

Partial History of the Virgil Coleman “V.C. & Marjorie Henrietta EPPERSON Cole Family living in South Tillamook County

by Ruth Ellen Cole McWayne

September 2002

Typed by Dean Bones in October 2021

My parents moved to the Beaver area from Kansas in the early to mid-forties. They initially owned the “Barcroft Place” further up toward Blaine before the Barcrofts lived there. My parents operated a dairy there for several years. My father was teaching in Tillamook and trying to run the dairy at the same time. My dad always said that when they sold the place to John Barcroft there was one week there when both families lived in the house at the same time while the transaction was taking place. Each family had about 3 - 4 kids by then, so there were 14 - 16 people sharing the house for a week!

After selling that farm, they bought a large farm in the Willamina area and owned it for about a year. I guess it was a wheat/dairy farm. I think that is when my dad went into farming full time and quit teaching entirely. (During his career, he had been a coach/high school math teacher in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Oregon for a total of 12 years, two of which he also was the superintendent while living in Rye, Colorado,) My father was “gassed” in a silo accident while they lived there, and the place became too much for them to manage. So they sold that farm and bought a smaller farm on Gold Creek Road near Willamina.

About that time I was born, November of 1948. They lived there for 2 1/2 years and moved back to the Beaver area in May of 1951, purchasing the farm at 21545 Blaine Road which 4 of us still own (the address was Star Route, Box 20 while I was growing up.).

They purchased that farm from Esther Henderson who moved across the road. She later married and became Esther Maxwell. She lived at the same place across the road from my parents until her death a few years ago.

At the peak of operation we milked up to 52 cows filling the milking barn twice each morning and night. My sisters, myself, and my mother did most of the milking because my father was allergic to dust, and the hay in the barn bothered him. He handled the tractor work, vet work, and all the other operation of the dairy. At this time, we had 4 milking machines. Two were Surge brand, and 2 were DeLaval. We strained the milk over water-cooled coils in the milk-house into the old 10 gallon cans which were picked up every morning by a TCCA truck.

On a side note, I remember a field trip to the Beaver Cheese Factory when I was in first or second grade in 1954 or 1955. At that time the cheese was made in big open vats. The smell was horrendous! at a profit The cheese factory was where the Beaver Mercantile is now. I also remember when the Wylie family operated a store right across from the grade school in Beaver. It was a treat to buy penny gum there.

My parents owned the Beaver farm until approximately the summer of 1968 when they sold the place to the Uptons. I was in my last year at OCE at the time. My parents owned a duplex in Monmouth and moved into the larger half. (They bought the duplex around 1958 when my oldest sister was ready to attend college. All of us lived in part of it while we attended OCE, and my parents rented out the other side. They sold the duplex after I graduated from OCE. Five of us, everyone but Nancy and Wade, are graduates of OCE and became elementary teachers.) I lived with them my final year at OCE.

My parents lived away from Beaver for about a year or a little more because I know they bought a small farm in Dallas, Oregon, in the fall of 1969 after I had graduated from college and left home. Around this time the Uptons were having a lot of problems at the farm with sick cows etc. My parents ended up taking the farm back because they had sold the farm to the Uptons on a contract. I don't know all the details. I do know that my parents were very happy to move back to Beaver, and they never tried selling the place again.

Around this time the rules regarding small dairies had all changed, and my parents would have had to convert everything to a milking parlor and bulk tank system. By this time all of us girls had left home, and my brother was the only help they had in operating the dairy. So they decided to quit dairying. I don't know when it was that the barns blew down but maybe sometime in the seventies, I think. My dad resurrected the upper stories of the two barns but never went back to milking cows except to hand milk for their own consumption which they continued to do until my mother died in 1991.