

My Life on Mt. Hamilton

By Helen Farmer Cox

September 1993

Here are some photos and memories I thought
I would share with you. I hope you all grow up
to have your own fond memories of school
and life on Mount Hamilton!

HELEN FARMER COX

SEPT. 1993



THE WHITE BUILDING ABOVE AND LEFT OF CENTER OF PHOTO WAS THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL, WITH THE PLAY YARD ADJOINING ON SOUTH SIDE.



BEHIND AND BEYOND THE SCHOOL TO THE LEFT IS A LARGE BARN WHERE THE BIG FAGEDL TRUCK WAS HOUSED. LATER, THE TRUCKS, INCL.

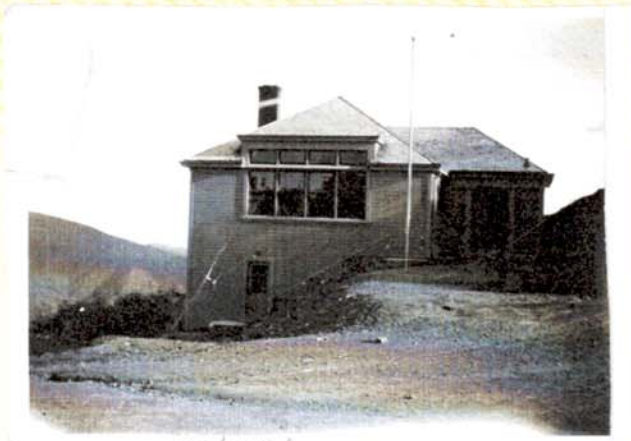


THE FIRE TRUCK, WERE KEPT BENEATH THE SHOPS.

TO THE LEFT AND IN FRONT OF THE TRUCK BARN YOU CAN SEE THE HOUSE WHERE THE FARMERS LIVED ORIGINALLY. A WOODEN SHED IS BETWEEN OUR HOUSE AND THE SHOP.

LATER, WE LIVED AT THE DINING HALL, CALLED "THE BOARDING HOUSE" WHERE MOTHER PREPARED 3 MEALS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. SHE WAS A VERY GOOD COOK, AND WAS APPRECIATED BY ALL.

THIS IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST PICTURES WE HAVE IN OUR COLLECTION,



school



school house

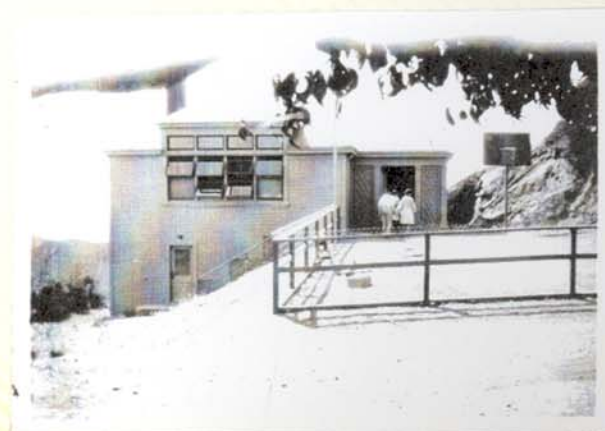
THESE WERE TAKEN IN
1926



FRANK FARMER, c. 1927
HIS FATHER, BASIL
and BASIL'S BROTHER, TED



1928



about 1928

WINTER

SUMMER



THIS WAS THE "BIG" TRUCK.
IT WAS A FAGEOL - WITH
SOLID RUBBER TIRES. TO
START IT, THE CAPS OVER
EACH OF THE 8 CYLINDERS
HAD TO BE LIFTED AND
ABOUT 1 TBSP. OF GASOLINE
POURED INTO EACH CYLINDER,
THEN THE CAPS CLOSED.
THE LIGHTS WERE CARBIDE.
BASIL FARMER AT WHEEL, VELMA
FARMER ON FENDER.

THIS TRUCK WAS USED TO
HAUL SAND & GRAVEL UP
FROM THE ISABEL VALLEY -
LUMBER AND OTHER BUILDING
MATERIALS FROM SAN JOSE.

ONCE A MONTH IT WAS
USED TO FETCH GROCERIES
AND OTHER SUPPLIES FROM
SAN JOSE FOR THE FAMILIES
ON THE MOUNTAIN.

BEFORE WINTER SET IN,
MR. FARMER MADE TWO
TRIPS A DAY HAULING
COAL UNTIL EVERY HOME
HAD A FULL SUPPLY.
IT TOOK MANY TRIPS TO
SAN JOSE.



