

# Coe Creek 2023

“Ho hum,” the reader might say, “this must be last year’s Coe Creek letter. Seems like I have read all of this before.”

In truth, life here on Coe Creek hasn’t changed very much during the past decades, but what follows were journal entries from 2023. Continuity in life seems as important to us as novelty. So, here is our year:

01/09/23: 18 F. at 6 a.m. Making a dish from a different country every day in January this year led us to a bean/corn soup called Githeri and a coiled flatbread to go with it—both from Kenya. They were good eating.

01/17/23: 32 F. A rainy day. Runo manned the carding machine and I worked at the spinning wheel.

02/02/23: 0 F. A sunny, cold day. I baked beans in the cook stove oven and remember Uncle John Erickson saying beans always tasted better baked in the oven of a wood stove.

02/28/23: 21 F. this morning, but it warmed enough for the sap to run, so we put in our 20 taps for our backyard syrup.

03/03/23: 20 F. but mild in the unheated greenhouse. We had a warm spinach/bacon salad from greens that grew there.

Runo evened up the ewe pens today, eleven pens with eight sheep each.

03/07/23: 25 F. We sheared a pen of sheep and kept one fleece that was very nice.

03/20/23: 20 F. Runo sheared the rams today. In the evening I washed our shearing clothes. The lanolin makes them easy to get clean.

03/25/23: 20 F. First lambs of the season, a nice pair.

04/08/23: 25 F. Seventeen ewes left to lamb. It has gone quickly and well this year.

Frogs are making their music today.

04/12/23: 40 F. I did the washing today and hung clothes outside for the first time this spring. Nice to have the basement lines empty—no need to duck under the wet washing.

4/30/23: 30 F. Finished spinning the wool of the ram Ghost. Runo had carded it all earlier.

05/01/23: 30 F. The ground was white with snow by evening chore time. Stayed for a few days.

05/08/23: 30 F. We drenched sheep today and then went to Reed City to the Health Department for a Covid booster and a shingles shot.

05/21/23: 32 F. Saw the first bobolink today.

06/12/23: 40 F. Runo built a fire in the cook stove, and we kept it all morning. I wore my red wool stocking cap all day.

06/13/23: 34 F. Baked a rhubarb pie. Worked in the garden, replanting what didn’t come up in this cold, dry spring.

06/14/23: 41 F. Runo cut part of the Big South Field today.

06/19/23: 45 F. Saw the first lightning bugs tonight.

06/27/23: 52 F. It was a very smoky day from fires in Quebec and Ontario. We wore masks while we were outside putting up electronet on the South Eighty.

07/03/23: 52 F. I dug down under the Onaway potato hills and found enough tiny new potatoes for dinner for the two of us. The best food of all—potatoes in so many ways!

07/06/23: 53 F. Brought the sheep home from the South Eighty today. Put them in the corner pasture.

07/10/23: 45 F. Ate the first Swedish mandel potatoes today.

07/11/23: 49 F. Don Byrne and Runo took off honey today. Later, Runo used the propane cooker to boil potatoes for the pigs.

08/02/23: 50 F. Picked red and yellow peppers and bright green broccoli for the freezer.

08/03/23: 55 F. Runo hung the new door he made for the basement. Looks and works fine.

08/22/23: 58 F. Started a batch of lemon/dill sauerkraut.

08/25/23: 60 F. Pulled the onions and dug the Onaway potatoes.

09/06/23: 65 F. Canned the rest of the peaches. Will cook tomato sauce for the freezer tomorrow.

09/12/23: 49 F. We sorted lambs yesterday and today sent 133 to the lamb pool auction. Later, went to the garden and picked three pints of fall raspberries and several pails of tomatoes.

09/23/23: 50 F. Runo picked the Liberty apples and the first from the Cox Orange Pippin tree. The Golden Russets will be on the tree for some time yet.

10/06/23: 40 F. Cold today after an overnight thunderstorm. Started the fire in the basement stove for the first time this season.

10/23/23: 23 F. A cold, frosty, beautiful morning. The sun was just coming up as I went to the mailbox before going to the barn. The rising sun illuminated the hardwoods and popples, and they were brilliant. The sun's rays, hitting the dark blue clouds in the west created a rose-colored luminescence around that dark blue.

10/31/23: 23 F. Runo planted garlic today.

11/01/23: 22 F. We rendered lard today. Ten quarts of pure white lard now in the freezer.

11/03/23: 25 F. Snälla had a big, light roan heifer calf today.

11/25/23: 10 F. A bitterly cold, sunny day. We split and hauled in wood all afternoon.

11/27/23: 15 F. About five inches of snow on the ground.

11/29/23: 15 F. Sent in our 2024 garden seed order today. The seasons fly by.

12/01/23: 16 F. Went to the woods and cut a balsam fir Christmas tree. Holiday greetings to you all.