

Alice Fletcher Leonard, *a Lovely Lady*

June 15, 1903. Alice Fletcher was born in Colfax County, Michigan.

December 17, 1903. The Wright brothers' first flight lasted a record 12 seconds.

Alice's parents, Albert and Naomi Fletcher, lived on a 40 acre tract near the town of Walkerville, Michigan, where they raised peaches and kept bees. Alice was the fifth of the Fletcher children, followed 2 years later by Glenn, the baby. Her older siblings were Beatrice, Reed, Lee and Kate. When Alice was 3 years old, the Fletcher family decided to join Naomi's brother, George, in Colorado. Albert, Naomi, their 6 children and all their household goods were bundled onto the train for the trip to Loveland, Colorado. The only memory Alice has of that trip is of being asleep and falling off the seat of the train. She still remembers the commotion it caused!

October 1, 1908. The Ford Model T was introduced.

The Fletchers were a farming family, living outside the town of Loveland. These were early days in Colorado, so the family had no electricity. They used kerosene lanterns for light and pumped water from a cistern. Loveland itself was a small town surrounded by sugar beet farms and cherry orchards. Even when she was very young, Alice walked up to 2 miles into town to go to Washington School in Loveland. Other families sent their children to school by horse and buggy, but Albert said it would make his children stronger and healthier to walk. One of Alice's earliest recollections of school was of the teacher letting the children go to the window to watch the novelty of a car going by. One of the first cars in Loveland belonged to the mail carrier. Alice remembers the car's high wooden wheels with rubber around the edges. Throughout Alice's childhood, Albert Fletcher farmed with horses and never had a car or any type of machinery.

Winter, 1913. The worst blizzard in Colorado's recorded history blew in while the children were in school. It snowed all day, so Albert brought the buggy to pick up his children. Although it was snowing heavily, they got home safely. By the next day there was snow to the top of the fences and no way for anyone to get out to the road. The children couldn't go to school for a week. During that week, the family ran out of food so Naomi made cornbread to keep them going. Finally, Reed, then 18 years old, decided he could get through if he rode the horse right along the fence line. It took him all day to ride the few miles to town and back. He returned home exhausted and snow blind. When school resumed, the children walked across the tops of the huge drifts.

During the summers, the whole family helped Albert when he contracted out to neighboring farms. Even as young children, Alice and Glenn had to put in a few hours every day helping in the sugar beet fields. Alice remembers that the girls would wear overalls with padded knees and heavily padded gloves. Their shirts came up high

around the neck and they wore straw hats so they wouldn't get too sunburned. Alice remembers the joke they played on their father one day when the whole family was out working beets. They always took a big lunch and would go into a grove of trees to eat, then Albert would take a nap. He would say, "Now we have to go back to work as quick as the noon whistle blows." So the kids got together and decided to hum loudly when the whistle blew hoping their Dad would stay asleep. It worked! They got an extra half hour on their lunchtime, although Albert was a little put out with them when he did wake up-Alice and Glenn spent their childhood as a team and as best friends. They played, worked and studied together, an inseparable unit. All of Alice's childhood stories start off with "Glenn and I," or "my brother and I," never just "I." They went on picnics, built "roads" under a favorite tree and went to the Larimer County Fair in the summer. In the winter they invented their own numbers game Alice remembers one winter when they were walking home and "it was way below zero and just desperately cold." Glenn got tired and wanted to sit down in the road. Alice was desperate because Glenn was two years younger and Alice was old enough to know that if he stopped walking he'd freeze. She got to the point where she was literally dragging him along. She finally got him to a neighbor's house where they got something warm to drink before starting once again up the hill for home. Sometimes during the summer the whole family would go camping. Albert would pile straw, quilts and the tent into the wagon. The grub went into big boxes under the seat. It was usually a full day's trip for the two horses to pull the wagon up into the Big Thompson Canyon. (Alice says, "It was what you might call a slow train to Arkansas when we went camping.") Alice and Glenn would get out and run behind the wagon, then hop on and ride when they got tired. When they reached the Old Montrose Inn, they would set up their big white tent, lay the straw down on the ground and make the quilts into beds on top of the straw. Holidays were always special in the Fletcher household, with the church being an important part of their religious celebrations. Alice remembers that Christmas was always a great time, although there were not many gifts. One Christmas the only gift she got was a hair ribbon but she loved it. She still remembers that it was blue satin and she thought it was a wonderful gift. Naomi had taken an extension class to learn how to make hats. Every Easter, the girls got new straw hats. Through the year, Naomi collected ribbons, flowers and trimmings. Each year she made hats in different colors, then let the girls help decorate them. Alice remembers the fun of wearing her special Easter hat to church. The Fourth of July was the time for watermelon, picnics and firecrackers. Halloween was a chance to be a little naughty. Alice still laughs when she remembers the year she and a bunch of friends put an old buggy sideways across a bridge. The tradition for New Years was for the neighbors to special order oysters, then all get together for oyster stew. Alice still loves oyster stew!

