

Effie Shumway Tolman

Born: October 14, 1891

Memories by Mary Eliza Tolman Harris

Written: June 4, 1994

I feel I need to write down a few things about my mother or her grandchildren and great-grandchildren will not know her like I would like them too. She was a woman of great faith in her Savior and great intelligence, although, she only had a 6th grade education. Effie had 4 brothers and 2 sisters, and her mother died when Effie was in 6th grade. Although she had an older sister, it was Effie that was called to her dying mother's bed and asked if she would take care of the little ones. (Her youngest brother, Kay, was still in diapers.)

Mother was a wise woman and had a gift of discernment that I'm sure was probably recognized by her mother, Eliza. Effie had a twin sister, Affie, who died as a baby. Mother was told she cried for days after Affie died.

Her family (Grandfather Shumway and 7 children) lived in a one room cabin on the Shumway farm, south of Lovell, Wyoming. Effie says her father expected her up at 5:00 am to fix potatoes and gravy for breakfast. In those winter days, it was cold in Wyoming and they would slaughter and hang beef or a pig in a barn. The meat would be frozen and they would cut off chunks of meat for meals. Later, they would cut chunks of ice from rivers and ponds and store them in sawdust in the barn to keep throughout the summer. I remember, they used this ice when I was a girl to make ice cream in a hand crank ice cream freezer, 2-3 times during the summer. This was a luscious treat. We would sometimes eat soda crackers with the ice cream.

Mother's oldest brother was Parley and they were very close. When Parley was a young man, he took a wagon team of horses and went to Penrose to dig up a body of (there is a blank space) and bring them to the Lovell cemetery. (Blank space again) had died of diphtheria and it was said that Uncle Parley got diphtheria and died young. It was hard for Mother to lose him.

Effie was a beautiful young woman. She had piercing dark blue eyes and curly brown hair. She had many chances for beaux. My father had a brother who lived on a farm with his family in Lovell. Dad came from Bountiful, Utah for a visit and that is how they met. I don't remember much about him. He was nice looking. Charley was 12 and absolutely devastated when dad died. Although, "Hon's" father was a schoolteacher, he didn't teach his own children to read and write. They were expected to work at a young age to help feed the family.

I do remember him taking me to a rough, old dentist who made me cry and then he told me if I would be good, he'd buy me an ice cream cone; which he did. From this early age, I have hated to go to a dentist.

Mother and dad started their life together, March 28, 1914, in a dugout – a hole dug in the side of a hill. My parents moved to a farm south of Lovell near the farms of the Shumway boys. We moved into the town of Lovell for a couple of years across from Aunt Vilate, who I always loved. I told her I married Keith so she would be my real aunt. This is turning out to be a lot about me – I suppose if they are my memories, they have to be.

My father was a sheep herder on the mountain, when we lived in town. He was gone a lot. I would hear stories way after my father died of what a hard worker he was. He was up early and the 1st one at the beet dump, sugar beets being grown and taken into town to the sugar factory by horse and wagon. He also took the 1st vegetables to Byron, Cowley, and Lovell to earn money in the spring.

One memory I have of the farm – we had a small stream of water running in front of the house from the canal for irrigation. There was a footbridge across the stream to get to the barn. I guess we were pretty poor, although I never realized it at the time. I remember being told to go to the stream and clean new potatoes with a small rag. When I was finished, I was told to put the rag underneath the little foot bridge for next time. Nothing was wasted.

Father was very honest and tried hard, but had little “book learning” sense. Story was told they dealt with a not-to-honest banker and lost the farm. After they lost the farm, they moved to Syracuse, Utah to farm on shares.

Effie had 3 miscarriages and the doctor told her she would never have a child. We were all born on this farm, 1st Charley, then Eldon and then Bob. Eldon used to tell me the boys were told to go over to Aunt Celia’s and when they came back, they’d have a little sister. Kay was the youngest and was 4 years younger than me. The 1st 3 boys and I were within 5 years, so in 9 years, mother had 5 children. The doctor was wrong....

