

## *A Collection of Memories*

# ***Christina Maria Klingler Oswald***

### MOMENTS AND REFLECTIONS IN THE LIFE OF MY MOTHER

*– written by her daughter, Verna Oswald Taylor – 1992*

Mother was born January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1879 in Sulz, Germany. Her father was Friedrich Ludwig Klingler, and her mother was Anna Maria Bauer. She was the third child born to them, and had the following brothers and sisters: Ernst Friedrich, Babette Christine, Friedrich Gottfried and Anna Maria. Gottfried Jacob died at 5 months of age. There were also Caroline, Gottfried Christopher and Charlotte (who died at 6 weeks).

The elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints found them and they joined the Church. Grandfather and Grandmother really wanted to go to 'Zion', so they saved their money and they, along with six of their children immigrated to America. They left their oldest son behind to stay with his aged grandmother.

The ocean trip was very hard, and one to be remembered by the entire family. They were desperately seasick, but after three weeks on the water, they arrived in New York. They came west on a train as far as Roberts, Idaho in June 1886. Since there was no way to send word to his sister or brother who had emigrated about one year before, Grandfather started to walk the 22 miles to Rexburg, Idaho. He crossed the Snake River by ferryboat. He found it necessary to swim through many of the water holes, not knowing the way around them.

He finally reached Rexburg, and to his surprise found it consisted of about twelve scattered log houses. Most of the people lived in dugouts. He was shocked and disappointed. He sent for his family and they lived with his sister, Charlotte Pfost. They ran a farm, and everyone old enough, helped in the fields. Later on, Grandfather went to work in the railroad shops in Pocatello, Idaho. Grandmother became very ill. She contracted pneumonia and died in 1889.

Left alone with eight children, he again sought help from his sister. She told him to keep his job and that she would care for the children.

Then in 1891, he married Christine Gertrude Buchmiller. She was a widow with three children: Emily, John and Magdalene. They were married in the Logan Temple. She proved to be a faithful, loving wife, mothering her step children as her own. There were seven children born in Grandfather's second marriage: Eva, Sarah, Carl, George, Wilhelm, Frank (died in infancy) and Alma.

Mother met my father, Ludwig Friedrich Oswald in Rexburg, Idaho, when she was nineteen years old. I heard her say; "I told your father that I wouldn't get married until I was twenty – so we waited until then."

Mother had full, half and stepbrothers and sisters. It was a large family, but a very close one.

She passed away seventy years ago and all through my life, I have felt her influence. She left behind my father and ten children (seven boys and three girls). I had six brothers older than I and so when I arrived on the scene, mother was very happy to have a daughter. There was a girl born between George and Arnold, named Dorothy, but she died as a baby. Another baby died at birth at the time of mother's death. She had ten children who lived and grew to adulthood: Lou (Ludwig Friedrich III), George, Arnold, Elmer, Herb, Willard, Verna, Mary, Victor and Violet.

As I reflect back on the first ten years of my life, they were extremely happy ones. Because I was the oldest daughter, I got to spend a lot of time with Mother. I remember going to town to do the shopping in the horse and buggy. Always we would bring home a treat for the rest of the family. We laughed, we cried, and we talked. We were a large family and she needed not only companionship but help. I learned to cook, sew, make beds and clean house. As I look back now, many things she taught me, and talked to me about were way beyond my years. Sometimes, I wonder if she had some sort of premonition of what would take place.

Father made me a stool to stand on so that I could get up to the stove to cook. Cleanliness was always an important item to my mother, and she was a very good housekeeper. I think of her as beautiful, quiet, capable and caring. She was the most unselfish person that I have ever known. She was only a little over five feet tall, but my memory of her (that of a ten year old) has her taller than that.

Her husband and family were always the first and foremost things in her life. Everything else was secondary. She was also a very good cook. Aunt Dora told me that she was the only person she ever knew who could make anything and everything taste wonderful.

She was also a good seamstress. She made most of her clothes and all of the girl's things. I had two sisters, Mary and Violet and a brother Victor who were younger than I. Lou, George, Arnold, Elmer, Herbert and Willard were older.

The beginning of school in the fall was always a special event. I can close my eyes and see her now sitting up to her old foot-treadle machine, sewing into the night. She said that patching, mending and darning were a chore, but she loved to make pretty little dresses.

We lived on a farm, and mother had a knack for making things grow. We had a big orchard, all kinds of berries and a fabulous garden. I remember how we used to all work together, preparing fruits and vegetables for canning and drying for winter.

One of the things that I really do appreciate is that she taught me to love flowers. We always had a flower garden, and I used to help her plant and care for it. I knew most of the names and types of flowers before I started school. That has been an important part of my life, and again, I am grateful.

I don't remember our entire family always going to church together on a regular basis, but I do remember many times that we did. That was very important to mother.

We all remember so well the foreclosing of the mortgage on our home and farm in Coltman. Though we were young, we realized how heartbreaking that was for our parents. We went out to the 'dry farm' west of Osgood. Father and three of his brothers bought land out there. It was called 'Oswald Basin'. The first couple of years looked wonderful. Then the dry season hit and they finally all had to leave there.

