

The Pearsons

In 1921 Joseph and Elizabeth Pearson bought a farm at the corner of 14th Avenue and Holland Street in Lakewood. They moved from Denver with their two young children, 9 year old Carl, and 6 year old Irma. Joseph and Elizabeth would spend the rest of their lives in this home, which is still in the family today.

The house didn't have central heating, but the big wood stove in the kitchen kept it cozy in winter months. The outhouse was the only bathroom, and the well pump the water source. Irma Pearson Lundin tells stories about the goose attacking the buttons on the back of the children's pants as they ran for the outhouse. Out running or out smarting the goose was part of every trip, as was the occasional nip on the bottom.

Joseph continued working at Gardner-Denver as a toolmaker, riding his bike 2 ½ miles to the bus (probably the streetcar) to reach his job across town. He did this no matter what the weather or time of year. This was probably a little challenging since the roads were dirt and gravel, not paved like today. He would bring home basic necessities on his return home each day.

The farm was a busy place with apple and cherry trees, a big garden, and animals to care for. The big barn's hayloft was filled with alfalfa and hay each summer. They sold the fruit from a stand on Colfax, and also had a u-pick orchard. The wool from their sheep was sold at a market in Denver.

There was a dam that held irrigation water on the west side of Joe's property, on the east side of Independence Street near where the elementary school is now. The water came from a ditch and Joe paid a fee for the irrigation rights. He used the water to irrigate his orchards and other crops. It kept enough water behind it to make a nice swimming hole for the kids when their chores were completed.

Within a few years more children were born: Glenn in 1921, Ralph in 1926, Lorraine in 1928, and Dorothy in 1933. Carl and Irma helped out with the younger children and with the work around the farm.

Weekends would bring extended family together after church or on Saturdays for picnics in summer and dinners on holidays. It was a home filled with laughter, and good family times. It was also a chance for the Denver families to drive their cars out to the country. (Joseph had a car, but didn't take to automobiles very well, so didn't drive much, preferring to let the kids do the driving).

The Depression years were hard on the family as work hours were cut, and they became more dependent on their land for income. Irma went to live with Aunt Minnie (Joseph's sister) in Denver part of the time to learn to sew, and Carl continued on with his high school education in Lakewood. As they became school age, the younger children attended Lakewood School, as had their older siblings. Ralph Pearson told stories about the annual trips to Golden to purchase new overalls for the boys. Aunt Minnie made many of the girls' clothes, and altered clothes to fit the growing family.

Carl and Irma were the first to leave home, both marrying in 1935. Carl married Irma's best friend, Inez Stenmark, and Irma married Carl's best friend, Edward Lundin.

The Second World War impacted the family as Glenn joined the Army and Carl the Navy. Both of them were in units which saw action in the Pacific.

Joseph and Elizabeth divided the property so each of their children would have a lot. Glenn, Ralph and Lorraine built their homes there and Dorothy on property across Holland Street. Irma sold her lot to Lorraine, as she was living in Washington State. The family grew, with 13 grandchildren, daughters-in-law, and sons-in-law with Grandpa Joe and Grandma Elizabeth at the center of the family. (In addition to the grandchildren living on Holland Street, both Irma and Carl each had two children).

Eiber Elementary School was built in 1955 near where the dam was, and the grandchildren attended that school.

Over the years, the Pearson farm went from a rural farm with horse drawn wagon, to shiny new motor vehicles of all kinds. The streets have been paved, and street lights added. Houses and families have replaced the old barn, sheep and other animals.

The old house is still in the family. The Pearson's grandson, Ron and Merry Hansen now own it. Dorothy and her husband Walt still live across the street. Irma, the only other surviving sibling, lives in Washington State and just celebrated her 101st birthday.