Peace at last

1930

BACK ROW:
AGNES COSH
HAZEL FARMER
FRANK FARMER
FRONT:
HELEN + VELMA FARMER



1930

L-R:
BASIL, VELMA, HELEN, FRANK

NEAT CAR!



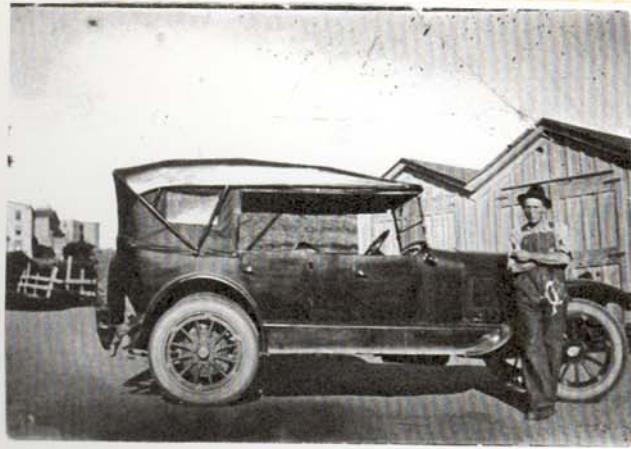
STUDENT BODY IN 1928

LEFT TO RIGHT:
 BACK ROW:- CLIFTON CORONA, RUTH WOLPERN, FRANK FARMER
 MIDDLE ROW: HAZEL FARMER, AGNES COSH, CECILE TRUMPLER
 FRONT ROW: MARGO TRUMPLER, MARGARET MOORE, ELLEN HAINER
 VELMA FARMER, JOHN HAINER, ELIZABETH
 TRUMPLER



BEN OLSEN, GENERAL FOREMAN
 DR AITKEN, DIRECTOR OF OBSERVATORY
 ← - 1929 -

FEB 18, 1935, DR. WRIGHT
 BECAME DIRECTOR OF THE OBSERVATORY



BASIL FARMER



HELEN FARMER

THIS SHOWS OUR HOUSE THAT
WAS ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE
SCHOOL



MY SIS, HAZEL - IN COSTUME
FOR A SCHOOL PLAY



AFTER THE NEW SCHOOL
WAS BUILT, THE OLD ONE
WAS USED AS A BUNK HOUSE
FOR THE WORKMEN FOR A WHILE.



LEFT TO RIGHT: 1930
 VELMA, HELEN, BASIL + GERTRUDE
 FARMER
 WITH A SON OF DR AITKEN

DOROTHEA HAVENS DESIGNED
 THIS CARD, DATED 1925. SHE
 MARRIED FRED CHAPPELL, THE
 PHOTOGRAPHER AT THE OBSERVATORY.



FRANK FARMER, 1930



TAKEN FROM OUR FRONT PORCH



← DEC, 1931

THIS IS THE OLD
MT. HAMILTON STAGE.

IT MADE THE TRIP FROM SAN JOSE
EVERY DAY BUT SUNDAY WITH
THE MAIL + GROCERY ORDERS
PHONED IN TO GEO. BARRYS'
GROCERY STORE - OR MEATS
FROM WENDTS' MEAT MARKET
IN SAN JOSE. MR. ROPER
DROVE THE STAGE FOR AS
LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.
HE OCCASIONALLY BROUGHT
PASSENGERS.

THE BLACK CAR WAS
MY BROTHERS' HUPMOBILE
(FRANK FARMER)



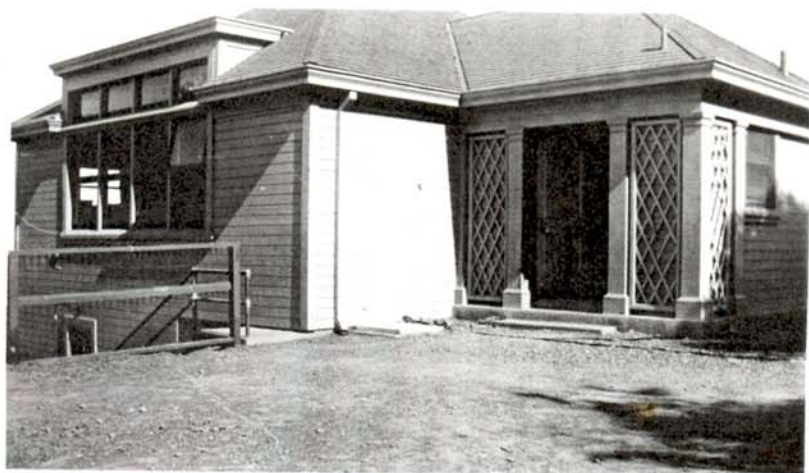
HAZEL 1931

THE TREE BEHIND HER IS
THE ONE STILL THERE AT
THE N.W. CORNER OF THE
SCHOOL YARD



MRS. JAMES COSH 1932

MR. COSH WAS THE HEAD
MACHINIST AT THE OBSERVATORY.
THEY LIVED IN THE HOUSE JUST
EAST OF THE SCHOOL. HE WAS
ALSO SCHOOL CUSTODIAN.