I recall going to school out there. There had to be seven children to qualify having a schoolteacher. There were five of us and one other child and the teacher's daughter. Elmer, Herb, Willard, Mary and I were attending. Mary was just starting school and the teacher had no patience what so ever with her. One day, she slapped her and Mary started to cry. I went up and took her by the hand and we started for home. Then Elmer, Herb and Willard came too. That teacher tried every trick in the book to get us to come back, but we paid no attention. When we got home and told mother what happened, she didn't seem very upset about it. In fact, I almost noticed a smile. She just said, 'Your teacher will be here in a few minutes to apologize, I think I will teach her a lesson. If I keep all of you home and report her, she's out of a job.' Mother talked to her for a long time and we didn't hear what was said, but for the rest of the year we could get by with anything.

We moved to Idaho Falls for one winter, then we moved out to the Osgood Project, a new farm area run by Utah Idaho Sugar Co. It was dusty and windy, no trees

or shrubbery, and hard living. Mother planted a garden and raised beautiful flowers and again made a home for her family.

I have many vivid memories of that year. Mother was expecting another baby. She told me all about it from the very beginning; I was her 'big girl' and this was our secret. Back then, this was not a subject to be talked about, especially with the boys. I was never to mention it to anyone except to her or dad. I went through a rigid schooling that year, but actually loved every minute of it as the anticipation of a new baby was so great.

A couple of months before the baby was due, mother stepped in a hole and fell down while showing Aunt Dora her garden. She started hemorrhaging. They called a doctor and he came out. The rest is a long, sad story. By the time she got to the hospital it was too late, as she had lost too much blood. Both she and the baby died.

I woke up early the next morning expecting to hear about the new baby, but a strange lady was in the kitchen. Then, Uncle Karl and George came and brought us the horrible news. We were all completely shocked and devastated. The next few months were a nightmare. I really didn't want to live; I just wanted to go wherever mother was. Dad was very concerned and tried to get me to go with Aunt Mary Ellsworth (mother's sister), but I refused to go.

Then I had a dream one night. I saw mother, and she talked to me for a long time. She told me so many things and I remember it all as plain as if it had happened yesterday. One thing she said was, "Verna, you have a long happy life ahead of you. You have got to change your attitude and get working on it. I can't be with you, but you pray to the Lord for any help you need." This helped me not only in my teenage years, but all of my life. I have a very strong testimony of prayer.

I have a very clear picture of mother in my mind, and always it is the way I saw her that night in my dream. I believe I could recognize her anywhere. I no longer feel cheated in having had to grow up without her. I just feel privileged to have had her for ten years of my life. Father never remarried and he worked very hard at trying to be both a father and mother to us.

Willard and I have tried to put together some of the things that we remember about mother for our children and grandchildren. We are hoping to convey the love and respect that we have for our mother.

## THINGS I REMEMBER ABOUT MY MOTHER

– written by her son, Willard Oswald – 1992

The original home in Coltman that dad and mother built when they were married was, as I recall, logs with mortar to seal the cracks between the logs. The inside walls were plastered and the room divided to accommodate the needs of the family. Later they added a kitchen with the big ‘home comfort’ cooking range, a dining table large enough to accommodate a family of twelve and a pantry usually stocked with food; the large wood box had to be filled with cedar wood every evening. The half dozen flat irons that were usually heating on the range, were not only used for ironing, but in cold weather mother would wrap them in towels and put them in our beds to keep us warm. The only heat that we had in that part of the house was the cook stove. Mother was an excellent cook. I remember the homemade bread baked fresh about three times a week, baked apples, apple pies made from fresh sliced apples and baked in a large bread pan, chicken dumpling soup. Most of the food was produced on the farm and stored for winter.

Harvest time was always a special time of the year. There was something for every member of the family to do. I remember the huge steam engine that pulled the thresher, and the excitement when they would come and all the neighbors would join together to harvest the grain. After the grain was threshed, dad would take part of it to the mill and trade it for new flour, germade mush, corn meal and other grain products. This was also the time when mother would change the straw ticks. They were made of heavy ticking that would not let the straw poke through. The old straw was dumped out, the ticks were thoroughly washed and refilled with new straw. The new straw was also used to cover the ice that was gathered from the river in the winter for storage to use in the icebox in the kitchen. Most of the washing was done on a scrubbing board until mother finally got a hand-operated washer and some of us could operate the washer, which eased her burden some. Fruit and vegetables were gathered and stored in a root cellar located close to the house. Vegetables and fruits of all kinds were canned, dried, preserved and stored.

Mother’s early life was the life of a pioneer as she moved with her parents from farm to farm in Germany and finally the missionaries found them and taught the Gospel to the family. Shortly after this they emigrated to Rexburg, Idaho where her father was able to homestead some land. This experience made it possible for her to learn many skills that proved to be helpful to her as mother of a large family. For instance, their home in Coltman was made fruitful and beautiful by the raspberries, and all sorts of vegetables. Many beautiful flowers adorned the yard and garden such as lilacs, hollyhocks, tulips, pansies, roses and many others.

