

Sarah LaRaida Richins Olsen, 92



Sarah LaRaida Richins Olsen, 92 passed away at the Boundary County Nursing Home in Bonners Ferry, Idaho on Dec. 30, 2003.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004 at 10 a.m. in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints with internment in the Porthill Cemetery, Porthill, Idaho.

Sarah LaRaida Richins Olsen was born in Grouse Creek, Utah on March 22, 1911.

She was the second daughter born to Wilford Francis Richins and Lillian Paskett. When she was 14 years old, her mother died three hours after childbirth on Christmas day in 1925.

Her siblings were 16, 10, eight, four and the three-hour old infant. Her grandmother took the newborn infant to raise, but that still left Sarah as the oldest girl.

As the oldest daughter, she had to take on the responsibility of the home as well as her schooling.

Sarah was very angry with the Lord for taking away her mother. She decided to rebel against the church.

Then one night her mother, Lillian, came to her. Sarah said she could see her mother as plain as day.

She was dressed in a beautiful rust-colored dress trimmed with fur. She was playing the organ just like she did for all of the church meet-

ings.

Lillian told Sarah she was needed where she was and that Sarah was to take care of all of her brothers and sisters the best she could.

Sarah felt somewhat better after that, but it was a lot of responsibility for a 14-year-old.

They had a washing machine made of wooden slats held together with metal staves.

Sometimes Sarah would forget to keep the barrel filled with water to keep the wood slats from shrinking when it wasn't in use. The wooden barrel fell apart, so Sarah had to wash clothes by hand on a scrub board.

They ironed their clothes with "sad" irons which had to be heated up on top of the stove. They kept trading off so that as one iron cooled off too much, there was a hot one to take its place.

In those days, everything had to be ironed, so Sarah spent lots of time doing laundry.

She remembered the Relief Society taking home big baskets of socks to be darned.

One day a week, Sarah only went to school for half a day so she could mix bread before going to school. Then she would come home at recess and punch it down, then return to school.

After school, she would form the dough into loaves and bake the bread.

Mom said it must not have been very good because after a few months her dad started taking the flour to Aunt Hattie and she would bring back the baked bread to the family.

Later, her father married Hattie Lovina Paskett and they were blessed with four more children.

After Sarah finished elementary school at Grouse Creek, there was no more schooling.

When she was 16 years old,

her dad decided it was time to move to a more populated, modern area and raise his children.

He bought a farm three miles south of Declo, Idaho. There, they had a nice, big house with electricity, a phone and indoor plumbing.

Sarah rode the bus to school, three and a half miles away, and started attending Declo High School as a sophomore.

She graduated in 1930. The "school bus" was a horse-drawn covered hay wagon.

Mom married Glen Dale Olsen on Nov. 15, 1930.

They remained in Declo for a few years to work on the farm that belonged to Dale's parents.

They later moved to Incom, Idaho to raise sheep, which turned out to be a disaster. The only good thing to come from it was the birth of their first son, LaMar.

In the spring of 1936, Dale and Sarah moved to Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

When they came into view of the Kootenai Valley, where the golf course now stands, all they could see was water. Mom cried and said that she wanted to go back.

They bought a farm 25 miles north of Bonners Ferry where they lived until 1988.

In those 49 years, they increased their land from 40 acres to 280 acres and were blessed with two more children. Nathalie was born in 1938 and Elda Rae was born in 1947.

The fact that Dale and Sarah were very much in love with each other their entire lives was always very apparent.

Dale used a list of endearments as greetings or names for mom, either in his letters or in person.

These included "Hello Mommy Doll," "Ducky Love," "Sweetie Pie," "Honey Bun,"

and "Angel Lamb."

They discovered two families that were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

These two were the Coble and the Alfred May families. They started holding services along with these two families and the Kiilsgaard family, who had moved with the Olsens to Bonners, at the Deer Park Community Hall.

Later as other families moved into the valley, services were split and held in two places, one in Bonners Ferry and the other at Porthill.

Mom had always been a faithful member of the church, serving in many different callings.

These included the quilt director and homemaking leader.

She also shared her talents of baking, sewing and gardening.

Mom enjoyed a variety of crafts and also working in her flower and vegetable gardens.

She worked as an elections officer at Porthill. Sarah also has a grizzly bear named in her honor.

Sarah hadn't seen her mother in 78 years or her beloved companion Dale in 21 years.

She was 92 years old at the time of her death on Dec. 30, 2003 at 10 p.m. in the Boundary County Elderly Care Facility in Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

This occasion should be thought of as a time of reunion, a time to rejoice and a time for remembering all of our loved ones on both sides of the veil.

Her survivors include one sister, Elsie Williams of California, and three brothers: Gayle and Bonnie Richins of Burley, Idaho; Deverl and Arlene Richins of California; and Dean and Percy Richins of Albene, Idaho.

Sarah is also survived by 11 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.

Bonnors Ferry Herald Jan 8, 2004 Pg 10A