



The Way We Were

*Glimpses of good times,
hard times and happy
times gone by in the
North Carolina countryside*

Cleaning the kittens

This photo is of me at about 3 years old. My mother did not like cats, but my grandmother did. I would go across the street to Grandma's to play with the kittens.

Grandma's kittens looked a little dirty to me, so I decided to wash them and hung them on the clothesline inside my grandma's stockings (they call them panty hose these days) to dry while I washed yet another kitten. I found the wash basin on the back porch.

At that time my uncle was a newspaper carrier. He worked for the Gastonia Gazette in Gaston County, which we still read daily. He carried the newspapers in this wooden box when he delivered them. The box, of course, is upside down, where I could put the scrub board and the basin in order to reach them.

I got the water out of the spigot in the back yard near the house. I was serious about washing those kittens, as you can see by the expression on my face, and I had a death lock on it by grabbing the kitten by the tail!

I can only guess that my uncle made this picture since he loved being the family photographer and making pictures.

*Jean Justus Sosebee
Bessemer City | Rutherford EMC*



*Thanks to everyone
who sent us photos
of the way we were.
We wish we could have published more.
You can see more on our Web site. Next
month we'll publish your stories of how
you control weeds and pests in your
gardens. (Deadline was Jan. 15.) See the
other themes and rules for our "Nothing
Could Be Finer" series on page 20.*



Rich Square Model T

This is a Texaco filling station in 1923 that was located in or near the town of Rich Square in Northampton County. My grandfather, Luther “Cap” Conwell, is standing next to his Model T. My Aunt Maizie, who must have been about 6 years old, is standing on the running board.

I checked with Rich Square’s Dr. James Everett Brown to see if he could tell me where this station was located. Dr. Brown, at age 88, is North Carolina’s longest practicing veterinarian and the source of many interesting stories from the past. He’s too young though to remember exactly where this was or who the other men are, but he did get a chuckle out of telling me a story about “Cap” and his Model T. He said, “Cap was picking peanuts for Josh Elliott who had a goat. The goat jumped on the hood of the car, then onto the top which must have been dry-rotted. When Cap returned to his car to go home for dinner, the goat was sitting on the front seat. He had fallen through the roof.”

*Nancy Stephenson
Conway | Roanoke Electric*

When boys were boys

Nothing thrilled me more than finding an old roll of film while digging in one of Mom’s and Dad’s closets. I took my chances in getting it developed, hoping for a surprise of some old memories to be brought to life. Oh, what a wonderful surprise to receive pictures of the first year my Mom and Dad were wed. But one of my favorites was the one from 1956 with two of my uncles holding shot guns, surrounded by their cousins.



Talking with Mom and Dad, I learned a little history behind the picture. I listened to the delight they had in their stories and in their hearts as they explained how the boys would often get together to hunt, play horseshoes, baseball, and go fishing. The one to the left is my Uncle Wayne holding a single-barrel shotgun, and the one in the middle is my Uncle Marvin with the double-barrel.

*Sharon Whitehurst
Rocky Mount | Tideland EMC*

Sunday breakfast and Sunday dinner

I returned to my roots in 1998 having lived in West Texas since 1979. I was so excited, especially returning to the farm on Highway #48, Glenview community. It felt good to be home again.

My brother, who lives in New Jersey, recently sent me a picture of the old farm house, the place of my birth. Shown are my mother and niece, the oldest grandchild. My mother passed away in 1982, but I remember the Sunday mornings when she would get up early and fix the most delicious breakfast and Sunday dinner, topping it off with a pineapple coconut cake for Sunday dessert.

This old house where I was born no longer stands, but memories are very vivid. Being home again and remembering dressing up for Sunday School and church was quite a treat for us. My niece is quite a lady now, provost at California State at Bakersfield, California. She says that her favorite vacation is returning to North Carolina, sitting in the porch swing and waving as the cars go by.

Collard greens, butter beans, white corn, pork barbecue. Nothing is finer than being in Carolina.

*Barbara McWilliams Cooper
Enfield | Halifax EMC*



Grandpa’s and Grandma’s chickens

When my daughter was little we lived in Yadkinville. Every two or three weeks we would make a trip to Ayersville near Madison, N.C., for the weekend to visit my parents. My daughter loved all kinds of animals and chickens, too. She always looked forward to going to Grandpa’s and Grandma’s to feed their chickens. This was in 1961. Although Grandpa and Grandma have been gone for lots of years and my daughter is grown up, she often talks of going there and feeding their chickens.

*Betty Matthews
Yadkinville | Surry-Yadkin EMC*



Zero and Daze

This photo of my great-uncle Zero McNeilly depicts how he lived most every day during the early to mid-1900s. He is hitching up his ol' mule Daze for another day's plowing. Zero lived and farmed near Casar, N.C. He lived poor, as did most people then, plowing the fields and growing corn, cotton and vegetables. He cut lumber with a steam engine and built sleds with side planks for hitching behind mules to haul things. Zero also rode Daze to get around to neighbors or into town. I can walk to his home place from my home. I often think about what life was like for him and his family, living in a log house with the springhouse out back. Just about every day I go by what we still call the Zero Bottoms, a wooded area now that was once a field where Uncle Zero plowed and worked.



*Danny McNeilly
Casar / Rutherford EMC*



We had plenty

I came from a large family of nine. My mom was definitely a stay-at-home mom with seven children. She was married at 16. By the time she was 25 she had her family of seven. This picture was made in 1956 when she was 21 and had just five children.

She cooked two meals every day. Breakfast consisted of a meat, eggs, grits or rice and always homemade biscuits (made with lard and buttermilk). She was a believer in breakfast before sending us off to school. We ate at a large table with benches on each side. Daddy always prayed a prayer before eating a meal.

When we were growing up my parents did not even own a vehicle. My daddy thumbed to work until he was 48 years of age. His first vehicle was a '67 Chevy truck.

We attended church three times a week. If there was a week of revival we had to go every night. I can still see the five pairs of boy's shoes polished and drying on newspapers on Saturday night ready for Sunday. My sister and I would make our patent leather shoes shine with cold biscuits.

We did not have a lot of material things growing up, but we sure had plenty of food, clothes, laughter, and most of all love for each other.

*Joan Williford Daly
Goldsboro / Tri-County EMC*

Learning to make butter

This is a 1954 picture of my Grandma Phebe Holmes McLamb and her great-granddaughter, Jeanie Krueger, making buttermilk and butter in an old stoneware churn near Benson, N.C. By pointing and questioning, Jeanie learned a lot about this process.

After cow's milk soured and clabbered, it was poured into this churn. They moved the dasher stick with cross pieces at the bottom up and down numerous times until flakes of butter formed on the lid—about 45 minutes to an hour. Then the butter, which floated on top of the buttermilk, was lifted out with a wooden paddle and pressed into a wooden butter mold. 📌



*Ada Allman
Benson / South River EMC*

Send us your best **Earn \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

April 2007 The Dumbest Souvenir I Ever Brought Home

Where did it come from and why? Send photos, if you have them.

Deadline: February 15

May 2007 How We Saved Energy

Good ideas for home, at work, or on the road.

Deadline: March 15

June 2007 One Time at Summer Camp

Your best summer camp story.

Send photos, if you have any.

Deadline: April 15

July 2007 Before Farmers Markets

Your stories of buying and selling farm products in the old days.

Deadline: May 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com