

## Home Country

# Cookies and a few kind words

Someday it would be interesting if social scientists would spend some of that grant money on finding out

how some good things get started, as well as discovering sources of pestilence and plague. It shouldn't be all

that difficult. The cookie thing wasn't all that hard to figure out.

The cookie thing, we concluded, began with old Jasper Blankenship. He came down from his cabin at the diggin's and brought with him an entire half pillowcase of cookies. He had found the recipe in one of those 30-year-old magazines he has up there, and since the snow was too deep to do anything else, he baked cookies.

Jasper walked into the Soup 'R Market and handed a cookie to Annette. "We don't often get to say how much we appreciate each other, Annette," the old man said, "so here ... have a cookie."

She thanked him and talked about it for the rest of the day.

Jasper found Doc walking toward the Mule Barn and his daily cup of coffee and handed him a cookie, too.



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"Doc ... the way you took care of that ... little problem of mine ... well, I want you to know how much I appreciate it. Here, have a cookie."

Before the day was over and Jasper headed back to the diggin's, half the valley had been cookieed, and the other half wished they had. Carla Martinez had been cookieed and decided to carry on the tradition, so she whipped up a batch of biscochitos and began passing them out, along with compliments.

Herb Collins asked Maizie to make a batch of chocolate chip cook-

ies, his particular favorite, and handed them out, along with compliments. Mickey Baker had store-bought cookies to hand out two nights later at the ticket booth at The Strand, where a Randolph Scott Western was playing for the first time in 60 years. Each cookie came with a compliment, too. This seems to be the most important element of Jasper's new valley tradition.

Cookies and compliments. Not a bad way to say I love you.

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