



Della Mae Miller

March 29, 1915 - January 21, 2008

Della Mae Ury was born at her parents' home in Chapman, Nebraska on March 9, 1915 to Elza Ury and Fairy Del Shreves Ury. No birth certificate was issued. Della grew up in the small town of Chapman, Nebraska where she was born and attended school and graduated high school there. Her father Elza ran the Ury Store in Chapman and she would run errands for her father to their home which was just across a gravel alley in back of the store. Her mother Fairy Del was a homemaker and her baked goods and meals were famous in the small town. Della said that at one time her mother also ran a small cafe in Chapman doing all the cooking and baking.

While on a return visit to her home town Memorial Day in 1998, Della had pointed out a side street near the drug store and told of how afraid they were to walk past there. She went on to explain that the horses and wagons were always hitched there and the horses would get spooked when people walked behind them and would swing their hind quarters around ready to kick. She also told of witnessing mule teams on the road crews building highways and roads.

There were stories of how she and her siblings went to the Platte River to learn to swim. And how her Dad went hunting and brought home wild game and always left it behind the kitchen door for her Mother to dress the game and cook it for the family of six children.

As a young woman Della worked in the family business at the Ury Store which by that time had dry goods, the town pharmacy, a soda fountain and the U S

Post Office. She worked the soda fountain after school and it was while working the counter that Della met a young man who stopped for ice cream at the store. Walter Miller was a welder on the railroad who often passed through small towns. For whatever reason, when Della waited on him he had the idea that she should become a pen pal with his younger brother Ray in Valley, Nebraska. She did so and the young people exchanged letters and photos through the mail for over a year.

One day while Della was selling ice cream to her regular customers, Ray Miller came into the store unannounced and met the woman he had fallen in love with and would marry. Della told of how she was so nervous waiting on the handsome young man that she was visibly shaking and that she too had fallen in love.

When Raymond's Grandfather who emigrated here from Germany met Della, she could hardly understand a word of his broken English but the story was that after he met her, he gave his Grandson one of the family homes in Valley, Nebraska and that is where they remained for the rest of their married lives. It was 1934, and the country still was suffering from the crash, so Ray and Della were married in her parent's home on February 4. It was attended by family with his sister and her brother as witnesses. The bride and groom stood on a white horse hair rug for the ceremony.

It would be more than four years before the couple had their first baby and they traveled extensively in the states up until that time, following the rails where Ray was employed. They lived as far west as Helena, Montana and in the east in New York. The young couple met many people as they rented rooms in hotels and room and board arrangements. Della told of how wild and lawless Helena, Montana was at the time they were there. Truly the wild west. Della was a busy wife and mother cooking and sewing, dressing chickens gardening and canning. One year Ray bought her a new sewing machine and she created terry cloth robes, flannel jammies and matching jumpers for the girls and flannel shirts for the boys, plus her patchwork quilts.

Della was baptized and received Jesus Christ as her personal Savior, April 20,

1958 at the age of 43. She was involved in all Scout leaderships, (Brownie, Girl, Cub and Boy), Eastern Star, and various church circles at the then Baptist-Presbyterian Church in Valley. Though she often denied it, because she could not read music, Della was a very good musician. In the 60's she played the electric organ at steak houses and lounges in downtown Omaha and belonged to the musicians union in Omaha. Ray always made sure she had the best musical instruments he could afford for her. Electric organs, pianos, accordions were his gifts of diamonds to his wife. During Valley's then annual celebration known as Alluvia, Ray transported the electric organ to the Valley Park and Della would play all requests outdoors under the stars in the open air. When asked where she thought her musical talent came from she related the family story that her Mother had bought a beautiful rosewood piano in hopes that her two daughters, (Della's older sisters), would take to it but since neither did, Della's Mother took the piano lessons herself while she was pregnant with Della and the rest, as they say, was history. It's a good story. Della was impish, a teaser and had a great sense of humor. She was very kind and caring, especially to those less fortunate. She fed the railroad bums that jumped from the freight trains in the switch yards in Valley and found their way to her door. While her children remained in the house, Della would pass out sandwiches, a glass of fresh milk from the dairy cows and a piece of homemade pie and coffee.

She not only was caring and kind, she was manipulative too. Her husband never liked carrots and being determined that he eat vegetables, she would hide them in the gravy and mash them to conceal them.

Della died January 21, 2008 in Valley, Nebraska. She was preceded in death by her husband Raymond Luther Miller, her parents, and brothers Robert and Edward and sisters Fay and Mary. Della is survived by her brother Daniel Ury and her children: sons Raymond Noel Miller and wife Nancy; Lynn Robert Miller and wife Terri; daughters Carol Rae Preble and husband David; and Marilyn (Polly) Riley and husband Rick.

Tribute Wall



“ *Della Mae Miller*

December 10, 2022 at 09:12 AM



“ *I remember so many good times with Aunt Della and cousin Polly and the dogs! Climbing trees, flying kites, kittens born in the barn, chickens and eggs, sleeping on the couch with the clock gonging every 15 minutes. And years later, bringing my sons to pick mulberries that we took home and made into jam. How she could play that organ! She had a way of making everything fun. So creative!*

Pamela Ury Schmidt - January 22, 2008 at 09:11 AM