

The McNess man visited the house periodically to sell his
castor oil, spices, and a variety of cold remedies and linament that our doctor
despite our dad's protest, he feeling those things could be bought in the town's stores.
Tin peddlers selling brooms, mops, rakes, hoes, pitchforks, dishpans etc. stooped, and
junk collectors came with their wagons to buy or sell old metal or other junk. Our dad
called them sheenies and said he'd run them off the place.

Our mother's loyal neighbor, Hattie Hermanson, came to visit almost daily. She lived just
across the field from us, and was a great help to our mother as she would sit
and mend overalls, socks, children's clothing while visiting with our mother. Often, she
would peel potatoes and help with preparing the noon meal, and wash the dishes. (Dishes
were washed on the small table by the stove, a dishpan of soapy water for the washing,
and a dishpan of clear water for the rinsing. Often our mother would be in the fields
when Hattie came, but she would busy herself with sewing or the kitchen chores until our
mother came in about 11 AM to get the noon meal ready for the men. Along with her help,
she was a companion for our mother, talking over the problems of the day. Although our
mother was a "survivor", determined to see her goals in life accomplished, and no doubt
wondered, at times, if she would succeed, must have appreciated talking with Hattie, who
lent an understanding ear, and was the only adult female companionship she had.
Hattie would usually take a bag full of mending home with her each day, to be returned
the next day. Along with the mending, mother would give her butter, cream, eggs, and
vegetables that were in season. In addition to the peddlers and "sheenies", our dad
seemed to dislike the daily visits that Hattie made. Perhaps he felt she interfered
with our mother's work, suspected that she heard of our mother's problems, or perhaps
it was just the loss of the butter and eggs that annoyed Pa. Whatever it was, I am often
reminded of Hattie as, since 1970, when I ^{lived} in Japan, and I learned there that the women
carried a shopping bag to collect and carry their groceries from the market, I have adopted
the habit, reminding me of the bag that Hattie always carried to and from our house. I
think she offered both help and companionship to our mother when she needed it, and our
mother was kind to her in return.