

Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves



July 4th, 2000
Today, July 4th, 2000, it has been 224 years since the Leaders living in the colonies of the "New World", now known as, "The United States of America", signed a declaration of independence for freedom from the tyranny of the Mother Country, England. The dedicated leaders bled in freedom, the determination to obtain it, the bravery, valor and sacrifice of life on the battlefield by men of all ages, who also believed in the cause, freedom, were all a part of the war that followed and the winning of it which made the U.S. "The Land of the Free" and "Home of the Brave."

This thought brings me back to this morning when my mind turned back to the first 4th of July spent in Rockcastle County. That was back in 1937, July was a happy, lovable, squeeze-able nearly eight month old baby and an armful to carry wherever, and when ever, I had the chance to go anywhere other than Mt. Vernon in the truck. I guess a mama's arms grow stronger, as the baby gets bigger, but the burden in my arms was as heavy as the burden of loneliness in a place where the closest neighbor was a mile away and I was busy making a farm out of a wilderness with little time left to socialize.

So, when Dorothy Gooden, the closest neighbor, and Evelyn Norton, our friend from Tennessee, invited our family to join them and their families on their fourth of July picnic, I accepted. A picnic! I hadn't been to one since I was a kid and our family would all crowd into the big old touring car and drive into the country, look for a big tree with plenty of shade, park under it and spread a tablecloth on the grass beneath, unload the basket of food and gobble up potato salad, baked beans, and sandwiches marked had packed in the basket. Then dried as a couple of watermelons was pulled from beneath the feet where they had been safely tucked when all the space had been taken up

with kids and dinner basket. If I remember correctly there were no trunks for storage in those old touring cars. The running boards and rear bumpers were used to carry luggage or things too big to fit under the seat, or feet. Of course they were securely tied on with ropes. Some of us still call those days "the good old days" and maybe we are right. Whole families still went riding in one crowded car to enjoy a day together and dinner was eaten from a cloth spread on the ground. Watermelon, still warm from its hiding place, would be devoured as quickly as one today chilled in the fridge.

I was disappointed when Mat didn't accept the invitation as readily as I did. It was July, the corn needed hoeing, garden vegetables were ready for canning, and celebrating the fourth of July had never been important to their family so why should he waste day picnicking when there were other things to be done. None-the-less I prepared something to contribute, probably a cake, dressed Judy in her prettiest dress, and she and I went anyway. (Freedom? maybe.) Liberated? That

word had not been a part of my vocabulary and I did not feel I was at war nor a prisoner, so the word never entered my mind.

Mat took us as far as the Goodin's politely explained why he couldn't go farther and returned home on his work.

We were soon comfortably seated in the two cars and headed for the river banks a couple miles away. Mat was missed but that did not put a damper on the fun of being together. Soon the voices of men and youngsters splashing in the water came from the banks of the Rockcastle River while we spread the food on an improvised table on the beach. Another old fashioned picnic dinner was done away with quickly as the wet and hungry swimmers joined the rest of us and "licked the platters clean."

Judy had been played with by everyone there including the young folks till I thought she would be spoiled by all the attention, but she accepted it as her due and was none the worse off for it.

Rockcastle River may not be known as well as the Ohio or Kentucky River, but it has beauty that can be compared to or perhaps surpass either of them. The place we picnicked that day was one of them. It was on a sandy beach at the end of the Line Creek Road, at that time a narrow dirt road that twisted around and followed the creek a short way then took off through the hills and ended in Putlaski County. There was a pool of water close to the edge and swifter running water beyond. Across the river was a mountain with cliffs going half way up that tempted a person to explore its secrets that were securely hid in the dark caverns below. The clear rippling bubbling and singing over the rocks were not only pleasant to watch and listen to they were a temptation to those of us wanting to wade or simply sit on one of those big rocks and dangle burning feet in the soothing coolness of it.

My day was a success. Dorothy and Evelyn never knew what that one day, a picnic two families had shared with an outsider and her baby, had meant to me. They are both gone now. But the Rockcastle River still shares its beauty and comfort to anyone, whether it is fishing, swimming or simply sitting on a rock or shore enjoying the ripple of water or soaking weary feet in its coolness.



Points East

By: Ike Adams

It's 11:30 p.m. on Monday night and I should have been in bed thirty minutes ago. Unfortunately, I have been engaged all evening in the two things I do best: procrastinating and getting side-tracked.

I will get to that in a minute, but in the meantime, at least two editors who have recently complained that they would rather have "columns" instead of the "epics" I've been submitting to log up the editorial page should be happy when they turn on their computers tomorrow morning. It shouldn't take all day to set the type on this one because I do intend to be asleep by 12:30.