A little about Kay, my younger brother. We had much love in our family. Mother made this happen. Kay and I were 4 years apart, but very close. Kay was liked by everybody. He went to Salt Lake once with my mother and went to work on day with Uncle Porter. Uncle Porter cleaned up a dance pavilion called “Rainbow Rendezvous”. Kay waited for Uncle Porter on the outside and said “Hi” or “Hello” to everyone. Kay later told my mother the people in Salt Lake were sure stuck up. He was the town of Lovell’s baseball team batboy. One day in early spring, when Kay was 14 and in the 8th grade, he and two other boys played hooky from school. They walked to the railroad bridge of the Shoshone River and were playing under a cliff on one side. A huge rock was blown off the cliff by a strong wind and it fell on Kay’s head. They got him to the Lovell Hospital, but he only lived a few hours, never gaining consciousness. There were people in the hospital lobby, people on the outside lawn – everywhere – waiting to hear about him. He was much loved by the town and by his family. Mother said she knew after my father died, she would never get to keep Kay long. My father wanted one of us with him. It will be nice to see him again – my little brother.

After we moved to Syracuse, I started school. He had to walk a couple of miles to go to school. One snowy winter morning we asked our Father if he could take us to school. He declined and we started out. In the meantime, father decided to go and pick up. However, when he got to us, his car was full of other kids and he had to pass us up.

Father was a smoker and didn't have a healthy heart. The next January he got pneumonia and died. Effie had 5 small children, the oldest 12 and the youngest 2. There was no welfare or government to help. Families did it. My Uncle Bill came from Lovell to Utah in an open farm truck, loaded what they could of mother's belongings and took us back to Lovell. Charley, Eldon, and Bob rode back in the truck. Mother, Kay, and I took the train back to Lovell.

My grandfather owned property and houses in Lovell. He gave us a house next to him on 5th Street, just across the alley. It had a small front room, a kitchen, and a lean-to across the back of the house. We all 6 slept in this room. I can remember lying in this room with the curtain drawn when I had the measles. These were hard years for Effie. She worked hard trying to keep her family together. I can remember playing cars in from of the house near the street in the dirt in the summer with Kay. I never felt deprived or needing of anything.

That first summer back in Lovell, mother took a job at Uncle Kay's farm to thin beets. I got to go some of the time and watched Kay in the shade of the house during the hot weather. She also worked in a Lovell restaurant washing dishes. The boys took turns going to the restaurant for what we called "slop" to feed the pigs. They hated this job. We had a barn with a milking cow, pigs, and chickens. The chickens were used for eggs and meat. A pig would be slaughtered and used for food. Effie always raised a huge garden. We would eat from it and she would can and dry from the garden for our use in the winter. I'll never know how she was able to do all of this.

One day when she was at work, I thought I would surprise her and make a cake. I didn't know what shortening meant, so I left it out. I always liked to cook. That cake was hard as a rock, but she praised it highly, told me what shortening was and I felt I could then try again. She never put us down or made us not feel of worth.

Once in a great while she had an extra 25 cents and would let someone go to the store and buy us a treat. We would usually choose a Powerhouse candy bar, as this was the biggest you could get for the money. On another occasion she would give one 25-30 cents and we would buy a loaf of bakery bread and baloney. We always ate homemade bread, so we thought this was a great treat. I still like baloney.

We lived next door to my grandfather and he was not always kind and considerate. Often mother had to do what he told her because of living in his home and the obligation she felt. Eldon had a dog and grandfather didn't like us having any pets. Grandfather told Eldon he had to get rid of it. I don't remember how Eldon got a BB gun, but he took that little dog out by the canal and shot it. His aim wasn't very good and that little dog cam crawling home. I suppose it was Eldon who had to get a club and finish killing it. What an awful day in our memory.

Mother got a little better job as a maid in the local hotel. I believe it was called the Shoshone Hotel. She had a suitor at this little house. He did something in the line of mistreating her and the next time he came, the 3 older boys chased him out of the front room with baseball bats. We never saw him again after that, in our house at least.

How lonely Effie must have been – 5 children, no husband, and a father who was domineering. She loved her children and we knew this. She made us her life. She never got away much. Maybe once a year, relatives would take us to the mountains for several days to camp outside. Effie loved this – she always loved the mountains.

After several years in this little house, Grandpa let us have another house that was a little bigger. The house was unpainted and had wooden sidewalks. It had an upstairs with 2 bedrooms, a front room and kitchen and a very small kitchen downstairs, and what we would now call a family room. We had a table in this room where we ate. All of this time, our toilet was outside in a separate little house. Our baths consisted of a large wash tub brought into the kitchen. Water was heated and poured into the tub. I bathed 1st then the boys after me. I don't remember where Effie cam in the lineup. Mother and I slept in the same bed for many years and I couldn't wiggle a toe. When we could finally afford a bed for me, in the same room of course, I was really elated to have my own bed.

