



McKinney Ex-Students Association *newsletter*



Above: The silo of the former Bill Dungan dairy farm as it appears today. Read more about the dairy and other area farms in this issue of the McKinney Ex-Students Association newsletter.

Welcome back!

This slimmed down issue of the MESA newsletter honors farmers who paved the way for the area we call home.

Former McKinney students and educators,

Your old friend is here!

Welcome back the *McKinney Ex-Students Association Newsletter*.

As you look through the pages of this much slimmer issue, you'll find that old favorites such as news, obituaries, donors, and reunion reports are gone. But while they may not appear here, they will show up on the new MEF Web site (www.MmEeFf.com).

You may remember from previous newsletters that we hit a financial snag. Like the rest of you, our budget became pretty tight in 2008, so we had to make some tough decisions. With printing and mailing costs climbing every day, we sought solutions that would still keep us connected without breaking the bank.

The result of our heavily debated discussions? We're going online.

As we speak, developers are hard at work on the new site, where **you'll find familiar faces with a fresh new look. You might think of it like attending a class reunion. Hidden behind years of love are the same warm and wonderful friends you've always known. Well, it's the same for us. While we may look a little different, we're still your favorite news-filled friend.**

So, join us in celebrating this issue where we tip our hats to **McKinney's roots**—farming families who paved the way for the area we call home.

See you online! ■

Ginger Woods Ebinger
Class of 1975
ginger.ebinger@tx.rr.com

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My father, Bill Dungan, class of 1925, purchased the old Pecan Grove Dairy in 1941. The dairy was located on the east end of Greenville Street, which was the original Greenville highway. Greenville took a dip down to the East Fork of the Trinity River. On

tional meeting there just to see **that barn. Because they didn't keep records of those meetings then, the barn's claim was never proved.** The remaining land was sold to Brad Douglas, class of 1981, who has decided to keep the old barn. It still stands just

leveled the old mound, so it no longer exists.

Dairy farming was not an easy lifestyle. As a teenager, our farm lost its dairy hands and we had to do the milking. We would get up around 3:30 a.m. in time for

The Bill Dungan Dairy Farm

By Mickey Dungan

the south side was an old farm house, a hired hand house, a hay barn and a milking barn. It was here that Bill and his wife, Lena Pearl, class of 1926, raised their five children: Bill, class of 1952; Carolyn, class of 1953; JoAnn, class of 1955; me (Mickey), class of 1956, and Judy, class of 1963.



I remember the milking barn's hay loft and having to throw bales of hay into the loft on hot summer days. More fondly, it was a place to build tunnels, swings that dropped into the hay, and, as a teenager, a place to steal a kiss from a girlfriend on a rainy Sunday afternoon. Those fun memories of the hay loft always concluded with a trip to the root beer stand where we enjoyed a frosted root beer.

It has been said that the old milking barn was the oldest in Collin County. The National Jersey Cattle Club held their na-

east of Airport Freeway, north of Enloe Road.

The land included most of the bottom land on both the north and south sides of Highway 24, what was referred to then as the Greenville highway, which later became Highway 380. The road sliced through the property on the north side, and we farmed the bottom lands on both sides.

North of Highway 380 there was an old Indian burial mound. After a good rain, we would find arrowheads, bones, and lots of flint. After this portion of the property sold, the next owner

the 4:00 a.m. milking. We usually finished around 7 a.m.—in time to eat breakfast, **then we'd return to clean the barns and put out silage for the cows to eat. We'd take a break for three—four hours until the 4 p.m. milking.**

If it happened to be a date night, **I wasn't much fun because I'd been up since 3:30 a.m. Every day I'd repeat this same routine;** the 24/7/365 routine convince me I did NOT want to be a dairyman!

The process became a little easier when we moved our operation from the old barn and set up a parlor milking process that involved a pit in which one person stood and raised a ramp on either side, allowing two cows to come in.

