

## Things That Have Passed Away in my Generation

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For the Schooling-Woods Centennial Celebration (commemorating the 100th settling in Missouri, in the year 1836)

The old-fashioned mother sitting by the old-fashioned cradle, rocking it when the baby stirred, sewing by hand or knitting, and all the while softly singing such songs as, " How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours", or "Sweet Rivers of Redeeming Love".

The trundle bed and the old high post cord bedstead, amply high enough to push the trundle bed under it in the daytime, and the bed wrench, which was used to tighten the cords (used in place of springs) are things of the past.

The wooden washtub, wooden churn, wooden water bucket, wooden well bucket and the old drinking gourd live only in history. If someone should decide to write some poetry about the old well buckets, they would likely say, "the old metal bucket, the old battered bucket, the old leaky bucket, which hangs in the well".

The tallow candle, with its pale flickering light, the candle mold, the candle stick, and the candle box used to keep the mice from eating the candles, and the scissors with which we snuffed the candles are things that are used no more.

In the backyard stood the old ash hopper, plain but very useful in its day. There was no concentrated lye on the market, and as everyone made their own laundry soap, their only source of lye was the leeching of the wood ashes, which came from the fireplaces during the winter months. As no poet has sung the praises of this, which was once a necessary piece of equipment in every home, I wish to dedicate the following verse to its memory.

### The Old Ash Hopper

The useful old ash hopper  
In the backyard it stood,  
Not very pretty, but needful and good:  
With a wave of my hand, I bid it good-bye,  
But I never can forget it,  
Even though I should try.

The hub of the spinning wheel, the noise of the loom, the crack of the reel, are noises that are heard no more. The blue dye pot is not found in its corner by the kitchen fireplace. When their noises were stilled, we made no more linsey, nor more counterpanes, no more of the beautiful colored coverlets, no more home knit socks and stockings, and no more of the warm woolen mittens.

While the women were cooking by the open fire, the men were tending the crops with a homemade wooden plow, which had only the point made of iron (steel was too expensive for that common a use), or they were harvesting the hay with scythes, and cutting the grain with cradles. The grain was thrashed with a horsepowered thrasher, and later ground into flour or meal on a water-powered burr mill.

When a house was to be built, the men hewed the logs square with broad axes and dragged them to the building site, and then held a "house raising". Very often a "two house raising" was quite an affair and was attended by all the neighbors, both men and women. With much joking, the men notched the ends of the logs so that they would fit at the corners of the house and roll them into place. The women served, not lunch, but dinner at noon, and though there was lots of hard work, many willing hands made it a kind of picnic.

When a young married couple started out housekeeping, the furniture was usually made by some cabinet maker who resided in the neighborhood. A dining table, a bedstead, four chairs, a Dutch oven, a skillet, a set of knives and forks, and set of spoons was the amount that was considered very adequate. Of course no girl thought of getting married until she owned a feather bed and enough quilts for covering.

The wild turkeys and wild deer (both of which were so plentiful), the prairie chickens, and so far as I know, the wonderful fox chases are things of the past.

If time and space would permit, I could write a long story about the wild flowers, which grew in profusion on the prairies, on the hillsides, in the valleys, and on the banks of the streams. There was never a time, from April till November that there was not some variety of wildflowers blooming. As the land was cleared and cultivated and the woods were pastured, these flowers began to disappear, so that now only the most hardy and vigorous varieties are all that is left. But as these disappeared, the seed catalogs began to be printed, and many families began to grow flower gardens in their dooryards. I often think of

the goodness of God in providing the wildflowers when we had so few of the cultivated kinds in our gardens.

The cotton patch and the cotton cards were considered indispensable. Not only must each family raise the cotton to be used in making the cloth for their clothing, but for the thread used in sewing and also for the small ropes used about the home. My mother and older sisters made their last piece of cotton cloth in the spring of 1872. They and others in the community made woolen cloth, jeans, linsey, and woolen blankets until about 1882. They also quit knitting their hosiery about 1895. Knitting was as much a necessary part of a girl's accomplishments as cooking or sewing, in fact, a girl was not considered very smart if she could not at least knit her own stockings by the time she was twelve years old.

