

SUNSHINE VALLEY

by-Dorothy Freudenthal

"SUNSHINE VALLEY"
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For my three daughters, who, when they were small, enjoyed hearing tales of "when Mother was a little girl".

My Family.....

Father-Frank Charles Dolce

Born-Metlicka, Austria January 9, 1888

Died-Cody, Wyoming December 23, 1957

Mother-Inez Ethel Voorhees

Born-Wessington Springs, South Dakota December 17, 1888

Died-Denver, Colorado December 17, 1964

Dorothy Marie Dolce

Born-Goshen County Wyoming March 28, 1915

Marjorie Francis Dolce

Born-June 10, 1919 Goshen County Wyoming

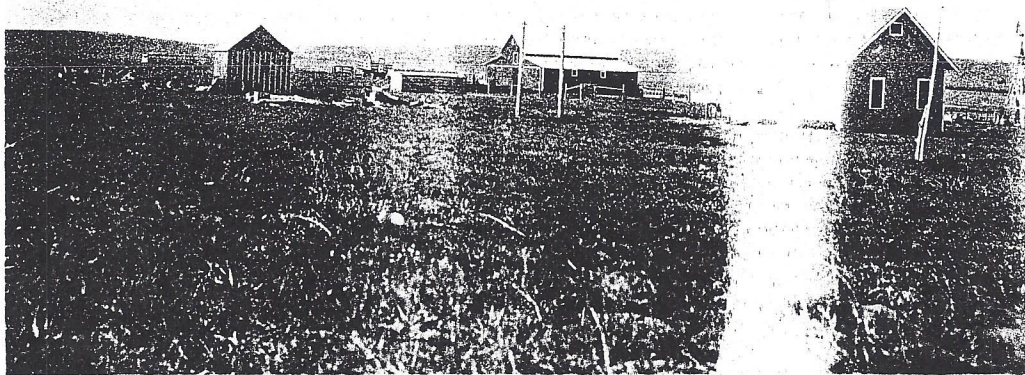
Betty Jo Dolce

Born-Goshen County Wyoming January 19, 1922

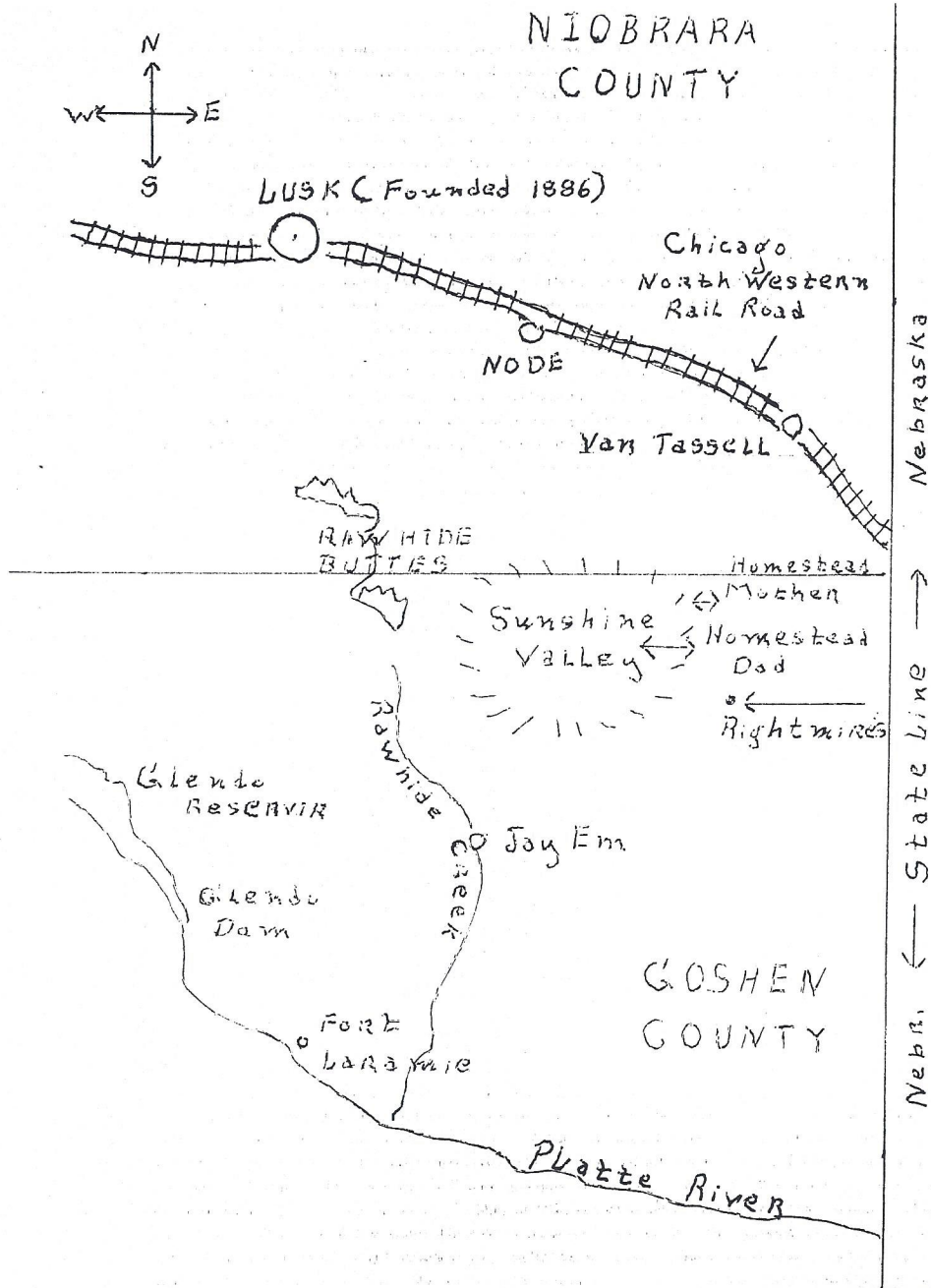
Died-Cody, Wyoming September 30, 1984

Floyd Wayne Dolce

Born-Lusk, Wyoming November 21, 1926



Our home in Sunshine Valley



Home stead requirements:

A U.S. citizen age 21 could file for home stead land of 320 acres. It took 3 years to "prove up" the land. Had to put improvements on the land, such as buildings or a certain number of trees, which were usually cotton woods. It was rare that the trees would survive for three years.

The home steader could be absent from his property for 5 months of each year.

Had filed in 1913, and Mother about that time...I don't have a date for her.



Dorothy - age 6 months

SUNSHINE VALLEY

I was born in Sunshine Valley and that was my home until I was about 13 years old. I was born during a March blizzard, something that the state of Wyoming does up in a grand manner. The doctor couldn't get through the storm until two days later! However all was well- my Dad knew just what to do.

So I grew up on a dry land farm which was homestead land of Mother and Dad's. Their property was adjoining. How nice! Of course that is how they met, because they were neighbors. Dad filed in 1913, and Mother and her brother Archie about the same time. My Dad lived about 2 miles south of their places. He lived in a snug little house which became the honeymoon cottage after he was married and the home where I was born.

Money was scarce for the homesteaders, and my mother said she had 12 diapers for me made out of flour sacks. Those flour sacks the ladies saved were always put to good use, for dish towels, kids bloomers, and when the printed ones came out many little girls wore a new dress made out of flour sacks. They made good aprons too.

At one time Sunshine Valley was a lake bed- perfectly flat and very fertile soil. Most of the homes were built on the low hills that surrounded the valley and the lake bed was used for the fields. There were no trees, except the cottonwoods the homesteaders planted in their yards. The valley and the surrounding hills were covered with thick prairie grass and the small blue-green sage that was feathery and soft to the touch. There was also plenty of small cactus, wild daisies and wild yellow sweet peas, a red blossom plant we called sour dock and patches of the loco weed with a purple blossom. The loco weed was poisonous to the horses...the cattle either wouldn't eat it or it had no effect on them.

Every farm house had a windmill. We had plenty of wind in the valley so it was very seldom we had to use the hand pump to get water. There was a big wooden barrel for the water to flow into. Then a trough led from that to the stock tank...a big wooden tank. Our garden was on the other side of the well and water was piped to it for irrigation. The gardens were the only crops that were irrigated. The oats, corn, wheat and beans were planted in the fields and depended on the rains to grow.

