

Lois Alberta Buse and Arlie Lee Cotton were married 15 Dec 1936 in McAlester, Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. Sons Kenneth Arlie and Lloyd Ray Cotton were also born in McAlester, Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. By 11 Nov 1941 Arlie and Lois had moved to Oregon and on this date their son Donald Wayne Cotton was born. Two more sons, Robert Gene and Ronald Lee were born in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. Robert's birth certificate states that Arlie worked as a rigger in the shipyards.

Sometime, about 1948, Arlie decided to go into business for himself. He and Lois bought some property near Cougar in Cowlitz County, Washington. Cougar is located on the Lewis River Road and is the nearest community to Mount St. Helens which lies 11 miles to its Northeast. The eruption of Mount St. Helens on May 18, 1980 was the deadliest and most economically destructive volcanic event in the United States. Their 6th child, Joy Marlene was born in Vancouver, Clark County., Washington. Vancouver, Washington is across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon. The family lived in Cougar but Vancouver was the closest hospital for Lois to give birth.

On the property was a two-story house, a barn, and out buildings. The family had a garden and grew corn, potatoes and other vegetables and there were fruit trees on the property. The potatoes and apples were all kept in the root cellar in the basement of the house.



There was no electricity or running water to the house. Lanterns were used until Arlie bought a generator and wired the house. Just as it was getting dark one of the boys would go out and start the generator. Eventually they had running water after Arlie ran pipe up the mountain to a stream.

Arlie ran his own saw mill and had his own logging truck. He cut a lot of railroad ties for the Great Northern Railroad. He would cut cedar trees and make roofing shingles. One time, he found a perfect tree that had no knots and got 500 dollars for the tree. That was a great deal of money back then.



All the kids atop the logs on the truck



The Cotton kids in the snow



The kids had many activities here in Cougar



Bob and Ron with a calf

The Cotton family didn't live in Cougar long. Pacific Gas & Electric forced the sale of the property on the Lewis River. A dam was to be constructed and the river later became Yale Lake. The family moved back to Portland. In 1958 Arlie was suffering from arthritis. He needed to move to a dryer climate. Arlie and Lois then bought a farm on Road 136 near Orosi in Tulare County, California. Kenneth, the oldest son, was married and stayed in Oregon. On Road 136 they planted Okra and several different kinds of squash for market. The boys took care of the field crops. Arlie went to work for Sequoia Forest Industry working in the woods. He drove a bull dozer making roads. Later, about 1963, they sold the farm, moved to Dinuba, Tulare County, California, and spent the rest of their lives there.