

Freeman

People - Crawley, Jack
1957

People

Sarah Tews, FREEMAN STAFF

Jack Crawley treats a dog.

'Cow Doc' of Palmyra Vet Jack Crawley has less demand

PALMYRA — Friends and clients of veterinarian Jack Crawley, Palmyra, will agree that Crawley, a.k.a. Cow Doc, is a unique breed.

Since setting up practice in 1957, Crawley with wife, Olive, have provided their eight children with respect for living things and their needs.

The children are grown now and away from home but they all congregated to toast and roast their father recently when he turned 60. Each son or daughter, with respect and tongue in cheek, lamented the fact they grew up taking second place to sick cows. Bill Owens, his uncle, had a farm between Dousman and Wales. Doc, with his younger brother Jerry, had two cattle named after them living on the farm. Doc wanted to go further than names and he started to work with his uncle.

Crawley also had an early interest towards the study of medicine. He says his grandparents helped him realize vet medicine would give the best of both worlds — medical work in the field to help the creatures he liked and understood.

UW-Madison in the 1940s didn't have a vet school. But it could give pre-vet credentials which allowed



Joan Holman

entrance to an accredited college. "And something else," this sometimes sentimental man reminisces, "Madison was where I met Olive Curtin of Reedsburg. The date was Feb. 24, 1949. She was doing nurse's training."

The couple had few dates because of their academic pressures but lots in common.

He began vet training at Iowa State at Ames from 1951. In September 1953, he and Olive were married.

When he finished his service obligation with the ROTC, the Crawleys came to Palmyra. His work started in 1957 but in 1959 the present house and clinic was purchased to grow with the practice and family.

In 1962, Doc's brother joined the business and it became Tri-County Services, Inc. Besides following his older brother into vet school, the

younger Crawley also met and married Olive's sister.

The practice during those years was nicely divided. Doc was the large animal man; his brother would work with smaller pets and a third vet specialized in horses. "Probably it was easier then," says Crawley, "when I began in 1957 there were about 76,000 head of cattle in Waukesha county and nine vets."

Of the nine vets practicing in 1957, only Crawley, Fruit (Merton) and E.A. Woelffer (Oconomowoc). "This is an excellent gathering for the vet in the field. Although the number of beasts in Waukesha county has shrunk to 7,000 and the bovine specialists are fewer the medical information with treatment has increased," says Crawley.

Doc continues working with the few remaining farmers in his area. "These men are loyal. When I first started, I'll never forget their support. That's a reason now, although there's fewer farmers, there's also fewer vets interested in farm animals. I'll stay with the people and animals whose families and herds I've watched grow."

(Joan Holman is a Freeman correspondent who lives in Eagle.)