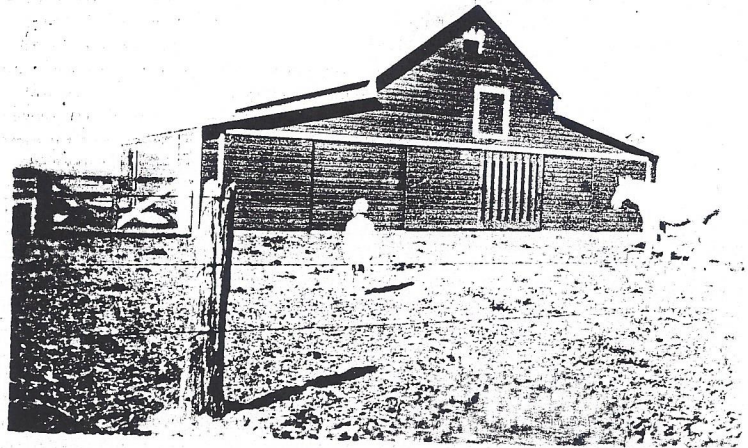
The pastures were thick with natural grass. We had 3 of them. Two pastures Dad used for the animals to graze...rotating them so the feed would stay good. The other one, which was too far away for the cows to graze, Dad kept for raising wild hay.

My Dad smoked a pipe, and one time when he was mowing the wild hay, a spark from his pipe set the field on fire. This was a real disaster. Neighbors came to help put the prairie fire out. They hauled barrels of water to the fire and used wet gunney sacks to beat out the flames. After that, when in the fields, Dad used a pipe with a perforated metal shield that would slip over the top of the pipe bowl.

We had a big barn on the other side of the water tank that was divided into 3 parts on the ground floor. The south part was for the cows with stanchions and feed bins. We milked from 16-23 cows...separated the milk and sold the cream. A corral for the cows was also on that side of the barn. The middle of the barn was partitioned off with stalls for the horses and an inside stairway leading to the haymow above. The north side of the barn was used for the pigs, with a grain storage room at one end. The whole area around the barn was fenced to hold the animals so they could go to the water tank from there.

Ah, that water tank. How well I remember it! It was the biggest pool of water we kids would ever see on that dry land farm. It had a lot of green moss growing on the wooden sides, both inside and out. Dad would

have to clean it periodically. And then when it was first cleaned we 3 girls could use it for a swimming pool. Only once of course. Then it went back to being water for the stock. I can remember once when it was so very hot we girls got in without permission, thinking Dad wouldn't know the difference because he was way out in the field and Mother was in the house. Did we ever get scolded good that evening! We had stirred up the moss and the horses wouldn't drink. So Dad had to carry buckets of clean water to them after a day in the hot field.



Dorothy in front of
the red barn.

MY FIRST MEMORIES-

My first memory is lying in bed with small pox. It was before my sister Marjorie was born. I was in bed with Mother and amusing myself by looking at a Sears and Roebuck catalogue. I suppose Mother was sick too. I don't know if Dad became ill. The small pox was all over and then you either got over it on your own or died. There wasn't any treatment for it. If a whole family was sick they just had to take care of themselves as everybody was so afraid of it. One of our valley neighbors, Gertrude Shaw lost her husband Nat in the flu epidemic of 1918 for the same reason. Not much they could do for the flu either and if it turned into pneumonia that was usually fatal.

Several years later when the school children were to get small pox vaccinations, Mother and Dad took we kids to the Dr. in Lusk to be vaccinated. Mother kept saying I wouldn't need it because I'd already had the disease. In fact I had scars from it on my forehead until I was in my teens. The Dr. would make a series of needle pricks in a circle on your arm ending up with a circle as big as a dollar. Marjorie and Betty had theirs and then it was my turn. Why my Mother didn't say anything I don't know. I looked at her with pleading eyes and finally she told the Dr. I'd already had small pox. So he said I didn't need the vaccination. What a relief for me! I have never figured out why my Mother didn't speak up.

My other memory is when my sister Marjorie was born. Auntie Blanche my Mother's sister who also lived on a homestead in the valley was there to look after Mother. It was in June and our yellow rose bushes we had by the garden were in full bloom. They smelled so good and were so beautiful. I picked a bouquet and brought them in to Mother who was lying in bed with my new baby sister. To this day, when I smell yellow roses, I think of that time.

I have vague memories of "war talk" and the first airplane I ever saw fly over our valley. I was sure the Germans were coming although the war was over by then. I remember eating lots of corn bread, I guess

white flour was hard to get then...of the ladies knitting wool socks for the Red Cross...and my Mother worrying about her brother Lester who fought in the trenches in World War I. He came home safely and years later died by choking on a chicken bone!

MY DAD-

My Dad was born in Metlika, Austria. His family came to the U.S. when he was quite young. They settled in Omaha, Nebraska. His father worked for a meat packing plant. His parents died when he was still a child and Dad ended up living on a farm with a family by the name of Hall. They did not adopt him. The other children in the family were parceled out to various relatives or friends. So he grew up learning to farm and used to hard work. Mr. Hall had a son about Dad's age. When the boys were old enough for college, Mr. Hall gave them a choice of a college education or a stake to buy a farm. Dad chose to farm. So that is how he got enough money for his homestead venture. As a result, he was better off financially than many of the homesteaders. He was able to build a better barn than most of the neighbors and a good solid house with a shingled roof. Most of them lived in a tar papered shack. The barn is still standing today...the only building left in Sunshine valley. The house was moved to Lusk and is still being lived in.

He was raised a Catholic. All his relatives were Catholics. He gave up his religion when he married Mother, but I am sure that deep inside he kept his faith. With all the farm work he had on the homestead, Sunday was a day of rest at our house. Only the necessary chores were done. Dad once said to me that God had a plan for all of us on this earth and when that plan was completed, then God would take us to be with Him.

He was a strict disciplinarian. His word was law! We girls never questioned his discipline. In fact we wanted to please him, where as concerning Mother we were always figuring ways to get around her without getting caught. If Dad was displeased with us, and we got a scolding, we would be absolutely crushed. I only got one spanking from my Dad and that was not for what I had done...but because I had lied about it. This lesson stayed with me forever. If you do something, you suffer the consequences, but you do not lie about it.

He was hard working, honest, willing to help anyone in trouble and earned the respect of his neighbors. So he may not have been a churchgoer, but he lived his religion.

He was a reserved person, not into displaying affection. He loved my Mother so very much...I believe he would have done anything possible to make her happy. Yes, they had their quarrels...and afterwards Dad would go out to the barn and cry, giving Mother time to get over her temper tantrum.

He built our new house, replacing the homestead house... built the big barn. He had a forge and did his own blacksmith work, had a cobbler's shoe last and half soled our shoes. People were really self sufficient then.

Dad did have neighbors help in building the barn. I am sure that Mother also helped on the building projects. Mother was not lazy and worked just as hard as Dad did. He also butchered the beef and pork. Neighbors came to help on that. He had a small smoke house where the hams and sausage were cured.

How glad I am that Mother and Dad's last years were spent in Cody, Wyoming. They had a snug little house with all the modern conveniences. He could go to work in his shoe shop and he and Mother could enjoy their fishing and camping trips in the mountains.

MY MOTHER-

Mother grew up in Wessington Springs, South Dakota. She came to Wyoming when she was 21. I assume that she had already proved up her homestead before Dad came to Wyoming, although I don't have any dates as to when she filed for her land.

She was the youngest of 7 children. I suppose her life in a small town was much different than my Dad's. She went to a "seminary" she called it, after finishing grade school. She studied music and played the piano very well. In fact that big upright piano followed her wherever she went. It is now in a church in Cody.

Mother was very opinionated about everything! She had a quick temper and would fly off the handle very easily. This made our life difficult at times. I probably was not exposed to this as much as the other children because I, being the oldest, helped Dad more than Mother. I soon learned to just let her spout off until she felt better and not really let the things she said bother me. It was not physical abuse that occurred, but verbal abuse. My sister Marjorie, being next in line, got most of it and it really upset her. She was always trying harder to please and then once again she would do something that wasn't right in Mother's eyes.

Mother had far too much to do and I suppose was worn out much of the time and this was her way of venting her feelings. What a big change it must have been for her to become a farmers wife after the kind of life she had before that. So I understand, but don't condone.

She cooked on a coal range...but most of the time we burned wood and cow chips to save on fuel. There was a reservoir on one end of the stove that would keep water hot. It was my job to carry water up the hill to keep the reservoir filled. She washed clothes on a washboard for many years, then finally got a wooden washing machine with a handle on it to agitate the clothes. This had to be worked by hand...and that was my job most of the time. Clothes were ironed with sad irons...3 irons heating on the stove, a removable handle to clamp on top of the hot iron until it cooled off...then you would change to another hot iron. Mother did most of the ironing herself as she was very particular how it should be done. She had worked in a laundry in Wessington Springs and could really turn out a perfectly ironed shirt.

