

Meet The Van Schoiacks on Rock Creek



JUST LEAVING CHURCH are (back row) from left, the Van Schoiack family: Bob, Bill, Katie, Michael, Daniel, Patricia, Anne and Kathleen.

Down on Rock Creek at the mouth of Juniper Creek lives the happy family of the 1971 Cattleman of the Year.

The Bob Van Schoiack home on Rock Creek is something of a big surprise as you make your way from the Condon-Heppner Highway towards Lonerock. The Van Schoiacks have achieved that "been here forever look" for their lovely hillside home. The rustic barn boards complement the setting of sage, Junipers and rocky formations. Bob chose the site on an old Indian campground. They bought the Rock Creek place in 1954 and added the Juniper place in 1963. The siding for the new house came off the barn built on the Juniper Ranch in 1952. The random width pine boards were the last ones from the Lonerock sawmill. The 16" to 20" boards add interest to their home which they started building in 1967.

Kathleen's Story

(Following is a story by Kathleen Van Schoiack in Miss Glavey's 5th grade, written as an assignment, "Where You Live.")

Indian Country

More than a hundred years ago, Indians lived at Rock Creek where I live now. Some of them lived in a cave a little way up the road from our house. They hunted, fished, picked wild berries and dug camas roots.

You can still see trails that the Indians used long ago when they came back from their summer in the mountains.

There are arrow heads to be found and Indian writings.

Today our house sits where Indians used to camp. Many tourists come see the Indian writing and dig arrow heads. Others come to hunt and fish.

This home, 22 miles south of Heppner, 5 miles from the Condon-Heppner highway, mail box and nearest neighbor, 10 miles from Lonerock, Hardman and Ruggs and 26 miles to Condon is the center of activity for Morrow County's 1971 Cattleman of the Year and his very interesting family.

Cattleman of the Year
The inscription on the trophy presented Bob Friday night at the Cattleman's Banquet could very well have read, "Cattle family of the Year". It is truly a family operation from Bob and Katie Van Schoiack to all their children, Patricia, Bill, Daniel, Kathleen, Marie, Anne and Michael James, who at 18 months is the apple of everyone's eye.

The three E's of the Van Schoiacks are readin', ridin' and rodeo.

Winter Time

Theirs is a range land, cow-calf operation as they calve and feed on the range within two to five miles of the house. Only one year in the last six or seven years can they remember bringing the cattle down to corrals on the creek by the ranch house. Cattle are wintered on bunchgrass range of the home ranch and on adjoining leased land. Protein blocks are usually fed in winter to supplement grass when needed in December and January. They are placed in areas with good grass stands to help keep cattle well distributed in spite of adverse weather conditions. About 300 tons of hay, grain hay and alfalfa, are in stacks about the ranch for daily winter time feeding. Water comes from ponds and springs.

The heifers are wintered close to the house where they can be watched during calving in February. Bob says he loses very few calves as diseases are avoided when the cows aren't in congested quarters. Heifers are kept separate until after they go to the mountains.

Spring Time

Most of the branding is done about May 15 at Juniper ranch about seven miles from the main ranch. It is the Double V (one V over the other), the same brand that Bob's dad got about 1918. About June 1 they trail the cattle to summer pasture. Bob and the kids are the main part of the trail crew with an assist from Bob's niece, June Bailey of Pendleton who keeps her horse at the ranch. Heifers are trucked in later.

Trail starts from the upper end of the ranch, cross country to the highway, past Anson Wright Park, Tupper Guard Station, to the south end of Forest range.

Range Readiness

The range has been checked for readiness. An estimate is made of the capacity for wild game and number of cattle. They have 23,000 acres in their forest allotment and 2800 more leased from Kinzua. The Van Schoiacks have cross fenced

their summer pasture into three main pastures. The two lower pastures are rotated in early use and the large upper pasture for late use. They have built 45 miles of fence in cooperation with the Forest Service and neighboring permittees. They have developed 35 stock ponds in cooperation with the Forest Service so that cattle are never more than 1/4 mile from water. Fences are maintained and salt is placed prior to turn-on. Salt is no closer than 1/4 mile from water, away from roads and areas where cattle naturally congregate.

Bob's folks acquired the forest allotments in 1945 with a sheep permit that was converted to cattle in 1962.

Summer Time

The trailer house is moved from the home ranch to Martin Prairie for family camping when changing pastures and fall gathering. They ride frequently to check the fences, the water, salt and to avoid congestion. Little Martin Prairie has been fenced for gathering pasture, adjacent to the family owned Martin Prairie where they plan future improvements.

