

MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER
BY PHYLLIS FREI NORTON

I remember being very small and Mother holding and rocking me before my nap. She seemed so soft, warm and safe.

She was the one to get us all to the happy family gatherings; the town clean up picnic, Uncle Max's around easter, to Uncle Orval's house, and to the Hafen Reunion.

She was such a wonderful cook, and loved to eat. I was a finicky eater but there was always a variety of food to choose from at the table and Dad always expected to eat that way the rest of his life.

I was impressed at how hard she always worked and what a clean house she kept. As soon as we were old enough she taught us to do house hold chores. In summer with a wood stove she canned everything; vegetables from the garden, fruit from the orchards and even meat. Dad would take us to the field to get honey from the bee's and Mother would sell the honey and also peaches, even the culls.

Every year Dad would slaughter a pig and this was an all day affair. They would string it up in the lane next to the old garage and it was exciting for us kids as we got the pigs bladder for a balloon and in the evening some melt to roast on the open fire. Mother would save all the fat. Then in the little irrigation ditch that runs along the north side of the garage, she would make a fire and cook all the fat in a big black tub to make lye soap for her laundry. She had a wringer washing machine, and every Monday she would separate all the clothes into piles in the back yard. She would wash and wring through two rinse tubs and hang all the clothes on the line. Then on tuesdays she would iron all day.

She did a lot of sewing, but mostly plain things. It was said her taste in clothes was not too great. I remember Dad picked out a lovely black on black dress that she looked especially nice in.

I remember how she loved to use cream in her cooking and we got a separator for the milk and the job of separating fell to me. She always did the fall and spring cleaning faithfully every year.

Mother loved to play the piano and sing, and she and Dad frequently sand duets in church. Mother loved to socialize in the church and with their Rook Club. She also was the post mistress and this gave her a chance to visit with the town's people. She also gave us a chance to earn a little money working in the post office.

I never remember Mother and Dad having an argument or raised voices. The only time voices were raised was when the men folk were discussing business.

Mother had a love of reading and as far back as I can remember I was read to and encouraged to read.

Mother had a pet name for everybody. In the morning she would sing "Time to get up sunshine". When I was out playing, I would hear her call "Philly" and I knew it was time to come home.

I never remember her being cross or unhappy. She sang a lot as she worked. And she loved her Rose Garden, some thing I think she got from Grandpa Hafen.

Many things are dim in my mind now. But I grew up with a feeling of security, love and warmth. I was 18 years old when Mother passed away but I am forever thankful for the time I had with her and lessons she taught me.