

The First Home. 1875 and Later

about it. There was ample proof as to the "innards" of that pie. It was very discouraging for the cooks, but those onions seemed to take it in stride. They never weakened in the least.

Onion soup was made for a time, and it wasn't too bad. However, if they put enough onions in the soup to make any material dent in the big pile of onions in the cellar, the soup was almost strong enough to stand alone. So, obviously, onion soup wasn't the answer. Fried onions are good, but who wants them for a steady diet? These onions were the strong vigorous kind, and seemed ready to fight to the death for their rights.

Ma finally discovered how to make onion soup that the whole family liked. She would put a batch of navy beans to soak overnight. In the morning she would fix a nice big mess of onions in a double boiler, never letting on to them that there were any beans within gunshot. After the onions were boiling good, sorta kicking up their heels in glee, Ma would set the pan of beans in the top boiler. This effectually sealed the onions off from any contact with the outside world and subdued them quite a bit.

Ma would add a slab of pork and anything else to the beans that was handy. This with a little seasoning made very good soup, and was enjoyed by all and sundry. When the beans are cooked, remove them to the other room and shut the door; now, take the dish of pretty thoroughly subdued onions out of the back door and dump them to the leeward of the house, not too close. Along towards spring the whole family got so that they liked onion soup made and served this way, and would take second helpings. Thus by continually experimenting, and with that never-say-die spirit of the pioneer, they had solved the onion problem, second only to the grasshopper plague and the blizzard. The boys had the experience, and plenty of onions left in the spring; it wasn't all wasted.

One fall after the grain was all stacked, two of the older boys were plowing "on seven" as we called this farm. They were using two walking plows. They had a bit of trouble with the plows plugging up with trash in one particular place. They set fire to this trash to get rid of it. It was pretty well burned up, and they thought the fire was out, when they unhitched and went home to dinner. During the noon hour the wind came up and fanned the smouldering fire into action. When they came out of the house