

Mr. and Mrs. 'Shorty' Stringer Balance Agriculture With Industry At Mystery Farm Home Number 40

Mystery Farm Home Number 40 belongs to Charles "Shorty" Stringer, Jr. He lives near the Improve church, eight miles from the Improve and a half-mile north of Highway 44.

This Mystery Farm is Shorty's loved stumping ground. He has lived here all of his life, since it is a part of his father's old place.

The Mystery Farm Home was built in 1947. Shorty says he hasn't finished doing all that he wants to do to the house but that he is gradually getting it more like he set out to build it at first.

Shorty married Miriam Ruth Watts on February 12, 1942. Together they are balancing their farm's agricultural program with an industrial program in Columbia. He is working at the New Orleans Furniture Manufacturing Company and she is working at the Reliance plant.

The work at the New Orleans Furniture Manufacturing Company is quite interesting. Shorty says he is training on a moulder. He says this machine has four cutting heads and all must be kept cutting properly.

Shorty says he did most of the work on his house and likes to work with wood. He says he can work at the factory and have a good bit of time to work at home, especially in the summer when the days are long.

This Mystery Farm had twenty-five acres in cultivation this year. In all there are about fifty acres in the place. Mule power was used to do the cultivating. Shorty says he sold his hay-burners when he went to work at the plant and is thinking about buying a small tractor to do his patching after work hours.

It won't be long until the oldest son in the family can run the tractor and do a lot of the work during the summer.

There were six acres of cotton on this farm this year. Shorty says he made a pretty fair crop, but likes more income than he was making by farming.

Working at the plant and doing some work at home can help boost his income, he believes.

Mr. Stringer says he has always been interested in cattle. He has five head in his little herd. His pasture is woodland pasture and he says he is planning to start a program of improving his pastures and will continue to grow into beef cattle production.

Improving pastures and growing beef will be about the best type of farming he can do while working in town. Shorty says he believes in plenty of corn and will continue to grow corn for use at home.

Hogs are grown on the farm and butchered at home for home use. This helps tremendously in keeping down the grocery bills. Shorty says they also butcher a yearling about once a year and put it in the deep freeze.

In addition to the deep-freeze, Shorty says they have the usual electrical household appliances, but there is one thing he says he uses quite a bit and wouldn't be without. This item is his electric bench grinder. He says he doesn't believe he could get along without this grinder because it comes in handy for so many different uses.

There are two fishermen in this family who really like it, according to Mr. Stringer. One of these is Mrs. Stringer, though he says she doesn't get to spend very much time exercising her hobby. The biggest fisherman in the family is David, the littlest one. David is four years old. Shorty says that David got such a kick out of catching his first fish that he wants to fish all the time.

There is a small pond on Mystery Farm Number 40 that Shorty says was built in 1949. It held water well during the recent dry

spell. Mr. Stringer practices soil conservation on his farm. He attended a terracing school that was held in the county a few years ago and received a terracing certificate. He owns his own terracing instrument. He has all of his farm terraced and has terraced a number of acres for other people in and around his neighborhood.

Shorty says he uses the Copeland system of terracing, which provides for some drain instead of terracing on the level, adding that there is much less chance of a Copeland system terrace washing over than with a terrace that is built on the level.

In addition to running the lines, Shorty and his brothers plowed up a number of them. He says he did quite a bit of this work when so many farms were terraced in the county a few years ago.

The barn was built about the same time the house was built. It has been used mostly for mules, but stands a very good chance of becoming a cattle barn. It has storage room and a place for hay as well as stalls.

The entire family likes radio station WGIU and especially enjoys the Hillbilly Hayride program.

Two of the children at Mystery Farm Number 40 attend school at Improve. Charles William, 10, is in the fifth grade. Shirley Ann, 8, is in the third grade. David, the big fisherman, is four years old.

Shirley Ann likes to play dolls and has all the other interests of a young lady her age, in addition to playing the radio.

The Stringers are using their industrial program of working in Columbia to help them raise their income and thereby provide funds to improve their home and farm.

Improving the farm and livestock will increase the agricultural income, in turn, and help to raise the total annual income, Shorty says.

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The Stringers say balancing their agricultural program with an industrial payroll means a constant income in addition to the farm income which is seasonal.

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MR. FARMER —

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