



Annie Irene Axelsen

By Velma Allred

On June 11, 1901 my mother Annie Irene was born in the small town of Cleveland Ut in Emery County, to her parents Adolph and Mary "Mame" Larsen Axelsen. She lived a long life and died of cancer and old age at age 88. She raised her seven children, almost by herself after she and my dad Adelbert Lee Childs split up in 1938. She then married Clifton Charles Brown and had my baby sister Darlene. They divorced and she then married Wesley Thomas.

Her children were Mary Leora born on Nov. 11, 1920; Shirley Irene and Sheldon Lee (twins) were born on Sept. 19, 1923; Kenneth Cecil who was born on Dec. 7 1928. Myself Velma born on March 25 1932; and Anne was born on December 5, 1936. I vaguely remember her birth. The rest of us were sent to spend the night at Uncle Bill and Ina Childs over night. We all lived at Spring Canyon coal mining camp. We got to go home the next day and meet our new and beautiful baby sister Anne. She and I have been buddies ever since.

Also I remember Darlene's birth on April 19 1944. Leora, Ann, and I were sent outside to wait a miserable, scary, and long time. Finally we were able to go see our sweet new baby sister Darlene. The next year when I was down with a bout of nasty Rheumatic Fever, Darlene learned to walk on my bed, while mom went out to do chores. I feel so fortunate to still have all of my sisters especially since both my brothers have died.

My mom was an ingenious, hard working, and no nonsense type of person. (I think I was always intimidated by her.) She had little of any worldly goods, or money, yet she always found ways to keep us clothed and sheltered. She had little formal schooling and went to school part time, the equivalent of about fourth grade.

At home no matter the job, farming, livestock, or gardening it was done one way or another.

Mom was an excellent cook, baker, canner, and always had bread and plain foods to feed us. Not much meat, but always a kettle of soup, spaghetti, beans or stew. Our after school snacks were bread and jam. She always made cottage cheese for us too. A special treat was that we got a piece of bread dipped in thick Jersey cream, with sugar, and topped with Pottowatamie Plum Jam. She said it was what her Danish people loved, dairy and fruits together. We would plant and can a huge garden, bottling peas, tomatoes, beans, and asparagus, in two quart jars. Then she'd buy two bushels of peaches, one of pears, and one of Italian Prunes and then she'd can them fresh. Next she would boil pits and peeling to make jelly.

Wheat was raised and taken to the mill at Huntington to be made into flour and we always had light yeast bread. Sometime we got baking powder biscuits (always made with thick cream and the best I ever ate.) In the fall of the year a pig or two and maybe a calf would be butchered. Some was ground into sausages and put in crocks of lard, some salted for winter use. The rest had to be bottled as there were no freezers then. We all love bottled meat.

Mom learned to sew out of the necessity and I remember she kept the old treadle machine going a lot of the time in Fall to get us ready for school. In the winter, you could find her patching, and fixing something useful. Most of our clothes were hand-me-downs, and were made over to fit us. Very little material was ever purchased. We were always clean, covered, and sometimes patched. Also a lot of under garments were made of salt, sugar, and feed sacks, because all sacks were made of cotton and sold that way. We helped to take out the string which

was saved for darning, (or tying quilts) Mom washed, bleach, starched, and ironed, sacks, then she'd cut patterns to use from newspapers I don't ever recall wearing bloomers that said "Castle Valleys Best" on it, but some of the school girls did.) When Darlene was little mom made her dainty little white dresses, and pinafore aprons, trimmed with a touch of colored gingham. We were really uptown when they started printing colored feed sacks. Mom would take four large sacks sewn together to make quilt backing, or she dyed white ones. She'd take four large white ones and make our sheets. Whatever was left she made into quilt tops. Mom would recycle worn out socks and underwear then she'd crochet them into floor rugs.

Mom made all of our clothes including; hats, coats, mittens, dresses, night clothes, and unders. She didn't make stockings but she'd resole all of our shoes on the last and stand. One thing we hated was wearing our brothers cast off overalls and boys' shoes, especially if we had to walk to town that way or an unfrequent visitor dropped by!

Mom would save fats for months then she'd make a years supply of lye soap. It was used it to clean house, do dishes, clothes, and kids. We kept the old farmhouse pretty clean. Mom was a very hard worker, and she taught her kids to do the same.

We girls get many compliments and comments, especially in the line of cooking. We learned from our very industrious mother. The boys were good around the house too, when they had to be.