Naomi and Albert were hardworking, loving parents. Albert had a fun sense of humor and liked to joke with his children. His children worked hard, but Albert taught them to take pride in their work, a lesson Alice has carried through life.

Naomi rarely spanked her children. Alice was so sensitive even a cross look could hurt and a scolding was terrible. In 1918, a terrifying flu epidemic hit the country. The school closed down for almost three months. Whole families died; neighbors died. Alice remembers it as a terrible and frightening time. Everyone in her family was sick, but they all survived. Naomi was very sick. Even when Alice recovered from the flu, she couldn't walk and her legs hurt until they went numb. A bad cough lingered long afterward. Following the flu epidemic, Naomi became ill and was unable to manage their home without Alice's help. At the age of 15, Alice took over keeping the house, buying groceries and cooking. For over a year the entire responsibility of managing the household fell to Alice. When Alice was 17, her life changed. She went to work for the Aultman family on their Longmont farm, helping with the housework and caring for the baby. One of the family's relatives, Jesse Leonard, came to play cards with the older boys. One day the boys made a bet. If Jesse lost, he had to take Alice home that evening and bring her back to work the next morning. He lost. Alice thought Jesse's offer of transportation was kind, but didn't pay much more attention to it. A few days later, Alice's brother Reed told her that Jesse wanted to take her to the movies. Alice said she'd have to ask her parents. They agreed that if Reed said Jesse was okay, that it would be fine if Alice went out with him. Alice and Jesse dated for almost a year. June 18, 1921. Alice and Jesse were married at the Presbyterian Church in Longmont. Alice was 19 years old. Jesse was 22. They moved to Boulder, where Jesse started working in a small garage for his brother-in-law, Roy Puckett. Alice and Jesse had an old 1-seater Model T and Jesse quickly discovered he loved mechanical work. However, the couple briefly returned to Longmont where Jesse worked on a sheep ranch. Their first son, Duane, was born in Longmont on January 10, 1923. Within the year, the small family moved back to Boulder. They lived in an apartment near where the Boulder Drug Company is now, at 17th and Pearl Street. When Alice thinks of that home, she always remembers the little gas stove. She had to plug in quarters to make it work; when the quarters ran out, that was the end of cooking! Jesse's parents, Elva and George Leonard, were getting elderly, so gave up farming and moved to Boulder. They shared a home with Alice and Jesse at 21st and Pine for about 5 years, until the death of Jesse's father.

