

Four Generations Farm At Walnut Ridge

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Helen Hawker came to Walnut Ridge Farm as a bride in 1936 with her husband, Maynard.

Her father-in-law Edward Hawker purchased the farm for the newlyweds, who had met one another at a Farm Bureau meeting in Baltimore.

Helen brought two Jersey cows from her home to the farm with her, and Maynard brought some Guernseys. Helen said recently, "The Jerseys didn't last long," as Maynard liked Guernseys.

That was the start of the Walnut Ridge herd.

Today, Walnut Ridge Farm is home to a Guernsey herd with a milking string of about 76. Walnut Ridge cows have been award win-

ners at the county and state levels, and have been as far as Louisville, to the National Guernsey show.

The herd includes a 90-point 4-year-old cow, Walnut Ridge Frank Maggie, that was senior and grand champion at the Frederick County fair this year, and an 87-point 4-year-old that was reserve senior champion at the state level, and that came away from Harrisburg last year with a first place ribbon.

Four generations of Hawkers and their families are now involved in farming and showing cattle.

"It's not a big operation, but then again, it's not a backyard operation, to support three families," said Pam Moser, one of Helen's four granddaughters.

Helen and Maynard had two



Four generations of family work at Walnut Ridge Farm, started in 1936 by Helen and the late Maynard Hawker. In the back row, from the left, are Debbie and Wayne Smith, Paul Miller, Douglas Hawker, and Robert Hawker. In the middle row, from the left, are Dora Smith, Dawn Hawker, Kitty Baer, Pam Moser, Evelyn Hawker and Helen Hawker. In the front row, from the left, are Amber Myers, Ashley Miller, Brandon Myers, Wesley Smith and Sara Smith.



Helping with the milking at Walnut Ridge Farm, from the left are Pam Moser, Wayne Smith and Dawn Hawker.

sons, Douglas and Robert. Robert is a bachelor. Douglas married Evelyn, and the couple have four daughters: Debbie, Kitty, Pam, and Dawn.

Dawn, the youngest, is still at home and in high school. Among the other three girls, there are 10 children, who are the great-grandchildren of Helen and Maynard. Maynard passed away in 1990.

Although there have been many changes in the farming operation since it was established 60 years ago, the Hawkers have never wavered from their commitment to farming as a family.

Maynard and Helen started out milking the cows in the barnyard until they could renovate the bottom of the bank barn in the summer of '36.

A spring ran under the old washhouse, and the five gallon cans of milk were kept there. The milk truck parked up the road, and the cans of milk were carried by hand to the truck.

Helen, a busy farm wife with small children, did the cooking, the milking, and helped with the fieldwork.

In between the births of her



Helen Hawker stands in the milking parlor of Walnut Ridge Farm, where she and her late husband Maynard came to farm in 1936 and developed a herd of Guernseys that is now cared for by four generations of family.

children, she suffered a broken knee, yet kept working. No challenge was too great for her.

Once, when a man driving the tractor picked up and walked off, Maynard sent the couple's son Douglas, aged five, to tell her he needed her in the field. She was to bring the tractor, but she didn't know how to drive it.

"Don't worry, I'll show you how!" cried the first grader, and he did. "I had to back it up out of the shed," recalled Helen, who accomplished the task with her young helper at her side.

"He'd take one on the haywagon, and I'd take one on the tractor," she says of her children, and that was how the couple accomplished their work.

"We made our own fun in those days," recalled Helen, "a lot of it."

Sunday evening haywagon picnics provided a time to socialize. If it wasn't too dry, the family would make a fire and cook their evening meal out in the field.

The Hawkers gradually updated their dairy over the years. At first the milk was cooled over spring water and icebox water.

"We used to cool our watermelon in there, too, and the milk

inspector didn't like it," remembers Robert Hawker. The first milk tank was installed around 1954.

Walnut Ridge was one of the last farms in the area to make the transition from horses to tractors.

"We used to have only horses. Then we had two tractors and two teams of horses. Now, we have seven tractors and no horses," said Robert.

The farm is one of the few remaining ones in the area with a woodlot, which the Hawkers use as a source of extra income.

A double-four herringbone parlor was added in 1990, with room allocated for expansion to a double-six in the future.

Today any combination of Helen and Maynard's grandchildren and great-grandchildren can be found running around the farm on a given day. There is no shortage of loving care to be found in the arms of an aunt, grandmother, or great-grandmother for the children whose parents are working on the farm.

Pam Moser, Douglas and Evelyn's third daughter, is in charge of the cows at Walnut Ridge. Her

(Turn to Page A35)



Amber Myers, great granddaughter of Evelyn Hawker, holds the halter of one of the farm's milking and show Guernseys.