She baked all our bread. The ladies kept what they called a "starter yeast" in a jar. Each baking they would use some of that to make the bread rise and then add more flour and water to it for the next time. She baked good bread. Also she made baking powder biscuits that were the very best. How she could turn out such delicious food with that stove is beyond me. But all the women cooked that way and thought nothing of it. I never learned how to manage a coal stove...tried it after Al and I were married and had to stay home all day just to keep the fire burning! I never learned to cook while I was home. Mother was always afraid I'd waste something.

Then there was the mammoth task of canning food. Most of our food was grown right on the farm. Only staples such as flour, sugar etc. had to be bought. The beef was cut into chunks, dipped in flour and browned in hot lard. Then packed into Mason jars, filled up with boiling water and a little salt and processed in a boiler full of boiling water for several hours...about 4 hours, I think. The vegetables like peas, tomatoes, etc. were processed the same way. Then the jars were packed away in our cellar. Imagine how hot the kitchen would get with a fire going for hours on end to keep the water boiling on the jars! Things like carrots, potatoes and turnips were stored raw in big baskets in the cellar for winter use.

Besides doing the cooking and running the house and caring for the family, Mother helped milk the cows night and morning. We milked from 16-23 cows, separated and shipped 5 gallon cans of cream to the Blue Valley Creamery Company. The mail man would pick up the cans when he came by to deliver mail...and take it to the town of Node where it was shipped by rail. I can remember Dad always being happy when he got another "cream check" as he called them. All his life if Dad got a little extra money, he would refer to it as another "cream check".

Mother had thick brown hair which she wore long and done into a bun at the back. I can remember seeing her brush it at night and then put it into a braid so it wouldn't get tangled. I always wanted to have long hair and wear braids but none of us did. We had our hair cut... by Mother or Dad of course and wore it straight. Marjorie and Betty wore a Dutch bob with bangs and parted in the middle. Mine was that way at first but as I got older I parted it on the side and used a big metal barrette to hold it out of my eyes. Any way, I admired Mother's long hair and when it became the fashion for women to cut their hair, Mother was one of the first to have it done. Dad didn't want to do it, so he just took ahold of her long thick braid in the back and made one whack through it! Here it was different lengths and looked terrible. Mother started to cry and Dad did too. Then he evened it up for her.

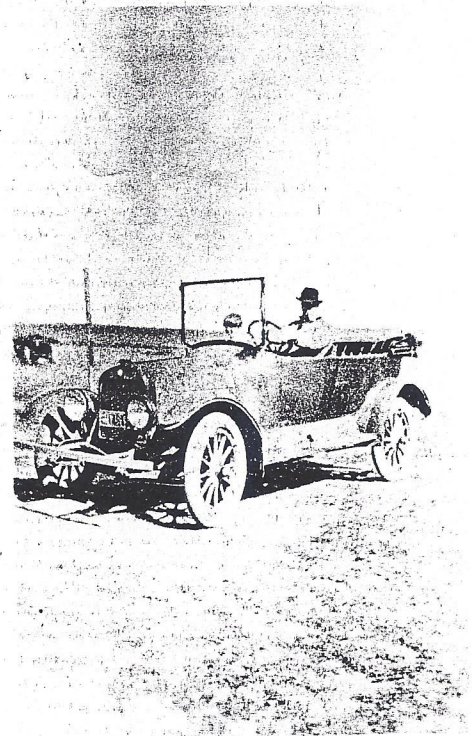
Mother was an avid reader and had a bookshelf full of books. I remember the Zane Grey books, a dictionary and the Bible. Also she subscribed to the Ladies Home Journal and saved issues for months on end.

She also crocheted just beautifully, tatted, knitted and was a very good seamstress. She could just look at a picture of a dress and come up with a pattern for it. She had a treadle sewing machine which had a lot of use during those years. The ladies of the valley got together and made dress forms for each other. The process was to put on a suit of thin cotton underwear, stand very still with your hands steadied on a chair back to each side of you. The ladies used rolls of sticky paper tape they would moisten on the sticky side and start pasting the tape around and around your body. All the time one had to stand perfectly still. This took about 30 minutes. Then they would slit down the back through the cotton suit and the tape. The dress form went over the hips. The form was removed and taped back together. Then it was stored in the attic or wherever for use in fitting a garment. Some times the women would faint from standing so long...and they would have to start over again!

Mother played the piano very well. She would play for the country dances along with a fiddler or two. If there was no piano she would play the organ if that was what was there. She had a good sense of rhythm and could play in any key. Her music made you just want to dance or sing or whatever. She had a way of putting chords to the melody of the other instruments that gave enough bass to the sound... a drum wasn't needed for the beat. For the square dance tunes...the fiddles doing the melody...this is what she would do. I am glad she had her beloved piano with her all her life as it meant so much to her to just sit and make music. Carting that piano all over the country, wherever they lived, was a wonderful thing for Dad to do. That was one thing from her early life she didn't have to give up. The piano was a birthday gift to her when she was a girl so it had a special meaning to her.



Frank and Dorothy



Frank and Dorothy
in the "Dort"
Taken in year of 1917



Dorothy & her doll



Frank and Inez Dolce and their daughter
Dorothy...At Rymils, a neighbors place
about 1919 or 1920...Sunshine Valley, Wyo.

A BIGGER HOME-

Dad soon built a bigger home to replace the homestead house. I think it was after Marjorie was born, but don't know for sure. Our family camped in the barn while it was being built.

One half of it was a long living room with a dining area at the south end. There was a steep stairway at that end leading to the attic. Under the stairs was a big storage closet where we kept our coats, caps, and other outer wear. It also became a catch all... Whenever we had something we didn't know where to put...it went into that closet. As a result it was hard to find anything in that closet!

At the other end of the living room was the piano with some small bookshelves between the corner and the bedroom door. There was also a brown leather covered couch that folded out to make an extra bed. It was called a "duo-fold" in those days. There was a matching leather chair and a table on the opposite wall. Also a front door close to the dining area.

The kitchen was off the dining room with a back door and a step. Later, Dad added a storage area off the kitchen which we badly needed to hold wood, extra buckets and other stuff. The other half of the house was divided into the kitchen and bedroom. On the north end of the kitchen was a big pantry...lots of shelves...used for staples such as flour, sugar etc. The other side of the pantry held the cream separator. The kitchen was furnished with a big black coal range, a cupboard for dishes, two work tables...and by the back door a wash bench with the wash basin, water bucket and dipper, soap and towels.

The other half of the pantry was a clothes closet (not nearly big enough) which opened to the bedroom on the north end of the house.

The bedroom door opened into the living room by the book shelves. Mother's oak dresser with a full length mirror was the nicest piece of furniture in there. That was another piece of furniture Mother kept all her life. When she gave up her home in Cody, she gave it to my sister Betty. It is still in their house...now refinished and a beautiful antique.

We girls used the attic for our bedroom and a play room. We had two double beds which we were supposed to keep made, but hardly ever did, unless we knew Mother was coming up to inspect. The attic was unfinished. Many boxes of things were stored under the eaves. At each end was a small window that was hinged so it would hang down in an open position and was held by a chain attached to the sill and to the middle of the window. The windows were so high up we girls would have to stand on a wooden box in order to see out.

