

**On Being a
Farm Wife
(and other
hazards)**
Joyce Bupp



'Tis the season for family
For renewing traditions For
using the family heirlooms

And so I had fished this heirloom from its almost-forgotten spot in a kitchen cupboard, wiped off dust which had accumulated on it and pondered its history What takes could be told by this simple, yet beautiful, utilitarian tool?

It's made of solid wood, probably pine, with carefully crafted handles which fit comfortably in the hand. Natural oils from the process of food preparation over the years have polished its smooth surface and aged it to a soft brown patina

How many pies had this rolling pin prepared over the years? It had been passed down to us by a great-aunt, not long after our wedding day, which had coincided with the wedding anniversary of the rolling pin's previous owner. So, this rolling pin came with a history, a tradition, and the potential of serving many more generations

Its well-fitted handles roll smoothly within their fittings in the sturdy wooden cylinder, making the rolling of dough an easy task But even with an heirloom rolling pin, make pie dough "from scratch" is a labor-intensive tradition And so I don't bake many But this was for pumpkin pie baking, not just

a seasonal favorite but a special treat beloved by grandson Josh

Having their family back home to share the holidays with is a special reason to renew some traditions that had fallen by the wayside in recent years Thus, this year's holiday pumpkin pies are steeped in tradition including the "butchering" of one of the giant pumpkins (actually a squash variety) we'd grown between the dairy barns Cooked, pureed and ready for use, the pumpkin provided lots of fresh pie material and oodles left over to freeze

The pies even baked in stoneware pie pans which had been gifts early in our marriage and which, with luck, (meaning I won't drop them on the floor) will live long lives Hopefully to go on to become kitchen heirlooms to some succeeding generation

Does a pumpkin "from scratch" brought into use another traditional tool, not quite yet an heirloom, but headed there My well-worn, discolored-aluminum Foley food mill which looks like a saucepan fit with a circling blade turned by a hand crank is the perfect kitchen tool for pureeing cooked pumpkin chunks The cranked blade "mushes" the softened chunks into a bright golden puree, while

separating the tough shell residue for recycling to compost

Once the food mill had been dug out of storage, it seemed natural to utilize it a bit longer So, while geared up into the food processing mode, I tackled another kitchen tradition Waiting for such an occasion were a couple of bags of assorted apples, gathered from a friend's orchard ahead of the last chilling frost Kettles filled with quartered apples, cooking soft in their steamy heat, filled the house with a fragrance surpassing any synthetic air freshener

Cooked to mush, with their peels and cores strained out by the food mill, the applesauce went into yet more heirlooms, canning jars we are handing down through the family. Three generations of us still do some home canning, and pass the glass containers engraved with Ball (and a few Atlas) quart and pint jars down from one to another.

How many more generations will make use of heirloom rolling pins and canning jars? As we eat more meals on the run in our cars, or devise quickie menus from an increasing array of ready-made selections from supermarket deli departments, will anyone cook at home in the future? Or prepare pumpkins or applesauce from scratch?

And will anyone really care, anyway?

Our grandmothers made their own soap Pounded clothes clean on washboards Blackened the oil lamps and trimmed their wicks I certainly don't care to utilize heirloom tools made for those once-common household tasks

And our yet-unborn, great-granddaughters (or sons), may feel the very same way about rolling pins

'Grossdawdy' Houses



"Grossdawdy" is the Pennsylvania Dutch word for "grandfather." Amish families often build additions to their homes to provide living spaces for grandparents and call these sections Grossdawdy Houses. Intrigued by the variety, shapes, and sizes of Grossdawdy Houses, Jim Drescher photographed 14 of the Lancaster County versions. Posters featuring Grossdawdy Houses are available at local art galleries or by sending \$10 to MIJIM Enterprises, P.O. Box 385, Talmage, PA 17580.

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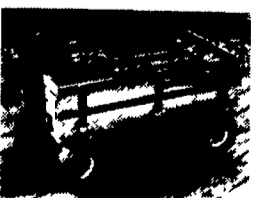
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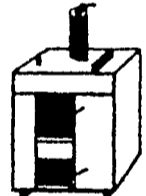
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