# Appalachian Memories

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enough for two large tubs to sit on. The tubs were made from a large wooden barrel cut in two. The rub board was made from a flat oak board. Dad saw a "store board," as the bought one was called, and he carved our rub board like the store board and how glad my sister was for that board! We had always rubbed the clothes by hand, which made blisters.

When the water was hot, we put some of the hot water in one tub and some in the second tub. Clothes were rubbed through two waters, with "battling" in between (beating the dirt out with a stick) on a battling bench, made like a wash bench only higher. We would cover the clothes over with home-made lye soap, then put them in the kettle to boil. After the clothes had boiled a half hour, they were taken out and put through rinse water three times. The wash place was close by a big stream and all water was carried to the kettle and tubs. After rinsing, the clothes were hung on a line to dry.

Tuesday was ironing day, and the irons were heated by an open fire, or on top of the stove. Starch was made from flour, but if we had no flour, it was made by using Irish potato water. Every girl liked her dress stiff enough to stand alone when ironed.

Hog-killing time was also soap-making time, for Mother used all the excess fat to make soap.

Dad made what we called an ash hopper, about two feet wide at the bottom and growing wider until it was three or four feet high. We burned hickory wood until we had enough ashes for the soap. The ashes, which had to be fine and clean, were put in the hopper, and water was added slowly so it came through down at the bottom and flowed into a pan. This was emptied every day into a larger container. People had to be very careful with the lye, especially if there were small children around, for sometimes a child would drink it and be poisoned.

Hog fat between the entrails and around the kidneys, heart, etc., was used for making soap. The lye was boiled, then the fat was added until soap would get hard enough to cut when cold. Often it was just a thick, jelly-like substance. It was hard on clothes and hands but it really cleaned and sterilized.

We grew corn, wheat, oats, grass, clover, beans, peas, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, cabbage, turnips, parsnips, carrots, onions, greens of different kinds, squash, pumpkins, okra, eggplant, cucumbers, apples, peaches, pears and grapes. Most of these could be preserved by some method. Beans, for example, could be dried or pickled. The methods used then for most things were either drying, burying in the ground, salting or sulphurizing.

We had our horses, cows, hogs, sheep, turkeys, ducks, chickens, guineas and geese. My father always killed four or five hogs in the fall or winter. We lived "high on the hog" then, but now we can hardly afford the feet! As a child, I did not know that beef was to eat. Dad never killed one. We had lamb often, but I did not like it.

Money was scarse in those days and there were no industrial plants to work in. People had plenty of time to be neighborly. Mother raised sheep, and our clothes were home-spun. The wool was taken from the sheep, and it was always full of burrs, and always dirty. We had to pick all the burrs out. There was one, called a cockleburr (burdock), which was just like chewing gum to get out-and that was my job. Mother would encourage me by saying, "You have beautiful little fingers, and you can make them fly."

After the wool was cleaned of burrs and dirt, it was washed and dried. Then it was carded and spun into thread, put into hanks and colored. Mother used cherry shoemake bark for red, walnut hulls for brown, broom sage for yellow, and she bought a blue stone for blue. One of the biggest jobs was getting the loom threaded for weaving. That was such a long process, and oh, so slow! The material was called linsey, and it was coarse and stiff.

I always had two dresses, one red and the other blue. Some of the little girls had calico dresses, and I thought they were so pretty. I was so glad when I stopped wearing linsey, and got my first calico dress. I would have had to wear linsey longer, but the dogs killed all our sheep.

The dogs were the sheeps' enemies. One morning, Mother went to milk early, and I went with her. When we got to the milk gap, here came all the sheep running down the hill to us. Mother put me up on the fence so they would not run over me. A dog was after the sheep, and a little lamb tried to crawl under her dress for protection. She could hardly beat the dogs off.

Early one morning, Dad came in and called Mother out. Later, I learned that the dogs had killed most of the sheep. I went out to the mountain, and there they lay, with part of the heads and legs eaten off,, and they were still alive. Most of the wool had been torn off from their being dragged down the mountainside. Only a few sheep were left, and Dad killed them. Mother and I cried.

Mother had to find another way to make money to buy our clothes. There were plenty of herbs growing in the mountains, and the merchants were buying them, so we began to be "rooters". Families made picnics of those days. We would gather up and go off to the mountains. We would start out with our hoes and bags, singing and laughing. Mother and the older ones knew all the herbs by name. Ginseng brought the most money, 70 cents a pound. (Now it is more than a hundred dollars a pound). I dug bloodroot, for it was easy to dig, and brought three cents a pound. It did not take long to dig as many roots as we could carry out of the mountains, for sometimes we would be two or three miles back in the hills.

