

dress but the pleasure in it was gone. I was just heart broken. Why did that have to happen to me? I began to hate the barbed wire gates just as much as other aspects of farm life.

The Spelling contest-

I loved to spell and by the 8th grade could spell every word in my blue spelling book. There was a spelling contest at Jay Em that spring for any school in the county that wanted to enter. This lasted all day. My friend Eugene Terrell was in it too. We were given a word. The rules were the contestant pronounced the word first, spelled it, then pronounced it again. If you misspelled a word you were eliminated. The group kept getting smaller as one by one they dropped out. Eugene finally made a mistake.

I was still there for the afternoon session. After all, I could spell every word in that book. About 1:30 in the afternoon it was my turn again. I pronounced the word, spelled it correctly...then forgot to pronounce it again. So down I went. Life can be cruel sometimes when you have to play by the rules.

The time I ran away-

I must have been about 12 yrs. old when I really got into it with my Mother. She told me to do something and I said I wasn't going to. I was too big for her to spank so she took after me with the broom. She got me cornered in the living room. I was about as strong as she was by then. I took a hold of the broom handle with both hands and we were just struggling there...no one gaining ground. This time I let my temper fly just as much as Mother. I held onto the broom and looked her in the eye and said "When I grow up, I'm going to do just as I want and nobody is going to tell me what to do". Mother's face sort of crumpled and tears came to her eyes. She said "My dear Dorothy, when you grow up you will find you can't always do just what you want to do". Truer words were never spoken. She dropped the broom and turned away.

I left the house still very angry and decided I'd run away! Where can a bare footed 12 yr. old run to way out on the prairie? I went past the barn and ended up walking through the south cow pasture. The cows were in it but I didn't see the bull until I was in the middle of the pasture. Dad had warned us to stay away from him as he was mean. I was too far away from the fence and too close to the bull to run, but he hadn't seen me yet. I found a depression in the ground that I could hide in and peer through the tall grass to watch the bull. I laid there a long time peering through the grass. Finally the bull wandered far away so I could high tail it back to safety. Mother and Dad never found out about this escapade.

Other stunts I pulled-

I was wearing some white canvas high topped laced shoes to school. It was winter and I did not want to wear white shoes. So I decided to dye them with shoe polish. I couldn't find any but did find a bottle of Mapeline flavoring that Mother used in the sugar syrup. So I dyed them a beautiful brown...and wore them to school. The teacher kept smelling "something". When she discovered it was my shoes, I had to leave them in the hall the rest of the day and go in stocking feet.

Eugene and I were in the store at Jay Em with Mother. I spotted a box of wax crayons we both wanted. So I put one box in my pocket and gave one to Eugene. When we got home and Mother discovered what I had done I got a lecture on shop lifting. The next time we went to Jay Em I had to give the crayons back and tell Mr. Harris what I'd done. Mother could have paid for them but she didn't. This was a good lesson for me.

I must have been a very trying child to my parents at times!

THE SEPARATOR-

Milking so many cows twice a day and running the whole milk through the separator was one of our biggest jobs. The separator had two spouts, one for the cream and the other for the skim milk. It had a crank handle that had to be turned at the same slow speed all the time. The whole milk would be poured into a metal tank at the top. When the right speed was reached the milk flow would be opened. The cream was put into 5 gallon cans and cooled at the well. We would save some to make butter. We had a big crock churn that sat on the floor. A cross piece of 2 pieces of wood fastened to a broom handle fit into the churn. Another round wooden piece with a hole in it for the handle fit into the top of the churn. The butter was worked in a big crock bowl using a curved wooden paddle.

Everything had to be kept so clean and sterilized as much as possible. The separator parts would be washed alone, separate from washing dishes. We used very hot water and strong soap and brushes to get it perfectly clean. There were numbered round metal disks that fit into the separator. These were what separated the cream from the milk. The disks had to be put back by number. After washing the parts were stacked in a big pan and covered with boiling water and let set to sterilize. This had to be done twice a day. When I got old enough to learn the procedure this was my job. I liked to do it.

The milk had to be protected from contamination during milking. The cows udders were brushed and washed clean before you started to milk. I milked one old ornery cow that would stand perfectly still until the bucket was almost full of milk. Then she would raise one hind foot and either tip the bucket over or else put her foot in it. This didn't happen every time but when it did the milk would have to go to the pigs if there was any left in the bucket. Then Dad would yell at me "Dorothy, you did it again".

The cows could switch their tails around and get dirt in the bucket too. I soon learned how to avoid that. Just hunch my left shoulder right next to the cows flank and keep it there. Of course sometimes her tail would beat you on the back but it didn't hurt...just annoying.

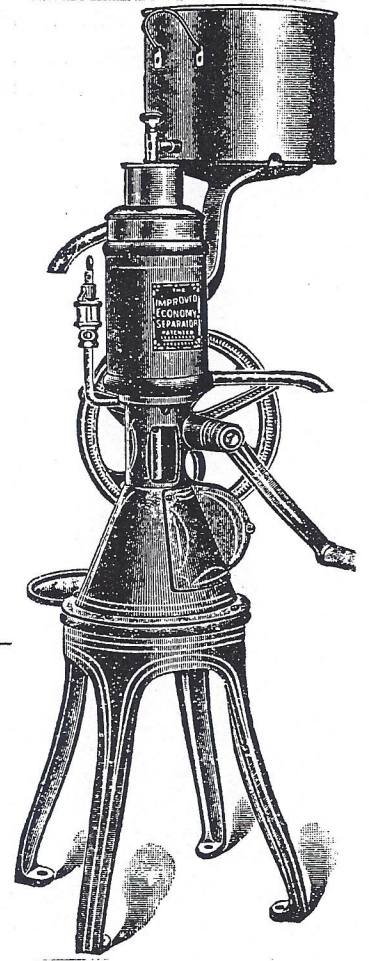
I didn't mind helping with the milking. Sure did hate to feed the calves. They got warm skim milk out of a bucket. I could feed just one calf at a time and the others would keep crowding and licking my bare legs. I had to hang onto the milk bucket so would keep them away by sort of kicking backwards at them. How I hated to do this and the tears would stream down my face in my misery.