Mom never hardly socialized with anyone but family, but as all Danish do, she invited, and welcomed folks to her home, where the coffee pot was always on, and everyone crowded around the kitchen table during their visits. In her later years no one left our house without some of her bread, home-made jam, or whatever. It always seemed that the guest needed the items they received more than we did. Often she would joke that her large ears were a sign of a generous Danish heart. She was certainly a big GIVER all of her life. I am proud to know and do all of the things I learned from this good woman, my mother.



MY MOTHER
July 17, 1992

June 11th, 1901, a pretty little girl was born to Adolph and Mary Angeline Larsen Axelson in Cleveland (Emery County), Utah.

Mother was just a little girl when they moved into a house that her Dad built about a mile from the town of Elmo.

Mother had three brothers and two sisters; all are deceased except the youngest, Merle. She and her husband live in Hawaii.

Mother told of how frightened she would be when the Indians would come to the home and demand food. Grandma would give them what she had and they would leave. Mother told of having an Indian Pony. She'd jump on and ride bareback like the wind.

I don't remember at what age, possibly she wasn't very big, when she got kicked in the head by a horse. It wasn't possible to get a doctor, so Grandpa took care of the wound and willed Mother to live. No one expected that she would, but after a long hard struggle she made it.

Didn't get much schooling, but she was a smart and elegant lady. Had beautiful blue eyes and lovely hair. I've been told I look like her. I consider that an honor.

Mother learned early how to make something out of nothing. Made clothes for her seven kids and she tried her best to give us all a lot of love and care. She taught us to be honest and always said, "Hard work never hurt anyone." Thanks to Mother, her two sons and five daughters grew up to be hard workers, to love and respect our parents and each other.

Mother and Dad were married January 12, 1920, and lived together for years.

We lived on the farm in the house that Grandpa built. I treasure the times that Mother would walk with me to town. We went to Mada's home. I used Mada's sewing machine and made me a house coat for a Home Economics school project. Also, Mother would walk with Sheldon and I so we could go to Mutual and dances.

Mother was a hard worker and a very good cook, a great seamstress. She would work outside as hard as she did in. Always loved flowers and could make most anything grow.

Can you imagine anything better than having a Mother who loved you and made you feel special?

It became necessary to have cataract surgery. Lou and I took her to Orem to a Dr. Clark. Darlene met us and we were able to watch on TV just what the doctor did, step by step. It was a hard decision to put Mother through that, but the doctor said it would be much for her if she had to sit in the dark. She came through with flying colors.

On the way back to Price she sat in the back of our car. We stopped and got her a cup of ice cream. She was just as contented as she could be. The doctor said somewhere down the road we would have to plan on doing the other eye, but that wasn't meant to be.

I spent many hours with Mother at the care center. She always looked nice and they kept her hair beautiful. Almost daily you could see her going downhill. She finally had to go to the hospital for a bowel obstruction. When they did the surgery they found her full of cancer. That was pretty hard for us to take. We tried to explain, but I don't think she realized. She just knew that she hurt and didn't feel good.

It's a blessing; she didn't know how bad it was. She became very anxious and disoriented.

There wasn't much they could do for her. The doctor said she would live until the cancer hit a vital organ, and that's what happened. She really suffered at the end, but it was a blessing that the medication caused her life to be shortened. She died in December, 1989. She had been in the home since March 1987.

Every day, I miss her and wish I could hold her in my arms and tell her again, I love you, Mom.

October, 1994

It has been five years since mother left us. More and more I appreciate all that she did for me. She was a great Mother. I'm sure she was a good and beautiful bride and great wife and a fantastic mother. I'm sure her life is easier now.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to know my Mother. She was my best friend.

It would hurt her to know that her kids have health problems. She never wanted to see anyone hurt.

Be proud of us, Mother. We are doing the best we can. You taught us how. Miss you and will always love you.

Your daughter,
Shirley

Besides that, all her teaching and guiding, I feel a fortunate person.

Mother was pleased when anyone referred to her as a "Stubborn Dane" and she was blessed with a strong back and a strong determination, plus quite a lot of stubbornness inherited from the Danish.

It took quite a lot to make Mother lose her cool. She would be pushed so far. I think all of us kids experienced what it was like to feel a swift hit with her right hand. Kinda makes me smile because I think we all inherited some of her traits. Mother had all of her kids born at home, except for Velma - she was born at home, but at Mada's. Mother experienced a lot of sad times, a lot of hurt and heartache. A lot of joy and fun times.

Her health was quite good, until she reached the age when it wasn't wise for her to live alone.

