

Chapter 7  
1936 - 1940  
A Farm of His Very Own

Ira was now ready to buy the farm, as he sold the land ranch near Oakley and had money for a down payment. On November 8, 1936, with final arrangements settled, Ira mailed the contract and money and was now officially buying the farm. Now he was really more enthused about fixing up and spent the winter improving by tearing down the old cellar and completing the new hen house. They had an enjoyable Christmas and on New Year's Eve, sat up and read while welcoming in the New Year.

January of 1937 started out cold and snowy. The younger kids contacted the chicken pox, so they took the four older children into town to stay with the Grandmas' during the quarantine



*An aerial photograph of the Frost Farm showing the home (left) and outbuildings.*

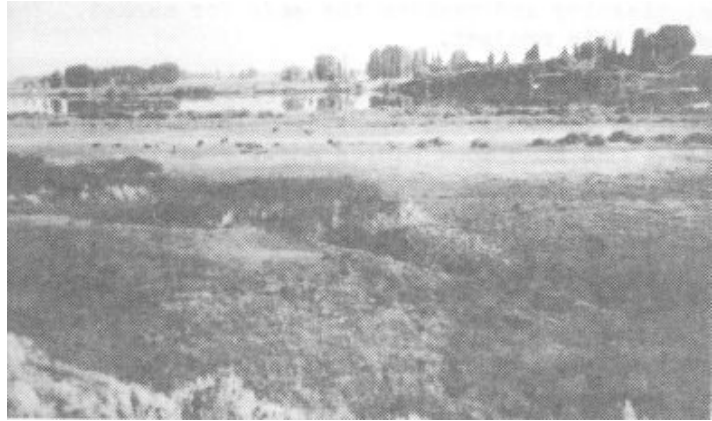
period so that they would not have to miss school. Ira spent those cold days doing some remodeling in the kitchen. In the bad storms that followed, in order to get to town, they made a road through the open field right past the house. The school bus and all other traffic, for several days, went right by the kitchen windows. The big flock of chickens and the new chicken coop were now being used for additional income. They were selling eggs each week. This involved extra work, as the chickens had to be fed, the coop cleaned out and the daily chore of gathering, cleaning and packing the eggs for market. The entire family helped in this project.

During these years of hard work and a large family to care for, Ira still took time to enjoy the finer things of life. He loved poetry and reading. He also took Eunice and Thelma to music lessons and was happy when they performed. His diary mentions taking the children to Heyburn where they viewed an art exhibit. He tried hard to attend all the activities in which his children performed. It was in April of 1937 that, with much satisfaction, Ira ordained Myron to be a deacon. He bore his testimony in Fast Meeting that day, as he mentioned on many occasions of doing, for he was blessed and wanted to express it.

It was with great excitement that plans were made to plant a lawn to beautify the yard. And so, in April of that year, Ira, the kids and Vyla spent considerable time planting and fixing flower beds. Ira took time to assist the Elder's Quorum in their projects of raising potatoes and he gave a lot of time this spring on preparations and planting of the crop. During the remainder of the spring and summer, of 1937, the usual crops were planted and the beets were thinned with the entire family involved.

One of the family dogs became sick and bit Myron, so Ira had to kill it. This may have been the same dog that frightened Myron when he went to the pasture to get the cows. He came back without the cows and just wouldn't go down there again, so Ira had to go himself. Getting the cows from the pasture was a daily chore all during the summer months every year. Every morning after milking, the herd was trailed down the road and across the highway to the pasture next to the river. They were left there all day to feed. In the evening, they were rounded up, trailed up the hill across the highway and taken to the corrals to be milked. At times the children spent too much time in the pasture when they should have been bringing the cows home. Sometimes they stopped at the

"little cave" and then on to the "big cave", or maybe getting all muddy in the slough, picking cat-tails and wading in the creek. There was also frogs to catch and squirrels to shoot at. It was great fun, and especially if several went together. Sometimes the herd was down to the farthest end of the pasture and it was quite a job to get them.



*The pasture along the Snake River*

Other times they were at the gate ready to go. Some of the dogs they owned were good cattle dogs and helped.

Summer vacation trips in those days were unheard of, but Ira managed to take the family on some very special outings. That summer he took the family to Twin Falls and over the Hansen swinging bridge, had a picnic and made a real fun time. Ira notes that he drove one hundred and five miles that day. The rest of the summer was busy with Ira threshing three hundred eighteen bushels of wheat and seventy bushels of oats at six and seven cents a bushel. He had to pay four cents a bushel for trucking.

In September, Mr. Gooch and Ira went together to buy a potato digger for two hundred sixteen dollars. After the potato harvest, they went to Logan on a temple excursion with some people in the ward. Ira took his car; they had Mother Frost stay with the children. That night there was a terrible noise and screeching and scratching inside the wall between the old porch and kitchen. Ira returned to some frightened kids and he had to tear the boards off from the wall to let out the cat which had accidentally fallen down inside the wall.

