

Mt. Vernon, Rockcastle, Co., Ky.

Robert Mullins

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Folkways, Homelife.

The houses in Mt. Vernon are built of brick and wood. In the country they are made of lumber and longs. They have on the average in town six rooms, living room, three bed rooms, dining room, and kitchen. In the country they have on the average four rooms living room, two bed rooms and kitchen.

In town the fuel is coal, in the country they burn wood. Their daily meals are breakfast, dinner and supper. The average breakfast consists of corn bread, biscuit, eggs, bacon, jam and coffee. For dinner they have corn bread, vegetables and meats. For supper they have the left overs with milk to drink. Most of their food is grown in the country.

There are four physicians in this town of Mt. Vernon one is in Livingston, two in Brodhead, and two in the country.

The home made medicines are brown paper and vinegar turpentine, and lard, camphor and kerosene, mutton tallow, sassafras whiskey, rock candy, and honey. Goats milk and pepper are used for colds, Pennoraoyal roots, barks, berries, and leaves are used. These are made into teas, salves, and other medicines.

Some people say if you have a styee on your eye you can go to the road side and say styee, styee, go off of my eye and go on the next one that passes by and the styee will disappear. To remove a wart go to an old stump and rub some of the water out of the stump on the wart and it will go off.

The old fashioned tools used are oradels, corn huskers, corn sheller, and hearth-side tools.

There are a lot of tin dishes still used, such as coffee pots, old iron kettles used on the fire places, tin skillet and hoe cake platters. The water bucket is now mostly tin and enamel. We still use tin buckets and crocks for milk. Churns used are made of cedar, tin, and crockery. The hands mill that are still used here

are coffee mill, and food chopper. There are two water mills still in use in this county.

The people of the family and strangers usually sit at the fireside in a circle. The strangers are usually placed together around the dining table, and the men of the family are always placed at the head of the table. The strangers are helped first, and family folk last. The children are made to wait until last or until the second table is served.

In the country part of the country people still hang to the old fashioned clothes: They wear long skirts and tight lace bodices, and their dresses are of calico and gingham. We often find some one still wearing old time plume hats. The men wear galluses and overalls. Most of the country people still wear the high top lace shoes. Sunbonnets are used by our town and county. The men work in overalls, hobnail shoes, and the women wear work dresses made of print and gingham. All the children go barefooted from the age of two (2) to fourteen (14). There are not any carpet bags here in the country. Men and women both milk. Food is kept in spring houses, ice is not preserved here. The women sit at the table with the men and also the children when there is no company. There are a very few side saddles used here now. The people travel about the neighborhood by autos, buggies, horse back, and wagons.

Most people here own clocks and that is the main means of telling time. There are a few people that tell time by the sun that is in noticing the way the sun slants or rises.

Reference sources:

Messe Fish, Mt. Vernon, Kentucky. Old resident.

Leiv Pennington, Farmer of Mt. Vernon, Ky.

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If one is troubled with a sty on his eye, he should stand on a street corner or roadside and say aloud these words: "Stye, Stye, go off my eye; gon the the next one that comes by." Thereupon the sty will disappear.

To remove a wart, go to an old stump that has water standing in some of its holes or depressions. Rub some of the stump water on the wart and it will disappear.

Two old-time spinning wheels are in use in Rockcastle co. today, one at Copper Creek, Ky., and the other at Horse Lick, Ky.

Sources:

Judge Fish, Mt. Vernon
Judge C.C. Carter, Mt.
Vernon, Ky.

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Customs: Holiday Observance

Folklore and Customs.

Hallowe'en is usually celebrated by school children and young people. The young people give parties, dress in costumes, play games and tell fortunes. The young boys of the town play pranks: such as, tearing down gates, soaping windows and blocking high ways with wagons, carts, etc.

Fourth of July: On the fourth of July the American Legion men march by a drum corps, and large crowds gather at different places in the county and spread dinners on the ground.

Ground Hog Day: On the fourteenth day of February if the ground hog sees his shadow there will be forty more days of bad weather.

Birth: After a baby is washed and dressed it must be given a teaspoon of oil; then make a "sugar-tit" for the baby until the milk comes into the mothers breast. Give catnip tea, mare's milk, goat milk, and fennel tea for hives. A baby born with a cowl has a super-mind, such as being able to tell fortunes, interpret dreams, converse with spirits, talk with the dead, stop the flow of blood, and doing various supernatural acts.

Courtship and Marriage: Sweethearts in the country "court" from one to three years, eat at one another's house, exchange presents, watch each other to see if they are "courting" anyone else. When they decide to marry they tell their parents and neighbors and arrangements are made for wedding dinners, charivaries and showers.

Social Customs: Amusements

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Quiltings. The tow churches here have "quiltings" the members of the churches gather at the churches and each one brings food for dinner. When the quilt is finished it is sold and the money put in the church treasury.