

## Chapter 4 New Neighbors



*Theo, Lurlene, and Donna Gooch  
about the time they moved to Unity.*

The Vern Peterson Family moved out, much to our families delight, even if it meant losing my playmate, Elaine. Then in 1932, the Ephraim and Ethel Gooch family moved in from Blackfoot. Wow!!! they had just about as many kids as we had and about the same ages. It didn't take long until we were good friends and neighbors. Daddy and Mr. Gooch soon were helping each other out . Byron was the oldest, then Lurleen and Theo were pals to Eunice and Thelma, Joyce (a boy) and Myron were buddies. Lorna and I had a playmate in Donna. Lilace was Marian and Irma's. Later they had two more boys, but they were to young for buddies for Gerald.

It didn't take the two families very long to become like one family and lifelong friends. They seemed to be a little better off than our family as Mrs Gooch came from a wealthy family. Grandma Taylor bought the kids nice things that we could not afford.

On July 1, 1933 our family and some of the Gooch family were enjoying a pleasant Sunday afternoon at our place. Myron and the Gooch boys were riding calves in the corral. Mother and Mrs. Gooch were watching their rodeo. We young girls were playing house. Daddy was irrigating, but was at that specific time was in the house writing in his diary.

I went to the garden to get flowers for our playhouse. Passing the ditch, I saw what I thought to be one of our dolls in the water. I decided to get the flowers and get the doll on the way back to the house. To my horror, the doll at the bottom of the ditch was an unconscious 1½ year old pixy faced Irma. I ran yelling for Mother. I am not sure,

but I think it was Mrs. Gooch that reached the ditch first (as mother was pregnant with Gerald) taking Irma's tiny lifeless body from the water.

Daddy came out of the house to investigate the commotion. Thank the Lord for Daddy's army training, he kicked over the big metal slop barrel that stood in the corner of our yard by the swing, rolling Irma's little body over it to force the water from her lungs. With the family knelt around, he offered a most sincere prayer. As soon as he said "Amen" Irma started to cry. That was the most powerful faith-promoting encounter in our young lives.

I remember exactly how the ditch was laid out with it going under the roadway to the garden and the field making a "T" with head gates in two different directions. As I remember right, my flowers (cosmos) went floating down the ditch. Irma was wearing a little light colored dress and looked to be much smaller under the water. It was a month and half before my 7<sup>th</sup> birthday and I still remember it very well. (Note: Reviving a drowning victim is no longer done in the manner described, as present day method is referred to as "CPR".)

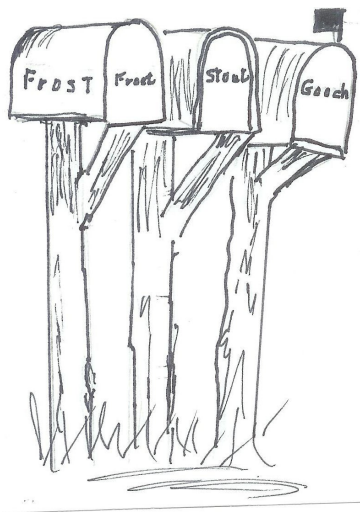
I don't think the family ever realized what had really taken place that day. From Daddy's diary that day, "Sunday July 1<sup>st</sup> Took kiddies and went to Sunday School. Still irrigating. Irma nearly drowned." Happenings were so chaotic that day that all that mattered was that she was saved. I doubt that anyone else even knew that I was the one that found her. How could I ever forget the details of the horrible event or its happy ending?

The Gooches and us had a lot of wonderful years working and playing together. Even though they lived up and across the road from us, they were in a different school district, but were in the Unity Ward. Their children went to school in Springdale which was a small country school about two and a half miles away. They had to walk to school, we rode the bus to town. When they reached the 9<sup>th</sup> grade they came to the Burley.

Each Wednesday afternoon we walked the three miles to Primary, gathering up other kids, including the Gooches, along the way. We always stopped at Sister Pace's

home for a cold drink of water and an occasional treat. In Primary, we would have children dances once or twice a year. That was fun, but most of us were too shy to dance. In those days Primary was held during the week rather than on Sunday as it is now. It was during this time that on my eight birthday Sunday August 19, 1934, Daddy and Brother F.H. Manning baptized me into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the canal above our home. I was the first one of all us kids that Daddy baptized. He also confirmed me in to the church Sunday August 26, 1934 .

In the summer after the beets were finished, you would find us swimming in the first lift canal, which we named the “ol swimming hole”. Sometimes we just laid in the mud on the canal bank between both of our homes.



Together we would walk the mile and half down the railroad tracks to Bowen's store for penny candy. When we went down to the highway one fourth mile to wait for the mail, we played leap frog over the guard posts,. It was fun to learn all the different makes of cars that passed by and their license plates. We were always searching the roadside for free pop-sickle sticks or bags to send away for awesome prizes. My very favorite prize was a pretty red buckle bracelet.

Our favorite sport was softball. The pasture in front of our house and across the driveway made a prefect ball-field. With both families, we had two perfect teams. Most of the time we used a homemade ball made from winding string into a ball and sewing it tight. When one wore out we just made another one. Mrs. Larson taught us how to do that and many other things. The Larsens lived a mile west of us. She formed a little club for any of the neighbor kids that wanted to



join. Each week she taught us something different. The balls were not the best but they served us.

In the summer we would take turns sleeping at each others places, mostly on the haystacks or spread out on the lawn and watched the falling stars and the changing night sky, telling ghost stories or other tall tales.

Our families spent many 4<sup>th</sup> of July trips to the South Hills on picnics. We had fun times making ice-cream and going to church together. Us girls went to the Saturday night dances together at the Y-Dell Ballroom or roller skating. We did almost everything together but eat at each others houses. For some strange reason we always had to be at home to eat.

Both Gooch boys joined the Navy as did Myron, all us girls one by one left the nest to get married. The old folks have passed on as well as three of our family with only four of the Gooch family left in 2010.