

# TABITHA MOFFAT BROWN

1780 - 1858

Tabitha Moffat Brown was a tiny, 66-year-old widow weighing less than 100 pounds when she left Missouri for Oregon in 1846. She had been a schoolteacher up to that point and did not relish the idea of leaving home, but she was determined to travel with most of her family to a land that had captivated her son, Orus. The traveling party included Orus, her daughter Pherne, their families, and her husband's brother, John Brown, age 77.

With only 800 miles left to travel before reaching their final destination, the party took the advice of a "rascally fellow" to follow a "cut off" across the southern Cascades. This "cut off" was later known as the Applegate Trail. Tabitha wrote that due to lies, she had been robbed of all her personal belongings and had nearly died of starvation.



When her party became desperate and in an attempt to reach help, Tabitha and John set off alone on horseback. John became so ill he could hardly continue. She writes, "Pause for a moment and consider the situation. Worse than alone, in a savage wilderness, without food, without fire, cold and shivering with wolves fighting and howling all around me. Dark clouds hid the stars. All as solitary as death." Yet she found strength to save them both.

On Christmas Day, 1846, after nine months of travel, Tabitha set foot in a house for the first time. A missionary family welcomed her into their Salem home. It was there that she reported finding a 6-¼ cent piece (a picayune) in her glove, which she had thought to be a button. She said, "This was my cash capital to commence business within Oregon". With that coin she purchased three needles, traded some of her old clothes for buckskin and worked them into gloves for the Oregon ladies and gentlemen, from which she cleared about \$30.00

Caring for poor and orphaned children was Tabitha's ultimate goal. With the assistance of Reverend Harvey Clark, she opened the Oregon Orphan's Asylum and School in Tualatin Plains (later Forest Grove) in 1848. The school expanded to become Tualatin Academy, forerunner of Pacific University at Forest Grove.

Through labor and hard work she was able to accumulate property, "rental cows", and enough cash to be able to donate \$400 of it to the University, and \$100 to the Academy. "This much I have been able to accumulate by my own industry, independent of my children, since I drew 6 ¼ cents from the finger of my glove."



Tabitha Moffat Brown was truly a remarkable woman. In 1987, the Oregon State Legislature named Tabitha Brown, "Mother of Oregon." Today Tabitha's story can be found in Forest Grove, in the Pacific University Museum.



# ALICE SIM

1915 - 2009



Alice Sim had an interest in politics from a very young age. As an adult, she pursued that interest vigorously, turning it into action and public service as a resident of Lincoln City

Alice served on numerous boards and committees and was instrumental in starting many civic organizations. She served on the Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital's Board of Trustees for many years, on the board of the Driftwood Public Library, was one of the organizers of the "Friends of the Library" and served as president and treasurer.

She was a board member and treasurer of the North Lincoln County Historical Museum. In addition she helped paint walls and move boxes as the museum moved from place to place before residing at its present location in Taft's old city hall building.

A charter member of the League of Women Voters, Alice served on the Children and Youth Commission, and volunteered for a multitude of community projects including tutoring a public school student in learning English as a second language.

In 1983, Alice was elected as the first woman mayor of Lincoln City and is remembered by her council colleagues as a natural leader, with a quick wit, who insisted that everyone be well prepared and keep "on task". She found the job time consuming but always interesting.

In her first year of office the police came into a council meeting and arrested one of the counselors on drug dealing charges. In the second year, she

had to negotiate with a homeowner who harbored eight dogs and 23 cats that were annoying the neighbors. She threatened to do bodily harm to herself if she were forced to part with her pets. In her third year, Lincoln City made the national news when 16 unburied bodies were found in the garage of the local mortuary. Further investigation increased the number of bodies to 38 that were not properly buried or cremated. It cost the city \$50,000 to investigate the crime.

Building on the work of her predecessor, Al Hatton, many beneficial projects came to fruition during her term as mayor: A new water treatment plant, a new sewer treatment system, and the opening of the Community Center.

It was time when many Californians were moving north even as southern California was seeking to tap into Oregon's abundant water supply. Alice recalls: "I laughed at times when they complained about sending the water to southern California. I think if they had the choice between piping the water there or having the southern Californians come here, they'd pipe the water."

