

YESTER YEAR

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with Barbie Alderler

Tales from Colorado Front Range Mountain Communities

Storytelling is delightfully imprecise especially when based upon an old-timer's recollections over the backyard fence. Every attempt at accuracy has been made. Please contact Barbie Alderfer with corrections for the next printing.

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A LOOK AT THE ORIGINS OF CENTAUR FARMS

It could be said that, instead of leaving his widow with twelve children to raise, George Washington Berrien left her a work force. George and Lucinda Berrien contributed sons to the Buffalo Park Valley labor force that also included the three Roy brothers, Herman Blakeslee and the Vezina boys. Besides doing family chores, the young men worked for Phalias Reoppell, an early settler in the valley who received his first homestead patent in 1872. Reoppell operated one of Evergreen's first sawmills. The Berrien daughters also worked, doing housekeeping at home and for other families.

Both Charles and John Berrien gained title to homesteads in the summer of 1897. By 1910 the family's holding had grown to 400 acres at the top of the Buffalo Park valley. A trade with Joseph Stransky of 80 acres consolidated the Berrien brothers' parcels.



Raymond Berrien's sawmill

In 1915 George and Daniel Berrien sold 160 acres along Buffalo Park Creek and reinvested in the meadowlands near Marshdale that John Hobbs and the Colorado Tie and Lumber Company owned. This location includes the present-day Jefferson County bus barns and ball fields. Around the turn of the century, the Tie and Lumber Company purchased the 1871 homestead of Hiram Hill along with the 1872 homesteads of Ted and George Romer, land later bought by George and Dan Berrien. Luther Berrien passed away in 1907 and Charles in 1914 while their sisters, Sara, Charlotte, Emma and Della, were starting their own families.

At this time George and Daniel expanded the ranch upstream along North Turkey Creek. Richard Holder sold the Berriens nearly a section that included an old hotel. Raymond, the youngest of the Berrien boys, united the 1871 E. Smith

homestead with Roger Aiston's 1871 homestead. Ray and Vera's middle child, Josephine, married Jack Fleming in 1936. Their ranch later was developed as Valley Hi Estates.

Back downstream along Thrkey Creek next to the Hobbs place, James Berrien purchased part of the Earley Ranch. In 1916, Jim married Bertha C. Archer who was a few years his senior. After losing their firstborn, their second child, William Archer, was born in 1918. Tragedy struck in 1938 when Bill was driving his parents near Hobbs, New Mexico and their pickup was broadsided, taking the lives of Jim and Bertha.

Bertha, raised in Denver, had four brothers and two sisters. The youngest was Jacqueline. County land records reflect the beginnings of the Centaur Ranch when title to 80 acres in Section 25 was transferred to Mrs. Jacqueline Archer Glen-Stewart in 1940. Over the next decade, Aunt Jackie would continue to secure Berrien acreage as it became available.

Son Bill married Leila Filson in 1949. Their children were Jim, Tom and Mary. When Bill passed on in the spring of 1966, he missed seeing 2400 acres of the ranch selling in 1968 for a sizable sum. Evergreen Meadows was divided into ten units. Streets with the names of racehorses sprouted up off of Colorado Highway 73 to the west in loops and lanes. New streets named for animals circled off to the east and up Berrian Mountain. The geographical mountain retains the spelling Berrian while the family changed their name back to Berrien to match their ancestors.

As Evergreen Meadows was developed, one of Evergreen's finest hay meadows evolved into beautiful yards and a section of cattails. For many years, the stewards of Centaur Farms have continued to operate a horse-boarding center along with running cattle, logging and building barns with their own timber.



Uncle Ray and his sawmill

CENTAUR FARMS: COMMENCEMENT OF A NEW ERA

If you drive Colorado Highway 73 between Marshdale and Conifer, you have probably seen them too. They are tastefully small for a realtor's listing considering the message they announce: FOR SALE. Centaur Farms, the last part of the Berrien lands, has gone on the market.

The Berrien families have been pulling up corrals, dismantling barns and saying goodbye to their home place in large hunks for the past decade. Their departure from Section 27 is near completion in this last part of the original ranch of the Berrien brothers. Upon the death of William Archer Berrien, the property was placed in a trust and has been managed by Colorado National Bank since 1947. Leila Berrien, Bill's widow, raised the three children, Jim (Evergreen High School Class of 1966), Tom (EHS '67) and Mary (EHS '71).

Early beginnings of the family were in France. Cornelis J. Berrien and his wife had five boys and two girls. John, the youngest boy, and his wife had three boys and three girls. Their second child, Cornelis (1698-1767), married Sarah Hallet, and they raised seven boys and two girls. Their fourth child was Nicholas (1726-1810).

Nicholas and his wife, Elizabeth, raised three sons. Their second son, Samuel (1737-1783), married Sarah. Their third of five children was James A. Berrien (1789-1848) who married another Sara. This couple started their journey west from New York. The last of their six children was born on the way in Illinois, christened George Washington Berrien (1838-1889).

George and Lucinda S. Munshower, his bride, homesteaded and started a family in Morris County, Kansas. When Daniel, their seventh child, was born, the growing family moved to Colorado and landed in Indian Hills in 1877. Soon George homesteaded and purchased land in Buffalo Park near the Stransky Ranch, set along the county border. When George W. died in January, he left Lucinda with twelve children to finish raising.

The oldest was Georgeanna who married Walter Clark. Their daughter was named Grace. Charles Edward (1867-1914), John Rubins (1867-1934) and George Wiley (1870-1944) remained bachelors throughout their lives. Luther Edgar (1873-1907) married Pearl Roy who lived on a neighboring ranch. Rosemead, their only child, married Melvin Rutledge. Sarah Lydia (1874-1959) married Columbus Roberts, and they had six boys and three girls.

Daniel (1877-1973) married Sue Keel. The couple had no children. Charlotte Anieli (1879-1929) wed James Walpole, and the couple had four boys. Emma Josephine (1880-1921) married William Nucholls, and together they raised Etta, Bill and Jim Dwight. Jane Elizabeth married John Antweiler who settled on Blue Creek. The last daughter of George and Lucinda was Della who married F. L. Smith. They were also childless. James A. Berrien (1885-1938) married Bertha C. Archer. They had one boy, William Archer, who married Leila Filson of Englewood.

The last child born to G.W. and Lucinda was Raymond who married Vera Jones, They had three children, Fern, Josephine and George. Josephine later married John Fleming who homesteaded at the north end of Berrien Ranch. After showing some of the grand scope of this family, they assembled one of the major ranches of the Front Range.



This Colorado State Chamber of Commerce photo was taken on August 11, 1946 shows Florian on the Archer-Stewart ranch south of Evergreen. He was the son of Antex who was the grandsire of a \$40,000 Arabian stallion owned by Mrs. Glenn-Stewart.