

'Spring Thaw' Magic Begins A New World

By LYDIA KING FREHSE

Special Writer for The Birmingham Eclectic

In mid-March most proofs of the season's turning are yet hidden and secret. But one who anticipates the spring can now detect certain unmistakable signs which impel him to cast off the toga of winter.

Although the water seems still and lifeless, the ice is beginning to break up in the ponds. The air has a penetrating chill, but one can feel the added warmth of the sun at noonday.

I can learn much sitting on a log in a wooded, turning over in my hand a brown leaf and listening for sounds as yet unheard. This is the moment in the life of the year when all things are yet possible because all things are in their beginning.

If one can link emotion to a season, then spring is gladness. The trees seem bare, but the folded buds are swelling

and bursting the scales which have sealed them against the winter's cold. Filibustering life is emerging from crack and crevice, from settled fog and frozen earth. Soon the first morning cloak will drift through the still air and the first bee will search for a flower that has not yet bloomed.

IN THE DARKNESS of underground photo the sap is coursing. Already it is spurring in the trunks of the sugar maples. The buds have begun to set in the sugar

ash and the fire is blazing, and bright under the steaming kettles.

Nothing smacks more of the flavor and fragrance of the woods than the satisfying sweetness of maple syrup.

It is to be regretted that in our urban fastness we are so far removed from earth's pulsations that for many the seasons come and go unnoticed. But the farmer of a generation ago (and to a lesser degree the farmer of today) was seeped upon the wiles of the weather. His livelihood came first-hand from the soil. He waxed fat or grew lean with the vicissitudes of any season. Would spring come early this year? It was a momentous question for him.

ON A DAY in mid-March he had already made an excursion to field and woodland to look over his acreage, to check on the ravages of winter and to plan for another season.

On such a day my grandfather would search out the naked shape of a cassia tree to strip some bark from one of its shallow roots. Therefrom my grandmother brewed a pot of tea and poured it into every waiting cup at supper time to "thin the blood" and to free the body of its winter lethargy.

After all the years, I can smell its pungent aroma and see the saffron stain it left in the empty cup.

There was a spot along the curve of Tomb-run Creek where, with the first spring thaw, the ground

was loose enough to dig for horseradish roots. I often followed my grandmother across the open landscape to the edge of the stream there to find the tell-tale leaves just peeping through the dried grass.

When she had dug a small basket-full, she cleaned and grated the roots. Next they were mixed with a dipperful of sour cream from the springhouse and a measure of home-made cider vinegar. The resulting relish had a tang for appetites satiated by the heavy foods of a long winter.

DURING A SUNNY afternoon in late March, my grandmother also began to search for dandelions. Gone was the winter's store of root vegetables, of celery and cabbage. It would be May before the first lettuce peeped through the garden loam. Dandelions bridged the gap by supplying greens for the table.

She gathered them in a basket or milk pail on a certain warm and gravelly slope. I was patient on many such expeditions. I was not a very good gardener and she patched him with the same long knife which she carried to sever the dandelions from their tough roots.

After the greens were cleaned and washed the dandelions were sautéed with a hot bacon and onion dressing and garnished the whole with a polka-dot design of hard-boiled

eggs. This dish made an elegant supper accompanied by a snowy mound of mashed potatoes and a fruit platter of sugar-cured

fruit. L. Saylor, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. Saylor, Canterbury Drive, Bloomfield Hills, graduated from the Associated Quartermaster Company Officer Course of

the United States Army at Fort Lee, Va., March 14.

A graduate of Michigan State College, Lt. Saylor entered the service in August, 1932. He has been attending the Quartermaster School for the past four months.

The post proclaims it the complete turn, and that he will soon be walking under the green of another winter; that the

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Lt. Saylor Completes Quartermaster School

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Troop B-1 Boy Scouts Campaign for Office

Election campaigns are going full swing among the boys of Scout Troop B-1.

Potential voters are "getting the works" in a really professional manner from those who seek the office of patrol leader.

To lighten the strain of campaigning the Troop recently attended a lecture and movie in

Parade.

Want ads cannot be accepted after 5 p.m. each Tuesday.

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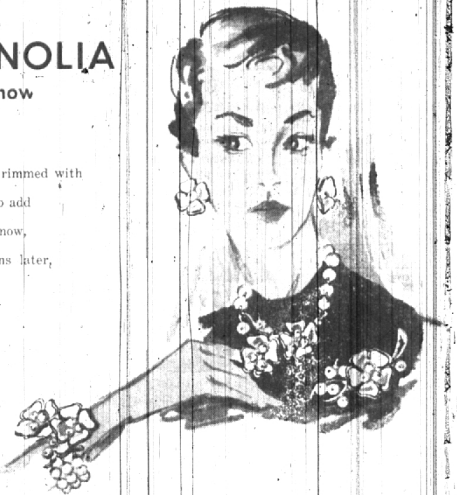
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