

## Jennie Coleman Freer (1876 - 1957)

Jennie Coleman was one of eight children born to Calvert Coleman and Sarah Westfall. Jennie was born in Canton Township, Michigan, on November 8, 1876.

Three weeks after her birth, Jennie's parents received notice that they had defaulted on their mortgage and the family farm soon would be auctioned to pay off the debt.

At the age of 18, Jennie married Edgar Freer on July 3, 1894. The ceremony occurred in Detroit. The marriage record mysteriously lists John Coleman as father of the bride. Edgar's father, Arthur, was an Irish immigrant who operated a farm in Macomb County, Michigan.

The 1890 Detroit City Directory listed Edgar Freer as a brakeman for a train. The 1900 directory continued to list Edgar Freer as a resident of Detroit.

According to family historian Clarice Coleman, "Jennie and Edgar had a lifelong interest in horses, both raising them and dealing in their sale. They eventually bought a horse farm in Rochester, Michigan, although they continued to live most of the time in Detroit, and later in Highland Park."

Jennie and Edgar adopted Jennie's niece, Ruth Coleman, daughter of Arthur Roy Coleman and his wife Florence Curtis Knapp. Ruth was born in 1913, two years after her brother Dodd. Apparently, when Florence and Roy separated about a year later, Roy asked Jennie to care for the child. What initially was a temporary placement eventually turned into a full blown adoption of Ruth by Jennie and Edgar.

According to an obituary story, Jennie's mother Sarah came to live with Jennie,

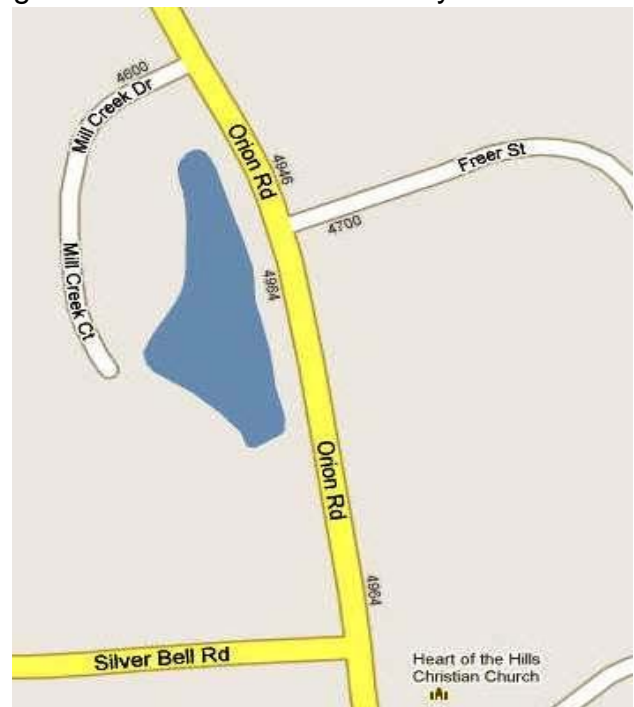
Edgar, and Ruth during the last six months of Sarah's life. Sarah died in 1922 at the Freer home in Highland Park.

A few years after Edgar's death in 1933, Jennie and Ruth moved permanently to the Rochester farm.

Some of Murray Coleman's children recall him mentioning his half-sister Ruth and his Aunt Jennie. These occasional references would occur in the 1960s as the Coleman station wagon was driving along Orion Road on the way home to Ferndale from Lake Orion. He would point to a white farm house and say that he had relatives who lived there.

Dodd Coleman II, known as Duffy, recalls going with his father to visit Ruth and Jennie at their residence in Rochester in the mid-1950s. Dodd Sr. was Ruth's older brother.

Jennie and Edgar are buried in unmarked graves at Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit.



Freer Street runs off Orion Rd. near Silver Bell Rd.