

ISOLENE MARGARET SHUMWAY BIRCH

Life History

(Given by Craig W. Turner, her Grandson on September 20, 1974)

Isolene Margaret Shumway Birch born August 11, 1900 at Malad, Idaho of goodly parents, daughter of Oliver Hooker and Lucetta Morrison Shumway. She was the youngest of the family having a sister, Sarah Lucetta and a brother, Oliver Lynn, both preceeding her in death. When she was around two years old, they moved to Cache Valley where she spent most of her younger life. Her father worked as a mill wright in the sugar factory. When she was barely 17, her mother passed away at the age of 42, of leakage of the heart. She then left home to make her own way. She came to Ashton to visit, staying with her cousins, Ada Bowman and Martha Webb. There she found work and stayed in Ashton for around a year and a half. During that time, my grandmother and her cousin, Della Neeley went to a dance at the old Fogg and Jacob's Dance Hall where she met my grandfather at the age of 18. Later she returned to Cache Valley where she worked in a pea cannery. Her father had remarried, marrying Mary Olsen who had two young children. She is 86 years old and living in Sacramento, California.

Grandmother and Grandfather corresponded and he made frequent visits to Cache Valley in his new Model T Ford which eventually led to marriage when she was 21 and he was 22. Grandfather said he remembered asking for her hand in marriage. Her father gave him a talking to and said if he ever mistreated his daughter, he would have him to contend with. They were married at Logan, Utah, December 29, 1921 and were sealed for time and eternity in the Logan Temple, November 10, 1926. After their marriage, they lived at St. Anthony where he worked on the farm for the rest of the winter and the following summer. In the fall, they moved to Pocatello, living there for a year, where Grandfather worked as a mechanic on the railroad. December 17, 1922 of that year, their first child, a boy, was born who they named Ernest Neal. Their happiness over his birth was short however, as he lived a little less than three weeks passing away from pneumonia.

In the fall of 1923, they moved back to St. Anthony in the fall to help with the harvest. They moved into a 4 room house behind Rowl Rice's present home. Here the other 3 children were born, Gerald in 1924, Colleen in 1927, and Dean in 1930. In 1937, they moved a mile west. This must have meant a lot to Grandmother as this house was more modern and she was able to enjoy the luxury of electricity. They lived there until the spring of 1944 when they moved onto his father's farm where they have lived ever since.

In April 1957, they purchased a cafe in Rexburg. Grandmother was an excellent cook and she helped to manage the cafe and made all the pies. Many people came into the cafe just to have a piece of her homemade pie.

Grandmother came from a strong religious lineage. Her lineage came from France, settling in Massachusetts and inter-marrying into the Prophet Joseph Smith's family line. Her Great Grandfather was the Captain of the first group to cross the Mississippi River on the trek to the West. He was a body guard for the Prophet Joseph Smith, a member of the Council of Fifty, and was with Brigham Young when they entered the Salt Lake Valley.

Grandmother never missed saying her prayers, both morning and night; even the week before her death she would still talk with her Heavenly Father. Grandmother was an early riser and a hard worker. She would have her canning or whatever else done with dinner always ready by noon. She was a beautiful woman and always took great pride in her appearance. Grandma was a great cook and one to try new recipes. Her drawers are full of tried and untried recipes. She loved to dance and they had many good times both round and square dancing and ballroom dancing. Her life wasn't an easy one. She was plagued with much illness during a good portion of her life, but she bore it well and wasn't one to complain.

(Additional comments were given from the heart of her Grandson Craig about his experiences and the experiences of her other grandchildren with their Grandmother.)