



Back in the Day...

A history of farming in early Menifee

Back in the Ol' Days...

The first family to settle as farmers in the Menifee Valley was the Kirkpatrick family. William and Callie Kirkpatrick arrived in Menifee from Tennessee in 1882. They had nine children. They grew wheat on a large ranch which was located near Antelope and Newport Roads. Large teams of horses were needed to pull the farm equipment that planted and **harvested** the wheat. A hired cook used a chuck wagon to feed the many hired men in the fields. William and Callie Kirkpatrick would take their nine children camping in the San Jacinto Mountains. They cut lumber here and hauled it down the mountain to the valley since the area had few trees. Wood was needed for building as well as heating homes. The Kirkpatrick house was a famous **landmark** in the valley until they sold their land and it was torn down.



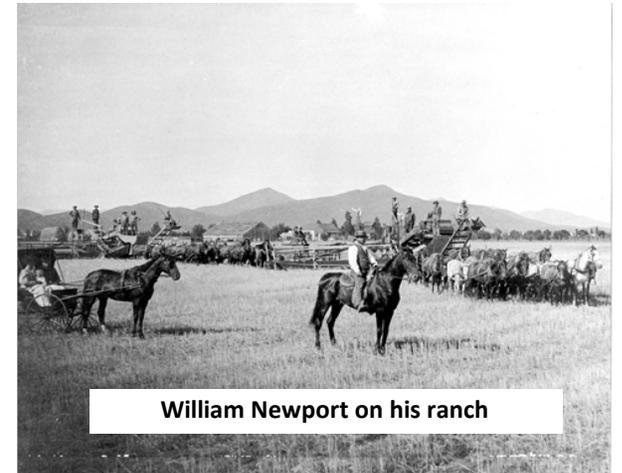
The Kirkpatrick house stood on the corner of Newport and Antelope Roads.



The Newport Family

The second farmer to settle in the area was William Newport. He bought 2000 acres of land in 1885 near what is now Newport and Murrieta Road. He arrived with 12 wagons and a cookhouse on wheels. He farmed wheat and raised prize-winning Berkshire hogs for over 40 years.

For years he employed the most workers in the valley. Newport loved to invite friends to his huge ranch in Menifee. He often took them out to what is now known as Quail Valley to hunt rabbit, and of course, quail.



William Newport on his ranch

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Another early farming family in Menifee was the Christensen family. Hans Christensen married Rosetta Holland in 1892. They farmed the land around what is now Holland and Antelope Roads. Their son, Hans Christensen, Jr., married Zora McGrath, and they had four children. Hans Jr. and his sons formed Christensen Farms. They grew wheat and **barley** in the Menifee Valley. Hans' and Zora's son Herbert, also known as Bud, invented a piece of farming equipment called a "drill fill." Bud said his drill fill could plant a field of wheat three times faster than a farmer who did not have one. Bud made his drill fill in Hemet and sold it all over the country. Christensen Farms ended their farming business in 1998 and sold much of their land in the valley.

To the left is an advertisement for the Christensen Farms Company's Drill-Fill. They sent flyers like this one all over the country to take orders for this piece of equipment.

Bud Christensen is sitting in the family's farm truck. His mother, Zora, is to the left and his father, Hans Jr., is to the right.





The Bouris brothers settled in Menifee in 1922. George, Sam, and Ted bought 640 acres off of Keller Road. The rocky hills and small streams reminded them of their home in Greece. Not only did they grow wheat, but they had grape orchards, fruit trees, walnut trees, and olive trees. They sold their produce in grocery stores in Lake Elsinore. George's son, Hercules, nicknamed "Herk," and Sam's son, Peter, continued the farming business.

Later, Peter Bouris and Herk's son, Mike, partnered to grow winter wheat. Like all other dry farmers in the valley, their crop depended on plenty of winter rains. In dry years, the wheat crop was poor. In rainy years, the crop was plentiful. They sold their wheat to countries around the world, even as far away as Iraq. Like the Christensens, the Bouris family is no longer in the farming business. Many years of drought and the high cost of water today make it difficult for farmers to make a **profit** and stay in business.

Below is a picture of the Bouris vineyard in 1929 along Antelope Road.





Life on farms in the early days of Menifee required constant work. Firewood had to be cut and chopped to provide heat for homes in the winter. Wood was also needed for cooking on wood stoves inside homes. Cows and goats had to be milked every day. Chickens had to be rounded up every night and placed in the chicken coop to protect them from coyotes. Families grew their own vegetables in their gardens. They made fresh bread, butter, and jams. Very few items were bought at a

grocery store. If they needed to go to the store, the closest stores were in Perris or Lake Elsinore.



Fields had to be plowed and tended to every day. There was little time for rest, even on holidays. Even after a special meal on Thanksgiving Day, the men would need to hitch up the horses and work in the fields.

Running water like we have in our homes today did not exist for the early settlers of Menifee. Wells had to be dug deep in the ground in order to find ground water. Windmills were used to pump water up from the ground. Water was then stored in tanks next to the windmill. People had to fill buckets of water from the tank to bring inside the house. Larger tanks also had to be filled to store water. Horses pulled the water-filled tanks to bring water to workers in the fields or animals in their pens.



Early Farming Vocabulary Squares

Definition:	Part of Speech:
Word Family	Picture
landmark	

Definition:	Part of Speech:
Word Family	Picture
harvested	

Definition	Part of Speech
Word Family	Picture
barley	

Definition	Part of Speech
Word Family	Picture
profit	

Now it is time to make a decision. Would you have liked to have lived on a farm in the old days of Meniffee? In the chart below, list the positives and negatives of living on a farm back in the old days of Meniffee. Use evidence from the article you just read.

Positives of Living on a Farm in the Old Days of Meniffee	Negatives of Living on a Farm in the Old Days of Meniffee
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---	---
---	---
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After thinking of the positives and negatives, it is time to form an opinion. Write your opinion on the lines below. This will be the topic sentence of an opinion paragraph.

T= _____

☆ _____ (state one fact that supports your opinion)

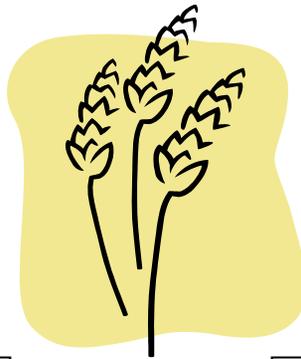
☆ _____ (state a different fact that supports your opinion)

Now choose evidence from the positive-negative chart. Those are the reds of a T-chart. Copy the information from this organizer to a T-chart. Use the T-chart to write an opinion paragraph about live on a farm long ago.

Farming in Early Menifee

Settler-Year

Locations



Products

Interesting Facts