

THERE ARE HANDS FOR COUNTRY LIVING

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We all have a little bit of “Country Living” in us. Close your eyes and imagine yourself, planting a garden, repotting a plant, or planting grass. Without hands, it would be difficult, wouldn't it?

Imagine a farmer without hands! I grew up on a farm. Now, how could I have milked 7 cows, before I went to school without hands? Now, they have electric milking machines. But it still takes hands to put the machine to work. How would I have fed the pigs, rode a horse, or even harness the horse without hands? Now, of course they have self feeders, but someone has to put feed into them. We have tractors to replace the horses, but someone has to steer, brake, and give it gas to run. Riding a horse remains about the same. How could I shuck corn, shock wheat, pick tomatoes, peas, beans, or pick fruit off trees without hands. Now they have automatic corn pickers, combines for the wheat, but someone has to run them. Even a simple “gathering the eggs” took hands. There were lots of times when I gathered the eggs, I wished that I didn't have hands because the clucking hens would peck my hands when I tried to ease them under the hen to get the eggs, and that hurt!

Think of our forefathers building their home, log by log! That took a lot of hands. I have a picture that I would like to show you. I can remember when we harvested wheat like this. We would bind the wheat, which make wheat bundles. Then we would have to shock them. I helped my mother do this many times. We would set my brother & sister in the shade of a shock, while I helped her. When the thrashing crew came in, the men would use a pitch fork to put the bundles on the hr rn6h, then take them to the thrashing machine, once again, pitching the bundles into the thrashing machine, where the grain would go into a wagon, and the straw into a big straw pile, You notice, in the picture, the women would bring lunch out to the thrashing crew in the afternoons, and it was the children's job to take jars of wafer, wrapped in burlap sacks, to keep cool, to the crew. I was lucky. I had a pony to take the water to them. The neighbors made up most of the crew, and helped each other. When I was about 12 years old, I had to go to the neighbors and help with the dinner and supper. We had a lot of men that traveled thru the country helping the thrashing crew. They would sleep on the ground, but that meant breakfast too.

Now, we have combines to do the wheat harvest. When Bob was still able to farm, it took two to run the combine: One to run the engine, and the other to see that everything goes well. Now one person runs it. One year, when Willie Campbell was helping us, Edith & I decided that we would ride on the platform of the combine, so after work, we put on shorts, which was a little uncommon in those days, and rode the combine. My husband was always hollering to watch, so

that the straw would not plug the combine. When this happened, they had to crawl inside the combine and pull it out with their hands. Well, I guess we distracted Willie on this evening and the combine plugged. Well, that was the last we got to ride with shorts on.

Although Country Living is special, it is not always easy. The responsibilities and decisions to be made are many. It takes hard work and planning to harvest a crop. After planting, will it rain enough to germinate the seed? Will it rain too much during harvest? Will we be hailed out? What diseases will we have to core with? What about insects? I remember one year, when the grasshopper ruined everything. One year the jack rabbits were eating the crops. What will the price of wheat, be? Should we sell it at harvest time, or put it in bins and hope that the market would go up. What will the government do this year? You have heard that the farmers always complain? You see what the weather does, and when it makes a big difference. There is much more, but from what I told you, how could all this be done without hands?