Hand-Cranked Ice Cream Made the Day

I grew up next door to my Grandma Rooke, and we always had a great summer picnic when Grandma's brother, Uncle Jess, came to visit us from Norfolk, Virginia.

Tables would be set up in the side yard beneath the huge, double-trunked mulberry tree that grew between Grandma's house and ours.

There was corn on the cob, green beans, mounds of mashed potatoes, sliced fresh tomatoes, fried chicken, plus apple and cherry pies and a rich chocolate cake topped with a delicious brown-sugar frosting.

Summer Rituals

We sat on blankets, the porch swing or porch chairs and ate all that we could hold. Then we played croquet, badminton or softball while other folks sat in the shade and shared memories.

Later, Dad retrieved a green wooden bucket from Grandma's basement. Time to crank the ice cream!

A golden mixture had been prepared earlier and poured into the shiny metal canister, the beaters inserted and the lid placed on top. The canister was placed inside the bucket and crushed ice was poured around the canister and salt added.

A heavy metal crank was fastened on top, and the work began. All of us kids took turns cranking while the ice cream was soft. Our arms would ache, and we'd just pass the job off to a brother, sister or cousin.

As the milky mixture would begin to become ice cream, turning that handle got harder, and the kids, one by one, returned to their games.

Sweet Secret

I was the last child to leave the cranking. I just liked being with my dad a little longer. After a while, he always sent me to play and then finished the cranking. Then he removed the crank and lid from the canister, being careful not to get salt in the ice cream. The beaters were placed in a large bowl and—as I later learned—Dad partook of his reward. He licked the beaters!

The cold metal lid was returned to the canister, and a small brown cork covered the hole. Fresh, clean ice was piled on and an empty brown ice bag covered it all.

We were told it had to sit under the ice for 1 hour, though I'm sure it never did.

As the frozen gold was uncovered, we all gathered around with bowls and spoons.

Even today, this treat brightens my spirits. We may be the only family in the world to pull out the old wooden bucket, set it in the kitchen sink and crank to perfection, even on the coldest winter day.

But this icy treat brings summer comfort to the snowbound soul.

By Karla Kincaid, Hamilton, Ohio