



Clarion Review

Biography

The Families of the Green Valley Dairy Farm

Willard "Moody" Richardson

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Two Stars (out of Five)

After surviving the Great Depression pharmacist Bryant Cunningham and his wife Pearl purchased several plots of land in western Tennessee that would later become the prominent Green Valley Dairy Farm. Ardell Richardson became a partner with Cunningham in 1955 and through select breeding the two made the farm home to one of the top herds in the state.

The Families of the Green Valley Dairy Farm catalogs the many families that lived and worked on the Green Valley Farm as well as the prize cows they bred and showed. The farm was famous for having the top breeding bull in the nation Nancys Sleeping Advancer who sired generation after generation of prize-winning cows. There are extensive lists of these cows as well as lists of farm family members and the tracts of land they owned. These details along with the included annotated maps make this an invaluable resource for a western Tennessee library.

Richardson also includes anecdotes that highlight the flavor of the time when work ethic family responsibility and physical stamina were valued above all else. The Vietnam draft took eight hard-working sons away from home and their families' farms struggled in their absence. Richardson himself was also drafted. He came out of the Army with kidney disease and continues to undergo home dialysis even after thirty years. Oddly the author reports on his own role and life on the Green Valley Farm from a third person perspective. If the story were grounded in his personal experience the collection of historical details may have retained some the sentimental charm that is so cherished by Richardson.

The book includes dozens of pages of scrapbook style snapshots of the farm families and their cows. *The Families of the Green Valley Farm* would be a great asset to a local library yet it has no sense of readership as general audiences will find its very detailed account of the dairy industry tedious. Because so many families are traced a visual such as a family tree would greatly supplement Richardson's long lists of names.

The Families of the Green Valley Farm has an important goal: to immortalize a people and a time which is fading into the background of American history. The dairy industry was a driving force in states like Tennessee. This book successfully records the key farmers premier bovine bloodlines and the hard work that made the Green Valley Farm a success.

Amanda McCorquodale