1932



CHANDAS PITCHING TO
MARGARET. PHOEBE CATCHING.
HELEN + RITA (WATCHING.)
VELMA GO THIRD. 1932



1932

SIX STUDENTS NOW

L-R VELMA FARMER, CHANDAS STEARNS
PHOEBE NEUBAUER, MARGARET MOORE
RITA NEUBAUER, HELEN FARMER

By 1935, ALL HAD GRADUATED EXCEPT RITA AND HELEN. RITA WAS TO GRADUATE IN 1936. RATHER THAN ENGAGE A TEACHER FOR JUST ONE CHILD THE NEXT YEAR, HELEN, A YEAR YOUNGER THAN RITA, TOOK THE 7TH AND 8TH GRADES TOGETHER. WE BOTH GRADUATED IN 1936, AND THE SCHOOL WAS CLOSED. IT REMAINED CLOSED IN 1937, AND WE MOVED TO SAN JOSE IN THAT YEAR. I DON'T KNOW WHEN THE SCHOOL WAS REOPENED.



HAZEL, IN HER
GRADUATION
DRESS

ON WARM SUMMER DAYS, WE WOULD
HOP INTO CARS AND HEAD FOR "CAMP
ISABEL" - NICK-NAMED "CAMP POODIE",
FOR HOURS OF FUN IN THE OL'
SWIMMIN' HOLE. IT WAS DOWN
KINCAID ROAD. ↓



THREE STANDING -
WESLEY WOLPERN
FRANK FARMER
CHANDAS STEARNS
HEADS OUT OF WATER:
HAZEL FARMER, RUTH WOLPERN

THERE WAS A TENNIS COURT ON
THE MOUNTAIN, BUT NO POOL -

BASIL FARMER 1932 →

HE WAS NOW CARETAKER and GUIDE AT THE OBSERVATORY. HE PHONED IN THE WEATHER DATA EACH MORNING ABOUT 5:30, AND TOOK CARE OF THE SEISMOGRAPH, ETC. HE STUDIED IN HIS SPARE TIME AND BECAME SO ELOQUENT IN EXPLAINING THE OBSERVATORY, AS WELL AS GIVING EASY TO UNDERSTAND LECTURES ABOUT PLANETS and STARS THAT GROUPS WOULD ASK FOR "PROFESSOR" FARMER TO GUIDE THEM!

NOTICE HOW THE "CHICKEN WALK" WAS ORIGINALLY MADE,



MR. FARMER, (MY DAD) WAS ALSO DEPUTY SHERIFF, ALTHOUGH NOTHING EVER HAPPENED THAT I CAN REMEMBER TO DEMAND HIS SERVICES IN THAT CAPACITY. POPULATION WAS ABOUT 50 'LAW ABIDING' CITIZENS.

THIS IS ANOTHER VIEW OF THE "CHICKEN WALK" IN THE BACKGROUND. THE 2 BOYS ON THE RIGHT ARE ROY and BASIL FARMER, SONS of MY UNCLE TED. THEY ALSO LIVED ON THE MOUNTAIN. THE LITTLE GIRL ON THE LEFT WAS A COUSIN, VISITING THEM THAT DAY.





1932 TRUCK BARN + COSH'S HOUSE



1933



FUN IN THE SNOW

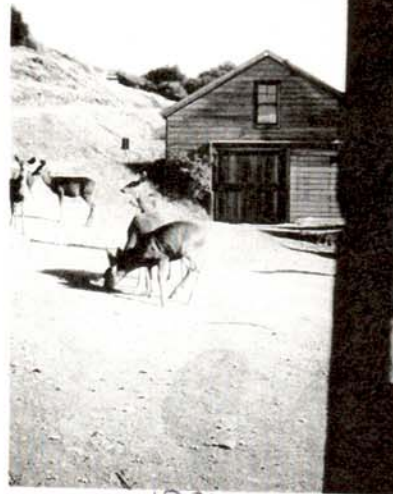


the
SHOP





1931



1931



0 DEC 4 1931

← HERE YOU SEE THE
OLD TRUCK BARN.
IT WAS NEXT TO
COSH'S HOUSE.

