

looking pigpen. Lady ran alongside us, her ears flapping. The slide down was such fun that we didn't mind the trudge back up the hill. We pulled our little brother, John, up the hill and listened to his "giddy-up" as he pretended to drive. At the top we were breathless, but ready for another ride. John especially liked being a passenger with Margaret, who skillfully sped down the hill, always hugging him tightly. Alice and I belly-flopped all the way down, because we found it easier to steer and keep from toppling over.

When we were quite cold, it was time to go in for a cup of cocoa and warm up by the potbellied stove. Then we curled up with our latest books from the library, and we were far away in the middle of a fascinating mystery, until it was time for chores.

WINTER CHORES

Dad never asked us girls to help with the morning milking on school days—he said he didn't want his girls to smell of the barnyard. But every afternoon, milk pails in hand, we walked through the horse barn, patting each horse on the nose, especially Daisy. She was our old gray mare that we rode in pleasant weather.

We glanced at the jostling pigs, safe in their pen, and told them "You'll be fed soon, so stop squealing!"



We hurried on to the cattle barn and the surprising warmth the cows generated. The warm, pungent odor of the livestock made a comforting welcome. The cows munched sweet-smelling hay with their characteristic cud-chewing; that was such a peaceful sight. We soon sat on our one-legged milking stools, our pails ready to receive the streams of warm milk.

With Dad, Grandpa, and us kids all milking, there was soon enough milk to fill the big vat of the DeLaval separator. Then my real job of the evening began: separating the cream from the milk. Turning the crank handle gave my fingers a welcome change from milking. The milk flowed from the vat and down through the stack of metal discs to separate the cream, which then flowed through the cream spout into the waiting five gallon cream can. The skimmed milk poured through a larger spout into the ten gallon milk cans. Foamy froth soon arose. Dad kept the vat filled until all the cows had been milked. The hogs fattened up on the skimmed milk. Judging from the noises they made while drinking, they surely liked it.

“It’s just like riding a merry-go-round, isn’t it?” Grandpa usually said as I turned the separator. I faced the open barn door and watched dusk gather and stars appear one by one. It was a magical time of day.



Dad Helps Alice get a Ride on the Calf

If snow was on the ground, Dad and Grandpa placed the cream cans on a sled. Dad pulled the sled and Grandpa steadied the cans. They brought the cream to the house for storage in our cool cellar until collected by the creamery man.

Mom made her creamy cottage cheese, and we girls took turns churning butter in the glass butter churn. We liked to watch the paddles turn a quart of cream into butter that would be perfect for spreading on fresh-baked

bread or baking-powder biscuits. Buttermilk was a by-product of the churning, and Dad looked forward to that treat.

We soon finished the evening chores. As we entered the house, we were met with the aroma of rich beef soup that had been simmering much of the day with carrots, onions, potatoes, and whatever vegetables were available—mmm! On those cold winter evenings, as we gathered around the table, we relished Mom's vegetable-beef soup and flaky biscuits. We ate to our heart's content, sharing stories of the day's fun, and laughing at another one of Grandpa's tales.

A MEMORY OF MARGARET

By John Adair

One time we all were sitting around the dinner table in the dining room with Margaret sitting on the northeast side. Mom had made a meringue pie for dessert (the one Dad liked to put cream on...of course he liked to put cream on everything). The pie was passed around the table.

The first one took a piece and they noticed a strange odor. Well, everyone had to smell the pie as it was passed. It was started at the southwest corner of the table where I sat. This gave me enough time to slip around to Margaret's side and when she leaned over to check the smell...I pushed her face in the pie. I thought it was funny and right now I can't remember how she got even with me, but she did.

Now for the rest of the story. We couldn't for the life of us find out what caused the smell. Finally we traced it back to the corn starch. We took the box to "Charles the Butch" where we got the starch. He was surprised and went to get another box. Sure enough we found the trouble; he had placed the starch next to the *Lifebuoy soap*. Lifebuoy soap had a fragrance of its own and didn't help the pie or set well with Margaret, either.

A YEAR OF CELEBRATIONS

Living on a farm meant that there was always work to be done; duties from dawn till after dusk 365 days a year. This sounds dull and boring; however I remember that we always had something exciting to look forward to. We anticipated gatherings of family and neighbors to celebrate birthdays and holidays,