When I was a mere slip of a girl under the teen-age, I only had one pair of Sunday stockings for summer wear. They were of white cotton, home knit of homespun thread, and did not reach above my knees. When fall came, they were carefully put away so as to be worn next summer.

No matching of color with dresses was dreamed of at that time. I was fifteen years old before I ever owned a pair of factory knit stockings, and until I was twelve years old, my only shoes were the ones which my father made.

Fireplace cooking gave way to the stoves in the early seventies, but for several years after, a stove was not considered a necessity.

In about the year 1870, mother permitted us to get a kerosene lamp, a brass one, for she was afraid one of us would drop a glass one and cause an explosion. Of course the kerosene lamp is still in use today, but it certainly has lost its popularity. (1936)

The only fence known was the crooked rail fence, and the only cultivated fields were fenced. The stock ran out on the range and as everybody's stock pastured on the same range, a system of earmarks was used. Every farmer had his own particular system of cutting notches out of the ears of his stock so that he could prove his ownership. None of these are seen any more.

The only vehicle of those days was the wagon which was drawn by oxen or sometimes horses. Volumes of history could be written around the use of the ox wagon and in this short piece I could not do it justice. However, there is one high point in my experience that is connected with the wagon which I wish to

relate.

### My Trip to Aunt Eveline Bright's

In July of 1866, my father and Mr. Eddie Motley did the wood work, and Mr. Jackson Pruitt did the blacksmith work for an ox wagon. No children of today could be more elated if the finest, new, shiny automobile were to be driven to their door and told that it was to be theirs, than we children were of that sturdy ox wagon (although it had not a spoonful of paint on it). You must know that up to this time, I had always walked when I had gone anywhere. Therefore, my first ride, a trip to Aunt Eveline Bright's, was an event in my life never to be forgotten. Mother and I each wore a new dress for the occasion. Mother's dress was of homemade cotton cloth woven in checks. The colors were indigo blue, pale blue, a little coppersa (pale yellow), and a little white. Of course it was checked back the same way. Now don't forget that these were our Sunday dresses. Our everyday dresses were colored with oak bark, black oak, and black jack buds, for indigo was too expensive to be used on material for everyday wear. My dress was made from the same piece of cloth and was patterned after the style of the day --plain waisted, buttoned in the back, high neck, long sleeves, and a straight skirt of generous length and width. It had two tucks so that it could be lengthened as I grew taller, for that was to be my best dress for several years.

My bonnet was not one trimmed with ribbons and artificial flowers, but a plain sunbonnet made of the same material as my dress and stiffened with splints made from homemade pasteboard as there were no boxes from which splints could be cut. Some of the everyday bonnets had splints made from thin strips of hickory.

Our mothers had not learned that girls should wear sun suits to be healthy. However I grew up to one of the healthiest girls that ever lived in the state and I never had so much as a short sleeved dress.

But back to the glorious ride in the ox wagon. Father and mother sat on two straight bucked chairs and I sat on the bottom of the wagon bed, just behind them on a folded quilt. I guess I got a lot of jolts, for there were no good roads then, but I was so interested and happy that I paid no attention whatever to them. The distance was only about eight miles and we started very soon after daybreak. It was about ten o'clock when we arrived.

Since that time I have ridden in buggies, carriages, automobiles, street cars, busses, and railroad trains, but never again have I experienced as great a thrill as when I took my first ride (when I was six and a half years old) even though it was only in an ox wagon.

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The next vehicle was the horse drawn wagon or hack. Next came the closed carriages and buggy, but they too have passed on, and only a few of these old relics remain today, for the automobile has proven the most satisfactory means of travel at the present time.

The only other means of travel in my younger days was on horse-back. Both the men and women would make long trips on horseback. But the side saddle with which our mothers and older sisters could so gracefully ride, have given way to safer ones, though I never knew of anyone getting seriously hurt, let alone being killed from riding on a side saddle.

The long-remembered squeak of the wooden molasses mills are heard no more, neither do we have molasses candy, molasses cookies, and the good old molasses cake. Of course we older ones can remember that for it was about the only kind of cake we had then.

