

# Front Porch

by Connie Jensen Criddle Gardner March 2012

In 1944 our family moved from the farm in Cambridge, Idaho to a home centrally located in the town of Downey, Idaho. I had started first grade that year and World War II was in progress. Gas was rationed and my father realized that the walk from where the school bus stopped at the Cambridge LDS Church was too far for me to walk home each day, especially in the winter. So our family moved to Downey and my dad drove to our dry land wheat farm instead. We moved to a beautiful red brick house with a wraparound porch on the southwest side of the house. The porch secured us to the house, but opened up our lives to the outside world.

It was what modern-day planners would call a Great Room. And it was a Great Room, because it was so versatile and comfortable. One of its main luxuries was that it was cool and shady. Many times a soft summer breeze made our afternoons and evenings very pleasant. However, it was not just a place to relax as we did a lot of work on the porch. We snapped beans, shelled peas, husked corn and etc. A broom was all that was needed to tidy up after our chores. Also, we did hand sewing and crafts, read books, told stories, played house with our dolls and paper dolls and had a sleep out in our sleeping bags on summer evenings. Clyde's cat enjoyed the porch too and two times had her litter of kittens in his sleeping bag, Yikes! We ate snacks on the porch and sometimes had parties and visited, but mainly it was just a good place to be.

One of the delightful happenings as we worked and played on the porch was to visit with friends and neighbors as they went by. Some moved pretty fast and some amble and some stopped to visit for a while. All were friendly and brightened our day. Some of them were:

Laura Godfry- She moved fast. She a nurse and worked for Dr's Burkett and Bjorkman and would scurry home for lunch and back to work.

LaRue Godfry- Laura's husband. He ambled or shuffled along. He was my sixth grade teacher.

The Bright Boys- moved pretty fast. I always wondered what they were about. They were bachelors.

Don and Helen Bosworth- moved along at a good pace and often stopped to chat.



Bertha Christiansen- had a steady stride. She was from Germany and her accent always fascinated me. Her husband was usually in his truck, but once in a while we'd see him walk by.

Marilyn Treasure Barnes- was a beautiful girl and I had such sorrow for her when her husband was killed in a combine accident.

Mrs. Coffin- went by often and Fred and Abby Penrose would often stop and visit.

Sometimes our friends the Brims would stop by and that was always special.

Aunt Orissa and Uncle Roy or their kids would stop by to visit.

Aunt Eva frequently came by on her way home from town to pick up her mail and groceries. Momma would volunteer to drive her home so she did not have to walk and carry her bags of groceries. She always wore a black hat to keep off the sun.

Of course the best treat for me was when my dear friend, Marilyn Christiansen, came over and we could be together. Such sweet memories!

One more thing. Before the Brims moved their house from their farm to the road south of our house we had a majestic view of Oxford Peak. Downey was centrally located in Marsh Valley and was surrounded by rolling mountains with Oxford Peak being the crowning peak at the south end of the valley. Looking out from our front window or porch offered a pictorial view of Oxford Peak. It was beautiful through all seasons of the year. Sadly when the Brim's house was moved to Downey it blocked our view of Oxford Peak.

A giant blue spruce which was taller than our two story home was at the northwest corner of the porch. A tornado blew the tree over onto the house sometime in the 1950's. Luckily it didn't harm anyone or cause any serious damage to the house. However, I never thought the house looked complete again after the tree was hauled away.

In later years, 1960s, the house was remodeled and the porch became part of the expanded living room. It greatly increased the size and comfort of the inside living space. However, I felt a deep loss for our wraparound porch. One of my sweet memories of childhood will always be our gathering together as family and friends on the porch. It offered security and safety to me and opened up the world to my view.