In 1985, while serving as mayor, Alice helped secure several grants from the city, county, United Way, Presbytery of the Cascades, and along with private donations, she secured a grant to establish a permanent domestic abuse shelter for women in Lincoln City. The grants funded the purchase of an Oceanlake property that served as a sanctuary for abused women for many years before its replacement by a new dedicated facility. Originally called "Lincoln Shelter and Services," it is now known as "My Sister's Place". Alice spent one night a week at the shelter, offering comfort, answering phones and often driving out alone, to retrieve women and children in distress. Both shelters have borne the name "Alice Sim House" in honor of her contributions.



Alice Sim was a political force to be reckoned with, a tireless public servant and an intrepid advocate for people in need. She will always be remembered as a truly remarkable woman.



# MAUDIE WALLING WANKER

1892 - 1970

Born in what is now Lake Oswego in 1882, Maude Walling Wanker showed artistic ability even as a child. Her formal art education included intermittent attendance at the Museum Art School, the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Oregon, and the National School of Art in Vienna, Austria. Beginning in 1933, Maude began a series of paintings documenting historical sites and buildings in Oregon. Some of her nearly one hundred canvasses were exhibited in 1935 in a solo show entitled, "Historical Landmarks of Oregon" at the Meier and Frank Art Gallery. She also had a painting accepted for exhibit at the prestigious 1939 "National Exhibit of American Art" in New York City.

Maude Wanker was honored as woman of the year by Theta Sigma Phi, a national honorary and professional sorority, has been listed for over 30 years in Who's Who in American Art and in the more recent publications Who's Who in the West, and American Woman. She was the recipient of some 450 awards, 200 of them blue ribbons. Her one-person exhibits were shown in 20 states since 1930. She exhibited in Seattle and Portland Museums and in several Universities.

In 1941, Maude moved to Lincoln City, where she was the chief organizer of the Lincoln County Art Association. A year later, she founded the Lincoln County Art Center in DeLake. She taught composition, design, and painting at the center and gave private lessons in her studio. The center became a well-known venue for many group exhibitions and one-person shows. In 1943, Mrs. Wanker and her husband, whom she married in 1901, opened the Paint Box Gallery in Wecoma.

Maude Wanker worked tirelessly to promote art in her community and along the Oregon Coast. She was an active member of the Oregon Society of Artists, the American Artists Professional League, the Attic Club, the Lincoln County Art Association, the Oregon

*"My greatest joy in living has been in having the opportunity to give of my art knowledge gained over some seventy-one years."*

M.W.W.



Amateur Watercolor Society, the Master Watercolor Society, the Oregon Watercolor Society, and the Cascades Artists Group. She was among the few Oregon artists who provided regional illustrations for the Ford Times publication. Her work is in the collections of the Oregon Historical Society, the State Capitol, La Grande Library, and the Hallie Ford Museum of Art in Salem.



Maude Walling Wanker will always be remembered as a remarkable woman who was a moving force for art and culture in Lincoln City and throughout Oregon. She died in Lincoln City in 1970.



# RACHEL BRADBURY STROME

1898 - 1985



Rachel Bradbury Strome was born in Nebraska and moved to Oregon in 1903 because of her parent's dream to live in Oregon one day. Her mother died before the family made the journey, but when Rachel's father received a small inheritance, he was able to rent a farm and finally make the move. The children relied heavily on the oldest daughter, Bess, who at the age of 19 was responsible for selling all the household goods and arranging for the children to join their father in Oregon. Rachel was only nine years old when the move was made, and had to work hard, along with her family, to adjust to a new way of life. Within a year, her father remarried. His new wife, Anna Pratt, helped the family weather hardships with hard work and loving kindness.

After the family moved to Lincoln County, Rachel attended Toledo High School until the 10th grade, stopping short of receiving her high school diploma. Never the less, her life's ambition was to become a teacher, so she attended the Oregon Normal School in Monmouth and graduated after a six-week's course with a teaching certificate. Her first teaching assignment was the Simpson Creek School for an eight-month term for which she was paid \$55.00 per month. That assignment was followed by two years at Long Prairie School before she got a job teaching at the Daisy Dell School near Devil's Lake. When she arrived in Taft by boat, she met her husband-to-be Alvah Strome, a handsome boat engineer, who caught her attention the moment she first saw him.

After marrying Alvah on September 21, 1921, the couple moved to a home on the Siletz River. Rachel took up teaching once more at the Reed Creek School, while Alvah fished for a living.

