

TOLMAN FAMILY LIFE

by Lavaughn Tolman Fowler

In the late summer and early Fall of 1911 Joseph H. Tolman bought ten acres of land from George A. Whitworth, and also a right of way through his farm, to build and maintain a ditch to carry water to the site selected for a water-powered sawmill. Father, known as Joe Tolman and two young sons. Alvin and Joseph Leroy "Roy" hauled lumber to build the shop, a one room house, penstock and water wheels from the Tolman sawmill at Dempsey, south and east of Lava Hot Springs.

By September, 1912 much of this work had been completed and Joe moved his wife Mary Ellen, daughters Lavaughn, Leona and Isolene to their new home in Inkom.



Joseph and Mary Ellen Tolman

Joseph Leroy enrolled in school, Alvin worked with his father at the mill. Roy would hurry home after school and help. The boys slept down in the shop, as there was only one large room to sleep the rest of the family. (Lavaughn remembers that her father built an attic where she and her sisters slept.

In November Alvin became very sick, so mother was caring for him in the shop. He had a high fever and drank up all the water, then kept begging for more to drink. His mother took a pail and a lantern and went to get him water. It was a wild rainy night with heavy wind. She climbed the hill back of the shop, reached down, filled the pail from the pond, raised up, picked up the lantern and the wind blew it out. Losing her footing in the total darkness she fell over a steep bank into rocks and broke her leg at the ankle.

It was some distance to the shop down this steep hill. She crawled dragging the broken limb to the shop door. She called to her son Alvin to go to the house for help. This he did. Mother never saw Alvin again after he ran past her to get father. That night of November 11, 1912, he passed away, grieved and broken hearted.

In those days help, doctors and transportation were hard to get. T. I. Richardson was about the only one with a phone. They called Doctor Wooley, who was unable to come and sent young Dr. A. M. Newton. When he looked at the broken leg he knew there was nothing he could do in the home and that she must go to the hospital.

The bone had run into the rocks, gravel and mud about six inches. By the time the doctor came from Pocatello, bone and flesh had dried out. Doctor Newton gave her a shot for pain and said as soon as he could get to Pocatello he would make arrangements to get her into a hospital. Arrangements were made with the railroad officials to have a through passenger train stop at the Inkom depot.

A bed was made on a cot, mother was placed gently on it. Gently she was loaded into a wagon box. By the time they got to the depot it was late afternoon. The train came; sped by without stopping, leaving the injured sufferer. Mother was then taken to T. I. Richardson's and taken into their home. Soon a call came saying the railroad was sending a special train to get the patient. The train was backed the twelve miles from Pocatello. After the scorching the doctors gave the officials they were glad to do anything to right the mistake. By the time mother arrived at the hospital it was nearing midnight.

Dr. Newton told father the only thing that could be done was amputation. Father would not consent, so they cleaned the flesh and bones and set the leg. After several days the cast was removed to see what was happening. (In these days the cast would remain in place and an X-ray would be taken.) Finding that the leg was mending without infection, it was necessary to re-break the bones and re-set the leg. Mary Ellen mended satisfactorily and returned home to walk with a slight limp, but had a mighty good leg. Dr. Newton was proud of the job; it was among his first experiences in Pocatello. Often he mentioned it and commented on how fortunate she was.

At this time I'd like to mention a word or two about T. I. Richardson and wife, Hattie.

They were people with hearts so large, there was room for anyone in need of help, no matter when or where. No one ever went to their door hungry that didn't leave with a full stomach and a sandwich to carry with them. If a place to sleep was needed, they got that too.

By the summer of 1913 the sawmill was in full operation. People from far and near came for lumber to build with and slabs and edgings for fuel, as well as sawdust to preserve their ices.

Most of the first homes in Buckskin were built from lumber from the Tolman sawmill, as well as many in Pocatello and all around this area.

The mill operated until 1925. It was sold to someone over in Arbon Valley or Crystal. Father helped dismantle and re-set the mill at its new site.

By 1915 the Tolmans had a berry farm going, with strawberries, raspberries, and later fruit trees beginning to bear.

There was much work to do, but many fond memories and lots of fun too. Women came from all around to pick fruit, both for pay and on shares. In those days the cases weren't 12 cup cases, and a dollar or more for picking, but a double deck case of 24 cups, and 20 to 25 cents for picking. Many of us could pick 7, 8 or 9 double cases in a day that started at daylight and ended at dark. Many had to walk or ride some distance to and from work.

We girls would get bored, tired and need reviving. Away we would go to the mill pond, slip out of our work clothes and into an old dress that hung on some tall wild clover. We would jump into the mill pond, paddle around a few minutes, and refreshed, hurriedly speed back to our berry row. Soon the buckets would be filled with luscious fruit. We managed a swim four or five times a day, and in the evening we managed one last swim for the day.

How well I remember the dear faithful women and girls who came early and worked late. Some are Mrs. Frank Sexton, Belle Merrell, Mahalia and Irene Romriell, Mrs. Luker, Rebecca Wanner Elvira Preece, Sarah Lish, Mrs. Staley, Mrs. Wray and daughters Muriel, Verda and Vesta, Lucille Gardner, Blanche Bush and others over the years.

The George A. Whitworth family lived on the north of us. They had a large dairy, had many hired men and plenty of work to keep them all busy. I'll never forget going there to day. Maybe Agnew or some of the help would be taking bread from the oven, probably 8 loaves at a time, and what loaves! Once they were out of the oven another drifter full went in. This was a daily task, but the family was large and help many. They had a smoke house. Hams, shoulders and bacon cured there, not just one or two,

but dozens.

We didn't have much meat and mother would make dresses for the girls, shirts for the boys and their father, and that way get meat for our table. We were always grateful for the fine neighbors the Whitworths were. How we missed them when they bought a ranch at Blazer, now Lava Hot Springs.

E. M. Webb and his wife lived on the west and south of us. They too were wonderful neighbors and friends. Later they moved to Hollister, Idaho, and Dr. Newton bought their place. He built a large log home and raised registered Herefords. The Webbs were among the first people in Inkom. Ed Webb was the first Bishop and served from July, 1906 until Feb. 28, 1914; a fine Bishop.

Grand-Daddy Johnson (All I ever knew him by) bought a few acres of ground from Edward Webb and planted berries and garden. He had two sons, Joseph and Hyrum. Joseph, the elder would do as he was told; Hyrum loved to fish, work or not. He would slip away with his willow pole, string and hook. Soon he would return,



Grand-Daddy Johnson



Hyrum Johnson

At age 16, at the home of Fanny Hayes, early day Post Mistress. Fanny Hayes took the photograph.

proud as punch, with a large string of fish. Even though his father was angry before he returned, at the sight of fish for supper, all was well!

Fish for many of our fish fries were furnished by that young lad. Joseph married and lives in Salt Lake. Hyrum married Norrene Merrell and they live in Pocatello; returning often to visit friends or to take pictures of our beautiful valley. (End of Part 1.) to be continued.

Inkom, 1912. The road from Pocatello to Inkom, at the present is remarkably good. So much so, that an automobile can make the distance in 25 minutes.