

"My Grandparents" by Wayne Easter

My grandparents came from the "Old School," they lived behind the plow, with no automobile, no electricity, no well and no outhouse. They eked out a living on a one-horse red-dirt farm in the foothills of the Blue Ridge and like their ancestors had done for generations, they followed the moon signs which told them when to plant, when to harvest, when to kill the hog, shoe the horse, pull teeth, make white-oak roof shingles (if not made in the right sign, the shingles curled up when nailed on the roof), and go fishing.

Grandma had a major say in how things got done. It was she who decided when to "put the garden in," make lye soap, churn the butter, go to church, ask the preacher to "stay the night" and when it came to growing corn, it had to be plowed and hoed three times, or the world would come to an end.

Grandpa? He was a man of peace and when Grandma went on the warpath, what did he do? He escaped to his "port in the storm;" the tack shop in his log horse barn. While Grandma raged, he repaired worn-out harness, peeled us apples (with the same knife he cut his toenails with) and sang me Dutch folk songs from the Old Country.

Once a year, he cleaned out the horse stall, loaded the whole mess on his sled and fertilized his watermelon patch. It was powerful stuff, because come mid-summer, he had watermelons to write home about. When Sunday Company came, they ate cold watermelons from the spring house; best watermelons on God's Green Earth.

In the photograph are my paternal grandparents, George Washington Easter and Alice Berrier Easter (circa 1940) all dressed up in their Sunday best.



George Washington Easter and Alice Berrier Easter