



Have Back Patio, Have Relatives, Have Grill—Will Travel

BY VERA MILLER

REMEMBER way back when the family WENT on a picnic? Shopping bags were saved during the winter in the bottom drawer of the stove. In the shed were the collections of empty mason pickle jars.

And picnics meant food. Instant food that you smelled cooking from Wednesday on.

Remember when you reached the picnic area and the meal was spread out . . . remember, what it was spread on? Who used a special table cloth? Usually the oldest, torn and faded table cloth was washed after each picnic and carefully folded and set aside for the next Sunday's event.

And the safari to the corner to wait for the picnic truck! Early in life you learned your position and each year as you were older, automatically the duties changed.

Ma, of course, always had to have an arm free to carry her pocket book and ride herd on the family. However, it was usually she who carried in the tin the homemade Tante Elke's struedel.

Pa usually carried the box which had the most hideous drug advertisements. It was only when you were old enough to be aware that sex was something that didn't come after seven, that you wished he would get something other than these boxes from the drug store.

Maybe the carton became more meaningful with each picnic, but as a matter of fact, each family could be recognized by the food carton balanced on the edge of their

area at the picnic ground.

In this box—oh! what treats! The big cast iron pot filled with *gademphta fleish*, on top was the cover upside down and set in it were plates. The cracked family size dinner plates.

The shissel had first been wrapped in a turkish towel to keep the contents warm and in its innards of folds were various irreplaceable unmatched utensils, forks, spoons and the big bread knife.

And out of the many-folded brown bags (who was a *mishuga* and threw away bags?); out of the depths came such delicacies as hard boiled eggs, black bread, a few knishes (enough to feed the entire 'lansleit'), battered, brown cake tins filled with kugles.

No one was fed psychologically. If you didn't like what Ma made, very simple, she made something else and more of it. A special request was an honor to the cook.

The inevitable salami was included, even though there was the remote chance you might win one at the raffle when the pinochle and poker games were through being played in the afternoon. With the salami, the mustard was transported in a cone made of several layers of waxed paper, and of course, some always oozed out through the side of the bag.

Doesn't it seem that as you went through life it always had to be the bag you carried? At least one member of the family could be identified by smell at the picnic area. The one the mustard oozed out on.