

Irena Ralphs Lemon
by Mae Barton

Irena Ralphs was born to Parley and Hannah Ralphs, the seventh child of a family of eight. She was named Irena, but was sometimes called Rena, and most often called Irene and signed her name Irene.

When she was a child, she became very ill and the doctor couldn't find what was wrong. The doctor recommended a higher altitude. Hannah decided to take her to the mountain for the summers. They took milk cows and made butter and cheese, and Irene was nursed back to health. When she died at the age of eighty eight, the doctors said she must have had hepatitis sometime in her life. Perhaps this was the illness she suffered as a child.

Irene was a pretty girl, and because of her jolly, friendly nature, had many friends. She enjoyed attending school, but there were so many pupils in the public schools that Irene began attending the Presbyterian school. She enjoyed these excellent teachers and took piano lessons from Miss McCann. Irene often stayed after school to sweep and clean up. The family began moving to Castle Dale in the winter to enable the boys to attend school, and in the summer they moved back to Ferron. While in Castle Dale, Irene attended her first year of high school at the Academy.

The following summer, Irene went to Oak Springs Ranch in Salina Canyon and hired on as a cooks' helper to cook for the ranch hands, thus she became a very good cook. Eventually, she went to work at the John Lemon home in Ferron, where she met and fell in love with Arthur Lemon. After they were married, Arth would tease Irene by saying he taught her all she knew about cooking. She would reply, "I cooked for ten different men before I married you." and Arth would say, "Yes, and they are all dead now."

Arth and Irene were married in Castle Dale at a hardware store by a Justice of the Peace. Family members attended the ceremony. The marriage was later solemnized in the Logan Temple. After the wedding, Arth and Irene journeyed to Salt Lake City by train, and then to Mantli. While there, Arth was baptized in the Mantli Temple by Soren P. Jensen, and confirmed by Lewis Anderson.

After the honeymoon, Arth and Irene moved into a home that Arth purchased from his sister, Delis and her husband Joseph Peterson. They were eventually able to remodel this home. Five children blessed their home. Ralph was the first born and was followed by four sisters: Mae, Maxine, Beth, and Jeanne. Arth was proud of his family and would say he had four daughters and they each had a brother.

Difficult times came after World War I and during the Depression. Arth and Irene learned that by hard work and thriftiness, they could save enough to buy the necessary things. Arth always said if it hadn't been for the help of his wonderful wife, they couldn't have made it through this difficult period.

Irene and Arthur were hard workers and taught their children the value of work. They always had a big garden and a variety of fruit trees. All the children had to help with the garden, cattle and farm. When Ralph went on a mission for the I.D.S. Church and was in the service during World War II, Irene and the girls would help with the plowing and other farm work.

Irene was industrious, and with the help of her mother, Hannah, and the four girls, would make rag rugs and piece quilts. Irene made many beautiful quilts and gave one to each of her five children and twenty-six grandchildren as they were married.

Irene was free hearted and would give to others a bucket of fruit or vegetables from her garden. She would always say, "One gives and shares of their fruit and garden goods, and the Lord blesses them with more." Irene was very hospitable and when anyone would come to visit, she would cook a meal or serve refreshments.

Irene was very religious and active in the church. In 1932, Irene was called to be Primary President of the Ferron Ward. She served in this capacity for six years and she enjoyed this calling immensely. She taught many classes in the Primary organization and loved all Primary work. She also taught Sunday School and was secretary in the Relief Society. She was a Relief Society visiting teacher most of her life.

Irene and Arthur always had a beautiful yard. One spring day (March 21, 1976) while they were working in their yard raking and burning, an evergreen tree next to the house caught fire. Before they could put the fire out, it reached the roof. With the help of friends and relatives, most of the furniture, clothing, and food was salvaged. While their home was being rebuilt, they lived in a mobile home parked by the previous home. After much worry and work, they were able to move back into their much loved home.

Arthur Lemon was born in Ferron, Utah to John and Emma Lemon. The love of animals was second nature to Arth, and it was very natural to choose this as a profession. He always enjoyed working with his cattle, and in 1958, was named Cattleman of the Year. He was president of the Cattlemen's Association for several years as well as vice-president and secretary. Arth was active in civic, church, and community affairs. He served five years in the Ferron Ward Bishopric, and was very proud to note that during his service in the bishopric, the church grounds were landscaped and a tennis court built.

Arth and Irene celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Hawaii. They felt Hawaii was indeed beautiful. This trip made Arth realize the many modern inventions that had taken place in his life. He remembered traveling by ox team, horse team, horse drawn buggies, and finally automobiles and then airplanes. He remembers when it took longer to go to Salt Lake City by buggy than to go to Hawaii by plane.

Irene and Arth celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary November 1986 in the Ferron Ward Cultural Hall. They were also honored by a plaque from President Ronald and Nancy Reagan complimenting them on their exemplary marriage. They also received a letter from the editor of the Deseret News complimenting them on their 70 years of marriage. The letter read, "Being happily married for 70 years is a significant accomplishment, one we feel should be recognized. Your example may well go far in setting an example of eternal and permanent marriage both to those now married and those yet to be married. In this day and age of so many broken homes, it is truly refreshing to see a couple who has been so successful. May you continue in the example so clearly set forth!" Besides being married for 70 years, Arthur and Irene were blessed to live in the same home that he took her to as a bride. Arthur quotes, "Mid pleasures and palaces, tho I may roam, be it ever so humble, there is no place like home."

They were leaders in the community. They were loved by family and friends. To honor them, Ferron City asked them to reign as King and Queen of Peach Days in 1976. Irene and Arthur loved and lived "as one" that they left this earth within a year of each other. She was 88 and he was 95. They left a large posterity of 5 children, 27 grandchildren, 92 great grandchildren, and 5 great-great grandchildren.