

Down Memory Lane

By

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Master Gardeners

The Seed Catalogs are coming to homes and it will soon be time to plan and start a garden. Starting plants from seed is interesting and a joy to watch them grow. I never had any luck. My plants grew up like a string and their heads drooped down and fell over.

When I was a child, I remember several master gardeners in Gary and the area. One of the great gardeners in Gary was Dock Heiney. His wife's name was Mae and I only knew her as a lady with poor health. Doc's sister Kate Mc Nammer lived with them and assisted Mae. Doc spent the summer with several gardens in the area. He raised all the vegetables that could be raised in this climate. Doc was not a man that ever spoke of religion, but on Thanksgiving their table was adorned with the vegetables that he grew in his many gardens. He said a table prayer that was lengthy. His son Johnnie said the gravy turned to jelly before the prayer ended. They also had a daughter Violet. Both Johnnie and Violet had great personalities. Doc had a old truck and a hill North of town that the people called Doc Heineys hill. He would speed up going down the hill and there was a curve and several times he didn't make the corner and went in the ditch. Well, Doc is in the ditch again the people would remark. I am sure that Doc sold some of his vegetables to stores and to individuals. I only remember him as a gardener.

The next gardener was Mr. and Mrs. Eikamp and they lived one mile west of town. The Eikamps raised and sold fruit and vegetables and they also made great cheese. Mother purchased asparagus from them every year. It was before freezers and they were canned to enjoy in the winter.

One spring we visited the Eikamps for asparagus. They had just turned out a huge block of cheese. It was round with caraway seed and was a beautiful yellow color. It would be sold to a store and resold by the pound there. We walked out to the garden and it was beautiful. They had so many kinds of vegetables and not a weed. Mr. Eikamp also farmed.

Mr. and Mrs. Dumke owned and operated a small dairy on the farm that David Denekamp lived on for many years. The Dumkes sold milk, cream and made ice cream. The cave is still on the farm and it was cold and the dairy products were stored there. They had a large garden and sold vegetables.

These three are just a few of the many gardeners. All mothers had a garden and it was a joy to see them. My mother and her sisters had competitions to see who could can the most vegetables and fruit. These are wonderful memories of yesterday.

Today we have master gardeners as well. Leona Stone has a large garden with vegetables and flowers. Leona spends a lot of time keeping it clean and productive. I enjoy driving by to see it. The late Donald Bekaert had a wonderful garden and flowers and Lilly does a fine job of keeping it up. The late Rocky Engessor had a large garden and flowers which Carol is continuing to grow. Eleanor Giese had a big garden as well.

Opal Olson, who's home was in the Gate City Housing at Gary, loved flowers and gardening. She made the front of the apartment house look like a garden in the park. Opal is no longer with us, as she passed away on March 26. Her garden looks so lonely. I hope that some one will keep it up. I am sure Opal has her flower garden in Heaven.