When we think of school, we see with our mind, the "McGuffey Readers", "Pennoes Grammar", "Rays Arithmetic", and the old "Blue Back Speller", and oh yes!-- the "Spellin Stick". Now don't misunderstand me, for it was spell-i-n not spell-i-n-g stick. This was a fad among the smaller girls. We had no lead pencils in school, so we would get a nice rod willow stick about the size of a pencil. We would fasten a band on one end and a button on the other and use it to keep the place when studying down the lines of the "Old Blue Back Speller". The practice of studying the lessons out loud has been discontinued but a few years, so that sometimes we were given permission to study our spelling lesson out loud, and at such times, my what noise we made! This was a time before children were supposed to even have slates; and a tablet and pencil in school were unheard of! It was about the year 1831 that the slate was considered a necessity and no child was thought properly equipped for school unless he possessed one. But now the slates have been thrown into the trash pile or hung on the wall as a relic. When the larger pupils studied writing, they did their practicing on "fools cap paper" and with pen and ink. The Spencerian System was the only method taught and the results can be seen in the beautifully written handwriting in any of the autograph albums written at that time.

While we are talking about school, let us not forget the old dinner basket. There were nine of us in our family of school age, in the years 1876 and 1877. At that time we all had a perfect attendance record and all nine of us ate our dinner from the one dinner basket. This basket was not filled with angel food cake made of the finest pastry flour, but plain wholesome food such as home baked bread, apple butter, home cured meat, which we all ate with good appetite. I guess it just accidentally (or otherwise) contained all the necessary vitamins for we were a healthy and happy bunch.

When it comes to music, we first think of the Old Southern Harmony. Words fail me when I try to tell of the precious memories of the dear ones that used to sing and the dear old songs they sang. It was printed in the year of 1835, so you see, it was comparatively a new book when first used here. As I write this scene of my early childhood, in the old home here where I was born and reared and lived until my marriage, as it comes to my mind.

On a cold winter evening, the friends of my older brothers and sisters would come in, a huge fire was built in the large open fireplace. The circle of people sitting around it was made large and all sang until tired. Then my mother brought in a big basket filled with fine apples and all had a merry time eating them. Then they sang again, continuing until a late hour. I was seated by my mother's side in one of the little chairs made for us children, and will never forget the sweet voice of Aunt Emma (Woods) Lynn as she so beautiful sang the old fashioned treble. In my memory I can still hear those grand old songs. In the Glory world, I wonder if they are not still singing some of those beautiful old songs such as: "In That Morning--In That Morning -- We'll All Shout Together In That Morning", or "I Am Bound for the Promised Land", and "The Family Bible That Lay on the Stand".

The Christian Harmony came next and was used only a few years. Its songs were sang entirely without musical instruments, but thank God, we had our voices and could use them to sing God's praises. This was the song book of the early teens of my happy young life sixty years ago. A majority of those who made up the classes have already passed over the river. Those who are left are like myself--old, wrinkled, and gray. Because of the many sweet memories which come to me when I chance to open my copy of this dear old book of the past, tears unbidden flow.

When our first Sunday School was organized, we used the New Testament for our textbook until we got a library. This consisted of several books, pamphlets,

and helps on the study of the Bible. We would commit whole chapters from the New Testament to memory and recite them to our teachers when in the class on Sunday. We did not begin using the "International Sunday Lessons" until 1880. Our mother taught us to reverently bow our heads when they prayed. It was the custom for all church members to kneel when engaged in prayer. We were taught to keep the Sabbath Day holy, and it was considered a disgrace to anyone working on that day. At church, the minister would select a hymn suitable to his subject and line it for his congregation. Hymn books were scarce and this was done that all might sing.

I began this with the cradle and will close it with the grave. Loving hands of the neighbors prepared the dead for burial as there were no undertakers. As there were no coffins to be bought, some of the neighbors built one. They were made of good lumber, covered with black velvet and lined with white muslin. They were necessarily very plain but neat. Caskets made their appearance several years later. Some neighbor would haul the corpse to the graveyard (as the cemetery was called). The procession would go directly from the home to the cemetery where the body would be buried in the grave dug by the neighbors. The funeral would be preached at a later date. This was necessary because the body had not been embalmed, and needed to be buried immediately. Often the services of a preacher, in many cases, could not be available for several days.

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Aunt Lenora liked and raised flowers, but was partial to the dahlia. I heard her say, "God might have created a more beautiful flower, but I've never seen it."

I will return this compliment to her---God might have created a more remarkable woman, but I've never met her.