FRANK BECAME
INTERESTED IN
TAMING THE DEER
WHEN HE WAS VERY
YOUNG. THEY LATER
CAME WHEN WE
CALLED THEM AND
WERE VERY TAME.
WE HAD THEM ALL
NAMED.



1934



"JEAN"

1935

"JACKIE"



1934

HELEN FARMER

SOME OF OUR DEER FRIENDS

THERE WAS A MISS KELLY THAT TAUGHT
SCHOOL BEFORE ANY OF US ATTENDED.
(WE FARMERS MOVED TO THE MOUNTAIN IN
1922. I, HELEN, WAS BORN IN 1924.

"MISS MILDRED" (SHEPHERD & SHEARER)
TAUGHT AT LEAST UNTIL 1930. THEN
ADELA COOLIDGE, A DECENDANT OF PRESIDENT
COOLIDGE, TAUGHT UNTIL THE SCHOOL
CLOSED IN 1936.



MARTHA GERTRUDE FARMER,
MY MOTHER, STANDING BY
THE DINING HALL. 1934



THIS IS FRANK, HELEN (SEATED), ↑
AND VELMA FARMER. 1934
THE ROADSTER WAS FRANK'S
PRIDE AND JOY. HE WAS GOING
TO COLLEGE AT DAVIS THEN,
HE LATER BECAME A POLICE OFFICER
IN SAN DIEGO. HE IS NOW
RETIRED + LIVES AT GRANTS PASS,
OREGON. HE WILL BE 80 NOV. 1993

THE HOUSE IN THE BACK
OF US IS THE ONE JUST
EAST OF THE DINING HALL

THE OLD FAGEDL
EVENTUALLY DIED.
MY UNCLE TED
DROVE THIS ONE.
-1935-



MY DAD + THE CAR
HE BOUGHT FOR MY SISTER,
HAZEL, WHEN SHE LEARNED
TO DRIVE.

1935

JUNE 1, 1936 WAS THE
48th ANNIVERSARY of
LICK OBSERVATORY.
(NOTE FROM MY FATHER'S DIARY)



HELEN



MILT - IN OUR 1930 CHARIOT,
"RICKETS" - FORD ROADSTER



THIS IS THE MOUNTAINS' "FIRE ALARM SYSTEM"
LOCATED JUST ABOVE THE DORMITORY, IT
MADE A LOVELY SOUND WHEN JUST TAPPED
WITH A PEBBLE. I WONDER WHAT'S
BECOME OF IT.



VELMA

MY HUSBAND, MILT,
MY SISTER, VELMA
AND I CAME UP TO
VISIT IN THE EARLY
1940's



I TOOK THIS PHOTO IN THE
EARLY OR MID 60'S, WHEN WE
BROUGHT OUR DAUGHTER, SUZIE,
UP TO SHOW HER WHERE I
LIVED DURING MY FIRST 13 YEARS.

