



VELDA LARSON LARSSON

1914-2006

Velda was the oldest child of Alvin and Deseret (Dessie) Parcell Larson, born 27 September 1914 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah. The family soon moved to Mt. Pleasant, Sanpete, Utah, where Alvin and his father, August Larson, built a two-room house. Alvin and Dessie had two other children while living in Mt. Pleasant, Verl (1917) and Uvonna (1919).

In 1918, a storm caused flooding in Mr. Pleasant. Rain, rocks, and mud roared down from the mountains, surrounding the Larson's small home. The family's only milk cow became mired in the mud up to its stomach. How her father got her out is still a mystery. Luckily the water didn't get in the house, but it did fill a trench that ran along the back of the house.

Also, in 1918 Alvin and August built an addition onto the home. The trench in the back was still there, full of water. Because the porch was not yet built, the back door dropped off into the trench. Therefore, the back door was always kept locked. However, one day Dessie heard men from the nearby sugar house yelling. She looked up just in time to see Verl pushing Uvonna in the baby buggy out the door. She caught them just in time from falling into the trench below.

Velda wore her hair in a Dutch cut when she was young. It was so white that some people called her "cotton top," a name she did not appreciate. Alvin and Deseret moved to Ogden in 1920. Velda spent the rest of her growing up years with her family on Eccles Avenue between 20th Street and 21st Street, next to her paternal grandparents, August and Susanna Larson. She loved to spend time at her grandparents' home.

In 1925, when Velda was 11 years old, tragedy hit the Larson family. Her eight-year-old brother, Verl, had gone with a group of youth on a hiking trip to Eagle's Cave, located in the foothills above the family home in Ogden. A few hours later, they brought the young boy home, laid across the back of horse. He slipped and fell on the mountain, and was killed. Many friends, neighbors, and relatives gave them comfort at this time.

When Velda was in her early teens, there was a boy who lived about two blocks from her home. She adored him, and he seemed to be sweet on her as well. However, when his mother found out that Velda was a "Mormon," she forbade her son to ever see her again. He was to have nothing to do with such a girl. Unfortunately, the boy heeded his mother's warning, and never talked to her again. She was heartbroken, and talked about the incident for the rest of her life.

Her father's sisters, Iona and Mabelle, were not much older than she was, and they became her best friends. These two aunts were both beautiful and fashionable. They loved fixing

Velda's hair in the latest styles and taught her how to finger wave it. They also fussed over her make-up and wardrobe. She, of course, loved every minute of the attention.

During the great depression, her father lost his job and had to stand in the soup line to get food for his family. Velda quit school after the eighth grade in order to work and help the family financially. She cleaned house for a family that lived on the east bench in Ogden. She earned \$7.00 a week. She gave her parents \$4.00 and kept \$3.00 for herself. Later, she worked at the Troy Laundry where she pressed clothes and did other chores. There were other girls close to her age at the laundry. They often did activities together such as hiking, swimming, etc. There were nine or ten of them and they became close friends.

Dancing was Velda's favorite activity. She loved ballroom dancing and did it well. She had several different partners and entered competitions. Many young men wanted her as a partner because she was a frequent winner of the competitions. She danced at the White City Ballroom and Berthanna in Ogden, and also at ballrooms in Salt Lake City. When her son, Gary, was attending Wahlquist Jr. High School, they had a mother-son dance with a waltz contest. Velda and Gary won 1st place hands down. She was a beautiful, graceful dancer.

In 1934, Velda traded in her dancing shoes for an engagement ring. Joseph Preston Larsson was not a dancer, but he stole her heart. Joseph (Peg) was a pilot. To impress his new girl friend, he took her on an airplane ride. While doing a looping maneuver, Velda slipped out of the seatbelt and fell on the floor with the seatbelt hooked under her arms. He looked back and couldn't see her. He thought she had fallen out. Velda was not too impressed. Nevertheless, they were married 14 September 1934 in Ogden.

Her hobbies soon turned to his interests, and they loved camping, fishing, and traveling. When their family grew to four; Gary Preston 13 June 1938, and Mitchel Alvin 2 April 1945, Velda dedicated her life to her children. She was a loving, kind, caring mother who took great pride in her children and supported them in all they did. Mitchel played football in junior high and high school, and sang in the choir. Gary was student body president in junior high and senior class president in high school.

Velda loved movies. Peg worked nights at the railroad, and then helped friends build houses, or do other jobs during the day. Therefore, he was gone much of the time. Velda often took the boys to the movies. Some of her children's fondest memories were going to the movies or watching television shows with their mother. They especially liked shows like Laurel and Hardy or the Jackie Gleason Show. Years later, the boys still enjoyed getting together to watch a favorite show. Half of the enjoyment was the memories it brought back, the other half was being together as brothers. And if you could squeeze in another half, it would be because they loved to laugh.

For many years, Velda took care of children in a day care facility to bring extra income to the family. Later, she took care of Don Gene Blair in her home. He was the son of Don and Janet Blair. Velda and Janet remained close friends for the rest of Velda's life.

Velda was a devoted grandmother, and was fortunate enough to have her grandchildren live next door to her. They loved to visit with her and loved to hear stories from her childhood: when her uncle tried to fly off of the chicken coop roof with an umbrella, or when her uncles tried to kill a rooster with an ax. They missed the rooster, but cut her uncle's finger off. The rooster grabbed the finger and ran around the yard. They also loved their grandma's sayings when she got excited, the favorite being, "Jumpin' Jehosipher and little fishes." When she was driving, her frequent saying was, "Hang on to the willows." She always had popsicles, candy, or ice cream sandwiches which she shared with the grandchildren and any or all of the neighborhood children - many of whom were her nieces and nephews.

"A good cook" is a title Velda earned, as her delicious meals were always a treat for her family. She could cook venison to taste better than beef, her duck could have been served in the best restaurants, and her tossed green salad could not be duplicated; many grandchildren have tried and failed. It will always remain grandma's secret.

After 47 years of marriage, Joseph Preston (Peg) Larsson died 3 September 1981. The family rallied around Velda to help her cope and give her comfort. She went on many vacations with her son, Gary and his wife, Joyce, and stayed involved with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Tragedy came into Velda's life again 31 December 1992 when her grandson - Mitchel's son - Jeffrey Mitchel Larsson, his wife Shanna, and their unborn baby were killed in an automobile accident. They were hit by a drunk driver on New Year's Eve when they were taking their sick child to the hospital. The two children in the car were injured, but survived the accident.

In the spring of 1995, Velda broke her leg, which required extensive surgery. With pins and metal plates, the doctors put her leg back together, but her health deteriorated from that time. She lived with Gary and Joyce for six years, where she loved seeing family members come and go, and listened with interest to the various activities they were involved in. Because of the 24 hour care she needed, she was moved to an assisted living home, and then a nursing home. She died 29 March 2006 at the age of 91. She is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery next to her husband, parents, and little brother.

SOURCES:

Larsson, Joyce Julander Larsson. "Velda Larson Larsson." Unpublished manuscript. 2011.

Blair, Don	Larson, Susanna
Blair, Don Gene	Larson, Uvonna
Blair, Janet	Larson, Verl
Eagle's Cave	Larsson, Gary Preston
Larson, Alvin	Larsson, Jeffrey Mitchel
Larson, August	Larsson, Joseph Preston (Peg)
Larson, Deseret Parcell	Larsson, Joyce
Larson, Iona	Larsson, Mitchel Alvin
Larson, Maybelle	Larsson, Shanna