Continued on page 12 >>

The Gidney Family: Five Generations of Farmers

By Debbie Gidney Rutledge

The Gidney family sold a section of land purchased in Alida, New Mexico in the 1800s and started a five-generation farming tradition in Collin County. Their original farms sat north of McDermott Drive in Allen and at Virginia Parkway and U.S. 75 in McKinney, where the Wysong Clinic is now located. From these original plots, the family moved north of McKinney where Norman Gidney, class of 1947, Mike Gidney, class of 1975, and Clint Rutledge, class of 2000, still work the same land where generations of their family before them farmed.



When times were hard, Zebby Gidney, Norman's grandfather, operated a store in downtown McKinney on the site of the present day Grand Hotel and Rick's Chophouse (and former site of Woolworth's). Understanding the plight of farmers, he would allow them to keep a ticket running for a year at a time until their crops were harvested and they could afford to pay. The groceries for the store would be brought into the railroad station by a steam engine and transported to the store by horseback.

Zebby and his wife, Katy, had twins, but only one survived. Z.W.—or Zeno as he was known to his friends—**followed in his father's footsteps and became a farmer.** He farmed with a single row plow pulled by a mule, which he used to plant crops one seed at a time. He also picked cotton this way.

Zeno and his wife had four sons, but only one went into farming. That son, Norman Gidney, joined the farming operation in 1954 after serving in the

United States Army. He purchased an H-Farmall tractor and 10 head of Holstein cows, and later he bought another M-Farmall tractor. **The introduction of corn pickers and combines made the farmers' jobs much easier.**

Twenty-one years later in 1975, Norman's son, Mike Gidney, became part of the farming operation. With the new partnership came new ideas. Mike developed a better way of spraying and fertilizing for which he was recognized in the local newspaper and various farm magazines.

Clint Rutledge joined his grandfather and his uncle in the operation in 2005 after receiving his BA in Farm and Ranch Management with a minor in Animal Science from Tarleton State University. **He also received his master's degree from Texas A&M.** Clint has brought more new ideas and more technology into the organization.

The Gidney's farming operation, which is known as G&R Farms, continues to operate over 8,000 acres of farmland and over 500 head of beef cattle. ■

THE FRESH FACE OF FARMING

By Clint Rutledge

Since my grandfather, Norman Gidney, became involved in the farming industry in 1954, farming has changed quite a bit. It used to take all day to plow 10 acres, and now it takes 20 minutes. In the past, farms were family-owned and operated, but today less than one percent of them are. I plan **to continue in our family's footsteps and keep our farming operation alive.**

Today, you must treat farming like a business and pay attention to things like payroll, budgeting, and **expenses. If we don't keep a close eye on these items, then one false move could be devastating to the operation.**

Farming has also become an expensive industry. There is talk about all the technology used to farm, but eventually we are going to be stuck and paying for the technology. We are faced with that today with corn seed. It costs \$60 per acre to plant corn. But innovation has improved the results. Today we can get 200-300 bushels per acre versus the 50 bushels of the past. And we are about a year or two away from having drought-resistant corn—something that would prove pretty handy in this area.

The technology on the equipment is also advanced. We can decrease our operating costs and improve yields with tools like GPS, which make us more profit. Using satellites, the GPS allows us to precisely spray, plant, or plow our crops in straight lines. It also enables us to not overlap pieces of implement, which saves fuel, time, and most of all, money. Just think of the money you would waste if you were planting corn and you overlapped two feet.

We also use GPS to drive tractors and combines by themselves, which is called hands-free guidance. This allows operators to do anything they want. They can focus on the implement they are pulling behind the tractor. And they can decrease driver fatigue. GPS is expensive, but if you do the math, the whole system can be paid for in one year or less of operation.



As previously stated, the technology of seed has changed dramatically. Now we use these crops to feed the world. If everybody knew how important agriculture is to the world in which we live, I think people would be more appreciative of the industry.

If the technology keeps getting better, who knows where we will be in the future. ■

Clint Rutledge (class of 2000) is son of MHS graduates Garry (class of 1970) and Debbie Gidney Rutledge (class of 1974), the daughter of Norman. Client received the first McKinney Cooperative Cotton Gin scholarship in 2000.

