

# Farming in the Forties

BY EVELYN BYRNE WILLIAMS WITH JANEEN SATHRE



Quite a few years back I copied a diary that Cary Culy had written in 1946 and 1947. It isn't that old but it certainly shows the lifestyle of early day farmers here in the Applegate. Cary came into this world at Steamboat (above the Applegate Lake) where his father, George, and mother, Permelia, had a 120-acre homestead on which to build a house and barns in about 1882. They also had the Steamboat Post Office and boarded the school teachers who taught the Culy's six children and others at the Steamboat School.

In 1905 Cary married Verna McKee, daughter of Deb and Leila McKee (historic McKee Bridge named for them). In 1910 Cary and Verna bought the 50-acre farmland on Kinney Creek across the river from Mule Mountain. It was not the loamy, fertile ground that every farmer wishes for and much work was needed to improve the land in order to make a living from it. There were always wagon loads of unwanted rocks to be hauled away after plowing and loads of manure to be spread over the ground to have successful crops each year. Water for irrigation traveled down a long ditch from the river to the fields and was always in need of cleaning, patching or switching from field to field.

Cary and Verna were neighbors of my family, both living on the west side of the Applegate River, only a couple miles apart. However, getting to their farm was not easy as the road on the west side ended near our house; they had to use the main road on the east side of the river and then cross a footbridge. The bridge was about 1/8 mile from their house. Everything had to be brought across the bridge; farm equipment, home items, groceries.

The Culy's had four children Omar, Helen, Louis, and Leora. Omar, the oldest, was the only one who stayed and worked on the farm until marrying much later in life. He was a tremendous worker for his parents, as witnessed in Cary's diary. Although, an entry is made almost every day I have chosen just a few I found of interest. Here is a glimpse into their life on Kinney Creek.

**Tues. Jan. 1, 1946—Weather clear**

Omar and I hung the shoulders and side meat this morning and cleaned the trash out of the smoke house and put the heater stove in for to build the fire in to smoke

the meat got done about 11:30 am. We didn't do any thing only I put the license on the car and brought the double trees over from Edd's. (Ed Finley, a good friend and neighbor lived across the river near the footbridge.) Omar caught a muskrat.

**Wed. Jan 2, 1946—Rain**

Omar and I got the lumber from the loft over the horses to make bottom for the wagon box and after dinner Omar and I went up and got the sides of the sluice box that was up at first gulch and we loosened the bolts in the wagon box. Omar went to his traps and set 1 more trap.

**Mon. Jan. 7, 1946—Rain**

Omar and I did the chores and I trimmed the horses tails and we hauled a load of oak wood am and Omar and I raised the broke ratchet on the wagon pm and fixed the little chicken house that Lewis built so the little calve could go in it pm It rained the most of the time today and snowed a little this evening.

**Sat. Jan. 12, 1946—Clear**

Omar and I hauled 5 loads of manure. Omar got some smoke wood while I was unloading 1 load. We are going to grange this evening. We got home 2 am Sunday.

**Mon. Jan. 28, 1946—Cloudy**

The ground was white with snow and about 1 inch in J'ville I took Uncle Stephen over to Medford. Omar helped Edd saw wood. I got 4 sacks of seed oats and sack barley a pruning saw and long handle pruner.

**Tues. Jan. 29, 1946—Cloudy, snow, showers**

Omar helped Edd cut wood. I cleaned out south end of the big barn. Lee Port (Forest Service Ranger at Star Ranger Station) come up and marked the trees that wanted for wood. I drove over to the foot bridge at 3:30 pm. Omar packed the seed oats over and a sack of barley.

**Sat. Feb. 23, 1946—Clear**

I hauled 3 loads of manure Omar picked pruning sprouts and Omar and I got a load of gravel and put it on each side of the bridge over by Kinney Creek gate. We went to the dance (at Upper Applegate Grange hall, near McKee Bridge) in evening.

**Tues. April 30, 1946—Clear**

Viola (Ed's wife), Omar, Verna and I went to Medford. We took the washing machine engine over to the May Tag for a over haul it cost \$11.10 for the over haul and a gal of oil. I bought a riding bridle and bit \$3.75. I let Omar have \$10:00

[Then there were these most interesting entries]

**Wed. June 19, 1946 — Clear**

I mowed and raked hay. Omar and Edd shocked some on the piece above the telephone line. I took Verna to see if we could see Dr. Bishop. Helen (their daughter) got Bishop on the line

about 11 pm and we got home about 1 am Thursday.

**Fri. June 21, 1946—Clear**

I mowed and raked hay Omar and Edd mowed with the scythe and shocked hay. Rosley (daughter-in-law) took Verna over to the Dr. and Verna went to the hospital.

**Tues. June 25, 1946—Mostly cloudy**

I finished mowing about 11 am. Edd and Omar turned winnows and some with scythe and shocked a little a.m. and pm I raked hay and shocked all afternoon. Rosley went over to the hospital after Verna and then brought 900 square ft of insaneating (?) plank 2 sacks of cement and roll of asphalt siding back on trailer.

And that is all we will ever know about Verna's illness but the story continues in the next "Back in Time" there is a shooting and electricity comes to the Upper Applegate.

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Picture above shows Beaver Creek School and students in the early 1920's

Back row: William Dietrick, Thelma Childers, Evelyn Childers, Omar Culy, Lydia Lewis, Helen Culy, Dorothy McKee, standing Clara McKee. Front row: Emmett Phillips, Orié Phillips, Earl, Stephenson, Louis Culy

Picture below of Cary and Verna (McKee) Culy, sometime in the 1940's