I got side tracked because I have four movies rented that are due back tomorrow. I'd already watched three of them over the weekend and didn't realize until 9 o'clock that I still had one to go. I don't know about you, but I'd give all week if I saw a movie that I'd paid hard cash to rent back to the store without dutifully watching everything on the tape from the previews through the credits. You never know when somebody you went to college with is going to show up as a key grip or water boy or galfer, etc. in the movie credits. It hasn't happened yet, but if it ever does, I'm not the kind of guy who would miss it.

So instead of starting the column on time, I watched what turned out to be the best movie I've seen in at least ten years. If you haven't seen Kevin Costner's "For the Love of the Game" you are in for a treat. If I have already seen it, you know what I'm talking about. It's a baseball movie, but you don't have to like baseball to like the movie. Not only that, but it has a happy ending.

I actually rented it as an afterthought because when I got to the checkout counter they told me that since I'd already rented three movies I had a fourth one coming for free. As it turned out the only reason I watched the others all the way through was to keep from feeling guilty. Actually, "Ed TV" was pretty good, but I can't even remember the titles of the other two.

Two weeks ago I asked readers to tell me what the signs were in when I planted beans on June 24. At last count I had 116 emails not counting what may be on there tonight telling me the signs were in the feet. But that's okay. I like to get emails and I found half a dozen long lost cousins in the process of finding out what the

signs were in. Predictions for my crop of half runners are mixed however. I've been told that the feet are absolutely the best sign under which to plant beans and others have told me I shouldn't expect very much. For whatever its worth the beans are up and already about 18 inches high and they are beginning to twine around the corn stalks that I intend for them to grow on if a big storm doesn't blow it down.

Now I need to know what the signs were in on June 25. I planted corn on a Sunday and I need to know what you all think about that. Also, I need to know what the signs were in on Saturday, July 8. I planted Fall beans that day. The email is ikedams@aol.com if you're forgotten.

I know that you're reaching to yourself, why not go out and buy an Almanac. Try it yourself if you think you're so smart. Even the companies that print the darn things are sold out. I spent two hours on the Internet trying to find out what the signs were in last Saturday before I planted my beans and I couldn't find anything. Everybody else that I know who has an almanac is either in the hospital or on vacation so I planted them anyway. I had the garden all tilled up and I figured that was a good enough sign.

Speaking of the garden, we've been eating Roma beans here for two weeks and if you want something different than beans and taters cooked together with a piece of fatback, let me suggest this simple recipe. Steam a quart or two of Romas in a pot with a heavy lid for thirty minutes with just enough water to keep them from cooking dry and burning. Then add a regular sized can of crushed tomatoes, a diced green pepper, a liberal amount of fresh oregano, salt and black pepper and simmer for another 15 minutes.

If that recipe wasn't so simple, I'd try to copyright it and charge you for even thinking about fixing it. It's even good cold, especially if you have some leftover cornbread to go with it.

And finally, coming next to a newspaper near you: All You Ever Wanted to Know About Early Golden Crook Neck Squash but Were Afraid to Ask.

Okay editors, I've earned my pay. Goodnight.

Summer Time Food Safety

Spring is now upon us and with summer fast approaching, there is a need to do more activities outside, including cooking. The incidence of foodborne illness is most prevalent from May to September, so while you're firing up the charcoal or putting gas in the grill, it is important to be aware of some "Food safety tips" during the warm weather. Often foodborne illness can occur with symptoms like headaches, muscle aches, exhaustion, diarrhea, dizziness or vomiting. It is often misdiagnosed as the flu.

Did your mother always tell you to wash your hands before dinner? Well I bet she didn't tell you to wash them before, during and after dinner. Bacteria can start to form each time you touch something - especially food.

1. Wash Hands Often. Wash hands in warm, soapy water before preparing foods and after handling raw meats, including poultry and seafood. While preparing foods, whether it is raw meat, cooked meat, be careful of cross-contamination.

2. Keep Raw Meats and Ready-to-Eat Foods Separate. When the juices from raw meats or germs from unclean objects accidentally touch cooked or ready-to-eat foods, cross-contamination occurs. Make sure to separate cutting boards; one for raw meat, the other for ready-to-

eat foods, like breads and vegetables. Make sure to wash them thoroughly after use in hot soapy water.

During summer, hamburgers and chicken are two of the most popular grilling foods across America, signaling the perfect time to reinforce safe food-handling practices. Mishandling food is the leading cause of food-related sickness.

3. Cook to Proper Temperatures. Use a meat thermometer, to help ensure the meat is cooked thoroughly. Now it's time to relax after your cookout, right? Not so fast. Make sure all of the uneaten foods are refrigerated within the hour after your meal.

4. Refrigerate promptly, below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. This will also help to reduce the growth of bacteria in the food.

According to a recent survey, nearly nine out of 10 Americans believe more education is needed about food safety preparation and handling in their kitchens in order to prevent food-related illness. By making sure you follow the four simple tips listed, you will be helping to reduce foodborne illness for you and your family. Have a great summer!

This information is being brought to you by the American Dietetic Association and the Rockcastle County Health Department.

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