Rachel was a remarkable woman, caring for five children, while she kept a large garden, fished, chopped wood, washed clothes, cooked and helped her husband with chores on the farm. She finally received her high school completion certificate through testing in the General Education Development Program, just before her 70th birthday.

In 1922 after the birth of her first child, Emma Louise, was born, Rachel and Alvah became homesteaders on the river. Although the life of an early homesteader was harsh, Rachel exemplified the qualities she thought were most necessary for a homesteader, "determination and the ability to keep going in the face of adversity and hardship." She had four more children John, Patricia, Anna and Frank.

The first few years on the Siletz River were especially hard due to two devastating floods. During the first flood in 1921, the Siletz flooded so badly that it wiped out almost every home and farm along the river. The aftermath of the flood and cleanup was heartbreaking, causing some homesteaders to relocate away from the river, but Alvah and Rachel stayed. However, when the second "fifty year flood" came only two years after the first, they moved their house back from the river.

Living on the Siletz River was a hard life, challenging but rewarding. There was great camaraderie among these hardy folk, who constantly helped one another with every day work, as well as floods and other disasters. Her memoir, *Back of Beyond*, tells of many harrowing experiences, but also includes stories of friendship and support from people like her dearest friend, Gertrude "Gertie" Miller.



# CONSTANCE P. HANSEN

1906 - 1993

Constance “Connie” P. Hansen was born in California but raised in Oregon. She moved to California to attend the University of California, Berkeley, graduating with a degree in Botany. After graduating, she stayed in California, marrying and raising a family while pursuing her passion for plant collecting and gardening. In 1973, retired and a widow, she returned to Oregon to look for a damp and sheltered piece of property where she could grow her favorite plant, the Iris. In Lincoln City, she found and purchased her dream location, a small home surrounded by swampy land, originally owned and developed by local artist and painting teacher, Maud Wanker.

For the next 20 years Connie worked tirelessly in her garden from dawn to dusk, creating the masterpiece we enjoy today. She worked ceaselessly, making a showcase for rhododendrons, azaleas, irises, primroses, lilies, heathers, a collection of trees and a variety of perennials from an overgrown marshland meadow and creek.

As a botanist, she knew plants intimately. As an artist, she created a complex and beautiful landscape. Featured twice in *Sunset* and once in *Fine Gardening Magazine*, and many times in the *Oregonian*, the garden was well known. People from all over the United States and even from foreign countries sought her out. She received hundreds of admiring visitors each year, many of whom made annual pilgrimages to stroll through her garden and ask her horticultural questions. Some visitors brought plants as gifts or to trade, and many made purchases at her annual plant sale.

Connie was an active participant in several horticultural societies. As an iris hybridizer she achieved recognition by growing and registering the Siberian hybrid, “Lightly Touched”, still growing in the garden today.



Towards the end of her life as her health was deteriorating, Connie sold her property to a friend, Virginia Warren, to make certain the garden would not be destroyed. Ms. Warren retained the property after Connie’s death in 1993; despite the difficulties she encountered maintaining it. Concerned citizens who had known Connie and loved her garden came together to help restore and preserve the garden. In May of 1994, with the help of both Virginia Warren and Rita Holmes, a local benefactor, the Connie Hansen Garden Conservancy was formed to purchase the property and maintain the garden as a nonprofit organization.



Connie Hansen was a remarkable woman and botanist whose dream was realized through perseverance and hard work. Today, Connie Hansen’s Garden is a Lincoln City treasure, enjoyed by tourists and residents alike.



# SOPHIA "SISSY" JOHNSON

1865 - 1931

Sophia "Sissy" Johnson was born in 1865, the daughter princess of Onatta, the great chief of the Tootoona Indians, one of the largest tribes brought to the Coast Reservation the same year Sissy was born. When in 1887, the government passed a "General Allotment Act" known as the Dawes Act, which in effect dissolved the Coast Reservation and tribal sovereignty, each tribal member was "allotted" 80 acres of land. The Siletz Indians did not accept the General Allotment Act until 1894, and even then many members did not move to live on their land, since that meant living far away from established homes, friends and family.

Sissy married Jacob "Jakie" Johnson Jr. while still living on the Reservation. The couple were among the first allotment holders to move from the reservation and live, for a time, on their allotted land.

