

Charles Cole Builds Bridgeport House

Charles Cole developed a cattle and dairy ranch which he operated until his death in 1916. He and his wife, Mary Ann Thompson Cole (Capt. William Thompson's widow), operated Bridgeport House which Cole built in 1862. The House had 19 rooms, and the Cole's took in overnight guests traveling on the Virginia Turnpike. Charles and



1862-1919 Bridgeport House of Charles Cole

Mary Ann had five children including Victoria Marie Amelia Cole who married Andrew Reed Kneebone. In the midst of a two-day storm in October 1862, the Coles took in and sheltered members of the McMillan wagon train. The McMillans were nearing the end of their journey from Kansas. The ten wagons were shoehorned into the covered bridge, the stock was placed in the barn, and the families were invited into Bridgeport House until the storm was over. The families settled in the Marysville area. This story has come down through the McMillan family.

Bridgeport House burned down August 17, 1919. Then occupied by the Kneebone family, the residents included Alfred and Lucy (Moynier) Kneebone (Lucy was pregnant with Lucille at the time), Alfred's brother Charles and his new wife Barbara (Ehmann), and two Kneebone aunts. The fire was thought to be of suspicious origin, as the aunts had removed their belongings shortly before the fire. All escaped without injury, but Charles and Barbara lost all their wedding presents. After the fire, Alfred and his family moved to the Wood-Cooley house across the river (site of today's north parking lot). A new house was built on the 1862 foundation to take advantage of the original cellar.



Location of 1862 & 1956 Cellar

Cole's Bridgeport Ranch

It is thought that Charles Cole built the red barn in the 1860s. The barn is lined up with the bridge so that teamsters approaching or exiting the bridge could drive directly into the barn, obtain services, feed livestock, or make repairs to wagons or equipment. The barn features a unique Jackson hayfork to lift hay from ground level to the loft opening and then



The Red Barn and Hayfork Shelter

on a rail into the loft. Wagons entering the barn could take on a load of hay and continue on to the bridge. Cole's ranch was 160 acres in 1862. In 1884, hydraulic mining restrictions (the Sawyer decision) impacted Cole's hotel business, and he increased his stock raising and farming to support the family. A cattle barn was built near the Bridge, and a granary was built next to the cattle barn. The granary had an elevated floor, so that grain for the cattle could be scooped directly into a waiting wagon. Eventually the ranch expanded to 1040 acres in 1916, the year of Charles Cole's death.

Cole Family History

Charles was born in England in 1831. In 1841, Charles, his father William, his mother Sarah, his grandfather Richard, his grandmother Jane Sarah, and six siblings sailed on the Hendrick Hudson to New York, arriving October 9, 1841. The grandfather Richard died on board ship near the end of the trip. This is a copy of the ship list:

176	Richard Cole	77	to	Freeman
177	Sarah Cole	49	Female	Wil
178	John Cole	35	male	Leuger
179	John Cole	14	female	—
180	Richard Cole	13	male	—
181	Mary Cole	12	female	—
182	William Cole	10	male	—
183	Charles Cole	10	to	—
184	John Cole	7	to	—
185	Sarah Cole	6	female	—
186	Constance Cole	2	to	—



Richard Cole, Charles Cole's Grandfather

The family moved to Racine, Wisconsin, and operated a farm. Charles' father, William, was the subject of the historical review below:

From The History of Racine and Kenosha Counties, Wisconsin, Publ. 1879 by Western Historical Company, Chicago - Page 574

WILLIAM COLE, deceased; was born in Coventry, Eng., on Feb. 11, 1791, and, at the age of 3 years, went with his parents to London. Having received a thoroughly good education, he was placed, at the age of 16 years, with a firm of attorneys, with whom he read law until he was 21 years of age, when he was admitted and commenced practicing for himself; in 1825, while still practicing as an attorney, he started a shipping gazette which he controlled until 1841, when he sold out. On Sept. 9 of that year, he left his native land, and, in due course, arrived in New York City, from whence he came to Racine, arriving there in the fall of the same year; after a few months residence in that city he purchased a farm in Raymond Township, which, with his sons, he worked until 1858, when he removed to and settled in Racine City, where he lived until April 18, 1867, when, surrounded by his family, his life slipped away, and he fell into that dreamless sleep that knows no waking. In 1825, Mr. COLE married Miss Sarah GOSLING, a native of Blackheath, Eng., who was born April 18, 1808, by whom he had sixteen children; those living are Richard T. W., born Sept. 16, 1826; William Henry, May 28, 1829; Charles J., Feb. 18, 1831; Alfred Alexander, Jan. 16, 1833; Sarah M., Aug. 12, 1835; Cecelia A., Jan. 3, 1840; Virginia A., Aug. 29, 1842; Martha Louisa, Aug. 21, 1846; Caroline Julia, Sept. 12, 1848; Edgar J., Sept. 9, 1851, and Henrietta, Dec. 10, 1854. In addition to these, there were Mary B., died July 31, 1861; Elizabeth, died Aug. 9, 1834; Frederick W., died March 27, 1838; Desmas, died July 23, 1841, and James F. W., died Nov. 20, 1864. Mr. COLE served three terms as a Justice of the Peace in Raymond Township, a position for which his early legal training eminently qualified him. He was brought up in the light of the Episcopal faith, but subsequently changed his views, dying a member of no church.

Carol Holmbeck