Kenneth was born in that home on September 20, 1925. Next, the Leonard family moved to a home on Arapahoe, the current site of Boulder High School. Alice remembers the pleasure they got from their radio in that home. It was a radio with crystals, operating from a car battery sitting next to it. Jesse's mother, Elva, and the grandson she was raising, Aubrey, lived a few doors away. Dorene Joyce was born on April 29, 1930. The depression years were hard for Alice's family. Jesse was working for \$25 a week and Alice spent \$5 of that to buy groceries for her family of 5. She could get 4 dozen eggs or 3 pounds of hamburger for a quarter. She always tried to get some cabbage and perhaps a Jelly fruit. They didn't have a refrigerator so storing food was always a problem. The family, got sick easily and Alice got very ill a few times. She remembers it as an extremely difficult time. When Dorene was 2 years old, there were rumors

of gold in Alabama. Jesse left for a month and a half but didn't find gold, so returned to Boulder. When the boys were in Jr. High School, the family moved to a large, pretty house at 215 and Bluff, then moved again in 1937 to Regent Street. Rose Marie was born on September 27, 1937, seven years after Dorene. The boys were teenagers. Alice raised her children without raising her voice and with few spankings. She had "a look" that was all the discipline she needed. (Apparently, it was busy little Rosie who earned the majority of the spankings!) Alice remembers the fun times while the children were young. The whole family enjoyed the phonograph and Alice loved to sing. They went to ball games and listened to plays on the radio. There was a vacation to the Black Hills, fishing trips all over Colorado and picnics with groups of friends in the Poudre Canyon outside Ft. Collins. There were annual drives over Trail Ridge Road (Alice's brother Reed worked on the construction of Trail Ridge.) There were yearly visits to see Alice's sister Kate and her husband, Paul, in Ignacio, Colorado. One of the annual trips to see Jesse's brother, Otto, and his wife, Jessie, coincided with the Worlds Fair at Treasure Island in San Francisco in 1939. Alice planned the trip for months. She bought fabric and made clothes for all the kids. The older children got new pajamas and new shirts and baby Rosie got 20 new dresses! They piled into the family Dodge. Because Rosie couldn't sleep unless she was holding her mother's hand, Alice had to ride in the back seat most of the way. Through the years, first Dorene, then Rose Marie fell in love with horses. Both Dorene and Rosie served as Pow Wow Queens in Boulder's rodeo and parade. Alice remembers one race where Rosie was so anxious to beat Dorene that Rosie crawled up on her horse's head, won, then fell off and broke her glasses.

Alice joined the Methodist Church immediately after the family moved to Boulder. The children always attended Sunday School and Alice was very active in her participation. She was Chairperson for almost 7 years, was a steward helping with communion and active in dinners and fundraisers. She contributed many years of dedicated service to her church. During these years, Alice belonged to several clubs in addition to her church work. One that she especially enjoyed was the Friends Friendly Circle, which she joined in the early 1930's. The club was non-denominational and focused initially on making quilts, layettes, and other clothes for Indians brought to the County Hospital for treatment for TB. (The County Hospital was located where the Mental Health Center on Broadway is now.) Alice remembers one year when the group made 54 quilts in one winter! Over time the need for quilts grew less and the club finally disbanded in the late 1970's. For over 40 years, Alice pieced hundreds of quilts to help people in need. In June of 1940, Duane was in the first class to graduate from the new Boulder High School. Kenneth entered high school that year and was a member of the first class to attend all 3 years in the school, graduating in 1943.

December 7, 1941. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Duane entered the War in March of 1943. Duane had met Shirley Gillard (b. August 8, 1922) in Boulder and fallen in love with her. Shirley joined Duane at Joplin, Missouri, near Camp Crowder and they were married on May 22, 1943. When Duane was sent to Europe, Shirley returned to Boulder to live with Alice and Jesse. Over

