



JOHN E. COCHRAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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My Story

By Effie Ruth Cochran Montague

All of you have read *Seven Switchbacks to Home* and know that I left Doumecq sadly, but with an eagerness to get into the world. Zenna was going to Whitman College in Walla Walla and Robert was in High School there. A place was found for me to work for my board with Dr. and Mrs. Krasch. He was a Professor in German and she was a music teacher at Whitman College. The next year they went to Purdue University to teach, so I went to work for Dr. Van Patten. Years before my father had attended church where Dr. Van Patten's father had been pastor.

My main job at the Van Pattens' was to baby sit their daughter, Polly. She was about ten years old and sitting with her was very interesting. The Doctor would frequently leave us at the movie house to spend afternoons. The stars of the movies in those times included Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mickey Rooney. On one occasion he let us go alone when we hashed out to see a house on fire.

After two years at a Walla Walla High School the folks sold the ranch on Doumecq to Clark and Edna and moved to the Horse Heaven Hills and started farming there. While the move was being made, Mother, Sid, and I went to Clarkston, Washington and lived in an apartment.

I finished high school in Kennewick. After graduating from high school only a summer course was needed for a teaching certificate. I went to Cheney Normal School to prepare for that certificate. At that time teachers colleges were called Normal Schools. Many boys and girls I had gone to school with in Walla Walla, Clarkston, and Kennewick were aspiring to be teachers. Some of the things I remember were not the course of study. I especially remember the Geography professor. He greeted us by saying "The weather is hot, so make yourselves as comfortable as possible. Sleep if you want to, I'm going to pass you anyway." Miss Sotenfeld, the English teacher was bored with it all and yawned loudly without apology.

We were all searching for jobs in the fall. One girl in the class got a position at the little school in Peach. It was on the Columbia River above the present site of Grand Coulee Dam.

It was a one room school with eight or nine students in all eight grades. She received \$80 a month.

I drew a good paying job at Burbank, Washington. There was a five room school; I taught the first two grades with 25 or 30 children. The pay was \$100 per month. Our cousin, Eldon Kittrel, was Railroad Station Master there and their two younger children were in my room.

Burbank was a thriving new irrigation town. There was a grocery store, a hardware store, a dress shop, a dry goods store, a church, a hotel, and the school. A U.S.Senator (I think his name was Chandler) had started a thoroughbred horse farm on the banks of the Snake River. He had built a big house, barns, a house for hired hands, and had large alfalfa fields and a huge vineyard. The new irrigation district had brought about much of this growth and expansion. The bridge across the Snake River toward Pasco was being built. When the bridge was finished there was a big community celebration. Governor Hartley came and cut the ribbon to open the bridge. Burbank was an active community in spite of its recent problems. The year before there had been an epidemic of small pox that left many scars. Some of the children had only one parent.

During this time the Folks had purchased an acreage near the Columbia River at Hover. They rented a house to live in until they could build one of their own. I think they paid \$15 a month rent. I soon became a part of a group of 15 or 20 young people there. Robert and Sid were in and out between jobs. That summer we went to the old swimming hole and had wiener roasts, picnics, and dinners at Ashbys, Dahlines, and our place. We picked asparagus, strawberries, cherries, apricots, cantaloupes, and picked up potatoes. We did any of the field work the truck farmers wanted done.

It was a time of family gatherings. That summer Uncle Henry, Aunt Asenith, and Aunt Effie came out from Tennessee to visit. Uncle Sam, Aunt Maggie, Uncle Billie and Aunt Nora spent a lot of time together at our place. When the family was together Mr. Maxey of Doumecq came to visit. After he had listened to Uncle Henry expounding for a time, he would go and visit the boys across the street and sit, talk, and smoke his pipe. The neighbors were three young men who had purchased 23 acres. One of those young men was Grover Montague.

Grover did a lot of work on the house for the folks at Hover. During the building Uncle Henry stood around in the way and watched. Before he left he said to me, "Ruth child, marry that boy. He's a good worker." After a busy and interesting year teaching first, second, third, and fourth grade at Hover I followed Uncle Henry's advice and married Grover.

We moved a big house onto the 23 acres. We planted an orchard on the land and also acres of alfalfa. The truck garden included strawberries, peas, potatoes, onions, cantaloupes, and watermelon. Finally, we even raised turkeys. We lived there about 15 years. When we sold the property at Hover we moved to Boyds, Washington on the upper Columbia River and

later to Yakima. At Newberg Grover worked for Swan Island Ship Yard. After World War II we left Newberg and bought a share in the cooperative plywood mill at Port Orford, Oregon.

Each of these places we lived has an interesting and extensive story of its own that could be told. When we retired from the plywood mill in Port Orford we came to Vashon Island.

Effie Ruth Cochran Montague, February 10, 1901 - January 17, 2000

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