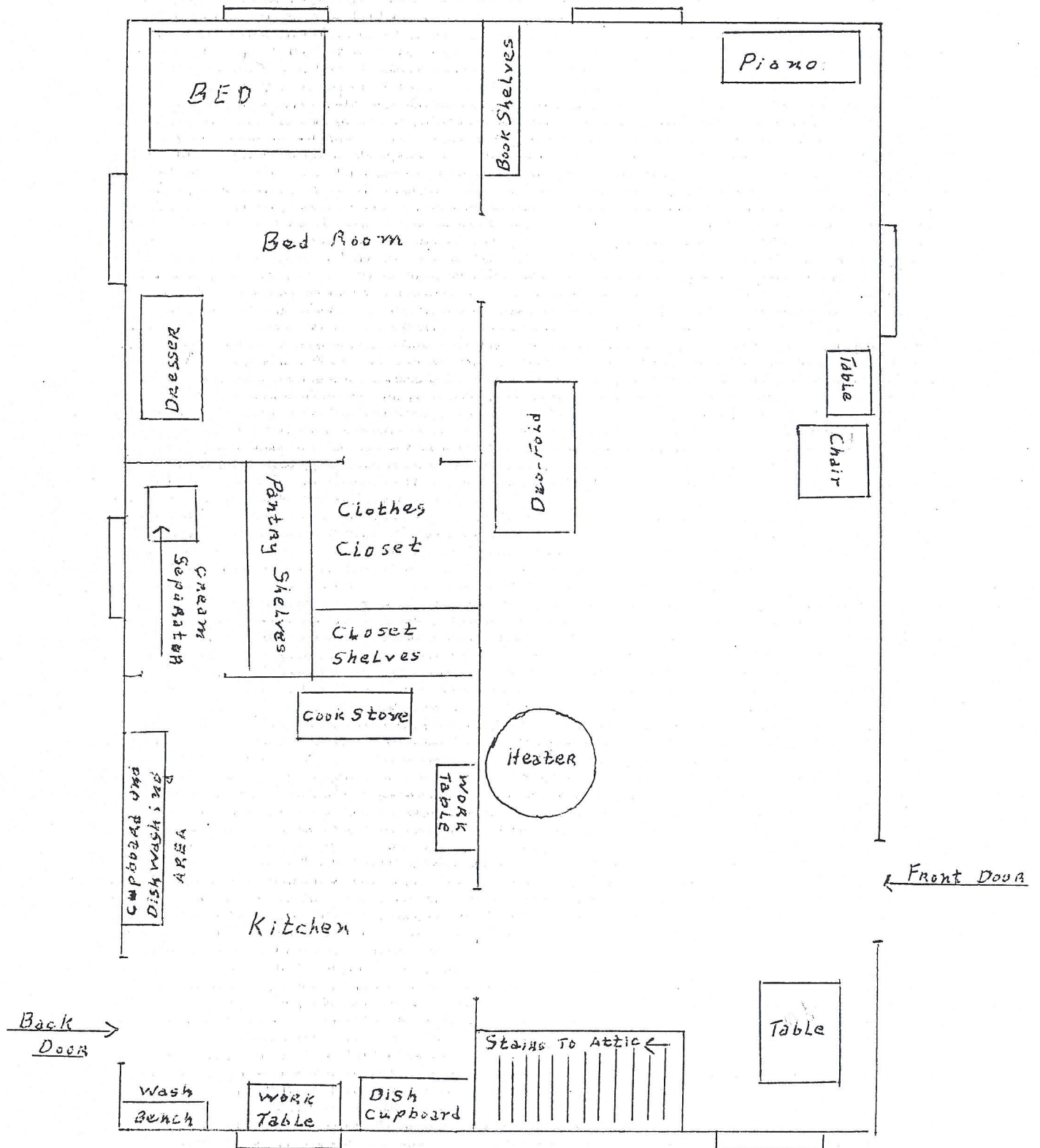
The rest of the attic was taken up with our toys. We had many dolls, sets of play dishes, boxes of paper dolls which we made out of pictures from the catalogues and magazines. We would cut out the picture and then using flour paste would put a backing on it so it would stand up. You couldn't buy books of paper dolls then. Later when the Ladies Home Journal would have a page of REAL paper dolls we girls were delighted.

At the top of the stairs was hinged door, like a cellar door, that could be fastened in an open position. That door was so heavy to open it was years before we girls were strong enough to lift it. As a result it was usually left open. The heat from our other stove, a coal heater on the dining room wall next to the kitchen would go up the stair well so kept it warm. In the winter however, it was so cold when we would get up mornings we would all three scurry down to the heater and dress by the fire.

The house must have been very sturdy. After Dad sold the farm and the people that bought it left, the house was moved to Lusk where it is still being used. The new owners did put a coat of stucco on the outside.

I forgot to describe the "bath room". We took our baths in the kitchen in a big wash tub. The toilet (two holer) was outside.

NORTH
OUR NEW HOUSE.....



MOTHER'S WEDDING DRESS-

Mother had a lovely wedding dress. It was of white lace with long tapered sleeves and covered buttons up to the elbow. The skirt was made of two or three (I don't remember which) gathered tiers with a fancy embroidered scalloped border. I can remember of trying it on once and doing all those buttons with a small button hook. She wore white satin covered high heeled pumps and then a close fitting hat (no brim) that was trimmed with blue feathers. The dress was kept in a safe place in the attic. We girls couldn't even look at it without asking first. However the shoes and hat went into we girls box of dress up clothes and I suppose were eventually thrown away. The dress ended up being a prom dress for Betty when she was in high school at Stevensville, Montana. Mother and Betty remodeled it and dyed it. How I wish she had kept that lovely dress!

Mother and Dad were married at Douglas, Wyoming in 1914. Rolla and Marie Porter...homesteaders also and lifelong friends of my parents went with them and "stood up" with them at their wedding.

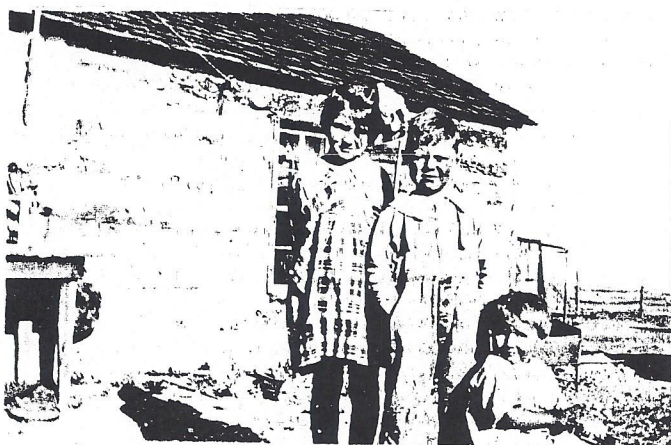
FIDDLERS AND DANCES-

Rolla Porter was one of the fiddlers that would play with mother. In fact there were three men that played the violin-Archie Sparks, Johnny Campbell and then Rolla.

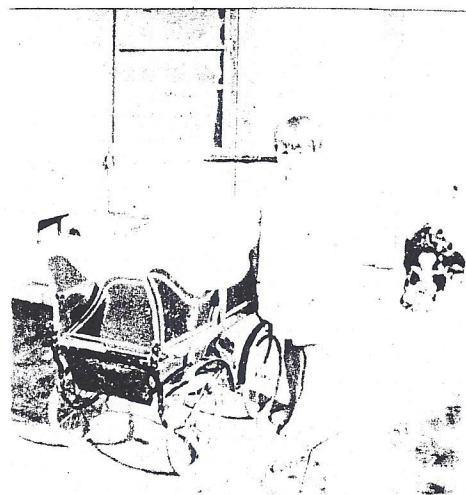
Usually the dances were held at the school house. People brought their children too. The children would either watch or dance for awhile and then curl up somewhere and sleep until time to go home. The ladies would bring food...usually pies for the midnight supper.

My Dad was a very good dancer. He taught me how to waltz and all my life I would rather waltz with my Dad than any one. They would have lots of square dances, some two steps and I suppose some of them were polkas.

One time my folks had a dance in the haymow of our barn. The hay mow was swept clean, and one end had tables for food that were planks put on top of saw horses. There was a big crowd. I sat on the top step leading to the hay mow and watched all the fun. I think they brought an organ from somewhere (I know Auntie Blanche had one) and got it into the haymow by putting ropes around it and lifting it up from the horse stall through the opening used to pitch hay to the horses. Mother was the only one that had a piano except for one in the school house. Some of the ladies owned an organ..the kind that you had to pump with foot pedals to make it play.



Dorothy, Eugene Terrel, Marjorie
at Terrel's house



Marjorie & Dorothy

SCHOOL-

My first school was in Sunshine Valley. It was close enough that I could walk there when the weather was nice. I loved school! Not many attended as some of the children went to the Rawhide school which was several miles west of us.

Everybody carried their lunch in a tin bucket...usually a lard bucket. We had a water bench with the wash basin. One towel for everybody and a water bucket with a tin dipper that everybody drank from. So if one child came down with a cold, we all soon got it.

I loved to read from my first primer. It had a blue cover and inside every page had black and white drawings of the story. The first page started out "Run, Dan run. See Dan run." Dan was a boy with a collie dog for a pet.

Marjorie was about 4 years old. The teacher said it would be all right for her to come to school with me. She got so lonesome at home and it was fun for her. I don't know how much she really learned but did learn to read and count. There were so few pupils that the teacher had time for her. I guess you could say this was the same as kindergarten for Marjorie.

The next year or maybe the year after, I don't know for sure, the only students left for this little school were my cousin Gerald Smith and myself. So the school closed and Gerald and I went to the Rawhide school. It was too far away for our folks to take us every day. It was arranged for Gerald and I to board with a lady by the name of Mrs. Campbell, and close enough to the school that we could walk there. Mrs. Campbell was a widow who had her grown son living with her. Her son was one of the violinists. I don't remember anything about him but I sure do about Mrs. Campbell and a very miserable year living there. It wasn't her fault I was unhappy. I was just too young to be away from home.

