

WHO'S WHO

The Florence Family

Three generations of Florences have proved up on homesteads on Upper Willow Creek. First there were the brothers Sterling P (called Price) and Louis Albert (called Al) who ran cattle from their homesteads to the Columbia River before there were any fences at all. Al's son Norman and Mrs. Florence, who was Beulah Gammell from Iowa, were married in Heppner in the home of Mrs. Jim Gentry (now Mattie Rood) in 1915, and they too became homesteaders on land adjoining his parent's place. They are living on this beautiful place today where Norman was born close to 80 years ago. Norman Florence's mother was Ella Kimsey Florence, and she and Al bought a claim from a Keithley to join the Price Florence place.

The Florence family was important in Oregon History before Price and Al came to Willow Creek. Their father, Norman's grandfather, Albert Burn Florence was the first senator from Lane County in the first state legislature. His wife was Katherine Skinner for whose family Skinner Butte near Eugene is named. The town of Florence on the coast in Lane County is named for this pioneer family.

THE FAMILY TODAY

Norman and Beulah celebrated their golden anniversary in 1965 in their attractive, modern home surrounded by its lovely yard, and a tremendous vegetable garden. Mrs. Florence has decorated their home with her needlework, colorful pictures formed in many special stitches and needlepoint tapestry chair seats and pictures. A very special feature is a hand-carved hanging clock that be-



Lewis Albert Florence

longed to Norman's grandparents. Beulah says she cares for the flowers, but Norman is the vegetable gardener, and this year he insisted in planting a wonderful, big garden.

Among the many family treasures is an account ledger dating back into the 1890's kept by Norman's father which contains the names of many families, quite a few still represented in the county, who purchased farm products from Al Florence. It also reveals that he paid helpers \$1. per day for labor.

The Florence's son Eugene Louis died in Aug. 1967. His son Gary, and their great-grandsons live in Eugene. Their daughter, Mary Eleanor (Mrs. Dean Gilman) an officer of the Heppner Branch of the First Nat. Bank is well known here.



Norman Florence

Mrs. Orville J. Rasmus (Norah Cecil)

Norah Rasmus lives almost downtown in Heppner now in a little pink house with a beautiful little yard on Center St. The house is not so little inside and is so tastefully furnished.

Norah is the granddaughter of William Y. Cecil who came so early to settle on the creek where the community named after him stands now. Her parents were Wilford Edwin Cecil and Elsie Ellen Zachary. Their first child Norah was born at Rhea Siding in 1890, her brother Ralph Edwin was born in 1892 and died in 1961 and their younger brother Glenn William born in 1895 died in 1939. Norah attended school at Cecil, Arlington and at Heppner. Her husband Orville Jacob Rasmus was the son of John and Maryetta Rasmus, early residents of Heppner. He served as water superintendent for the City of Heppner.

NORAH'S SHOP

Norah was a longtime employee of the big Thomson Store with its large stock and many departments where who learned much about merchandising. Later she opened her own business, a ladies

ready-to-wear store that she called Norah's Shop in the old brick Fair Bldg. that was torn down before Cal's Richfield was built. She started with a \$500 stock and when she sold out to Elma and Everett Harshman in 1956 the stock was appraised at about \$30,000, she says.

Norah Rasmus is a Rebekah, a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, and a member of the Episcopal Church. She was hurt badly in an auto accident a few years back and hospitalized in Pendleton. She is of good humor, loves to visit, and is now able to get around with reassurance from a walker.



Mrs. Harry Archer (Letha Devin)

There are still be other board walks in Heppner; however, a very nice one leads to the front of Letha Archer's home on Water St. Letha has lived right there since 1917.

She is one of the six girl and 1 boy family of M.J. Devin and his wife Sarah Hurt Devin, both from Missouri, who came part way west by train and the rest of the way by wagon. Letha was carried west on a pillow when she was very young—about 88 years ago. The Devins had sheep and later went into cattle on their Sand Hollow homestead.

Letha still has her father's favorite rocking chair in her home. She has two sisters living in Hermiston, Mrs. Aitha Kirk (Merlyn Robinson's mother) and Mrs. Tena Scott.

Letha went to Sand Hollow School and then came in to Heppner High. Her first husband, Max Smith, a native Oregonian, died in 1938. She married Harry Archer, a painter and carpenter in 1941, and he died less than one year later. She has gone through all the offices of the Sans Souci Rebekah Lodge.

Letha worked downtown for over 12 years in the variety store that belonged to Jimmy Healy and was sold to Blakes. Her daughter Margaret (Mrs. Jimmy Leach) died in 1954; her son Austin Smith lives in Portland.

Among the neighbors she remembers from her girlhood in Sand Hollow were the McCartys, Turners, Edwards, Galloways, Morgans, and Barratts. She says most of her early friends are gone now and that she is sometimes quite lonely. The Don Robinsons are on the Devin homestead now.

Remember in the Centennial Year:

Harris Drive-In

has old-fashioned

treats ice cream as well as the best in restaurant food



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Syrel and Coleen Galliher
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