



Tam's Front Porch Ponderings
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Bean Picking And Canning Time

Life just doesn't get any better than when you're standing knee deep in mud, picking beans!

My Aunt Shirley phoned and said, "I need help, I've got beans to pick and the wind has knocked down my cane poles, can you come help? I know it's awful wet, but these beans need picked."

Naturally, I'm not gonna say no to the lady who makes the best chocolate pies in the whole, wide world; so, at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday morning, I was wading mud in my trusty rain boots, to pick beans.

It all started out well enough, there had been an early morning fog and the temperature wasn't too bad as we picked the first row of white, half runners. I had come prepared with my big, white, five gallon bucket, shorts, rain boots, hat and cool-dana tied around my neck. The water from the cool-dana ran down my back but it felt delicious as the sun began to climb in the sky, along with the temperature. Before long I had tied the thing around my forehead to keep the sweat out of my eyes, but Aunt Shirley showed no sign that the heat was affecting her. She picked right on, chatting about first one thing, then another, while I huffed and puffed, struggling to get my breath. There was no way I could carry on a conversation in this heat, how did she do it?

She marched through weeds that the abundance of rain had helped to shoot up here and there, while I gingerly tip-toed among them, looking for snakes! She was as spry as a sixteen-year-old, being in the garden was definitely good medicine for her! I fought bumble-bees and stink bugs while I listened to her plans for next years garden. "Think I'll put the corn on the lower side and the Nell beans up front", she said casually, like she was fixin' to redecorate a house. I couldn't even think about next week, let alone next year as I wiped the sweat from my eyes, AGAIN, and tried to pick the beans that were way up high. We had finished the row of half-runners and was on the lower end of the garden picking a different kind of bean. The leaves were HUGE and the weight of the plants, along with the soft, wet soil, had bent the cane pole, tee-pees over side-ways.

Curious, I asked her, "Why do you call these beans, Nell beans?"

"Well, it's like this," she said, "Bruce Rose gave me the seeds to these beans and said she got them from Nell Kissick, so we've always just called them 'Nell' beans."

"Interesting story," I replied, "I always wondered why we called them Nell." I could remember Daddy referring to them years ago as such, but I never bothered to ask why. I thought it was just some special breed of half-runner and I didn't dare question the Master Gardener when it came to his beans!

We picked until after 10:00 o'clock and I don't think we left a bean one hanging. I loaded two five-gallon buckets in the back

of her truck and we headed for the coolness of Shirley's basement to begin stringing. The first thing I did was hit the sink, bean plants make me break out in a horrible, itchy rash, but I've learned over the years to immediately wash my arms with cool water and soap. That seems to stop the rash from spreading to my face and chest, and we had lots of stringing to do before we could can. I surely didn't want to be distracted by spending my time scratching!

It was peaceful, sitting together in the cool basement, with our pans in our laps. Aunt Shirley fixed a big pitcher of lemonade, and, as we strung the beans, we laughed and talked about everything and everybody! We discussed recipes and church socials and tried to come up with names for the new Royal Baby.

"I hope they name him Spencer, in honor of Princess Diana," I mused softly. Diana had always held a special place in my heart, I cried for weeks when she was killed. We spoke of Prince Charles and that horrible, horrible Camilla, and before long we had the Nell beans ready to wash and place in jars for canning.

Canning was something my Daddy and I had shared a love of. He taught me how to sterilize and pack the jars, then how to add the salt and pour boiling water over them. Next came the lids and rings and finally, he taught me how to load the pressure canner

and monitor it at 10 Lbs. for ten minutes. He even gave me elbow length, leather gloves to wear as I carried the canners outside to release the lids and gingerly lift the beautiful quarts of green beans from their hot bath. We'd sit together and count the 'pops' of the lids as they sealed, and, when they were almost cool, he'd take a fat, black crayon and mark the year on the lid. Yep, those were some special times.

Shirley and I worked on the half-runners while the Nell beans were in the canner. We timed it just right, "cause as the Nells came out, the half-runners were ready to go in. While we waited for the pressure to build to 10 Lbs., we swept and did up the dishes, tidied up the basement and discussed plans for supper.