Every Sunday evening mother prepared to wash our clothes. For years we cleaned our clothes with a tub and scrub board. This was replaced with a "washing machine" with a ringer, which was stored on a small porch. Mother would separate the clothes to be ready because she would get up at 5:00 am on Monday and start the washing. Every shirt had to hang outside on the clothesline together, every towel, etc., down the clothesline, with underwear on the middle line. I would help her and often, in the cold of winter, the clothes would freeze stiff. The clothes would be there all day. We would take the frozen clothes in at night and hang them around to finish drying. This had to be done early, so mother could go to work.

Charley had a hard time during this period. He would run away from home and mother wouldn't always know where he was. I thought maybe they were too much alike and clashed. Charley and Rose were so good to mother after they married. Charley surly tried to make up for any pain he might have caused her.

Mother was a good church member and tried hard to see that her children were taught the Gospel. She taught us valuable lessons that were worthwhile for our lives. Honesty, no lying, no cheating and everything of that nature was not allowed. We knew it. She taught these lessons through her own life. One Christmas she got her pay at the hotel. She had enough to pay her tithing for the month or go to the post office. She had ordered a C.O.D. package from Montgomery Wards which contained a gift for each of her children. What a choice for a single mother. Bishop Brown had a little office in hi bakery where people would come to pay their tithing. On the way to the post office, she stopped at the bakery and paid her tithing. She went to the post office to tell the Post Master to send the package back to Wards because she couldn't pay for it. H first said, "Sister Tolman, you have a package here". Effie told him she couldn't pay for it, but he said, "Ah, it's already paid for. It's yours." She never knew who paid for it, but suspected the Post Master, Brother Bringherest. Effie never knew for sure.

Effie's family continued to grow and we stayed in this house through my high school years. Mother had "spells" once in a while. It scared us and we would run and get Aunt Letelle who was an RN. We didn't have money to go to a doctor very much. In looking back, I think mother might have had

periods of depression and this was how she let go. She would go to bed and rest for a few days and would be okay for a time. These “spells” seemed to diminish as we grew older, although, she had many problems – without wonder.

I went to a different ward than the rest of the family because all the girls my age went to West Ward. I never gave a talk or a part in anything that somehow mother was there. We had a special love in our family; a respect for one another that lasted our lifetime. This came from our Mother and how she kept us together and raised us to love one another. She was a good mother, proud in her way, but she had a wise discernment. She was intelligent in many ways. She did everything imaginable to bring in extra dollars. In the spring, she would start early beds of tomatoes; peppers plants, etc., and sell them. She would do the white robes and shirts of a preacher. Mother was very particular about this and I was in my late teens before she would allow me to help her with this. She got a job as a nurse’s aide at the Lovell Hospital. Mother would bring home the bacon grease from the hospital and make soap; sometimes we used it for gravy for a meal.

We had a cellar dug in the ground with dirt on top. In the cellar we kept bins of carrots, potatoes, parsnips, beets put in dirt and used during the winter. We had peaches, pears, raspberries, apricots, cherries, jellies of every kind, and everything else she could get her hand on. We put the milk in the cellar (this was the coolest place we had) in large pans and when the cream came the top, we would make butter from it.

Mother was an excellent cook. She was the cook every other weekend at the hospital. She raised chickens from small chicks in the spring until they got too old to lay eggs. Then she would slaughter the old hen, cook it in the Dutch oven for several hours and it was delicious. We didn’t have a lot of meat. A special treat on Sunday was meatloaf. Sometimes supper was creamed corn over bread or just bread and milk, but we never went hungry.

I remember our 1st electric fridge and we could have Jell-O! Once in a while with bananas in it – what a treat! When Effie made pumpkin pies, it was 7 or 8 because she would use the whole squash or pumpkin. Eldon liked this pie very much and we’d find a pie pan in some of the most peculiar places after he had consumed one. Often our breakfast was cocoa and toast. We had our own milk from the cow and always homemade bread. Cocoa was bought in a container about 14” high. It was called “Mother’s Cocoa”. Eldon didn’t care for crust on bread so he would put them under the table on a small ledge there. Eldon knew how to handle mother. He was good to her and could make her happy. Eldon and Bob played football. Bob also played basketball. These games were great to watch. My big brothers sort of cleared a path for me. People from other towns knew who I was because of them. My big brothers were always good to me all of my life. They made me feel special and took the place of not having a father.

