

**Life History of
Rebecca Marie (Mother Marie) Jacobson Knaphus
(1916- 2001)**

Parents: Baltzar Hans Jacobson
Sara Rebecca Stay Jacobson

by Becky (Knaphus) Beddoes; her daughter; May 15, 2005

Rebecca Marie Jacobson was born on May 27, 1916 to Baltzar Hans and Sarah Rebecca Stay Jacobson. They had nine children: Rowena, Cecil, Dorothy, Joseph, Leo, Marie, Margaret, Catherine, and Phyllis. Only the youngest was born in a hospital. Marie was born at home on the family farm at the southeast corner of Thirty-Third south and Highland Drive in Salt Lake City. Mother related many stories of a happy but strict childhood with her three brothers and five sisters.

The Jacobson's owned two homes on their property (the old house and the new house). The "old" house came in handy on several occasions. Mother was quarantined in the old house as a young child with a severe case of whooping cough. She became very lonely for her mother, who had recently given birth. Grandma Jacobson was careful to keep her distance because she didn't want to infect the new baby. Meals and supplies were passed through a window or were left on the porch. Little Marie would sit by the window trying to get a glimpse of her beloved mother. When she spotted her mother hanging laundry on the backyard clothes line, she gleefully ran out the door to catch her! Marie chased her around the yard until she caught up to her and wrapped herself around her mother's legs. Marie just couldn't understand why her mother was so upset. That day Marie learned a valuable lesson about health standards. This whooping cough story was related to us many times, because it was necessary to isolate ill children as we were growing up.

Mother's parents were both educators. In fact, Grandpa Jacobson was the first Rhodes Scholar chosen from Utah. Grandmother was very industrious and expected her children to be likewise. Everyone had jobs to do. All the children were expected to do well in school. Marie did so well that she was put ahead a grade. Marie was a small girl and felt different and out of place when she was put into a city school, Forest Dale Elementary. She longed to be with her friends and attend the nearby William Penn School.

By high school, Marie had caught up physically and discovered that she was not only smart, but was also a gifted athlete. She was happy to be in the class just a year apart from her brother, Leo. They ran in the same crowd and enjoyed each other's friends.

Mother attended the U. of U. where she participated in track, pistol shooting, and archery. She was passionate about hiking, swimming, and tennis. She met and married Austin Kellogg. She gave birth to Norman on June 30th, 1937. After her divorce, she

moved back into her mother's home. All her sisters had fun helping with darling little Norman.

Dad, Torleif, dated Mom's older sister, Rowena. She introduced him to mother. Dad was smitten and he pursued mom and won her love. Grandma Jacobson strongly advised mother to reconsider her decision to marry him. Grandma foresaw a host of problems and obstacles ahead for her daughter. What courage it took to marry a man the same age as her mother who had seven children (some older than she), and was heavily in debt. Mother's prudent, frugal upbringing became an invaluable asset as she worked hard to blend the family together.

Mother (age 24) and Dad (age 58) were married March 21st, 1940 in the Salt Lake Temple by Elder John A. Widsoe.

Elling was born May 2, 1941. Mother and dad did not own an automobile, so mother took the bus to the hospital. During her confinement, Elling contracted impetigo (the hospital had a terrible outbreak of the infection). She took Elling by bus to the hospital daily for over a month before the infection was under control.

Stephen was born January 18th, 1943.

Mother worked very hard to feed and clothe the growing family. She was an excellent seamstress and made the children clothes from hand-me-downs.

I was born January 16, 1945—mom's first daughter. She was finally able to make dresses instead of shirts and trousers. Martin came into the family next, February 25, 1948 and Rowena was the last child born to them on April 18th, 1950.

We had an excellent mother who provided us with a happy and fulfilling childhood. We had no idea how poor we were because we always seemed to have everything we needed—except hot water! And, what a happy event it was when the older brothers and sisters had the electric water heater delivered and installed! Washing clothes, dishes, and all the children became so much easier to bathe.

Mother canned an enormous amount of fruit each year. One year she had just finished 30 two-quart jars of peaches when the kitchen table collapsed under the weight of the full bottles. I was amazed at how calm she was as she cleaned up the ruined fruit. I didn't fully appreciate what she went through that day until it was my turn to bottle fruit for my own family.

Mother enjoyed reading. I remember her gathering us around her in the evening and reading us stories. We always had board and card games and played them frequently. Sunday evenings we would have a light supper of rice pudding or toasted cheese sandwiches. Then we'd gather in the front room for pinochle. Many times we would be joined by the married family members.

Mom had great organizational skills. She would plan and carry out fantastic family dinner parties. I still don't know how we fit so many people into such a small home.

Christmas was always a special time for mother. She would plan all year to make certain that everyone would have something special.

In the late fifties, mother realized that she would need to work outside the home to make ends meet. As dad's health declined, she worked long hours and took special care of dad, never complaining. I don't know of a more devoted wife or mother in the world. I feel lucky to have been brought up by such a beautiful woman with so many fine attributes.