the next few years, Duane served in England, France, Belgium and Germany, with a brief period in the Philippines. Kenneth graduated from Boulder High in June of 1943. In September of that year, just after his 18th birthday, he was inducted into the army. After training at Camp Kohler in California, he was sent to New Guinea in the summer of 1944. Approximately a year later, he was transferred to Luzon in the Philippines. Alice still remembers of the pain and fear of seeing both her sons leave for war. Rationing during the War made life difficult. They had to take the tires off their car and turn them in. They had almost no meat because coupons were scarce. There was no butter, just white margarine, which Alice remembers as being absolutely horrible stuff. There was very little sugar, but Alice found an old molasses cookie recipe that made a lot of cookies with half a cup of molasses and one cup of sugar. These cookies became a great favorite. Immediately after her sons entered the war, Alice joined the War Mothers. Her mother, Naomi, had been a charter member of the Loveland War Mothers in the First World War, so it felt natural for Alice to join in Boulder. Her group adopted Ward 17 at Fitzsimmons. They sewed lap robes for the boys in wheelchairs and, once a month, they drove to Denver to deliver cakes and cookies. They stayed to visit with the young soldiers, offering comfort and companionship in addition to the treats. During the time that Alice served as President of her chapter, there were over 100 members. After the War ended, Alice continued her participation in War Mothers for nearly 40 years. After years of fear and worry the war finally ended and Alice's sons returned home, Duane in March of 1946 and Kenneth in April. Despite the joy of having the boys home safely, there was sorrow at the loss of Alice's nephew, Donald Puckett, who had been killed after serving with great honor. While Kenny was stationed in the Pacific, he began corresponding with Dorene Edwards (b. July 2, 1927), a neighbor of his parents on Regent Street. After his return to Boulder in April of 1946, their relationship blossomed. Kenneth and Dorene were married in Boulder on December 15, 1946. Throughout the years of the war, Jesse's mother lived with Alice, Jesse and the girls in their home on Regent Street. In all, Elva Leonard lived with the family off and on for over 16 years, most of the time accompanied by her grandson Aubrey. In the years prior to her death in 1952, she became bedridden, so Alice provided her with constant care. In the late 1940's Jesse went to work at the Olson mine in Caribou. The work paid well and life grew easier. In 1947, the family moved to 2514 Pine Street, to the home known as "Grandma's house" to a generation of grandchildren.

October 14, 1947. Test pilot Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier for the first time, introducing the age of supersonic flight. On May 26, 1947, Alice's first grandson, David, was born to Shirley and Duane. Duane graduated from the University of Colorado in June of 1949 and his son Steve was born on November 4, 1949. The world was changing and Alice's family was growing! In 1948, Alice's oldest daughter, Dorene Joyce graduated from Boulder High School. Alice remembers 1948 also as being the year they got their first television - black and white, of course! Kenneth's wife, Dorene E., graduated from C.U. in 1949. Kenneth graduated in 1950. Their four children were born over the next five

years: Shari on May 5, 1950, Randy on December 13, 1951, Patrice on September 12, 1953, and Jennifer on March 24, 1955. Alice's youngest daughter, Rose Marie, graduated from Boulder High School in June of 1955. She married John Dale (b. May 30, 1930) on August 28, 1955. Daughter Julie was born on February 25, 1957 and son Jess was born on February 21, 1958. Alice's family remembers the house at 2514 Pine with great affection. The house had high ceilings, 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, and front and back porches. The back porch held the washing machine, Jesse's tools, a pantry (and the dog!). The front porch, originally screened, later glassed, ran the width of the house. The kitchen held a heating stove and water heater but it still had plenty of room for the big kitchen table. The room was usually filled with the scent of something wonderful cooking. There was another heating stove in the living room. The dining room table could expand to seat multiple generations of Leonard's. The yard full of trees and flowers was circled by a white picket fence. The old coal shed back by the alley was used for storage (and for grandkids to jump off of). At the back of the yard was an apple tree and a corral. Mostly Dorene and Rosie kept Shang, Syn and other horses in the big pasture just across the 2-lane dirt road that is now 28~ Street. But sometimes they brought the horses into the corral in the yard, often when they were getting ready for the Pow Wow rodeo or parade. In later years, the city filled in and the horses were moved to pasture further out. The garden moved from the area near the clothesline and took over the corral. Wherever she lived, Alice has always kept a beautiful yard, filled with flowers, trees, lilacs and an abundant vegetable garden. In the 1960's, Alice was a Pink Lady volunteer at Boulder Community Hospital, finding yet another way to help other people and her community. Her father, Albert Fletcher, died on March 22, 1962. By 1966, Naomi Fletcher was aging and began living with Alice's sister Kate in the summer and with Alice through the winter. Naomi grew frailer as she approached her 100'h birthday and eventually moved to a nursing home in Berthoud, where she lived to the age of 105.

