

RECOLLECTIONS by Helen Washburn Dodd



A trip to Hyde Farm in the mid 1970's was a feast for the senses. I remember listening to the ripples and gurgles of the creek and the songs of the varieties of birds. We'd see some who make their home there, some just passing through. No one who has been fortunate enough to walk through a clearing at dusk and hear a whippoorwill call will ever forget the sound.

There's the joy of finding ripe blackberries and popping them into your mouth on a hot summer day. Seeing the mist rise off the river or delighting in finding the early flowers that mean spring is on the way became stories to share together at mealtime.

Watching the sky light up in

brilliant colors as the sun starts to set, and then seeing the moon rise over the trees as an owl hoots in the distance could make your heart sing. There's the barefoot pleasure of walking through the red dirt where plows have worked for many years.

If I shut my eyes, I can slide back in time and almost hear the flap of reins on the mule's back as they steadily work their way across the field. The quiet voice saying "Come on Pet" as sweet potatoes roll up out of the ground as the plow passes. I can smell the sweat of the man and the mule mixed with the cool scent of the freshly turned earth. I feel the care of a family who worked with land, not just to make a living, but because it was what they loved. The land and the lives were one, both made better because of the other.

*Photo: Buck and JC Hyde plowing with their mules Pet and Shorty, circa 1972
Pinhole camera photo by Ginny Smith*