough water to splash and put out the fire. Then he would lay a piece of plywood in front of the barrel. Later the hog would be laid on this. Back at the house, MamMaw would be sharpening the knives and preparing the tubs. After she finished, she would take the rifle and a few shells and head for the barn.

PapPaw would put the hog into a stall in the barn. Then he would take the rifle and climb carefully into the stall. PapPaw would make everyone be very quiet. He believed that if the hog got mad before it was killed the meat would be tough. As soon as PapPaw had a sure shot, he would fire the gun. Then it was Dad's job to cut the hog's jugular vein. This allowed the hog to bleed freely.

Cleaning the hog required teamwork and timing. Two men would dip the hog in the barrel of boiling water. They would roll the hog to make sure it was heated evenly. When the men pulled it out and put it on the plywood, several people would start to scrape the hair off the hog. Then the men would replace the water in the barrel and keep it hot. When the hog started to cool, the men would pour boiling water over it to keep it hot. But, using too much water would cook the meat. After the hog was clean of hair, PapPaw would gut it. Then he would cut off the head, hams, and shoulders and split the ribs. MamMaw would begin to pack the tubs with meat and carry them to the house. It would usually take her the rest of the day to finish cutting and trimming the meat. After all the meat was finished being cut and trimmed, PapPaw would smoke it in the smokehouse. This meat was what they lived on in the winter.

PapPaw believed in doing things himself. It might have been easier for him just to have taken the hog to the slaughter house and had it killed, but that was not the way he was raised to do things. He always said, "When I was growing up, we . . .," and no matter what the problem, he always seemed to have the answer.

Tobacco Farming Since 1934
by Barbara England

Claude Ray grew up on a farm in Edmonson County and has farmed all of his life. He quit school at the age of ten to help his dad on the farm because in those days times were rough and ends were hard to meet. When he turned twenty-five, he married Lillie Hawkins and moved to Barren County. Then, in 1944, he bought his first farm at Stovall Crossing in Barren County. In 1946, Claude and Lillie lost their house to a fire, so they lived in the tenant house for about four years until they saved enough money to rebuild. When Claude bought his first plow, he had \$27 left to start his crops. Even though Claude has raised pigs, had dairy cows, and fooled with a lot of hay, he said tobacco is where he has made his money to show a profit.

He raised his first tobacco crop in 1934 and got 11 cents a pound. In 1940, he got approximately 49 cents a pound; in 1944, 62 cents a pound; in 1985, \$2 a pound; and in 1991, only \$1.80 a pound. So the tobacco crops have gone up and then back down in price over the years.

From the 1930's until 1991, Claude has purchased many different types of equipment to use in raising tobacco and other crops. When he purchased a plow called "Rastus," which is pulled by a mule, he really thought he had something. Then his next plow was the team-riding plow. He bought his first tractor through a black market. Then two or three years later, he purchased a red-belly Ford tractor. That is when he really thought he had it made. Claude owns several tractors, but one of his favorites is the 1962 tractor he purchased, and it still runs well.

In the 1930's, to get ready for his tobacco crop, he tended all his grounds with teams, burned his plant beds, and covered the beds with cotton canvas. He used a peg to set the tobacco. One time he set an acre of tobacco with a peg in one day. Another time he set seven days straight with a peg and covered over ten acres. Later, he went from setting with a peg to using a hand-setter, then a team-setter, and finally a tractor-setter. He remembers the weather being dry when he first got into tobacco, but the tobacco grew and looked a lot better than it does today. The rows were farther apart, and it did not take as much water. In 1991, because of the lack of rain, his crop lacked four thousand pounds weighing as much as his 1990 crop. It did not grow as it needed to. The plants he uses today are 6-10 tobacco plants, and they need a lot of water to grow. To hold down black shank, a common tobacco disease, these plants must have good root rock position .

As the tobacco started to grow, he had problems with

suckers in the tobacco, so he had to sucker the tobacco by hand. Before long, sucker dope came on the market, so he used a hand sprayer to put it on his tobacco. Before he topped his tobacco, he sprayed the sucker dope on it, waited four to six days, then topped the tobacco, and, finally, two or three days later, sprayed it with sucker dope. This procedure has really helped to keep the suckers out of the tobacco. To make the job a little easier, in the 1970's he started using a boom sprayer to put the sucker dope on.

When he first started cutting tobacco, he speared the tobacco. Then later, he used the spike. He said he used to drive sticks into the ground and cut and spike the tobacco by himself. Then he left the tobacco in the field for three days before he hauled it to the barn.

When he takes the tobacco down out of the barn to get ready to strip it, he thinks it is much better to leave the tobacco on the stick until it is ready to strip. This will cut back on damage to the tobacco. Also, if the tobacco is in high order, this will cut back on the tobacco getting in even higher order. He also believes it is better to let the tobacco come in order by itself, instead of watering it down.

Claude has always taken pride in raising his tobacco. He does not believe in rushing to strip his tobacco before it is ready. He said, "As long as you take care of your tobacco crop, it will bring the same on the first day of sale as it will on the last day of sale."

Claude said he has always felt the same about his tobacco crop: He dreaded when tobacco season came because there was a lot of hard work ahead! He said he has made more money in the last three years than in all of his years of farming. Claude, now sixty-seven, and his wife, Lillie, have moved to a beautiful home in town and are enjoying it and their three children and two grandchildren very much. But, Claude still has his farm and is still planning on several more years of farming.

The 1938 Tobacco Crop
by Debbie Dilley
as told by a resident of the Wisdom community

On a small farm in Metcalfe County in 1938, my husband and I raised a lot of different crops, but our main crop was tobacco. Not only did my husband work, but my children and I worked too. Like most people, we couldn't afford to pay for help. There were many different steps that we took before we sold our tobacco crop: preparing, setting, cutting, and stripping the tobacco.

We started preparing our plant beds the last of February. Logs and brush were placed over the area where the tobacco seed would be sown; then they were burned. While they were burning, they were slightly moved, to insure the ground was well-burned. After we completed the burning of the area, we raked it to get the large burned material out. We then sowed the tobacco seed, covered the area with canvas, and nailed the ends of the canvas to the logs to secure the seed. When we finished, we smelled like smoke bombs.

In late May, we prepared our field for setting. We used a plow and disk pulled by a team of mules to break the ground. We always did this after a rain, so that the ground was moist. We would go to the plant bed, pull tobacco plants by hand, place them on burlap sacks, and haul them to the field. There, we would use a long peg and place it in the ground to make a bale to place the tobacco plant in. After we placed the tobacco plant in the hole, we used the peg to push dirt around the plant.

In late August, we started cutting the tobacco. My husband would cut and split the tobacco stalk so it would hang from the tobacco stick that I was holding. We had many blisters on our hands, and we always came home worn out. These days would always be very hot and humid, and it seemed like we couldn't get enough water to drink.

