By Nancy Whitaker

THE DAYS OF CLOUDS AND CLOVER

As I was driving home from work the other day, enjoying the nice sunny weather, I happened to look up at the blue skies and the white fluffy clouds.

Of course, this scene triggered my mind to go back and remember the era in which I grew up. I thought of the simple ways that as kids how we used to entertain and occupy ourselves for hours.

We lived in the country and one of my favorite things to do was just lie on the ground on my back and gaze at the sky. As I peered into the clouds, I always thought to myself, “What is up there? Where is Heaven? If people are walking on streets of gold, why can’t I see them? Why don’t they fall out of the sky?”

Even as a child, I was always inquisitive and could entertain myself for hours just speculating about what was behind the clouds. It was such a simple, but thought provoking way to pass time.

What else made me think of going back in time? Watching farmers in the fields with the dust rising up takes me back to a field where you could find light purple clover blossoms and smell and taste their sweetness. Ahhh, they were good.

Also, as kids, we always picked and played with that nasty smelling milkweed. Naturally, I had to look inside a pod just to see what was there.

Another thing we used to do as kids was to take yellow dandelion blossoms and hold them under one of our playmates friend's chins. If a yellow reflection showed up it meant you liked butter. (Someone just today told me they had never heard tell of or done it before.)

Months later, we would take the remaining dandelions which now had white tops, run in the wind with them and let those white seeds fall wherever they chose. Yes, those were simpler times in life.

I also enjoyed the fun of making a doll out of a hollyhock. As kids, we waited anxiously for Grandma's hollyhocks to get big, then take a blossom, peel back the petals and make it into a skirt for the doll. The stem in the middle was the body of the doll. How cute they were.

Another fun thing to watch was ant hills. Even as an adult, I still love watching them hauling their little bites of food back to a nest to share. I think it is terrible to tear up an ant hill. Think of how discouraged the ants must get with rebuilding.

Of course, there was always a nearby creek to play in. Taking a stick with a string and a hook on it, a piece of bread for bait, we could occupy ourselves for hours waiting for that elusive "big one" to come along and nibble on our lines.

As soon as the end of May rolled around, we were allowed to go barefoot. Our feet toughened up as we walked down the mud and stone roads to our next adventure.

I can still remember the old well at Grandma's and the good cold water we used to pump out into a tin cup. We all drank from that same cup on a hot summer day and never worried about germs.

At night we used to play hide and seek, catch lightning bugs or sit on the porch and look at stars. If we saw a shooting star, we were told that someone had just died and gone to heaven.

I hear a lot people say, “I am so bored. What is there to do?” However, if you grew up before the age of the Internet, TV, computers, DVDs, iPods and X-boxes, you will know how much fun simple things in life can be.

It is so much fun to think back and recall some of the simpler things in life. You know the first chance I get, I am going to go outside, lie on my back, gaze at the skies and nibble on a clover bud. Care to join me?

But, wait just a minute. The only place I might be able to lay and get a clear view of the sky is in my backyard. However, there are huge trees which would block my view and no clover. Plus, the neighbors would probably wonder what I was doing and if I could get back up. Do you remember making hollyhock dolls, chewing on clover or looking at the skies when you were a kid? Did you catch lightening bugs, go barefoot and play in the creek? Let me know and I’ll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.