

Every once in a while I notice—while reading—some reference to outdated practices. Usually, these are things I do all the time. I am surely behind the times, and, in fact, much of what I do was not in vogue for girls and women even when I was growing up. The old phrase “born a hundred years too late” surely does apply to me.

Ironing is probably the best example. I don’t know anyone who irons anymore. Some people have told me that they don’t even have irons these days. Probably, part of the reason I iron is because of something else I do that is not common now. I hang clothes outside on the lines to dry and in winter, I hang them in the warm basement. We do not have a clothes dryer.

But, a little more about ironing is pertinent. I am not a “good” ironer. It is a quick job pressing out the worst of the wrinkles in shirts. I am more fussy with ironing dish towels. Because most of the ones I use are the hand woven linen/cotton variety I have made myself, I like to see that smooth sheen on a newly ironed towel.

Hanging those clothes out to dry is, too, of course, a most unpopular practice these days. I don’t know why. It is not a hard job, clothes smell so nice and outdoorsy from the fresh air, and hanging clothes out is certainly is one environmental improvement that is painless to adopt. And, as someone recently said as he ducked under the clothesline on the way to the cabin, “Outdoor art!”

I spin woolen yarn from the fleece of our own flock instead of buying knitting yarn. This was just as uncommon in this area in the middle of the twentieth century as it is now. But, earlier in our local history there were women who regularly turned raw wool into socks and mittens to keep their families warm during the winter.

These days, though, sitting down at a spinning wheel and turning out usable yarn is more an art or craft activity than a necessity. Still, it is one of those practices that has several positive attributes. First and perhaps best, it is fun. It might look about as exciting as watching paint dry or a turtle making its way across an open field, but it is really quite satisfying to the individual who is creating yarn from fluffy wool

It also gives me the satisfaction of making something useful from what grows here on the farm. Sometimes, I even know which ewe provided the fiber. I remember going to the barn one very cold winter night years ago and silently thanking the little gray ewe for providing the wool that had become a pair of socks that were

warming my feet on that particular night. It isn't easy to get much closer to the source than that.

So, when I feel "old-fashioned," it does not distress me. It is just an indication of a lifestyle that has much to recommend it in this speeded-up environment of today.