

I Remember...

Remember.



When Daddy broke the Christmas tree

It was a chilly Saturday in early December when the kids and I decided to drag out our old Christmas tree and decorate it for the upcoming holidays. April was 4 and Matt had just turned 8. That old tree had been used for years, first by my parents and now by our family. It was a little bit shabby, but it was the best we could do. The kids helped me put the branches in the holes on the tall center pole. Then we strung lights and put all the decorations we had accumulated (homemade and store-bought) on the branches. We thought it looked festive when we finished, even if it did lean a little to one side.

About that time, my husband came in to see the finished product. "That tree is leaning," he announced. "But I think I can fix it!"

"Maybe we could put a couple of magazines under one side," I said. Ignoring my suggestion, Dale reached through the ornament-laden branches and attempted to adjust the center pole. We all heard the ominous "crack" at the same time. The top half of the tree was really leaning now as it had completely separated from the bottom part.

April started howling, "Daddy's broke the Christmas tree! How is Santa Claus gonna come now?" Matt chimed in with unwanted questions and comments: "Wow, Dad, you really did break the Christmas tree! Guess that wooden pole didn't bend too good, huh? What'cha gonna do now, Dad?"

I was left holding the top part of the tree and listening to April's screams and Matt's chatter while Dale hustled off to find some tools. He returned with a hose clamp and soon had the Christmas tree back together. Peace was restored and we all agreed the tree looked quite festive, even if it did lean a little to one side.

Brenda Pardue, Hamptonville, EnergyUnited

Warm summers with my sister

Back when there were no computers, air-conditioning, fast food or cable television, we played with puppies, kittens or baby pigs. If we came upon a stray dog or cat, we could take it home because Daddy would help us hide it from Mama. But she always found out. She would eventually warm up to it, until it got in the house or in her flowers.

Our family grew huge gardens, or at least they were huge to us kids. The adults thought it was good for us to help them in this endeavor. Those rows seemed to go on forever! When we complained about our backs hurting, Daddy would say, "Oh, you're too little to have a back. All you have is gristle."

The highlight of our day was going to the corner store with Daddy to get a pack of Nabs, a Honey Bun and an RC Cola. There always seemed to be men sitting around in the store laughing and talking about something.

At night, my sister and I shared a bed and, of course, the window and breeze were on her side. I made her flatten out like a little frog so I could feel some air.

Wanda Garren, Lincolnton, Rutherford EMC

Plowing our garden

I grew up in a small community called Mayfield, located between Eden, N.C., and Danville, Va. This picture was made by Cora Lipford in June 1949, when I was 12 years old, plowing our vegetable garden. We had a large garden because there were eight children. On our farm we grew tobacco, wheat and corn. We also had two cows to milk, which took care of our food. We had electricity but few appliances and no indoor plumbing. Work was hard, but we enjoyed our life together.

James Pruitt, Reidsville



"Jimmy in the garden, 1949."



If you shucked a red ear you got to kiss your favorite girl.

Moore County cornshuckings

I remember as a young boy going to cornshuckings as a child during the late 1940s at my grandparents's place in Moore County, as well as at a nearby neighbor's in Balfour. Neighbors and friends would gather on one side of a long row of corn to help the farmer shuck his corn. If you shucked a red ear you got to kiss your favorite girl. Also, everyone looked forward to the good food that the ladies would have ready to eat when the shucking was done. The fried chicken, ham, dumplings, fresh vegetables and, of course, the delicious pumpkin and sweet potato pies.

The photo of the cornshucking was on my grandfather James N. Thomas's farm in Bensalem township, Moore County. It was 1943 during World War II. The soldiers were on maneuvers in the area. They regularly visited the farmers on the weekends, usually for a good home-cooked meal. My father, Cecil L. Thomas, is third from the left, and his twin sisters are standing near the middle of the photo.

My grandfather's farm did not have electricity in 1943, but is now being served by Randolph Electric Membership Corporation.

Wayne D. Thomas, Asheboro, Randolph EMC

Pokes and scissors

Growing up I worked in a wood shop with my parents from age 8 to the ripe old age of 15, and I suffered many cuts. As soon as I would cut myself, my father would say, "Go inside and get a poke and wrap it around it." No matter how bad that cut was, I wrapped a piece of brown paper around it, and lo and behold, the bleeding stopped. Also, I became car sick frequently and guess what? That brown paper poke was cut to the size of my stomach, a tee shirt was put over it, and off we went. Lo and behold, the car sickness was no more. Then there was the green bean drill. "Karen," he would say, "go get a poke, go to the garden, and don't come back until it is full." About two hours later I would return with that poke. And my mom! Anytime I was bleeding from anywhere, she applied scissors to the back of my neck, and that stopped the bleeding. Needless to say, I now have an aversion to pokes and scissors.

Karen Bowman, Statesville, EnergyUnited

The dress was easier to get

I was the eldest daughter of a struggling cotton farmer in 1949. In the summer before my senior year, while visiting my aunt in her small town that had one general store, I saw an evening dress in the window that I thought was the most beautiful of dresses. I had never had a "bought" dress and I wanted it badly for my senior prom.

I begged my parents to let me go to my aunt's house to pick cotton for a week for a man and his nephew who hired people, just so I could get that dress.

On a Monday morning, my Aunt Ruby said, "Do you see that young man across the railroad tracks? Ask him where he wants you to pick."

As I approached, he was so shy of girls he turned and walked to the other side of the car. I walked over there, and he went to the other side. I made up my mind I would get that young fellow to talk to me.

He wasn't in the fields that day but an outgoing cousin of his was and we picked side-by-side. The cousin told him about our day, and the next day I took a row between the two of them. I picked so fast I had to pick on their rows, too, so they could keep up with me. I averaged over 200 pounds every day that week, making my goal. So I got my dress.

He must have become interested, because the neighborhood began talking of Howard being interested in a girl, so I asked his uncle to tell Howard to take me home Saturday afternoon. But I never dreamed I would see him again.

The following Tuesday, up drove Howard and his cousin. They blew the horn and said he lost his picksack and asked if I had seen it. While there, he asked me to go to a movie on Saturday.

He brought his cousin along for the first 20 or so dates. His cousin and I talked while Howard held my hand. One night I whispered to him, "Can you and I go alone?"

We were married 15 months later. 📍

Rosita Jones, Dallas, Rutherford EMC



Howard is the world's champion in shyness. This is on Broad River before we were married.

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