

JAMES FREEMAN COOK  
BERNICE (HADFIELD) COOK

James Freeman Cook was the oldest son of three children born to Henry and Emma Cook. He was born on October 30, 1899, on the homestead on the N.E. ¼-14-26-W 4<sup>th</sup>. Emma's mother, Mary Jane Furman, was the midwife. The family lived on this location until Freeman was four or five years old. Lawrence Dill, the second child, was born at Aunt Sophronia Follet's home in Cardston. Gladys, the third child and only girl, was also born there.

Henry and Emma purchased land from Jack Purnell, the Vern Shaw homestead, and the Mike Smith place, on the north-west side of the St. Mary's River along the U.S. Montana border. Later they added the Hudson Bay and Railroad Land. This is where Henry and Emma moved their young family.

When Freeman and Dill became school age arrangements were made to send them to the closest school at Boundary Creek. Mr. Arthur Prime was teaching there. Auntie Tuttle (as the Cook's called her) made arrangements to board the teacher and Henry Cook supplied a horse for him. Freeman and Dill also boarded with Auntie Tuttle. With this arrangement, Mr. Prime consented to stay on at Boundary Creek as teacher for another year. They had approximately three miles to ride to the school house. Mr. Prime was a real friend to the Cook family, right until his death in 1977. Gladys got her early education from governesses, Miss Wilensen and later Joy Johansen. In 1907, the house in town was bought and Emma moved in with the children. Freeman and Dill continued their schooling in Cardston. The flood of 1908 washed their home away down Lee's Creek. Later they purchased another home in Cardston and Emma Cook again moved to town so the two boys could continue their school.

An oil company drilled for oil on the St. Mary's River below the Cook buildings in 1914. There were three or four families that settled in the oil camp.

Freeman, Dill, and other neighbors hauled coal and provisions for the camp. Watching the drilling was a great pastime for the young men. Mr. Cutler from California was the head man and such a gentleman. During the 'flu years 1918/19, when the Cook family took so ill, Mr. and Mrs. Cutler would bring hot dinners to the gate for them. The camp generated their own electricity with a Delco plant. There was no oil found and after three years of drilling, the buildings were sold, some of which the Cooks bought. Later the Cutler house became the first home of Freeman and Bernice Cook.

Freeman and his father ran over 1,000 head of sheep for many years. In the early 1940's, Freeman sold most of the sheep and went into Hereford cattle. He brought Polled Hereford bulls into his herd. Meryl is still operating the ranch with very fine Polled Herefords.

Bernice (also Berneice) was born on the homestead southeast of Taylorville on October 6, 1899, the eldest daughter of James Henry and Mary Jane Moorehead Hadfield. The family lived on the farm there until Bee (as she was called) was approximately nine years old. They bought a house in Cardston where Mrs. Hadfield lived with the children so they could attend school. Mr. Hadfield continued farming and was a partner and manager of the Cardston Farming Company, Incorporated, with large leases on the Blood Reserve.

As a child, Bernice remembers watching from her bedroom window as the houses floated down stream in the 1908 Lee Creek flood. Her father had to cross the creek in a boat to get supplies from down town. Bernice spent several years helping her father in the Cardston Farming Company, cooking for the crew.

She took her education in the Cardston schools and a year at Logan, Utah. She selected a teaching career and taught for a year in the country school in Twin River (east of Stirling) and the next year at Del Bonita.

Freeman and Bernice were married March 12, 1927, in Lethbridge, Alberta. They lived in the Oil Well House right on the bank of the St. Mary's River. After their first child James Freeman Jr. (Jim) was two years old,

they moved the house upsteam closer to the other farm buildings because of the danger of the river bank. They lived and worked side by side with Freeman's parents for many years. In 1942, Henry and Emma retired to Cardston.

In 1949 Freeman had a new modern home built on the ranch with help from carpenters, son Jim and Tony Wass. They lived there until Freeman was hospitalized in 1983. He passed away August 13, 1984. Bernice moved into the Chinook Foundation in Cardston where she is presently living. Their youngest son, Meryl, and family are continuing the ranching operations on the home place.



*Bernice and Freeman Cook (Golden Wedding – March 1977)*

Freeman and Bernice had seven children: James Freeman, Jr. "Jim" (md. June Eggen, ), Fay (md. Gerald F. Eggen), Royce (md. Lenora Deglau), Geraldine, Marylynn (md. (1) Grant Beazer -now deceased- (2) William Merritt), Lloyd (md. Janice Willson), Meryl (md. Dinah Watson). There are 19 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

Source: Copied from a history of local residents in Alberta, Canada [Provided by Claudette Seward 2005]