

Personal History of Olive Erma Hickman

Written by Olive Erma Hickman

Transcribed by Maureen Wolfe (daughter)

Olive Erma Hickman was born June 27, 1915 to Frank Leslie Hickman and Olive Ida Nixon in American Fork, Utah. I was born in our home. I had 2 sisters and 2 brothers. They were Leslie Dean Hickman, born Sept 17, 1913, June Rene Hickman born Feb 11, 1917, Nina Elaine Hickman born Nov 30, 1919 and Ruth Luana Hickman born Oct 26, 1924. My mother has always told me that there was an earth quake the night I was born. We lived in American Fork just a few months when we moved to Salt Lake City in the Keith apartments. At the time of my birth, my father was principal of the American Fork High School and had been for 4 years. This was where my brother Dean was born also. My father left teaching to go into business. Later that year we moved to Provo, Utah to a home on University Avenue, across the street from his mother who was a widow. I took my first steps in this home. Later we moved to our home on 345 E Center Street. I was nine years old in 1924 when we moved to a new home at 1426 Gilmer Drive in Salt Lake City. Our home was directly across the street from the Yale Ward meeting house. Our home became known as the Annex to the Ward because so many Primary practices were held there as my mother was the Primary chorister. She taught all the children to sing parts. They put on many Primary pageants and programs. This was always a fun time for all of us. Living so close to the church, we never left the house till it was time for Church to begin. So you would always see Daddy; mother with baby Ruthie and 4 children march down to the front of the chapel and sit down. It seemed it happened more like this then being there on time. But we were always there. Very seldom did we miss. We made lifetime friendships while we were living there. In our Ward was President George Albert Smith, President Joseph Fielding Smith and family. We went to school with his children. Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith Sr, George Gaskell Romney and George R Hill, member of the General Superintendency of the LDS Church Sunday School.

I started school at the age of 6 attending BYU Training School in Provo, Utah. I was there for the first three years. Then we moved to Salt Lake City and I attended the Uintah School. My close friends were Lael Brewster, Maurine Snow, Dorothy Dunn and Julina Perry. Julia Jack lived next door. Francis and Alyee Rogers lived up the street 4 houses. I used to play with Helen Snow, Francis Bagley and Ellen Toursen. Two of my favorite teachers were Miss Ryan and Miss Ryberg. It was in Miss Ryan's class that I had my curls cut off. I'll never forget that I hated to go to school and show the kids my hair. I was really glad to get it cut. It was down my back and I could sit on it. I attended Roosevelt Junior High in Salt Lake City. I was still friends with Lael and Maurine. Lael and I were very competitive in athletics. It was here I got 1st Place in Jumping the Hurdles. We were on the school softball team and in school Glee Club. I sang a solo in the Victor Hurbart Program. I also sang the high part in the Star Spangle Banner in a school program. I attended the LDS High School in Salt Lake City my freshman year. This was a good year where I made lots of great friends. The LDS High School closed its doors and a new High School was built and it was called South High. In 1931 – 1932 I attended East High which was only 5 blocks from home. We had a great school year with lots of activities. Lael and I were still the best of friends. In 1932 & 1933 I went with my brother to South High. He offered auto mechanics and he wanted to take the course. So he talked me into going down there for my last year. I still needed a half

semester of English to graduate. So I went there with him and took a lot of special courses like dress making and tailoring and public speaking from Bessie Jones. I hated to get up and participate. I was in the Glee Club and acapella chorus.

I attended college at Brigham Young University for 1 year. I took piano lessons and was also in the Ladies Glee Club under the director of Florence Jepperson. She also taught my mother music at BYU.

I came to Los Angeles to seek my fortune where I attended Beauty School in November 1936 to 1937. I lived with Uncle St Clair Nixon, my mother's brother, and Aunt Lyle during this time. They only had a two bedroom home and two bunks beds. Reed and Richard slept on the top bunk together and I slept on the bottom bunk. Their daughter Maline who was a baby and slept in Aunt Lyle's room. I used to ride the bus and street car into school each day. The Nixon's lived in Mar Vista, CA. We attended the Mar Vista Ward. That is where I met Ralph Bird. Also in the ward was a boy I knew in Salt Lake when I worked at Kaleeys Ice Cream Store, His name was Marion Evertson. The Sunday Marion saw me; the Mar Vista Chorus was on the stand. When Ralph saw Marion wave to me, Ralph asked "Who is that?" Marion said "you don't want to know, she is too old for you". This was the day I met Gay Sorenson, who became my best friend. She told me that someone wanted to meet me and that person was Ralph. I came to Church wearing my new fur coat that I purchased with my tips and salary I had saved while working at Jacob Lake for Aunt Nina, my mother's sister, and Uncle Harold Bowman. I think Ralph thought I was "rich". My Grandma Nixon financed the tuition for Beauty School and I was not rich, just had expensive ideas. I really didn't care for Beauty School after going into it. I hated all the hair in the brushes and sinks. That really made me sick. Before I knew whether I had passed the Staste Board, Ralph & I were married. So I really didn't get much practice in the Beauty Shop. My experience was working with Pearl Jeppson who owned a shop in West Los Angeles. My other problem was doing hair. I worried too much about if the patron would like her hair when I finished. I did not stay with it long enough to get my confidence up. I continued to keep up my license for 40 years. Then I let it lapse because I knew I would never do that kind of work again. Of course Grandma Nixon was very unhappy with me because I was to pay her back for my schooling.