In late October, when the tobacco was cured and the leaves of the tobacco were moist and not brittle, we began stripping. By forming a line, we stripped by grades. The bottom leaves, called "trash," were stripped first; the middle leaves, called "lugs," were stripped second; the "red" leaves were next to be stripped; and "tips" were stripped last. We each tied our own grades by hand. By the end of the day, our hands would be black and very sticky because of the tobacco gum.

In November, we would load the tobacco on a wagon and take it to the warehouse in Glasgow where later on in December it would be sold. I can remember when tobacco would barely bring enough to pay for floor expenses at the warehouse. But we

always received enough money to live off of until the next year's crop sold.

Raising tobacco was very hard, back-breaking work. We always got up at daylight and worked all day until sundown. It was very time-consuming and depended a lot on the weather. Nevertheless, these years were the most rewarding time of my life.

Raising Tobacco
by Sonia Martin

Growing tobacco has been a way of life for a lot of people in south central Kentucky for many years. Cecil Edwards and Kate Taylor Martin are among these people. Cecil Edwards was born in 1933 in Metcalfe County and has lived there all his life. He is the son of Guy and Mammie Akins Edwards. He is the third of five children--two boys and three girls. He started raising tobacco when he was in his teens. Kate Taylor Martin was born in 1906 and has lived in Hart County all her life. She is the daughter of John Franklin Taylor and Anna Roberta Owen Taylor. She was the fifth of nine children--six girls and three boys--and is one of only two still living. She started helping in tobacco when she was eight years old.

In the early 1900's, people first dug up the area for the plant bed and tried to get out all the rocks. Then they raked it. Next, they attached a crooked blade, called a turning plow, to a mule or a horse which would pull the blade into the ground. They cut logs to burn the plant bed. This process was necessary in order to kill the weeds and bugs that might kill the plants. They burned one section of the plant bed at a time. After they burned the plant bed, they cut long logs to put around the edges of the bed.

They sowed the tobacco seeds into the plant bed by mixing seeds and ashes together and scattering them everywhere in the plant bed. Then they covered the bed with a canvas to protect the plants from heavy rain and later frost. Next they waited for the rain to come and for the plants to grow tall enough.

The next step was pegging the tobacco. They cut tree limbs to make the peg which was sharpened at one end and a little crooked. Using a team of horses or a mule--or in the case of farmers who didn't have horses or a mule, their hands--they laid the land off in rows. They dropped the plants on the ground, and someone with a peg came along and made a three-inch hole in the ground, put the plants in the ground, and covered them up. Ms. Martin said, "Back then, people could raise as much tobacco as they wanted."

Later, with a woven cloth strapped across their shoulders and a metal container with Paris green in it, they sprayed the tobacco for worms. Still later, the tobacco was topped. Finally, the tobacco was cut by taking a knife and cutting the plant through the middle. They then cut off the bottom and put the split of the plant onto the tobacco stick, called a "hands-on" stick. Then the tobacco was allowed to wilt in the field for a few days. Finally, they loaded it on a sled or wagon, and a horse or mule pulled it to the barn where it hung

on tiers or poles until the leaves dried.

At last the tobacco was taken down from the barn, and the leaves were stripped off the stalk and hand-tied before they were packed in baskets to take to the tobacco warehouse to sell. Tobacco, the number one selling crop in Kentucky, has always been hard work, but people have had their friends and family to help them.

Yesterday's Tobacco Crop
by Rickey T. Shive

Tobacco is the major cash crop in the state of Kentucky today; however, there was a time when tobacco wouldn't bring enough money to pay for the floor expenses. Thanks to the government's acreage and poundage programs, the tobacco industry in Kentucky today has reached a peak production level.

Reed and Lucille Shive have lived and farmed in Kentucky all of their lives. Reed has raised tobacco on his farm as long as he has owned it. When he first married and started farming for himself, around 1920, tobacco was hardly worth raising. Reed said, "If you didn't smoke it or chew it, you might as well not even raise it!"

The profits gained in raising tobacco back then were mighty slim. Times were tough and money was very scarce. Most families made just enough to get by. The tobacco crop was raised in hopes of possibly bringing in a few extra dollars; however, most of the time families were lucky if their tobacco crop brought enough money for them to break even. Reed remembered the tobacco crop of 1930 that cost him more to sell than the crop brought. Back then labor was not figured as an expense. If labor were figured as an expense, as it is generally done today, then most all of the tobacco growers would probably have come out in the hole with their tobacco crops.

Luckily, around 1932, the government realized that some type of program needed to be established to guarantee the farmers a positive return for their tobacco. This brought about the introduction of the Tobacco Acreage Program. This program allotted each farmer so many acres to grow his tobacco on. Then the government guaranteed an absolute minimum price to be paid for the tobacco being sold. This price guarantee was called "price support." This new program turned the tobacco industry around. Now the farmer could raise tobacco and be assured of a profit.

But, like all new ideas, there is usually a problem with them, and this program was no exception. The guaranteed price on tobacco gave many people ideas on how to take advantage of the program. Many people would grow extra fields of tobacco. They would grow these extra patches of tobacco in the middle of corn fields, in the middle of the woods, or anywhere they could get tobacco to grow and it not be found. Of course this created a new government job: the illegal tobacco patch uncoverer.

Reed remembered one year when he had an exceptionally good tobacco crop. It yielded approximately two thousand pounds per acre. After he sold his crop, a government man came to inquire about his acreage. He thought Reed had raised extra tobacco.

Reed soon set that government man straight. He said to the government man, "There is a thing we use around here called cow manure that makes our tobacco grow so grand."

The acreage program existed for years. It was the first major step toward improving the tobacco industry. Around 1971 the farmers voted in the program that's in existence today. This program still offers a price support; however, now farmers are allotted poundage of tobacco, not acreage. They now have the option of growing as many acres of tobacco as they prefer; however, they can only sell a certain number of pounds.

Reed remembered clearly how bad the tobacco industry was. He, along with many other farm families, is thankful for the government programs that helped put Kentucky's tobacco industry on top.

Sowing, Planting, and Topping Tobacco by Amy Williams

There are many different jobs when it comes to raising tobacco, but the most difficult and time-consuming is the time between sowing and cutting the crop. There is a lot of work and patience required for tending tobacco because it is a long, drawn-out process. The three main steps in growing tobacco are sowing a plant bed, planting the crop, and topping the tobacco.

