

Estella Thomas Richman

23 September 1886 – 27 October 1971

**This History was Written by
George Reese Richman (a son)**

Estella Thomas Richman (my mother) was born September 23, 1886 in Paradise, Utah to John Edward Thomas and Annie Shelton Obray. She grew up on the family farm on the north end of Paradise, Utah. Marion Olsen bought the farm from my Grandpa Thomas and his house is now where the "Old Thomas House" was. My mother spent her summer days along with her brother, Joe, herding the milk cows as they grazed on the northeast part of the farm. She attended the Paradise Elementary School through the eighth grade. She married George S. Richman Dec. 12, 1906.

Mom and Dad had been married over 11 years before Edna was born and I know very little about those years. I know some of them were spent with the sheep owned by Teddy and Zella Summers. I have a picture of Mom and Zella riding mules.

After Edna was born it was about 11 more years before I was born. A brother, Del Roy, was born in 1926 and he lived only about 6 weeks. Jay, my brother, was born in 1931. The Great Depression of the 30's marked our early childhood. As I picture my mother I see her in many jobs, all of them hard work.

As a young girl she milked cows, a lost art for girls today.

Before I started school, Mom furnished board and room for elementary school teachers. They had to stay in Paradise because travel from Logan and other parts of the valley was "too far".

The road from Hyrum to Paradise was a gravel road. The first teacher I remember living with us was Miss Richards (Jenny Richards), from Mendon. She was probably the reason I dreaded starting school. The whole summer before first grade I would not cross the square (public square) to go to Jensen's store, 2 blocks south and a block east of our place.

Another job my mother worked at was plucking turkeys. This was for the Whites who had a trout farm and a turkey herd. When the turkeys were processed, men (usually young men) would catch the turkeys, kill them (I'm not sure how), dip them in hot water, and bring them to the women to be plucked. They would be hung up and the feathers removed by hand, a very hard strenuous job. I think people were paid on a per turkey basis.

Mom went to Brigham City one summer and lived with her sister so she could work in the canning factory.

A great deal of our summer was spent in Blacksmith Fork Canyon and later at Elk Valley where Dad herded cattle. Those were some of our happiest days and I think Mom felt that way too.

On occasion we would all ride together, Dad, Mom, Jay and I. As we prepared to ride one day Dad and I urged Mom to ride a brown horse that she had never ridden. She was hesitant and a little bit afraid of that horse. Dad and I told her how smooth he traveled and how pleasant he was to ride. As she started to get on the horse, he spooked and whirled around with her, hitting her head on a tree. We were camped at the Elk Valley Ranger Station so there was a phone available. We called Dr. Burgess in Hyrum and he came to Elk Valley to care for Mom. This was a distance of about 30 or 35 miles over poor dirt roads. This event would have been in the late 1930's. Mom's injuries were not real serious and she recovered with no lasting effects.

One summer Mom and Jay went out to Nevada and I stayed with Dad up Blacksmith Fork. She worked for Pratt Mathews cooking for a railroad crew. They lived in a railroad car on a siding called Proctor. This is on the rail line that goes over Silver Zone Pass. I'm sure this had to be a very hot, miserable place to spend summer months.

One thing my mother enjoyed was an annual trip to Salt Lake each fall with Pearl (her sister) and her husband Russell Johnson. Russell went to UEA Convention and Mom and Pearl would go along spending a couple of days doing whatever you do in Salt Lake for a day or two.

Pearl and Russell and their girls Lola and Colleen, lived in Nibley, Utah. Almost every Sunday they would come to Paradise to my Grandpa Thomas's house and we would also go there. Grandpa would always buy a big beef roast. Mom and Aunt Pearl would cook it on the wood stove, prepare potatoes and gravy and all the other stuff and we would eat Sunday dinner there. Sometimes other brothers and sisters would come but the Johnson family and ours were the regulars.

With the approach of World War II, our lives changed. Mom went to work at the army depot at 2nd street in Ogden. She traveled from Paradise to Ogden every day. She also made sure we (Jay and I) were fed and ready for school each day. This was the first time, I believe, that she earned any "real" money. She spent most of it on Jay and me, and later, on our kids. She loved to buy little toys or candy or any little thing for the kids. After 2nd street she transferred to Hill Field and worked there until she retired.

When Dad died in 1961, Mom seemed lost. It was obvious she could not live alone in Paradise. She did not drive a car. The last car she drove was the 1924 Model T. She liked to stay at the Ogden Hotel and visited us at times and she spent a lot of time with Jay and Elva. She had some physical problems and Jay, Edna and I thought she would get the kind of care she needed in a rest home. I talked her into trying the rest home in Brigham City. She was hesitant but accepted it, I think mainly because Jess Cook worked there. Her needs were better satisfied there than any other option but I don't think she was ever happy there. I have always felt guilty, wondering if there were not better options. Mom died in that rest home in 1971, ten years after Dad died.