MY SISTER VELMA TOOK
THIS WHEN SHE VISITED
AROUND 1986 or 7





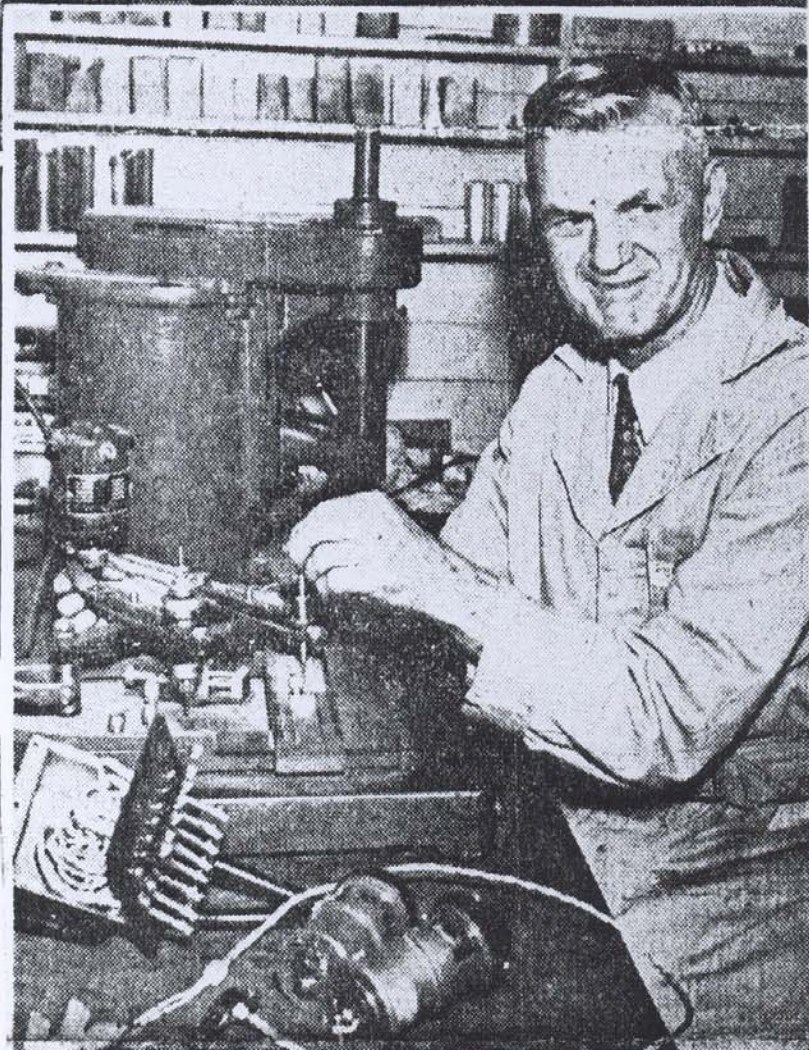
SEPTEMBER 1993



IT WAS FUN TO SEE
IT AGAIN!



SILVER BOWL FOR INSTRUMENT MAN — James Cosh (second from left, above) receives silver bowl honoring him for long service as instrument maker at Lick Observatory. Dr. Hamilton Jeffers (second from right), observatory astronomer, makes presentation on behalf of Lick staff, some of whom are Dr. Olan Eggins, astronomer (center) and Peter Fellgett (left) and James Cumming, machinists. At right Cosh pauses at workbench where for 29 years he has serviced observatory's delicate instruments.



Lick Savants Honor Top Expert on 'Cross-Hairs'

By FRED WESTPHAL

James Cosh, the man who put the delicate cross-hairs in Lick Observatory optical instruments, retired yesterday after 29 years of work atop Mount Hamilton.

Cosh was honored Wednesday in informal ceremonies in the observatory machine shop. Dr. Hamilton Jeffers, observatory astronomer, presented the 66-year-old Scotsman with a silver bowl on behalf of Lick employees.

The instrument maker had been working at the observatory longer than any other employe.

Cosh worked with observatory astronomers in making the intricate instruments necessary for accurate observation and recording of astronomical data.

Precision was the by-word in Cosh's shop. He frequently worked with tolerances of 1/10,000 of an inch. That meant he had a margin of 1/10,000 of an inch in which to make errors.

And yet, he pointed out, nothing man can make on Earth is completely accurate. He complained the Earth spins so fast nothing is in plumb.

He was charged with pulling the minute fibers from silkworm cocoons and making the cross-hairs used in sighting instruments. He said the cross-hairs must be fine enough so where the two hairs meet in an X they won't hide a 12th magnitude star—one thousand times dimmer than the brightest star visible to Earth. He also did precision machine-work.

Cosh was trained as a tool and die maker in Scotland. He came

to the U.S. in 1909, and after several trips back and forth to Scotland, settled in San Francisco. He went to work for the observatory July 1, 1923.

He and his wife, Agnes, lived in the same cottage on Mount Hamilton the entire time he worked there. He said he visited San Jose frequently, but always was glad to get back to the peace and quiet of the observatory.

Cosh said the view from his cottage and workshop was so beautiful it could sooth him if some piece of work wouldn't go right. "It makes one realize nature is pretty good, after all," Cosh said.

From his workshop he could see the pine-tree studded hills and grazing land below the crest of Mount Hamilton.

Tomorrow he and his wife will leave for Seattle, Wash., where they will stay with their daughter, Mrs. Agnes Martin. Cosh said he probably will spend most of his time gardening and visiting astronomer friends at the University of Washington.

SAN JOSE
MERCURY
1951

WHILE LOOKING FOR OLD
PHOTOS FOR THIS BOOK,
VELMA FOUND THIS
ARTICLE IN THE BACK
OF OUR FATHER'S DESK.

IT'S BEEN FUN VISITING WITH
YOU. HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED
IT AS MUCH AS I HAVE ~

SINCERELY, *John Cox*