Previous page: Norman, Zeno, and Mike Gidney. This page, top: Clint Rutledge. Bottom: Mike Gidney, Clint Rutledge, and Norman Gidney.

McKinney Cooperative Cotton Gin Scholarship

This is a reprint of the May 6, 2000 article by McKinney Courier-Gazette reporter Ryan Bauer

How can the sale of the last cotton gin in Collin County help some McKinney students get a college education?

Read on.

More than half a century ago, some area cotton farmers decided to form a cooperative around a gin, which still stands on the northwest corner of East Virginia Parkway and Throckmorton. Proceeds from the gin made ginning and buying seed cheaper.

Eventually, cotton faded as a cash crop in North Texas, and the gin stood decaying. **The cooperative's trustees were left wondering what to do with the land, which they saw as benefiting no one.**

In 1996, the last remaining trustees decided to sell the gin and the land it stood on for \$81,000. The only question left was what to do with the cash.

It had been years since living descendants of the original cooperative members had contacted the cooperative, said secretary Jack Evans, a long-time trustee. So, trustees decided that the money should go to students interested in pursuing a degree in an agriculture-related field.

"What we had decided long ago was how are we going to benefit young people through education with the money, and we decided this was the best decision," Evans said.

They had decided to donate the money to the McKinney Education Foundation for a scholarship to benefit students interested in a continued agriculture-related education, whether it be at a university or vocational school.

Evans said it was appropriate that the money should benefit students interested in agriculture.

"This money was really made by farmers in the McKinney area, so who better to help out than somebody who's going into an agriculture-type career," he said.

Evans and the trustees had heard good things about the MEF and decided the 8-year-old, non-profit organization benefiting McKinney students would be the best recipient for the money.

Evans said the decision to sell and donate the money is an old story.

"It's like when an old man had to sell his horse and buy a tractor," he said. **"Whether progress is good or bad, that's just the way things go."**

Beverly Kleckner, executive director of the MEF, said that while the foundation endows about \$2.9 million in scholarships, \$81,000 is larger than most donations. She said there are only about seven donors who have given more than \$50,000 and most of those are corporations.

The donation will be placed in an

account that will generate enough interest to award a scholarship of \$4,000 each year.

"We are so proud that we have an organization in place with credit enough that an organization like this feels like they can trust us enough to turn over this amount of money to a scholarship," Kleckner said.

The MEF will award the first McKinney Cooperative Cotton Gin Scholarship in a ceremony May 18, 2000 at 7 p.m. at McKinney High School.

Meanwhile, the cooperative's days are numbered. With no cooperative, no gin and no money, there is not much for the trustees to be entrusted with.

"We will probably have our last meeting and say hey, everybody resigns," Evans said.

He added that, although the decision to donate the money was **one of the trustees' last**, it probably was their best.

"That's the way we feel," he said. ■

For a list of scholarship recipients, please see page 13. >>

Trustees who set up the scholarship endowment were Ray Robertson, Norman Gidney, Allan Littrell, Butch Aycock, and Jack Evans.

Farming for Dollars

By Kenny Lewis

Every little boy who grows up on a farm LOVES tractors. Daddy (Kenneth Lewis) always had one at home, even when he wasn't there. He had an old H-Farmall tractor that he left parked under a shade tree in the yard.

When I was in diapers—too young to be out in the field—I loved to climb on that tractor and push the starter button. (I knew where it was because he always took me for rides on it.) The tractor was always left in **gear so it wouldn't roll. I figured out that if I pushed the starter button I could make it move.**

My Daddy would come home and see his tractor moved. He figured out it was me and warned me to quit. But I was having too much fun, so he tried to set my diaper on fire with his belt!

When I was five, my Daddy let me plow a field after bugging him over and over. He took a 770 Oliver tractor with a one-way plow over to a field, got me started on it, and rode a couple of rounds with me until he saw that I could do it. Then, he jumped off and I was on my own.

I was in hog heaven! Of course, he had me in a slower gear than he would have been in, but I was plowing!

