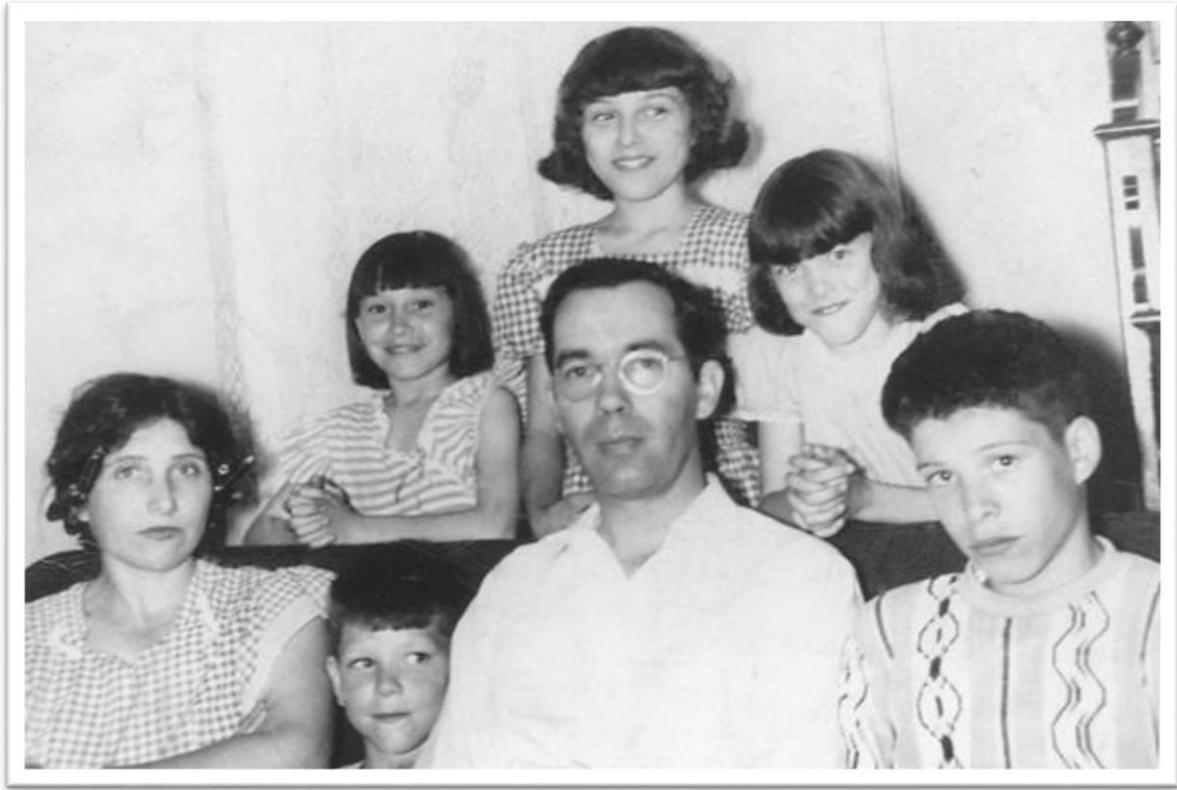


## Chapter 7 - Magdalena Waugh



*Figure 1 Magdalena Waugh and her children with her second husband, Forrest Roberts*

"We were with Magdalena for her death watch. We stood around her room at Belfonte Hospital and held her hand, or sat in chairs outside the door. She lay in her hospital bed, her eyes already blinded by impending death. We spoke to her and soothed her, but she never said anything to us; when at once she raised her hands high over her face, her chin tilted in a supplication like gesture, she said in a clear voice,

"I want all my children to be together," Betty Fairchild's voice trembled at the memory. "It was Magdalena's atonement. I knew then she was talking to God, that her children were her last cogent thoughts.

Then she died. It was early winter in 1983."

"Magdalena was a mystery to all of us. We knew a lot about her, because she was our cousin, she was a central figure in our family on Donta Road, young and rebellious, and she was also a worry to our aging parents. Magdalena was one of their younger daughters, and they were not energetic anymore. There is a great deal we don't understand about her," Betty repeated. "She loved her children, but she was baffled, overwhelmed, almost defeated by her responsibility as a wife and mother. She was too young to marry, that was certain." Betty reflected, "I married young, and in tandem we had children nearly the

same ages, but she was not settled, nor resigned to staying home. She sought a more jolly life. There was a need for her to be with people."

At home, as a young woman she had enjoyed good times, with fun and laughter and of course, some difficulty in our large family on Donta Road. Her prospects were good, though. She made a fine appearance with a dark complexion and sparkling blue eyes. She looked exotic, with hair that lay like liquid flint. She had a social life equal to the other young people in our community. It's true she was not focused on school, and she didn't go regularly, but imagine how distraught her parents were, and all us were, when she took up with an old man like Albert Waugh. She was fifteen and he was thirty years old.

Magdalena was a sweet, friendly girl, and she was still only fifteen years old, when he persuaded her to marry. After that, Albert left her on her own for months. He traveled with construction work. But, he came home often enough, because within the next nine years, she had six babies in rapid succession," Betty said.

"Their marriage went downhill swiftly even as she was expecting their sixth child," Betty recalled the events, "I had little children of my own to care for, and she lived across the street, so I was aware of her distress. She was lonely. By the winter of 1942, Albert Waugh was assigned to Georgia, and he never came back for her. She gave birth to Ronnie, her youngest son, in late June of 1943. She was alone, except for us her family, Albert never even came back to see his new son. They say he was a cruel man," Betty concluded, "Brutish," she said again, "He'd even lock her up in the house when he went to work."

- Betty Kozee Fairchild - cousin to Magdalena Skaggs-Waugh-Roberts-Jones-