

Summertime Work for Kids



In the summer, I worked for a gardener named Bill Kidd for 10 cents an hour. That was after working a year picking beans and peas by the bushel. Fifteen cents a bushel! If we got into a new patch, I could pick two bushels per hour. But, you did not pick in a new patch all of the time. When you got to the second and third pickings of one patch, we could only pick a bushel in an hour and a half. The beans were not so plentiful.

After you had attained that speed, picking two bushels an hour, you went on salary, earning 10 cents per hour. Though it was less money, I got more of a variety. Pulling onions, picking peppers and getting to work in the barn were added duties. The main attraction was not the work, but rather his three daughters! When we were done picking, we would wash and pack the truck for the market, either Kroger or Eastern Market. Usually we would go to Kroger in the morning and then bring the balance to Eastern Market.

The next year I worked on the farm, my salary was raised to \$10 per week and then \$12 for my last year. Jobs were hard to get and I had work. Mr. Kidd always paid off every Saturday night around 5 p.m. The older boys would get to know how he worked so we would try to get the rows of beans to pick nearest the barn as he stopped to pay those workers first. He would always ask "How much do I owe you."

We would respond, "A full week Mr. Kidd," and he would give you \$6 and excuse you for the day. He would go to each worker the same way. He never questioned our honesty. If some had a day off, they would deduct the 10 hours. He did this week after week, with no bookkeeping and no name or address written down. My how times have changed!