Dad would take me to Mrs. Campbell's every week driving the horse and buggy and then be there to take me home on Friday. I guess the road was too bad to risk taking the car. The horse could get through the snow but the car couldn't. He just missed one weekend during the whole term of school. That time the storm was just too bad for him to come. That was a long desolate weekend for me even though Gerald was there too.

Mrs. C. was a small wiry woman, very neat, with her hair done in a bun and always it seemed wore a calico apron. She was a good cook and of course packed our lunches for us. I tasted catsup and raw tomatoes at her house for the first time...and was very surprised how good they were. Mother didn't like catsup so never made it. She always said that raw tomatoes were poison and had to be cooked. I decided to take a chance on the tomatoes after I observed the rest of them were eating them with no ill effects.

I came down with a very bad cold and Mrs. C. doctored me up with her home remedy. Some sort of smelly goose grease concoction she spread on my chest. My chest was covered with flannel for warmth. When I went to school the next day she made me wear her red flannel petticoat which was full length with half sleeves. I had about 2 inches of red sleeve hanging below the short sleeves of my dress. My whole day at school was spent trying to keep those red sleeves tucked up so they wouldn't show.

We had a one room school house with home made desks. Very rough lumber with a table top for two, an open shelf underneath to hold our books, and a bench big enough for two. So we really shared our desk with another person. There was a recitation bench in front of the room where we would go to recite. We were right in front of the teacher's desk when reciting. The pupils that were studying were behind us so we did not bother them.

I excelled in reading and soon was allowed to take reading with an older group. Phonics fascinated me and I could usually sound out a word and pronounce it correctly but didn't always know what the word meant. In fact I tried to read Charles Dickens at Mrs. C's the week end I didn't get to go home. She didn't have any children's books. I could read most of it but finally gave up because I couldn't understand what I was reading.

I made some new girl friends, Wyoma and Alice Hoy. Wyoma was my age and Alice was younger. They had two older brothers and then a younger one too. Wyoma asked me to stay all night with her. Of course I would have to get permission from Mrs. C. first. She wouldn't let me go without asking my mother first. That meant I would have to wait until the following week. I wanted to go the very next night...so I did. I walked home with Wyoma and spent the night with her. When I got back to Mrs. Campbell's she was very stern and said "I'll have to tell your Dad about this when he comes after you". She did, and I shed many tears trying to explain to my folks why I had disobeyed. I wasn't punished. Guess my parents thought I had gone through enough mental anguish before I saw them. But I never did that again.

A NEW SCHOOL-

The next year Rawhide and Sunshine valley schools were consolidated. Both buildings were moved to a new location west of Sunshine valley that was central for all the students. It was named "Rawhide School".



Left to right-

Emma Pearson-holding Alice Hoy and Marjorie Dolce

Edward Ryder- holding Garland Ryder

Maynard Hoy- holding Eugene Terrel

Harold Hoy- holding Raymond Hoy

Dorothy Dolce-holding Etta Canfield

On the ground-Edward Hoy, Luella Canfield, Wyoma Hoy

We now had a two room school house for about 15 students. We had two teachers and a school bus to haul us to school. A school board was elected and my Dad served on that. This was really an honor and an important position for him. There were just three members on the board.

We had real desks, a playground with swings and a teeter totter. There was an outdoor privy for the girls and one for the boys. A cloak room was added for coats, overshoes and a place to park our lunch buckets. The one dipper in the water bucket was just used to fill our own tin cup we had hanging on the wall with our name on it.

In spite of this, when yellow jaundice hit the school everybody got it. After the kids got over being real sick they just started back to school as everbody was exposed anyway. The same way with the whooping cough.

When I had hepatitis (we called it yellow jaundice) I was sick in bed for two weeks. This was one of the few times I went to the Dr. in Lusk. He gave me a foul tasting medicine and put me on a strict diet. Now that I was sick I was sure I'd get a big basket of fruit but the diet squelched that. I could have oranges. However Mother made up for that by giving me a lovely rose colored organdy dress that I saved to wear for Easter.

We had two teachers. The lower grades were in one room and the upper grades in the second room. We would all gather in one room for the opening exercises. After we had pledged allegiance to the flag, sung America and had a prayer we went to our separate rooms.

The school bus was a Ford Model T. Our bus driver was Stanley Hoy who lived just across the road from our school. He was a widower and had two boys, Edward and Raymond, that went to school with us. His brother was Waldo Hoy, the father of Maynard, Harold, Wyoma, Alice and Wayne.

The bus driver arrived at our gate by the well at 7:30 a.m. It was always a scramble to be ready by then. We had to eat breakfast, have our lunch pails packed, and I had four cows to milk in the a.m. Dad gave me the easiest ones to milk. They were very gentle...in fact practically pets of we girls. We dearly loved "Daisy" because we could pet her and crawl on her back when she was lying down...and contentedly chewing her cud.

In the cold winter the bus driver would have heated rocks covered with a blanket on the floor of the car. This was to keep our feet warm. The canvas curtains with icing glass windows would be buttoned up tight to keep out the drafts.

One time as the school bus came over the last hill, Mr. Hoy saw that the roof of his house was on fire! He drove the bus right into his yard and had all we kids form a bucket brigade from the well to his house. He got a ladder and used our buckets of water to put out the fire. We were late for school and very wet and dirty, but so very proud that we were volunteer firemen.

I was very happy with the new school and my new friends. The only sad thing was that my cousin Gerald wasn't there. He now went to a school at Royal valley and his Dad drove a bus for the Royal valley children.

Soon the teachers came up with an idea for hot school lunches during the winter months. The mothers would take turns fixing a big container of stew, beans or whatever and send it on the bus. The kids would bring in their own lunches whatever else they wanted. The teacher would put the big pot of the hot dish on top of the heating stove to get warm for lunch. So we had a hot lunch program way back then before the government ever thought of such a thing!

The school would put on programs and all the parents would come. Neighborhood dances and box socials would be held there. I went to this school through the 8th grade and by then Dad had sold his place and we moved away.

Two teachers I remember well. The first was Mary Blair. She was very young and not used to living the life style of the homesteaders. She had trouble keeping a fire in the heater at school and many times one of the older boys would light the fire for her. She was such a lady.

Miss Blair was always so very neat and wore such pretty dresses. Her hair was bobbed and kept in a neat marcel. The ladies used a special curling iron to get this result. She had beautiful hands and perfect-manicured nails. I was delighted when she showed me how to do a manicure. I don't remember much about the other young lady that taught when she did. They lived close by and didn't stay very long in that rough country.

The other teacher was Gertrude Calhoun. She had re-married after her first husband Nat Shaw died. She was big, fat and sloppy. She had two children, a daughter named Aldene and a boy named Gerald. Mr. Calhoun had boy named Norton older than I and a daughter named Alice that was about Marjorie's age.

Mrs. Calhoun taught after Mary Blair and would ride the school bus with us. Usually the bus would have to wait for her. Then she would come out with a cup of coffee and a donut in her hand and have her breakfast on the way to school. She and Mother were very good friends. Then she tried to tell Dad, because he was on the school board, how things should be run at school. This caused some coolness between our two families and she took it out on me. Her boy Gerald was a spoiled brat and a big tease. He would tease me unmercifully! One time I got so mad I threw my lunch bucket at him, and gave him a big gash above the eye. This really caused some trouble and Mrs. Calhoun informed my folks they should teach me to control my temper. After that I was treading on thin ice all the time at school never knowing when I would get some more verbal abuse from her. I had to go to school... and I had to try to get along with her...but I really hated her!

On the other hand, she was very sweet to Marjorie and thought Marjorie was an adorable child. She had her teachers pets but I wasn't one of them. She was very cruel to her stepdaughter Alice and not too kind to Norton either. Once when Alice and I were using the outdoor privy together I saw these big black and blue welts on her buttocks. I asked Alice how she got those bruises. She said Mrs. Calhoun whipped her with a leather belt...often. I never told anyone this, not even my folks. Kids just didn't tell those things. But I stored this in my mind and hated her more than ever.

Her daughter Aldene ran away with their hired man. They hid out in the Rawhide Buttes. Aldene was only about 14 years old. All the men in the neighborhood went out searching for them and found them the next day. I was too young to understand all the implications of this episode. Aldene was sent somewhere after that, and the hired man was sent to prison. I do remember we children and our mothers all gathered at Mrs. Calhoun's house while the men were searching. Then Mrs. Calhoun saying "Inez, I know they have found them". She was so right, as soon after they were brought in.