In between checking on the cattle this family is busy putting up hay, moving sprinkler pipes for alfalfa and irrigated pastures, a garden, orchard and wind break trees.

A vacation is a week spent at Martin Prairie with the 10 riding horses. A summer Sunday may be a trip to Lehman Springs for a picnic and sight-seeing along the way. Everyone likes to swim.

Bob does all his own horse shoeing. He says, "The cost of having it done would buy a lot of boots". He does all the maintenance and repairs around the ranch except for major overhaul jobs. He's handy with his hammer as he helped a lot with the building of the house.

Another vacation is the week spent at the Morrow County Fair. The kids have worked on their 4-H projects early in the morning and in the evening all summer.

They take in rodeos and the Round-Up and occasionally see Happy Canyon.

Fall Time

Calves are separated in corrals at Martin Prairie. Usually about 275 calves are sold and delivered to a buyer. Replacement calves are trucked home. Here good neighbors come to the rescue and help with the hauling. Bob says, "We could barely stay in the cattle business in this area without good neighbors. With shortage of

qualified help and high cost of operating, many days are spent in joint effort with neighbors gathering strays and moving cattle".

After two or three days weaning period, cattle are started on three day trail home where they are vaccinated for leptospirosis, given long-lasting vitamin A shots and treated for lice and warbles.

Older and weaker cows are sorted out along with cows suckling late calves so that they can be kept in separate pastures where the competition is not so great and they can be fed separately if necessary.

Then out to fall and winter pastures of bunchgrass range.

How It Started

Cleve Van Schoiack and Martha Mellugill were married near Cottage Grove and moved to Heppner in 1916. They worked for a time for Minor & Co. Cleve did the farming and Martha cooked for large crews needed for harvest haying and lambing.

They bought the ranch up Sanford Canyon in 1918. Cleve did some of the first strip cropping in the Heppner area pulling the drill with horses. Bob recalls he and Sidney measured off the strips with a rope stretched between saddle horses. They also ran cattle and sheep.

Of that family there were Andy (deceased) who farmed with Bob. Andy took the wheat part of the operations and Bob took the sheep and cattle. Bob bought Andy out in 1966 and then sold the Sanford Canyon ranch to Orville Cutsforth in 1967. Bob's sister-in-law Beth and youngest son, Jim, now live at Monmouth. The others are married.

Others are Cecil, a building contractor at Olympia and Sidney, manager of the Madras Freight Lines, a livestock transport company.

Sisters are Helen (Mrs. John Karlson) and Irma (Mrs. Bob Darrien), both work in Portland.

Katie's parents were Mr. and Mrs. Pat Campbell at Lonerock. She comes by her Irish temperament naturally as both of her parents came from Ireland. She went to grade school at Lonerock and graduated from Heppner High School and Maryhurst College. She taught 5th grade at Hermiston before she and Bob were married.

She grew up on a sheep ranch where she helped with cooking for crews so cooking for her own crew comes easy. She loves her beautiful birchwood kitchen with a view up Juniper Creek.

Meat is a basis of her meals and they raise beef, mutton, pork and chickens. The successful hunters in her family add wild game to the freezer, too.

Like the other members of her family, she likes to read. Right now she is reading "Footsteps in a Darkened Forest" by Sheen and is looking forward to her next book "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee", the Indians own story.

She collects pictures, clippings and someday hopes to write a book when the children are grown.

In the corner on the counter top of her kitchen sits a sourdough crock. It is old and has served many "Irish shepherders". Katie says the Basque herder never got into sourdough.

Another treasure is a large oak table that belonged to Martha V. It is 8 feet long and 3 1/2 feet wide.

Making homemade ice cream is another family project. The boys like to help with the crank freezer as well as with eating the ice cream.

The family worships each Sunday at St. Patrick's.

Their Family

The boys and Bob like to hunt. Bill, 13, also traps bobcats and ground hogs. He elk hunts with friends, Cecil Bill and Howard Pettyjohn and their crew.

Daniel, 12, loves to ride calves and is learning to rope. He entered the Junior Rodeo last year in calf riding.

Patricia, 15, has as her first love, her horse "Honey Boy". She likes to Barrel Race and rope. She has been active in 4-H for six years in Livestock and Sewing. She went to 4-H Summer School at Corvallis. This year she won the National Medal for Dress Revue at Achievement Night.

Kathleen, 10, is in 4-H knitting and has a 4-H lamb project. She has a flock of chickens and banties.

