

Ashby's Advice; Think Young

By Linda Bell, Correspondent

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Red Ashby's hair is slowly turning a sandy white, but his lively green eyes sparkle when he talks about the wonderful life he's had for 74 years.

"Think young," he says. "I think I got that from my mom. She'll be 100 years old in June."

Red and his wife, Dolores (Dee), who died three years ago, build a home in upper Cherokee Park, in the St. Cloud district, in 1955. It is located at the junction of County Roads 80C and 59, near the Parker Ranch owned then by Dee's stepfather, Schell Parker.

In 1975, Ashby said, they opened the "Homestead Store" in the lower level of their home, following somewhat in the tradition of the Parker Ranch, which supplied gas and tobacco to area residents. Ashby said people were always stopping by needing help anyway – gas or the telephone, or a tow out of Devil's Creek Canyon on CR 80C – so why not open a store to make it official. A very valuable asset to the community, the store operated for 20 years.

"We raised three children in that house, Ashby said, "two daughters and a son." Ashby said his wife used to drive them to and from the Livermore School every day during the school year. She had a contract with the school district, and the family station wagon was the school bus, he explained. She'd pick up the other school children on the road along the way. Sometimes there were only six riders, but other years there were as many as 13 children, Ashby said.

For 30 years Ashby worked for the Larimer County Department of Roads and Bridges at the work yard located directly across the road from his house. He said they had grading and plowing responsibility for all of CR 80C from U.S. highway 287 to Eaton Reservoir and for CR 59 from his house to the Wyoming state line.

In the early days, Ashby said, it wasn't unusual to turn up some Indian artifacts – beads and arrowheads – with the road blade but they never uncovered any graves or skeletons.

A Fort Collins native, Ashby said his family moved up to Livermore to do new construction at the Frank Miller place, Trail's End Ranch, when he was 12. His first job was wrangling horses for Dick Brackenbury, Sr. Ashby said he worked mostly in and around the Livermore area, and he got to know Dee at the dances held at the Livermore Hall. At the time Dee worked for Ruby Swan and Red worked for Wes Swan, Ruby's brother-in-law.

In March 1951, Ashby was drafted into military service and went to Korea. Before he left, he and Dee were married.

Now Ashby lives closer to town where he shares a house with the widowed grandmother of five of his own grandchildren, since his daughter and son married her son and daughter. Ashby still owns his home in upper Cherokee Park and operates heavy equipment for private contract work like road grading and gravel supply.