

A lot of people would probably say that we live in the past here on this farm. We certainly agree with that sentiment if it means that we avoid much of the trappings of 2022 society in our daily routines. We do a lot of hand work, we don't own a television set, we are seldom away from home, we don't eat much factory food, and we hang our washing on the clothesline to dry. The ways in which our lives differ from most Americans' lives today are numerous—some insignificant, some more important. But, as much as we reject some of modernity, we fail to live like the old adages tell us, as well.

I thought about the old pattern that laid out the average woman's role in the 19th century. Our lives don't correspond to that, either. It is rather interesting, though, to speculate about that advice and wonder if it was followed even then.

It goes like this, enumerating women's work: Wash on Monday; iron on Tuesday; mend (or sew) on Wednesday; churn on Thursday; clean on Friday; bake on Saturday; rest on Sunday.

Today is Monday, but I didn't wash. It is raining a little this morning, and I wonder if women felt guilty if they didn't get the laundry done at the beginning of the week.

Instead of washing I jumped way ahead to Saturday's chore and did the baking. I suppose that means that I should substitute some other daily job for the Saturday baking.

The trouble is, though, that we need a lot of baked goods to fuel the rest of the activity around here. I guess some people do that via a "shopping day" excursion to the bakery or to the appropriate aisle in the supermarket. Here, though, it involves flour, yeast, and other ingredients as well as a hot oven. And, when the last round flatbread comes up from the freezer, it is time to bake again, regardless of the day of the week. Besides, a baking does not often last a whole week.

Tuesday is ironing day. Unlike most people, I have not given up ironing. I don't pretend to be a good, accomplished ironer, but I do smooth out linen dishtowels and the shirts we wear every day. I don't mind ironing; there is a sense of accomplishment when one completes this very simple task. But, ironing comes the day after washing, and that isn't always a Tuesday.

Wednesday is mending or sewing day. I don't sew, even enough to mend, so that day can be completely crossed off as far as tasks are concerned. We wear clothes with holes instead of patches.

Thursday is churning day, according to the traditional teaching. That is probably the day on which my activity is most consistent with these old dictates. Since I churn every other day, I am bound to churn on Thursday at least every other week.

Friday is cleaning day, and I often try to accomplish this job at the end of the Monday/Friday workweek. But, just as often as I clean on Friday, I neglect cleaning on that day, and sometimes, I clean during another part of the week. So, I have not done so well in that endeavor.

Baking on Saturday is not unusual here on Coe Creek. I often bake more than once a week, and cookies, rolls, and pies can come out of the oven

any day of the week, so certainly, on Saturday as often as any other time.

On Sunday, the direction is to “rest.” That is the hardest of all the daily guides. There is always something that needs to be done, and we are the ones to do it. So, resting on any day of the week can be a chancy business. And, if we manage an afternoon off, we tend to feel guilty. I suppose this is the way people have always felt. And, on a Sunday when we have made a concentrated effort to “take the day off,” we are always glad when it is time for evening livestock chores. One can stand only so much leisure!