The Rawhide Buttes: low foothills 14 miles from Sunshine valley and the only source of wood in that area. It was an all day trip with the team and wagon to go over there and haul wood home. In 1849 a wagon train was traveling through that area. Clyde Pickett, one of the scouting party killed an Indian Princess of the Sioux tribe. He vowed he would kill the first Indian he saw. The Indians attacked as the train was ready to pull out for their day's journey. In order to save the wagon train Clyde ran out to the Indians and gave himself up. The wagon train retreated, running to safety at Fort Laramie. Clyde was left to suffer a horrible death at the foot of the Rawhide Buttes. He was skinned alive and left to die. Lusk, Wyoming still enacts the "Legend of Rawhide" every year as a tourist attraction.

THE TELEPHONE-

About 1918 the neighbors in the valley rigged up their own telephone system. The top wire of the barbed wire fences were used for the telephone line so the only extra wiring needed was over the gates and into the houses. The phones were wall phones with a crank to make the rings. Everybody had their own ring...like one long:two shorts,etc. Any time you called some one all the phones on the line rang, so a lot of "listening in" went on. You had to be careful what you said on the phone because several people could be listening in. In spite of this it was good for the neighbors to be able to visit back and forth and get some help if they needed it.

SHIPPING CATTLE-

The farmers would round up their beef in the fall and trail them to Node where they were shipped to Omaha, Nebraska. The men would take turns, or whom soever could go, riding the train to Omaha to sell the cattle. One year when my Dad went he brought me a pair of black patent leather high strapped slippers. The leather went up the back and in front were just straps that buttoned. So I had to learn to use a button hook to button up those tiny black slippers. I still have the button hook. He would always bring Mother a box of chocolate covered cherries.



MY GRAND PARENTS-

John Dolce- born October 24, 1858: died February 14, 1901

Barbara Kramenich- born October 16, 1860: died August 13, 1900

My grandmother Barbara and four children came to the U.S. in 1891. She and her children, accompanied by two other people, rode for three days on a train to Bremen, Germany. On January 12, they boarded the vessel Rhine and arrived in Baltimore on February the 8th. John Dolce was already in Omaha, Nebraska where he worked for a meat packing house. This all I know about my Dad's parents. Spalding is about 120 miles from Omaha so I presume many of the relatives lived there and that is why the orphaned children ended up living there.

Ezra Voorhees-born in the state of New York in 1848

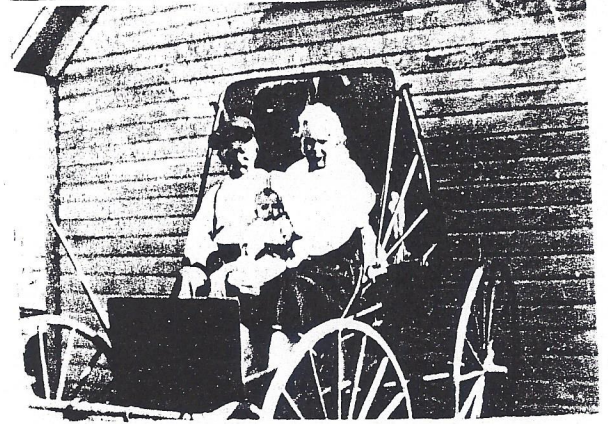
Alice Beels- born in the state of Ohio in 1853

They were married June 1, 1870. They had 7 children and my mother was the youngest. (4 boys and 3 girls). My grandmother died when I was 8 months old. She saw me once when I was 6 months old, when she and grandpa came to visit Mother and her brother Archie. Mother took me with her when she went to Wessington Springs the Christmas of 1915 for grandmothers funeral.

So the only grandparent I knew was Grandpa Voorhees. He was such a delight to be with. A small man, very dapper, with a grey beard and mustache. He would take the time to play with us, would tell us stories and take Marjorie on his knee, jiggle her up and down and sing a little "Too-la-roo-ah" tune to her. He came for a visit when Marjorie was small. When we would go to Lusk (all of us) he would take me to Mrs. Burrows Sweet Shop-buy the two of us an ice cream cone. Then we would sit at the table there, just the two of us and eat. I was in 7th heaven to get such special attention from my grandfather. He always asked for a teaspoon to scoop the ice cream out of his cone. I thought that was very strange. I suppose he did that to keep from getting ice cream on his mustache. I had a very special feeling for my very own grandfather. Grandparents have a very special place in the lives of their grandchildren...that no one else can fill. I have always tried to be that kind of a grandparent to my grandchildren.



Taken Xmas 1915 at Wessington Springs
Mother was there for the funeral of
grandma Alice Voorhees. I was 8 months
old. Hazel was Mother's neice.



Ezra and Alice Voorhees with
their granddaughter Dorothy.
Taken at Uncle Archie's house,
which was called "Calamity
Hill".

A few years later my grandfather re-married. Uncle Lester was home from the war. Mother took Marjorie and me back to Wessington Springs to visit. This was in 1920. We went on the train from Node. A man sat across from us on the train. He asked Mother if I could have a piece of his licorice candy. Mother's temper flared. She almost shouted at him-"I should say not! I won't let my daughter eat that filthy black stuff". That poor man! He was just being nice. Why couldn't Mother have said a no thank you and let it go at that? But that was not her way.

Dad sent me a letter while I was there. It was found in Mother's trunk after she died. The letter is written in lead pencil on ruled tablet paper. It reads:

My Dear Dorothy- I hope Santa Claus found you and left a lot of nice things. So you can show them to Daddy when you get home. Your kitties are just fine. Daddy feeds them lots of milk every morning. How do you like all your little cousins? Now be a good little girl and take good care of Chick. (a pet nickname for Marjorie). With lots of love and kisses...Your Daddy.

This is the only letter my Dad ever wrote to me...and I still have it.

So this was the second time I got to see my grandpa...and the last time too.

Mother and Uncle Lester would sit in the back bedroom at grandpa's house and visit. He would relate his war experiences. I can still see him lying on the bed dressed in his army uniform and the wrapped leggings that showed above his shoes. He was tall and very thin and looked like he was sick.

Of course we visited the many relatives there, Uncle Manley who was married and living there...my Aunt Clara and husband Bert Housner, Hazel Brown, a neice of Mothers who had a son about my age, and others I don't remember.

Mother deeply resented her father getting married again. She made no effort to be nice to her stepmother. I thought she was a nice jolly plump lady that baked wonderful molasses cookies. Mother criticized every thing the poor woman did, to anyone that would listen.

One day they had a terrible row. I think my grandfather just left the house in the middle of it. Anyway it ended with Mother becoming very angry and dumping all the freshly baked cookies into the slop bucket in the kitchen. I can see those cookies floating around in that bucket! I just couldn't imagine why Mother would do such a terrible thing. She never discussed this with me and of course I never told anyone...not even my Dad when we got back home.

I don't know how long we stayed but it was great to take the train back home. Then for some reason my Dad wasn't at Node to meet us! We got a ride home with Rolla Porter in his car. Dad had driven a team the 9 miles to meet us and somehow they missed each other. I don't know how this happened but do know that when Dad got back he wasn't in a very good mood. I don't blame him or Mother either. It ended up with a lot of tears shed and a big misunderstanding between Dad and Rolla Porter. Rolla came over the next day and talked to Dad so I guess they got it all straightened out and remained friends.

It has always hurt me deeply to see my loved ones quarrel. I guess that is why I am still a "peace maker" at heart.

MY AUNTIE BLANCHE'S FAMILY-

Blanche Voorhees-born May 19, 1883 at Sumner Iowa:died August 18, 1974 in a nursing home at Basin, Wyoming.

Olin Smith-born April 14, 1877:died April 4, 1962 at Thermopolis, Wyo.

Ross Smith-born March 13, 1904:died at Worland Wyo.

Esther Smith-born July 9, 1902: died in Oregon

Gerald Smith-born March 29, 1909: lives in Thermopolis, Wyo.

Blanche and Olin were married September 4, 1901 at Wessington Springs, South Dakota. They filed for a homestead in Wyo. in February of 1914. They left Sunshine valley in 1926 and moved to Thermopolis where they lived the rest of their lives.



Auntie Blanche, Uncle Archie & Mother
About 1963-taken at Uncle Archie's
home in Lusk.



Smith family

Gerald, Esther & Ross
Auntie B. & Uncle Olin
At home of Ross, Thermopolis:
Golden Wedding Anniversary for Blanche & Olin....

My Auntie Blanche was one of the dearest, sweetest persons I have ever known. I adored her, and admired her patience and serenity. She was like a second mother to me. No matter what circumstances life dealt her...she accepted and coped with it.

How I loved to go to her house, which we did quite often. She made the best do-nuts I have ever eaten. Years later, when we both lived in Thermopolis, she still served the do-nuts and tea.