Well, as is the case with most **kids, my attention span wasn't very long.** After I went around a few times, I got bored. It was hot; I was sweating. And I could see the sweat coming through

my gloves. So, I decided to stop and take them off.

But my Daddy hadn't shown me how to stop the tractor even though I'd seen him stop it many times. I decided to jump off the seat, put both feet on the clutch, mash down with everything I had, and push up on the steering wheel (which was in my face at this point). I hit the gear shift and knocked it out of gear. Worked like a charm!

I got off, took off my gloves, and spun around. And there he was—my Daddy.

He wanted to know why I had stopped. I told him that I needed **to take off my gloves. He wasn't very happy with me and ordered me to get back on the tractor.** My Daddy rode around with me a little bit before jumping off again. Before he did, my Daddy said that I needed to finish plowing the field because it was supposed to rain. He warned me **that if I stopped again that I'd get a spanking.**

That was enough for me; I plowed the rest of the evening. Only something strange happened when I got to a certain corner of the field—I started seeing dollar bills sticking up out of the dirt!

I really wanted to stop and pick the money up, but I knew what was going to happen if I did. So, I kept plowing. And every time I **came to that corner, I'd look at the money I had plowed.**



About dark, my Daddy came over and said that we were going home to eat supper, and then haul some hay. He let me drive his tractor home with him sitting on the back of the seat. He ate and then went up on the hill to haul hay. Daddy had a brand new 1961 Chevrolet truck with a throttle and four speeds. He put it in first gear and set the throttle at a speed where I could drive the truck so he and my uncle Willie Pharr (who was a McKinney teenager then) could walk along and stack the hay on it.

When we got through that night, they were both ringing wet with **sweat. Daddy did what I'd always seen him do in that condition—he slapped his hands on his pants to wipe them off, straightened up his pants, and checked for his billfold.** Well, his billfold **wasn't there! Things got a little excited then because Daddy had gone to the bank that day and withdrew \$200 (a huge sum back then) to pay some people who were helping to hoe his cotton.**

We rushed to his truck; Daddy told me to jump in the truck with Willie, who drove while my Daddy rode on the hood. We drove down the wrong side of the road all the way back to the field where he let me drive his tractor. He figured his billfold must have slipped out there while he was riding on the back of the seat. But when we got to the field, it **wasn't there**.

So, we drove back to the hay field, slowly shining our lights on the edge of the road. We did this several times and finally I thought about that money I **saw in the field. I told Willie that I'd seen dollar bills in the ground when I was plowing.**

About that time, Daddy hollered through the windshield to turn around. But Willie gave it the gas and kept going. He was trying to get us back to the field where I saw the money—all the time **questioning me whether I was SURE I'd seen it (which I had) and asking whether I could take him to it (which I could).** He and I knew that we only had one shot at this because Daddy would be mad at us for not following his orders to turn around.

I told Willie where to turn, and he jumped the ditch and drove out there, my Daddy hanging on the hood for dear life. We turned the corner and there it was—money sticking up out of the dirt. We all got on our hands and knees and dug until we **couldn't find anymore.**

The next day Daddy went back and found all but **about \$20 and his driver's license. We figured out** that his billfold must have slipped out of his pocket when he got on the tractor with me the last time before warning me not to stop.

For years after that, the older farmers in the area **used to tease me and ask why I didn't stop when I saw the money that day. Then they'd laugh because they all knew Daddy and they knew darn well why I didn't stop.**

Daddy passed away a few years ago. After he passed, I went down there and got that old pickup running again. I take it out for a spin every once in awhile just to bring back my memories of the day we farmed that money. ■

Left: A recent snapshot of Kenny Lewis, who as a young child "farmed" his Daddy's money on his first plowing expedition. The Lewis family were a well-loved Collin County farming family. Siblings Carol, Kenny, Lisa, and Susan graduated from McKinney High School.

Right: In this 1990 photo, Kenny (left) is pictured with his father, Kenneth (middle), and uncle, Gerald, who—according to Kenny—"still farms land near Wylie, Lucas, Parker, Plano, Allen, Winnikoph, and all points in between."