Effie liked costume jewelry. She liked to dress for church and look nice. Mother had a sense of style, simple beauty, and set a good example.

Mother’s assignment was to go before a funeral started and arrange the flowers. She had a knack for this. Certain colors together arranged at the front of the church in a pleasing way. She took this assignment very seriously. In those days, when someone died, the family cleared out a room in their home and the body was brought into the home for at least one night. People would sit up with the body. Mother often did this – taking food in for the family – even if she worked the next day. How did she do it all?

Mother was never late to anything and we were taught not to be late, also. She was efficient and had a great sense of humor. She understood things had order. She respected the priesthood and expected the same from all of us.

As Grandpa Shumway (Charles Bird) grew older, mother would have one of us take him a meal once a day. I cleaned his house once a week. The aunts came once a year and gave his home and porch a really good cleaning. I think most of his grandchildren feared him. He was pretty gruff, but I do remember sitting on his lap and searching in his shirt pockets. He would have pink or white mints about the size of a nickel. I liked the pink ones best because they weren't so strong. I think he liked me – probably because I cleaned his house and didn't get into things. Salesmen would visit him and he'd buy from them. He would give me things. I still use a piano scarf he gave me and a blue wool blanket. I thought this blanket was so pretty, that he finally gave it to me. The last few years of his life, he lived with Uncle Bill's family because he needed a man to lift him in and out of bed. Grandpa had a rather rough childhood in southern Utah. His wife died fairly young, Eliza Johnson. Eliza had a withered or shriveled arm from infantile paralysis when she was two. My mother used to say that Eliza could still do everything with this arm – she could crochet, sew, etc. I didn't know either of my grandmothers. I felt sad about this. They were both gone before I was born. Grandmother Shumway was buried in Lovell Cemetery in 1907. Grandfather never married again. He liked to have his picture taken.

I heard mother testify of her mother's faith and courage to pay her tithing. Effie was proud to say that all of her children paid tithing.

I grew up in the "depression" years. Although we didn't have much, no one else did either and we didn't feel out of place. Effie fixed her home up nice because she wanted her children to bring their friends there. She let us play games, even cards sometimes, because she then knew where we were. My cousin, Loa, told me once, "your mother knew how to make a house a home. I like going there." It was a gift she had. She had very little and made sacrifices for her family to have a presentable home. She made our growing up years fun and good. She had a surprise birthday party for me when I was 16 that I remember as very special. In my junior year in High School, I served as the Prom Queen. Mother didn't have the money to buy me a new formal. She sewed some, but knew I needed something special for the Prom. We went to J. C. Penneys and picked out a dress. She paid on it weekly until it was paid for so I would look nice.

My mother loved her children dearly. I tried very hard, as did the boys, to help her where we could and relieve her of some of her burdens. As I cleaned, I was slow because I wanted to do it well. She would sometimes say, "Can you do it a little faster and not quite so good?", but she taught me to "do things good," in many ways of my life. I feel I owe her so much in lots of ways. He was a good housekeeper and liked things neat and clean. We used milk to wax the kitchen floors

My grandfather had said that the first grandchild to go on a mission, he would give \$1,000. Charles had this help and went to Argentina. Then the war years came. Eldon went into the Air Corps as a bombardier. Charley was a Marine, and Bob in the Army. Mother had 3 sons and a son-in-law go to war. Charley had a rough time in the South Pacific. Eldon was shot down over Germany and was a prisoner of war for 2 years. Bob sat it out in the Aleutian Islands, saved money to later help him on a mission. Keith went through cadet training and was transferred from one plane to another until he ended up as a B-20 pilot, the largest bomber the U.S. had and he was only 21. However, he never had to go overseas.

We hadn't heard from Eldon for weeks and thought he could have been shot down over Germany. Mother and I knelt down to pray that all was well with him and I told her, "the Lord took your youngest son from you. He wouldn't take another." That night she had a dream and saw Eldon parachuting from a plane over Germany and landing safely. We found out a few days later he was a German POW. Still later, we found out this was what happened. The whole town celebrated and when we could hear from him through the Red Cross, they would print his letters in the town paper.

Mother was a "4 Star" mother and displayed proudly her 4 stars in her front window. It was a hard time for her.

