

Car Seats to Couches

By Barbara Mooney Myers

Today as I look through these magazines and newspapers and see all this strangely made furniture, it takes me back a few years, quite a few, I'd say, to the later fifties when Burnice and I had been married a few years. We still had little furniture, just enough to keep us housekeeping, I suppose. Burnice had always loved farm life. On that day, he and Edgar Myers, his uncle had been near Manchester, TN, bailing hay for a family. That evening he came home about sundown. The kids and I sat waiting for him.

Peggy was four; Sue was just starting to climb around on things and was age two. Watching Burnice as he and Edgar got out of the truck, I said to myself, Now, he's bringing more junk to pile on the front porch - maybe another old car motor. As they neared the house I saw it was a car seat out of some old car that had quit running. "Hey, Honey", he said, "look what I found you today. It's the back seat of a Lincoln, finest car ever made, and most expensive too."

"Good, Lord, Burnice," I replied. "You call that a piece of furniture"?

"Oh, yes," he said. "Wait 'til Daddy and I get done with repairing it"!

"That's not going in my house," I said.

"Well, we'll see," he said.

They set it down on the porch. He asked for a cover to lay down to keep it clean. It was already a little dusty. In the meantime Mom was with us. She shooed us back indoors for supper, and said, "Let the men handle their job. Besides we could use a seat to set on. We'll work out something. Wait and see how things go. "

Floyd Myers, Burnice's father, could build or carve about anything. Burnice was also pretty good at making things if he could stay out of the fields long enough, but farmers just have jobs to do, and besides he had about 25 cows to milk morning and night. Well, a few days went by and on a weekend they worked at the barn workshop all morning cleaning supplies they used to milk, but then I heard hammering going on for hours. I just continued to do my housework while Mom pampered the girls. By noon time the men came to the house, done with the job of fixing the seat with a platform and legs that Floyd carved out and nailed on. Then came the time to set up the finished product. Floyd set the arms which he had made out of wood at each end of the seat. They were as smooth as velvet. When

they carried it into the house, I couldn't believe my eyes. The girls smiled so big and excitedly ran into the kitchen to get their granny to show her the car seat which was now a couch. Mom said, "Well, what is one man's junk is another man's treasure. I told you to just wait and see. We have a couch to sit on now!" It made my family happy to have it.

It wasn't the first repurposed object the Myers family had used. We used to raid the trash piles searching for whatever we could use at home: flower pots, jars that could be scrubbed and washed then used for canning, as well as any other item that we might be able to use. In those days money was scarce in most families' pockets. Some hardly made it through from week to week. Dad always said, if you don't need it, don't buy it. I know I had to plan my meals through the years of raising my children. If we had a meal of a tuna sandwich, fried potatoes, and maybe Jello or a cookie or sliced peaches for supper, we never complained. We gave thanks over our meal and ate it with pride. Today some smirk at this kind of meal and just walk away from it. My kids still remember it and are glad to talk about it.

I don't have to use an old car seat any more for my couch, but if we used what we had today, a lot of our bills would certainly fade away. Our worries over debt would be eliminated and we would want less, and life would be much easier. I am glad that my family taught me to be resourceful and to be content with what I have and that my husband also had that creative touch that could turn an old car seat into a reasonably nice piece of furniture.