

MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER
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BY VICTOR FREI

Mother was born Aug 3rd 1893 in Santa Clara Utah to John G Hafen and Lenora Knight. She died November 15, 1953. She was 60 years old.

She married Vivian Jacob Frei son of Lena and Jacob Frei on June 10, 1914. Vivian died on Nov 3, 1991 at the age of 98. They were the parents of six children, Landon, Howard, Shelby, Victor, Dorothy, and Phyllis.

Mother grew up in Santa Clara in the John G. Hafen home directly across the street from the present Relief Society building that has recently been restored. She was 20 years of age when she married dad. Her mother passed away the year before they were married. Mother tells of her mother, Lenora Knight Hafen going down to the chicken coop to gather eggs. They found her dead a few hours later.

During the first year of her marriage she and Dad lived with Grandpa Hafen, where Mother took care of the family. Uncle Max and Uncle Orval (twins) were about ten years old. Mother talked of the challenge but there was a great bond that formed between them. Orval and Max stayed very close to mother the rest of their lives, coming to our home many, many times.

My memories of mother are many and very special to me. Maybe because I was the youngest son and she had more experience raising boys, but we were very close. I loved her very much. She was a kind and gentle woman, always concerned about the neighbors. Annie Gubler, Laura Gubler and Hyrum's mother, was bedfast and I can remember mothers concern for her each day.

Mother was a very ambitious person. She was on the go all the time. I helped some with the chore, such as making soap and bottling fruit. I went with her to pick ground cherries to make jam. She was a very conservative person. Nothing was wasted. Even some of the fruit we picked up off the ground to dry or bottle.

At approximately the age of 31 mother applied for and became the postmaster in Santa Clara. I guess it was one of the few available paying jobs at that time for a woman in the town. Mother maintained the post office in a small room on the northwest side of our home. There was a small walk in area with approximately 50 mail boxes with combination locks on them. A small arrow would point to the numbers. Anytime small children or handicapped persons, such as Roxie Graff, came to get the mail they would not know the combination so one of us would run out and get the mail for them. Mother met many people because of the post office who became special friends because of the daily contact. O.B. Fry, who ran the Indian Reservation became a lifelong friend. I remember how concerned mother would get when she was told there would be a federal agent coming to inspect the post office books and give her a rating. Mother was a very intelligent person and always passed her postal rating very high. I think she could remember every letter that

came through the mail. Often when someone would ask for the mail she would say "yes there is a letter." Mother was ill at the time retirement came and could not handle the office any more. Before she died she and Dad had to decide what step in the retirement plan to take. They took the step where by if mother got well again she would receive so much a month. If she passed away Dad would receive 50% of the retirement until he remarried. Dad went on to receive mothers retirement check for over 30 years as he lived a long life and never remarried.

Some of my fondest memories of mother were when I would come home from school and she would have sweet rolls or hot bread on the cabinet. She was an excellent cook. I can still taste her chess pies.

Mother was also an excellent speller. I think she could spell every word in the dictionary. It was so easy for me to just ask her how to spell a word when I was doing my school work. When I was in grade school we always had the spelling list in the kitchen window so we could study while I took my turn at doing the dishes. I can never remember mother getting mad at me. I am sure she did, but she was always calm and thoughtful in what she said or did. I can not remember anything about her that was negative. I also felt loved and wanted.

On her death bed she said to me, "Don't seek after material things in life. They don't bring true happiness." She always said things in a kind and caring way. I can't remember mother and dad having ever quarrelled or shouting at each other.

Mother played the piano and liked to sing. She played a lot in church activities. She and Olive Moss shared much of the piano playing.

When World War II broke out, I had to leave home to take part in the war. I was 19 years old and was gone three years in the U S Marine Corps. Mother wrote weekly and sent cookies or candy often. I felt her love and concern for me. When I came home she encouraged me to write a brief history of my life in the Marine Corps. I am glad for that now, otherwise it probably would not have gotten done.

I have had so many of the people who grew up with mother tell me what a special person she was--a great strength in the community, such an honest, kind and gentle person. I love her so very much and give thanks to her for the wonderful mother she was. She died of a heart attack after about a three months illness.