The kids liked the grandmas to stay with them and they liked to go to "grandma's house". Ira liked to visit and often the whole family went to town. It was very convenient having Ira's and Vyla's parents and some brothers and sisters living within a few blocks of each other. The kids had many cousins to play with when in town.

The year 1938 was busy with Ira working all winter on a new garage. He took the older kids to M.I.A. and he played a part in the ward drama and noted that it was fun. Later in the winter, Ira decided to remove the old fixtures in the house and the pipes running to a buried tank, which, at one time provided carbide lighting for the home. It had not worked since they moved there and it needed to be removed. It turned out to be a big job, as the tank was buried about eight feet in the ground. They filled the hole with junk and covered it over. The lighting for the home was kerosene lamps and a gas lantern. There was a constant danger of fires starting, as the lamps were easily tipped over. A fire started on the ceiling one night when the lamp was turned up too high, but it was extinguished. Another incident occurred when the family made plans for a movie, which was a rare treat for them. But Ira was impressed they should not go. Later in the evening, the chimney clogged up and the wall in back of the stove turned red hot. Ira put the fire out and corrected the problem. If he had not been faithful enough to heed the promptings of the spirit, the house would probably have burned.

In those early days, all the water was heated on the stove, and the ironing was done with flat irons also heated on the stove. Sometimes Vyla took her ironing to her mother's and did it with the electric iron. There was no means of refrigeration until they later got an ice box used with blocks of ice. Prior to that, they sometimes fixed a bowl of jello in the wintertime by setting it out in a snowbank to set up. The beef and hogs that were butchered in the winter were hung out on the side of the house, brought in and a few pieces cut off when needed. In the summer an old orange crate, padded with gunny sacks, was placed up in a shady tree and periodically soaked with cold water to keep it cool. The family kept their milk, butter, and other perishables in it so that they would keep fresh longer.

When the 1938 springtime planting came along, the Frosts couldn't afford a car license, so they had time to work in the yard. They drove to church and occasionally they would sneak down the canal bank to go to Bowen's store at Unity for the necessities such as coal, flour, and kerosene. Myron helped his daddy drag big pieces of cement from the torn down cellar to be used as flower bed borders around the house. Some box elder trees were dug up from the neighbors, and planted around the yard. In June there was a bad hail storm which almost ruined the crops. They did come out of it, however, and the family was able to finish out the year with only the usual problems.



*Ira grew a goatee  
for the fair*

The years of 1939 and 1940 followed the same hard working pattern as the previous years. At this time, Ira found what it was like to have four teenagers plus five other youngsters. Even Kathryn, the baby, was growing up and was about four years old. But these were years when Ira showed patience and love to the family. He had good judgment in his discipline of the children. The kids all knew the threat of having the "razor strap" used on them could change their actions in a hurry. But with that many children so near the same ages, there was bound to be some brotherly and sisterly disagreements or genuine bickering. However, it is easier to remember the good times.

Along with the work of farming, which always included thinning and hoeing the beets, there were activities such as the Mutual, Primary and school functions to attend. Among the special memories of good times were when the Gooch kids would go down to Frosts' or the Frost' would go to their place and, on a nice summer evening, play games like "Run, Sheep, Run" or "No Bears Out Tonight" and many others. There was no television in those days, nor was it needed. Many times the evening ended with blankets and pillows drug out onto the haystacks, where beds would be made. The kids really got a lot of pleasure from sleeping out underneath the stars where they could tell stories until the wee hours of the morning.

One such night, there was a guy who had been wanting to date Thelma. He and his friend noticed the girls making beds on the haystack. After the girls had settled down, he and his buddy parked on the canal bank and snuck down through the orchard to scare them. The girls, sensing someone was there, started screaming as they ran to the house. Ira reached for his shotgun, ran out in his underwear and fired a couple of shots into the air. Later, Ira, in his sense of humor, told how "Jack Gott. . . out of there". by the way, the fellow's name was Jack Gott.

Another of the daily routines was going to get the mail. The mail box was located on the highway, a quarter of a mile away. The Gooch and Frost kids would walk or ride their bikes, and if the mail had not yet arrived, they would wait for it by throwing rocks, counting cars, or goofing off in

some other way. It was then the main highway between Salt Lake and Boise and it was fun to see how many different states' license plates they could count till the mail arrived.

Bikes were an important means of transportation for the kids. The first one was purchased about 1936 when Ira traded one of his cherished saddles for it. The second one was bought in 1939. It was so exciting to go places faster. Many bike trips were made up to Gooch's, down after the mail, over to the Unity Store, or just riding up and down the road. Of course, nothing could ever replace the pleasure of riding the horses and they played an important part in the everyday life of each child. If not working in the fields, the horses were usually being ridden by some of the kids.