

Monday Washday

By Jan Graf

Monday was an interesting day in the neighborhood - it was washday! Every woman in town knew what they were doing on Monday morning. I don't know when Laura Gubler did the washing for her household (her brother Hyrum and herself), because she was busy going around the neighborhood keeping all the women informed as to who had their washing on the line first. There was a silent competition in our neighborhood between Hilda Stucki, Grace Stucki, Leda Frei, Glenna Hafen, and sometimes, my mother. Laura was the judge and jury of who got their sheets on the clothesline first, and whose were the whitest!



Laura Gubler 1904-1993

For Mom to do the washing Dad had to build a fire in the ditch by the garage and put a large kettle of water on to boil. Mom had a wringer washer out back under the shed on the south side of the garage with a double wash tub for rinsing the clothes, and a tub with a washboard for scrubbing the dirt out.



Summer wasn't too bad at daylight, but winters could be cold, trying to get the clothes washed and on the clothesline. My mother was so excited when Dad and Uncle



Si built her a new clothesline with about 6 wires to hang clothes on, and with a grass patch under it. Her previous clothesline consisted of 2 wires that ran down to the corral along the path and which was sometimes muddy and slick.

For laundry, Mom made lye soap when we killed an animal and she had fat. She would boil the fat with lye. Pig fat worked best. She always had cloth diapers to wash out with Paul and Carol as babies. None of the competitors had babies except Glenna, who had Barbara who was about Carol's age. I know it had to be hard and tried real hard not to get my clothes too dirty.

I remember the day my mother finally got an automatic washer. Marion Bowler, the Hotpoint dealer on St. George, brought it and installed it on the 31st of October. Mom washed clothes all evening as kids came trick-or-treating that night. She was so excited that she didn't have another winter out under the shed, doing the washing. She still had to hang the clothes out on the clothesline but that was the easy part, she said. The washing machine was put into Carol's bedroom next to the bathroom so it could drain and receive water from the plumbing in the wall.

By Jan Marion Graf
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