

# Remembering the clothesline

You have to be a "certain age" to appreciate this one....

I can hear my mother now.....

## THE BASIC RULES FOR CLOTHESLINES:

(If you don't even know what clotheslines are, better skip this.)

1. You had to hang the socks by the toes... NOT the top.
2. You hung pants by the BOTTOM/cuffs... NOT the waistbands.
3. You had to WASH the clothesline(s) before hanging any clothes - walk the entire length of each line with a damp cloth around the lines, because the lines might have been dirty, and leave marks on the clean clothes you pegged there.
4. You had to hang the clothes in a certain order, and always hang "whites" with "whites," and hang them first.
5. You NEVER hung a shirt by the shoulders - always by the tail! What would the neighbours think?
6. Wash day on a Monday! NEVER hang clothes on the weekend, or on Sunday, for Heaven's sake!
7. Hang the sheets and towels on the OUTSIDE lines so you could hide your "unmentionables" in the middle (perverts & busybodies, y'know!)
8. It didn't matter if it was sub-zero weather... clothes would "freeze-dry."
9. ALWAYS gather the clothes pins when taking down dry clothes! Pins left on the lines were "tacky"!
10. If you were efficient, you would line the clothes up so that each item did not need two clothes pins, but shared one of the clothes pins with the next washed item.
11. Clothes off of the line before dinner time, neatly folded in the clothes basket, and ready to be ironed.
12. IRONED????! Well, that's a whole OTHER subject!

And now a POEM ...

A clothesline was a news forecast to neighbours passing by,  
There were no secrets you could keep when clothes were hung to dry.

It also was a friendly link for neighbours always knew  
If company had stopped on by, To spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the "fancy sheets", And towels upon the line;  
You'd see the "company table cloths", With intricate designs.

The line announced a baby's birth, From folks who lived inside,  
As brand new infant clothes were hung, So carefully with pride!

The ages of the children could, So readily be known  
By watching how the sizes changed, You'd know how much they'd grown!

It also told when illness struck, As extra sheets were hung;  
Then nightclothes, and a bathrobe too, Haphazardly were strung.

It also said, "On vacation now", When lines hung limp and bare.  
It told, "We're back!" when full lines sagged, With not an inch to spare!

New folks in town were scorned upon, If wash was dingy and grey,  
As neighbours carefully raised their brows, And looked the other way.

But clotheslines now are of the past, For dryers make work much less.  
Now what goes on inside a home, Is anybody's guess!

I really miss that way of life; it was a friendly sign ~ !  
When neighbours knew each other best ~ by what hung out on that line.

*Author Unknown*