

## "A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE"

# Whatever Happened To Summer Kitchens?

Years ago, a common feature on many farms was the summer kitchen. It was usually an airy porch or a small building near the house where the farm wife could prepare meals or preserve summer produce without creating heat and discomfort in the farmhouse.

Most of them are torn down now or are used for something else, but Arlene Rigg, of Bishop Hill, Ill., wants to keep pleasant memories of a summer kitchen from her childhood alive. So, she and her husband, Dick, built a 12-ft. by 20-ft. summer kitchen from scrap lumber for under \$200 on their 15-acre farm.

Their cozy summer kitchen includes antiques and furnishings from a bygone era. There is an old cookstove, a pie safe, cream separator, dry sink, icebox, butcher table, and many utensils and tools to give the kitchen a realistic and rustic feel.

"My family tells me I should have

been born 100 years ago," Arlene says. "I collect antiques to help me preserve my memories of life on the farm the way it used to be. And I love baking."

Arlene has written a cookbook based on her experiences called "Summer Kitchen Memories". But there's more to it than just recipes. "It's not just a cookbook. It's a little trip down memory lane," she says. "It also includes pictures and illustrations from my summer kitchen."

Many people have come to Bishop Hill to talk to Arlene about fond memories and to try her home-made Norwegian and Swedish cooking out in the summer kitchen.

Arlene has also entertained some extra special guests at her summer kitchen. She baked a special cake for the King of Sweden a few years ago. And the Consulate General of Sweden tried some of her pastries another time.

Arlene's book is printed on heavy,



Arlene Rigg's summer kitchen, located on her family farm, is furnished with antiques and appliances from 100 years ago.

plain brown paper — similar to grocery bag paper. It even has a special binding made from her homespun wool. Her collection of authentic recipes and memories sells for \$4.

To order a copy, or just to share a few memories, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Arlene Rigg, Box 11, Bishop Hill, Ill. 61419 (ph 309 927-3359).

## MAKES BREAD THE OLD FASHIONED WAY

# Old-Style "Mud Oven" Fires Up Pioneer Spirit

People in Melville, Sask., think there is no bread quite as good as bread baked in a mud oven.

The mud oven is part of a revival of pioneer bread baking methods. A local citizen, Harry Swartz, remembered the one on his home farm when his parents first settled the area. He decided to build a replica for use during the 75th anniversary provincial celebration dubbed "Celebrate Saskatchewan".

Harry Swartz' mud oven is 7 ft. long, 3 ft. wide and 3 ft. high. Although mounted on an old cart so that it can be moved around, the original ovens were built in a permanent location. Also, he used bricks bound together with a mixture of clay and straw, whereas the old ovens were usually made with stones and clay mortar. It took about a month to build.

Before baking bread, a fire is built in the oven and heated up for about two hours. Then, when the fire and ashes are removed from inside, the bricks have enough heat in them to bake bread.

Bread loaves usually bake in about 35 minutes, depending on the oven and the baker's skill. To regulate

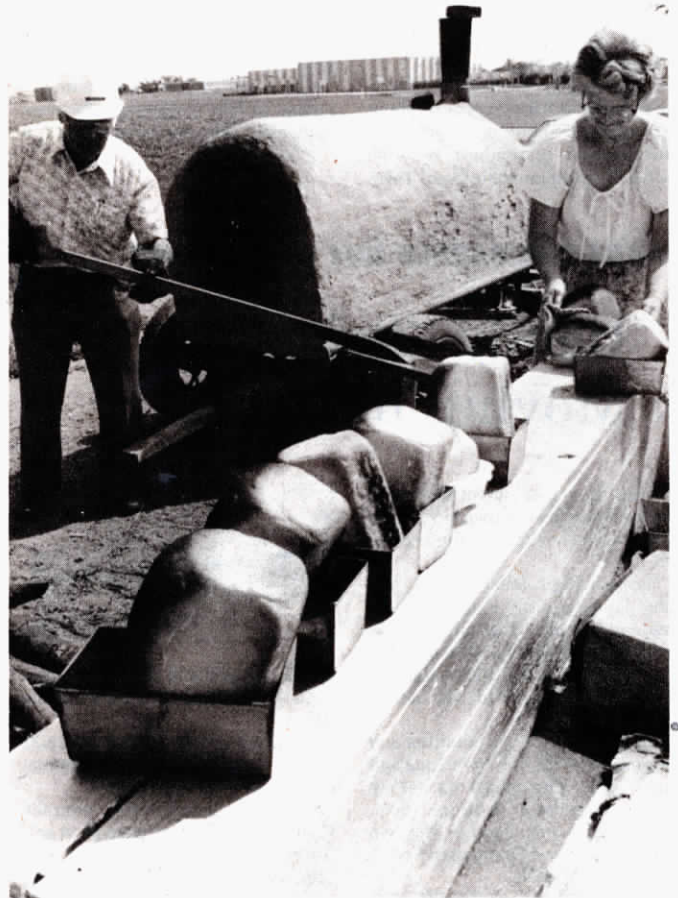
temperature, a chimney can be opened to allow heat to escape, or the outside of the oven can be sprayed with cold water to cool it down. Starting temperature for baking is about 450 degrees F., but when 25 loaves are put in, they absorb a lot of heat.

Verla Erlendson, Melville, assisted Swartz with much of the baking for the celebration. Her old recipe yielded loaves of bread that people bought up faster than they could be baked.

"What we didn't know about the oven, nature taught us. We learned that the bread browns quickly but then keeps baking without turning browner," says Swartz. "You listen to the bread when you take it out. If it crackles, it's done. If the sides cave in, it's not cooked properly inside."

The mud oven has been turning out about 200 loaves a weekend, as well as pies and rolls. It's expected to be used again and again in the future as an attraction at Melville events.

For more information contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harry Swartz, Box 92, Melville, Sask. (ph 306 728-5840).



Harry Swartz and Verla Erlendson serve up fresh-baked bread from the old-time mud oven.