**The Clothesline**

A clothesline was a news forecast to neighbors passing by, There were no secrets you could keep when clothes were hung to dry. It also was a friendly link, for neighbors always knew If company had stopped on by to spend a night or two. For then you’d see the “fancy sheets” and towels upon the line. You’d see the “company tablecloths” with intricate design. The line announced a baby’s birth from folks who lived inside As brand new infant clothes were hung so carefully with pride.

The ages of the children could so readily be known By watching how the sizes changed, you’d know how much they’d grown. It also told when illness struck as extra sheets were hung. Then nightclothes and a bathrobe too, haphazardly were strung. It also said “On vacation now”, when lines hung limp and bare. It told, “We’re back!” when full lines sagged with not an inch to spare. New folks in town were scorned upon if wash was dingy grey As neighbors carefully raised their brows and looked the other way.

But clotheslines now are of the past, for dryers make work much less. Now what goes on inside a home is anybody’s guess! I really miss that way of life, it was a friendly sign When neighbors knew each other best……by what hung upon the line. *By Marilyn K. Walker*

**We may well be the last generation that will remember a clothesline.**

**MISSISSIPPI HISTORY IN MAY**

**May 8, 1541** Hernando DeSoto discovers the Mississippi River. **May 17, 1673**  Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette begin exploring the land which will become the state of Mississippi. **May 16, 1817** Mississippi River steamboat service begins. On May 10, 1823, the first steamboat to navigate the Mississippi River arrives at Fort Snelling—now St. Paul, MN. **May 16, 1863**  Battle of Champion Hill—bloodiest action of the Vicksburg Campaign. **May 4, 1883** John Gordon Cashman publishes 1st edition of the Vicksburg Evening Post.

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