

Everybody Had An Outside Hustle  
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Make no mistake about it, farming for a living was hard work! Up until the late 1950s most Haywood families did not have tractors. They still plowed with Old John and Old Bell (mules). The cotton crop was chopped three times and the corn at least once. Crops were plowed as needed, for example, before chopping and oftentimes after chopping. There was no "pre-emerge" or other chemicals used to combat grass and weeds.

The family's clothes, bed sheets and spreads, towels, etc. were washed and ironed on Saturday. The house was also thoroughly cleaned on this day and the yard carefully swept.

Advance money to make the crop only covered the bare essentials. Consequently, most families raised other crops such as strawberries, greens, or okra. They also picked wild blackberries, plums and persimmons. The products from all of these activities when sold would bring in a little bit of extra money.

Farm women sold eggs, candy, cakes and other goods. Dr. Cynthia Hobson, a few years back, in a eulogy of Mrs. Callie Sue Brown at St. John Church picturesquely captured this activity. Women also fixed hair and some sewed for others. For extra money, men built and repaired houses and sheds, hauled timber, cut firewood, repaired broken appliances, and some cut hair on Sunday mornings.

Although these cottage industries did not result in fists full of dollars, they did make it possible for the farm family to occasionally treat themselves to something like a carton of store bought ice cream, to have a dollar to put in the collection plate at church, and to provide the children with pencils and notebook paper for school and potted meat, bologna, peanut butter, and light bread/crackers to carry to school for lunch.