The Smiths built a house of rough lumber slabs and covered the outside with black tar paper held on with strips of lathe. The wood they hauled from the Rawhide Buttes. The inside walls were papered with newspaper (back issues of The Lusk Herald). Everything was always so neat and clean. She had a big dining table covered with oil cloth with such a pretty design. I thought this was such a great idea and asked Mother why didn't she use oil cloth, but Mother used a white tablecloth that had to be washed and ironed.

There was a big home made wooden cupboard in the kitchen. Usually it would contain several big rounds of yellow cheese that Auntie Blanche would make in big pans. When the cheese was cured it was wrapped in cheese cloth that was dipped in paraffin.

She had an organ in her front room. Auntie Blanche was musical too but didn't play like Mother did.

There was always a sort of magic for me to visit there. We always had so much fun being together.

Gerald was only 6 years older, so he was just like a big brother to me. We would have all sorts of adventures when we got together. I just adored him and would go along with him on any escapade he thought up. In fact, I thought he was so great I once asked my Mother if she thought that Gerald would wait long enough for me to grow up so we could get married. I was just crushed when she said that first cousins couldn't marry, it was against the law. Of course I really didn't understand what getting married was, but I thought it was a great idea...then Gerald would always be around and we could have so much fun together.

He tried teaching me to box and play the violin. I didn't do well at either but sure did try.

One time Mother was helping Auntie Blanche can peaches. The baskets of peaches were in their cellar. Gerald came up with the idea of putting peaches in our hats and then put the hat on our head. This way he was sure we could walk by the house without our mothers knowing we were stealing peaches. We walked to the barn and sat and ate the peaches thinking how clever we were. The women spotted us through the window and could see what we were up to but just let us enjoy the few peaches we managed to smuggle out of the cellar.

Gerald and I would walk from his house to visit my Uncle Tony (Dad's brother). He lived about a half mile away. There was a well worn path to the Smith's house because Uncle Tony would carry water from their well. Uncle Tony loved kids and we were always welcome. He would fix us tea and we felt very grown up drinking tea with him. He had a small place and wasn't home too much because he worked for other people as a hired hand. He lived on his land the required amount to qualify for a homestead. He was a bachelor all his life. He was most generous to all of us at Xmas time and usually gave us 3 girls dolls.

I liked Ross too, but most of my time was spent with Gerald because he was closer to my age. Ross would hold Marjorie on his lap and play with her. She was such a cute little "pudge". She got her nickname of Chick because Ross would pick her up and say "How is my little chick today?"

ESTHERS WEDDING-

I was flower girl when Esther married Ray Cameron. The wedding was held in the Smith's front room. One corner of the room had a wedding bower made of pine branches brought from Rawhide Buttes. Her bouquet was yellow wild sweet peas. Mother and Auntie B. picked them ahead of time and dipped them in paraffin to keep for the wedding.

Esther was a very pretty girl...beautiful eyes with thick lashes...peaches and cream complexion...and lovely curly brown hair. Ray was tall and handsome, dark complected, with curly hair and blue eyes.

All the guests were sent to the kitchen while the wedding rehearsal was held in the front room. Hattie Mc Curdy was Esther's maid of honor. After the rehearsal Ray looked into Esther's eyes, held her close and said "We are almost married now honey". Esther took Hattie and me into the bedroom and she fixed my hair with a big bow tied on the side. Then Hattie hugged Esther and said she was so happy for her.

The actual ceremony was a blur to me...but everybody performed perfectly...and I thought that weddings were just wonderful!

A NEW SISTER-

My sister Betty was born on a very cold night in January. Once again Dad was mid wife. When Marjorie and I came shivering down the stairs that morning, Dad was beaming and took us into the bedroom to see our new baby sister. Betty was always a frail child. I always wanted to protect her and take care of her. As she grew older it seemed it was always Betty and I, and then Marjorie was the odd one. Betty slept with me. When we played dress up Betty and I would go visit Marjorie, and she was the "play Lady" that lived alone. One time we had a tea party in the attic. Mother let us have some bread dough that we cut out into tiny biscuits with a thimble. When they were baked all three of us set our little table in the attic with our dishes and the biscuits. The attic was Marjorie's "house" that day. Betty and I went down stairs to dress up for our party. We took so long to get ready that Marjorie got tired of waiting for us, so she ate up all the biscuits before we arrived!

When we would go to town and spend our dime apiece for penny candy, Betty and I would have all of ours eaten the next day. Marjorie hoarded hers and we would try to find it. When we couldn't there was a lot of bargaining to get Marjorie to give us a piece of her candy. Marjorie was a "smart Chick"!

Mother nursed Betty full time although she had a very large ulcer like thing on one breast for weeks. I feel Betty wasn't getting the nutrition she should have had...poor milk...and this gave her a poor start in life. Women just didn't bottle feed babies in those days.

THE LOCO WEED-

About this time Dad's horses all died from eating the loco weed. I didn't seem to bother the cows or else they didn't eat it. The horses would become very sick and weak and half crazed. It was a slow horrible death for them. Some of them Dad had to shoot to take them out of their misery.

So how could he farm without horses to do the plowing, seeding etc.? Dad sold his car and bought a team of mules. They either would not eat or were not affected by the loco weed. Dad kept them until we left the farm. He did get one saddle horse, a white one, which we kids immediately named Beauty. We never got to ride her as this horse was too much for a kid to handle. He kept her in the corral at the barn and fed her there so she would not get the loco weed. The mules were good workers but very hard to handle. The only time I EVER heard my Dad swear was when he was driving that stubborn team of mules.

We went without a car for a time, I don't know how long. Of course we still had the buggy and the wagon to travel in.

Finally Dad was able to buy a new car. It was a brand new blue Essex. We could ride in style!

We were all so thrilled with that car but especially Dad. Many times after the chores were done, Dad would take me with him out to the garage to just sit in the car with him and enjoy it. The first time we all went visiting the neighbors in the car the back wheel fell through the side of a wooden auto gate that was pretty unstable. Dad had Mother drive and he got a plank pried under the wheel to get enough traction to get out. So the outing was completed. We girls were sure our new car would be ruined...but of course it wasn't.

RECREATION-

Sundays were the day people would visit each other. Too much work to do during the week didn't leave time for recreation. Sometimes we would drive to Node for church and Sunday School, but not on a regular basis. There were many events at the school house, including the dances and plays that sometimes the adults would put on. Sometimes one of the neighbors would have a party for everybody at their house.

We would go to Jay Em to see the silent movies. The picture house was an upstairs hall. People sat on wooden benches. The projector operator had his machine set on a table in the back of the room. I saw my first Mary Pickford movie there. We would also go to Jay Em for election day and everybody would bring food for a community picnic by the creek.

Couples would get together for a card game of Solo or Pitch-at each others houses.

Then sometimes a couple of families would go to Glendo to fish in the Platte river usually camping there too. When the wild grapes were ripe they would bring home as many as they could find to make jelly: also picked choke cherries.

Once we were fishing and camping at the river with the Calhouns. We kids were learning how to fish too. Each adult had a child with them to watch so they wouldn't get lost or fall in the river. Of course Mrs. Calhoun had Marjorie (her favorite) with her. Marjorie was pretty small to be able to throw a line in the water but she tried. She ended up hooking Mrs. C. in the rear end. The hook went clear through her knickers and stuck in the flesh. I was close by and heard her call to Mother "Inez come quick and help me". I ran over to find her bending over with the fish hook stuck tight. I found Mother and she got it out. Mrs. Calhoun just laughed about the "big fish" that Marjorie caught.

We kids used to play at fishing in the creek at Jay Em too. But because we had no adults with us we "fished" with an open safety pin with a piece of bread for bait and a short willow branch for a pole. Of course we couldn't catch any but spent many hours trying.

Jay Em is a small village about 9 miles south of Sunshine valley. The name came from the cattle brand of J-M. It consisted of a General Store, Post Office, the town hall and an ice house. Two brothers by the name of Harris owned the store and ice house. It was a lovely little village with many trees and homes built along Kawhide Creek.

The neighbors had birthday parties too. Mother gave a party for me once and had a beautiful big cake for me. The party was at night and I became very sleepy. I crawled into Mother and Dad's bed and went sound asleep. When I woke up everybody was eating my cake! I was so disappointed that I couldn't stay awake for my party.

On my 13th birthday my friend Ilene Porter (a neice of Rolla) gave a real girls party for me. She lived in Lusk. I was so excited. It was the only real girls only birthday party I had while growing up. Mother and Dad gave me a black photo album. I still have it much worse for the wear by now. A note pasted inside says "From Daddy and Mother... for Dorothy's 13th Birthday".