Sowing a plant bed is the first thing you need to do to raise a crop of tobacco. A plant bed acts as a greenhouse for the young, tender plants to grow in. The bed is covered with a canvas which protects the plants from harsh weather. You have to plow and fertilize the land you want to use as your tobacco patch. The patch has to be in good shape, and the soil must be rich and well-drained. When the plants are around six to eight inches tall, the tobacco is ready to be planted. The plants must be hand-pulled. Pulling plants cannot be done at just any time of the day. This needs to be done early in the morning when the plants are crisp. The hot afternoon sun will make the plants wilt and, therefore, hard to separate when planting. The plant bed also needs to be slightly damp, so the brittle plants won't snap in half when they're being pulled. After the plants are pulled, they are put into baskets and placed in a cool, shady place until they are ready to be planted.

Today most people use tractors and tobacco setters to plant tobacco. The setter is on a hydraulic lift on the back of the tractor. A huge barrel of water is connected to the setter. The setter rides two people, and the plants are placed in front of the planters in trays. If you are riding the setter, you take turns with your partner placing the plants in a little slot. The slot forms a clamp that grips the plant and sticks the root into the ground. Before it's set, a little blade glides along and splits the earth. Water then flows out of a spout and provides a moisture-rich hole for the plant to grow in. After the tobacco has been set, it needs to be plowed and fertilized when it is at least knee high. If it is a very dry season, the patch will also need to be irrigated.

When the tobacco is about head high, large blooms will start to develop in the top of the plants. This is when it is time to top the tobacco. Sometimes topping tobacco can be dangerous because you need to use very sharp snippers and because bumble bees thrive on the sweet juices from the blooms. To top tobacco, you have to cut the suckers--the large blooms and the tiny leaves that grow between the stalks and the big leaves. Suckers don't hurt the tobacco plants, but stripping tobacco is easier if they have been removed. A couple of days after you have topped the tobacco, you will need to spray the entire crop with "sucker dope," a chemical that prevents new

suckers from coming back. This is the last step before the tobacco has to be cut.

Of all the processes involved in raising tobacco, the time between when the seeds are first sown and when it is cut is the most important of all. Raising tobacco is something you have to stick with and see through if you want to see a job well done.

Tobacco
by Jeff Ballard

Today's tobacco crop is a way of making extra money for small-time farmers. Few farmers raise tobacco for a living because of the hard work and because of the low price of tobacco. Carlos Ballard, a Barren County farmer, has raised tobacco for many years. There are four main steps involved in the producing and selling of tobacco.

The first step in the production of tobacco is setting the crop. This involves choosing the correct location of land to prepare a "plant bed." A "plant bed" is a small area of land usually ten feet wide and one hundred feet long. This is the place where the tobacco grows until it reaches the correct size to be transplanted. The ground needs to be prepared by a plow and disk for the plant bed. After the plant bed has been prepared, it is time to plant the seeds. Once the seeds have been planted, it will take about two months to grow to the correct size. When the tobacco plants reach the correct size, then they are ready to be transplanted, which requires pulling the plants out of the bed and setting them where the crop will be raised. A tobacco setter is a mechanical device used to set the plants in the ground. After the plants have been set, then they need to be plowed once a week to help keep grass out of the crop.

The second step in the production of tobacco is cutting the tobacco down. Ninety days after the tobacco has been set, it is usually ready to cut down. When the tobacco is ready to cut, there will be a yellow color around the bottom of the tobacco stalk. The first step in cutting tobacco is breaking the buds out of the stalk. A tobacco knife and spike are necessary for the cutting down of tobacco. When cutting the tobacco down, the stalk needs to be cut close to the ground so all the leaves can remain on the stalk. After the tobacco has been cut, it is placed on a tobacco stick with a spike. Most farmers leave their tobacco out about two days after cutting it. This will make the tobacco lighter and easier to handle. The next procedure is to haul the tobacco to the barn and hang it up in tiers, sections in the top of the barn where the tobacco is placed. The tobacco will hang in the barn usually a month before it is ready to strip.

The third step in the production of tobacco is stripping the leaves off the stalk. When the stripping begins, the tobacco is taken down from inside the barn and removed from the tobacco stick. The tobacco is placed on a table where the leaves will be stripped off. The leaves are usually stripped according to their color and length. The leaves are placed in tobacco balers and baled when they are full. After the tobacco has been baled, it is sent to the market to be sold.

The fourth step is the selling of the tobacco. This is a very simple process because of the way tobacco is bought. The tobacco is auctioned off to different tobacco companies. The farmers are allowed to sell according to what they have leased or what they own. Farmers raise tobacco for extra money, instead of raising it for a living, according to the four steps mentioned. Because of the low selling price, fewer people will raise tobacco in the future.

Technology and Tobacco
by Brent Bledsoe

The skill of raising tobacco has been passed down from father to son for many generations now, but the method which a person's father or grandfather used is somewhat different, due mainly to technological advances in machinery and chemistry. David Hunter, a fifty-five year old farmer who now resides in Bethpage, Tennessee, realizes how his methods of raising tobacco differ greatly from those used by his father and grandfather.

David can remember how his grandfather's method of preparing the plant bed differed from his. His grandfather went out into the woods and cut down a great deal of pile brush, which he put on an area measuring ten feet wide by one hundred feet long. This area was torched and allowed to cool down for about a day before it was worked up and sowed with seed. According to David, his method is much easier than that of his grandfather and father. David works up an area of ground measuring ten feet wide by one hundred feet long. He then places twelve cans of gas in the plant bed. A plastic canvas is placed over the bed, and all the edges are buried. Each can of gas is held in a special container which is designed to puncture the can and release the gas when the top is hit. The canvas stays on for three days after the gas is released. Then it is removed, and the seeds are planted.

When it came time to set the plants, David's grandfather waited for it to rain, a time which he called "a season." David's grandfather then took a wooden peg and poked holes in the ground. Someone followed behind him with the tobacco plants and water. Around 1946, his grandfather bought a device called a hand-water tobacco setter. This circular device was divided into two sections. One side held about three gallons of water, while the other side had a chute for the tobacco plant. It took two people to operate, one to insert the plant and the other to put the device in the ground and release the plant. About 1948, David's father purchased a riding setter which was pulled by two mules. Now David uses a tractor-reel type of setter which he says is the easiest way of planting tobacco that he has seen yet.

According to David, not much has changed about the way he cuts tobacco. He used to split the tobacco stalk down the middle with a knife and then place the stalk on a stick. Around 1954, he got a metal pike to place over the end of the stick, which ended his need to split the plant with a knife first.

David tells of only one change that has occurred in the process of stripping tobacco. Instead of stripping the tobacco and putting it in a basket, it is now pressed into bales. As the leaves are stripped off of the stalk, they are placed in a

wooden box. Once it is full, a hydraulic jack compresses the tobacco into a bale which weighs about eighty or ninety pounds. David says, "To me, these bales are a lot easier to handle than those baskets."

