

15
Akers
Beatrice Simmons Leamaster written by granddaughter Carol Callor
A Tribute to Grandma

Grandma was born at Spring Canyon near Dragerton on a farm used to be known as the "Big Spring Ranch." Her dad raised hay and had animals on the farm. She was the first child born in her family and was named Beatrice Olive Simmons. Grandma never liked the name "Olive" so she just used the initial "O" instead. When she was younger the kids used to call her "Olive Oil" and it made her mad.

Later when the railroad came and took the water from the ranch. There wasn't enough water left to raise crops or for the livestock. So they moved to Helper, then to West Hiawatha. Her dad worked in the coal mines there. Since there was no available schooling in West Hiawatha at the time, Grandma took turns staying with her Grandma Avery and Grandma Hanson in Wellington. She went through the lower grades of school there. Finally Mrs. Phillips came to West Hiawatha to teach school. There was a one-room school house with children from the 1st grade through the 8th grade in it. And only one teacher! Grandma then moved there to attend school and be with her Mother and Father once again.

Soon, Grandma had a sister, Dora. Then two brothers followed her; Cliff and Tim. Grandma often told me how her and Aunt Dora would gang up on the boys (her brothers) then fight with them and they would really have a time! Grandma used to tend her sister and brothers and was supposed to keep them from fighting. Instead she would tease Aunt Dora by calling her "Fatsy." Aunt Dora would say that's OK--I did my work already and you didn't. Then the fight would start.

Later she worked in a boarding house for miners. She cooked, cleaned and waited on tables with Grandpa's sister, Hilda.

When the silent movies first came out Grandma played the piano for them. When Grandma and Grandpa were courting, one day they had a little quarrel. Grandma was mad and wouldn't even talk to Grandpa. So she boarded the train for Wellington. Meanwhile, Grandpa mounted his horse "Old Jumpsteady" and beat the train. When Grandma got there, there was Grandpa waiting for her!

On December 10, 1919 they were married in Wellington by Bishop Branch. Grandpa had a cast on his foot and was on crutches. They made their home in "Blackhawk" which is now Hiawatha.

When the Leamasters first opened up the coal mine in Huntington canyon Grandma cooked for the. They had a tent and a cook shack. Every night the sheep herders and cow herders would come down to the camp and sit around the campfire. Grandma always had raisin and apple pie ready for them. She liked doing things for people.

The first time Kaye Christensen remembers "Aunt Bea" was when she was just a little girl. They were at the mining camp, (Uncle Vern, Aunt Leora, Kay and Grandma) and were waiting for the trucks to come down. They were tired of waiting so Grandma stuck her fingers in her mouth and whistled at them. Kaye said it was a loud and shrill whistle. When the truck drivers got there they said they had heard her.

Daddy remembers one incident about Grandma and he said he would never forget about it. He was just a small child and they lived in Hiawatha. They were having plumbing troubles and the toilet flooded over. So Grandma went and got the ax and chopped a hole in the bathroom floor so the water would run down the basement.

Grandma and Grandpa had three children: Virginia, born April 5, 1922 (she died when just a small child): John Martin (Jack) born June 17, 1924 and Sara Lou, born November 11, 1927.

Grandma had a good, full life. She was very close to Grandpa. They had a good marriage; they gave each other love, devotion and companionship. When Grandma was sick, Grandpa would cook for her, do the dishes and take care of her. They spent 53 years together as man and wife--Grandpa and Grandma sharing everything.

One thing we all remember is Grandma's sense of humor. No matter how sick she was she could always joke around and make you laugh. She always had a smile on her face.

When she was first learning how to drive she backed the car out and ran in the ditch. She didn't want anyone to find out so Grandma got the broom and swept the car tracks away.

Anyone that ever knew Grandma couldn't help but love her. She wasn't just Mrs. Leamaster, but Grandma Bea or Aunt Bea to everybody. Everyone was her friend.

Grandma was a warm, loving, compassionate woman who cared about other people. Her thoughtful ways, her consideration and kindness to everyone will always be remembered.

If you went to her home to visit you always found it clean and neat. Grandma was so proud of her home. She always had some cake and ice cream or cookies or something for you. You felt comfortable in Grandma's home.

Grandma was a good cook. She made the best homemade pies. She made it look so easy rolling out the dough and shaping the edges of the pie crust. Grandma tried to teach me, but somehow mine didn't turn out as well as hers did. Grandma's were always perfect and tasted so good. She loved to cook and bake and try out new recipes on Grandpa. She would always make some

extra for us to try. There was always something good to eat at Grandma's house. I remember how proud I was when my friends went over with me. Grandma always had homemade goodies for after after school. We all sure enjoyed them.

Grandma also liked to sew, crochet, and embroider. She was handy with a needle and her beautiful handicraft work proves it. She's made countless pillowcases, aprons, hankies, tablecloths, hot pads, slippers, quilts, etc. She made sure that all of us grandkids had something for our hope chests.

For her friends and family, all her gifts for them were made by herself which showed how much she cared. Every little stitch showed that she put her heart into her work.

When we were younger I remember the rag dolls that Grandma made for us grandkids. I still have mine and I think it still gives me just as much pleasure now as it did then. My little girls love to play with it too. Grandma made her one too and kept it along with other toys for the little kids to play with when they visited. She loved children.

For Christmas Grandma crocheted slippers for everyone. When she was in the hospital I said, "Grandma, you made slippers for everybody but yourself and you're the one who needs them" That was typical of her, always thinking about others instead of herself. She was an unselfish person.

And, oh how Grandma could play the piano. She played by ear--never had any lessons. Any song you wanted to hear Grandma could play. She loved music. It was a big part of her life.

Grandma liked to have her hair done. "Make me fancy with lots of curls", she would say. She had beautiful gray hair but she always wanted to touch it up with a little brown to make her look younger. But, she didn't need to look younger because she always stayed young at heart.

Grandma liked things that were sentimental. Many times she's showed me dishes and things she has of Great-Grandma Simmons. Tears came to her eyes and she would hold them close to her heart and tell me how much she loved and missed her Mother. I'm sure she is with her Mother now at peace in Heaven.

She was a good wife, a good Mother and a good Grandma--The Best!
We love you Grandma!