

STORIES ABOUT AUNT ETHEL

Ethel Whitmer



ETHIE:

Aunt Ethel knew she had a heart problem before she died. She had written something about her heart problem on her calendar

Aunt Ethel was a millionaire with friends. Her friends from the church would always come by even if she was drunk. They would stay and visit it. I wouldn't be surprised if they put her to bed. Once she had quit drinking and going to church every week, she loved going to church. She felt like going to Relief Society was like getting a college education.

I stayed at Aunt Ethel's a couple of summers. Aunt Ethel would have a case of vodka delivered often first thing in the morning. She could hear the bottle open then gulp, gulp, she'd start drinking. I didn't understand what was going on but would hide the bottles throughout the house hoping she wouldn't find them.

One time when I came to stay at Aunt Ethel's, she taught me to drive a stick on a 53 Ford. It was a three-speed shift and about drove Aunt Ethel crazy.

Aunt Ethel would take me to a cool hamburger place where the high school kids hung out. After Bill Pringle left, Aunt Ethel was much happier. When she married John Shearer he helped her with her drinking problem. Whereas she had been on hard liquor before, John helped her transition to beer. Things got better. After John died, Ethel tried to get his military benefits but he she found out that he wasn't actually divorced from his first wife.

One year Aunt Ethel came to visit me when my daughter, Rachel, was a toddler. While we were cooking breakfast in the kitchen, Rachel's toys were all over the kitchen floor. I should have picked them up because Aunt Ethel stepped on one, and fell and broke her arm.

LEE:

It's bizarre. Aunt Ethel and Aunt Genevieve would go to Grandma's for lunch. I'd be there too. Then they would disappear. Ethel came back happy. She was a happy drunk. Genevieve came back depressed. Genevieve was a depressed drunk. I didn't understand what was going on at the time.

After Bill Pringle left, Ethel got over her drinking. John Shearer died before Ethel. Ethel tried to get John's military benefits but he wasn't actually divorce from his ex-wife. If it matters, I think she believed he was divorced but was she was never able to verify it. Especially since his children would never help with information, e.g. where did they live when they divorced (assuming he was). I talked to her about some of this and offered to help find the answers but she never called me.

Grandma had dementia. When she stayed with us she would run out the front door and walk down the street. When I would follow her and ask where she was going, she would say, "We gotta get them cows."

I remember that my family would get together for Thanksgiving the last couple of years before Aunt Ethel died.

She often brought fireworks when she came to visit. The kids loved it.

Four years ago Marge and myself were in Safford and decided to go to Silver City where they met a woman at an antique shop who knew Aunt Ethel. Said Ethel was a really classy lady.

Grandma was always a really generous person. If a hobo came by she would give him a can of food. She even let them stay outside by the barn.

Grandma often went to gather the eggs in the morning with Alton at their farm.

WILLIAM ADAMS, Faye's youngest son:

Aunt Ethel was loving, kind and generous. One time she even washed my parent's car by hand without them knowing it. My parents were so surprised and happy.

Grandpa Whitmer would come by our house for pork chop dinner which he loved.