

HOUSEHOLD CHORES

In the kitchen we had a large chalkboard where mom listed the jobs that needed to be done. We wrote our name next to the jobs we chose to do, so first to pick got the easier ones. Mopping the floor was usually last to be chosen. When all jobs were done, we could draw pictures on the chalkboard or play school if we wanted to.

Our folks often made those chores fun to do. One way was sitting on discarded wool clothing placed on a freshly waxed floor. Then we had a jolly time chasing each other as we scooted around the room, polishing the floor.

The marvel of electricity had yet to arrive in our area. Kerosene lamps and lanterns were our source of light. One daily job was keeping those lamp chimneys clean of soot formed from the flame burning each evening. We wadded a sheet of newspaper, thrust it into the glass chimney and swiped it around. The soot clung to the newspaper and left the chimney clean. Mom said it was the ink in the paper that left the glass shiny. It was also our way of washing the windows to keep them sparkling.

Gathering eggs was a good job choice, but helping Grandma dig dandelions was a chore. She liked a nice-looking lawn and considered dandelions an eyesore. She gave us slender knives to plunge into the soil around the plant, then lift it up. We hoped we were getting the entire root so it wouldn't grow again. The dandelion leaves were sorted, washed and cooked for dinner. They were tasty with vinegar splashed on them.

A job we kids would do together was pumping water into a huge tank for the horses and cattle to drink. After many times taking turns pumping, the tank was filled, and our arms sore. On a hot summer day we'd wish we could climb right into the tank.

Many of the chores we did then were hard and monotonous. But after each day, we felt a sense of fulfillment, having contributed to the wellbeing of our farm and family.