When we got the herbs home, we would wash them, and put them on a board to dry. When they were dry, if they had any little roots we had to rub them off-then they were ready for the market. When they were dried, we did not have half of the pounds that we had had when they were green, so it took several pounds to get a dress. Then, calico was ten cents per yard, checked cotton was five cents, and domestic three cents a yard.

Most of the stores would buy roots, and you would be surprised how well-supplied those stores were. The merchants had to haul everything from Marshall or Barnard, the nearest railroad station. Women wore corsets, in those days, and most of the clerks were men. I have seen the girls give one of their friends a few pounds of roots to ask for the corset. One of the missionaries went into the store to buy a pair of hose, and the merchant went to the back of the store. He came back in a minute, carrying a garden hose, and said, "Lady, this is heavy, but I think you can use it!" Another lady asked for a pair of drawers (which we call panties, now). The style then was with divided legs, so they were called "split drawers." The merchant held them up and said, "Lady, they seem to be torn in two, but I'll tell you what I will do. I will let you have them at half-price." There was a lot of blushing in those days.

Mother did not have a sewing machine and made all our clothes by hand, and it took a long time. One of our neighbors who lived two miles away, had a sewing machine and sometimes Mother would go there to sew. There was a little girl in the family, and I had a good time, for I was always trotting at Mother's heels. While she was sewing, I would be out with the little girls playing. The only kind of swing we had was grapevine, and this particular family lived in a nice big cove in the mountains. There were two big hills so close together we could take hold of a grapevine and swing across a little hollow, kick the other mountain, and fly back. Roxie was swinging this time, and the vine broke, and she fell across a stump. It stuck almost through her, and we thought she was dead. For days, it looked as if she would not pull through, but she did.

Mother decided she would get a sewing machine. She decided to plant black-eyed peas, and it took fifteen bushels of peas to pay for the machine. The machine had to be special ordered and it was days before word came that the machine was at the depot. Mother hitched up Beck to the sled, and we started across the mountain to Barnard on a sled road. She took me with her and I was a proud little gir. I had never seen a train,. and now was my chance. I could hardly wait for the train to come, and soon I heard the whistle. I started to run toward the train and Mother grabbed me. When the train got closer, it looked as if it were coming right toward me and I started running in the other direction. There were people at the station and they all laughed. But I was scared!

We started back home with the machine, and it took us two days to make the trip. We spent the night with a family that lived on the mountain. Word got around that there was a sewing machine at the Wheeler house, and people poured in to see it. But no one had any thread to try it out.

Next morning, bright and early, we started home, and when we arrived there was another crowd anxiously waiting to see the machine. My sisters were arguing who got to use it first. That machine was kept pretty busy and made the children and young people happy, for they did not have to wait so long for a new dress. Many were taught to use it.

Getting peas or beans ready was a hard job. First, they had to be picked off the vine and spread out to dry. When they were dry you could step on them and the hulls would burst open and out came the peas or beans. First, people tried walking on them, and that was a slow process. Then someone made a tool out of a hickory treebranch. The tool would be about six feet long and a yard or more from the end of the stick, and would be broken until the end would twril around. Hickory is tough and as they would lift it up and come down hard the end would twril around, and when it hit the bean pods they would burst open and out would come the beans. They put a sheet outside of the house on the ground and poured bushels of beans on the sheet and then with what we call "frailing" the beans would start. It did not take long to frail out bushels. After they were frailed out, the hulls ould be on the top, and they were taken off and thrown away. There were always small pieces of hull and dirt left on the beans; then came what was known as "winding" the beans. They would wait until a windy day, then put some beans in a bucket and hold it high. While the wind was blowing, they would let the beans slowly fall out of the bucket onto a sheet, and all the chaff would be separated from the beans.

# Committee

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**ing for the elderly; however, the number of available units is limited, and many elderly residents prefer to remain in their on homes. Housing rehabilitation programs such as the Existing Section 8 and Community Development Block Grant programs have provided a needed improvement to the County's housing stock, and these programs should be continued with special attention to units occupied by the elderly. In addition to rehabilitation programs, the weatherization assistance available through the French Broad EMC and the Opportunity Corporation should be expended as a means of improving housing quality and reducing energy costs for elderly residents.**

Elderly residents of Madison County represent a critical link with the heritage and culture of the area. The knowledge and experience of these individuals are an important community resource which should be shared with younger generations. Community organizations and churches should acknowledge and promote the leadership abilities of the edlerly. The involvement of elderly persons in these organizations increases the recognition of their abilities and contributes to their feelings of self-worth. Churches should encourage their membership to assist elderly members of the community, possibly through special interdenominational programs.

