



George Richard Moldenhauer

December 19, 1919 - May 20, 2013

George was born December 19, 1919 to Richard and Rubie (Rivard) Moldenhauer at Eads, Colorado, their 3rd child and first son. His two sisters Irene and Bonnie were so happy to have a brother. His dad had a bakery in town, and they lived on large acreage and had some beef cattle. Those cattle froze to death in a blizzard one winter. The following children were born there in Eads – Bertha, Milton, Bill & Betty.

George loved to walk around town to see what men were working on. One day, a mechanic asked him if his folks might have some rags to use in their shop, and George ran home to get some. The man gave a quarter for them, and George bought bananas and ate so many that he got sick. He and Bertha put some oil in the stock tank and had to spend the day in bed as punishment.

George remembers in Colorado, two men from the town of Eads came out to his parents farm and shot jackrabbits all day in the cornfield, and took two trucks loaded with rabbits back to town. The next day, he and his dad picked up another wagonload of rabbits and they fed them to their pigs.

Times were tough and it was the depression, so in 1929, his dad went to Deer Park, WA

and got a job with the forestry department. Rubie brought her family of 7

children and found him there. They lived in a large home, and the rent was to tear down some buildings on the property. Another daughter, Ruth, was born there. The children of school age walked to school one called Burroughs School. In warm weather they could take a short-cut diagonally through a section of land, but in winter, they had to walk the road. Their teacher Sarah Inman cooked rice for the whole class on the wood heater, so they had one of the first hot lunch programs. She came from a well-to-do family and furnished the rice herself. All the Moldenhauer children attended Happy Sunday School, of which the Inmans also belonged, and they always invited some members to their home for Sunday dinner. George always looked forward to when their family was invited.

Work was slow in the forestry, and his dad helped out at a neighbors farm during harvest, and when it came time to be paid, the farmer paid him with Watkins products (vanilla, spices, powdered drinks) as he was a salesman of Watkins and didnt have extra money either.

In 1931, the family moved to Ferndale, WA to a 7 acre place on the W. Pole Rd. Richards father had died and he used that inheritance to buy the acreage. The home was less than 1000 square feet, and so his dad built a bunk house and the 3 older boys slept out there. The last and 9th child, a boy named Richard, was born there.

When the family was moving from Deer Park to Ferndale, they hired a man with a large truck to take what furniture they had, and the 8 kids. George rode in back with the furniture, and his eyes got sore and red from standing up and looking at all the scenery and he said there were dead jackrabbits by the hundreds along the road.

The farm at Ferndale had a large patch of strawberries and he and his dad picked 5 gallon buckets full and walked to the corner store at the Guide

Meridian and sold them for \$1 a bucket full!

George attended Woodlyn Grade school, and then Meridian Grade School, which was by the High School in an old 2-story building where the present Meridian High gym is now.

He worked for farmers, haying and clearing ground, and then at age 14, lived with Ernest and Bertha Bass for room and board of \$15 a month in summer, of which he gave his folks \$10. In winter, when he was going to school, he got \$5.00 per month and had to help milk cows and hitch up the mule team before school. On a Saturday or Sunday, he would hitchhike to Bellingham and no cars would come along, so by the time he got to town, it was almost time to walk back. Sometimes, he would meet his folks in town and they would give him a ride back. The Dream Theater was 5 cents for a movie, and a hamburger and a candy bar were 10 cents. George also worked for Kammerzells & Clarence Still in haying and milking cows.

George left home and school in April 1937 to join the Navy. He had to take a bus to Seattle for his physical and it was snowing in Whatcom County, so he had high knee boots on to go to the big city. He took what was known as a Minority Cruise (you served until you were 21 years old). He was a Watertender working in the engine room and served on the USS North Hampton, USS Oklahoma, and USS Tennessee. He made Fireman 1st class and was discharged in December 1940. Pay at that time was \$60 a month. He held odd jobs for the next 6 months, shingled a chicken coop and milked cows. He started working at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in June 1941.