Technology has made it a lot easier for today's farmers to raise tobacco. David says he hopes that in the future someone will invent robots to go out in the field and do all of the work. By the way technology is advancing, it wouldn't be surprising if this were to happen in the near future.

Tobacco Greenhouses
by Rita York

While the idea of raising tobacco transplants in a "water bed" has been around for years, it has only been in the last couple of years that the float system concept has caught on in a big way. Tobacco raising is not an easy job, nor is it one that many people enjoy, but for farmers, it is a way of life. This new technique of raising tobacco with floating tobacco beds under a plastic greenhouse is saving growers' labor, minimizing expenses, and improving crop quality.

The hours involved in preparing plant beds and pulling tobacco plants are long and many. With this new system, the time is cut in half. Trays are filled with potting soil, and a seeder machine drops one seed in each cell of the tray. Someone then takes the tray and floats in on the five inches of fertilized water in the bed. Once the seeds are sown, there is very little maintenance required. One great labor-cutting step is that there is no more of the old-time mowing of the beds. Automatic clipping systems, manufactured of expanded aluminum, are lightweight and simple to use. This outfit runs down a track in the greenhouse evenly clipping or "mowing" each tray of plants. The automatic clipping system is faster and easier, and it allows for timely mowing, which is vital.

Yes, it's still farming, and it's going to cost money. The float system method of growing plants does have a lot of up-front costs, but once it is installed and producing plants properly, many farmers feel this type of system is going to be a must if they are to stay in business. Today, many farmers are raising twenty to twenty-five acres of tobacco each year. It costs an average farmer \$60 a day per farm hand to pull tobacco plants. With this size of crop, it will take at least ten hands to make the process work smoothly. This new system does away with all the hired labor costs. Four people can make this type of system work by themselves. Also many farmers are selling tobacco plants to the smaller farmer with only a couple of acres and bringing in a profit.

Besides easing labor problems, many think the floating beds and greenhouses will improve crop quality, too. Southern States Cooperative managers across the United States believe that in the long term float beds could be a step toward helping U.S. tobacco farmers maintain their reputation for quality leaf tobacco. The clipping systems make for uniformity and help to produce high-quality plants as well. Greenhouse plants have been determined to be healthier, and most survive once they are in the ground, resulting in a more uniform crop.

The greenhouse size can be constructed to fit the particular farming operation, from five to five hundred acres.

I myself have a farmer for a husband, and we have purchased a system this year for ourselves. I feel very strongly that it's the farming of the future because of all its advantages. Today's farmer needs all the help he can get!

Floating Plants
by LaDarra K. Rich

Tobacco has been around forever in South Central Kentucky, and is a way of life for most Kentuckians. Farmers of all ages depend on tobacco crops for their livelihoods. For some farmers, tobacco is their only income. Farmers, therefore, need all the help they can get when it comes to making their crops the best they can be. That's why the decision to try new ideas can be so difficult. Consider, for instance, the new floating tobacco plants. How are farmers reacting to them? Do they like them?

Kenneth Smith of Dripping Springs Road, Glasgow, says he doesn't think he will change to the floating plants. He finds the plants too expensive. Kenneth thinks a regular plant bed might be a little harder work, but it costs a lot less. Kenneth says the plants haven't been used enough in this area. He would rather wait and see what the long-term effects of the plants are. Since the plants are new, the demand for them is greater than the supply. This may mean if a farmer needs more plants than he thought, the plants may not be available.

Darrell Chapman of the Old Bowling Green Road, Glasgow, says he isn't quite sure about the floating plants. Darrell says he has compared prices of planting a regular plant bed with the prices of the new plants. Moneywise, he can't find a whole lot of difference when he looks at fertilizers, sprays, and all the other things that go into the regular bed. A person must also consider the cost of getting help to pull the plants for setting. The floating plants may be less trouble growing, but there are a few adjustments to be made for them. The plants Darrell uses come from another state. This means he needs a place to keep the plants until setting time. Some farmers are growing their own. This means building a greenhouse. Darrell says his setter will need to be adjusted to accommodate the plants. He says he is going to give the plants a chance this season but isn't sold on them just yet.

Tim Emerson of the Park City-Bon Ayre Road, Park City, says he thinks the floating plants are great, and he won't go back to the old plants. He likes the fact that the plants are grown in water. They have never been in the ground, so when they are planted, they don't wilt like the other plants. Tim said he didn't have to reset as many plants as he did with the old plants. He said the floating plants seem to take off as soon as they hit the ground.

As with everything else, floating tobacco plants have their advantages as well as disadvantages. Many farmers are willing to give the plants a try, while many other farmers don't like change. We will just have to wait and see. Will the floating

plants be a great asset to our tobacco farming or will they be a passing fad?

Things to Consider in Farming Today
by Billy Joe Carder

Dwight Tooley is a retired agriculture agent who has worked with farmers for many years. He bought his own farm when he was thirty-seven. Now sixty-five, he has partially turned his farming business over to his son who will take over completely when he turns twenty-one. He said, "Farming today is a whole different ball game from when I started farming."

He said, "When I was growing up, I looked forward to owning my own farm. But it takes so much money to buy a farm that I was almost forty years old before I could buy a farm of my own." Some people get an early start at farming because they inherit the family farm when their parents retire.

In this day and time, farming is going through extreme changes. Everyone must realize it costs more to acquire a farm than it did thirty to forty years ago. When people buy a farm, they get both a business and a home. It is very important to realize that they must succeed in the farming business because most of the time when the farm goes under, the home goes with it.

Another thing people must consider in farming is that home conveniences, such as heat, telephone, electricity, and all electrical equipment, are all necessities. All of these, plus the charges to operate them, must be paid out of the farm income. "Also, there are children," Mr. Tooley said. "Most parents, like myself, want to send their kids to college." Mr. Tooley said farmers must ask themselves, "Can the farm do it?" Today it is very difficult to make a living farming. Most small farmers are having to find alternative incomes and then farm in their spare time.

Deciding whether or not to dedicate one's life to farming is a very big decision today. There are so many farms going out of business because they cannot make enough money to pay the expenses. Expenses almost outweigh the profits any way a person goes. Mr. Tooley said, "I have found that people out there farming today who are making a good living are people with an education in agriculture. When I was growing up, farming was an alternative to going on to school to get more than a high school education. Now, in the '90's, that is not the case. It is a must to get an education if you want to succeed at anything in life."

Raising Coffee, Corn, and Sugar Cane in the Philippines
by Maria Theresa Pulanco

Farm work is considered tough work. It involves the endurance of someone under the heat of the sun lifting heavy weights and exerting effort to do so many things. But most farmers get used to it and develop the attitude of feeling good. In this endeavor, they can find a source of money, a way to earn their living. They feel good when harvests are good, but they learn that bad harvests and problems like drought, bad weather, and insect infestation are also a part of life. I grew up on a farm and have experienced growing three types of crops: coffee, corn, and sugar cane.

