

Denver – My Other Home Town

By Marilyn Reeves

Many of you know that I grew up in Salida, which I call my home town. But before and after Salida, there has been Denver – my other home town.

My very earliest memories are of living in Denver. We had baby bunnies and little kittens that my sister Janet and I brought into the house to dress up in doll clothes. And in 1945, at the age of three, I was allowed to take one of those kittens with me when we moved to Salida.

But we would drive back to Denver a couple of times each year so that Dad could visit the wholesale dealers and pick out merchandise for the store. While he and Mom were busy shopping, Janet and I would walk up and down 16th Street. Big, tall buildings with Daniels & Fischer's tower at one end, and Colfax and Broadway at the other. Young boys calling out, "Extra, extra, read all about it!" hawking *The Denver Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News*. Old men pushing carts filled with fragrant tamales, and store-front manikins in impossible poses displaying fancy hats and dresses. Windows filled with arrays of sparkling jewelry, sleek porcelain figurines and fine china. There were animated toys, miniature trains, and beautiful dolls decked out in lacy finery. Downtown Denver seemed like a truly magical place for a pair of small town girls!

By noon, the folks had usually completed their task of ordering merchandise, so we would go to a nice restaurant like the Golden Lantern or the Blue Parrot for a mid-day meal. I don't recall the menu except that one of those places featured hot fudge sundaes with green mint ice cream for dessert, a special treat I looked forward to year after year.

But the best thing of all were the afternoons spent at Elitch Gardens! Riding the Ferris wheel and the merry-go-round and those little planes that you could guide with your hand as you glided high above the treetops. When I was a little girl, going to Elitch's was the next best thing to Christmas!

My, how time changes us. While I've spent virtually all my adult life living and working in the Denver metro area, I've never been to the new Elitch's, and I rarely ever go downtown ... and only then if someone else is driving. But I now reside in an active, dynamic senior citizens' community on the east side of Denver called Windsor Gardens.

I have many fond memories of growing up in Salida. I went to school there. My parents are buried there. And I shall always think of Salida as my home town. But I was born in Denver and chances are, my days will also end here. In Denver, Colorado. My other home town.