UNCLE ARCHIE-

Mother's brother Archie that homesteaded close to her place married Edna Rightmire. He ended up living with Edna's parents not too far from our place, east of us. They had two daughters named Alice and Rosemary that were just a little younger than I. Uncle Archie had attended Grand Island Business College after his other schooling. He also took oil painting lessons. He did lovely paintings, good paintings, so she must have been a good teacher. I have a sea scape he gave to Mother, who gave it to me, framed and hanging in our TV room. I can remember some horses heads he'd done that were very good.

Occasionally we would visit them. I can't ever remember of a return visit however as Mother did not get along with Aunt Edna. We would be scrubbed and dressed to perfection when we went to visit. I suppose Aunt Edna was critical of Mother's way of life too. The visits were never very comfortable for us as Marjorie and I had been cautioned to be on best behaviour and not do anything to embarrass Mother. We would sit in the front room and have tea and cookies. Aunt Edna and her mother were grand ladies from the "old school" and everything was done in a very stylish manner. The two ladies did not do any outdoor work like my Mother except tend their garden and raise lots of flowers. They did not have to do out door chores when there were two grown men to do that. Their well was close to the house so they could carry buckets of water to keep the flowers growing. I once asked Mother why couldn't we have flowers and things growing around the outside of the house to make it beautiful. Her reply was she didn't have time to carry water just to keep flowers growing. Of course she was so right. However she did plant one row of cosmos in our garden and some tansy by the house. The tansy was hardy so didn't take much water. We did have the yellow rose bushes planted close to the garden along with a windbreak of cotton woods and some currant bushes... but these were watered from the garden ditch.

After Uncle Archie left Rightmires he and Edna and the two girls moved to Lusk to live. He worked for the railroad. Their two daughters married ranchers in that area and still live there. Archie and Edna both died at Lusk.

CHRISTMAS-

We always had a wonderful Xmas at our house. Our tree would come from the Rawhide Buttes. The decorations were things that Mother saved from year to year and some that we made too. We had real candles held in a spring clip holder that would be carefully placed on a tree branch so the flame would not catch the tree on fire. We would hang up our stockings, sometimes on a chair back, confident that Santa would find them. He always did and put in maybe a box of crayons or small toy, an orange in the toe and finish filling with nuts and candy. The orange was the biggest treat as we didn't have fruit very often...fruit was just for sick people. Our toys would be under the tree. Usually we got dolls and dishes. We took good care of our dolls from year to year. One Xmas, counting the old dolls and the new ones, we had a total of 23. One year all I wanted was a "nigger" doll. Some how Santa found a colored baby doll for me so I was very happy.

We would look forward to Xmas morning for weeks. We had to wait until then for the gifts. One year we 3 girls got up at 4 a.m. We just couldn't wait any longer. Dad was cheerful about it and built up the fire in the heater for us. Then he went back to bed. We played with our things contentedly until they got up later.

I don't know how my folks kept the Xmas presents hidden from us in our small house with out much storage. One year we girls thought we had found a hiding place on the shelf of the bedroom closet. The box had "Doll" written on it. We waited for several days until Mother was

out of the house and proceeded to get the box down for a peek. In the box we found Mother's corset! So much for being sneaky.

One Xmas we spent at Auntie Blanche's house. Uncle Olin was Santa. We were all gathered in the front room when we heard sleigh bells ring at the kitchen door... a big "ho, ho, and Merry Xmas everyone." In walked Santa wearing a heavy fur overcoat, a Santa mask made out of a flour sack with eye and mouth holes, and the beard was the bottom of the sack cut into fringes. He had a gunny sack over his shoulder that contained our presents. What fun!! We older ones, Ross, Gerald and I knew that Santa was really Uncle Olin but that didn't spoil our enjoyment one bit.

THE GYPSIES-

Occasionally a caravan of gypsies would travel the road by our house on the way to Node. Mother saw the wagons approaching. They were covered square box top wagons like a medicine man would use. The gypsies were dressed in their colorful clothing. She was alone with we girls. The gypsies would steal and beg and offer to tell your fortune. Only two women walked to the house from the road. Mother put the shot gun by the door and ordered we girls to the attic. She shut the trap door and told us to stay there and not make a sound no matter what happened. It was rumored they would even steal little children! We did as we were told, very, very scared. We stood on a box so we could see out the attic window. We could hear Mother talking to the two women. No, she did not want her fortune told...but she would give them a smoked ham, which they took and then left.

MY BABY BROTHER-

I was almost 11 years and now knew that Mother was expecting her fourth child. We girls had to be told as Mother was going to Lusk and have her baby at the home of Florence and Roy Porter and have the doctor too. So we girls would stay at home with Dad. I was so excited and prayed to God every day..."please God send me a baby brother". Gerald was the closest to a brother I'd ever had and I thought it would be so wonderful to have a real brother.

As to the process of having a child or anything else related to it, I knew nothing. Those things were never discussed at our house, and never were with me. I didn't even know what sex was and wasn't even interested in such things. You would think being raised around animals we would have at least seen a calf being born...but we girls were shielded from all those things.

Dad took Mother to Lusk a few days before the birth and a couple of weeks later she came home with her baby boy. How I loved him and still do. When he was old enough to haul around the yard in our little toy wagon that is what we would do. A baby was never more welcome than he was. I loved him so much I even forgave him for smashing the china teapot to my set of play dishes...a prized possession of mine. When Floyd was old enough to get a toy set of tools he tried out the hammer on the teapot!

Florence Porter was the mother of Ilene Porter where I had my 13th birthday party. Roy Porter was the brother of Rolla. The story was that Roy weighed just 1½ lbs. when he was born. He was kept alive in a shoe box lined with cotton and fed with an eye dropper. No incubators for babies in those days!

MORE MEMORIES-

Our swing- We had two big cottonwood trees in our yard. Eventually they died. But they were sturdy enough to hold a rope swing that Dad made for us. We spent many happy hours at our swing.

Canning and cooking-

Dad had a small flat topped stove outside the meat curing shed. When he was smoking hams the fire would be going. We girls would pretend to can dandelions in old jars we found. Then we would bake flat mud pies on top of the stove. Mother let us put kernels of corn in the mud pies if we promised to feed them to the chickens later.

Playing in the barn-

If the cows and horses were not in the barn we could play out there too. We loved the hay mow. Some times we would jump out the hay mow door and land on the hard ground below...that is until Mother found out. Then that stunt was forbidden. We could have broken a leg jumping on to that hard ground! Also the cats were at the barn and we liked to play with them. We would put doll clothes on a cat and that was our baby.

One day Marjorie had been to the barn alone. She came back and told Mother we girls couldn't play at the barn anymore. Mother asked "Why not?" Marjorie said "Because there is a rattle snake out there". Mother took the 22 and found the snake coiled up in the barn door. She shot it. We girls always went barefoot in the summer. How easy it would have been for little Marjorie to have been bitten.

Mother was a good shot with the 22. If the chicken hawks started flying around the chicken yard she would get out the gun and down them on the wing.

Easter-

A wild rabbit made his home under the granary. He had a hollow place dug out under the side of the building. I was sure he was the "Easter Bunny". I fixed a little straw nest there for him to leave the Easter eggs. Sure enough when I went out on Easter morning there were several colored hard boiled eggs in that nest!

Hunting rabbits with Dad-

In the late fall Dad would go rabbit hunting and take me along. We would walk up into the hills east of our place where there were outcroppings of sand rock. This was a good place for the rabbits. He killed them for us to eat so maybe two on a hunting day would be enough. Then we had fried rabbit which tasted just as good as fried chicken. The homesteaders would shoot antelope for food too. They always said they were eating mutton if it was out of season for antelope...but every body knew what it really was.

The Watkins Man-

Periodically the Watkins salesman would drive up in his covered van with a suitcase full of remedies and spices. Mother would buy vanilla and spices from him and that horrible smelling salve called Musterole that would be rubbed on your chest and neck to doctor a cold.

The Blue Valley Creamery Contest-

Every customer got a notice of the contest for their children to send in a list of how many words they could make out of the name "Blue Valley Creamery Company". This was great fun for me. With Mother and Dad's approval I got out the dictionary and went to work. I suspect they gave me a little help too. Anyway I entered the contest and was rewarded with a check for \$15.00. I don't think I won first prize but I did win something! This was my very own money and I could spend it for anything I wanted. I bought me a pale blue linen dress with most of the money. I suppose the rest went for candy treats for all the family that I got at Mrs. Burrow's Sweet Shop.

I was so proud of that dress and wore it every chance I got. My pleasure was short lived as soon after I tore the sleeve opening a gate for Dad. The wire loop was so tight I had to use both hands to get it over the end of the post. The gate part shot out and the barbed wire tore a big three cornered tear in the sleeve of my beautiful new dress. I had to mend it...I was the one that tore it. But a mend job by a 12 year old was not very well done. I was just heart broken. I still wore the