

Missed Connections

August 22, 2018 by Harry Zirkelbach
Stars and Sun date 352ar

On 23 August 2018 we are driven back in time to the youth of the guest who was celebrating her first year in the ninth decade of life. It was Barbara Zirkelbach's birthday. As a gift she was given a day in the confines of Upper Bear Creek, today a short trip from her Denver home.

Back in the day of her youth, when her family of five, mother, two boys and two girls, stayed on land one by farmers in this area, with permission, a world away from the Denver home. In those summers they slept in tents, played and explored all day long..

history of the obtaining the home on five acres near the final cut-off of Upper Bear Creek Road is told elsewhere. But it was in the possession of the Mrs. Foley's sister and family, the understanding, the Foleys could use it with the owners approval.

And so it happened. One week day of summer 1950's Harry, Barbara and three children were enjoying a day there. After breakfast all five began a trek around the surrounding properties. There was an auto at the summer home of Dr. and Mrs Mills of Arvada. They were also frequent visitors here.

The Mills welcomed their visitors. In a short time the children were excused to play outside.

It was only a short time later when two return exclaiming "Look what we found in the bushes". Each had an unopened bottle of whiskey..

Set aside ,and away they went. Almost immediately three return, each with a unopened bottle of some quality booze. Added to the earlier pile. Not that much later the three return with more "spirits"..

Our hosts expressed surprise of how this might have come to be: since this was not their alcohol we were urged to take it all home with us. Even when we protested, suggesting some sharing.

We took eight bottles back to the chin, leaving four jugs for the other relatives who might sit all day in the cabbins work up a thirst. After all the cabin had been given the name "Merri-Mac" after the owners father, who had died of consumption in 1944.

We later learn that Dr Mills was an alcoholic. This in spite of his wife's cajollingg, nagging, begging, prayers,, that he change.

Ant thus it was that both had claimed non-ownership of the alcohol that sunny day when our children first thought it possible that alcohol might grow in the mountains in bushes. They didn't care. There were always

unanswerable question for Children who would not accept the explanation "because".

Of course the whiskey myth shattered when we visited later that summer and our tykes, their friends scoured the bushes and never found even a can of water, though on one occasion when they approached a bush a skunk quietly walked away from his resting spot, and politely refrained from formally saying "stay away".

On this 91st birthday many stories were shared with the owner of near-by property, as Merrimac is no longer owned by the cousins.

That and many tales of youth from the four elders who drank water together in the comfort of a nearly completed home. Today few cabins are found on any stretch of Upper Bear Creek,, just second home mansions, a contrast to the comfortable homes eighty years earlier.