June 20, 1969: An American becomes the first man to walk on the moon. "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. "

On March 9, 1973, Jesse was killed in a sudden and tragic accident. Despite her sorrow, Alice continued to help care for her centenarian mother. She also began Volunteering in the Boulder schools, visiting with the children and helping them with reading and other schoolwork. Alice and her daughter Dorene remained in the house on Pine Street until, in 1976, Dorene moved to her farm near Loveland. Alice joined her the following year. Over the years Alice has traveled to Canada, Mexico, Hawaii, twice-to Alaska and to England. She made frequent trips to see Aubrey and his wife, Sally, in Seattle. And she has traveled often to the Bitterroot Valley in Montana to visit Rosie and Johnny. Alice still cooks, bakes and makes jelly and pickles. She spends much of her time enjoying the flowers in her yard and listening to audio books on tape. She attends the First United Methodist Church of Loveland and is a member of the

Deborah Circle. Alice's family has continued to grow, first by 17 great-grand children, then by 5 great-great-grandchildren. On June 15, 2003, Alice celebrates her 100th birthday, surrounded by the love of her family. Alice is truly a very special lady.

Addendum:

Jesse Leonard was born on March 29, 1899 on a farm near Niwot in Boulder County, Colorado. His mother, Elva Goodrick Leonard, was of English and Irish heritage. She was a beautiful woman with white Irish skin and black hair. Jesse's father, George Leonard, left home at age 14 to become a drummer boy in the Civil War. Elva and George homesteaded in North Dakota, living in a sod house with dirt floors. They lost three children to diphtheria, then moved to Colorado with their other children: Edith, Roy, Aubrey, Otto, Lulu and Jesse. The family farmed, primarily raising wheat and hay. Jesse went to a country school through 8th grade, then finished his education and graduated from high school in Longmont. After Jesse and Alice were married, Jesse moved from his farming background into the profession of mechanic. He started by working in a small garage with his sister Lulu's husband, Roy Puckett. Over the years he worked for the Dodge Plymouth dealership in Boulder, in other independent garages and on mine equipment in Caribou. Primarily, however, he worked for the Boulder County Garage, both as a mechanic and as a supervisor. He continued working there until his death in 1973. Alice's mother, Naomi Drago Fletcher was born in Colfax, Michigan on April 4, 1871. The Dragoos were thrifty, hardworking Pennsylvania Dutch who passed their strong work ethic to their daughter. Naomi was a tiny, but energetic, person. She was thrifty and wasted nothing. Alice remembers tearing and sewing together strips from worn out overalls, then her mother would make the strips into rugs. Naomi made all the family's bedding and Alice remembers the big, heavy, soft comforters they snuggled under in the wintertime. Naomi also liked to do fancy piecework and made beautiful quilts. She would invite friends in, make a chicken dinner, and they would have a fun, sociable time quilting. Shortly after Naomi celebrated her **100th** birthday, she took up the art of embroidery painting. She enjoyed her new craft and made many gifts. Albert William Fletcher was born June 1, 1869, in Sunfield, Michigan to a family of French Canadian heritage. Alice remembers him as a great farmer, with fields of tall hay and huge crops of beets. In the wintertime, Albert would hunt jack rabbits in the summer, he liked to fish. He was a good trout fisherman and the family always counted on having fish to eat when they went camping. Albert and Naomi met when Albert was working in the lumber camps in 1892. They farmed most of their lives. When Albert retired from farming, he became the

caretaker of the cemetery in Loveland, living in the small white house beside the cemetery. A few years later, he built a home near Lake Loveland. In the mid-1950's Albert and Naomi moved to Colorado Springs until Albert's death.