He bought his parents 7 acres by paying monthly, and then the 15 acres adjoining and then 20 acres more. He was a ship-fitter at the shipyard and that's where he met Donna his wife-to-be. She didn't know he had 42 acres in

his hip pocket when she met him and had told her dad many years before I'll never marry a farmer! I hate washing milk buckets.

Well, the World War II was on and George got drafted back into the Navy in June 1944. He was sent to Farragut, Idaho for boot camp and was company commander.

On September 30, 1944, George and Donna were married at Laurel Baptist Church and they honeymooned to Vancouver, B.C., and then went to Idaho and found an apartment in a private home in Coeur d'Alene. George signed up for more schooling and went to Philadelphia where Donna joined him a little later. He was in the top 3 of his class, and got to choose where to be stationed, and he chose Tacoma but was based at Harbor Island in Seattle as the keel of the ship he was assigned to was just laid. We spent from April 1945 to October 1945 in Seattle and being that the war ended, George was on a crew to take the Destroyer Laffey to Hawaii for target practice. He was paid-off and discharged on November 21, 1945.

George's dad died of a heart attack on November 9, 1944, and he got leave to come home for the funeral. His dad had built a home on the 20-acre piece of land adjoining the original farm, and the family hadn't moved yet. Rubie had 3 children left to raise alone, and George tried to get an emergency discharge to help but was refused.

When George was discharged, he signed up for the military's 52-20 for Veterans (that's \$20.00 a week for 52 weeks) to help you get a job and established after serving your country. He never collected as we met an old friend on the street who offered him a job welding at his shop the next week. George worked there for about 2 years, and also started building our hay barn, milking barn, 2 wooden silos (from a fir tree on our farm he had made into staves), then a large loafing shed, a machine shed, and a shop. We

bought our first cows in 1946 and started shipping Class A milk. We eventually had a milking herd of 50 cows and raised all our replacement heifers. In about 1958, he and his brother Milt had a silo filling business long hours getting up early to milk our cows and then be at the customers farm by 8:30 AM then home to milk and repair any machinery. He seldom got 6 hours sleep.

In 1961, we moved our little house down in the field and built a new home on the original location, finished it, and moved in in the fall of 1961. He had a farm machinery and cow auction on the farm on April 18, 1977, and we retired!! At that time, we had also purchased an additional 25 acres and a 4-acre piece, so the farm was 72 acres.

Did I mention we had 3 children? Janet in 1947, Becky in 1949, and Mark in 1954. They helped so much with regular chores.

On the day of the sale, a real estate agent came to us and said he had a customer who would like to purchase our farm. He was a Canadian, and we decided to sell the family with 9 children never could get a firm date to immigrate, so the farm sold again. In the meantime, we bought 7 acres on the W. Hemmi Rd, sold 4 of those acres to Mark, and built ourselves a new home and large garage/shop in 1978.

George had a heart attack in September of 1979. We started traveling south for winter sunshine in the desert and to Yuma, Arizona. We continued that for 23 years, and fishing every spring and fall.

We have been blessed with 8 grandchildren, who have given us 12 great-grandchildren. Our family is very close, and we get together often. George was still very active after having esophageal cancer in May 2001. He raised his garden every year and had a project going in his shop all the time, and also helped the kids and grandkids with their projects. A life well lived and as

the refrigerator plaque states A rainy day fishing beats any day at work.

By Donna Moldenhauer

Tribute Wall

GS

“ Dear Donna: I am so sorry you have lost George. What a hard working and patriotic man he was. I know you will miss him. May you feel God’s peace and comfort during this difficult time. You are In my prayers. Sending deepest sympathy to you and your family.

Gladys Struiksma - May 20, 2013 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ Donna, loved the story about George....what a wonderful full life... his shop...will never be the same....the stories it could tell....thinking of you!

kim bonsen - May 20, 2013 at 12:00 AM

BC

“ Donna and family, So sorry for you loss. George was a wonderful person and will be missed.

Barb Cieslar Cline - May 20, 2013 at 12:00 AM