

## **Amenities and Chores**

In our house we always saved the rain water in a large wooden barrel, outside the back door, it sort of came up the roof of the house, down through the gutters and we had a well also at the back door which was sunk, which they talked about in the late nineteen forties.

Somebody would have come along and bind, to find out he would have used a wooden stick to find out where the best source of a spring well was. So we were fortunate, John Joe McMahan, he sort of found a well for us at our back door and he hand dug this well, it was fifty two feet deep, and they put a pump on the well, and they also made this great big cement tank, there was a long pipe from the pump, and the water went into this big tank, and we had to pump water, and fill the tank, and then the water from there was carried to the animals, to the cows at the biers, and the calves in the sheds, and it was also carried into the house for drinking water, and you had a bucket on a bench in the scullery, and that was the drinking water.

The soft water was from the barrel, and it was sort of used for washing clothes. They talk about washing clothes, well in our house anyway we had this sort of tin bath, it was like for bathing a child in and my aunt would have filled it up with cold water, and she would have put the clothes in, and they would have been left to soak over night, and the next morning she would have sort of lifted it up onto the range, the big bath, and she would have cut soap with a knife She would have had a hard bar of soap, and she would have cut it with a knife, into pieces, on top of the washing, and she would of stirred it all around and maybe pounded it with a stick or a potato pounder and she would have brought it to the boil, to sort of whiten the clothes, and that would of kinda have been for under wear and everything, shirts and sheets and all that sort of thing.

The soap was the only detergent, we didn't have washing powder in those days. Washing powder, 'Omo' I think was the first washing powder. I remember 'Omo'

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and 'Rinso' sort of came well into the nineteen fifties, and it would have made washing a lot easier. Drying out on the line or sometimes out on the grass, actually if you wanted to bleach the thing and now a big problem with bleaching, you sort of maybe used washing soda if you wanted to bleach something, take for example, if you wanted to bleach a flour bag, everybody sort of had a large, maybe eight stone bag of flour in the house, this is in a farm house for making bread and the bag itself was made from a very good quality cotton, and I think it was produced by 'Morton's', 'Morton's' were the people who supplied the flour, and on this flour, and on this flour bag there would have been a black bird, and because everything was recycled in those days, and flour bags were definitely recycled they were a very valuable asset in the home.

When the flour would have been used, it the bag would have been washed and the black bird would have been bleached out of it, and it would have been bleached out by using soda crystals, washing soda, and it would be left to soak for several days, and then it would have been washed out in clean water, and then it would have been put out on the grass to be bleached, to get the black bird out of it ,and then these flour bags would have been made into sheets, four foot sheets, and they would have been made into pillow cases, and made into shimmies for women and girls to wear, and made into knickers, they would have been made into hand towels, they would have been made into dish clothes.

As well as the flour bags, there was also a wheat meal bag, and it was a smaller bag, and it was made from Muslim and I think it also came from Morton's. You would of sort of, when it was empty taken the label off, there was a paper label as far as I remember, you would have taken that label off and have soaked it, washed it, bleached it and it would have been used in a strainer for straining the milk, it would have also have been used when you were making jelly as a jelly bag, that was another use for that, and maybe even as a face cloth because, as it was like a softer material than the harder material of the flour bag. Allowed to use cosmetics, you wouldn't be allowed to use lipstick or ponds vanishing cream

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was the thing people put on their faces to keep them from getting wrinkles and oh everybody had to wear corsets, I know its not cosmetics but it had the cosmetic effect, even the younger children even, like once you became a teenager you had to wear these corset's, you know with the whale bone, it was reckoned it was the best way to support your figure were these corset's.

Earlier than that children wore liberty bodices but you were asking about cosmetics, no there would have been very little cosmetics used in our house, anyway and you would have definitely have been seen as a scarlet women if you had gone out in lipstick and also in our house we wouldn't have been allowed to go to the pictures, it wasn't seen as being an appropriate place for respectable people to go to.

Another thing was reading of books, in our house my aunt was very much against anybody sitting reading books or reading novels because it was her experience, in her young day, of some women who had spent her time reading and they had lost their farm over the head of this, instead of being out working on the farm she was sitting in the house reading novels and apparently the family went out of business and lost their farm, so the whole ethic was work and hard work and everybody and every member of the family was involved in some way or other, even the children were out helping to harness the horses. I remember having to hold the belly band as it was called and threw the belly band under the horse and horses harness was very valuable, especially the horses collar and those things were kept in the kitchen, hanging up onto, sort of had it on some hooks, big wooden hooks.

These two horses collars were kept in the kitchen to preserve them because they were expensive items to buy new and you had to look after your things, you had to look after your implements, you had to look after all your farming tools and equipment. Life was generally quite hard, people didn't have soft seats in their kitchens or houses, mostly people didn't sit down all that much, maybe in the

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evenings, maybe you sat down to sort of crochet or knit or make sheets out of the flour bags or make quilts, but generally people were very active, everybody was involved with the family in all the farming tasks. All the children were out we used to be out raking the hay and we would have to wait for the mowing machine coming along and the horses, you sort of had to rake out the swathes to let the horse get in to cut a new swathe.

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