Marie, 9 and Anne, 8, each have a dairy calf raised on a bottle which they showed at the fair.

Outside chores are divided and the inside work their mother says is "come in as come does".

Proof of their riding, they were judged the best mounted family group in the Morrow County Fair last summer.

Bob and Katie pay taxes in Gilliam, Morrow and Grant counties. Morrow County taxes went up 20% on their real property and 30% on their personal property.

Snow . . . Blow and Van Marter

LaVerne VanMarter Jr. had an experience coming home from Treasure Valley for Christmas Vacation that he won't forget for awhile. He became stranded in a snow blizzard in Ladd Canyon and was snow-bound for more than 13 hours.

He had left Ontario following his last final shortly before noon to bring Bonnie Culp's car back to Heppner and spend his Christmas Vacation with his folks. It was about 1:30 when he hit Ladd Canyon and it was slick. A car driven by a Californian was stalled in the middle of the highway and no cars could get by him when the blizzard set in. The visibility was 0 and the wind was blowing such proportions that LaVerne couldn't even open his car door. Not knowing how long he might have to sit there, he ran the motor only for short periods to warm him. Fortunately, he had all his bedding from college with him so he wrapped up in the blankets. He kept working his toes and shifting his position to keep from getting stiff and keep up his circulation.

He ran out of fuel shortly after dark. Finally, the man in the car behind him came to share his discomforts. They had no food. Sometime in the night a man came to the car to tell them help was coming.

At Home
There was apprehension at the VanMarters' and Culp's. Bonnie called Baker and they figured LaVerne was in the Ladd Canyon snarl but the blizzard was so bad they couldn't get in there. VanMarters' called LaGrande and Boise. They said the road was cleared up to Ladd Canyon and no accidents had been reported. The VanMarters left word with the State Police at LaGrande for LaVerne to call home as soon as he got in.

Help came in the form of a snow cat that ferried them out of the drifts to a waiting school bus. When the bus was full, it took them into the Armory or the State Police at LaGrande. More than 100 cars were stalled in the Canyon. LaVerne called home and then accepted an invitation with someone, he doesn't know who, who said "I'll treat you to breakfast if you'll eat with me."

At daylight he went with a wrecker to the car and had it towed into town. Gas and a check-up and he was on his way home where he arrived after dark on Thursday.

Mrs. VanMarter says this will be a lesson to her. When they're going into snow country, after this they'll take some warm coverings.

Too Late to Classify

FOR SALE — Portable Motorola Stereo — 2 speakers and stand. Plays 78-45-33 and 16. Excellent condition \$60. Call Dan McQuarrie 676-9693. 50-53c

FOR WISE FAMILY GIVING — ORDER World Book Products

(All Five or Any One)

—World Book 22 Vol. Encyclopedia

—World Book Dictionary

—World Book Atlas

—Cyclo-Teacher Learning Aid

—15-vol. Childcraft Books

For pre-Christmas Delivery call Mrs. Justine Weatherford, 989-8159

Home Property Changes Hands

Several homes in Ione have been sold recently. The "Stub" Rams house was purchased by the "Skip" Pettyjohns. The Ray Heimbigner bought the brick house where the Pettyjohns have lived. The Joe Gaarsland home has been leased by folks from Bend.

COLE ELECTRIC
Motor Rewinding
INDUSTRIAL - COMMERCIAL FARM AND HOME
Pendleton 278-776

College Offers Tax Help

Blue Mountain Community College will conduct a series of workshops to assist property owners in determining their status under the Homeowners Property Tax Relief bill passed by the last State Legislature. They will be in Pendleton, Hermiston, Milton-Freewater, and Heppner during the latter part of January and February and will provide assistance in filling out the Homeowners Property Tax Relief Application form which all property owners have received or will be receiving in the near future.

The workshops will be free and are open to the general public. More details soon. Persons needing more information may call the evening school office, 276-1260, extension 205.

Just Arrived!

New shipments of Coty, Revlon, Max Factor and Blue Jeans

Toys, Toys, Toys

Malibu Barbie, Ken and Skipper
ONE THIRD OFF

Timey Tell Doll

ONE THIRD OFF

English Hornsea

Gourmet Ware

25% OFF

Set of 4

FONDUE TRAYS

Reg. 1.98 now 98¢

CHAPS OR SKIRT AND VEST SET

Reg. 10.98 now \$3.98

Murray's Drug

HEPPNER OREGON
UNITED TO SAVE YOU MONEY

UNITED U Pharmacies

HOURS 8 to 6 Phone 676-9158