In January 1948, this city girl moved to a 30-acre farm south of McKinney because my stepfather always wanted to live on a farm. Basically he slept on the farm and commuted back and forth to Dallas, where he worked as a University Park police officer.

That type of “farming” was not the case for most families in the McKinney/Collin County area. Farming was their way of life and the means of supporting their families, as it had been for generations. Back then if you did not farm, you probably worked in a farm-related business such as the feed store, feed mill, cotton gin, equipment store, hardware store, grocery store, or textile mill.

Farming was the backbone of the economy. As with many things, times have changed. Those acres of farmland are now producing other things beside food. More often than not when dirt is turned, you will not see a crop sprouting in a few months—you will see a new business or retail shop, office complex, gas station, or residential development.

I sat down with my friend, E.B. Milstead, class of **1947, recently to “pick his brain” about what was and is now located on those black land farms of the past.** In no particular order, he mentioned:

- Farmland once owned by the Hill family (Mack Hill, class of 1940) became the Westgate Shopping Center on the southeast corner of U.S. 75 and Louisiana Street.
- George Cameron’s farm, where Patti Cameron,

On the Streets

By Martha Mullins Woods

class of 1952, and her brother grew up, was split in two parcels by U.S. 75. Two shopping centers now occupy the space southeast and west of U.S. 75 and Highway 380. One of the centers is actually named Cameron Crossing.

- The Interchange Business Park on North Tennessee Street was once farmland owned by the Milstead family.
- Bill Dungan, class of 1925, once owned a large dairy farm that was taken by the building of the new Airport Freeway on the east edge of McKinney. The acreage not absorbed by the freeway was sold to Brad Douglas, class of 1981. With the development around the airport, this area will probably become home to various industries.
- Part of the land where the Gabe Nesbitt (class of 1970) Ballpark is located—as well as the new satellite library named for John Gay, class of 1947, and his wife, Judy—was once part of the farm of J.B. Milstead, who was Early B. Milstead’s grandfather.



Where We Lived

- Tom Allen, class of 1947, inherited farmland from an uncle. Part of that land became a portion of the Stonebridge Ranch development in west McKinney.
- The Presbyterian Church at Stonebridge sits on a portion of the Joplin farm where Joe and Bill Joplin, classes of 1961 and 1965, respectively, were raised.
- The Bush family farmland east of U.S. 75 and south of Stacy Road is now the location of a new retail shopping center in Allen, Texas.
- The Petefish farm on the northwest corner of U.S. 75 and Stacy Road is now a large portion of the Allen Premium Outlet Mall. The Stacy farm—mostly on the south side of Stacy Road—where Doyle Stacy, class of 1950, and his sister, Dorothy, class of 1951, were raised, is a small portion of that same outlet mall.



- Not farmland, but certainly a popular trading/selling spot for local farmers, was the Jockey Lot, which was located east and a little south of the downtown square. Farmers would come into town (usually on Saturdays) and sell their fruits, vegetables, eggs, and fresh milk from the Jockey Lot. Presently, this area is a parking lot surrounded by the backside of many of the buildings that surrounded the lot in past years. Not far from the old Jockey Lot location in the historical Chestnut Square complex is a **Farmer's Market that currently operates during the late spring, summer, and early fall.**

As Early B. and I visited, he shared his observation that the idea of a family dynasty—in this case, family-owned farms—is quickly disappearing. The majority of the remaining farms are owned by large companies. Today farming is a big business that takes both money and education to run successfully. Usage may change but one thing remains a constant: the land. Beneath the concrete foundations still lies the same black land clay of previous generations.

That is a foundation that will never change. ■

Scenes from what used to be the Jockey Lot. Top, left: A municipal courts building. Bottom, left: the Dowell Tin Shop, which is now retail space. Top, right: The Collin County Feed Store. Bottom, right: The back view of Hope Hardware, now The Pantry Restaurant.

