



Meet Della Thompson

I was born shortly after the Civil War. I lived on a farm near Jackson. I loved picnics—the colorful foods, good smells, and bright tablecloths. I wrote about picnics and my other happy times in books when I grew up. I wrote about times I was unhappy or embarrassed, too. Follow me through the exhibit and I will tell you about the times in my life.

SCHOOL ROOM

I took my lunch to school each day in a dinner pail. What did I eat? What do you like to eat for lunch?

Once I had to recite a poem about the Civil War for a school program. I forgot my lines and had to sit down. I was very embarrassed! Has that ever happened to you? The poem was “Calling the Roll.” You can read it in *McGuffey’s Fifth Eclectic Reader* (Revised Edition).



PARLOR

The “almanac” is in the parlor. It had weather forecasts and advertising for new products. It told when to plant crops. Where would you find that kind of information now?

DINING ROOM

I loved holidays. Do you think that the table in this room might be set for a holiday meal? My “best” holiday was New Year’s Day. It was also my father’s birthday! What’s your favorite holiday?

SHED/OUT OF DOORS

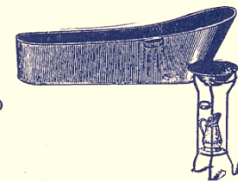
There were many chores to do on a farm. I liked to help with the milking each night. My father would squirt a stream of milk into my tin cup straight from the cow.

I helped with corn husking and apple picking. When we took apples to the cider mill, my father would taste the fresh apple cider. Where can you visit a cider mill?

BEDROOM

What is your bedroom like? Can you describe your bed? Is it a good place to read or to think and dream?

Where did we take our baths on Saturday night? Push the button to find out!



KITCHEN

I loved the way mother’s cooking made our kitchen smell. She cooked special Sunday dinners for company. Once we had spareribs and stuffing, mashed potatoes, vegetables, and preserves. Dessert was apple dumplings with lemon sauce. We drank cider. What are your favorite foods?

CONCLUSION

What did I do when I grew up? When I was young I loved cooking and homemaking. They became part of the books and articles I wrote. What do you do today that you might want to keep as part of your life forever?

REFERENCES: Lutes, Della T. *The Country Kitchen*, 1936. *Home Grown*, 1937. *Millbrook*, 1938. Boston: Little Brown, and Company.

“Growing Up in Michigan, 1880-1895”
Michigan Historical Museum
Michigan Historical Center
Department of History, Arts and Libraries