Growing coffee is a tough job which requires exerting an extra careful effort. The seeds of the coffee plant are quite sticky before they are planted in a cellophane cup filled with soil. When these coffee seedlings reach eight inches, they will be transplanted. As these coffee trees are growing, they need to be watered, to have the grasses between them cleared out, and to have some fertilizer put on them. During the harvest season, coffee seeds are considered ripe if they are colored red. Then they must be dried in the sun for about a week, and the outer skins must be removed, leaving the coffee beans. The beans are sold when they dry.

Due to the lack of farm machinery, the way corn is grown in the Philippines is really different from the way it is grown in America. Whereas in some countries farm machines are used to minimize the amount of people needed to do the work, in the Philippines many people are needed. Growing corn is done through first cleaning the land for planting. As the corn grows, it needs some fertilizer and it needs to have the grasses between the rows cleared off. Harvesting the corn is done by many people. We do this by cutting and removing the corn from the stalks and placing it in sacks or big baskets. Then, if all the work in harvesting is done, we can remove the leaves from the corn. Removing the corn from the cob requires the use of our hands or the use of a man-made metal to scrape the seeds from the cob. The corn is then dried before selling it to the market.

Growing sugar cane is not easy work. Planting the cut stalks should be done by many people. It requires everyone being in a line so the planting will be quicker. In each row, people have their own tasks to do. If the land is ready for planting, the cut stalks will be placed in the soil, and someone will put the soil over them. Growing sugar cane takes a year before it can be harvested. At harvest time, we must wear a hat and a long-sleeve shirt to protect our skin from the heat of the sun. We have to use a long knife, called a machete, to cut the stalks of the sugar cane. It is a difficult job. The stalks

are thick and tough. The men will pile the sugar cane stalks, tie them, and carry them to the truck for loading and delivery to the factory for milling.

In order to survive in farming in the Philippines, one must consider the hardship of undertaking the job. Sometimes it is considered a sacrifice and takes a lot of patience, but when people get satisfaction from their work and when they can earn a comfortable amount of money, a perfect work is made. We feel good about farming as a way of living, even though it is tough work.

Rice (Palay) Farming in the Philippines
by Maria Theresa Pulanco

Farming is considered the backbone of a country. Through this means, people grow and produce crops. Many people choose farming as a way of life. More or less, they consider farming a source of living, a way to produce crops that people want to buy, a way to earn money, and a hobby. Through farming, farmers play a significant role in the production and consumption of man's everyday needs. With the increasing information available about modern technologies in farming, a large number of farmers, both from developed and developing countries, learn various methods and techniques in farming. This also leads to better produce and more productive crops.

In a tropical country like the Philippines, there are plants grown such as rice, corn, sugar cane, cassava (a tropical shrub which produces a nutritious starch), fruit, vegetables, and other tropical crops. These are usually grown for food. There are farmers that use hand-tractors, threshers, and other farm machines. They also use animals, like carabao (water buffalo) and cattle, because they are very helpful in plowing the land. Because farmers still use the plow, these animals are used to pull it. Most farmers there grow rice, or palay, as it is known in the Filipino language. Rice grows best in water. It is planted after heavy rains. There are three steps in planting rice: preparing the area for planting, replanting the rice seedlings, and harvesting the crops.

A farmer prepares a seed bed in the rice paddies. He has to prepare the entire area for planting by cleaning the rice paddies, plowing, harrowing, and using the hand tractor in tilling the soil so it will be ready for planting. Then he has to prepare the rice seeds. The grain must be checked to be sure it is free of insects. The grain has to dry in the sun for about two days. Then, the farmer has to put it in a sack and soak it in water for two days. This is to let the grain germinate. The water should be inspected from time to time. Sometimes the farmer needs to spray the rice plants to protect them from insects. If the seeds sprout, the farmer will spread the seed evenly on the surface of the seed bed. It will take ten days to grow. If it reaches eight inches, the rice seedling is ready to be uprooted for replanting.

Most farmers replant the rice seedlings as soon as they are ready. They uproot these seedlings by hand. It is easier to uproot these seedlings if the soil is flooded with water. Planting rice seedlings in rice paddies is done by at least fifteen people, depending on the area. After planting, the farmer checks his plants from time to time. It will take three months for the rice plant to grow. Within this period, the

farmer has to maintain the proper amount of water needed by the rice plants, clean the pathways between each rice paddy, spray the rice plants, and put on some fertilizer.

Rice crops are ready to be harvested if the grain is almost ripe. Farmers are very busy during harvest season. It is also a time of worry because farmers consider the months of work wasted if the harvest is not good. Before harvesting, the farmer prepares some rope made of bamboo stick, and he has to provide some sacks for the rice crops. They harvest the palay by cutting the stalks with a rough-edge knife, gathering them together, and tying them with bamboo stick rope. They will pile these in a certain place ready to thresh. Farmers do work together in threshing. In operating the thresher, everybody has his own work to do. Somebody will put the rice stalks to the machine; someone else will take charge of the machine; and still others will fill the cavans, or sacks, with the grain of rice, use the rake to remove the stalks from the area, tie or sew the the cavans with a big needle, and arrange them in as pile. Farmers sell the rice crops immediately after the threshing. Some farmers will dry the grain in the sun for about a week before selling it.

Planting rice is a laborious work for the farmer, and many people are involved. But people enjoy growing crops and producing food for man.



Farm Living--Southern Kentucky Amish Style
by Amanda Gillon

There are many families in most American communities that have lived farming lifestyles throughout their entire lives. There were the simple ways of life, and now there are the more advanced ways. In the 1800's, people used simple mechanisms, such as horse-drawn buggies and plows for farming use. Now Americans have expanded their growth in technology, as have most other cultures. However, I have found that not all Southern Kentucky farmers have engaged in such modern technology. One such example of farmers who haven't is the local Amish community.

The Amish culture is a descendant of both the German and Dutch heritage. The language the Amish people speak is called Pennsylvania Dutch, but they also speak English. Originally, the Amish were a northern culture, but as times grew, so did the Amish population, and many migrated south. Levi and Anna Zook are two Amish farmers from the Red Cross area of southern Kentucky. They are originally from Ashland, Ohio, and have lived here for three years.

Religion is a very important part of the Amish culture. Originally, the Amish were Catholic. A few of the Catholics felt their religion was beginning to change, so they broke away from the Catholic church. These few became known as Mennonites. The same thing happened to the Mennonites that happened to the Catholics--a few broke away from the Mennonites because of change. These few people who broke away were then known as Amish. They did not break away from the churches because of change for the better or worse. They broke away to remain unchanged. I asked Levi to tell me the difference between the Amish and the Mennonites in his opinion. He said, "Most

Mennonites believe in electricity and cars and things we don't." People do not have to be born Amish. They can be accepted into the culture and the way of life but cannot bring anything with them, such as electricity or cars.

