

FINANCIAL AIDS & HOMECHORES

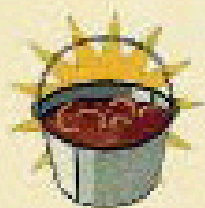
Elsie J. (Titus) Martin

Our father worked on road construction. Sometimes it wasn't easy to get everything needed for school and other expenses. Those of us who were old enough to do odd jobs could help with some of our own needs.

The brother just older than I took a job with two elderly ladies who lived next door. He cleaned house, cooked, and drove them around town in their big Buick. He thought he was king of the hill. With the money he earned he bought some nice clothes and took dancing lessons. He later taught dancing for a few years, going to small towns in the county. He was a good cook and several times cooked dinner for the High School faculty. Later in life he was produce manager for a large supermarket chain until his health forced him into early retirement. He died several years ago of Alzheimer's disease.

I baby-sat and styled the neighbor ladies hair. I couldn't charge for the hair dos of course, but all donations were greatly appreciated. I made some of my own clothes, learning from my mother and Home-Economics classes in High School.

The younger boys delivered papers, mowed lawns in the summer and shoveled snow in the winter. Some of the neighbors paid them to dig fish worms; they also went out at night with a flashlight to pick up night crawlers, also known as dew worms. They stored them in the damp basement in a special box Dad built to keep them in, one that the worms couldn't escape out of the cracks. At that time worms sold for twenty-five cents a dozen. Last summer, when I was in the hometown, they sold for about two dollars a dozen. It doesn't make any difference what you're in the market for, inflation gets you coming and going.



I don't want to forget my older sister. She would get all dressed up pretty and meander around the block, glance about to see if there happened to be any boys watching. She recently had a birthday and I found a card I thought was appropriate. The outside read, "Remember those funny clothes Mom used to dress us in?" On the inside it read, "You can stop now."

The sister just younger than I hated to do dishes. When it came her turn to do them, she would stack them in the sink, run water on them and let them sit. She said the food was stuck and they needed to soak. The problem with this was that I had the job of wiping the floor when the dishes were finished. These two jobs had to be completed before we could go out to any school functions or any other activity we wanted to attend. I usually ended up doing both the dishes and the floor so I could go out. I didn't like to do the dishes either, and I still don't. That's why I use paper plates whenever it's permissible and sometimes when it isn't.

