

History of IOLA ROBISON O'DONNELL

--As Read at Funeral Services, 1 Oct 2001

--Author: Children of Iola Robison O'Donnell

--Transcription: Chad G. Nichols (original text, including errors)

Iola R. O'Donnell of Ely died Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2001. She was 83.

Iola was born in Gandy, Utah, on April 1, 1918, to Isaac P. Robison and Louisa Sorenson Robinson, the third child, joining a brother Keith, and a sister June.

She attended school in American Fork, Utah, before attending BYU for two years.

Rulon and Iola first met in Gandy, Utah as he and John Terry rode into the Ike Robison Ranch on a Thanksgiving day with a bunch of wild horses they had rounded up on Mt. Moriah. This was not a prince on a white horse, but a filthy dirty mustanger on a mangry mustang. But amazingly, once this mustanger cleaned up, and was introduced to Iola, it was love at first sight. She was a young teacher, and had several years of school and growing up to do. She also had a yearning to attend BYU and wanted to become a teacher. She never became a teacher but that yearning to learn stayed with her all her life, and even in her 82nd year, she attended the community college taking a course in history. She marveled at the fact that her life expanded from the horse and buggy days of going to American Fork with her father to sell produce, to flying on jets to visit many other countries, and to landing a man on the moon.

She married Rulon F. O'Donnell on June 9, 1937. At that time they moved to the old shearing pens on the 3 - C Ranch. On Valentine's Day February 1938, her sweetheart rode his horse into Ely to buy her a valentine. He had to ride his horse, because of the deep snow, and was unable to get the car to the highway. But Iola really appreciated that valentine.

They eventually moved back into Ely, and on March 6, 1940, their first son, Jerry was born. Four years later, on May 20, 1944, their second son, David Rulon was born.

Iola enjoyed being a mother, and a homemaker, and didn't go to work, until both boys were well into school. During these years, the family traveled to many different parts of the West and even into Canada, as Iola's love of traveling kept them on the move. Both boys recall the car was a two door card with no soft back seat, but an old board, but that didn't matter, they all enjoyed it.

Iola eventually went to work at White Pine Motor Company, where she was a bookkeeper and earned many awards from the GM Company. She stayed there until the business closed. She spent a short time unemployed, and about the time Rulon retired, she had located another bookkeeping job at E-Lee Ford. This was a new learning experience as the computer age had arrived. Not one to be scared off by new things, she went into it with full force, and learned computers along with the owners. She also earned many awards at Ford Motor Company. As retirement age loomed, she never wanted to quit, working and learning was a part of her nature, but she did retire from this job.

She then began volunteer work full time, which she had done off and on before. The White Pine Hospital Guild, Pink Ladies, was one of her biggest joys. It was very hard for her to miss a day at the hospital gift bar. She was a member of the Ely Riding Club, and the Steptoe Steppers and Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. She was instrumental in organizing the Family History Center for the Ely Nevada Stake and spent over 20 years in that capacity. She accomplished much in her own genealogy lines, and enjoyed doing the temple work. She always encouraged others in their search for ancestors.

She was an active member of the LDS church, being baptized as a member at the age of 16, in the Manti temple. She was an active member of the Ely Second Ward from the time the ward was formed, serving in many positions.

She enjoyed traveling to visit her sons and their families, no matter where they lived. Family was very important to her, and she traveled to many different friends and relatives to share in their happy and sad times. She was very supportive of those she loved. She also enjoyed visiting other countries, traveling to England, Norway, Sweden, Hawaii, Mexico, Canada, and almost every state in the U.S., and finally her last trip with a dear friend to Israel and the Holy Land which had been a life long dream.

She spent close to five years caring for that mustanger sweetheart of hers as he aged and developed complications that left him homebound. That care again showed her love and dedication to people important to her.

She was preceded in death by Rulon on November 29, 1999, her parents, her brother and sister.

She is survived by 2 sons, her two daughter-in-laws, RaeNell and Ronda, her five grandchildren, Michael, Lisa, Wendy, Patricia, and John, 17 great-grandchildren, and on great-great granddaughter.

We will leave you with a mental picture of the reunion of grandpa and grandma in heaven, mom on Shorty and grandpa on Camp with Bimbo trying to catch up and mom trying to figure out who the dark haired man next to her is. She is finally with her mustanger again.