There are many different churches of Amish people. Recently the church districts divided because of a lack of room. One district will go to church on Sunday; then the other district will go on the next Sunday. Levi and Anna now attend church every two weeks. I asked Levi who was in charge of their communities and churches. He said the elders are. The Amish have a Board of Elders which governs the community and its events. These elder Amish people in the community are chosen by each church district. Elders have a major part in allowing others to join the Amish culture. The board also sets rules for the Amish youth.

As I spoke to Levi and Anna, some friends and relatives came to visit. Two of the young men who had just entered the room overheard Levi and went on to tell me more about the Amish youth. They explained that the elders had a hard time keeping the youth interested. The Amish teenagers see all of the things the American culture has to offer and wonder why they aren't also allowed to have those things.

There are several businesses in the Amish community. There are leather shops, furniture shops, and buggy shops. The Amish sell produce and quilts, but mostly do farming. Levi and Anna own a saw mill, and Levi shoes horses by appointment. For some extra money, Anna does quilting on the side. I asked Levi and Anna what their daily routine consisted of. Levi said, "I milk forty cows in the morning and at night. If I have some appointments to shoe horses, I will. Then . . . I loaf the rest of time."

I asked Anna, and she replied, "Make breakfast." I asked her if she did that all day, and she laughed. On Mondays, Anna washes clothes if the weather permits. On Saturdays, she cleans house and does her baking. They also have everyday chores they attend to. On Sundays, they usually attend church and have company.

When I asked Anna and Levi what they would like to change about the community, at the same time Levi blurted out "Die!" and Anna "Divorce!" We all started to laugh. Levi said, "I'm kinda kidding." He turned to Anna and said, "We're not allowed to divorce." Anna replied, "I forgot." Levi and Anna finally agreed they would like it peaceful in the community. They wish people were not so jealous of others.

We discussed laws and the cooperation between the Amish people and the American people in the community. The Amish are supposed to abide by the same traffic laws, hunting laws, and so

on as the American people are. Levi feels the American and Amish people work well together and have no conflicts. He said, "They give complaints of buggies." We discussed the dangers of riding in buggies. He feels riding in a buggy is much safer at night than in the daytime. "When I see lights, I can get in the ditch for fast people," he chuckled.

Basically, there is very little difference between the Amish culture and the American culture. In my opinion, Amish life is a great life. As I walked towards the door, Anna and Levi raised their hands and said, "Kumm tcurick." In Pennsylvania Dutch, this means, "Come back." I said, "I will."



Amish Farming
by Amy Doyel

Farming can be done in many ways, especially when it is done by different people with different ways of life. Amish farming, in our eyes, is a hard way of going about it. The person I interviewed talked about the difference between our ways of living and their ways of living.

When I first started talking to him, he talked about the ways of teenage life. It was very interesting to hear him talk about how he would spend all day Sunday riding up to town with his horse and buggy and watch people his own age drive by in a pretty bright red car that could get them there in fifteen minutes. He talked about the weird clothes and the funny-looking shoes we wear.

He talked about all the things going on in the world today. He said the Amish people never have to put up with those things because they live in their own little world. He said the only thing the Amish people have to put up with is people driving too fast on these little country roads and running over the Amish people.

When I asked him what things his family did for a living, he showed me some of the big baskets his mom makes for extra money. He said it usually takes her about a week to make one. His three little sisters help his mom clean, wash, and make clothes for them. He told me that his dad was out working in the fields that day, as he is almost every day. He helps his dad with all the delicious vegetables they have in their store. He and his brothers also help milk the cows. A dairy truck picks up the milk and takes it to the plant to pasteurize it and

make dairy products out of it.

He said our tools and machinery would come in handy sometimes to get the job done faster. He said the Amish tools and machinery are old-fashioned, and their mules are as stubborn as he is sometimes. He said he wished it were as easy for them as it is for us, so doing things wouldn't take them all day.

Talking to him was very interesting. Even though he says we have it a lot easier than they do, I don't think he would switch if he could. Being that close to his family is a great thing to have, and not all of us have that.

Sturdivant's Grocery
by Craig Emmitt

The local country store is a symbol of rural America, including south central Kentucky, that is fast becoming extinct. Sturdivant's Grocery, affectionately known as "The Capital of Railton, Kentucky," is one of the few that continue to survive in this age of modernized convenient markets. Sturdivant's Grocery is not modernized and is probably not considered very convenient by city folks who are used to a faster-paced life. As the store's owner, Wendall Sturdivant, will tell you, that's the way he plans on keeping it, simple. The store's customers mainly consist of the people of Railton, and the most highly-respected customers are the loafers. The loafers themselves consist mainly of the elders of the community, the local farmers, and the neighborhood teenagers.

The elders of the community of Railton can be found just about any time of the day or night loafing around the store. During the summer, they congregate outside in front of the store. In the winter, they can be found inside by the wood-burning stove. Instead of chairs, most sit on old wooden Coke bottle crates. Their favorite pastime is simply telling tall tales. Oftentimes, it becomes a contest to see who can tell the biggest tall tale. There is also a lot of discussion of politics and world events. Many world problems have been solved in the back of the store over a good game of checkers and a big chew of tobacco.

The local farmers can be found loafing at the store during the evenings after the sun goes down. Now the talk shifts from tall tales to farm-related issues. They discuss how their crops are coming along and how well their livestock are doing. Also during this time, a lot of trading takes place. Usually all that is required to seal a deal is the farmer's good word and a handshake. Oftentimes, a single object will be traded between many farmers without any of them ever really having possession of the item. Wendell says that the farmers only hang around the store to get away from their wives!

The neighborhood teenagers can be found loafing around the store at just about any time of the day or night. If the store is closed, then they can be found outside on tailgates and car hoods just passing time. Wendell says their sitting at his store all night after it has closed doesn't bother him because it keeps them out of trouble. There are many activities at the store that they can participate in, including fishing tournaments, frog-gigging contests, ground hog hunts, and so on.

Sturdivant's Grocery won't be around forever, and when it finally closes there will be a lot of people who won't know what to do because loafing at the store is a routine part of their everyday lives. My guess is that they will still sit in front of the store and loaf, even though it's closed, and I plan to be one of them!



Fireside Tales
by Dorothean Powell

When my husband and I were first married, we moved into my father-in-law's tenant house. We sharecropped on his farm until we could buy one of our own. We didn't have electricity at that time and had never heard of a radio or television. We didn't have much in the way of entertainment on long winter evenings. So, we would walk up the hill to my father-in-law's house. He would get out his cornpopper and proceed to pop corn over the fire in the big fireplace. He would pop a big dish pan full of popcorn. As we sat by the fire and ate popcorn, he would begin to tell tales of various things that happened to him over the years.

