

GROWING WHEAT IN THE BRIGHTON AREA (CONT.)

BARNs WERE OFTEN BUILT VERY NEAR THE ROAD. IN ORDER TO SET THE SEPARATOR SO THE STRAW STACK COULD BE BUILT WHERE THE FARMER DIRECTED THE ENGINE HAD TO BE PLACED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD AND THE LONG, HEAVY BELT STRUNG ACROSS THE ROAD. THE FARMER PROVIDED ACCESS AROUND THE BARN FOR THE HORSE DRAWN TRAFFIC OF THE TIME AND NO ONE SEEMED TO MIND THE DELAY. THE COMING OF THE AUTOMOBILE PUT AN END TO STRINGING THE BELT ACROSS THE ROAD.

A BIT OF FRIENDLY RIVALRY ENSUED AMONG THE FARMERS' WIVES AS THEY PREPARED MEALS FOR THE THRESHING CREW. USUALLY TWO MEALS WERE PREPARED FOR UP TO 20 MEN FOR AS MANY DAYS AS IT TOOK TO FINISH THE THRESHING. A HIRED CREW RECEIVED BREAKFAST ALSO.

THE MEAL PREPARATION ENTAILED MANY HOURS IN A HOT KITCHEN (IN HOT WEATHER) PEELING, COOKING, ROASTING, BAKING, TABLE SETTING, TABLE CLEARING, DISH WASHING; AND IT WOULD BEGIN AGAIN FOR THE EVENING MEAL. THE FARMER'S WIFE ENLISTED THE AID OF FEMALE RELATIVES, IF SHE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH DAUGHTERS, TO HELP WITH THE WORK. AS WITH THE MEN, THIS FAVOR WAS RETURNED IN LIKE MANNER. HER CUSTOMERS WERE ALWAYS APPRECIATIVE AND HUNGRY. WORKING FROM 7 A.M. TO 6 P.M. THEIR APPETITES MATCHED THE GENEROUS MEALS.

THE THRESHERS, GARBED IN BIB OVERALLS, LONG SLEEVED SHIRT, RED BANDANA HANDKERCHIEF AROUND THE NECK IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP OUT ITCHY, PICKY CHAFF, AND HEAVY SHOES WERE READY WHEN THE DINNER BELL BY THE BACK DOOR WAS RUNG. A WASH BENCH WAS SET UP OUTSIDE WITH PANS OF WATER, BARS OF SOAP AND SEVERAL TOWELS. THE THRESHERS APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE FROM THE SWEAT, GRIME AND CHAFF WHICH HAD ACCUMULATED. THE YOUNGER CHILDREN KEPT THEM SUPPLIED WITH FRESH WATER FROM THE CISTERN AS THEY CLUSTERED NEAR THE CHATTING, AND OFTEN TEASING, MEN. THE FRESH WATER BUCKET, WITH ONE DIPPER FOR ALL TO USE, WAS WELCOMED BY THE THIRSTY WORKERS. USUALLY A MIRROR WAS HUNG IN A HANDY PLACE AND A COMB COULD BE RUN THROUGH WET, TOUSLED HAIR. AFTER ALL, ONE OF THE YOUNG LADIES SERVING MIGHT BE A SPECIAL SOMEONE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT OCCASIONALLY WORKERS BROUGHT THEIR LUNCH AND WENT HOME FOR SUPPER BECAUSE OF THAT PARTICULAR FARMER'S WIFE'S LACK OF CULINARY SKILLS. (BY MARIEANNA BAIR. TO BE CONTINUED.)

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