

# Just a Word...

from Steve Dickerson, Communications Secretary

**I like to tell people** that I grew up in a house full of joy and gladness!

The house was in a lovely country setting on the banks of New Waukum Creek near Enumclaw, Washington—almost in the shadow of Mt. Rainier. The neighbors up and down Farmers’ Picnic Road (the name of our country road) were relatives and friends.

It was an ideal place for a boy to spend his childhood. Our house was on seven acres of mostly forested land, bordered by the creek, and on a quiet country road. The creek had a beaver dam just upstream from us, and at certain times of the year, salmon would leap the dam on their way to their spawning grounds.

My sister and I spent countless hours building rock dams in the creek, hunting crawdads, or pretending to be pioneers in the forest. Our father had made a swing for us, with ropes tied to an overhanging branch from a tree in our back yard. The swing was fun, especially when someone took the time to push us, but we had just as much fun climbing the trees!

We had electricity, running water (from a well my dad had dug), and a nice warm house heated with a wood stove. We had flowers growing around the house and a fine vegetable garden my mother tended. One thing we didn’t have was an indoor toilet, though that came a little later.



“Joy and Gladness” Dickerson —my parents

I remember my mother showing me the second hand on the electric clock hanging on the kitchen wall, and telling me that it made a trip around the dial once every minute. One time she left to “use the facilities” and told me that she’d “only be gone a minute.” I watched the clock and learned how long a minute could be.

It was a wonderful time, truly full of joy and gladness. Did I mention that my parents’ names were Joe and Gladys? At some point, one of my cousins decided that that’s what they should be called. But more than anything else, my joy and gladness came from the knowledge that I was loved, and from the security that gave me.

You may not have had the blessing of a childhood like that. Maybe your childhood is full of unpleasant memories, but you can be sure that you are loved by your Heavenly Father, and that He’s got a house full of joy and gladness just waiting for you!

