Houses. The houses in our county are mostly of wood and brick, with the exception of in the country, where the majority of the houses are logs. The average number of rooms in town homes is five; in the country, three. In town: bedroom, bathroom, dining room, living room, and kitchen. In the country: kitchen, bedroom, and dining room.


Meals. Daily meals in town are called breakfast, lunch and dinner. In the country, breakfast, dinner, and supper. Average breakfast in country: meat, bread, coffee, and gravy. In town: Toast, eggs, bacon, and coffee. Noon meal, Town: a variety of foods, no special menu. For the evening meal the same is true. In the country; Noon meal: vegetables, milk, and coffee. Evening meal in country: Meat, bread, gravy, potatoes, and coffee. In the country the food is home grown, but in the town they are not as a rule.

Physicians. Irvine has six Physicians, including the county health doctor. Estill county, outside of Irvine, has one physician.
Remedies. The home-made medicines and preventative are used mostly by the country people, consisting of roots and herbs. Some are colts foot, horse tail, life everlasting, golden seal or yellow root, ginseng, cat-nip, peppermint, mountain tea. These are mixed in various ways and used for colds, and general diseases such as lung trouble, coughs, or run-down condition. Brown paper and vinegar and all remedies mentioned in the assignment are also used. Such things as styes being "charmed away" have long ago been abolished and they are now cured by physicians. However, it is an old belief that styes could be charmed away by saying: "Stye, Stye, leave my eye, jump on the next one that passes by". Warts are said to be removed by stealing a dishrag and hiding it somewhere for several days.

Tools, etc. Some of the tools mentioned are not used now in this section. The hempknife is used moderately. Of course cradles, dishes, cooking utensils and water buckets are very much the same as they always were. In the country wooden buckets are still used. Tin dishes are used to a great extent by some of the country families, but usually china dishes that are now being used. The old fashioned churn, worked by the unceasing up-and-down movement of the dasher to bring butter, is still used. In some of the more prosperous homes in the country, where they are fortunate enough to have electricity, the farmers have electric churns, but there are not very many of these. The spinning wheel is very nearly a thing of the past, now kept more for a display than anything else.
Home Customs. When there are strangers in the home of a farmer, in most of the homes they are treated with the same kindness that one would treat a friend. When sitting around the fire the children generally sit with them, and listen in on the conversation. Around the dining table the father takes the head of the table, the stranger at his right hand, and if there is more than one stranger they sit the way that is most convenient for the strangers or guests. Strangers are helped first and then the grown members of the family, the children waiting until the second table is served if necessary.

Clothes. The old-time skirts were beautiful. They were very long and full, and made of very heavy material, generally wool or serge. For Sunday some of the more fortunate had silk skirts. The blouses, some of them were manish, and were made of broadcloth with tucks in the front and long sleeves. Of course there were silk ones too. The shoes were very sharp-toed, and high; some of them lacing and some of them with buttons. Beaver hats were not worn very much, as the weather has never been cold enough for them. "Galluses" that were worn then and those being worn now are much alike. The same holds true as to buttons and boots. Of course buttons used then were, some of them, much smaller than the ones used now. Shawls were knitted then and it seems that now again knitted shawls are very much in style. Caps are worn only by the working men; they are now rarely used for "dress-up" except by the country folk.
Sun-bonnets are still worn the same as in early days, with the exception of not being worn to church as they were in the earlier days. However, this is done in the country, although not so much. Work-clothes worn by both men who are farmers and railroad men are overalls, and in the winter they wear the overall jackets. Of course the business men wear just plain dark suits. Going barefooted is a thing of the past for the town folks. In the country one may drive along and see a woman, man, or child sitting on the porch barefooted. (Could find no carpet bags although I'm sure there are some way back in the "sticks".)

Both men and women milk. Food is kept by some farmers in springhouses, and by others in cellars and ice-houses. Fruits are preserved and dried for winter use. Meats are killed and cured for winter use, and vegetables are mostly eaten in the summer from the gardens. There are no records of any beef clubs, at least I could not find anyone that knew about them. I know of no unusual cooking receipts. However, there is one way of fixing butter beans that seem to be different; they are mixed with canned tomatoes, chili powder, and corn. This is very delicious. Usually the women do sit at the table with the men, unless they have guests and have to wait on the table. Yes, the children do eat with the grown-ups, unless there is not room at the first table. Then they have to wait until the second table.

Side-saddles are still used some, but very little. It has been more than ten years since they were used extensively. Traveling is done by cars by those who live on good roads and are prosperous enough
Ravenna, Estill Co., Ky.  

Evelyn McLeamore

to possess one. Wagons, buggies, and horseback are other methods of travel.

Most of the country folks have clocks to tell the time by.

Reference Source:

Mrs. George Lyle, age 66, Housewife, Irvine, Kentucky
Superstition and Custom

Superstitions of Animals and Plants

When a snake makes its mark in the dust this is a sign that it is going to rain.

If the groundhog can see his shadow on February 2nd, when he wakes from his long winter sleep, it is a sign there will be six more weeks of winter weather, but if it is cloudy and he does not see his shadow there will only be four more weeks of winter weather.

Cats wash their faces before a thaw, and sit with their backs to the fire before a snow.

When the robins come this is the sign of spring.

If the fowls roost on the fence in the daytime they are waiting for a storm.

If a shower is to be a short one, the hen seeks cover, but if it is to last a few hours they remain in the open.

The tree toad sings before a rain.

When robins run on the ground and chirrup loudly, they are calling for rain which is likely to follow.

When the locusts begin to sing, summer is on the wane.

When crickets sing in August, an early autumn may be expected. Six weeks after the cricket sings summer is gone.

When ducks fly south or other birds fly in that direction there will be an early winter.

The bees store up more honey when there is to be a hard winter.

The oppossum burrows in the trees before a mild winter if the winter is to be a hard one it burrows in the ground.

The frogs must freeze under three times after their first concert, before the frosts are over.
When the spider spins a long thread that glistens in the sun, the weather is to be fair, for the spider never spins a web that will be ruined by the moisture.

Cloudy weather in June is a good sign for corn, because the roots grow stronger.

When woods grow very tall, the snow will be almost as deep.

When newly plowed ground looks pink at twilight, and the woodlands look purple, the season is changing.

When fruit trees bloom twice, the autumn will be unhealthy. Many acorns precede a long winter.

In the month of October, when the leaves are falling many of them wither on the boughs and hang there, it betokens a frosty winter and much snow.

When the beech acorns thrive well, and the oak trees hang full, a hard winter will follow with much snow.

If on November first, the beech acorn is dry, we will stick behind the stove in winter, if it is light, but if the acorn is wet and heavy, the winter will be likewise.

Flowers bloom in late autumn, denote a hard winter.