The Crutcher Farm Legacy

Reprint of a 1997 article provided by the Joe Joplin family

Over 100 years ago, Dee and Fannie Cromer Crutcher purchased a 160-acre farm four miles west of McKinney—across from what is now the Mallard Lakes subdivision—and settled there with their five children. One son, Joe Samuel, later married Sarah Virginia Brakebill, who was raised on a farm that is now Stonebridge Estates subdivision. Over their 45 years together, they acquired 867 acres for cultivation of the soil.

Joe and Sarah had seven children—Mary, Minnie Lou, Joe Lewis, Goldie Alleen, Gladys Allie, Eva Mae, and Virginia Ruth. These children inherited their parents' farm in 1959, but the Crutchers stipulated in their will that no part of each inherited portion of the farm could be sold during the lifetime of each child. "Pa" Crutcher wanted to protect his daughters' interests from "city slickers" who might try to persuade them to sell their share of the farm or to use it for nonagricultural development. The seven heirs lived long lives. However, six of the seven children have died, and much of the land has passed to the next generation and can now be sold.

Eva Mae Crutcher married Leighton Alexander Joplin in 1935. This couple had three children: Joan (Joplin) Klemm, class of 1954; Bill Keith Joplin, class of 1961; and Joe Mitchell Joplin, class of 1965. At Eva's death in 1993, her share of the farm passed to them.



That the Joplin's donated six acres of land to the Trinity Presbyterian Church for its present facility on Virginia Parkway and four acres to Parkway Baptist Church (formerly Foote Baptist Church) attests to the strong religious values of this family.

Today, Joe Joplin is one of 26 living heirs to the estate of his grandparents.

This farm family was living modestly along an old white rock road (now known as Virginia Parkway) when Stonebridge Ranch began building. While the **farm couldn't be sold during the lives of the seven children, homes were built up to the property line and the farmer's way of life was threatened.** To attempt to maintain the property for agricultural use was no longer feasible. Prohibitive taxes, urban encroachment, inaccessibility to farming equipment, and the lack

of space required for modern agri-business forced them to sell.

In recent months, Joe Joplin—the only attorney of the 26 children—represented several cousins in a zoning request concerning 135 acres of their land. As an attorney specializing in real estate law, he assumes responsibility as a family of obligation. He spent many years searching for solutions to this situation. He had the vision to make choices that will be in the best interests of McKinney for years to come.

It is the family's wish that the property be zoned in a fashion that will be compatible with the character of Stonebridge. All of it will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods. No mini-storage buildings will be built on the site, and the apartments that will possibly be built on 12 acres require a gated and guarded entry and are highly restrictive.

Traffic flow problems have also been admirably accommodated. All of the land will be residential style and no office building can be larger than 15,000 square feet.

None of the land will be developed by Joplin or his family. They are zoning it before they sell it. This insures that the land will be used for attractive and well-designed multiple uses, not zoned arbitrarily by some disinterested or profit-driven individual of corporation.

Joe actually owns less than five percent of the original farm. He is not a developer, does not represent developers, nor does he wish to be one. Like his maternal grandfather who wanted to **protect his daughters' share of the farm from "city slickers,"** Joe wants to protect it for another generation. ■

Since this article was published in 1997, the Crutcher farmstead has been developed. Here is a list of what now calls this former farm home:

- Stone Brooke Crossing subdivision at Village Drive, Virginia Parkway, and Crutcher Crossing
- Minshew Elementary School on Joplin Drive and Cambridge subdivision off Virginia Parkway and Joplin Drive
- Village of Stone Brooke Retirement Center
- Primrose School at Stone Brooke
- The Village Center at Stone Brooke
- Inwood Hills subdivision at Virginia Parkway, Mallard Lakes, and Bellgrove
- Sorrellwood subdivision on Hardin Road, south of Virginia Parkway
- The 7/11 strip center at Lake Forest and Virginia Parkway
- Trinity Presbyterian Church
- Parkway Baptist Church
- Family Worship Center
- Ridgecrest subdivision at west Highway 380 and Forest Ridge Lane

Pictured at the Crutcher family farmstead are (from left) Mary Crutcher Sorrell, Virginia Crutcher, Minnie Crutcher Duncan, Joe Crutcher, and J.S. Crutcher.