Much of the fruit and vegetables were canned or dried. I remember helping prepare the fruit for drying. After the fruit was washed, cored and sliced, we were given a darning needle and thread and the fruit was strung on the thread, covered with mosquito net to keep out the insects and hung over the clothes line to dry. When the fruit was properly dried, it was stored away for winter.

Mother was a good housekeeper. Wherever she lived, her home was clean, tidy, inviting and blessed with love and understanding. Mother and dad believed in obedience and they were a good example of this principle. To some it would seem an impossible task to enforce this principle with seven sons and three daughters involved, and at times a little extra persuasion was necessary. For example, some of us kids were down in the willows by the swimming pond, smoking hay leaves. We were taught not to do this sort of thing, so when we entered the house we were called to task for disobeying. There was one amongst us who decided he could handle the situation and after he directed a few sass words at mother, she took hold of him and he started to fight back. Now, she was not a large woman, but she was able to sit on him and administer the punishment he had coming!

Our parents were good neighbors and a friend to most everyone. Mother was especially close to her parents and her sisters. I remember when Aunt Caroline Spaulding's husband passed away. Dad and mother invited her and her family to stay at their home for a while. They stayed for a year and they were welcome to stay longer if they wished.

Mother was a good seamstress. I remember how she used to sit for hours during the winter months, treading that sewing machine with her foot, patching and making new clothes and darning the socks. We always had warm clothes when the weather was cold. I recall when I went to school in Coltman, some of the older girls called me 'Little Santa Claus' because I came to school with knit mittens, overshoes, a stocking cap, a good warm coat and a scarf around my neck.

Mother and dad had a good life together. If they ever quarreled, or had any form of contention between them in their married life they did certainly conceal it well. We sometimes question (unwisely) why some of God's children who are living good lives are burdened with trials and adversities, but I understand that these things are necessary and actually bring families closer together. Certainly, our parents have had many such experiences. For instance, mother used to travel by buggy and horse to town to take the cream and eggs to market and to shop for needed items, and commodities at Simmons Mercantile. She always liked to drive old Fox, a spirited bay horse with a white face and four white feet. He always brought her home until one day something frightened him. He started to run and she could not control him. The roads were rough

and mother was thrown from the buggy under the wheels. Imagine the excitement when the horse came bounding over the plank bridge with the buggy, but no one in it. They quickly went back and brought her home. She was badly bruised and shocked, but soon recovered.

I also remember mother telling about father's bout with pneumonia. He lay for several days with an extremely high fever. They had doubts that he would live. Suddenly in the middle of the night, his fever broke and he started to improve. On another occasion, dad had purchased a new horse. They knew he was a tricky old devil, so they were very cautious about getting behind him. One time, he had been working all day on the plow and seemed tired and calm. Dad stooped over to unhook the trace and the horse let go with his hind hoof and hit dad square in the face. Needless to say, he was pretty well beat and it was quite a while before he regained consciousness.

About 1918, dad and mother purchased 40 acres of ground that joined their property on the south. This land belonged to dad's brother, August. In order to buy the farm they had to mortgage their home and farm to the bank. It seems that they only farmed it one year when the bank foreclosed and they had to move off and leave their home. This was a great loss and a very sad experience for them. This was the only time, to my knowledge, that dad was angry enough to fight. The representative from the bank came out to serve foreclosure papers and he left in a hurry when he saw the fire in dad's eyes. That spring, the family moved to the day farm located about seven miles west of where the Osgood store is today. Dad had homesteaded 360 acres a few years previous, but there was little rain and the crops were short. The area was in a drought cycle at this time and many of the homesteads were turned back for the taxes owed. After harvesting what grain there was, the family moved to Idaho Falls and rented a home for the winter on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. In the spring of 1920, dad and mother moved the family to Osgood where they leased some land from the Utah Idaho Sugar Company. At Osgood they endured almost unbearable conditions. The wind blew constantly, the dust would sift through the poorly constructed windows and doors of the house, but still mother managed to plant a vegetable garden and grow beautiful flowers, which seemed to give life to the barren conditions that existed.

It was August 17, 1922 when mother passed from this life and took back with her a choice little spirit that was to be born into the world. It was in the evening that Aunt Dora and Uncle Willard Kedzie came to visit. Mother invited them out to the yard to show her flowers. She accidentally stepped in a posthole that was partly concealed, and she was injured and started to hemorrhage. Kedzies left immediately to bring a doctor, but were unable find anyone who would come. After more searching, they found a doctor who consented to go with them. He examined mother, then said we will have to

let nature take its course for a while. Then he went to sleep on the couch. They soon awakened him and told him to get up and do something. He decided that she would have to be taken to Idaho Falls to the hospital. They gave her transfusions, but to no avail.

The next morning, Uncle Carl came out to give us the message that Mother didn't make it. I shall never forget that experience. That night all the flowers that were growing in the yard froze.

It was Mother's aim throughout her married life to make home the most pleasant place in the world for her husband and children, which she achieved naturally and supremely. I have a great love and respect for our parents, and I coin the words of President David O. McKay, when he said of his mother; "I cannot think of a womanly virtue that my mother didn't possess."