

# The Jack **ALCORN** Family

by **Betty Trim** (nee **Alcorn**) b. 1924

My dad, **Jack Alcorn** was born and raised in Milton (southern NSW – Illawarra area). He came up to the Northern Rivers with his parents and then later came to Maleny because it was good dairy country. He leased our “*Bonnie View*” farm of 110 acres from Mr. Dixon (from Buderim) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (abt. 1906), then purchased the farm a few years later in 1912. He drove some cattle up from Bangalow NSW to Maleny to start his herd. The property had been mostly cleared of scrub when he bought it, with a creek running through every paddock (Bridge Creek).

Dad was supported by his younger brother **Norman Alcorn** who ended up joining the Lighthorse regiment and was injured in Egypt early in WW1 and repatriated. Jack joined up in 1917 at about age 35 years and managed to escape any major injuries while fighting in France. His sister **Crystal** helped manage the farm during his absence. When Jack returned to Australia he married **Alice Kindred** whom he met on the Richmond River previously. They married in 1919 in Sydney. Alice’s mother, **Mary Kindred** was a district nurse in the Richmond River area and then returned to Sydney. Crystal married **Willey Gay** and moved to Bangalow, Richmond River. Jack and Alice had only two daughters - **Grace** and **Betty**, born 5 years apart.

Our father was on the Butter Factory Committee but apart from being a Regular/Elder Presbyterian Church member, he was not a ‘joiner’. He was dedicated to his farming lifestyle, being proud of his Jersey herd and the long days involved. Unfortunately, he had to rely on casual workers in the early days (men of the Depression Years, looking for work and a good meal). The situation improved after a cottage was built and families employed, share farming. About 1928 my father planted 4 acres of Queensland Nut trees, in the days before uniformity of shells (for mechanical harvesting). These seedlings were purchased from the Collard farm next door – ex Alstonville, Northern Rivers NSW.

The house we lived in had 3 bedrooms, with wide verandahs on 3 sides. No electricity until the 1940’s so the house was heated and cooking done, by the wood stove or Primus. The chip heater was over the bath that provided us with hot water, but dangerous to be close to, due to the extreme heat radiation. The house was lit by a flammable liquid we had to pump in a drum to produce the gas for the lights fixed on the ceiling. Other lights were hand held kerosene lamps. We also had two gas lights which were nerve wracking to light, with many a scorched ceiling. ‘Mrs Potts’ irons were heated on the stove and a petrol iron was an improvement. The war years (after 1943) brought electricity to the area – previous to this milking and separating were done by hand. Dad started at 4:30am at the bails (milking shed) to milk the cows, then the pigs and calves had to be fed and he was lucky to get in by 8:30am for a cooked breakfast (porridge and eggs and bacon/mince/chops). The rest of the day was taken up with general farm maintenance until 3:00pm when he was back in the milking bails.

My morning job was to round up the horses from the paddock and bring them into an enclosure by the bails where we would saddle up the horses for school. Also, there were the draught horses that were put to work in the fields and used to carry the milk cartons down to the road for the cream carter to collect to take to the Maleny Butter Factory. I remember in particular rounding up the horses on the misty mornings when you couldn’t even see them and you were relying on your ears to hear them snorting. Sometimes they would run me a merry dance to avoid being caught!