Sissy and Jakie's combined allotments included most of the land along the south side of Siletz Bay. They built a home on the shore of the bay and lived an isolated life for some years before homesteaders began arriving at the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time, a homesteader could claim 160 acres of land, twice that allotted to the Indians. A person might expect that fact to have caused resentment from the Johnsons or hostility toward the newcomers. But, in fact, the opposite was true. Sissy and Jakie were warm, welcoming and helpful neighbors. "Jakie and Sissy Johnson used to stop in and visit us and have a meal with us at the ranch house. They were just real nice people." Dave Pompel

Most homesteaders were hearty and hard working, but many did not have the everyday knowledge necessary to thrive in a harsh and unforgiving environment. Sissy and Jakie, accustomed to life on the Oregon Coast, taught many early homesteaders survival skills, including where fresh water springs could be found, how to find and eat mussels and crab and how to cross the bay with a team of horses. "When we'd go to Newport, Jakie Johnson rowed us down across the bay and then he'd bring our horses over for us to ride. He'd watch for us to come back and row over and ferry us back. Jakie and his wife were just as nice as they could be to us. The settlers had a high regard (for them)." Fred Butterfield

As a medicine woman, Sissy knew about medicinal herbs and remedies. Since there were no doctors available in the early years, she was often called when homesteaders were injured or ill, and she never failed to come to their aid. "I was sick in bed. It was one time before one of my children was born. I don't know, something went wrong, and I was sick in bed. And one of the boys - one of my sons - went over to Jakie Johnson's to tell Mrs. Johnson to come over." Mattie Olsen



Sissy also served as a midwife, delivering babies and nursing them when they became ill. A remarkable Native American woman and allotment holder, Sissy Johnson exemplifies the spirit of independence, helpfulness and harmony with nature so valued by native people. She showed white settlers that Indians were not people to be feared, but rather respected and appreciated for their knowledge, traditions and values.



# AUGUSTA "TOOTS" SMITH SIMMONS

1900 - 1976

Augusta M. Simmons, known to her family as "Toots" was born to Louis and Agnes Newberry Smith on August 28, 1900 in Siletz, Oregon. Like many Native American women, Augusta's life was often difficult and challenging. At the time of her birth, the Coast Reservation and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians had been terminated by the US government through the Dawes Act of 1887. That meant that tribal members no longer received government services, much of the land set aside for the reservation was taken away and individual tribal members were forced to accept an allotment of land, often far from their established homes near the town of Siletz. The resulting poverty, confusion and disruption were hard for many to bear. Augusta is one of the strong Siletz women who brought her family through these hard times by using her innate flexibility and determination to survive and thrive in a white man's world.

Augusta may have learned much about how to bridge the divide between native ways of life, and those customs brought to the Oregon coast by white settlers, from her stepfather, Coquelle Thompson. Coquelle Thompson worked with anthropologists to document reservation life and preserve traditional customs and ceremonies, such as the Ghost Dance.

In her youth, "Toots" helped her family in many ways, including riding her horse from her remote home down the Siletz River to the town of Siletz to run errands for her mother and family.

During WW II Augusta was a volunteer in the war effort. At night she went to the center of Siletz to listen for enemy aircraft, which she had been trained to identify from the sounds made by the different planes. In the early evening hours, she checked the homes in and around the town of Siletz to make sure people had their windows blacked out with curtains or other means, to protect them from enemy attack.

Siletz Indians, although they did not traditionally operate under a matriarchal clan system, were among the earliest to have strong female representation in their elected government. In the 1940's Augusta served on the Siletz Tribal Council making sure that tribal members were looked after and that their needs were represented, both locally and nationally.

In the 1940's and 1950's she often worked in the large community kitchen on Government Hill, teaching cooking and canning to women wishing to learn that skill. Augusta was an industrious food preserver and canned a large variety of fruit, vegetables, salmon, eel, deer and elk meat.

Toots was also the model for a fictional character in the book Rebounding Vengeance by Theresa (Ketcheson-Boldrick) Roper. Under her picture she is identified as "Miss Augusta Smith, a descendant of 'Chee Chee', the Umpqua maiden," a name that Toots was also called by her family.



A lifetime resident of Siletz until her death on March 3, 1976, Augusta Smith Simmons was a remarkable woman. Yet she was not so different from many native women who lived quiet lives of service to their family, their tribal community and their traditional way of life.



# LUCILLE DUNCAN

1897 - 1976

Lucille Duncan exemplified the spirit of many intrepid young women who left comfortable homes to teach in rugged, barely settled country during Oregon's homesteading years. Unlike many teachers who came from the city, Lucille's family lived on a potato farm and all the children worked on planting and harvesting. Consequently, she felt she was schooled not only in academics but in life as well, more than ready for the adventure ahead.

