

NONI: Woman lived and worked on Lazy Z

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On the Lazy Z they lived in the original two-story white farmhouse that stood where the present-day ranch house is located. It was a dairy and alfalfa farm, larger than the current acreage of the Lazy Z, and required hired hands to assist Brownie. The hands slept in the ranch bunkhouse.

Noni cooked for the crew on a woodstove in the country-style kitchen. The house had a large screened porch where Noni kept the milk separator and butter churn. The barn on the ranch today is the same one there in the 1940s. The irrigation pond and the magnificent view of the Three Sisters have remained unchanged.

Brownie and Noni had three sons; Bill born in 1939, Dick in 1942, and Rod in 1950. Brownie was one of the early supporters of the Sisters Rodeo, organizing the horse races and helping in a number of other ways. Noni's son Dick shared a photograph of the Sisters Rodeo parade on an unpaved Cascade Avenue, with Brownie carrying the

American flag at the front of the procession. In those days the rodeo grounds were in town, where Hoyt's Lumber is now located.

Noni was kept busy with the boys and cooking for the crew, as well as doing farm chores. Her father-in-law, William "Mac" Moss, lived at the ranch. He liked to ride his horse into town, tie it to the apple tree on a vacant lot near what is now Leavitt's, and play cards at the Owl Tavern.

In 1950, Brownie was diagnosed with stomach cancer at age 42, which necessitated selling the ranch and moving into town. Having sold the ranch, Brownie purchased a quarter horse named Blackman Burdick that he raced at Portland Meadows and the Oregon State Fair in Salem. In 1952, Blackman set a track record at Portland Meadows running 300 yards in 16.1 seconds. Blackman and several other Moss horses were kept in an old wooden barn behind the Owl Tavern.

Brownie succumbed to his cancer in 1954 at age 46, leaving Noni a young widow with three boys to raise. They lived in a house on Spruce Street on the north side of town, not far from the present-day *Nugget* office.

Never one to shy away

from hard work, Noni went to work in the school cafeteria as a "lunch lady," working with Audrey Warner and Bernadine Lowery (Sue Tewalt's mother). The high school was housed in the brick building that now serves as school district headquarters. The old two-story grade school stood on the current site of the Sisters public library. The high school had about 100 students. The school gym served as the town dance hall where the rodeo dances were held.

Noni later cleaned summer homes in Camp Sherman, cleaned Ruth's Café (now The Gallery Restaurant) after hours, and worked in Stacy's Café, where she met her second husband, Forrest Myers. Forrest was a timber faller from the coast who moved to Sisters because his dream was "to be around those tall ponderosas." They were married June 3, 1961. It was after that when Noni went to work in Leithauser's grocery store.

Both Bill and Dick went right into the service after graduating from high school to, as Dick explained, "take a load off Mom – not having to worry about us, so she could take care of Rod."

When Noni and Forrest retired, they spent their summers in a rented cabin on the Yaquina River at Sawyer's Landing. For fun, they took up commercial salmon fishing. Noni would run the boat and Forrest worked the lines. They had a black Lab named Zip who always went out on the boat with them. Dick shared that Noni's best years were probably those spent on the Lazy Z and the summers at the coast.

Forrest developed Alzheimer's and Noni was his sole caregiver until it became too much for her to handle. He spent his final days in a Prineville nursing home, passing away in 2008, when Noni was 92.

"I loved living in Sisters, I



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Noni Moss has an evident love for life.

sure did," Noni recalled. She was proud of the fact that she had post office box number five at the Sisters Post Office.

From Noni's three sons, she has six grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Noni has always loved animals, feeding the squirrels in her Sisters yard, as well

as feral cats that she looked after. She currently enjoys her Kitty B, a large calico who was a rescue cat.

When asked what she has most enjoyed in her 100 years she replied, "Everything, I just like everything. I enjoy my kids, my grandkids. I'm just happy to be."



PHOTO PROVIDED

A rodeo parade in the 1940s, with Brownie Moss carrying the flag.

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