DUNGAN continued from Page 2.

This milking method allowed hands to be about level with the **cow's underside. A rolling feed bin** was in front of each cow.

While they milked two cows on one side, two more came in on the other side, where we fed them and washed their udders.

Most of the cows were trained to come in by themselves, but occasionally we had to encourage them to enter.

The milk went directly into a glass pipeline to which the milkers were attached and then into a 500-gallon refrigerated tank. The beauty of this setup was that we **didn't have to bend under a cow** anymore, nor lift heavy milk buckets.

Milk was our family's primary source of income. We had over 200 acres for grazing, with hay and silage to feed the cows. Everything was geared to keep those

cows content. As my father branched out into other businesses, including a feed mill, a feed store, and a farm implement business—in addition to becoming active in city and state politics—he decided to sell the dairy farm.

As I think back, it was a hard, but good, life. I have the greatest admiration for those farmers who remain dairymen. ■

~~ farm memories ~~

Jess Atchison, at one time one of the wealthiest men in McKinney/Collin County, had a large amount of land amassed when his son, Chandler Atchison, was born. Jess was a very intelligent man with no formal education. He wanted his son to receive a good education. He sent him to **Texas A&M where he was an active part of the corps. As a loyal "Aggie," Chandler hosted the A&M muster for many years on a portion of his father's land. Eventually, that land was sold and became the Flying M Ranch, which is now the Stonebridge Ranch development.**

Jackie and Jimmy Woods, class of 1952, were not raised on a farm but there were many farmers on **their mother's side of the family giving the Woods' twins the opportunity to experience the farming** lifestyle. One of their uncles, Clarence Ragsdale, practiced farming in the most basic style; his family raised their own food, made enough money to sustain them, and did it all with their own sweat equity using a mule and a hand-driven plow. The twins loved to ride into McKinney on the back of **their Uncle Ragsdale's makeshift pickup. On the return trip from town—with the truck fully loaded—Jackie and Jimmy had to hop off and walk up any steep inclines in the road because the loaded pickup could not pull the hills, the load, and the two boys.** They also fondly remember the delicious meals their aunt Hattie prepared, especially the bread pudding using any available biscuits or bread scraps.

The terms "Poor Farm" and "Pauper's Prison" evoke very sad images. Within the last few years, a high-end residential development has been built in the area where the Collin County Poor Farm was located many years ago. Despite the development, there are still reminders of the facility that sat on the hill and served the needs of the community. It offered permanent housing for the poor, permanent housing for the mentally challenged, and a minimum-security prison for such crimes as drunkenness and hot-check writing. There was also a garden that provided food for the compound.



McKinney Cooperative Cotton Gin Scholarship Recipients

Since establishing the McKinney Cooperative Cotton Gin scholarship endowment 10 years ago, the McKinney Education Foundation has awarded several scholarships to the following graduates who pursued degrees in agriculture-related professions:

- Clint Rutledge
- Lindsey Gerber
- Jared McGill
- Cody Griffin
- Dalaine Stephens
- Amy Griffin
- Jake Evans
- Magen Scott
- Charity Deike

If you would like to establish a permanent endowment for scholarships, please contact MEF Executive Director Melanie Perkins at 469-742-6313 or mperkins@mckinneyisd.net.

Top: A young Early B. Milstead (class of 1947) on his family's farm. Early B. used to ride the pony pictured with him through the town of McKinney and beyond. Middle: Ben (class of 1974) and Lisa Lewis Griffin (class of 1977) with their children, Cody (class of 2003) and Amy (class of 2007.)—both Cotton Gin scholarship recipients. Ben owns the Collin County Feed Store, which sits near the site of the former Jockey Lot. The Griffin family has farmed land east of the McKinney Airport for several generations. Bottom: Former educator, FFA advisor, and local landowner Harold Frazier walks the family farmland, which is still located north and west of McKinney and is occupied by surviving son Claude Frazier.



McKinney Ex-Students Association
newsletter

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