

Woman born on farm returns to her roots after years in the city

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Linda Bunney was born on a farm and learned to love everything about it, so maybe it was no surprise after 37 years of government work, she had a yearning to return to her roots.

After she retired from a job with the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver, she was able to come, not home exactly, for the house was gone, but to the house northwest of Norcatour where she'd spent much time with her aunt and uncle.

The daughter of Leo and Louise (Corey) Bunney, both graduates of Decatur Community High School, she was born in Norton and lived on the farm with her parents northwest of Norcatour until she was 2, when her parents moved to Denver.

However, she said, her family often came back to visit her grandparents, Leonard and Emma Wood.

"As a child," she recalled, "I remember how excited I would get when we saw the Oberlin water tower on those trips back to the farm."

"When I started school, I got to come and stay on long weekends, any school breaks and summers. I especially loved spending time with my grandparents and my Aunt Jennie and Uncle Wilbur Long. My Aunt Jennie made me feel like a princess."

"When I had to go back to Denver, I would cry and cry. Grandpa always gave me a silver dollar at the end of the summer, and I thought it was to pay for me to go back. One time, I told him, 'Just keep your money; I want to stay.' I loved it here so much."

"I had chores, but even that was fun, with animals galore. I even captured a bat once and put it in my bird cage to tame, thinking it was a type of mouse. I also tamed feral cats by putting them in a cage and I named all of my Grandpa's Black Angus and the chickens, too."

"When it rained, Grandma would go for a walk with me, bare-footed. It was such fun feeling the mud between our toes."

"My grandparents moved to Denver in 1959 due to my grandmother's health. However, the summer before they moved, my mother wouldn't let me come back to the farm, afraid that I was going to get in the way of them getting ready for the auction, so I never got closure, I guess."

After that, she said, when she got to come back with her grandfather and dad on business, it was never the same.

"I missed some years with living in Arizona, Pennsylvania and Italy, but once I moved back to Denver, I would come here with my dad,



especially after my mother passed away. We came for his reunions, and I would also come when Denver got to be too much. I would sit at my grandparents' farm yard and have a picnic, then drive back.

"I know it was a long way, but it sure helped with stress — beats a psychiatrist for sure!"

She said that when she came for harvest she got to hang out with her cousin, Elden Long, and ride around in the combine with his son Greg.

"It was wonderful!" she recalled.

Her dream was always to move back and fix up her grandparents' house on the farm. However, before that materialized, the house was sold to Sheila and Ken Frahm, who moved it to a location near Colby and remodeled it for their home.

She said she was thrilled when Elden and Marilou Long gave her the opportunity to buy their home in the country, where she had spent so much time as a child with her Uncle Wilbur and Aunt Jennie.

When she made the move, she brought her horses, wolfhounds, pomeranian dog, cats, a rooster and peacock to their new home.

"We always had horses ever since I was young. My dad raised thoroughbreds for racing, and before he died, he mentioned he was worried about who would take care of Wickster, his last Thoroughbred, and his cat. I said that I would."

"Wickster got claimed in a claiming race, so it took me awhile to get

him back, but when I finally did, I said, 'This is for you, Daddy.'"

So now her farm is somewhat a menagerie with miniature horses, a miniature donkey, a miniature mule, dogs, cats and even a big bull snake named Slither.

"I also added some chickens, a rooster, and three llamas," she said, "however, I lost two of the llamas, Lucy and Tony Llama. After Lucy died, the third one, Ricky, cried for days."

Since moving to the farm in 2008, she said, she has also lost her little dog, Wolfgang; Basil, the peacock and Snurdly, the rooster.

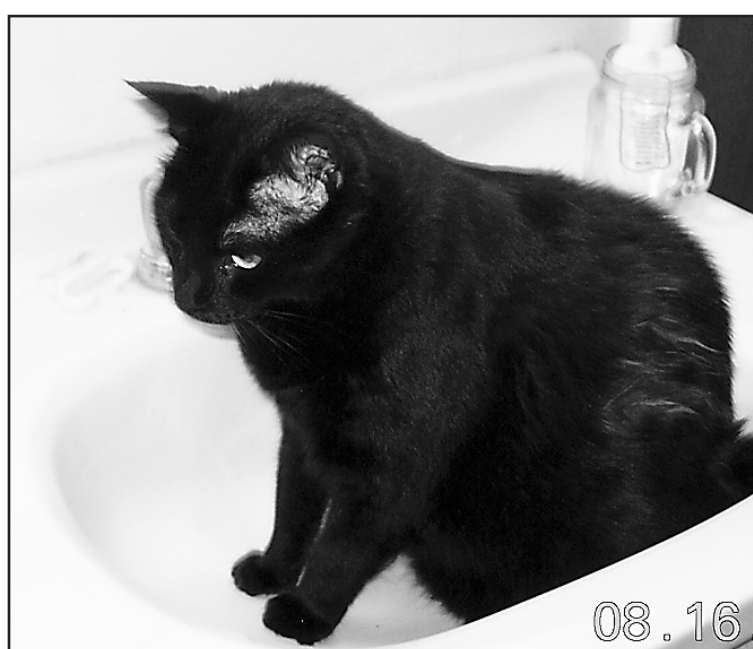
"I really miss Snurdly," she said, "because no matter what time of the day or night it was when I drove into the yard, he always crowed."

And now that her dream of returning to the farm has come true, she said, "I love getting up early in the morning — a new day — so clear and beautiful most of the time, and seeing my animals in the corral, also going out just as the sun is going down, again seeing my animals. This is a good life!"

She has had a sign made which will be placed on her driveway soon, which says, "De Java Lane," (happening again), which she said tells the reality of her longtime dream.



DOLCE BELLADONA, a miniature colt, (above) was born on Linda Bunney's farm and has been a favorite of both children and adults. Three-year-old Linda (left) posed during a visit to the Wilbur and Jennie Long farm near Norcatour, where she now lives with her animals.



THESE MINIATURE HORSES (above) are among animals on the Linda Bunney farm. They share a corral with Sugar, a white miniature donkey (shown in center). Harley the cat (top

enjoys relaxing in the bathroom sink in the home his owner, Linda Bunney, northwest of Norcatour.