Volunteerism is an integral part of the strong sense of community in the county and it continues to be an improtant source of assistance to the elderly. Volunteerism can provide services that are not available through the public sector, as well as supplement and extend the quantity and quality of the public services which are provided. Young people should be especially encouraged to become involved in volunteer service to the elderly, since intergenerational understanding is improved and teh younger residents can learn much from visiting with their elders. Schools, churches, community organizations and agencies should continue to promote the traditon of volunteer service. Existing efforts to provide some coordination of volunteer services, such as Neighbors in Need, should be continued, both as a means of involving elderly persons in the activities of the community, such as schools, and as a way of insuring that the needs of individuals in the community are not overlooked.

**Health and social service providers should continue to focus their resources on providing assistance which enables the elderly to live independently in their own homes whenever possible. Implementation of a "lifeline" telephone service in the county is an important objective in this regard. In-home services provide a cost-effective alternative to institutionalization for many elderly persons.**

Madison County if forntunate that it is still characterized by strong and cohesive families. These extended families are a part of the cultural tradition of the area, and they lend stability and continuity to the social fabric of the community. The family has major responsibility for the personal growth and development of each of its members. However, many of the social changes occuring in the national society can also be seen in Madison County, and the committee recognizes certain problems which should be addressed in order to strengthen family life in the county. A primary concern is the needfor greater public understanding of the many factors which contribute to a healty family. Families need to be more aware of the services which are available to assist in resolving family problems, and family members need to understand the improtance of recognizing existing or potential problems and seeking appropriate help.

## SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN NEED

Although there exits a variety of public social and human services in Madison County, certain needs of family members and individuals cannot always be met by public agencies due to the budget and eligibility constraints of these programs. There is a need for a more organized community response in this regard. The work performed by Neighbors in Need, various churches and community groups has provided an important service to families in crisis. It is believed that these efforts should be expanded and better coordinated in order to serve a more effective role in the community. An example of this role is the need for a job referral system. Families in economic need often seek only the opportunity to obtain work to provide for the family during a difficult period. A means of bringing together those who need part-time or temporary workers and those who need such employment can sometimes prevent the need for public assistance.

It is recommended that a Madison Community Christian Ministry be formed as the responsible organization for coordinating and enlarging the services available to families in need. This organization could be supported and managed by churches in the county and other interested organizations. The Asheville-Buncombe Community Christian Ministry might serve as a model for this organization.

The County Commissioners should request that the Employment Security Commission expand its level of service in Madison County, especially in obtaining more listings of temporary employment opportunities.

Individuals in the county who have need of temporary workers should be encouraged to share these needs with the Community Christian Ministry so that disadvantaged individuals can be referred to these opportunities.

## CARE FOR DEPENDENT FAMILY MEMBERS

As a result of economic and social changes which have occured over the past decade, more and more families are characterized by the labor force participation of both the husband and the wife.This circumstance creates problems in the provision of adequate care for dependent family members-children, the elderly and handicapped individuals. In other cases a single caregiver is responsible for a dependent person, and the need for respite care becomes an improtant concern. The following recommendations have been formulated to address some of these needs.

The County Commissioners and the Board of Education should study the possibility of providing an after-school program for children whose parents work. Similarly, school facilities could possible be used to provide a summer activities program for such children. These services might be supported by parent fees.

The Council on Aging and the Department of Social Services should determine the potential demand for adult-respite casre in the county. Families who care for the elderly or handicapped individuals often need short periods of relief from these responsibilities. Development of a facility and program to care for such persons for periods of a few hours periodically while family members shop or conduct other business would assist these households.

The County Commission and human service program administrators should investigate the feasibility of establishing a group home for handicapped citizens who are capable of some degree of independent living. The level of care offered through family care homes should be evaluated as an alternative to a group home. Such services would relieve families of some of the care responsibilities for these individuals, while allowing the handicapped to remain in the community and close to relatives. The provision of limited respite care services through such a facility would offer support to an even greater number of families.

**MADISON COUNTY 4-H MEMBERS Billy Gosnell of Marshall and Anthony Ripley of Mars Hill attended the 4-H Electric Congress held at Western Carolina University recently. Carolina Power and Light customer service representative Aundria Walker accompanied the boys.**

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