To Mom, With Love

Early Payroll Deduction

DURING the early 1900s, women at the Nelson Laundry in Wilmette, Illinois (above right), shown at the company's picnic in 1910, earned 15¢ an hour.

As young girls, they dreamed of having new clothes but didn't think they could save enough from their checks for the cost of a nice blouse, which was about $5.

My mother, Ida Weber (far right in photo, next to boss), told her fellow laundry workers how they could save money. Everyone agreed to let the laundry owner withhold 25¢ from each weekly paycheck, and Mom convinced the owner to hold the money.

Everyone watched their savings grow, and when they had accumulated enough money, it was shopping time!

Realizing that Mom had helped the women reach agreement and had overseen the savings, the owner decided Ida Weber would be a good manager. Because of her budgeting skills and revolutionary plan, Mom made an additional $2 per week and moved into management.

—Jean L., Elkhart, Indiana

Rules Are Rules!

MOM TAUGHT US rules to live by during my formative years of 1939 to '46 by asking or telling us three things before we'd leave

the house:

“1. Son, have you washed your hands?

“2. Do you need to go to the bathroom before we leave?

“3. Make sure the door is locked!”

Many years ago, during my travels for a wholesale distributor, I had the occasion to spend a night at Mom and Dad’s house. I liked the enclosed porch they had, so after having dinner and catching up on things, I retired to the sofa bed on the porch.

Upon awakening the next morning and needing to visit the bathroom, I found myself locked out. Mom had locked up everything, apparently to keep all the intruders away.

So I couldn’t follow Rules No. 1 or No. 2 because of Rule No. 3.

—Larry T., Stuart, Florida

It Was “Curtains” for Dad

SPRING CLEANING at our house in the 1920s was a major production orchestrated by Mom over many days.

Part of Mom’s routine was taking down every lace curtain in our two-story home in Indianapolis, Indiana and washing them. Next was the stretching of each panel on her old-time curtain stretchers. As each panel was finished, she carefully stacked them on the bed in our guest room to dry.

One night, Dad got up to visit the bathroom. A short while later, Mom noticed him missing and called out, “Carl, where are you?” Dad’s reply was, “In bed. Where are you?”

Mom got up and found him in the guest room, where he had gone in his sleepy state. There he was, lying in the middle of her clean, stretched curtains, with several of them tucked in under his cheek for warmth.

Dad was in the doghouse for quite a few days.

—Paul B., Auburn, Alabama