Some of his stories were humorous, and some were spine-tingling. One of the humorous stories he told us took place when he was a teenager. He had been to call on his girlfriend. In those days, when boys went to call on their girlfriends, it was called "going a courtin'." It was dark when he left his girlfriend's house and started home. He had to walk home without a lantern or a flashlight. There was no such thing as having a car in those days. Folks were lucky if they had a horse to ride, which he didn't. As he walked along in the dark, nervous and probably a little scared, suddenly there was a bear standing in his pathway. It was standing on its hind legs with its front paws lifted up. He said, "I shore thought I wuz a goner when that bear rose up in front of me!" He began to search for rocks to throw at the bear. He threw rocks at the bear until he was exhausted, and still it stood in the pathway. As he stared at the bear, it suddenly became clear to him that it was only a cedar tree. Needless to say, he felt very foolish and relieved. The next day he passed by the place where this incident took place. He said, "The cedar tree shore was in bad

shape." He had knocked limbs off and made big holes all through the tree.

Another story he told us was a spine-tingler. When this story took place, he was married and had two small children. They lived in a remote spot along Barren River. The neighbors had been telling about hearing some kind of a wild animal scream in the night. Some of them claimed to have seen it. They said, "It might be a panter." What they meant was panther, but they pronounced it without the h. My father-in-law was skeptical about these stories of the "panter." He laughingly gave it another name. He called it an "Al Capanter."

One night he decided to go possum hunting. He took my mother-in-law and the two children with him. They went into the woods along Barren River. After a while, they sat down to rest and sent the hunting dog to search for a possum. The dog wasn't gone long until it came back, and it wouldn't budge from their feet. It was then that they heard the scream, and it wasn't like anything they had ever heard before. At first it was a faint sound, but each time it screamed it was closer. So they grabbed the children up in their arms and started for the house. At first, they were just walking fast, but as the screams of the wild thing came closer, they began to run. There were several gates to go through to get back to the house. By the time they reached the second gate, they heard the "Al Capanter" jump the first gate. By now, they were frightened for their lives, and were running as fast as they could. The wild thing was gaining on them all the time. Finally, they reached the house, just ahead of the animal. As they ran into the house, the animal jumped the gate into the yard. My father-in-law said it was about six feet long with a long tail, and it was black. He got his gun as fast as he could and shot at the animal. In his haste to shoot, he missed it, he believed. It jumped two or three feet in the air and ran off. They never saw it again. Perhaps he did hit it when he shot, and it managed to get back to its lair and died there. But no one will ever know for sure.

My father-in-law has been deceased for a number of years, but the legacy of his fireside stories lives on. He mesmerized the grandchildren with his tales. I'm sure they will remember them and tell them to their children and grandchildren.

George and the Snake, or a Hay Hauling to Remember
by Rickey T. Shive

Junior and I lived on a small farm in south central Kentucky with our parents, James and Grace Ferguson. The chores that the farm presented back in 1915 were considerably harder than those of today's farms. The most strenuous and time-consuming, the most sweat-producing and back-aching chore of the summer during those days always had to be hay hauling. It was on a particularly hot July day that Junior and I experienced the scare of our lives. We were hauling hay that day when we almost killed our tenant, George.

George was a middle-aged man who lived in our small, two-room tenant house. He worked around the farm doing everything from hauling hay to helping Ma silk sweet corn for canning. A fairly easy-going person, George was a real hard worker. He never let things trouble him too much; however, he had a weak spot and we knew it--it was snakes!

We started hauling hay that morning just as soon as the dew gave way to the sun's steady stream of heat. George drove the wagon team while Junior and I forked the hay on. After the wagon was loaded, we would take the hay to the hay pole and fork it off to Papa. Papa's job was to stack the hay around the pole. All morning Junior and I poked and joked at ole' George. He never seemed to pay much attention to us; occasionally, he would say, "You'n boys had to better work more'n play lessen or you'ns Paw's a gonna gitche!" We would give George's comment a couple of boyish giggles and then continue on aggravating him.

Along about dinner as we were winding the grasshalm lot up, Junior motioned me over to a windrow of hay. He slowly eased up the hay with his pitchfork. There lay the biggest snake I had ever seen. "Why that snake is the blackest snake I've ever seen and longer than a t'backer stick," squealed Junior! Through our minds tracked the same thought--we were going to get ole' George good now.

We rushed back to where George and the team were. We were trying our best to not act too conspicuous. We forked the hay as fast as we could, trying to get to the windrow with the snake under it. We dared not look at each other, knowing that just a glance would cause us both to burst out laughing. As the windrow grew closer and closer, I could picture ole' George's face when that snake hit him. I was counting them down: three windrows left, now two left, now only one to go. I wondered which one of us would get to the snake first.

Junior reached the snake before I did. This suited me just find because now I could watch George's expression more closely.

Junior eased his pitchfork under the hay. He scraped the dirt to make sure that he got under the snake. Just as George pulled the team to a stop, Junior slung hay, snake and all right in the middle of George's lap. George took one look at that ole' black snake, fell right off the wagon, landed on the ground, face up, and then never moved. We thought George was dead.

Papa watched everything that happened from the hay stack. By the time we had managed to scrap up enough courage to take a closer look at George, Papa had reached us. He was all out of breath from running. He took one look at George and said, "Boys, ya'll've done went and killed the poor ole' boy!"

Luckily, George wasn't dead. We dragged him to the shade of a big sycamore tree and finally revived him. I'll never forget that day; I thought that we had literally scared George to death. Needless to say, we never even mentioned the word snake to George again.

The Strangest Day of My Life, or The Largest Watermelon Ever
by Jeff Duncan

In today's rat race, one could experience many events that might be labeled strange. However, one hot fall day many years ago I had an experience which proves that even the simplest of all acts can turn out to be the strangest. I learned the hard way that growing large watermelons can cause strange events to take place.

It all began as harvest time rolled around and we started to pick our watermelons. It had been an exceptionally good year, and the melons were extra large. In fact, they were so large that we had to use a backhoe to load them onto the truck. The truck we were using was a two-ton with a twenty-four foot long bed which would only hold one watermelon.