Cadet training was nearly over for Keith. He called one Saturday night and wanted me to meet him in Salt Lake City and get married. The next Friday, Effie helped me get a dress made, temple clothes ready, and we set off the next Wednesday on the train. I had bought materials for these things and had them on hand or we could never have accomplished this. I had been accepted into nurses training, but felt I should stay with mother during this time when she was alone. The war was taking some of our boys and it was a miserable time for young people. I was working as a cook at the hospital, but when you didn't know if you were going to have any time together, you married young to grab fast at what you could. We were not yet 20, so I had to get and take with me Keith's mother's consent and a recommend for him.

Keith was ordained an elder in the Salt Lake temple and we were married, March 17, 1944. I went with him for about 6 months and we were lucky to have this time. This was hard for Effie, to be left at home, alone for the first time. She continued to work in the Lovell Hospital and kept busy. I was home in the fall because Keith was being moved and I couldn't stay with him. On January 17, 1945, Jim was born. This gave mother much joy and she really enjoyed him. We thought he looked a lot like Kay and this helped fill a hole for her. Of course I didn't realize until I lost a son when I was 41 how hard losing Kay must have been for her.

Mother had some fun belonging to a "widows group" in Lovell. They would have fun parties and get together. She would Indian Wrestle and participate in quilting bees. There were only certain ladies that were invited to these "Bees". You had to be a good quilter. You came the 1st day and stayed all day. The home where you were working would furnish lunch and after that you came as you could until the quilt was done. Mother made us a beautiful quilt when we got married, pink and white and material with pink flowers. Pink was her favorite color. I still have the quilt. I made an all pink quilt for her 75th birthday. Kristi has it.

I didn't learn to quilt until I was about 40, but as a child, I remember having fun with other children under quilts being made. A cup of raisins was a treat.

Mother had concern for her children throughout their lives. She was interested in their activities and recognized their accomplishments. She tried to have her "year supply". She would buy 100 lbs. of sugar and flour stored in the boy's bedroom in the fall. She was always planning ahead. She has wooden chests full of linens that she bought on sale and when each child married, she would have a substantial pile of linens for each one. How could she do all this? Mother embroidered and crocheted in the evening. We each have an afghan she crocheted for us. Mother was an exceptional person. She worked quietly inside and outside of the home when women didn't work outside of the home much. Charley and Rose married and within a few months she had taught Rose the gospel. Rose always gave her credit for this.

She had a gift for detecting the phony. Keith says I have this gift. You were blessed if mother called you friend. Mother never forgot the Lord and we knew from where our blessings came. She taught us to kneel night and morning in prayer, to have our personal prayers, to always pay our tithing, to be kind and loving to those who had less. She had lots of friends and often when people dropped in, she would fix a meal and sometimes I would wonder from what?

I think we had a special mother/daughter relationship, but I suppose all her children felt this way, which is to her credit.

Mother was there to help with each new child, except she came after Holly was born. She loved babies, loved to hold them, to talk to them, etc. She taught each new child to “dancey, dancey, dancey.” We have some movies of this. When we lived in Denver and she would visit, she always built a bon fire in the sand box. She and the kids would roast hot dogs and marshmallows. When she would visit, she would buy a roast or take us to Arby’s. She always bought one thing we needed; a mailbox, fringe for a special tablecloth; nothing big or huge but some little thing to help us on our way and as a token of her love for us.

Once when we lived in Lovell, I had a kitchen table leaf that had to be help up with a stick. She came over one night and told Keith she wasn’t going home until the table was fixed. The table was soon fixed and she went on her way.

A Tribute to Effie Tolman

By Rose Tolman, daughter-in-law

I first met “Mother Tolman” the day I was married, on November 14, 1945. She took me into her heart at once and was a wonderful mother to me until the day she died.

Mother was instrumental in getting me to join the Church, by gentle persuasion, giving me plenty of reading material, encouraging me to read the Book of Mormon and answering my many questions.

We always raised big gardens in Lovell, Wyoming and we would share the produce. She always raised acorn squash because she knew I loved them so much. She helped me can and taught me much about many things.

She felt as badly as I did when I had trouble getting pregnant. Then when Sherri was born, she was right there helping and doing things for me. She was a wonderful cook and it was such a treat to be invited for a meal in her home.

Down through the years she spent time visiting in my home wherever we moved and lived. She helped during times of illness and during the birth of Mikel – always giving of herself.

I had many opportunities to help her when advancing years took their toll on her health. She was always so appreciative of anything I did for her and I never regretted for a minute the time I spent doing things for her. Mother was one great lady and so deserving of the rich reward in Heaven.