Lucille passed her teaching exam at age 18 in Oswego, Oregon. It was not easy to find a teaching assignment. According to Lucille, "No placement service offered listings, no college backed you up, no experience told you what move to make... you applied by letter...boards seldom notified you of rejection..." Just when she began to think, "What am I going to do, stay on the farm and pick spuds the rest of my life?" she was offered a teaching assignment in a small town called Neotsu on the central Oregon Coast. She didn't know how she would get there, how many pupils she would have or where she would board. Although she was nervous about these unknowns, especially about her students and what their parents might expect of her, she was determined to do her best for this coastal community.

To get to her teaching post, Lucille had to take a train to Willamina, and from there travel a long rough road by stage to the coast. She wore an overcoat of green wool, which she hoped would suffice through chill and wet weather. Though the travel made her weary, she noticed the beauty along the Salmon River Road and remained enthusiastic and anxious to begin teaching.

Single teachers in those days did not live alone, so most took up residence with a local family. Lucille resided with the Muir family. She paid a modest amount for room and board, which she felt she could afford since she was being paid \$60.00 per month for teaching.

The school Lucille was assigned, known as District 61, was on Devils Lake. Her students mostly lived somewhere around the lake and often took a rowboat to school. Her students numbered up to 30, ranging in age from 6-16. They came from homesteads and log camps and included native children from the surrounding areas. She was told that the native students would be cooperative as long as they liked her, but if they didn't, they would be hard to control. Fortunately for Lucille, she quickly won over her students.

Getting to her schoolhouse was challenging in bad weather. The classroom needed daily maintenance, water hauled up from the creek and wood chopped for heat, but her students provided that, vying for the attention from their teacher and status that came from being her helper.

Lucille proved herself to be an excellent teacher, but she was also a good student of her environment, learning much from her students and their parents about the lake, the ocean, plants, animals, and fish. Lucille learned about native customs and ceremonies and came to understand and respect them. She even learned to enjoy dancing and how to row a boat, a feat for which she was most proud.

At the end of the school year "Miss Duncan" gave each of her students a "School Day Remembrance" booklet that included this poem:

*Give love, and your life will flow,  
A strength in your utmost need;  
Have faith, and a score of hearts will show  
Their faith in your word and deed.  
For life is the mirror of king and slave,  
'Tis just what we are and do;  
Then give to the world the best you have,  
And the best will come back to you.*

~ Madeline Bridges ~



Lucille Duncan was a remarkable woman and teacher who bravely opened her life to new experiences, thereby gaining the admiration and love of her students and the community she came so far to serve.



# MILDRED HARMON SALAZAR

1926 - 2008



Mildred Harmon Salazar was born July 26, 1926, in Monticello, Kentucky to Oliver and Sarah Jane (Twyford) Harmon. Due to her father's ill health, the family moved from Kentucky to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he died. Her mother married Samuel Wilson and they moved to an 80-acre farm in Pierce, Colorado. When her stepfather died her mother moved the family to Abilene, Texas.

Upon graduation from Abilene Christian College with a Bachelor's Degree in Education, Mildred moved to Oregon where she taught English at Columbia Christian High School in Portland. She also taught at high schools in Ophir, Sweet Home, and from 1962 to 1971, at Taft High School in Lincoln City. As a teacher she was inspirational, funny, warm and is still fondly remembered by her students. While teaching, she furthered her education, receiving a Master's Degree in Library Science from Portland State University and became school librarian at Oceanlake, Delake and Rose Lodge elementary schools.

During her time at Oceanlake, a woman named Helen Neimi came to the school to share history books of the area with the students and staff. Mildred became so impressed by Neimi's faithfulness to the North Lincoln County Pioneer Association she was compelled to become involved herself, "I was inspired by Neimi driving her little old car here and yonder."

She began her work with local history by conducting an oral history interview with George Kangas, a long-time Lincoln City resident. After the interview, Salazar wrote up the history and so began a long series of oral history interviews that continued from 1981 until 2002.

For more than three decades Mildred recorded the memories of homestead family descendants, but the interviews were just a small part of the work she accomplished over three decades. She also transcribed each interview, compiled them into books, and then edited and indexed each one. The result of her life's work is three additional volumes of the Pioneer History of North Lincoln County. This significant contribution to local pioneer history caused her to be named Lincoln City's Woman of the Year in 2003.