The heating element in my oven had burnt out the night before, so I was thinking along the lines of Burger Barn for supper, but Aunt Shirley would have none of that! She sent me home with chicken and

dumplings, fresh green beans, homemade potato salad, cantaloupe and before I left, she even taught me how to fry hoe cakes! Ahh, and for dessert, tucked in my picnic basket were three, homemade, fried apple pies. I hoped I could resist the urge to eat all three of them before I got to Sand Hill!

I begged Aunt Shirley to let me take my beautiful, nineteen quarts of green beans home with me, but she refused. "I'll not have them explode in your truck, they have to be completely cool before you can take them home," she cautioned me sternly.

So I tossed them a sad look of good-bye as I went out the door. I felt like Little Red Riding Hood as I left with my basket of goodies over my arm.

I hated to leave my beans behind but --- it would give me a good excuse to return for them the next day and who knows? Maybe she'd send me home tomorrow with ... CHOCOLATE PIE!

ESTILL PUBLIC LIBRARY
 246 Main Street, Irvine, KY - Call 723-3030
If school is cancelled due to icy roads, the book-mobile will run two weeks after the scheduled date.

Week of August 5-8, 2013

BOOKMOBILE SCHEDULE

MON.	TUES.	WED.	THUR.
Old Fox Road Furnace Jct. Miller's Creek Cow Creek	SI Elementary Winston Trotting Ridge Sandhill	NWisemantown Station Camp Red Lick Crooked Creek	Spout Springs Hudson Mill New Fox Road Hargett-Parvin Road

"Mommie & Me" and Storytime
 Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. and Fridays at 10:30 a.m.

School News

Thursday, August 1st, 4-7 p.m.

West Irvine Elementary Open House

West Irvine Elementary is hosting Open House, Thursday, August 1, 2013, 4-7 p.m. Open House is an opportunity for all students and parents to meet their teacher and ask important questions for the upcoming school year. West Irvine Elementary's back to school theme is "Wild About West." We look forward to seeing everyone soon!

Thursday, August 1st, 5-8 p.m.

Estill Middle School Open House

Estill County Middle School students and parents/guardians are invited to our annual open house activities Thursday, Aug. 1 from 5 to 8 p.m. Schedules will be available at this event. Make plans to meet your teachers and obtain needed information for the upcoming school year. We hope to see each and every student at this event.

Monday, August 5th, 3-6 p.m.

Estill Springs B-to-S Open House

Estill Springs Elementary will host a Back-to-School Open House on Monday, August 5th from 3-6 p.m. for students and families of all Estill County first and second graders! Bring your child to see our exciting changes the night before school starts and sign up to volunteer this year! Confidentiality Training will be offered on the hour at 3 p.m., 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. Parents may also wish to bring school supplies in as well. ESE Staff hope to see you there! Go Bulldogs!

Estill County High School Schedule Pickup Times

Wednesday, July 31st

Senior and Junior schedules 9 - 11 a.m.
 Sophomore schedules 1 - 2:30 p.m.
 New & transfers 9-11 a.m. & 1-2:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 1st

Freshmen: Orientation 6 - 8 p.m.

Schedules will "not" be available in advance of these designated times. **Please adhere to these assigned times in order to expedite the process.** If students cannot make it at their designated times, the schedules will be **available on Infinite Campus to print starting on Aug. 2.** ***Schedule change requests will only be considered if it is a graduation requirement issue: a required class for graduation is missing "or" the student has inadvertently been placed back into a class for which he/she has already received credit.



Sunday, August 4th, 10a-3p

ROUND UP THE KIDS.

Back to School extravaganza

Looking for some free fun for the kids? Come join the Ravenna Church of the Nazarene for their Back to School Extravaganza on August the 4th! There will be free food, inflatables, dunk tank, and other fun games at Ravenna's Veterans Memorial Park. You and your family will not want to miss it. All this free fun will take place right after the church service at Ravenna Nazarene on 530 Main Street, across from the park, until 3 p.m. The Sunday school starts at 10 a.m. and the morning service starts at 10:45 a.m. The new children/youth pastor, Rev. Josh Sutton, will be preaching the morning service. We would love to see you come join us, do not let this be something you will regret not coming to.