

## Dreams to Rags

*By Donna Bishop*

It was time for a new dress for summer. I had my heart set on a pretty sundress. In our home new clothes didn't mean an exciting trip to a fancy dress shop or even J.C. Penney's. It meant a long boring trip to the fabric department of the local community store where we purchased groceries, shoes, birthday gifts, underwear, and in my nine-year-old mind everything we ever needed.

My younger sister and I, hand in hand with Mother, weaved our way through the store to the pattern counter. Mother quickly thumbed her way through the oversized books to locate girls' clothing. She would then wrinkle her forehead as she concentrated on each possible selection. "Donna, do you like this dress or how about one of these?" Now mind you a nine-year-old girl, who was much more interested in jump rope, hopscotch and a game of jacks, trying to picture herself in dresses worn by the pretty little smiling girls in the pattern books. My typical response was, "I don't know. What do you think?" So Mother made the selection and now it was on to the rows and rows of fabric. After many questions of "How about this one or this one?" Mother again made the selection of a piece of cloth for my sundress. It was beautiful indeed with white sunbonnets floating across a background of sky blue material.

I was very anxious to have my new dress completed. Several yards of material, a pattern and two large white buttons for the straps is a far cry from stepping into a new frock and twirling around and around for all to see.

Mother set to work carefully cutting each piece. Soon the pedal of her Singer sewing machine could be heard humming away. Several times the piece of clothing was adjusted for just the perfect fit. At last the two big white buttons were in place on the straps that crossed my back. The last step was the hand stitched hem. What a beautiful summer dress my Mother had created for me.

I was thrilled with my dress and so proud to show it to my friends. I begged my Mother to let me wear it just for a few minutes. Mother said, "Wouldn't you rather save it for a special day?" My reply, "I'll be very careful. I just want to show my friend!"

Outside in the backyard next door I joined my friend LeAnn on her swing set. Back and forth, higher and higher my beautiful skirt swirled. Knowing I promised to be gone only a few minutes I bailed out of the swing and my new dress was ripped off as the swing seat lifted away. I grabbed the torn pieces crying to Mother to fix. She held the shredded pieces up, with a look of disgust, threw them in the garbage can and said, "They won't even make good rags!"