Work had been progressing rather smoothly until one of the watermelons rolled out of the bucket of the backhoe. The melon patch was located on a hillside overlooking a creek. As the watermelon hit the ground, it began rolling down the hill toward the creek. Upon reaching the creek, it went into the water and because of its large size dammed the creek. Water immediately began to rise, and soon it had overflowed its banks. There were cattle in the bottomlands around the creek, and because of where the fences were located, they were unable to go to higher ground as the water rose. They were in imminent danger, and something had to be done. Because of the water and the size of the watermelon, our options were limited. A decision was made to insert a stick of dynamite into the watermelon and blow it out of the water. This was quite challenging in that the dynamite had to be strategically placed, so as to avoid the continually-rising water. With the dynamite in place and the fuse now burning, everyone sought cover. The explosion happened. One would have thought it was the Fourth of July. Fire flew, water was thrown hundreds of feet into the air, pieces of watermelon rind and seeds were scattered everywhere. Success was achieved, the watermelon was gone from the creek, the water had receded back to normal, and the cattle were now safe.

Everyone involved at this point thought the events of the day were over. However, not until later on did we come to realize the magnitude of our deed. Watermelon seeds had been scattered for miles and miles. People were coming to us to say that seeds had been falling with such force that they had torn off the roof of every barn and house within a ten-mile radius. I was extremely glad I had insurance to cover their losses. Nevertheless, all did not turn out well--there were so many claims paid by the insurance company that it cancelled my coverage.

The unexpected events of this day proved one thing to me: always expect the unexpected. It doesn't matter how simple, how trivial, or how boring a task may be, there is always something that can happen to change the total complexion of a person's outlook on things as they appear to be. Never in my wildest dreams would I have expected to go out and see a piece of watermelon rind and inside of it find a sow who had just had a litter of pigs. That is exactly what I found the following day. Thus, you can see why I call this the strangest day I ever had.

Editor's Note: This story and the following story about frog gigging have been included as proof that the tall tale is still alive and well in south central Kentucky. Jeff also has similar stories about fish, dogs, and other topics, but, as a service to the reader, these stories have not been included in this collection.



How To Gig Frogs
by Jeff Duncan

Each year near the end of April or the first of May, frogs begin to emerge from their winter habitat. During this time of year when I go out at night and hear the croaking of the frogs, I begin yearning to get out the old frog gig and go to the pond or creek bank in search of this nocturnal recluse.

When I walk around the farm or fish in the river, I see numerous small frogs and signs of frogs. But where is the best place to go? I must find where all these deep bass, guttural sounds are originating from. I finally decide on a pond that in years past has yielded many frogs.

As I walk through the field and approach the pond, I am encompassed by the sights and sounds of the night. An owl hoots in the distance, a possum trots along the ground in front of my light, and just as I reach the water's edge, a snake slithers in for a late-night bath. There is a full moon out tonight, and the frogs are out in full chorus. One would be perfectly content to sit down and absorb the serenity and peaceful bliss of the surroundings.

I do not want to spook my prey, so I am very careful not to make too much noise as I reach the water. I step into the water and look around to determine which way to go around the pond. Listening attentively, I determine the depth of the water. If the frog's croak says "belly deep," the water is too deep. If it says "knee deep," it is just right. Upon finding the knee-deep water, I begin my task.

The glow of something shining is detected through my light beam. Closer observation reveals the two bulging eyes of that

which I seek. The adrenaline starts to flow, thoughts race through my mind, I am nervous. Will I be able to get close enough to it, or will it jump before I can get there? The anticipation is almost unbearable as I creep ever-so-slowly through the water. I have now reached my destination. Careful not to move the beam of light out of the frog's eyes, I draw the gig back with a motion so slight that it is almost undetectable. I forcefully bring the gig down with precision. The quarry is now impaled on the sharp pricks at the end of the gig.

Suddenly, he lunges forward, catching me off-balance. With rocket-like propulsion, he is carrying me across the water, as if I were skiing behind a boat. What is this that I am trying with all that is within me to hold on to? Is it a whale? Or perhaps the Loch Ness monster? The fear of drowning suddenly becomes an issue; I must do something before this thing pulls me underwater. There, a tree--if I can just reach it, I will be all right. Finally, on the third try, I am able to grasp onto it. Should I simply be concerned with my safety and let this massive amphibious creature go? Never!

I was rescued from the tree some three hours later. Totally exhausted, I took this, the biggest frog I had ever seen in my life, and cleaned it. One leg weighed twenty-five pounds. My family ate on this one frog for three months!



Come Frogging With Me
by Jeanelle Gooch

Despite this fast and furious pace that has been set by our modern society, the rural community has had and continues to have an activity which slows the pace and gives opportunity for enjoyment for young and old alike. For years and years, frogging has been a sport enjoyed by little boys and their fathers, but it can involve the whole family. Frogging involves planning and collecting equipment, stalking the frog, and eating the catch.

The first thing to do is check to see it's frogging season which begins in May and ends in October. Don't forget to purchase your license. You will need a frog gig on a twelve-foot pole, a flashlight with good batteries, a burlap sack, a can of insect repellent, and a pair of boots.

Now that you have everything ready for the adventure, you can begin the fun of stalking the frog. In the cool of the evening after sunset when the frogs come to the edge of the pond, you are ready to start. You are reminded by your fellow froggers to be quiet as you walk slowly and cautiously around the pond listening for the croak of the frogs. When a frog is heard, you spot him with your flashlight and move very slowly, being careful not to step into the pond or make a noise which might frighten the frog away. When you are close enough to the frog, you poke the frog gig into the frog's back. Move back up on the bank of the pond, take the frog off the gig, and place it into the burlap sack. Be sure you tie the sack securely with a string so you won't lose the frog.

Sometimes, when you are just about ready to gig the frog, you find some nosy livestock have come to investigate what's

going on at their favorite drinking spot. You may not be aware of their presence until you receive a nibble on the back or a great big juicy lick, which just about scares you to death. So you can guess what happens--all the frogs are frightened away by the commotion and you just have to sit down and wait for their return.

Once you have caught your limit of frogs, which is fifteen per frogger, you are ready to prepare them for eating. Most people only eat the back legs of the frog because they are the biggest and easiest to clean. You skin the frog legs and remove the leaders with a pair of wire pliers. While you are skinning and preparing the frog legs, you may find some of the neighborhood cats and dogs drop by to help you out. After the frog legs are cleaned, they should be soaked in salt water overnight before cooking; this gives them a much more delightful taste. When you are ready to cook them, roll the frog legs in flour and place them in a medium hot skillet of oil. Cook them until they are golden brown, turning them at least once. You may notice the frog legs begin to move around when placed in the hot oil. This is normal, so don't be alarmed. Some people will tell you the frog legs will jump out of the skillet, but you will find this not to be true. Probably, your oil is too hot. Now it's time to enjoy your catch--Just sit down and feast yourself on fried frog legs, hushpuppies, cole slaw, ripe tomatoes, and coffee.

Many people have not had the opportunity of enjoying the sport of frogging. Yet it is a relatively inexpensive sport, takes minimum preparation, and is a lot of fun. Frogging is also a means of supplementing food for the family. It provides a wholesome family outing, and the highlight of the sport is you get to eat your catch.