

THE BARN on the centennial farm of Donald and Beatrice Miljure on S. Elkton Road, Cass City, is thought to be about 90 years old, only 10 years younger than the farm itself.

In Grant township Miljures enjoy retirement on centennial farm

When Donald Miljure bought his first tractor, a used one, in 1941, it cost him \$185.

The last one he bought, in 1969, cost him \$10,000, and he figures it would cost him twice that much today to buy the same tractor new.

But the farm he and his wife, Beatrice, own has seen more changes than that in its 100 years.

Their farm, originally 80 acres and now 120, was recently designated a centennial farm by the Division of Michigan History of the Michigan Department of State.

It is located in Grant township, on the east side of Elkton (Cemetery) Road, north of Bach Road.

It was swampland when Mrs. Miljure's uncle, George Martin, bought it in 1880.

He only owned it a couple of years before he sold it to his mother, Mary, who sold it to another son, Albert, in 1883. The Martins came here from England.

Albert and his wife, Jennie, had nine children, of whom Beatrice, now 68, was the youngest.

Also still living are Clifford Martin, who lives west of Cass City, and sisters Gertrude Beyette, Caro; Edith Harris, Wyoming, Mich., and Hazel Blair, Bad Axe.

Albert Martin grew fruit and vegetables, which he sold in towns in the area. When he died in 1912, his widow ran the farm, with the help of sons Clifford, then 12, Howard, then 14, and another son, Claude, who was married. The farm became more of a cash crop operation then.

BEATRICE MARTIN ATTENDED Herron School at the corner of Bach and Elkton Roads, through the eighth grade, graduated from Cass City High School, then attended Huron County Normal School in Bad Axe for one year in order to become a teacher.

Her first teaching job was at the Sherrard School in Grant township, which paid special dividends. One of her students was the younger sister of the man she was to marry. The teacher met Donald Miljure when he hauled firewood to school one day.

They were married in 1938 and moved into the home on her family farm, where they still live. (It is now about 80 years old.) The farm was being rented at the time and Donald Miljure bought the equipment, three horses and cows from the man who was renting it, Hubert Root.

Mrs. Jennie Martin lived with her daughter and son-in-law for a while. She sold them the farm in 1940 and moved to Cass City. She died in 1962 at the age of 93.

The farm was 120 acres when the Miljures bought it. They added 40 more in 1951 for pasture, but have since sold the 40 to a daughter.

They have two children, Nancy (Mrs. Patrick) Kendall of Bay City and Joanne (Mrs. Terry) Herban of Saginaw, and four grandchildren.

MRS. MILJURE TAUGHT a total of eight years in three rural schools, five years of which were after she married.

Her husband was a full-time dairy farmer, milking about 20 cows at the most, until he sold his herd in 1965 and switched to cash crops.

He had started working in Marlette shortly before that, then worked at Michigan Lumber Fabricators in

Elkton until it closed in 1976. He also retired from his part-time farming about that time.

At age 67, Miljure isn't completely retired. He works week ends and holidays as a security guard at General Cable.

Mrs. Miljure worked 11 years at Cable as an inspector, retiring from there in 1977.

When they had the dairy herd, she helped with the milking and washing equipment and their daughters also helped.

Back then, Miljure commented, "Everybody had cattle. Everybody thought they had to have cattle to live." Now, however, very few farms close by have any dairy cows or feeder cattle.

THE MILJURES KEEP busy in their retirement. They have another home near Mio, where Donald can enjoy his hobbies of fishing and hunting. He hasn't missed a deer season in 46 years and missed only one opening day during that

time.

Mrs. Miljure has 70 house plants to take care of plus outside flowers. She and her husband also have a large fruit and vegetable garden.

They rent their farmland to Dale and Don Schuettes, Elton and marvel at the size of the Schuettes' operation, typical today, in contrast to the modest one they had.

Compared to their own tractor -- Miljure keeps it now mainly for plowing snow -- the Schuettes have two four-wheel-drives and four or five other tractors. "Then fuel bill would make you head swim," he commented.

The brothers farm at least 1,000 acres, they guess, which now seems necessary. Farmers today, he said, have "got to be big in order to compete."

As for the big debts which seem to be a part of modern farming, that makes farmers work hard, Miljure feels, which is desirable. "The guy in debt works." Those not in debt, "take it easy."



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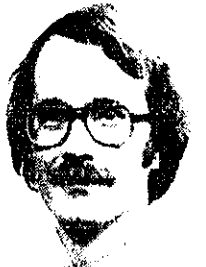
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