

the stove. She was able to control the temperature by placing a stick of wood of just the correct thickness at the precise moment. Obtaining a stove with a gauge - that was progress! The aroma of freshly baked bread wafting across the breezes would lure the children quickly home to supper.



*Mrs. Mary Matechuk weaving rag rugs.*

Embroidery, knitting, sewing, quilting, mending, darning, carding wool, feather tearing, etc. were generally the chores done in relaxation - a far cry from today's yoga practices, aerobic exercises or T.V. Brass on horse harnesses was polished with a paste made of coal oil and ashes.

A daily chore, especially in the winter, the homemaker was responsible for keeping the coal oil lamps ready for lighting in the evening. The lamp chimneys had to be washed and polished, wicks trimmed and bowls filled with fuel (coal oil, high test gas).

Regardless of the weather, the homemaker had meals to prepare, clothes to wash, etc., each which required the use of the kitchen stove. Come summer, the heat from the stove combined with the summer heat, the kitchen became an oven in itself. To overcome this and to make the home cool, the "summer kitchen" came into existence. In many instances an empty granary was pulled near the home to serve this purpose. Here all the cooking, canning and washing chores were done. The house was used only for sleeping and for entertaining visitors.

*Ollie Prokopchuk in her summer kitchen.*



The summer kitchen, with the heat and aroma of food soon attracted all the flies in the area. Fly swatters were swung into use. If the door was accidentally left open (a common occurrence with even today's youngsters) the unwelcomed guests were chased out with a towel, apron, or leafy branches. Fly paper, a coiled sticky paper, was hung in strategic areas to entrap the flies. A certain type of poisonous toadstool was placed on window sills. The flies that alighted on this toadstool soon "met their Waterloo". Toxic fly pads were also purchased. The pads were soaked in water and set on window ledges. The flies drinking this water would be poisoned.

If today's homemaker was told that she must give up all her electrical appliances with the exception of one, in all likelihood she would keep her refrigerator. It is one luxury item one would not like to live without. The pioneer woman had to rely on the ice house during the summer to keep the perishables from spoiling. An ice house was a large pit filled with ice and then covered with a thick layer of sawdust. Over this a roof was built with a door on one wall - presto! - a walk-in refrigerator! The winter posed no problems as the outdoors provided her with the largest freezer. The pantry was often unheated so it was cool enough to store food.

To ensure a continuous supply of meat, the homemaker canned chicken, pork, beef and wild meat. Beef rings were held during the summer. A number of families would belong to the beef ring. Each month an animal would be slaughtered and the meat shared. The families took turns providing the beef for slaughtering.

In the winter, the meat was wrapped in sugar bags and stored in the grain. Some meat was also set in a brine to cure. Mrs. Phillip Coulson used the following brine:

- 3 mixing bowls salt
- 3 pails of water
- 5 cups brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp. salt petre
- 3 Tbsp. cayenne
- 3 Tbsp. or more ground allspice

Boil good, set out to cool; put an egg in (raw in shell), if it floats the brine is alright, if the eggs sink, it needs more salt.

After the meat was cured it was often smoked. Even today, meat that has been cured and smoked over green willow, oak, hickory sawdust, etc., has a flavour difficult to be duplicated in store-bought goods.

In the spring the homemaker would plant her garden, often using her own seed. She would set aside a few plants through the summer which would be permitted to go to seed. This seed was carefully gathered, dried and stored to be used for next year's planting. To have seed from biannual plants such as beets, carrots, or parsnips a whole root would be planted in the spring. Chosen cucumbers and tomatoes were carefully ripened and the seeds dried.



*Morels picked by Joe Hnatiuk.*

The leafing of the poplar was a signal that the morels might be out and the mushroom hunt would begin. The morels would be followed by "pecheritsi", "varge" (horse lips), "kozari" (red caps), and lastly by "pidpenke" in the fall. These were the popular mushrooms. In the early years they were dried for use in the winter.

Early spring was also the time to set the cluckers (a setting hen) on a clutch of eggs. As the setting period drew to an end the clucker would be watched closely to ensure a high survival rate of the young chicks. There was no such thing as chick starter for the young chicks. The homemaker would make her own variation of chick starter. It would consist of mashed hard-boiled eggs, cottage cheese, oatmeal, wheatlets, chopped