

My Memories of the Jock & Emily Leach Farm days.

By Trevor A. Harris (20 January 2006)

Jock and Emily were my, very caring, Grand Parents.

The farm, still there today, is placed on the south side at the bottom (on the left driving south) of the overhead rail ramp two miles south of Woodville.

Their land went from the Ramp/House going South down to the small river, they also leased land directly across the road plus more over the other side of the ramp by Bolton's farm.

My first memory was being there with mum (Gwen Harris nee leach, we lived in Woodville) looking through ashes! Yes the house had burnt to the ground. I think I was about 5 years old.

Next was the new house and every xmas the whole family from all over would be there & grandma would put on just the greatest meal with the high light being the Xmas Pudding! Yes complete with money, three pence six pence etc. And what a noise when one of us found some money, she always made sure we all got some, How? Who knows?

I used to stay at the farm a lot and you had to work! For no pay!

Pop was a stern type where you must do everything right. He told me if I learnt to whistle he would pay me some shillings! Well I learnt but not good enough!

So, no money! The farm dog was Charlie, then to me it was just a name, now I look into it Jocks farther was Charles, Jock was Richard Charles but called Charles at school and Jocks son who ran the farm later was Charles nick named Charlie.

Pop had friends the Benbows as we called them and when they came (He had a walking stick & smoked a Pipe) they would ague heaps big time mostly about politics.

Grandma used to churn the butter and make Bread and always made Gingerbread men. She was just the best cook.

As I got older I got the job of mowing the lawn and got paid five shillings.

Arthur Walker ,Lena's (Jocks Daughter) Husband then ran the farm for a period, he was a very likable & colourful person & a Great uncle.

The family used to go eel'ing in the river at the back of the farm at night and Arthur Walker was the prankster in the dark. Grandma would skin and cook the eels obviously perfect.

Charlie, Pops son, then took over running the farm and he was like pop you had to work! IE.for no pay! He taught me how to MUCK out the cow bails, the oyster being I got to drive the Farmall (narrow front wheeled) Tractor with the trailer on and take the muck down the back and unload it.

I leant to drive on that tractor when I was about 12 years old and got my licence in dads Morris Series E on my 15th birthday in Auckland where we lived at that time.

I used to help with Haymaking, my job to stick the end of the twine around the round bale into the bale to stop it unwinding, no automatics those days.

Grandma would bring the morning tea/Lunch down the paddock & it was always yummy.

Charlie built another house on the property to live in (was later removed) and I was staying there one time and got up in the morning and there was water right

around the house, the Manawatu river had flooded! The water came to the bottom of the ramp believe it or not! Warrick (married Wendy Walker) & Peter Curry had canoes and they were paddling down the flooded river with the news papers!

The Vickers would come down from Auckland & I remember Laurence and I riding the horse (well trying to) and we fell off! Wendy Walker, Arthur's Daughter retrieved the horse and rode it just to rub it in!

A year later it was found Laurence had actually broken his hip!

Grand pop (Jock) was big in the Jersey Breeders Association, and had Prize Bulls & Cows one called Blackie. The Association used to have shows at the Woodville School & Wendy (my Cousin) & I would have a calf each to show, Guess who always won, Yes, Wendy & Guess who was the Judge, Yes Pop! I remember Grandma & Pops Golden wedding anniversary, all the family were there, held in the Drill hall. Now gone & think the Fire station is there.

Pop died not long after of cancer.

Grandma sold the Farm, to me as a young person this was just an everyday thing BUT now I know more history it must have been a huge decision and she must have been very sad after their life on the farm.

Grandma Built a new small house in Woodville and bought a brand new car (Low light Morris minor) We then lived in Palmerston North & I used to bike over and stay with Grandma.

Rex Leach, Grandma's son lived in Hawera I think or Eltham and Wendy and I, Both 16 years old drove her from Woodville to see Rex several hours drive whilst taking turns at driving.

Grandma lived long enough for me to get married and have children & we used to call down from Napier and see her with her Great grand children.

When Grandma Died the house was sold, ending an era truly indescribable.

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