

The Pitiful Pancake Incident of 1963

by Marilyn Reeves

Back in the days before recorded history, and long before I acquired my well-seasoned cast iron griddle, I was a young bride; and as such, I wanted to impress my new husband with my skills as a cook.

One Sunday morning, I decided to make pancakes. So I got out the old cookbook which I had purloined from my mother's kitchen, and followed the recipe therein, taking great care to measure each ingredient to a "T". I beat the eggs until they were frothy, added the oil and milk and dry ingredients, and stirred and stirred until the batter was a nice uniform – if somewhat stiff – texture.

I pulled out my brand new skillet – part of a stainless steel cookware set that included a pot, a pan and a Dutch oven. I still have the pot and pan, minus their handles – don't know what happened to the Dutch oven or the skillet – but I digress.

After frying the bacon, I poured off the excess grease and then plopped in a glob of pancake batter and stood back to watch it sizzle. After a minute or so, the big bubbles which rose to the surface began to pop, so I figured it was time to turn the pancake. Easier said than done. That sucker stuck to the skillet like glue! The bottom of the pancake began to burn, emitting stinky fumes of burnt pancake into the air, while I tried to chisel it out of the pan with my spatula. Despite vigorous scraping and a great deal of teeth gnashing, there was nothing to be done but take the burning mess over to the sink and douse it with hot water. After several more minutes of scraping and scrubbing and peeling off the remaining goo from the spatula, I decided to try again.

This time I added about a half cup of oil to the skillet and let it get hot before plopping in another glob of batter to cook. And this time I was able to release the pancake (which now resembled a fritter, but I wasn't too picky) from the bottom of the pan in order to turn it and cook the other side. I prepared a half dozen or so of these delicacies before calling my husband to breakfast.

There is a great diversity in people's preferences for pancakes. Some like buttermilk, some like blueberry, some even prefer buckwheat. But be they platter size or dollar size, the primary attribute of a good pancake is that it be light and fluffy. Tom and I each ventured a single bite of my offering. The texture was something on the order of a rubber Frisbee, and the taste was ... indescribable.

I looked up at Tom and said, "Wanna go to I-Hop?" It took less than a minute for us to grab our coats and rush out the door.