After saving some skim milk for our own use the rest would be fed to the pigs. Dad would do this as some of those big red sows could be dangerous to a little girl.

OTHER CHORES-

The whole family would help pick the corn. We would pile it into the granary where we would use the corn sheller as the corn was needed. I helped shock the wheat. When the threshing crew would come the grain was piled in the granary too in a wooden bin. Dad raised oats too. I don't remember him selling any of the grain so suppose he kept it to feed the animals.

We had a chicken house and it was my job to feed them and gather



the eggs. The eggs and chickens were for our own use. I don't remember Mother ever canning any chickens. They were just killed and cooked whenever we wanted one to eat. If unexpected company would arrive we would kill a couple for fried chicken.

I hated the chickens. The hens would peck at me when I'd reach under them to get the eggs. The roosters would chase me. Only one chicken did I like. This one had a crippled leg. The others would crowd him away from their food. I felt sorry for him so would feed him away from the rest. As a result he grew nice and fat. Mother did not want to keep a cripple. She made me chop his head off one day so she could cook him. I was crying over having to kill my pet but I did it because I had to. He was the only pet I ever had.

We had lots of cats...up to 20 of them. They lived at the barn and fed skim milk at the barn so they would stay there. The cats would kill the mice and kept them away from the granary.

Sometimes I would get to pitch hay down to the cows and horses. This was real fun for me. We would help pick up potatoes from the garden too. These were stored in the cellar along with the canned food in jars on the shelves and the hams hanging from the roof.

I really didn't do much to help Mother inside with all my other chores. I did pack a lot of water up the hill to the house. The bucket would get so heavy I would set it on the ground for awhile and then finish carrying with the other arm. Sometimes I would turn the washing machine for Mother. She just didn't have time to stand there and do it. We had a hand wringer attached and I liked to run the clothes through it...then rinse them in the rinse tub of water and get to use the wringer again. I wasn't as careful as I should have been and popped a lot of buttons off clothes in that wringer. After I learned how to sew on the buttons I'd popped off I became more careful.

By this time I didn't like living on the farm and resented Dad and Mother having to work so hard to keep up with things. I really didn't resent my working, just knew I had to do my share too. I vowed that when I grew up I'd never, ever live on a farm...and when I became rich I'd walk down the streets of Lusk wearing high heels and silk stockings and a string of pearls with a beautiful dress. All my day dream did not come true, but years later I did visit the town of Lusk and Al and I drove out to see the old homestead. It was deserted. The barn still looked good but the house was gone. I looked at this desolate prairie and thought "Did I really live here all those years"? I found you can't go back in time and have things look the same. It is just better to keep your memories. Most of the homestead houses were gone. One by one, most of the homesteaders either left without proving up or they did stay that long and then sold out. At the same time I visited the Walt Rymill ranch south of us. He stayed and kept buying more land as people left. He was prosperous and had a big cattle ranch with a lovely big home. The thought crossed my mind while there that is what my Dad should have done. It was what he knew and he managed well. The hardest years were over for him. He was at the point he could afford to hire some help. Why didn't he stay?

Dad sold our place to Minnie and Lawrence Butler and we left after school was out in the spring of 1928. He had an auction sale that lasted all day long. The farm machinery and most of our possessions were sold at that time. That day was a big blur to me. I can remember a huge crowd and the auctioneer chanting and one more thing would be sold. Then I remember Mother and other ladies preparing and serving a huge (free) lunch to the crowd. That is my last memory of Sunshine valley.

Our family spent the summer of 1928 traveling and camping in a tent. We went to Spalding, Nebraska first to visit Dad's relatives. Then back through Hot Springs, South Dakota where Dad's neice Henrietta Krick was taking nurses training. We visited Auntie Blanche and Uncle Olin who were then living on the McCarthy ranch north of Thermopolis, Wyoming. Dad was looking for another good place to farm. We went through parts of Montana, Washington and Idaho. We spent several weeks in Yellowstone Park where Dad got all the fishing he wanted.

We rented a truck farm at Spearfish, South Dakota that fall. We girls went to school at the training school for the State Teachers College which was right next to our home. Dad didn't find anything he liked there so we moved to Littleton, Colorado in March and we girls finished out the school year there. By then Dad had found a farm near Sedalia, Colorado where we spent the summer. I started high school at Castle Rock. Dad couldn't stand working in that high altitude so he sold the place and moved to Thermopolis, Wyoming in September of 1929 two weeks after school started. I went to high school in Thermopolis and so did Marjorie.

The yr. 1935 Dad and Mother with Floyd and Betty moved to the Bitter Root valley close to Stevensville, Montana. Marjorie and I were both married by then and living in Thermopolis.

Betty went to high school in Stevensville and graduated there. They left Montana in 1940 or 1941 and moved to Cody, Wyoming. Dad went into the shoe shop business with Gerald Smith and eventually bought the shop and operated by himself with Mother helping. Floyd went to high school in Cody. Mother and Dad lived in Cody the rest of their lives.