

A clothesline was a news forecast, to neighbors passing by.

There were no secrets you could keep when clothes were hung to dry.

It also was a friendly link, for neighbors 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 tablecloth" with intricate design.

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, "Gone 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 gray,

As neighbors 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 neighbors knew each other best by what hung on the line.