While working on the history books she also managed to do volunteer work for the North Lincoln County Historical Museum, which she was instrumental in founding. She became the museum's first curator and served on the Board of Directors until her death in 2008. In 2007 the Pioneer Room of the North Lincoln County Historical Museum was dedicated in her name.

Mildred Salazar was a remarkable teacher, librarian, curator, historian and writer. She will be lovingly remembered by all the people she touched directly, and also by the families whose history she helped to preserve.





# GERTRUDIE MILLER

1896 = 1996

Gertrude was born in 1896 on a pre-emption claim on the Chetco River. For almost 100 years, Gertrude Gardner Miller observed and participated in the history of her times as a pioneer, wife, mother, dairy farmer and trusted friend.

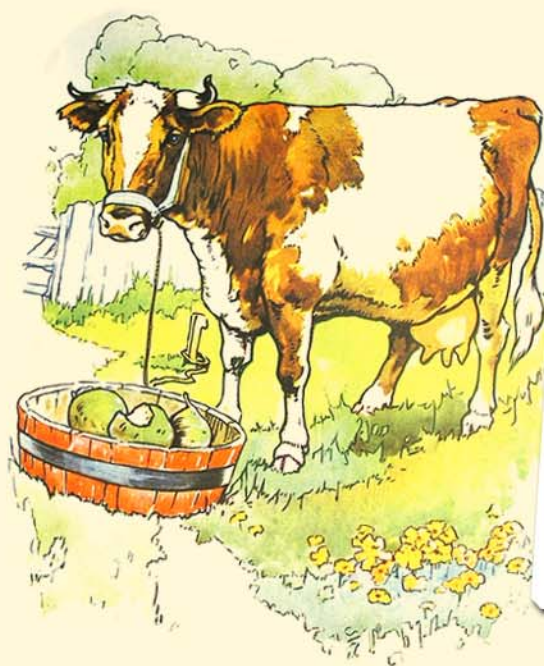
At sixteen, Gertrude cooked for the sawmill crew that was owned by her father and uncles. In Curry County at that time school was in session only three months a year, making an education rather hard to get. During the summer that she cooked for the crew, Gertrude prepared for and took the teachers' examination, in spite of her ineligibility to be employed as a teacher until she was older. She held the certificate and later taught at Winchuck and Jacks Creek Schools.

When Gertrude married Elmer Miller, the country was involved in World War I, and everyone was doing something for the war effort. More food was needed, and the Millers thought a farm along the Siletz River would be the place where they could best help the country and themselves.

Elmer and Gertrude traveled from Siletz by wagon to their new home near Mowrey's Landing. The mud was so deep that the horses floundered, leaving the wagon and left it stuck in the mud. Gertrude got out and walked the rest of the way to the little fisherman's cabin where they camped. Gertrude had just passed her twenty-first birthday.

While fixing up the three-room homestead house a freshet caused the river to rise quickly, flooding the bottomlands, and surrounding the cabin with five feet of water. The honeymooning couple were taken completely by surprise, and lost many personal and household possessions.

As soon as the water receded the hard work of clearing the land of debris and a foot to three feet of sediment began, with Gertrude working alongside her husband, making fires and burning brush.



Having no money, they survived on fish, potatoes, and the few huckleberries they picked. As soon as they could, they planted a garden of corn, potatoes, beets and carrots. Over the years Gertrude and Elmer experienced six or seven high waters that eventually meant moving their house to higher ground.

Gertrude and Elmer endured heartbreaking work, influenza epidemics, and floods, but the worst was the loss of their first baby, a girl. Gertrude reflected, "Pioneering was pretty hard on babies. On most all these farms up here, there's a pioneer baby marker." Their son, Lee Miller, was born in 1926.

In addition to farming and fishing, Gertrude and Elmer started raising a few calves, since they "wanted a few cows to milk so they could have a few dollars selling cream." From the calves Gertrude developed a Grade A dairy herd that was as good or better than any in the country. The hard daily work of milking the cows was done mostly by Gertrude, who began milking by hand, but when the herd grew to forty-five cows she started using a milking machine. Still, she had corns on her fingers for many years.



Gertrude Miller is one example of remarkable pioneer women who faced adversity, hardship and personal tragedy; meeting everything life threw her way with determination, optimism and hope. She died at the age of 99.