She sold her home on the farm to Lou and I, raised her youngest daughter in Elmo. The time came when all the kids left the nest and her home in Elmo was sold. She spent some time with all of us. She didn't miss out on what was going on. She remained quite alert until I'd say around 75 years of age.

Her heart was broken when her youngest son died. She had her time to grieve and then got on with her life. Always willing to help if we needed. At that time, she found peace of mind by becoming involved with the Jehovah Witnesses.

It became necessary to find a place where Mother could receive 24-hour care. We found that place in the Castle Country Care Center in Price, Utah. She entered there in March of 1976. It was a relief to know she was receiving the care she needed.

She adjusted to the care center quite well.

It broke my hear when one day (not a good day) she said to me, "what have I done wrong? Why am I here? I promise I'll not cause any problems. Can't I go home with you?" I had to tell her she wasn't being punished and had to stay there. I asked the nurse about what was best for her. I was told we could take Mother home for a few hours once in a while, but we knew she needed more care than we could give.

I brought Mother home with me many times. After she had her lunch, she'd say, "Well, don't you think you should take me home?" I'd say she enjoyed coming and having lunch with us, but later she couldn't remember that she had even been here.

She always wanted to help fix lunch. She sliced tomatoes and vegetables, and always insisted she help with dishes.

Her eyes got bad, so she couldn't read or crochet; didn't have much interest in TV.

06/10/01

Mary Angeline Larsen Axelsen

By Velma Allred

We lived in Spring Canyon, now Carbon County Utah, when I was four or five years old. Back then it was a coal mining camp. We traveled to Emery County to visit Grandma and Grandpa Axelsen. They lived on the homestead of 160 acres.

This was between Elmo and Cleveland. This is about my first memory of these working hard Danish Grandparents. Grandpa Dolph (Adolph Axelsen) was in the living room reading and smoking his old stinky pipe. Grandma Axelsen "Teeny Grandma" as we called her, met us with open arms and huge lemon flavored sugar cookies. Her house was completely spotless! She had long thin gray hair that she wore in a braid wound up in a bun on her head. She had a long black skirt, a long sleeved white blouse with the sleeves rolled up, a light gingham; over the head apron, and a tiny white hanky she kept in her pocket.

She took us on a tour of the garden, the chicken houses, and the barn. Then mom (Annie Irene), my younger sister Anne and I went across the wash to gather greasewood sticks. Grandma put them in her apron so she could finish cooking the chicken dinner she had made for us.

I remember fried chicken and chicken soup that was so clear, and I remember the fluffy and delicious dumplings she made. I think we had mashed potatoes, and wonderful yeast bread with some kind of tart jelly.

Grandma was a wonderful cook, and a wonderful woman. She was **little** and sickly, and worked all of her life to make a good home life for Grandpa and six children (Luther, Sheldon, Mada, Percy, Irene, Merle.) Unfortunately she lost two of those children. Luther drowned when he was 11, and Sheldon died in France during World War I. The rest of her children survived and raised families, and they lived to their old age.

Grandma raised her family, cooked and baked, washed and ironed clothes, canned and preserved all kinds of food for winter use. She also raised chickens and eggs. She churned and took care of the milk. She helped raise meat, and any food that they could spare. Then Grandpa would peddle it out to E. Carbon coal camps and boarding houses, to get money for the few grocery items they could not make for themselves, chicken feed, sugar, salt, tea, and such. They were pretty self sufficient and very frugal with everything.

Grandma never minded doing the dishes when she came to visit in her later years, when she's come back to visit at the farm. (They had moved to Salt Lake City to help my widowed Auntie Merle with their grandson John and by now were in poor health.) My mom (Annie Irene) ended up with the farm and moved her kids there from the coal camps.

Grandma was a gentle soul but had her little "Danish Dander" at time. I remember every time she'd visit she'd eat sparingly shredded wheat, and green tea for breakfast. She'd eat maybe toast, pickled beats and green tea for lunch. Then she'd have what ever and green tea for supper.

She had a dowagers hump from hard work and arthritis. She was always in pain. She'd walk the floor and put a warm water bottle on her worst spot.

Grandma loved the farm and it always seemed to be her home. We were always happy to have her visit. When she came she would teach me basic crochet. There seemed to be a lot of other things about her that rubbed off onto me too.

I am grateful for this little Danish woman, she was a true pioneer from Sanpete County, Utah and one of the first settlers in Elmo Utah, Emery County. Thanks "Teeny Grandma."